

Press Release

For immediate release:

New RAF Operations Book Records released on TheGenealogist

This is the first time that these **RAF records** are fully searchable by name, aircraft, location and many other fields, making it easier to find your aviation ancestors.

In a release of **over half a million records**, this is the first batch of **RAF Operations Records Books (ORBs)** to join TheGenealogist's ever-expanding military records collection.



Pilots of 111 Squadron taking part in the 1935 Air Exercises, they are using the tail plane of a Bristol Bulldog fighter to plot their route on a map. This picture was taken during the so-called air panic of 1935, during which German rearmament was revealed and large-scale RAF expansion undertaken in response. [MoD/Crown copyright 1935]

The operations records books are for squadrons primarily after the First World War but there are a few early squadron records from 1911 to 1918.

These documents tell the stories of these brave aircrew who battled against the odds and give insights into their everyday lives. You can use the collection to follow an airman's war time experiences from these fully searchable Air Ministry operations record books which cover various Royal Air Force, dominion and Allied Air Force squadrons that came under British Command. The **AIR 27 records** allow the family history researcher a fascinating insight into their relatives serving in a number of wartime air force units.

In the last week we have been sad to hear of the death of the last surviving Battle of Britain ace pilot from World War Two. Wing Cdr Paul Farnes died aged 101 a few days ago and so it is, therefore, poignant that as one of the last from among the 3,000 airmen – known as The Few – who had defended Britain's skies in 1940 he appears in this release of RAF records from [TheGenealogist](https://www.thegenealogist.com).



Wing Commander Farnes had six confirmed enemy aircraft destroyed, two shared destroyed, two possible destroyed and 11 damaged in his impressive war time tally making him qualify as an ace (a pilot who shot down five or more enemy planes).

Right: Wing Commander Paul Farnes

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The records provide summaries of events and can reveal the death of aviators, crashes, as well as less traumatic details such as weather and places patrolled by the planes and where the squadrons were based as the war wore on. As aircrew personnel are named in these reports, those wanting to follow where an ancestor had been posted to and what may have happened to them will find these records extremely informative.

Reference: AIR 27/1949						PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE					
COPYRIGHT - NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION						1	2	3	4	5	6
Place	Date	Time	Summary of Events						Page No.		
											References to Appendices
Tangmere -- Betheniville.	10.		WEATHER. Fine. Sixteen aircraft led by the Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader M.V.W. Cluhs, left Tangmere at 14.30. hours for Betheniville. Operations began immediately on arrival in the evening, P/O, A.D. Pickup shooting down a Do 17 about 15 miles North of Vouziers. After a burst of 140 rounds the pilot of the Do. was seen to leave his machine by parachute.								
Tangmere -- Betheniville.	11.		WEATHER. Fine. Ground personnel and remaining pilots of the Squadron moved from Tangmere to Betheniville by Civil and Service Air Transport. The move was completed by 17.15. hours, but the last aircraft crashed on landing, the following casualties resulting:- Flying Officer A.C.J. Percy. (Killed). Sergeant Whitfield. (Killed). Sergeant Barrwell. (Killed). Pilot Officer B. Duckinfield. Admitted to Hospital. Pilot Officer B.J.R. Brady. Admitted to Hospital. P/Sgt. Avent. Admitted to Hospital. Sergeant Adams. Admitted to Hospital. Sergeant Davis. Admitted to Hospital. Sergeant Crabtree. Admitted to Hospital. (In addition to these the crew of the aircraft were all admitted to Hospital). Six pilots were able to claim enemy machines brought down. These were as follows:- Sgt. R.C. Defforn. 1 Do. 17. 15/20 miles S. to S.W. of Reims. P/O C.L. Hulse. 1 Me. 110. Between Aisne and Meuse, Nr. Cornay. Sgt. P.R. Morfill. 1 Me. 110. Between Aisne and Meuse, Nr. Tourteron. P/O C.E. Melfroy. 1 He. 111. Near Betheniville. P/Sgt. A.D. Payne. 1 He. 111. Near Mourmelon. P/Lt. E.S. Williams. 1 Do. 17. Pdivob.								
Betheniville.	12.		WEATHER. Fine, visibility 30 miles. A large force of enemy bombers was sighted overhead shortly after dawn, and intense activity continued most of the day. The Squadron was able to claim twelve successes as follows:- Sgt. P.C. Farnes. P/O E.J.H. Sylvester. 1 Do. 17. 30 miles N.E. of Betheniville. ✓ Sgt. P.C. Farnes. 1 He. 111. Near St. Hubert. ✓ P/O E. Holden. 1 He. 88. Luxembourg frontier, and 1 Do 17. ✓ P/O V.N.T. Lee. 1 Do. 17. Belgian Border. ✓ Sgt. D.S. McKay. 1 He. 111. St. Hubert. ✓ Sgt. P.R. Morfill. 1 He. 111. St. Hubert. ✓ (cont'd).								

Sgt P.C. Farnes first "kill" recorded in the Operations Record Book for 501 Squadron on TheGenealogist

Of value to researchers are the duties recorded in these documents so that you can find the assignments the men took part in. This includes Bombing, Convoy Escort, Submarine Hunt, Attack Docks & Shipping, Dive Bombing Raids and more.

Use these records to:

- Add colour to an aircrewman's story
- Read the war movements of personnel in air force units
- Discover if a pilot, navigator, radio operator or gunner is mentioned in the action
- Find if an airman is listed for receiving an Honour or an Award
- Note the names of squadron members wounded, killed, or did not return
- Easily search these National Archives records and images

This expands TheGenealogist's extensive Military records collection.

Read their article:

<https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/featuredarticles/2020/raf-operations-books-build-a-picture-of-wwii-aircrew-ancestors-action-1231/>

These records and many more are available to Diamond subscribers of TheGenealogist.co.uk

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About TheGenealogist

TheGenealogist is an award-winning online family history website, who put a wealth of information at the fingertips of family historians. Their approach is to bring hard to use physical records to life online with easy to use interfaces such as their Tithe and newly released Lloyd George Domesday collections.

[TheGenealogist's](http://TheGenealogist) innovative SmartSearch technology links records together to help you find your ancestors more easily. TheGenealogist is one of the leading providers of online family history records. Along with the standard Birth, Marriage, Death and Census records, they also have significant collections of Parish and Nonconformist records, PCC Will Records, Irish Records, Military records, Occupations, Newspaper record collections amongst many others.

TheGenealogist uses the latest technology to help you bring your family history to life. Use TheGenealogist to find your ancestors today!

About The National Archives

[The National Archives](http://TheNationalArchives) is one of the world's most valuable resources for research and an independent research organisation in its own right. As the official archive and publisher for the UK government, and England and Wales they are the guardians of some of the UK's most iconic national documents, dating back over 1,000 years. Their role is to collect and secure the future of the government record, both digital and physical, to preserve it for generations to come, and to make it as accessible and available as possible. [The National Archives](http://TheNationalArchives) brings together the skills and specialisms needed to conserve some of the oldest historic documents as well as leading digital archive practices to manage and preserve government information past, present and future.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/>

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