

# History



## History of Royal Air Force High Wycombe

Faced with the threat from Hitler's Germany in 1936, the British Government provided a new Secretary of State for Air a new Air Programme. This involved a complete change in the existing structure of the Royal Air Force into new Commands; Bomber, Coastal, Fighter and Training.

Bomber Command was formed on 14 July 1936 with temporary headquarters in Hillingdon House, at Royal Air Force Uxbridge.

Royal Air Force High Wycombe began unexpectedly from a remark, at the Air Ministry in 1936, by Wing Commander Alan Oakenshott of Hughendon village, during the discussions of a permanent site for the new Bomber Command. The site had to be in the South of England, in the country and well screened by trees. "Why not hide it among the Beechwoods of the Chiltern Hills?" asked the Wing Commander. Reconnaissance verified that the area around Walters Ash was suitable.



When the Directorate of Works finally decided to build at Walters Ash there were protracted negotiations, since the station was to be scattered in 4 sites owned by several people.

Consequently, although building began in November 1938, most of the conveyances were not signed until 1940. In preparation for the move to this new headquarters, during March 1940, the Air Ministry directed that in the interests of secrecy, the new station was to be known as Southdown with a postal address c/o GPO High Wycombe.



In 1948, two new blocks were built on 3 site, one being named "Southdown" to commemorate the wartime station.

On 23 November 1966 the MOD sanctioned a Station Crest for Royal Air Force High Wycombe. The badge consists of a Thunderbolt supported by two pillars. The pillars indicating the support the unit gives to Bomber Command, the main feature of the badge is a thunderbolt.

The Station motto "Non Sibi" may be freely translated as "Not for Ourselves". Formal approval was given for the unit to be known as Royal Air Force Station High Wycombe with effect from 1 January 1969.

In 1963, the Air staff recommended that a major front line command should be formed containing the bulk of its "Teeth" units. At the end of 1967 the Air Force Board decided to merge Bomber and Fighter Commands with Signals Command; Coastal Command merged with them a year later. Strike Command came into being on 30 April 1968.

Her Majesty the Queen approved an official crest for the new command which consisted of an astral crown depicting the Command's dominion in the air, and a sword erect depicting both offence and defence. The flashes of lightening issuing saltirewise depict the role of the new Signals Group and Maritime Group is represented by an azure annulet wavey surround. The motto "Defend and Strike" was chosen.

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