

P372: "A Brief Account of the History of the Royal Air Force Station at Wick, Caithness, Scotland, 1939-1946"

RECORDS' IDENTITY STATEMENT

Reference number: P372

Alternative reference number:

Title: "A Brief Account of the History of the Royal Air Force station at Wick, Caithness, Scotland, 1939-1946" by John Nelson, photocopied, handwritten. At back, "A List of Commanding Officers of RAF Coastal Command Units based on or on detachment from other units which operated from Wick airfield".

Dates of creation: 1999

Level of description: Fonds

Extent: 1 bundle

Format: paper

RECORDS' CONTEXT

Name of creators: John Nelson

Administrative history: John Nelson served with the RAF in 269 Squadron at Wick 1940-1941.

The present Wick Airport administered by the Civil Aviation Authority still retains much of its wartime atmosphere when it was a strategically important R.A.F. Coastal Command base. Two of the original three hangars which once housed aeroplanes such as Hudsons, Whitleys, Fortresses and Liberators, still stand and are to undergo refurbishment so that they may house a new generation of civil aircraft which may include helicopters engaged in transferring personnel to the North Sea oil fields. However the present level of aircraft movements is only a shadow of the intense wartime activity when Wick was the home of Coastal Command General Reconnaissance squadrons, fighter squadrons, a Photographic Reconnaissance Unit, and a Meteorological Squadron.

The R.A.F. base at Wick was originally a grass airfield used by Captain E. E. Fresson's Highland Airways Ltd. (later Scottish Airways Ltd.) from 1933 until 1939 when it was taken over by the Air Ministry and reconstructed with hard runways, hangars, and other buildings. Wick, along with its satellite airfield at Skitten, became one of fourteen airfields extending from Iceland to North Yorkshire administered by No. 18 Group, R.A.F. Coastal Command with its headquarters at Pitreavie, Fife.

An army of three hundred labourers was employed in constructing the airfield which prematurely came into commission with the outbreak of War in September 1939. Until proper accommodation at the airfield could be provided, R.A.F. personnel were billeted in the town at hotels and private houses. The Air Ministry also requisitioned the newly completed North School for use as the airfield's operations centre and the Bignold Hospital for the treatment of the wounded and the sick.

The first R.A.F. Squadron to be based at Wick, and indeed to enjoy the longest association with the aerodrome, was No. 269 Sqn. of Coastal Command. In October 1939, No. 269's Avro Ansons moved from Montrose to Wick to begin General Reconnaissance patrols over both the Atlantic and the North Sea.

Custodial history:

RECORDS' CONTENT

Description: Squadrons include: No. 22, 42, 48, 58, 86, 144, 220, 254, 269, 404, 407, 415, 489, 502, 608, 612, 618

Appraisal:

Accruals:

RECORDS' CONDITION OF ACCESS AND USE

Access: Open

Closed until:

Access conditions:

Available within the Archive searchroom

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ALLIED MATERIALS

Related material:

Publication:

Notes:

Date of catalogue:

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