

**War art: murals and
graffiti – military life,
power and subversion**



War art: murals and graffiti – military life, power and subversion

By

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Front Cover

RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, detail of an F-111 aircraft from a mural by Kenneth B Gore (1978–79)
(© English Heritage AA051444)

Back cover – top to bottom

1 East Side Gallery, Mühlenstrasse, Berlin, in the foreground 'Tolerance' by Mary Mackey of Denver, Colorado, photographed in September 2000 shortly after the image was repainted by the artist

(© W D Cocroft)

2 RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, raven cartoon in a building used to service F-111 aircraft flight equipment (© Roger J C Thomas)

3 Nedlitz barracks, Potsdam, Germany, 'Victory' parade ground mural (© Angus Boulton)

4 RAF Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire, mural painted by Aircraftsman Robert Hofton in preparation for a Christmas 1940 party. At the time he was serving with 19 Squadron which during 1940 had distinguished itself during the withdrawal of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk and during the Battle of Britain (© English Heritage AA051483)

5 Nevada Peace Camp, Nevada, USA, one of four masks placed within stone circle (© W D Cocroft)

6 Rangsdorf, Brandenburg, Germany, former Soviet helicopter maintenance works, recreation room, 'Warrior Airmen! Serve in your Red Army Airforce units with pride' (© Angus Boulton)

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The authors are indebted to many individuals who have contributed to the words and images included in this book. As the main focus of the work is visual it makes sense to begin there. Numerous photographers are represented, and have kindly given their consent for images to be included in this collection. Individual credits are included in the captions. In alphabetical order the photographers are: Keith Angus; Angus Boulton; Ian Evans; Aldon Ferguson; Veronica Fiorato; Alistair Graham-Kerr; Anthony Harding; Jonathan McCormick; Basil Nash; Nicholas Saunders; Leo Schmidt and Raymond Towler. We are also grateful to South Gloucestershire Council, the Desert Research Institute (Las Vegas), the Imperial War Museum, and the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland for their permission to use selected images. Other images are reproduced courtesy of the National Monuments Record, English Heritage, many of which were taken by Steve Cole and we are grateful for his cheerful enthusiasm for the project and assistance in selecting the images for publication. We are also grateful to Derek Kendall who photographed locations in London and the south of England, to Alun Bull, and Mike Hesketh-Roberts. Some photographs by the authors are also included.

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Our greatest debt however is the most difficult to acknowledge. Except in a very few cases the artists represented here are unknown, and probably have no idea their work is being published and given value by those of us that study this recent past. We acknowledge their contribution to our understanding of the past use of these military sites and landscapes, and dedicate this volume to their memory.



Sayers Croft, Ewhurst, Cranleigh: an evacuee leaving his parents

PART I

'The Art of War'



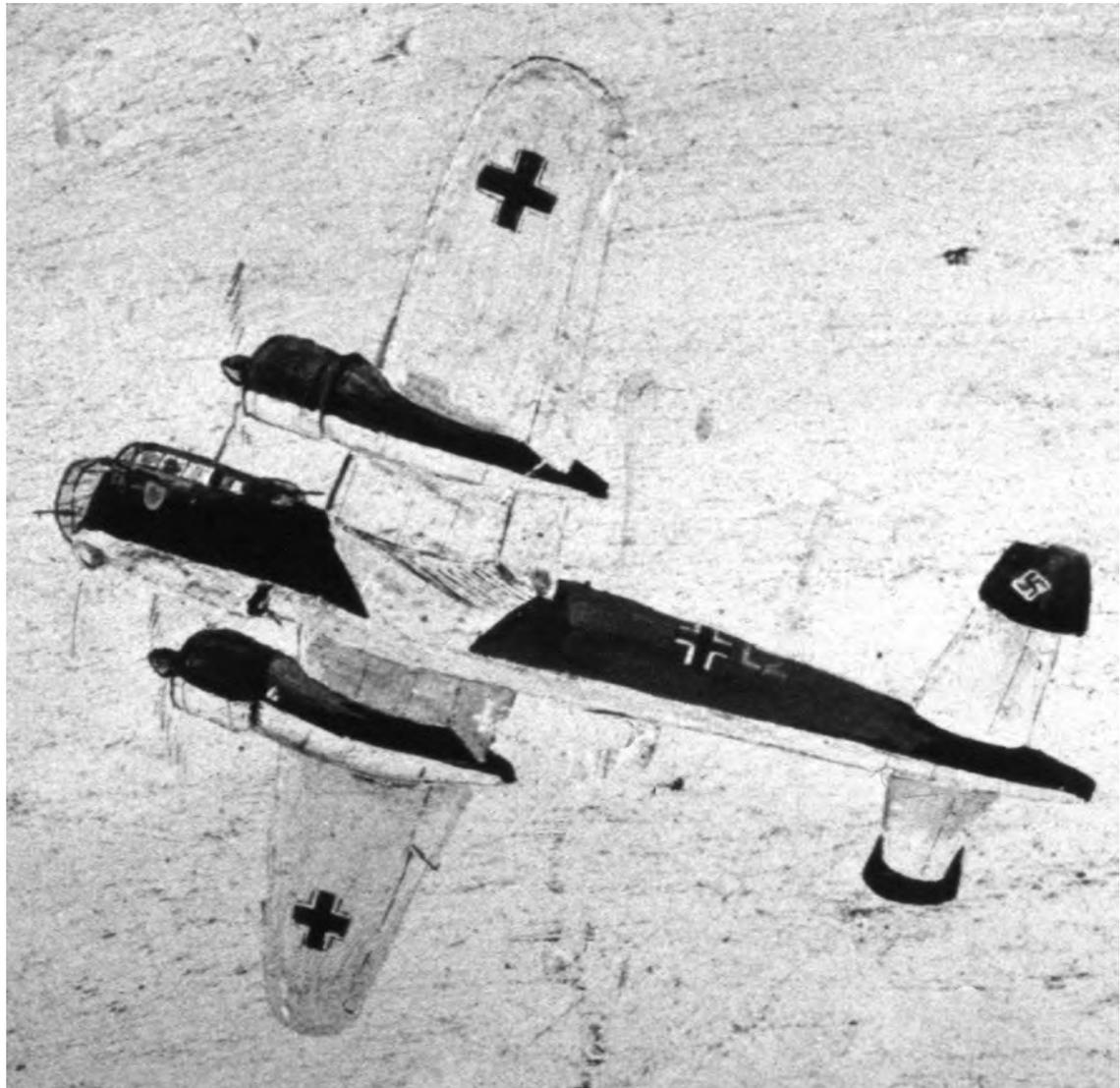
© 2006 Crown copyright; Mural in Basra, Iraq



INTRODUCTION

One characteristic of later nineteenth- and twentieth-century warfare is the significant impact these historic episodes and events have left on the landscape. In Britain, the First World War saw considerable construction on the home front, whilst during the Second World War there was not an area in the British Isles that wasn't touched in one way or another by the conflict. Even today many traces of Second World War activity survive, albeit more subtle than some might imagine; whether it is a fading sign pointing to long removed air raid shelters, or the glimpse of a solitary hut covered in undergrowth. With the passing

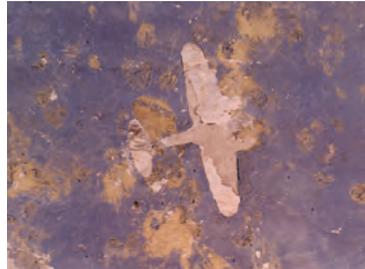
**Halsham, East
Riding, H6 Heavy
Anti Aircraft
battery, motor
transport
workshops,
Dornier 217
(© R J C Thomas)**



WAR ART

of each year, the stock of these older buildings and sites becomes progressively smaller, whether due to coastal erosion, dereliction, redevelopment, or changes in agricultural policy. These same factors also apply to military sites that were in operation as recently as the 1980s before becoming redundant with the ending of the Cold War.

At first glance, many of these often abandoned and semi-derelict buildings and sites offer little to suggest their original purpose, and the history of their occupation and use. But on closer inspection the surviving surfaces can reveal visual traces of the past, providing insight to the lives of their former occupants. The walls may be adorned with decoration, often a combination of sanctioned military imagery such as unit badges, sortie records, or official notices and instructions, as well as less official paintings and drawings, of women and aircraft, and personal messages. The name, rank, number, and the unit of an individual serviceman can often be found pencilled on the walls. Graffiti gives a more casual and personal expression, often including social comment and humour. It is these visual representations of conflict that this book describes, with examples drawn mainly from England, albeit within a wider geographical and political context.



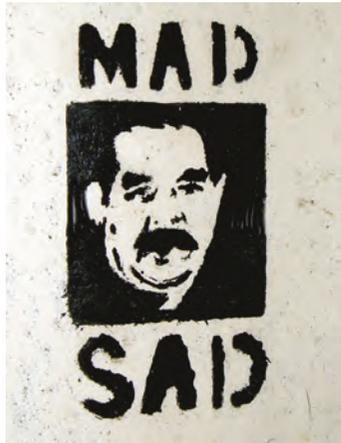
Top: Left – Fort Borstal, Kent, nineteenth-century mobilisation centre reused as an anti-aircraft battery during the Second World War. Guardroom with painted ceiling (AA023970 © English Heritage); Middle – Fort Borstal: Detail of an aircraft (AA023973 © English Heritage); Right – Soldier's Rock Battery, St Ishmael's, Pembrokeshire, coastal artillery battery camouflaged gun house (© R J C Thomas); Bottom: RAF Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1552 fuel pump house, 81st Tactical Fighter Wing fuels branch; Right – POW MIA You are not forgotten (AA054186 © English Heritage); Left – 'We pump pride by the gallon' (AA054187 © English Heritage)



Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, Dormitory 445; First floor corridor, Woman with binoculars, signed R A T (AA054130 © English Heritage)

DEFINING WAR ART

War art is defined here as any deliberate expression that has been applied onto, or is integral to understanding, any built structure, site or area in the context of its military occupation or use. Alongside wall paintings, murals and graffiti, this definition deliberately includes artistic expression applied to any artificial surfaces such as roads, fence posts and free-standing signage, and also on natural surfaces. While the term 'war art' is traditionally confined to wall paintings, notices, or instructions applied officially or unofficially by servicemen, it has more recently been given a broader definition that can include: building decoration, camouflage, scribbles, scratches, drawings, paintings, stencilling, photographs, carvings, bas-relief, castings, rubbed brick-work, and graffiti. These can be on military buildings or beyond them, placed outside their security fences by those opposed to the military activity within. In other words, war art is very broadly defined, taking in all images and representations of power and subversion that relate directly to the militarised landscape.



Top: Royal Naval Armament Depot Trecwn, Pembrokeshire; Mad Sad stencil, Gulf War 1991 (© R J C Thomas)
Bottom: RAF Greenham Common, Berkshire; Painted post (© Veronica Fiorato)
Right: Operation Motorman, Derry (© Jonathan McCormick)



**Middleton St George, County Durham. Marilyn Monroe poster in the base jazz club
(© R J C Thomas)**

WAR ART



Left: RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, Dormitory 446; North side first floor corridor, early 1990s cartoon of a F-111 (AA051470); Right: RAF Woodbridge, Suffolk, Special Weapons Maintenance building 264; Camouflage wall – look carefully! (AA054179) (© English Heritage)

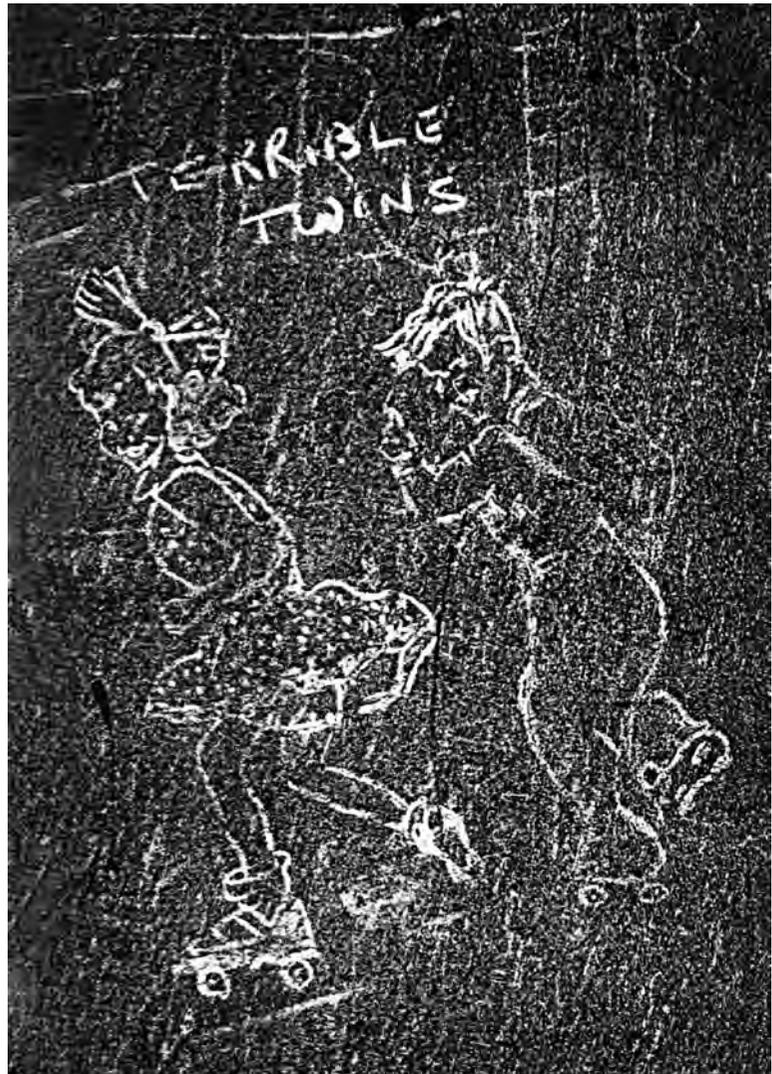


Bamburgh, Northumberland, Second World War anti-tank cube with dice (© R J C Thomas)

MATERIALS AND EXECUTION

Most of the war art illustrated in this book was produced for the instant with little thought that it might survive beyond the moment or perhaps a few months, and certainly with no idea that it would one day be an object of study. Before the end of the Second World War the only practical writing implement for soldiers in the field was the pencil, or coloured pencils for map work. Given wartime shortages the materials chosen to produce war art are diverse and often demonstrate remarkable ingenuity. As well as traditional materials including pencils, coloured pencils, inks, wax crayons, oil pastels, oil paints, and water colours, there was use of candle or cigarette lighter carbon, cellulose vehicle and aircraft paints, cellulose spray paints, boot polish and vegetable dyes.

**Royal Naval Armament
Depot, Broughton Moor,
Cumbria**
**'The terrible twins', chalk on
black board, early 1950s**
(© R J C Thomas)

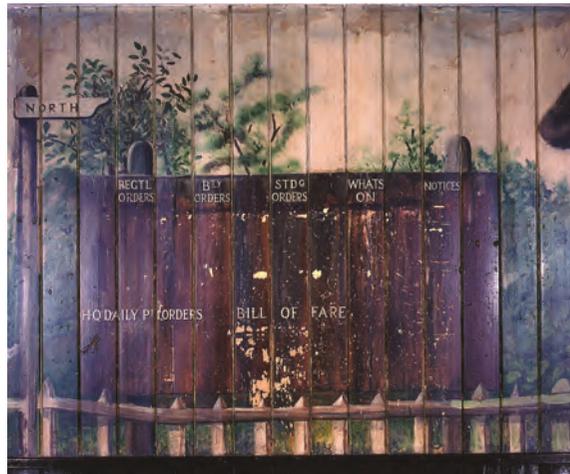




Royal Naval Mine Depot
Newton Noyes,
Pembrokeshire
Entrance shifting area
(© R J C Thomas)



RAF Finningley, Doncaster
Top: Left – Hangar interior,
writing on the door warns
'FOD pick it up'
Bottom: Left – Hangar
interior II Squadron badge
Right: Yorkshire University Air
Squadron (© R J C Thomas)



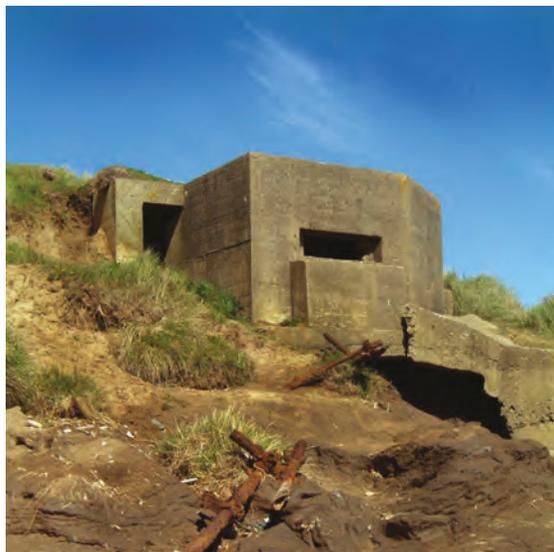
Ness Battery, Stromness, Orkney, canteen (© Crown copyright RCAHMS)

Top: Cottage scene on wall with serving hatches (SC446615)

Bottom: Left – Notice board (SC 446613)

Bottom: Right – Caravans (SC446614)

Given the high losses amongst allied aircrews, the often fragile murals from the wartime airfields have a particular poignancy as they adorned some of the last buildings many would have seen before setting off on their missions. The surfaces upon which they are applied are equally diverse: stone, fair-faced brick, mortared brick, cement render, pre-cast concrete panels, asbestos cement panels, hollow terracotta blocks, fibre-board, hardboard, plaster-board, and lath and plaster. War art is also applied to surfaces in the open: roads as well as fence posts and even natural surfaces where stone arrangements can resemble work by established landscape artists such as Richard Long. This combination of materials, techniques and locations reflects the wide range of decorative styles, a diversity that greatly affects their present condition and the chances of long-term preservation.



Auburn, near Bridlington, East Riding:
Left: Pillbox
Below: Inscription in cement 'Earwig villa'
(© R J C Thomas)



Emblem of the 79th
Armoured Division
(© R J C Thomas)



THE ARTISTS

Military service, like any career, has its peaks and troughs. Many prisoners of war were at an obvious low-point, but in relation to all military personnel, it is crucial to recognise that military life can be – and has often been – spent waiting for something to happen; passing time. It can be lonely, tedious and repetitive, and much war art reflects this fact. But the compulsion to artistic expression is not just induced by boredom and alienation; there are many other reasons to produce artwork, whether for private consumption or for the benefit of others.

One common theme for example is the need to establish communal identity, an *esprit de corps*, that exhibits pride and devotion to the group, whether as small as a platoon or as large as a squadron or regiment. Symbols and badges often take pride of place on vehicles, aircraft, office accommodation and mess walls. National identity can also be a motivation, as well as being an influence on the style and form of expression.



Donibristle Airfield, Fife,
HMS Merlin, a repair depot
for naval aircraft
(SC924209 © Crown
copyright RCAHMS)

PRISONERS OF WAR

In prisoner of war camps, there are particularly discernible trends that indicate an influence of popular styles and genera of art current at the time in the artist's country of origin. For example, war art painted in the Second World War by Italian prisoners included devotional subjects, gentle flattering portraits of women, and Disney characters. German prisoners of war however painted landscapes, and where women are represented they are strident and heroic, similar in fact to their depiction in Nazi propaganda posters. Here war art is produced by prisoners to create reminders of their homes and loved ones, the act of remembering being integral both to the production of artwork, and its continued presence thereafter. In other camps, art works depicting openly defiant Nazi inspired imagery is found, reflecting the strength of political views amongst the different grades of German prisoners. But the style of expression varies, being culturally constituted, albeit with personal touches.

In addition to the war art produced by prisoners of war, two main constituencies or groups of artists are worth briefly reviewing, as these feature strongly in the images represented in this book. They are Home Forces, and Foreign Forces stationed on home soil. As discussed below, there were significant differences in the style of artwork.

Harperley, Crook, County Durham.

The prisoner of war camp was established in 1942, initially as a camp for Italians, but from late 1944 it held German prisoners who remained until 1947, when it became a foreign labour camp.

Top: Air photograph (NMR 17259/16)

(© English Heritage)

Bottom: Prisoners' Chapel,
Harperley Camp

(© English Heritage via James MacLeod)



WAR ART



Harperley, Crook, County Durham.
Pencil work revealed beneath a peeling paint wash was probably produced by Italian prisoners who built the camp.

Top: Ludo board,
probably drawn on the board before it was fixed in place

Bottom: Pipe smoker
(© R J C Thomas)



Harperley, Crook,
County Durham.

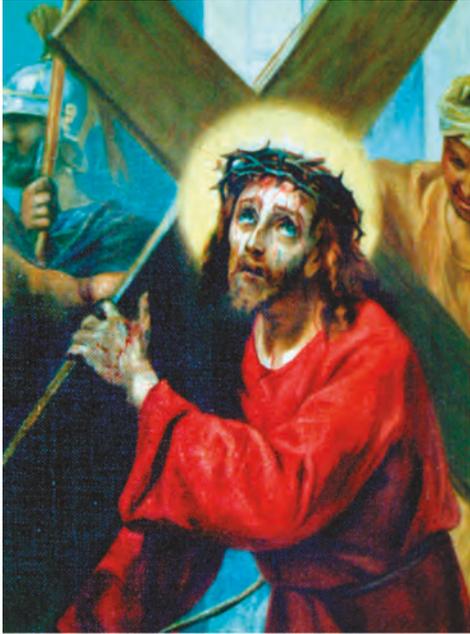
German artwork:

Top: Hut interior with artwork on
the panels between the windows
(AA035120)

Bottom: Left – Piper in a rural idyll
(AA035109)

Bottom: Right – Alpine scene
(AA035104) (© English Heritage)





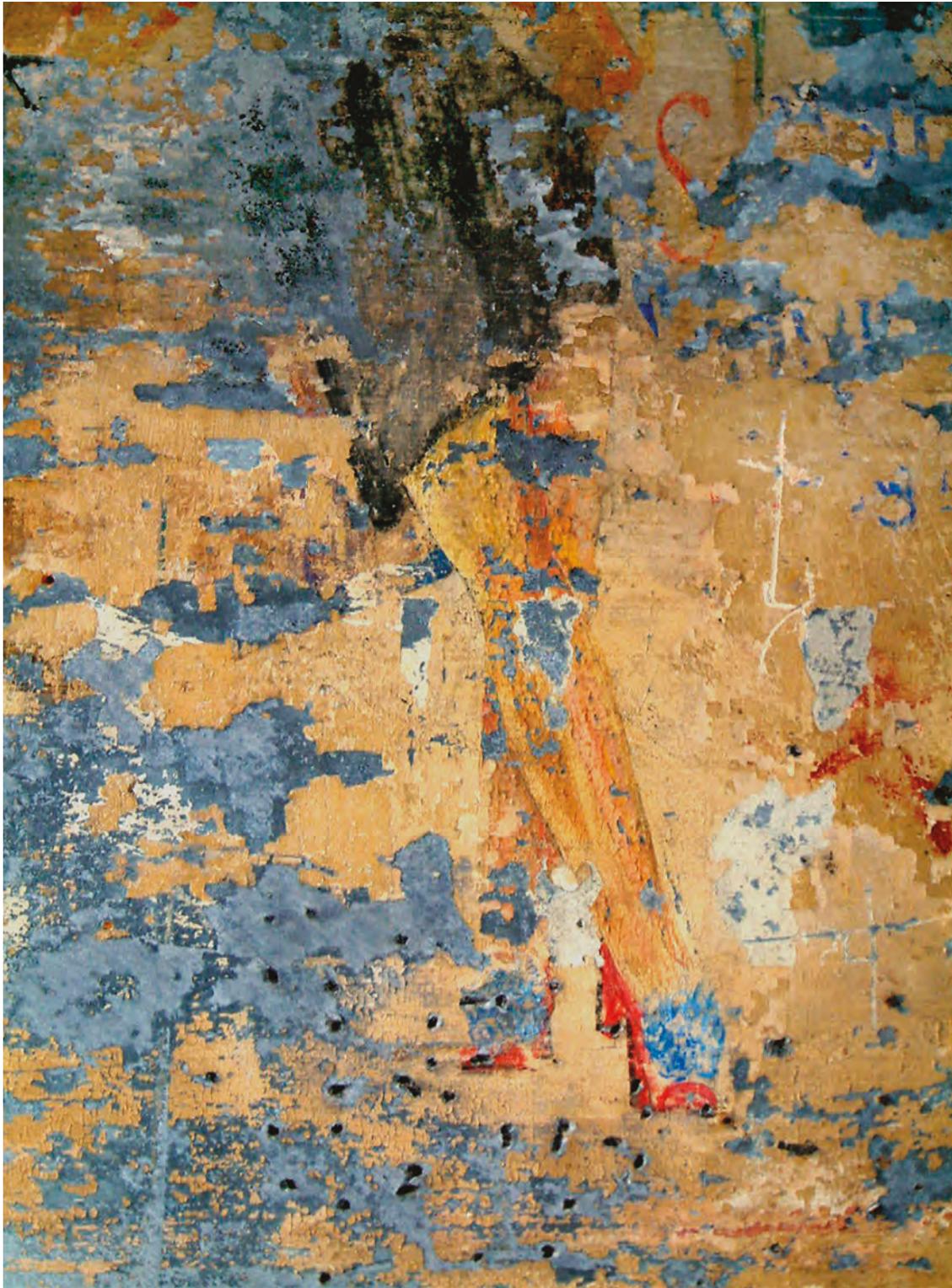
Stations of the Cross series, St Thomas of Canterbury Roman Catholic Church, Wolsingham, County Durham. Italian prisoner of war paintings (Framing completed by German prisoners of war at a later date).

Top: II Jesus is made to bear his cross: Left – detail (© R J C Thomas), Right – full framed version (AA040756 © English Heritage)

Bottom: Left – IV Jesus meets his afflicted mother (AA040758 © English Heritage); Right – V Simon helps Jesus (AA040759 © English Heritage)



Pingley Farm, Brigg, Lincolnshire, Camp 81, prisoner of war camp, artwork probably produced by Italian prisoners
Left: Top – Woman on bed; Right: Woman in swimming costume
Left: Bottom – Hut 43 (© R J C Thomas)



Hatfield Heath,
Mill Lane
Camp, Essex,
prisoner of war
camp, fragment
of German
wall art
(© R J C
Thomas)

HOME FORCES

British war art is predominantly semi-official and sometimes humorous. Although the artwork was officially frowned upon, the need to maintain and encourage morale within the armed forces often resulted in the time honoured practice of ‘turning a blind eye’, provided the artwork was not deemed too outrageous. Female figures do appear occasionally on sites occupied by Home Forces, chiefly in the form of the cartoon character ‘Jane’, but these are tastefully done: most pin-ups remained firmly on the inside of locker doors.

The largest proportion of British war art is found in communal areas like messes, NAAFI/canteen buildings or in huts used as theatres, and on operational sites where aesthetic and functional motivations are evident. Regimental crests and graduated panoramic views of the area of water commanded by the

**HMS Goldcrest, Royal
Naval Air Station Dale,
Pembrokeshire**

**Top: Left – Contemporary
photograph of an officer’s
bed surrounded by aircraft
cartoons painted by
Anthony R Dashfield
1946–47**



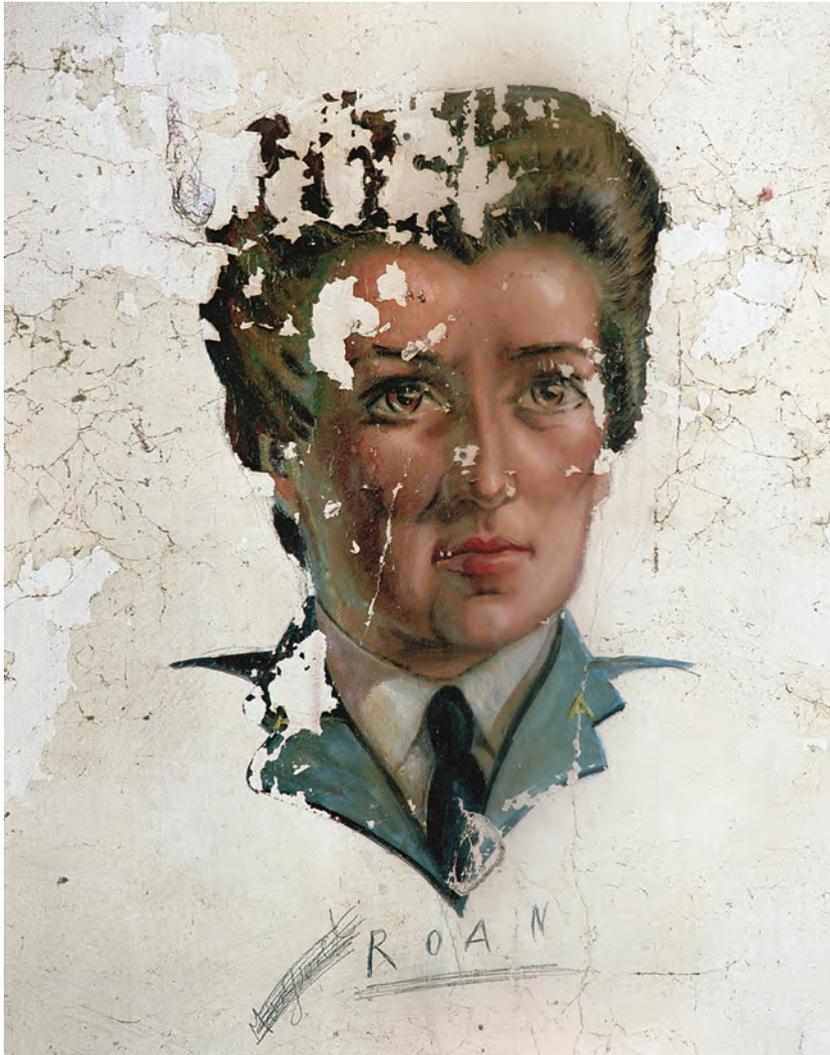
**Bottom: Left – Angel
in flying goggles
(© R J C Thomas)**

**Top: Right – Fairey Firefly
cartoon
(© R J C Thomas)**



**Bottom: Right – Fairey
Fireflys over Skomer
(© Basil Nash)**





Castletown, Stangergill Bridge, Highland
Portrait of a member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force on the wall
of a church used as the officer's mess for Castletown airfield
(SC 923035 © Crown copyright RCAHMS)

RAF Woodvale, Lancashire.

Top: Right – During the Second World War information for visiting
pilots was often displayed on the control tower (watch office) and in
this aerial photograph taken in 1945, the airfield layout plan can
clearly be seen painted on the rear wall of the watch office
(© Aldon Ferguson)

Bottom and middle: Right – The painted airfield plan is revealed in
1975 and – restored in 1987 (© Aldon Ferguson)



**East Ware, Portland, Dorset,
nineteenth-century detention
barracks**
**Graffiti of various NATO ships'
names and pennant numbers**
(© R J C Thomas)



**1980s German Bundesmarine
ships' crests, Bremen and
Fregatte 210 Emden**
(© Alistair Graham-Kerr)



WAR ART

guns are reasonably common images found at former coast artillery sites; the crest to engender pride and the panoramic view to enable the rapid allocation of target bearings. Similar range and bearing markings can be found painted above the gun loops of anti-invasion pillboxes. At anti-aircraft batteries the pictures are most often of aircraft profiles, for training and recognition purposes, but occasionally they are more expressive representations of aircraft in flight.

British examples of war art are much rarer than those created by American servicemen. Less may have been created, but this is more likely due to the majority having been placed at sites that were built for the 'duration', rather than in the established barracks, airfields and depots, where discipline was often much more rigorously enforced – 'If it moves salute it, if it doesn't white-wash it', to cite a catch-phrase of the time.

FOREIGN FORCES

American war art was often colourful and brash featuring national symbols, unit badges, cartoons, aircraft and above all women. During the Second World War, from 1942 to 1945, The United States Army Air Force (USAAF) operated from numerous bomber and fighter airfields across East Anglia, the midlands and the southern counties. Images of scantily clad or nude women or cartoon characters often adorned the noses of aircraft as lucky tokens; the same 'nose art' also appeared both on the flying jackets of the crews and in their communal areas. At RAF Raydon (Suffolk) a large 'Aces Honour Roll' was painted onto one of the gable walls of the Briefing Room flanked by naked 'honour guards'.



RAF Poddington, Rutland
B-17G Flying Fortress, removed to the Imperial War Museum, Duxford and repainted
(© R J C Thomas)



**Ullenwood, Gloucestershire,
USAAF 62nd General
Hospital, canteen building**
*Top: Left – Exterior of Former
Canteen*
*Top: Right – American Red
Cross mural*
Bottom: Central wall
(© R J C Thomas)



WAR ART



Ullenwood, Gloucestershire, USAAF 62nd General Hospital, canteen building
Top: Couple dancing the 'Jitterbug'; Bottom: Boxers (© R J C Thomas)

RAF Seething, Norfolk RAF Seething (Station 146). Home of 712, 713, 714, and 715 Bomb Squadrons of the 448th Bomb Group, 20th Combat Wing, 8th USAAF who operated B-24 Liberator bombers. Altogether the unit carried out 262 combat missions over enemy territory, many of which were listed on the wall of a barrack hut. Left – Hut 420, list of raids Right – Hut 438, crayon drawing of Heinkel III



RAF Raydon, Essex (Station 157). The 'Honor Roll 350th Fighter Squadron', 353rd Fighter Group, 8th USAAF was originally displayed on the gable wall of the unit's Briefing Hut, flanked by a pair of painted nude female figures. A further pair of female figures was situated at the opposite end of the hut. Reputedly the hut was later used to house pigs and it was at this stage that the figures painted on fibreboard were removed to preserve them. Although their removal and preservation was well intended, the four figures are no longer associated with the 'Honor Roll' and as such, have lost their historic context. Above: The Honor Roll 350th Roll Aces in its original position (© IWM)



RAF Raydon, Essex (Station 157). The 'Honor Roll'
Four figures, out of context
(© R J C Thomas)



Inspiration for many of the female figures was taken from the pin-up art of various magazines and books like *Esquire*, *Beauty Parade*, *Petty Folio*, *Silk Stocking Stories*, *Movie Merry-Go-Round* and *Life* painted or drawn by Art Frahm, George Petty, Rolf Armstrong, Alberto Vargas, Earl Moran, Gil Elvgren, and Peter Driben. What is often not appreciated is that a number of the pin-up artists were women including Zoe Mozart, Joyce Ballantyne and Pearl Frush. Nevertheless, George Petty and Alberto Vargas were the most influential of artists; George Petty's stunningly smooth stylish simplicity was particularly popular, and was the inspiration for the nose art of the *Memphis Belle*, made famous by William Wyler's remarkable wartime documentary of the same name.

This diversity of expression continued with the presence of American units in the UK during the period of the Cold War. Although styles changed, as the influences changed and the cultural backgrounds of American servicemen became more diverse, many of the same themes are evident. Unit badges are a significant presence on USAF bases such as Upper Heyford (Oxfordshire) and Greenham Common (West Berkshire), while instruction drawings, graffiti and unofficial paintings exist in the private spaces amongst barracks and living quarters. An example of cultural influence is the Hispanic style and language of images at Greenham Common.



RAF Greenham Common, West Berkshire, cruise missiles were based here 1983–1991

Top: Left – Maintenance hangar 303

Top: Right – Dog Flight mural, locker room with an unfinished drawing of a missile launcher in the background (3041/17A © English Heritage)

Bottom: Left – Dog Flight Los Unicos Perros Rabiosos En Britania

Bottom: Right – Cobra Flight (© R J C Thomas)

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Although this collection concentrates on modern war art – that of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – the use of martial emblems and symbols has a long history and was certainly in widespread use by the Ancient Greeks, Egyptians and the Romans. In the earlier medieval period war art was used to identify troops, display wealth, power and status, and to invoke fear in the enemy. Powerful images of dragons and mythical beasts adorn Saxon and Viking artefacts and can be seen on the prows of ceremonial warships, while the Lindisfarne stone-carving included bas-relief depicting warriors armed with axes and swords, raiding the Lindisfarne monastery.



Tilbury Fort, Essex, the Water Gate (© English Heritage)

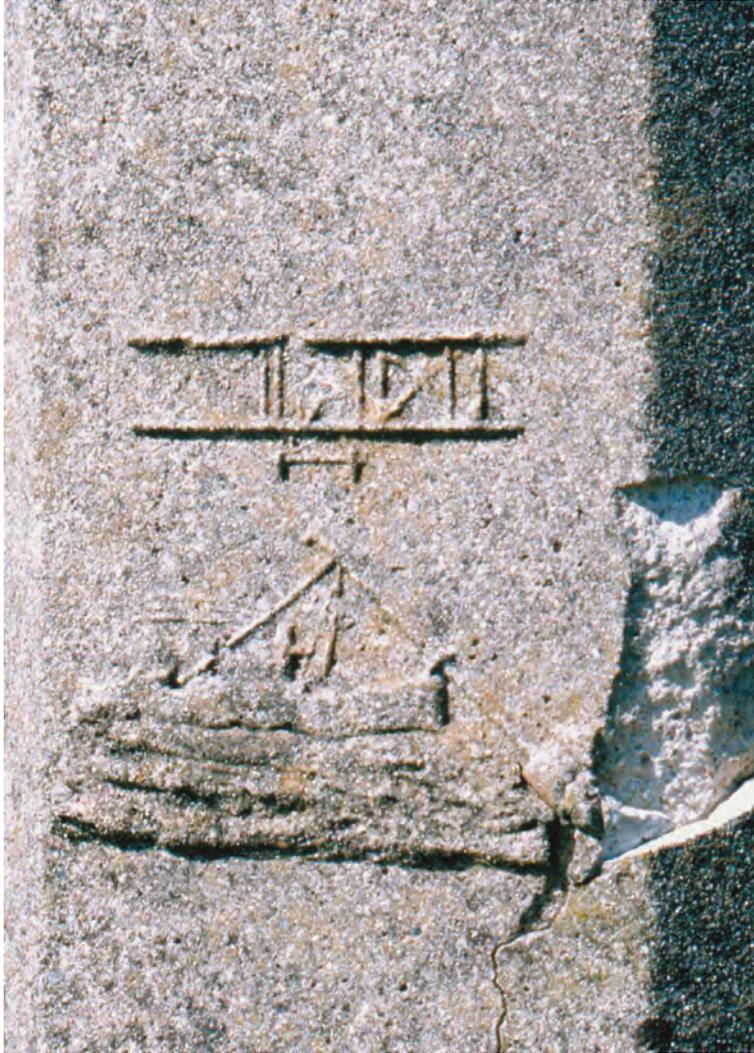


Chipping Sodbury, Gloucestershire, George Hotel, late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century wall painting naming the (South) Gloucestershire Hussars was uncovered during restoration in 1996. The Hussars were one of a number of militia units raised in South Gloucestershire, whose main purpose was as an anti invasion reserve against the French, although they were often used in a civil role such as the Bristol Bridge Riot of 1793 and the reform riots of 1831 (© South Gloucestershire Council)

Throughout the Middle Ages, the symbols of warfare applied to shields, flags and banners became increasingly stylised through the use of family heraldic devices. Large army units employed specific badges to symbolise regimental honour and individual loyalty to a fighting unit, while flags acted as rallying points on the field of battle. Within medieval Britain, conflict and the preparation for war occupied a central place in the lives of the aristocracy, demanding an increasing number of fortifications, which often combined defensive capabilities with extensive residential complexes. Very few examples of early medieval castle decoration survive, at Chepstow (Gwent) wall plaster in Marten's Tower is painted with red lines to resemble joints in ashlar masonry, similar painting was found in excavations at Okehampton Castle (Devon) (Kenyon 1990, 124). In the later Middle Ages, as heraldic and chivalric display became more fashionable, coats of arms were often applied to castle walls as a means of indicating status and ancestry of the owner. During early fifteenth-century alterations at Warkworth Castle (Northumberland) the Percy family adorned one of its towers with their lion symbol. At around the same time, Ralph, Lord Cromwell, Lord Treasurer to King Henry VI, was rebuilding Wingfield Manor (Derbyshire): here he embellished a gateway with his family and associated crest and the purses of the Lord Treasurer's office. Such brazen displays of 'vanity' were frowned upon during the Commonwealth and many examples of war art and coats-of-arms were destroyed by the puritans, but the restoration of Charles II witnessed a resurgence of highly visual heraldic devices, armorial emblems, royal crests and exuberant martial displays such as those on the gateways of Tilbury Fort (Essex) and Plymouth Citadel (Devon).

Examples from the eighteenth century are also generally restricted to grand gateways, such as the 1718 entrance to Chatham dockyard (Kent), which was originally adorned by George II's coat of arms (Coad 1989, 82), and of similar date the Royal Brass Foundry at the Royal Arsenal Woolwich. The dining hall of the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth (Devon), and the Great Hall at the Chelsea Barracks (London), both contain monumental schemes of wall painting by leading artists such as Thornhill and Verrio. Surviving graffiti from this period is quite rare, and primarily linked to places of incarceration, such as Portchester Castle (Hampshire), where the Norman keep was used as a prisoner of war camp during the Seven Years War (1756–63) and again at the end of the century during the French Revolutionary Wars. An analysis of the locations of these graffiti noted that it occurred in clusters, in rooms that were used to incarcerate prisoners who had committed some minor infringement of camp rules. Another group was found at the top of the keep's staircase where the natural light hit the wall, which was perhaps a place where prisoners met to sit and talk (Cunliffe and Garratt 1994, 68–9).

The tradition of applying sculptural royal coats of arms to gates and pediments continued into the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the 1790s, half a dozen large Coade stone reliefs depicting the royal coat of arms were ordered, one of which survives at the Wyvern Artillery Barracks, Exeter (Douet 1998, 87–8). Once in place they were often rendered in bright primary colours. Surviving nineteenth-century photographs and engravings of barrack interiors indicate that most were simply whitewashed, they were also crowded with rows of beds, dining tables, with equipment hung from walls, leaving little room for decoration. The survival of nineteenth-century war art is sparse and chiefly consists of eponymous graffiti, although officially sanctioned stencilled instructions, room numbers, identification marks, magazine signs and wall decorations such as stencilled friezes do survive in many Victorian forts. Poor levels of literacy amongst soldiers must be a reason for this, but discipline amongst the small 'regular' British Army should not be overlooked; officers and sergeants would not have approved of unofficial artwork or doodlings on their pristine barrack room walls. However, the scarcity of nineteenth-century soldier's art and graffiti may also be illusory, as the British Army was primarily used to police the Empire and a large proportion of the soldier's time was spent abroad, away from the stifling discipline of their home depots, and it may be there that creative opportunity presented itself. Other transient groups



**Tregantle Fort, Cornwall,
early twentieth-century
bas relief on pillar
(© R J C Thomas)**

produced portable folk art in the form of scrimshaw, worked bone and ivory, which is a well-known product of nineteenth-century mariners, many of whom were drawn from the same social classes as the army. Many pieces of fine scrimshaw work were also produced by French prisoners interned during the Napoleonic Wars – some of these may have been produced by officers during their forced idleness.

EXPLORING TWENTIETH-CENTURY WAR ART

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Amongst the squalor of the front lines of the Western Front, where the priority was survival, there is little evidence of attempts to make the living environment more homely, with the exception perhaps of photographs of home or a sweetheart. In the less threatened rear areas, where the troops were safer and had some free time, more elaborate work was possible. Much of northern France is underlain by chalk bedrock and beneath many towns caves were used as billets and hospitals. In this environment, the readily workable chalk walls were carved with images of animals, patriotic and religious symbols and unit badges; even chapels and altars were hewn from the rock. Good examples are accessible in the Dragon's cave on the Chemin des Dames overlooking the Aisne valley and in the caves of Confrécourt near Soissons (Saunders 2002a, 41). Subterranean wall art was produced by all of the major fighting nations on the Western Front. In the German fortresses surrounding Metz are many fine murals, both patriotic and humorous, painted by serving soldiers, including Willy Reue (1893–1962) and Ernst Koch who were to become well-known artists after the war (www.braunn.chez.tiscali.fr). Towards the end of the war the mood changed and scenes depict the hardships of soldiers sitting down to a meal of potatoes and a skeletal civilian in oversized clothes, reflecting the food shortages at home.



Fovant, Wiltshire. During the First World War a series of chalk figures were cut into the Chalk Downs above Fovant by soldiers undergoing training in the area. Units who cut badges included battalions from the London Regiment and Australian troops. During the inter-war period some became overgrown and after the outbreak of war in 1939 others were covered over to prevent their use as navigation markers by the Luftwaffe. Subsequently some of the badges were re-cut and others added to commemorate the local Home Guard and the 50th anniversary of the Royal Corps of Signals. They are protected as a Scheduled Monument. Also visible in this view is the prehistoric hillfort of Chiselbury (© Crown copyright NMR 18037/10)

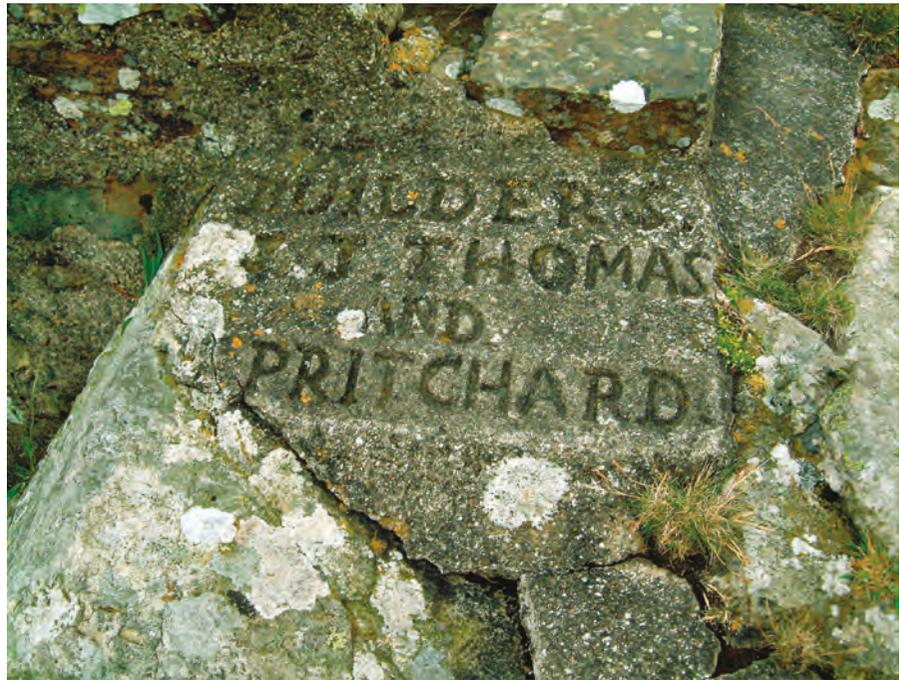
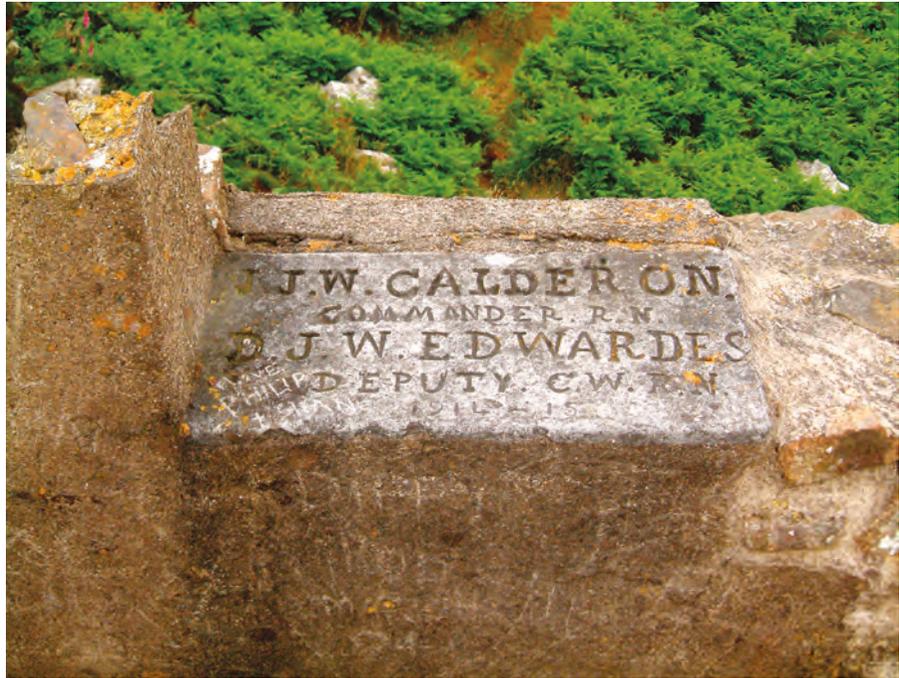


Wigmore Abbey, Herefordshire
Left: A rare surviving sketch from the First World War of Kaiser Bill (Wilhelm II) – it was probably drawn by British troops billeted at the farm
Right: Pencil sketch of a man's head
(© R J C Thomas)



Garn Fawr, Fishguard, Pembrokeshire, First World War coast watcher's post
Left: Coast watcher's post
Right: Carved compass on rock
(© R J C Thomas)

Garn Fawr,
Fishguard, Pembrokeshire,
First World War coast
watcher's post
Top: J J W Calderon
Commander RN, D J W
Edwardes Deputy CW RN 1914-15
Bottom: Builders J Thomas
and Pritchard
(© R J C Thomas)



WAR ART

In Britain, there are few surviving examples of Great War soldiers' art in military buildings, and the graffiti of conscientious objectors at Richmond Castle (North Yorkshire) is a rare example of what may have been commonplace. This absence may be explained by the passage of time and subsequent reuse of structures; it may also be accounted for by the widespread use of prefabricated timber huts during the war, most of which no longer survive. Occupation of most camps was also generally transitory, during training or on route to one of the battle fronts. On the home front recognition of the relationship between productivity – not to mention health – and decent working conditions resulted in the common areas of newer armaments factories, such as canteens, being 'spruced up' through painting and often simple decoration. Some of the larger factories had their own theatres, where various forms of music hall show were performed by the workers. As part of their sets they might include elaborate back-drops probably painted by the more artistic amongst them.

Better known artwork from this conflict, but beyond the scope of this book, is the vast range of Trench Art (for more information see books by Jane Kimball 2004 and Nicholas Saunders 2002b). Some was produced by soldiers from spent war *matériel*, but it also includes commercially manufactured items produced as souvenirs for the troops and post-war battlefield tourists.



Two corseted artillery shell case vases with art nouveau decoration
(© Nicholas J Saunders)



Bullet crucifix mounted on a tripod of three German Mauser rounds with memorial plaque attached showing the Menin gate, Ypres, and thus dating the piece to sometime after 1927
(© Nicholas J Saunders)

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

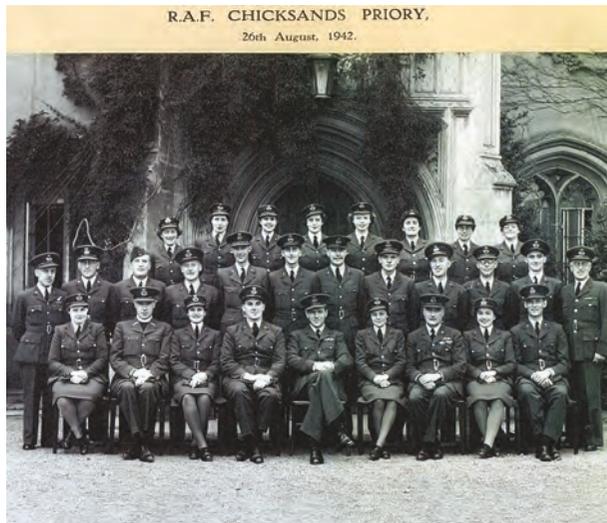
Troops on active service, or frontline aircrew, were generally freed from some of the minor regulations of soldiering. Either through attempts to adapt to local conditions or because of difficulties in supply lines, uniform regulations were also sometimes relaxed. Similarly, the painting of images on aircraft or vehicles, which would be forbidden during peace time was at least tolerated. One aspect of this greater freedom was the increasing use of symbols on the new engines of war, in particular aircraft and armoured vehicles, to identify national allegiances and lower unit formations. Crews also began to add their own emblems to individualise and identify standard and mass-produced machines. On campaign, men's lives not only depended on the reliable functioning of their vehicle; it also became their home. Images also took on a superstitious importance for aircrew, with rituals and good luck charms appearing as other means of coping with the repeated exposure to danger (Ward 1951, 287–9).



Left: RAF Biggin Hill, Kent, 1943. Painting by leading Aircraftsman Harry Parnham in the Officer's Mess of 611 Squadron (© Harry Parnham via Aldon Ferguson)

Right: Craster, Northumberland Coastal Defence Chain Home Low radar station operations block, fishing smack scratched onto a wall (© R J C Thomas)

WAR ART



RAF Chicksands, Bedfordshire. Above: During the Second World War Chicksands priory was used as a Y Station to intercept German wireless signals. A painted panel recording the names of wartime personnel was discovered during decorating work in 2005. Detail of the panel with names (AA0533454

© English Heritage)

Below: Wartime photograph showing some of the personnel whose names are recorded on the panel (© Crown copyright)

**Newhaven Fort, East Sussex,
Air Sea Rescue Launches – 41, 106,
2711, and 2300
(© R J C Thomas)**



**Landguard Fort, Suffolk
Battery Observation Post:
gunnery range and bearing marks –
range is shown above and bearing
beneath. The building in the
middle is Roughs Tower,
a Maunsell fort, an offshore
anti-aircraft battery
(© R J C Thomas)**





Fulbeck Hall, Lincolnshire

Pegasus badge of the Dutch airborne division, who acted as guides during the airborne assault on the bridges at Arnhem in September 1944



Chapel Bay Fort, Angle, Pembrokeshire

Top: Left – Casemate Shelter No 1, soldiers driving a truck, seen through whitewash

Bottom: Left – 12 pounder shell store, gunnery instruction probably Second World War

(© R J C Thomas)



Ditchington Hall, Norfolk, USAAF officers' mess and sick quarters

Top: Left – The farm yard view, the small building to the rear was used as a bar

Top: Right – South wall, 'Bucking Bronco Bar'

Bottom: Left – Airman dreaming

Middle: Right – Detail of rider

Bottom: Right – North wall, new or futuristic aircraft
(© R J C Thomas)



Photographs of the campaign in northern Europe after D-Day often show allied vehicles with names or other images. German vehicles were rarely similarly adorned, except perhaps for an unofficial unit badge, while on Soviet tanks contemporary photographs often depict patriotic slogans such as 'To the front for the rout of fascism' or 'We defend the conquests of October' crudely painted on their turrets.

A comparable official attitude appears to have been taken towards the application of murals to the walls of military buildings. In such a tightly regulated environment the walls were usually painted in gloss paint, but might be brightened by officially placed posters, often designed by influential artists of the day (Cantwell 1989), to deliver propaganda. During the war, officially sanctioned propaganda posters came to the fore amongst most of the combatant powers, which might be reinforced by slogans painted for example on factory walls. Murals are most commonly encountered in the many temporary airfields and camps that were built across the country. None of these establishments had a long military tradition and neither did most of their personnel who were volunteers or conscripts for the duration of the war.

Murals are commonly found in communal areas, such as canteens or institutes that might also be used for dances and other social functions. At Fowlmere (Cambridgeshire), a satellite airfield for RAF Duxford, a mural survives on the wall of a farm building. In most instances the painters of murals are unknown. However, at RAF Fowlmere it is known that the painting was executed by Robert Hofton, an Aircraftsman serving with 19 Squadron who was asked to decorate the barn for a Christmas party in 1940. It was originally painted using airfield paint and 100 octane aviation fuel. Over 50 years later, in 1993, he returned to repaint the image (*Cambridge Evening News* 1993, 1).



RAF Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire. Mural painted by Aircraftsman Robert Hofton in a farm building in preparation for a Christmas party in 1940. At the time Hofton was serving with 19 Squadron which during 1940 had distinguished itself during the withdrawal of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk and during the Battle of Britain (© English Heritage AA051483)

THE COLD WAR

In Britain, following the end of the Second World War and with the return to peace time soldiering and spit and polish standards, there appears to have been an absence of war art within military establishments. The images from the Second World War survived because they were often located in temporary wartime bases that were abandoned in the late 1940s. During the 1950s, with the return of United States forces to counter the Soviet threat, there is some contemporary photographic evidence for

**RAF Upper Heyford,
Oxfordshire, club, brick reliefs
probably dating to the 1950s**

**Top: United States eagle
(AA541122)**

**Bottom: Left – John Bull
(AA054123)**

**Bottom: Right – Uncle Sam
(AA054124)**

(© English Heritage)





RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, former Station Offices (52), F-111 mural by Kenneth B Gore (1978-79), moved from Building 300 (AA051444 © English Heritage)

the reappearance of war art; however, little is known to survive from this era. Instead, the greatest survival of war art in Britain is associated with the United States Air Force, dating from the 1980s and early 1990s. The great variety of images that are encountered reflects both a visually-aware generation and a culture where street art and graffiti had become a part of everyday life. Some war art on American bases was officially encouraged to reinforce the *esprit de corps*, while other work was at least condoned.



RAF Lakenheath, Suffolk, home of the USAF's 48th Fight Wing 'Liberty Wing'
Left: F111 on blast wall
Right: Keep the torch burning (© Raymond Towler)

RAF Lakenheath,
Suffolk, home of the
USAF's 48th Fight
Wing 'Liberty Wing'

Top: Left – The
Liberty Club

(© R J C Thomas)

Top: Right – Proud of
Lakenheath

(© Raymond
Towler)

Middle: Spread the
word prevent FOD
(Foreign Object
Damage)

(© Raymond
Towler)



RAF Coltishall, Norfolk, spray paint artwork on hangar doors dating from the first Gulf War 1991

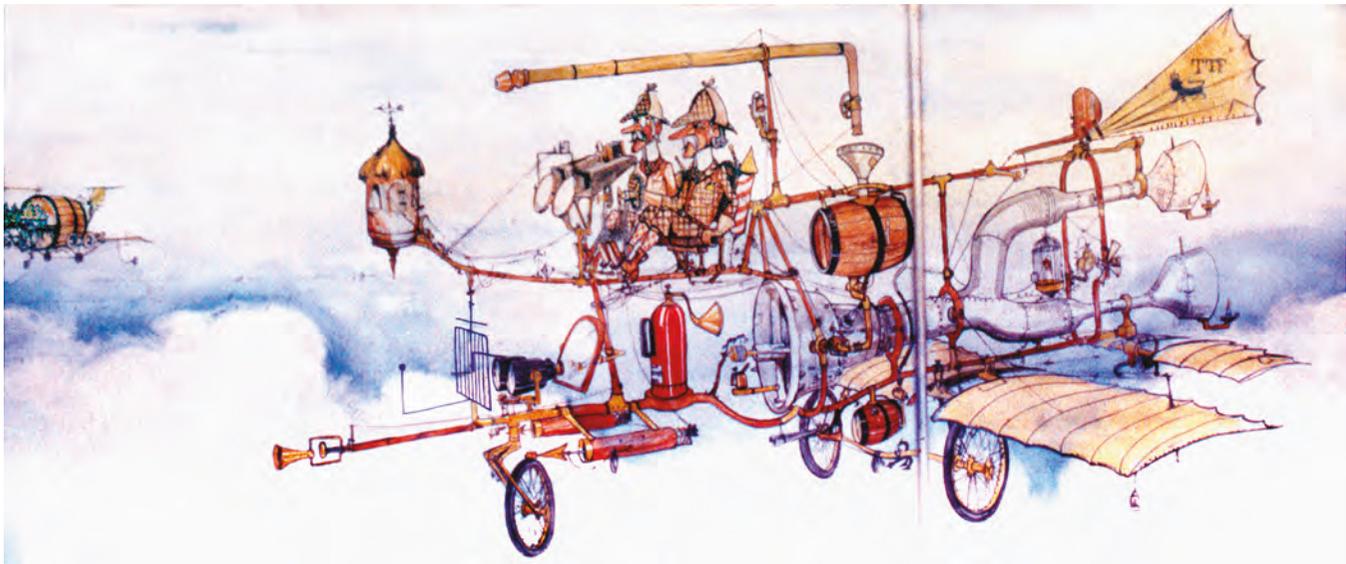
Left: Jaguar being attacked by Iraqi missiles (© Aldon Ferguson)

Right: Tired Jaguar, to the rear is cross of Lorraine, the badge of No.41 Squadron

(© Aldon Ferguson)



**RAF Binbrook, Lincolnshire,
former Lightning interceptor base**
**Top: Maple leaf emblem
of 5 Squadron**
**Bottom: English Electric
Lightning of the Lightning Training Flight**
(© R J C Thomas)





Top: Londonderry, murals by British troops inside the yard of the Rosemount police station

Bottom: Cowabunga, mural by troops of the Royal Hampshire Regiment, Northern Ireland
(© Ian Evans)



Murals of this date are also found on some RAF bases, but they tend to be restricted to unit emblems within hangers or other technical buildings. There are also examples in Northern Ireland.

PROJECT WARRIOR AND THE 1980s

It is acknowledged that it is a soldier's loyalty to immediate comrades that will sustain him or her in the heat of battle, rather than higher political ideals. Faithfulness is reinforced by training, and the teaching of history and heritage reflected through the heraldry of war, links an individual to the heroic deeds of past members of the unit.

In the late 1970s, in the United States Air Force, it was recognised that due to many formations simply being designated a number, and also because of the constant movement of personnel, that there was poor emotional bonding between service personnel and their unit. Both these factors coupled with the low morale in the services after the Vietnam War were leading to poor group cohesion, which could potentially

have devastating results in combat. This period was also marked by a decline in relations with the Soviet Union and a massive increase in defence spending. Attempts to address the problem of morale were initiated under *Project Warrior*, one strand of which was to use history and heritage to foster *esprit de corps*. This was achieved by taught courses, the creation of base history rooms and the reintroduction of the iconic wartime A2 leather flying jacket for frontline personnel (Glines 1993, 60–5). These jackets were famously decorated with unit patches and mottoes, often corresponding with those on the sides of aircraft.

In the past, during wartime the authorities had often turned a blind eye to aircraft nose art only insisting that it should be removed when aircraft returned to their peace time bases; however, in 1970 during the Vietnam War individual aircraft markings were outlawed. This policy was reversed during the 1980s, when as part of *Project Warrior*, nose art was officially encouraged, Strategic Air Command naming their programme *Glossy Eagle*. The other side of official encouragement was the exertion of greater control, and a formal procedure was put in place to approve images; nudes and tasteless designs were forbidden (Ethell and Simonsen 1991, 173). It is in this context that many images were also applied to buildings.

In many situations murals arose from a group's desire to liven up uniformly decorated and furnished living areas and to reinforce their presence within a space. In February 1979, an air force newspaper, *The Vanguard*, reported that at RAF Upper Heyford a section of the 20th Munitions Maintenance Squadron had brightened up one of the dormitories with a wall-sized version of their unit patch, the design painted by AIC Randolph T Hinkle. Around the mural was written 'Home of the 20th Mun Maint Sq'. Later in accommodation block Building 485, an inter-war barracks, a mural in a common room identified it as the accommodation for the 20th Component Repair Squadron. On the first floor a pair of theatre masks and a quote in Italian, translating approximately as 'abandon hope all ye who enter here', the inscription at the entrance to hell as described Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, defined one of the living sections. In this particular building this section was uniquely decorated with murals in corridors and bedrooms, subjects



RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, Dormitory 485

Left: Dormitory 485, 1920s barrack building, internally the original large open rooms have been divided into smaller single person bedrooms, externally some of the original openings have been blocked and new windows inserted (AA054119 © English Heritage)

Right: East side ground floor common room, 20th CRS (Component Repair Squadron) Many Tasks One Mission (AA051461 © English Heritage)

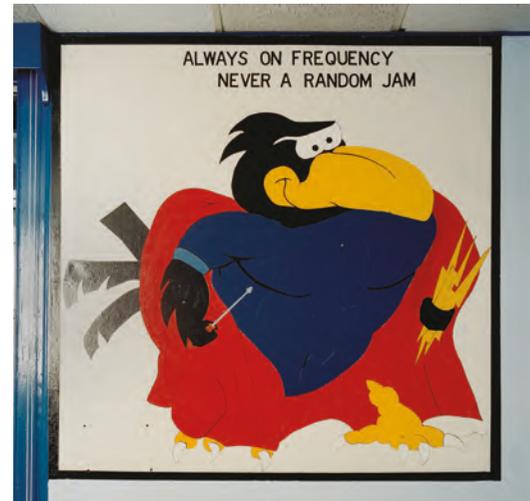
**RAF Upper Heyford,
Oxfordshire, Dormitory 485**
**Top: Left – Entrance to west
side first floor corridor, Italian
quote from Dante’s Inferno
(AA051460)**

**Top: Right – West side first
floor corridor, Judge Dredd
(AA051464)**

**Middle: Left – West side first
floor corridor, hatted Raven
on Electronic Counter
Measures pod ‘Have pod will
travel’, Ed Wildner 1990
(AA051459)**

**Bottom: Left – West side first
floor corridor, Doo Dah Man
by Ed Wildner
(AA051458)**

**Bottom: Right – West side first
floor, bedroom, ‘Always on
Frequency Never a Random
Jam’ by Bill Campbell
(AA051463)**
 (© English Heritage)



including *Judge Dredd*, cartoon Ravens, and the Doo Dah Man. An unfinished drawing of a Raven on an Electronic Counter Measure pod confirms the link between this living area and the Avionics Centre, Building 299, where most of this section worked. Other accommodation blocks in this complex were similarly decorated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, their accomplishment and topics indicative of the artists' cultural, educational and social backgrounds.

In the ammunition inspection building at RAF Bentwaters (Suffolk) there were large blank walls that were painted during airmen's spare time. The subjects of the paintings directly reflected this section's functions; some were designs on the floor and walls simply incorporating the word 'ammo'. Others were more elaborate and included a realistic portrayal of the unit's main aircraft type: an A-10 Thunderbolt nicknamed the Warthog. Another showed death in a contemporary olive drab uniform leaning on a conventional bomb while holding a large calibre 30 mm round used by the A-10's Gatling gun. On another wall a cartoon figure of a warthog is dressed as an ammunition inspector. This painting reveals considerable details about the working practices of the section and codes particular to that team. The figure holds an inspection stamp, adorned with a skull and feathers to make it easily distinguishable in the lockbox where they were stored. This decoration is so distinctive that it was probably identifiable to a known individual; below the AMMO troops' group identity is affirmed with their 'tag': IYAAAYAS ('If you ain't AMMO you ain't shit'). The black painted corners of the ammunition box indicates that it is one that has been inspected, being one of the main functional activities within this room where the image appears. A similar warthog ammunition inspector can be seen a few miles away at the adjacent airfield of RAF Woodbridge, but this example is wearing a camouflaged jacket, possibly indicative of the introduction of a different style of uniform and date. One former United States airman posted to the bomb stores at RAF Bentwaters during the 1980s commented that the stories surrounding the paintings there were 'really kind of mundane', reflecting the fact that artwork could just liven up the monotony of military life, perhaps also satisfying a basic human need to personalise such undistinguished buildings.

In 1988, two of the six A-10 Thunderbolt squadrons based at Bentwaters and Woodbridge were transferred to RAF Alconbury (Cambridgeshire). In a former Second World War corrugated-iron Nissen



RAF Bentwaters, Suffolk, squadron office

Left: Pilot's helmet (© Alistair Graham-Kerr)

Right: Painting of bald eagle and F15 'Eagles' by Robert J Herberd (AA054191 © English Heritage)



RAF Bentwaters, Suffolk, Weapons Inspection Building 437, 1980s artwork

Top: Left – ‘We live so that others may die!’ on the exterior wall (AA021677 © English Heritage)

Top: Middle – ‘Death’ in a contemporary olive green uniform holding a large calibre cannon round, dated 1988 (AA021681 © English Heritage)

Top: Right – Fairchild A-10 Thunderbolt, nicknamed the ‘Warthog’, signed by Poole 1989–91 (AA021678 © English Heritage)

Bottom: Left – Warthog inspecting ammunition (AA021680 © English Heritage)

Bottom: Right – Ammo (© W D Cocroft)

hut the pilots’ mess of the 511th Tactical Fighter Wing ‘The Vultures’ was fitted out internally to resemble a half-timbered pub. The work of attaching mock beams to the walls and bar was probably carried out by members of the mess, whose names or nicknames are recorded on board in the hut. The image of the warthog to represent the A-10 was also common to their pilots and on one wall is a large marker pen



RAF Alconbury, Cambridgeshire, felt pen mural in the mess of 511th Tactical Fighter Squadron 'The Vultures'; this unit was equipped with A-10 aircraft nicknamed 'Warthogs' (AA023744 © English Heritage)

cartoon of a warthog holding a Gatling gun. Elsewhere on the base, in the munitions storage area under the control of the ammo troops, another warthog is depicted carrying a Gatling gun and a bomb.

The individualisation of aircraft through the use of nose art and naming had a beneficial effect on the ground crews' identification with and pride in the aircraft they were responsible for. During the 1980s, in USAF's Strategic Air Command, it was the ground crew, through their crew chief, who submitted the designs for nose art for approval (Ethell and Simonsen 1991, 179). The mechanism for selecting the nose art for the RF-4C McDonnell Phantom aircraft of the 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing aircraft at RAF Alconbury is unclear, although the ground crews' identification with the aircraft was reinforced by name plates attached to the Hardened Aircraft Shelters' doors, where the aircraft's nose art was often reproduced along with the name of the crew chief in charge of its maintenance. Subsequent to the departure of the A-10s in 1992, the base was occupied by the 39th Special Operations Wing transferred from RAF Woodbridge. It declared its possession of the airfield by the application of a large mural of a specially modified Lockheed MC-130P Hercules aircraft operated by the 352nd Special Operations Group. Not to be outdone, on the other side of the airfield the crews of the 17th Reconnaissance Wing, who maintained the high altitude TR-1A reconnaissance 'Dragon Lady' aircraft, incorporated a dragon design into a large mural in their refuelling building.



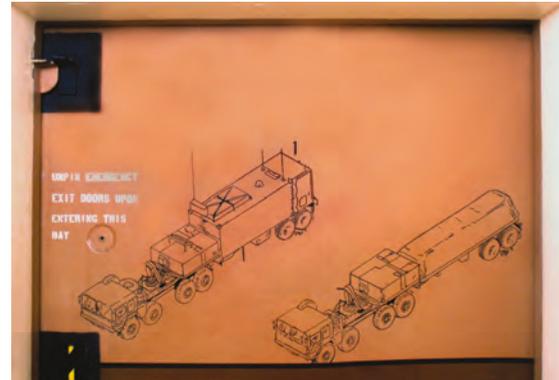
RAF Alconbury, Cambridgeshire, Crew boards on Hardened Aircraft Shelter doors (© English Heritage)
Top: 'Oh Johnnie' (AA023759)
Left: 'I'll be around' (AA023779)
Middle: 'Geronimo' (AA023780)
Right: 'Grim Peeper' (AA023781)



RAF Alconbury, Cambridgeshire,
MC 130 H Combat Talon I of
the 7th Special Operations
Squadron, applied during the unit's
occupation of the base 1992-94
(AA023755 © English Heritage)



RAF Alconbury, Cambridgeshire,
Building 250, 10th Explosive
Ordnance Disposal badge
(AA023745 © English Heritage)



RAF Greenham Common, West Berkshire,
Left: Integrated Maintenance Facility
Right: Realistic portrayals of cruise missile launch centre (LCC) and transporter erector launcher (TEL) vehicles (304M/21 © English Heritage)

RAF Greenham Common,
West Berkshire, Quick Reaction
Alert shelter, 11th Tactical
Missile Squadron decal
(© R J C Thomas)

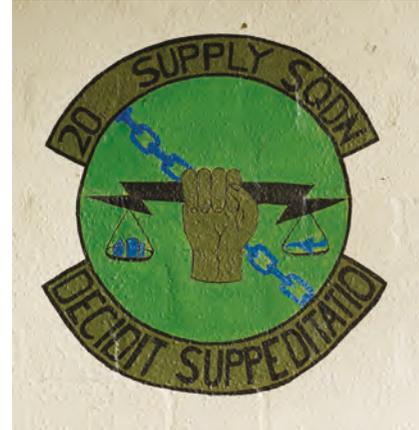




**RAF Greenham
Common, West
Berkshire, Hangar 301
501st Tactical Missile
Wing A-Flight Alpha
Death's Head
(© Veronica Fiorato)**



**RAF Greenham Common,
West Berkshire, Warhead
Maintenance Building, B1B multi-role
strategic bomber introduced into
service during the 1980s
(© Veronica Fiorato)**



RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, Dormitory 446
Top: Left – Dormitory 446 (AA054117)
Top: Right – Entrance lobby north side ground floor 20th Supply Squadron badge (AA051473)
Bottom: North side ground floor, games room, cartoon characters from various American newspapers (AA054126)
(© English Heritage)



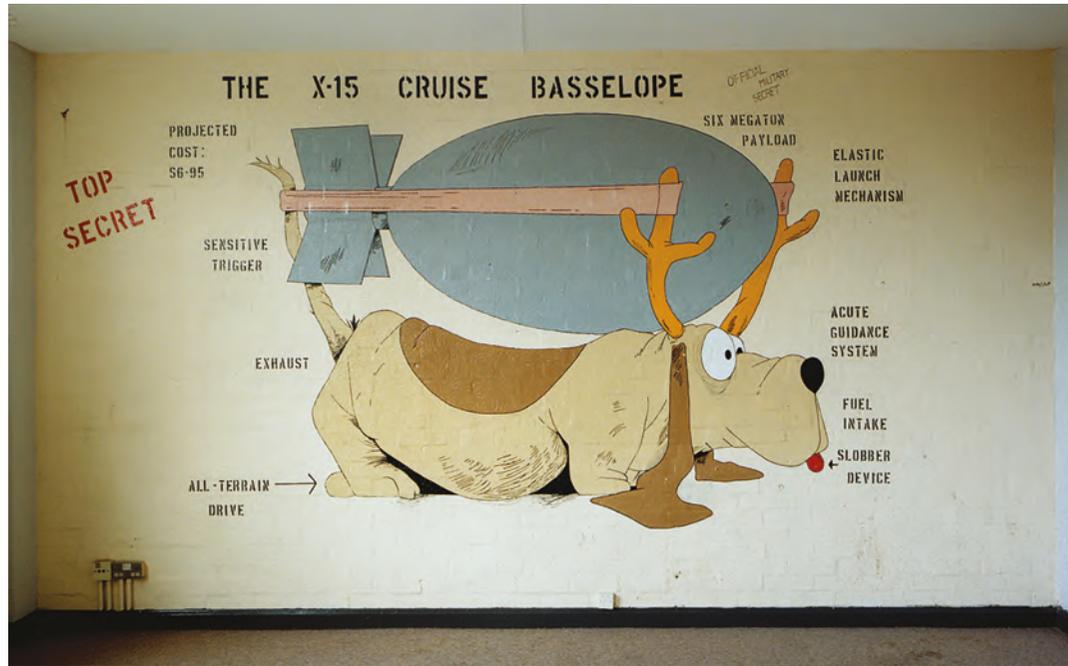


RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, Dormitory 446

Top: Entrance lobby south side ground floor, USAF shield and eagle badge, by Steve Wellever 1991 (AA051472)

Bottom: Ground floor south side corridor, world map (AA051465)

(© English Heritage)



RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, Dormitory 446

Top: North side first floor, games room, 'The X-15 Cruise Basselope' by F S (AA0514125)

Bottom: Left – North side first floor corridor, Garfield by F S (AA051467)

Bottom: Middle – North side first floor corridor, early 1990s Saddam Hussein cartoon 'This is not what I meant when I said I wanted to be the center of things!...' (detail). Also see context picture on p 8 (AA051468)

Bottom: Right – First floor, corridor, eagle with snake cartoon by Jim Cable 1992 (AA051474)

(© English Heritage)

WAR ART

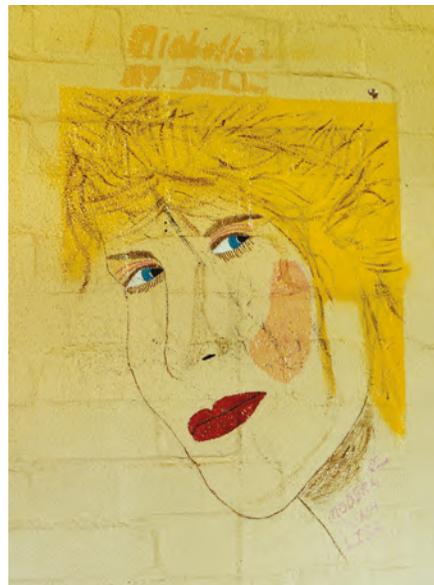


Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, Dormitory 445

Top: Left – Dormitory 445 (AA054118 © English Heritage) Top: Right – Ground floor corridor, mural perhaps inspired by the ink drawing of *The Great Wave at Kanagawa* by Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art New York (AA0541131 © English Heritage)

Middle: Left – Ground floor, shower room with a surreal image of a woman with a verse, signed by Julia 1992 (AA054142 © English Heritage)

Bottom: Left – Ground floor, 'A Fireman's Prayer' 'Dear God, when I am called to duty whenever flames may RAGE Give me the Serenity to save some lives whatever be its AGE Help me embrace a little child before it is too late or save an older person from the horror of fate Enable me to be alert and hear the weakest shout and quickly and efficiently to put the fire out I want to fill my calling and to give the best in me to guard my every neighbour and protect my property and if according to your will I am to lose my life Please bless with your protecting hands my children and my wife Amen' signed 'R.A.T. May 93'. (AA054144 © English Heritage)



Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, Dormitory 445
 Top: Left – First floor landing, ‘No Second Prize’
 signed RAT (AA054136)
 Top: Right – First floor lounge (AA054129)
 Middle: Left – Ground floor stair lobby, by
 ‘Steve Wellever 1991’ (AA054134)
 Middle: Right – Ground floor bedroom, Bart and
 Homer Simpson, signed ‘J W 92’ (AA054146)
 Bottom: Left – First floor bedroom (AA054149)
 Bottom: Right – First Floor bedroom, ‘Michelle
 my bell Modern Mona Lisa’ (AA054141)
 (© English Heritage).



Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, Dormitory 445

Top: Left – First floor bedroom (AA054147)

Top: Right – First floor bedroom, Garfield and Odie (AA054148)

Middle: Right – First floor landing ‘Midnight Fantasy’ (AA054140)

Bottom: Left – Second floor, common room, impressionistic painting of a tiger signed by Cindy L Monzaley, April 1992, ‘I dedicate this to my Husband Tony & all the wonderful Friends in the Dorm! Thankyou!’ (AA054127)

(© English Heritage)



RAF Woodbridge, Suffolk
Top: Left – Missile Maintenance Building 277
(AA054155)
Top: Right – Personnel entry door (AA054156)
Bottom: Left – Blast door signage (AA054157)
Bottom: Right – Missile specialist badges
(AA054158)
(© English Heritage)



RAF Woodbridge, Suffolk

Top: Left – Tank Busters (AA054162)

Top: Right – Dove of peace, painted by ES 1985 (AA054163)

Middle: Left – AGM 65 Maverick, an allusion to a Hughes air-to-ground missile (AA054165) (© English Heritage)

Bottom: Left – Signage indicating the use of both American and British voltage electrical systems (© R J C Thomas)



RAF Woodbridge, Suffolk, 667 SOMS Nose Docking Shed, Bigfoot foot prints (© R J C Thomas)

Also during the 1980s, RAF Greenham Common (West Berkshire) was remodelled to accept Ground Launched Cruise Missiles. In contrast to the reported low morale at Bentwaters, at Greenham Common, due to its high political profile, the missile troops were very proud of their work. This too finds expression through murals painted in operational areas. In a building occupied by the Security Police, who were responsible for base discipline, the murals were formal renditions of official badges. In contrast, in the workshops and restricted crew areas the images are less restrained, and in common with earlier murals,

WAR ART



RAF Woodbridge, Suffolk, store building and workshops 296

Left: History of American flight (AA054153 © English Heritage)

Right: Helicopter and dart board (AA054154 © English Heritage)



RAF Woodbridge, Suffolk, storage and handling building 259

Left: Skull and cross bones (AA054171 © English Heritage)

Right: A10 Warthog (AA054172 © English Heritage)

their style may be seen to be directly influenced by contemporary culture and graphic styles. Many of the images and themes are reminiscent of the material found in comic books of the time, such as *2000AD* and *Judge Dredd*. It was a style that many of the troops would have been familiar with, for example from magazines circulating around the base.

Some drawings at Greenham Common reflected in-jokes, such as a cartoon figure of a 'Smurf' in combat fatigues, reflecting the nickname of the troops based in the Special Maintenance Facility or SMF.