



Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



# Historic Environment Action Plans

Theme 7: Landscapes of Militarism,  
Commemoration & Defence





This document forms part of a suite of documents which together comprise the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Historic Environment Action Plans.

The HEAPs provide a summary of the key characteristics of the historic environment of the AONB at a landscape scale, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of this special landscape and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance these special characteristics. These summaries are divided into two groups:

1. Summaries of the historic environment of the AONB by area
2. Summaries of the historic environment of the AONB by theme

These core documents are accompanied by documents which provide background information, supplementary information and detail on the methodologies used to create these documents.

A series of icons help you navigate this suite of documents:

-  **Background** - Provides an introduction to the AONB Historic Environment Action Plans and provides background information on the history and archaeology of the landscape **(B1 to B10)**
-  **Area** - Summarises key characteristics of discrete geographical areas within the AONB, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of each area and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance its characteristics **(A1 to A12)**
-  **Theme** - Summarises key characteristics of historic environment themes, each document then sets out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of each theme and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance its characteristics **(T1 to T14)**
-  **Supplementary** - A series of documents which explore supplementary issues of relevance to the Historic Environment Action Plans **(S1 to S2)**
-  **Method** - Introduces the methodology behind the production of the Historic Environment Action Plans **(M1 to M3)**

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## Introducing the Theme Statements

Fourteen distinct Historic Landscape Themes have been identified in the AONB. These were chosen by the HEAP Steering group as representing the topics which best encapsulate the historic character of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.

The theme descriptions aim to provide an overview of each theme which encapsulates the main features of the Historic Environment present and include both the archaeological and historical, the very old and the more recent.



The process through which the Historic Landscape Character themes were identified, and mapped, and the sources of information used to create these descriptions is documented in the methodological statement 'Creating and Describing Historic Character Themes'.

## Introduction to Theme 7: Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence

*“There is a green hill down our way, A signal sleeve on verdant ground.  
It bears the badges – sen by hand, Modest, simple – nothing grand”*

Extract from 'Fovant Badges' by Nigel Brodrick-Barker

The aims are to provide an overview of the key archaeological and historic characteristics of military and defence activity and to focus on the evidence of physical surviving remains in today's landscape.

From Medieval castles to Cold War ammunition depots the AONB has a varied history of military activity and is notably associated with the commemoration of fallen soldiers, especially in relation to the First World War.



**Fovant Camp 1918**  
(courtesy of the Fovant  
Historical Interest Group)

### Summary of Key Characteristics

- First nationally organised militarism in the AONB represented by a network of Roman roads (see Routeways Theme) and two Roman forts.
- Medieval fortifications including motte and bailey castles, fortified manor houses and the ruins of Wardour Castle.
- Wardour Castle is associated with the English Civil War when it was under seige.
- Rifle ranges dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.
- Earthworks associated with military railways created during World War One, World War Two and in the Cold War period (see Routeways Theme).
- Evidence for large scale temporary camps established in the First World War at both Fovant and Codford, including slight earthworks representing the camps layouts and at least two surviving huts.
- Nationally important group of Chalk Cap Badges at Fovant and a single example from Codford. These symbolise the presence of regiments in the area from the First World War onwards and are the focus for yearly ceremonies.
- Remains from the Second World War including camps at Codford and several air fields, including Zeals at which the control tower survives as a house.
- Evidence of post war activity is represented by the now, mostly defunct, RAF Chilmark, a large complex comprising a light railway, warehouses and underground bomb storage in former stone quarry workings; Knook Camp; and the military camp at Blandford which was first used in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is built on the foot print of a 17<sup>th</sup> century race course.
- World War Two aircraft crash sites which form the focus of local memory and discussions.
- Dedicated War Grave Commission cemeteries associated with War Grave Commission style crosses and inscriptions. These form the focus for yearly ceremonies or remembrance.
- Village war memorials and single War Graves in parish churches.

### Linkages to other Historic Landscape Character Statements

This statement forms one of 14 AONB wide Historic Landscape Character Theme descriptions. These are accompanied by a series of 12 Historic Landscape Character Area descriptions which cover the whole of the AONB. These documents together build up a picture of the key characteristics of the Historic Environment of the AONB at a landscape scale. These statements combined inform the Historic Environment Action Plans created for the AONB landscape. The Areas of relevance:



Area 2: Sutton Veny, Cold Kitchen Hill and Zeals Knoll

Area 3: Chalk River Valleys

Area 4: Northern Wyle and Ebbel Valley Sides

Area 7: Fovant Terrace and the area between Chalbury and Woodlands

Area 8: Chalk Escarpments

Area 12: Southern Downland Belt

## History and Context

The position of England as an island means that it has throughout its long history been subject to waves of incoming population, including attempted and successful military invasions. Defensive fortifications in the AONB landscape can be dated back in time to at least the hillforts associated with Iron Age Britain and the first organised armies present in the AONB appear in the Roman period. The Medieval and Post Medieval landscape of the AONB was organised by an elite, for whom fortifications were an expression of power and control and include fortified manor houses and castles the defensive aspects of which were put to the test during the English Civil War (1642-1651).

By the 20<sup>th</sup> century war had been transformed into an experience shared by all members of society, a universal and unifying experience. Twice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the population of the AONB has been mobilised for total war (1914-1918), (1939-1945) and was affected by activity centred on combatting the Soviet threat in the Cold War (1946-1989). The importance of this experience is still recognised in the keen interest taken in the history of all three of these wars. However, the impact on the landscape of the AONB itself is largely forgotten, despite the proximity of this area to the military training grounds of Salisbury Plain, the two Military camps still in active use, and the importance of this history to local people.

The roots of this process can be found in the militarism of late 19<sup>th</sup> century society including regular army bands, drill halls and volunteer forces. From the late 1850s there had been an important advance in weaponry with mass production, small arms increasing in prominence, and the development of modern chemical weapons. The impact of total war on the landscape of the AONB during the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be read in terms of the archaeological and built remains of camps, airstrips, and munition dumps; war memorials and war graves; war art in the form of the chalk cut cap badges; commemorative events, including ANZAC day celebrations; and the mobilisation of land for food security.

There are some key datable turning points in the development of the historic characteristics of military characteristics in the AONB which it is helpful to bear in mind.

AD43	- Romans invade Britain
AD 1066	- Normans invade Britain
AD 1642-1651	- English Civil War
AD 1756-1763	- Seven Years War
AD 1803-1815	- Napoleonic Wars
AD 1914-1918	- First World War
AD 1939-1945	- Second World War
AD 1946-1989	- Cold War

B2

See Background Paper 2 for an overview of the archaeology and history of the AONB by time period.

B4

See Background Paper 4 for an overview of historic land use in the ONB

B6

See Background Paper 6 for an overview of the key historical figures associated with the AONB.

**B6** See Background Paper 6 for an overview of the key historical figures associated with the AONB.

**B7** See Background Paper 7 for an overview of Major historical events trends and fashions and their impact on the AONB.

## Key Secondary Sources

The AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation is the main source of information on the historic landscape of the AONB and is available at [www.historiclandscape.co.uk](http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk).

The main archaeological record for the area is the county based Historic Environment Record in Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset and the Sites and Monuments Record in Wiltshire.

Information on the listed buildings in the area is available from English Heritage's Listed Buildings Online <http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk>.

Information on nationally important historic parks and gardens in the AONB are available from the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and includes information on the landscape setting of Old Wardour Castle.

A general introduction to Kitchener's Armies can be found in Peter Simkins book *Kitchener's Army. The Raising of the New Armies 1914-1916* (2007) published by the Imperial War Museum.

The book *Codford: Wool and War in Wiltshire*, by John Chandler (2009) describes the First World War camps established at Codford for Kitchener's New Armies, the creation of the Lamb Down Cap Badge, and subsequent World War Two camps.

The Fovant Badge Association provide the primary source of information on the chalk cut cap badges and also are responsible for their maintenance <http://www.fovantbadges.com/> [last accessed December 2010].

Information on the Fovant Camps and subsequent World War Two military information can be found via the excellent website of the Fovant Historical Interest Group <http://www.fovanthistory.org/> [last accessed December 2010].

Information on the military camps at Sutton Veny can be found on the parish history website <http://www.fovanthistory.org/> [last accessed December 2010].

There are a number of useful online sources on World War Two airfields. <http://www.controltowers.co.uk/> features both airfields in the AONB [last accessed December 2010].

The Defence of Britain Project databases provide information on features in the AONB which were part of the war time defence of Britain during the Second World War. This database was created from field and documentary work carried out between April 1995 and December 2001 and can be accessed from the archaeological data service archives <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?dob>.

## Landscape Scale Characteristics and Components

### 1. Iron Age Hillforts

#### *Background*

The Iron Age in the AONB dates from 700 BC to AD 43. From 700 BC Iron Age hillforts appear in the landscape; these imposing earthworks often placed in prominent positions on the edge of escarpments are commonly comprised of one or more earthwork banks with a corresponding ditch on the outside. They sometimes contain dwellings and pits within their interiors. Although, obviously designed to make an impact on the landscape, modern interpretations see these earthworks playing a domestic role (settlement, trade, agriculture) rather than being purely for defence.



*View from Winkelbury Hillfort*

#### *Landscape scale impact*

The most visually recognisable features from the Iron Age within the AONB are the twenty-one hillforts located through the AONB. These are often positioned in prominent locations. None of the hillforts in the AONB has seen systematic investigation.

### 2. Roman Military Activity

#### *Background*

The start of the Roman period in the area is traditionally dated to AD 43 and is associated with the imposition of Roman culture into Britain over the next 300 years. This includes archaeological evidence for the presence of the Roman Army in the AONB.

#### *Landscape scale impact*

The impact of the Roman Military in the AONB is restricted to isolated finds and individual sites. This includes the Roman fort discovered at Lake Farm, Pamphill. Individual finds include a scabbard mount and ballista bolt found at the Late Iron Age settlement of Woodcutts in the Cranborne Chase.

### 3. Medieval Fortifications

#### *Background*

The conquest of England by French speaking elite in AD 1066 introduced defensive castles and manor houses into the AONB. This included earth and wooden motte and bailey castles, which were succeeded by stone built castles later in the period.



*Old Wardour Castle*

#### *Landscape scale impact*

The distribution of Norman (11<sup>th</sup> century AD) motte and bailey castles in the AONB is restricted to the Longleat and Penselwood Hills in the northwest, and Downland Hills in the southeast. These exist as archaeological earthworks and are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. These include Castle Orchard near Penselwood village and two other fortified sites at Charlton Musgrave and Penselwood, which Castle Orchard may have formed part of a unified programme of castle-building. An example in the southeast of the area includes Castle Hill at Cranborne.

Other Medieval scheduled monuments with defensive aspects in the AONB include the fortified Medieval manor house of Woodford Castle in the parish of Horningsham which survives as rectangular earthworks and masonry, and the fortified manor house at Stourhead built in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century and comprising two courts, one with an open hall, kitchen and gatehouse, and surviving as an earthwork.

Several of the surviving Medieval buildings in the AONB had defensive aspects. These include the Grade I listed Cranborne Manor House, a 17<sup>th</sup> century hunting lodge which includes original Medieval building fabric. It was originally built as a hunting lodge between 1207-8, and appears to have been referred to as a castle in 1241 and 1322.

The most dramatic Medieval defensive feature in the AONB dates to the second half of the Medieval period. Old Wardour Castle, in the Vale of Wardour, was built around

1393. It was clearly influenced by French designs and was built more with luxury and display in mind than defence. The Castle was remodelled in the Post Medieval period between 1570 and 1678 by Robert Smythson for Sir Matthew Arundell, including renovations to many of the private rooms. The Castle consists of a two-floored hexagonal keep, open in the centre, with projecting gatehouse flanked by two towers, which contained the great hall on the first floor. Following two sieges in the Civil War, during the second of which in March 1644 the south-west side of the keep was largely destroyed, the Castle was abandoned. A new house was built immediately to the south of the castle in 1686, which was surrounded by formal gardens using the ruin of Old Wardour as a picturesque centrepiece. Old Wardour Castle is a listed building owned by English Heritage and open to the public.

#### 4. English Civil War

##### *Background*

The English Civil War (1642–1651) was a series of armed conflicts which led to the trial and execution of Charles I, the exile of his son, Charles II, and replacement of English monarchy with first, the Commonwealth of England (1649–53), and then with a Protectorate (1653–59), under Oliver Cromwell's personal rule.

##### *Landscape scale impact*

Old Wardour Castle, and the Fortified Manor Houses at Stourhead and Woodford Castle, Horningsham all owe their ruinous state to attacks by Parliamentary and Royalist forces. Only at Old Wardour is this history still a visible component of the landscape.

#### 5. 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Military Activity in the AONB

##### *Background*

In 1756, with the outbreak of open hostilities with France during a period known as the Seven Years War, a regiment under General Wolf (then Colonel) was tasked to guard Kent against a potential French invasion threat. As the threat of invasion decreased, the regiment were marched to Wiltshire.

The increased militarisation of society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century placed greater emphasis on training grounds and rifle ranges across the country.

##### *Landscape scale impact*

Camp Down and France Down near Blandford are associated with the camps established by General Wolfe's regiment, although there is no known archaeological evidence associated with this history.

Several rifle ranges are known in the AONB. The former rifle ranges are widely distributed across the AONB, near Knook, and Mere. 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.

## 6. Impact of the First World War: Kitchener's New Army Camps, Chalk Badges and Associated Memorials

### *Background*

The Third New Army was created in September 1914 and the 25<sup>th</sup> Division was sent to new camps around Codford St Mary and Codford St Peter while the 26<sup>th</sup> Division was sent to camps at Sherrington, Stockton and Wylde. Additional camps were established on the Fovant escarpment to deal with a further shortage of billets. These eventually stretched from Barford St Martin to Swallowcliffe. Soldiers stationed in both the Wyle Valley and on the Fovant terrace were responsible for creating the chalk cut cap badges which survive today. Many of the soldiers stationed at these camps were from Australia and New Zealand and the churchyards near the camp are associated with the graves of soldiers stationed at these camps. Many of whom were killed during the influenza outbreak of 1919 without seeing military service in France.

The Fovant Cap Badges were created by soldiers stationed at the Fovant camps. The first badge on the downs was that of the London Rifle Brigade cut during 1916. By the end of World War One there were 20 badges some of these were replaced by carvings placed there after the end of World War Two. The last cap badge created was the Royal Corps of Signals cut in 1970. There is one other cap badge in the AONB in the parish of Codford which was created by Australian troops between 1916-17.

### *Landscape scale impact*



*Fovant Camp in 1918 (Courtesy of Fovant Historical Interest Group)*



*Surviving hut at Compton Chamberlayne (Courtesy of Fovant Historical Interest Group)*

Fovant Terrace between Barford St Martin to Swallowcliffe was the site of six camps. These were served by a military railway. There are signs of those camps even now, almost 90 years later. From the chalk escarpment, particularly when the sun casts long shadows, marks on the ground where the camps once stood can be discerned along with the track which the railway took. Several original huts also survive, notably at Compton Chamberlayne. There are Commonwealth War Graves in churchyards throughout the area.

There was a World War One camp and a hutted military hospital of more than 1200 beds at Sutton Veny. A railway ran from Heytesbury to serve these camps. This history is represented by Sutton Veny Churchyard which contains 168 First World War burials, 167 of them in a plot at the North West corner of the church. Many of these are Anzac graves. The names of 142 Australians and 2 sisters are recorded in the Australian Chapel in St John's Church and are interred in the churchyard. There is a yearly memorial service held on the Sunday closest to the Anzac Day.

There were 15 different camps in the landscape around Codford, also primarily used to house Anzac troops before their deployment to France. Located around and to the south of St Marys church the remains of rows of temporary huts can be seen. Also clearly visible are the earthworks associated with the Codford Camp railway. There is an ANZAC military cemetery in Codford St Mary with 97 graves which is also a yearly memorial service held on the Sunday closest to the Anzac Day.

Twelve of the Fovant Camp Badges survived into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century on Sutton Down and Fovant Down, all of which are Scheduled Monuments. Today only 8 of these are actively maintained on Fovant Down (seven cared for by the Fovant Badge Society and one by the Royal Corps of Signals). The association organises an annual commemorative Drumhead Service. The cap badge in the Wylde Valley also survives.

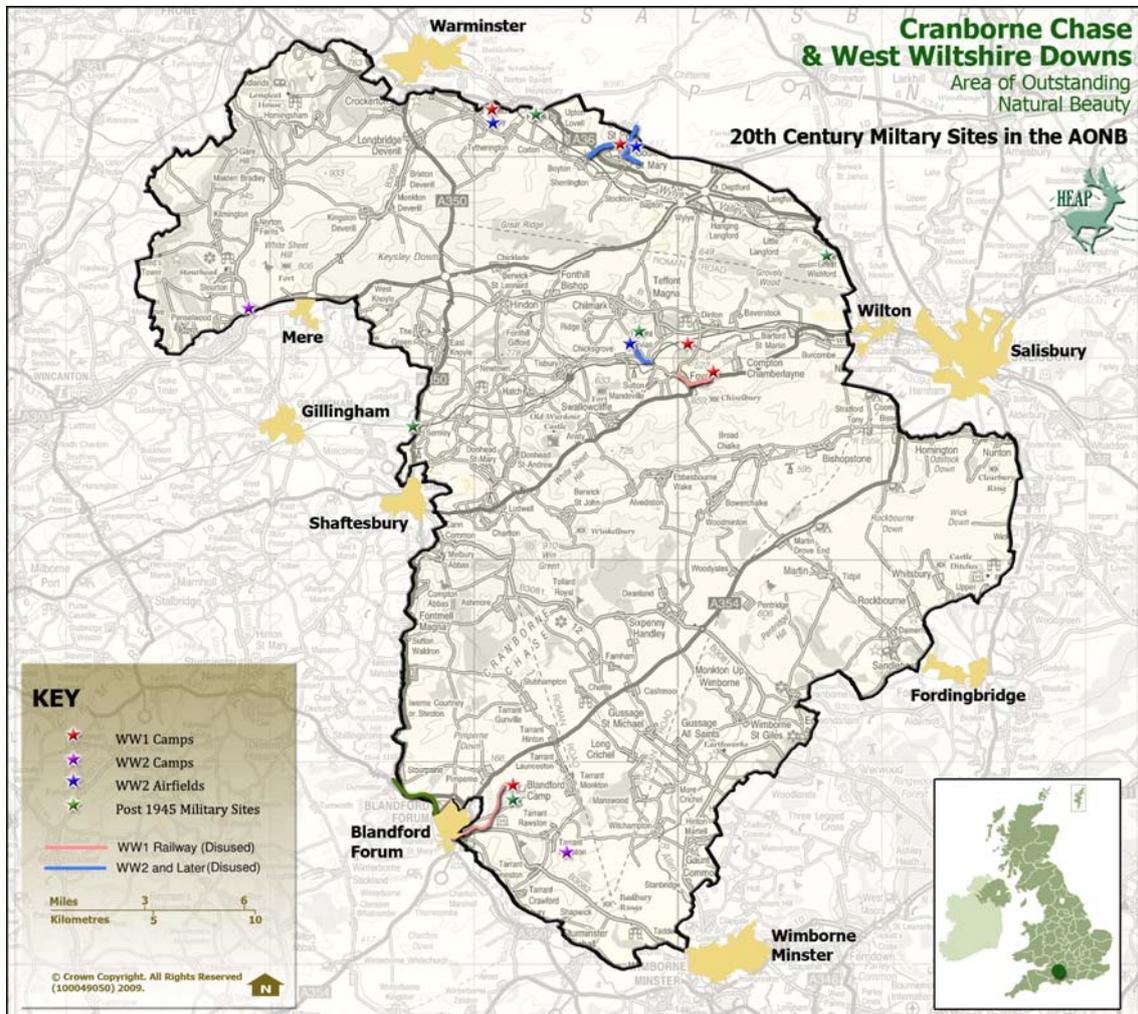
## **7. Second World War Camps, Airfields and other features**

### *Background*

Historic and archaeological features associated with the Second World War in the AONB can be grouped into four main categories:

- Offensive military camps and airfields
- Features relating to the Defence of Britain

- Memorials and war graves
- The landscape scale impact of the wider mobilisation of the countryside to help the war effort.



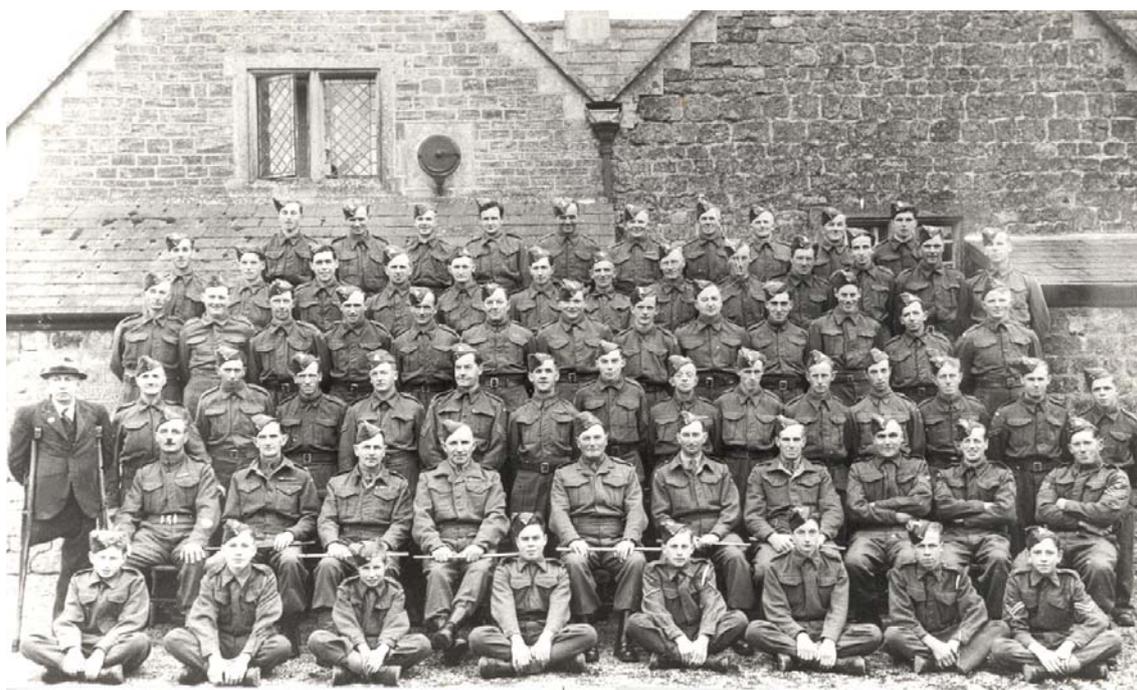
### *Landscape scale impact*

There are remains of several Second World War Camps in the AONB:

- The Second World War saw the rebuilding of camps in the Sutton Veny area, though not on the scale of the First War. There were two camps built. The first was on the Deverill Road between The Beeches and Long Ivor Farm. A substantial number of buildings and huts remain today, and it is now known as the Longbridge Deverill Trading Estate. The second camp was built in Best Lane in Sutton Veny where a few Nissen huts are still present.
- There were extensive military structures at Codford although little evidence survives today. The remains of a row of wheeled vehicle repair workshops, situated to the South of New Road, operated by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, constitutes one of the few structures remaining.

- A military camp was first established at Chilmark during the Second World War.

There are remains of a substantial World War Two rifle range on Martin Down. A World War Two rifle range at Fovant also survives, including the work of graffiti artists of the 1940's who left their marks on the walls and corrugated metal shelters of 'The Butts', much is still visible. Several Fovant Historical Interest Group members have carried out much hard work on the deciphering and listing of the names, including unit and home information, and the position of the soldier's handiwork. The majority of the graffiti is the work of American soldiers.



*Kilmington, Stourton and Maiden Bradley Home Guard (Courtesy of Kilmington Parish Albums)*

There are the remains of two Second World War airfields in the AONB:

- RAF Tarrant Rushton airfield was established in 1943 and continued to be reused for refuelling in 1980. The layout of the airfield can still be discerned although the concrete has gone and two hangers remain.
- RAF Zeals was sited to the north of the village of Zeals, next to the village of Stourton and the Stourhead estate. The station was only in operation from 1942 to 1946. In that time it was successively occupied by the Royal Air Force, the United States Air Force and the Royal Navy. The site was closed down from January 1946 and in June it was returned to farmland. The control tower, now a private house, remains on Bells Lane in Zeals, the western perimeter track serves as a farm road while parts of the southern boundary are used as hard standing for farm buildings

There are several aircraft crash sites in the AONB, one of which is marked by a memorial at Beech Knoll, near Zeals. This marks the site where a Dakota transport plane crashed in February 1945, killing more than twenty people.

Commonwealth War Graves relating to casualties of the Second World War are associated with churchyards in the AONB. One example is the grave of three 'Pioneers' in the churchyard at Damerham killed in an explosion at the ammunition dumps which were situated on the edge of the village at Knoll on the Martin Road.

There are 11 sites associated with Second World War wartime defence recorded by the Defence of Britain project ranging from pill boxes, anti-tank blocks and anti-tank trenches. Some of these relate to complexes of defences, for example features down the Wylde Valley relate to the Southern Command: River Wylde Stop Line - Stop line running NW from Salisbury to meet the GHQ Line (Green) south of Bath.

The final impact of the Second World War on the landscape of the AONB was through the need to ensure food security. In 1945 20% of land in England was in the direct control of the War Office, and the land use on private land was also dictated. This included the creation of new ploughed fields in downland areas. In some instances this impact was only temporary, as at Martin Down Nature Reserve, but in others it was permanent.

## 8. Post 1945 Military Sites

### *Background*

Two military sites exist in the AONB today, Blandford Camp and Knook Camp, and one at RAF Chilmark was decommissioned in 1996 but parts of the estate are still used by defense companies.

### *Landscape scale impact*

RAF Chilmark, which utilised a huge quarry for a massive underground munitions store for WWII and which continued in use until 1996. The old RAF Chilmark HQ site to the east of the public road, the munitions area to the west, and the Ham's Cross railhead at the branch line further south, are all still visible. Other features surviving include the former Regional Government Headquarters (RGHQ) bunker, with huge communications tower, which is situated in a special compound just to the east of the old railhead buildings at Ham's Cross. There is another remote ordnance depot for the former RAF Chilmark, alongside the main line rail sidings at nearby Dinton, within Fovant Wood. Further military buildings at Dinton have been decommissioned and transformed into an industrial estate. Similarly, on the other side of the train line alongside more sidings, the WWII RAF Baverstock military supply depot can be seen. RAF Chilmark was decommissioned in 1996, but in August 2005 the International School for Security and Explosives Education (ISSEE) moved into part of the main Chilmark site.

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 map so has been dated to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

## Historic Environment Actions



*See Background paper 9 for a full list of Historic Environment Actions and the stages identified in their implementation.*

### **ACTION 13: Enhance appreciation of the military history and archaeology**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - The military history and archaeology of the AONB landscape is an under appreciated component of the story of the AONB. This includes the camps established for Kitchener's new armies in 1914, Second World War camps and airfields, and Cold War sites, including RAF Chilmark.

**The Potential Mechanism** - The lack of appreciation of surviving military remains in the AONB could be combated by making information on the military historic and archaeology of the AONB more accessible and by identifying private collections of information which will shed light on these important aspects of the historic environment of the AONB. Individuals who have drawn together historic material could be encouraged to become involved in a study of surviving remains. An event could be organised to coincide with the centenary of WW1 in 2014.



Version 1 December 2010. Written by Emma Rouse, HEAP Officer  
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Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



## Historic Environment Action Plans

[www.historiclandscape.co.uk](http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk)

This document forms part of a suite of documents which together comprise the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Historic Environment Action Plans, or HEAPs for short. The HEAPs provide a summary of the key characteristics of the historic environment of the AONB at a landscape scale, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of this special landscape and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance these special characteristics.



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