

# Crash Sites in the United Kingdom during World War Two

Over the years since first published in the Spring 1997 issue of *Aeromilitaria*, *World War Two Crash Sites*, was a regular feature. Jim Halley and numerous researchers provided us with a volume of detailed information that is second to none, unique in fact. It is presented here in a searchable form to allow further research and hopefully that research will bring interesting results that can be published in future issues of *Aviation World*.

If you are researching a particular type, unit, county or event, please let us know of your results or queries.

A large number of aircraft crashed within the United Kingdom during the course of World War Two but in many cases the exact locations of these crashes have not yet come to light. The Crash Sites tables are a beginning, so if you have any further information or additions, we welcome your contribution.

Locations contained in the Air-Britain RAF Registers come from a variety of sources, some more detailed than others. The Air Ministry accident cards are the primary source for flying accidents but, especially in the first few years of the war, do not cover aircraft which crashed during operations. These tended to be recorded only in unit Operations Record Books (ORB) in various amounts of detail, ranging from adequate to zero.

The difference between these two types of crashes was that a flying accident had to be reported on a Form 765c, a four-page document that was required for accident investigation. Operational losses came under 'wastage' and joined the same forms as bombs dropped, ammunition fired off, etc. without detail. Although the aircraft may have been lost in a flying accident while on operations, it was much simpler to count it as wastage!

As far more aircraft had repairable crashes than total wrecks, it would be impracticable to attempt to record every crash that took place. There were about 100,000 of them! In the table below, which covers the wartime months of 1939, we have listed those which were written-off in crashes on land. It does not relate to aircraft written off in ground accidents or air raids.

We have produced this initial list in the hope that readers may be able to add more detail to those that are vague. Local archives often record more detail than the accident cards or ORBs, some of whose locations have been found to be wrong while others are so badly-written that they are capable of being misread. The ORBs often record only the fact that an aircraft had crashed without saying where. Many units did not even mention crashes. Similarly, Bomber Command aircraft returning from raids which crashed were frequently wrongly reported by the unit as they happened some way away from the station. Some shown as crashing on return have been found to have crashed many miles from the reported location.

Not included are aircraft destroyed on the ground or crashed in the sea unless very close to land. Crashes at airfields are recorded where the aircraft was flying at the time, not if it was hit by another while parked.

In the seven decades since the end of the war, many books and magazines have mentioned crashes. We would have liked to have read every one of them for clues, but time and expense makes this quite impossible without the input of our members who may have copies which throw light on some accidents.

To fit the page, we have abbreviated the actual circumstances as full details are already in the RAF Registers. Those used are:

Ab: abandoned; BB; hit balloon barrage; BL: bellylanded; BUA: broke up in air; CFL: crashed in forced landing; CIC: crashed in circuit; CIF: crashed in fog; CL: crashed on landing; CO: crashed on overshoot; COA: crashed on approach; Coli; collided; Cr: crashed; CTO: crashed on take-off; DBR: damaged beyond repair; DIG: dived into ground; FRG: flew into high ground; FIG: flew into ground; NK: not known; OOF: out of fuel; OSL: overshoot landing; SDAA: shot down by AA; SDE: shot down in error; SDF: shot down by fighter; SIG: spun into ground; UCCL: undercarriage collapsed on landing; UCCTO: undercarriage collapsed on take-off; USL: undershot landing. The addition of 'N' means that it took place at night.