

Bourn Airfield: A Wartime Story

Bourn Airfield was constructed in 1940 as a satellite for RAF Oakington. From July 1941, No. 101 Squadron trained here with Vickers Wellingtons, and soon 7 Squadron joined when Oakington became unavailable. Bourn became a hub of wartime activity.

Raiders and Resilience

The Airfield faced its first attack on 9 April 1941 when a German Junkers Ju 88C strafed buildings and bombed the runway. Remarkably, there were no injuries. Two further raids in May 1944 damaged parked de Havilland Mosquito aircraft.



Sacrifice and Service

As the bombing campaign intensified, losses mounted. By the last sortie on 4 April 1945, 164 aircraft had been lost, either from the squadrons based at Bourn or from others trying to land on the field. Of the 886 listed names, 648 were killed. Many were barely out of their teens.



Innovation in the Skies

In March 1944, 97 Squadron's Lancasters gave way to Mosquito IXs of 105 Squadron, equipped with Oboe navigation for pinpoint target marking. Later, 162 Squadron joined with Canadian-built Mosquitos, flying almost nightly to Berlin.

Behind the Scenes

From 1941 to 1945, damaged Short Stirlings were repaired and test-flown at Bourn. Nearby Madingley's Sebro factory supported this work, later handling USAAF Liberators. Together, these units employed up to 4,500 people.



Post-War Legacy

After the war, Bourn passed to RAF Maintenance Command in 1947, closed in 1948, and by 1961 much of the land returned to agriculture. Today, its runways whisper stories of courage, loss, and ingenuity.