

Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB  
Historic Landscape Characterisation Project

**HISTORIC LANDSCAPE TYPE  
DESCRIPTION:  
TYPE 10 MILITARY**



ENGLISH HERITAGE

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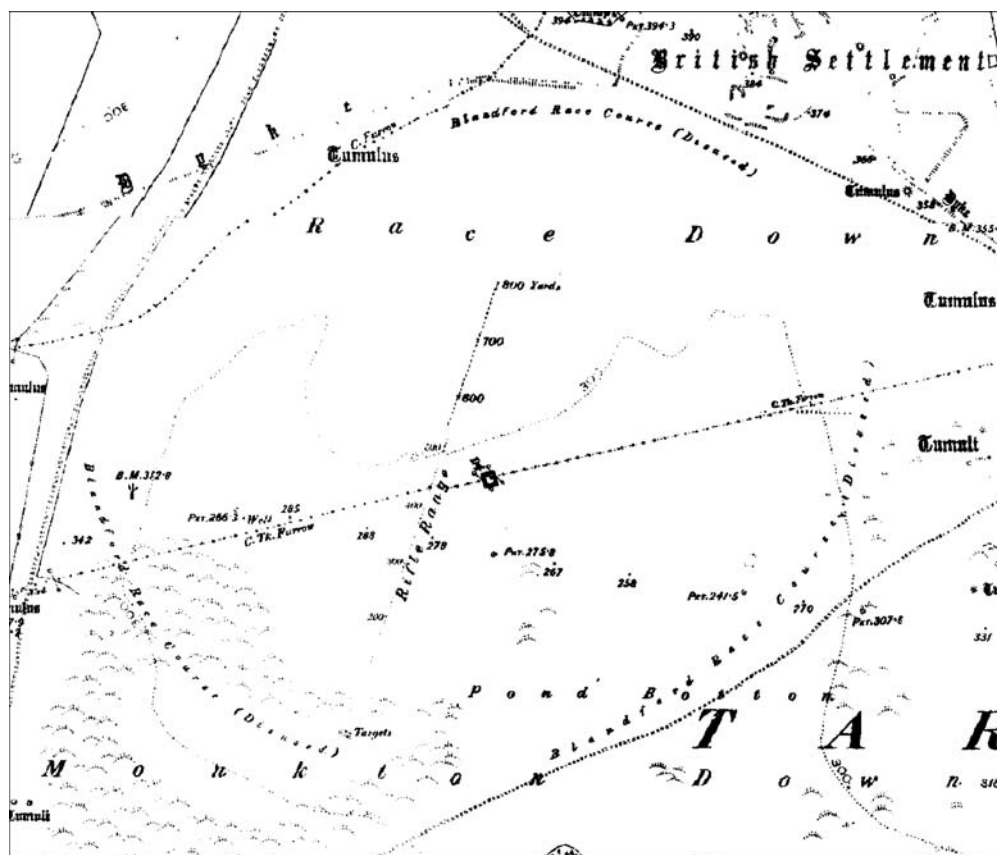
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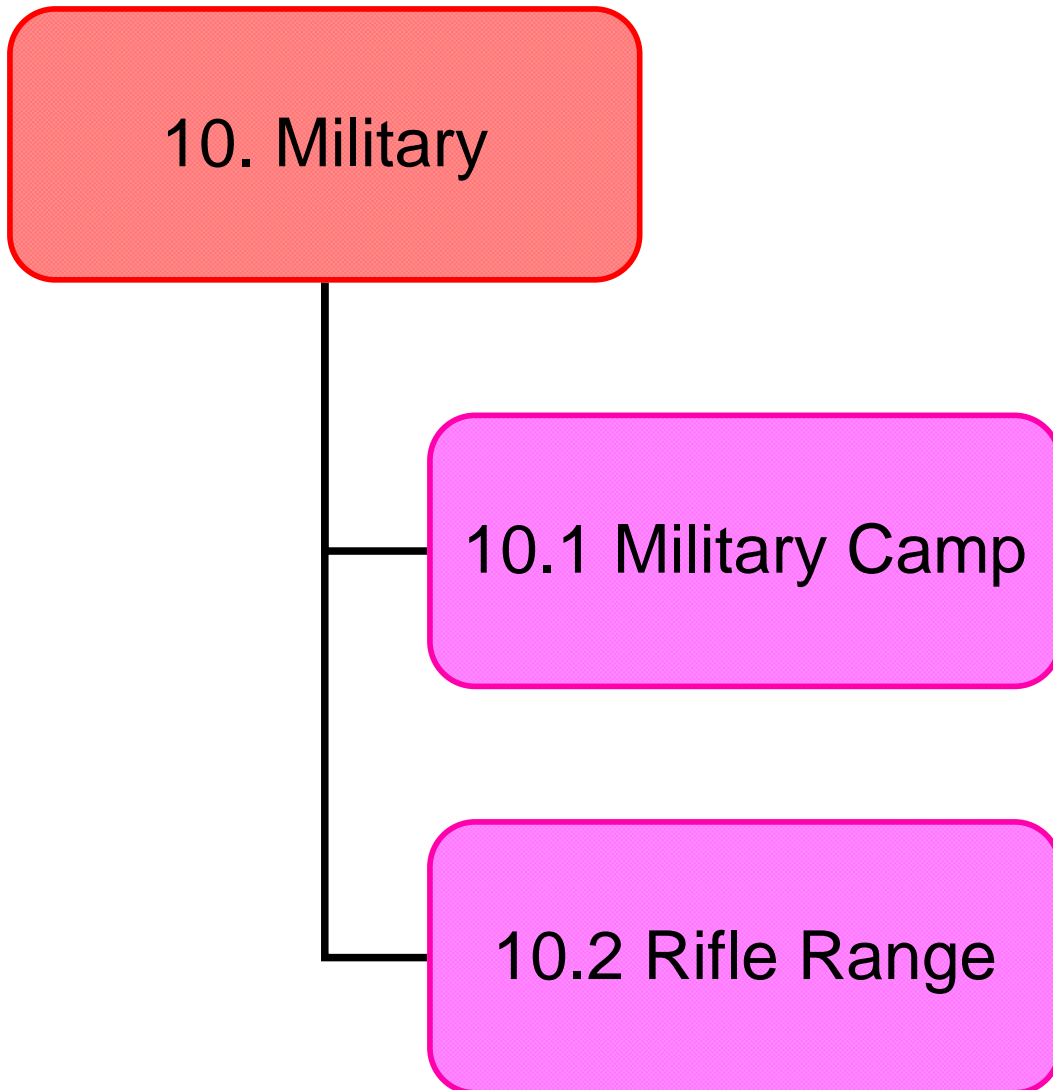
## Military Activity in the AONB: An Introduction

*"In April 1944 the first of five US Army hospitals was established in the camp [at Blandford] ready to receive the wounded from the invasion of Europe, These hospitals were closed after VE Day, having treated some 20'000 patients."*

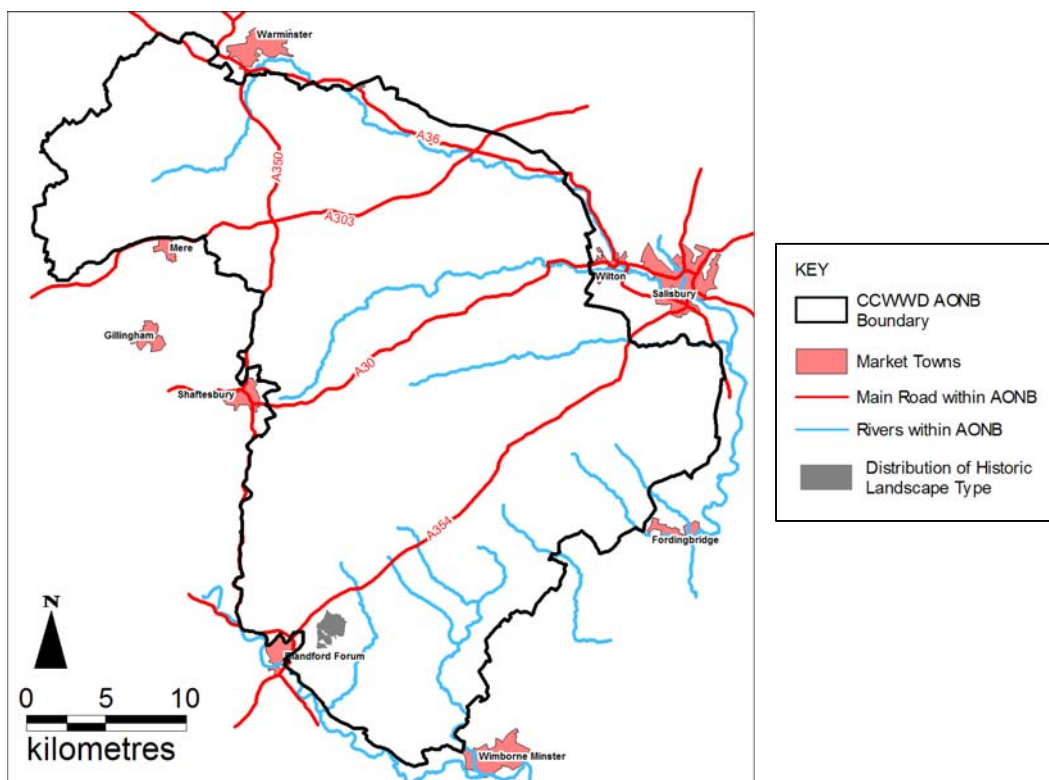
(From [http://www.army.mod.uk/royalsignalsmuseum/blandford\\_camp.htm](http://www.army.mod.uk/royalsignalsmuseum/blandford_camp.htm))

The picture below illustrates the footprint of Blandford Race Course, which was transformed into Blandford Camp in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Along with the smaller Knook Camp in the north of the AONB, Blandford Camp represents the only large scale military presence remaining in the AONB. This contrasts greatly with the large and permanent military activity which occurs on the Salisbury Plain military training area, just beyond the northern boundary of the AONB. The military has not always been inactive in the AONB. Several former bases, for example RAF Chilmark, are today used as private industrial estates or business units. The First and Second World Wars saw the establishment of several temporary airfields and bases across the AONB, notably at Fovant. Finally, former rifle ranges have often been incorporated into modern field boundaries.





## Type 10 Military



### Introduction

The Historic Landscape Characterisation project has only recorded evidence of military activity that has a landscape scale contribution to the historic character of the AONB. This includes the two military camps which are still in use and three locations where former rifle ranges has affected the morphology of later land use.

More transitory military camps also existed in the landscape of the AONB, especially relating to the First and Second World Wars but these have not been captured by the project as they did not contribute to the historic character of the landscape as seen today. Further discussion of the Fovant Badges can be found in Section 12. In addition, more ephemeral evidence of military activity, such as anti tank blocks or pill boxes, is too small to be recorded in this project but information on features such as these can be accessed on the Council for British Archaeology Defence of Britain database at <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/projects/dob/index.html> [last accessed May 2008].

### Distribution

Current military activity has been recorded to the east of Blandford Forum, and on the northern edge of the AONB.

## Principal Historical Processes

The military activity recorded dates primarily to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, though evidence for former rifle ranges has also been recorded. Several former military camps have been transformed into business and industrial units, and these are dealt with in Section 8 Industry.

## Typical Historical/Archaeological Components

This type primarily comprised of fenced compounds with heavy security. They commonly feature huts, offices, bunkers, banks, bunds, training areas and ancillary buildings.



## Rarity

Military activity is scarce in the AONB, especially when compared with the level of activity on the Salisbury Plain Military Training Area.

## Survival

The majority of the military evidence recorded relates to military camps which have been in existence in their present form for approximately 50 years.

## Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

This type would be very recognisable in the landscape; however they cannot be experienced by most people due to the security which surrounds them.

## Past interaction with other types

The type is often imposed on the landscape regardless of previous land use when required.

## Evidence for time-depth

The largest concentration of military activity at Blandford Camp is built on the footprint of a 18<sup>th</sup> century race course.

## Contribution to the present landscape character

Modern day military activity is scarce in the AONB so it has a small contribution to present day landscape character, especially when compared against the scale of the military activity on Salisbury Plain. In addition much of the former military presence in the area was temporary in nature. For example, at Fovant during the First World War

there was a hospital, railway line and range, but only the Fovant Badges remain today.

### **Key Statistics**

Total Area:	268.77 hectares, 0.27% of the AONB.
No. of Polygons:	This Subtype is comprised of 2 polygons, 0.05% of the total number of polygons digitised.
Av. Polygon Size:	Each polygon averages 134.87 hectares in size.
Occurrence:	Scarce.
Previous Coverage:	268.77 hectares, 0.27 % of AONB was Military at the point when this type was at its most prevalent
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 277.55 hectares, 0.28 % of the AONB

### **Constituent Types**

[10.1 Military Camps](#)

[10.2 Rifle Ranges](#)

### **Parent Type**

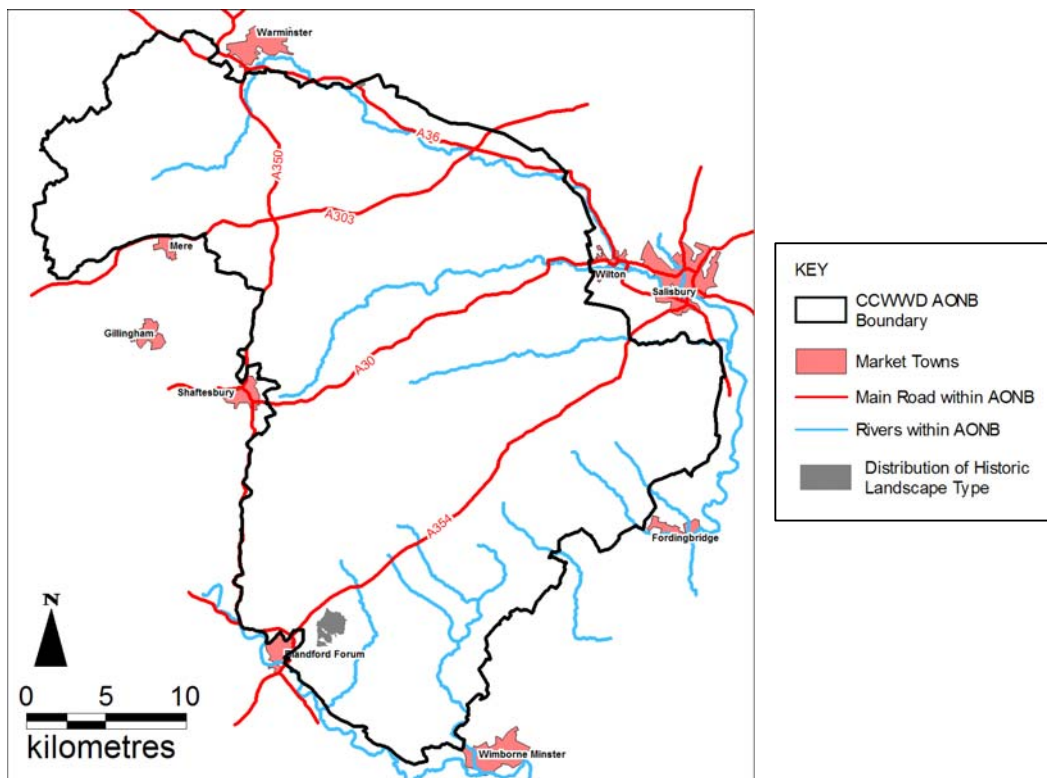
None

### **Suggested Sources**

Fovant Badges Society Website <http://www.fovantbadges.com> [last accessed 01.06.08]



## Type 10.1 Military Camps



### Introduction

Military camps in the AONB. There are 2 military camps in use today that both feature on modern Ordnance Survey maps. More transitory military camps also existed in the landscape of the AONB, especially relating to the First and Second World Wars but this has not been recorded in this dataset for two reasons. Firstly it is not captured by the available historic mapping and, secondly, it did not have an impact on the history of land use in the present day. Several former military camps have been transformed into business and industrial units, and these are dealt with in Section 8 Industry.

### Distribution

The first Military Camp recorded is Blandford Camp to the east of Blandford Forum, the second Knook Camp on the Northern edge of the AONB.

### Principal Historical Processes

Blandford Military Camp is the home of the Royal Signals. It is a large camp. The first military use of the site dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century when local volunteer units used it as a training ground; at this time it also served as a race course. The first time the camp appears on the maps available to this project is on the modern day Ordnance Survey maps. However, a rifle range was marked on both the Epoch 4 (1919-1939) and Epoch 3 (1904-1939) historic Ordnance Survey maps. The site was, however, used as a depot and camp temporarily during the First World War, alongside a POW



camp. Again, in the Second World War the site was in use when a US army hospital was established. This was removed after VE day. The camp which can be seen today dates from 1946 onwards.

Knook Military Camp is smaller than Blandford and is a transit camp mostly used by the Territorial Army and Army Cadets. It is located on the edge of the Salisbury Plain Military Training Area. It is situated in an area which was formerly Parliamentary Enclosure and the edge of the camp follows the enclosure boundary. The camp first appears on the Epoch 3 Historic Ordnance Survey OS so has been dated to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

### **Typical Historical/Archaeological Components**

This type is comprised of fenced compounds with heavy security. They commonly feature accommodation, offices, bunkers, sports fields, training areas and ancillary buildings. Knook Camp primarily consists of older, more temporary, brick and wooden huts.



### **Rarity**

Military camps are scarce in the AONB.

### **Survival**

The future of Blandford Camp is uncertain.

### **Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components**

This type would be very recognisable in the landscape; however they cannot be experienced by most people due to the security which surrounds them.

### **Past interaction with other types**

The type is often imposed on the landscape when required.

### **Evidence for time-depth**

Blandford Camp is built on the footprint of a 18<sup>th</sup> century racecourse, where as Knook Camp is situated within an area of former 19<sup>th</sup> century Parliamentary Enclosure.

### **Contribution to the present landscape character**

Military camps are rare in the AONB so have a small contribution to present day landscape character, especially when compared against the scale of the military activity on Salisbury Plain.

## Key Statistics

Total Area:	268.77 hectares, 0.27% of the AONB.
No. of Polygons:	This Subtype is comprised of 2 polygons, 0.05% of the total number of polygons digitised.
Av. Polygon Size:	Each polygon averages 134.87 hectares in size.
Occurrence:	Scarce.
Previous Coverage:	268.77 hectares, 0.27% of AONB was Military Camps at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 277.55 hectares, 0.28 % of the AONB.

## Constituent Types

None

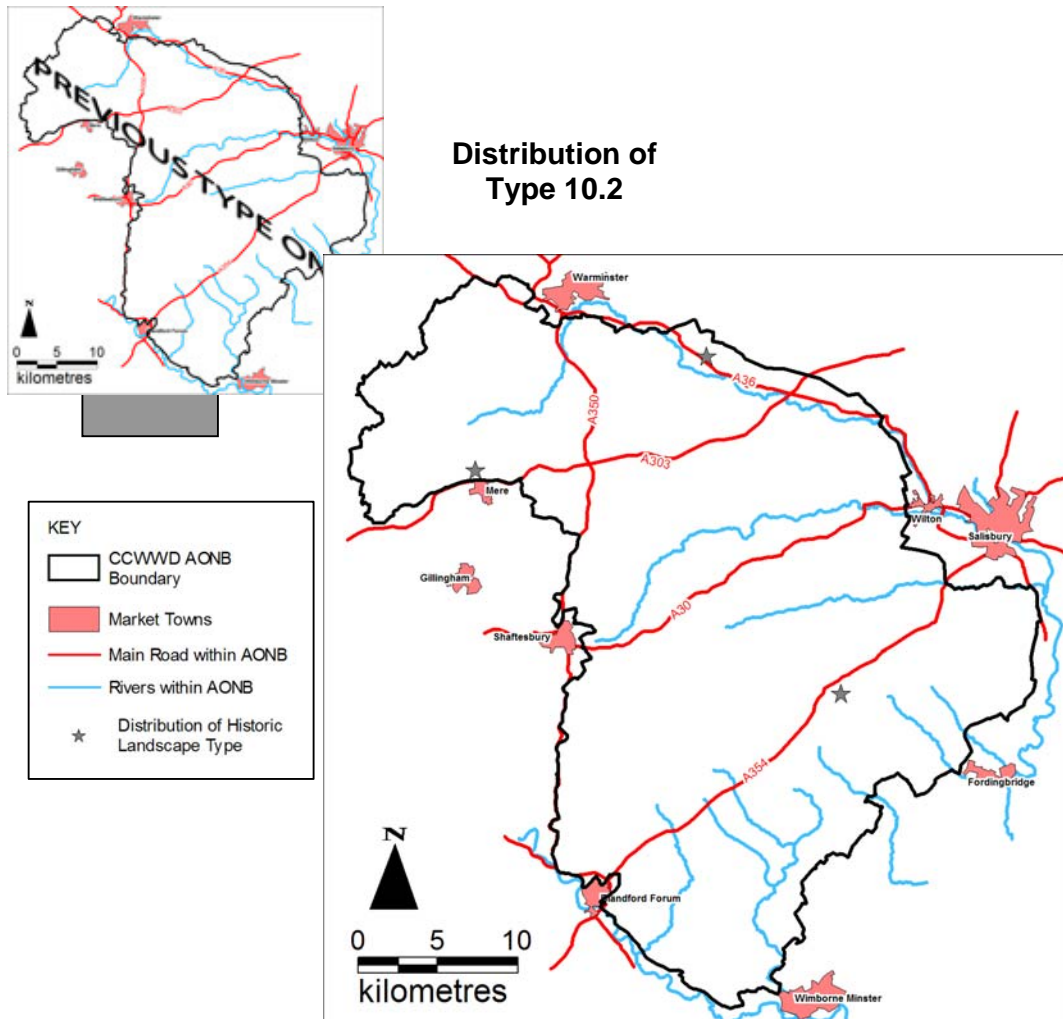
## Parent Type

[10. Military](#)

## Suggested Sources

Website of the Royal Signals Museum for information on Blandford Camp - <http://www.army.mod.uk/royalsignalsmuseum/> [last accessed 21.05.08]

## Type 10.2 Rifle Ranges



### Introduction

Evidence for the presence of former rifle ranges in the AONB which have affected later land use. This distribution does not show the location of all former rifle ranges, only where this military activity has affected later land use.

### Distribution

The former rifle ranges are widely distributed across the AONB, near Knook, Mere and on Martin Down.

### Principal Historical Processes

The former rifle range 2 km south east of Knook dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the footprint of which was incorporated within new 20<sup>th</sup> century field boundaries. The former range at Mere is early 20<sup>th</sup> century in date, and was also incorporated within 20<sup>th</sup> century field boundaries. The rifle range at Martin Down dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century

and has a strong influence on the survival of unimproved grassland in this area which today is a National Nature Reserve.

### Typical Historical/Archaeological Components

This type is indicated on historic Ordnance Survey maps as consisting of a line with marked distances. This line is then incorporated in the boundary of new 20<sup>th</sup> Century fields at Knook and Mere.

This map shows the Epoch One Historic Ordnance Survey Map superimposed with the boundary of the modern field which incorporated the line of the rifle range.



### Rarity

There are only three rifle ranges incorporated into the HLC dataset. They do feature on historic mapping more commonly, but do not tend to be reflected in subsequent land use.

### Survival

No rifle ranges remain in the AONB.

### Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

This type would not be recognisable in the landscape without reference to historic mapping.

### Past interaction with other types

The type is often imposed on the landscape when required.

### Evidence for time-depth

This type exists only as a previous type.

### Contribution to the present landscape character

There are only three examples of rifle ranges influencing later landscape character, so it has had a low impact on landscape character.

### Key Statistics

Total Area: N/A

No. of Polygons:	N/A
Av. Polygon Size:	N/A
Occurrence:	N/A
Previous Coverage:	4.45 hectares, 0.01% of AONB was Rifle Ranges at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 4.45 hectares, 0.01% of the AONB.

**Constituent Types**

None

**Parent Type**

[10. Military](#)

