

FROM MOTHS TO MERLINS



The story of West Malling Airfield

by
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INTRODUCTION

As a flying club airfield during the 1930s, West Malling was well known and very popular. 1939 saw the airfield taken over by the military and it became a forward landing ground to Biggin Hill the sector station. Though out of use during the period known as the Battle of Britain due to enemy bombing, from 1941 onwards Malling, as it was popularly called, became the premier nightfighter station in No.11 Group Fighter Command. During the Dieppe disaster the airfield was used by many dayfighter squadrons and in 1944 became the main anti-diver airfield in the aerial destruction of the V1 Flying Bomb. In peace it continued the night defence of our Islands until it closed operationally in 1960 and the RAF left for good. Since then the airfield has seen a wide variety of activities and today is an active centre for private and commercial flying.

This is the story of that one particular airfield strategically placed in the centre of the County of Kent. To all the men and women who died or were injured whilst serving at the station, I dedicate the following chapters of history.

Robin J. Brooks