

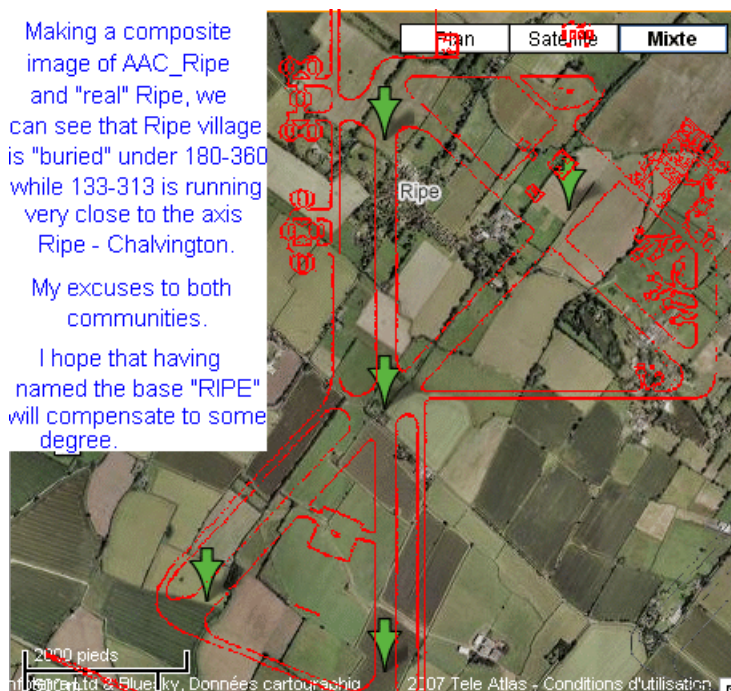


AAC RIPE is a fictional Anglo-American air base situated in the South of England, East Sussex, where the villages of Ripe and Chalvington stand. Since most of Ripe is under the runways (see the picture below), it was only normal to take that name as sort of *payback*.

Making a composite image of AAC_Ripe and "real" Ripe, we can see that Ripe village is "buried" under 180-360 while 133-313 is running very close to the axis Ripe - Chalvington.

My excuses to both communities.

I hope that having named the base "RIPE" will compensate to some degree.



As an historical footnote, a single grass airstrip airfield was constructed "for real" just North-East of Ripe as an *Advanced Landing Ground*; RAF Deanland airfield. It was built four to five months after our fictional base, in the Spring of 1943, and holds the honor of being the first base to launch aircraft on D-Day. The airfield, now a private one, is still in use and our former commander, Colonel Humblesprout, was kind enough to point it to me. For more information on Deanland airfield history, go see <http://www.deanland-airfield.co.uk/deanland/airfieldhistory.htm> .

I have also written a semi-fictional history of AAC Ripe relating the beginnings of the base;

Although showing a confident face to its British counterparts in RAF Bomber and Fighter Commands, general Ira C. Eaker was expressing its worries in his reports to general Carl A. Spaatz in the period of spring-summer of 1942.

In charge of then VIII Bomber Command, he was to organise in England the "Mighty Eight". Among his many worries was training or, to be more precise, the lack of it! His own "skeleton HQ", mostly formed of civilians incorporated into USAAF without any formal military experience, was "learning the ropes" by "looking over the shoulder" of RAF personnel.

Pursuit's groups, transported by sea in convoys, were forced to jump into "borrowed" Spitfire MkV as their P-39 and P-38 could not make the trip with them. During their familiarisation instruction with RAF fighter's squadrons in the South of England it became obvious to all that gunnery, formation flying, instrument flying, air tactics and many other aspects of training left to be desired.

Bomber's crew were even worst. In his haste to ship as many men to England as soon as possible, general "Tooey" Spaatz, no doubt poked in the back by general "Hap" Arnold himself, was shipping to Eaker crews that consisted of pilots who had never fly in high-altitude bombing formation, of radio men who were unable to send nor receive Morse code, of gunners having never fired a shot while in the air, of navigators having never held a map of Europe in their hands... and still without aircraft of their own.

Add to all that the necessity of getting familiarised with RAF procedures and ETO geography and weather and you will only begin to understand Eaker's worries. So it was not without some "polite scepticism" from the British that Americans not only expressed their desire to operate as an independent force, but also to do so while implementing daylight bombing raids.

One fact that is almost forgotten is that the RAF, despite its initial reservations about Eaker's plan, was more than instrumental in its accomplishment. Furnishing bases, aircraft, training personnel, they did everything in their power so as to not let Eaker's worries turn into a nightmare.

British Isles and the Commonwealth's nations were in the "thick of it" since 1939. The growing pains of the 8th Air Force was reminiscing of their own state of chaos after the

"Battle of France". That well of experience was not to go to waste with those young Americans, still "wet behind the ears", but eager to learn... and to fight.

Theory and training was put to practise on the Fourth of July 1942. With six "lend-lease" Boston (Havoc A-20) painted hastily to Americans colours, crews of the 15th Bombardment Squadron (Separate), went on a daylight low bombing air raid over German's air bases in occupied Holland, accompanied by six RAF Boston and their crews.

Unexpected heavy flak opposition, probably alerted by German lookouts in the Channel, would cost the Americans two of their medium bombers, a third barely making it back to England. The RAF officer in charge of the mission would report back that he had never encounter such a harsh opposition, loosing one of his own bomber. But the "Colonials" would show the stuff they were made of. Capt. Charles C. Kegelman, having lost his right engine and suffered damage to its right wing during the bombing of De Kooy airfield, was able to recuperate control of his bomber after bouncing on the ground and, seeing a flak battery turning its guns toward him, to turn slightly to shoot at point-blank on it - silencing it for good. He would get the "Distinguished Service Cross" for this uncommon exploit.

Pilots, navigators-bombers and gunners of the 15th Bombardment Squadron were among the first to be shipped to England and had trained since then under the supervision of the RAF No.226 Squadron. The gunners were send to gunnery school for a "crash course" while pilots and navigators-bombers would train shoulder-to-shoulder with their RAF counterparts. The rapid progress made by the 15th Bombardment Squadron gave general Eaker an idea; why not create a "joint group" where British and Americans would practise cooperative missions on a more permanent basis?

General Spaatz's first reaction to the idea was, shall we say, lukewarm to the best. He felt it was "a foot in the door" for RAF taking control of the 8th Air Force. But the subject was nevertheless discussed during a reunion of Combined Chiefs Staff in late July 1942. The idea was received with much more enthusiasm there and a directive for the formation of an Anglo-American Operational Training Unit was transmitted to the joint Air Chiefs.

In front of the "fait accompli", General Arnold told Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal that, as to not have this unit interfere with both Air forces prime objectives, it would be placed under their own joint staff command. The Allied Air Corp was born.

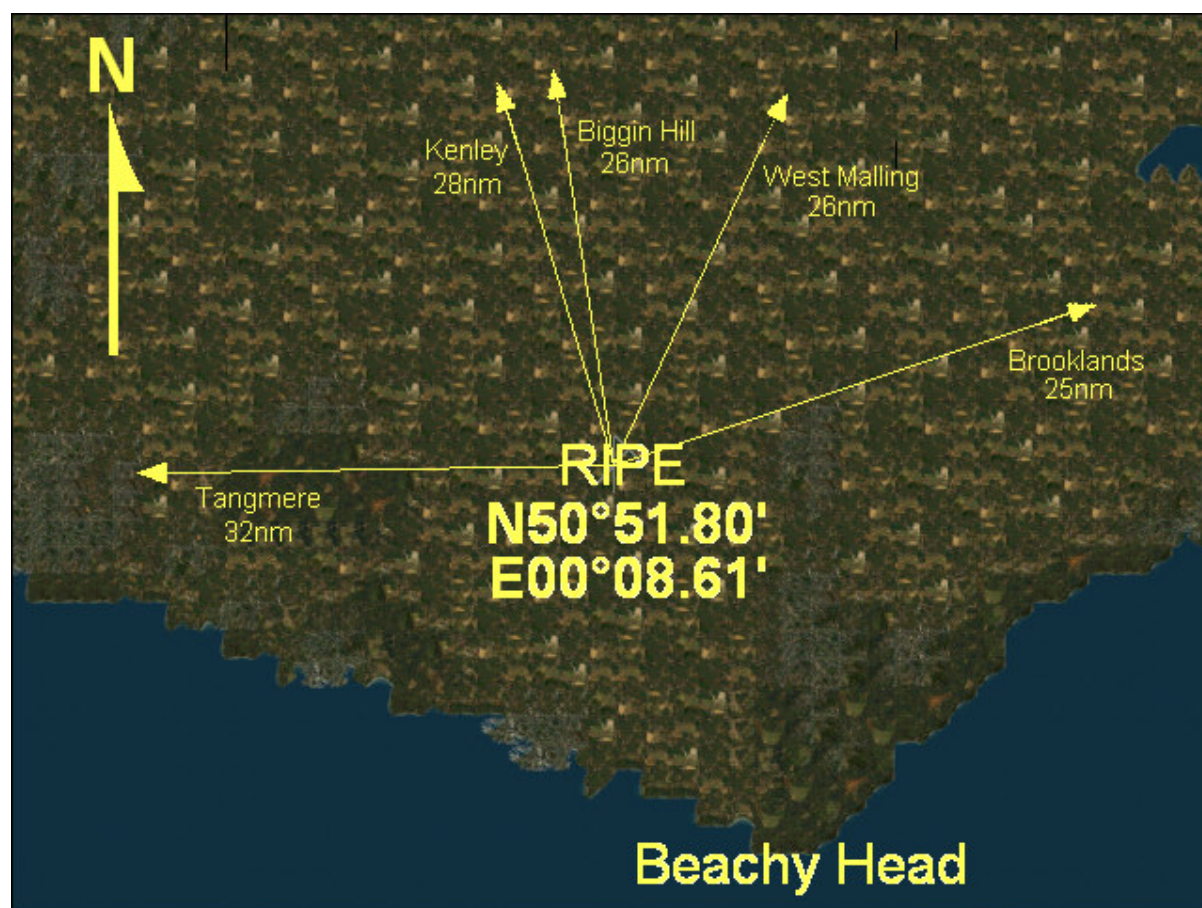
*Excerpts from "Allied Air Corp: the untold story" by Col.(ret) Humblesprout , DoubleNight Publications, Oxford and New York, 1949.

For more, go see the thread "Neue Amerikanische Flugplatz im Ost-Sussex" at Sim-HotHouse <http://www.sim-outhouse.com/sohforums/showthread.php?t=44832> .

RIPE'S GEOGRAPHY

AAC Ripe is located inland of Beachy Head, N50° 51.80', E0° 8.61' (intersection of the two main runways), at an altitude of 226 feet MSL. Terrain is fairly level with a \pm variation of about 3 feet in all directions.

Tangmere is located East of Ripe while "CFS1 Brooklands" is to the West. Bases North of Ripe are Kenley, Biggin Hill and West Malling, to name a few of the nearest.



AAC Ripe is a "class A" airfield with three runways. 180-360 and 043-223 are intersecting at their respective midpoint while 133-313 is at right angle with 043-223, forming sort of a "T". All runways are made of steel reinforced concrete cast in place in 262² feet slabs for the two major runways and 164² feet for 133-313. The two main runways are 6,562 feet long and 262 feet wide while 133-313 is 4,921 feet long and 164 feet wide.

Taxiways are built with the same technique but are covered with low-grade asphalt. Heavies must use one of the three runways for take-off and landing, depending on winds and ground obstructions. Lighter aircrafts may "scramble" from any open area on the airfield in case of an emergency. They may also land on taxiways in an emergency situation but should preferably use runways.

Main Sites

- A- Fighters' dispersal #1
- B- Bombers' dispersal #1
- C- Bombers' dispersal #2
- D- Fire Post #2
- E- NDB station
- F- Railroad station
- G- Runway 043-223
- H- Runway 180-360
- I- Runway 133-313
- J- Bombers' dispersal #3
- K- Tech site #1
- L- Tech site #2
- M- Watch Office Site
- N- Buildings' compound
- O- Fighters' dispersal #2

Note that some of these sites are described in more details in other plans.

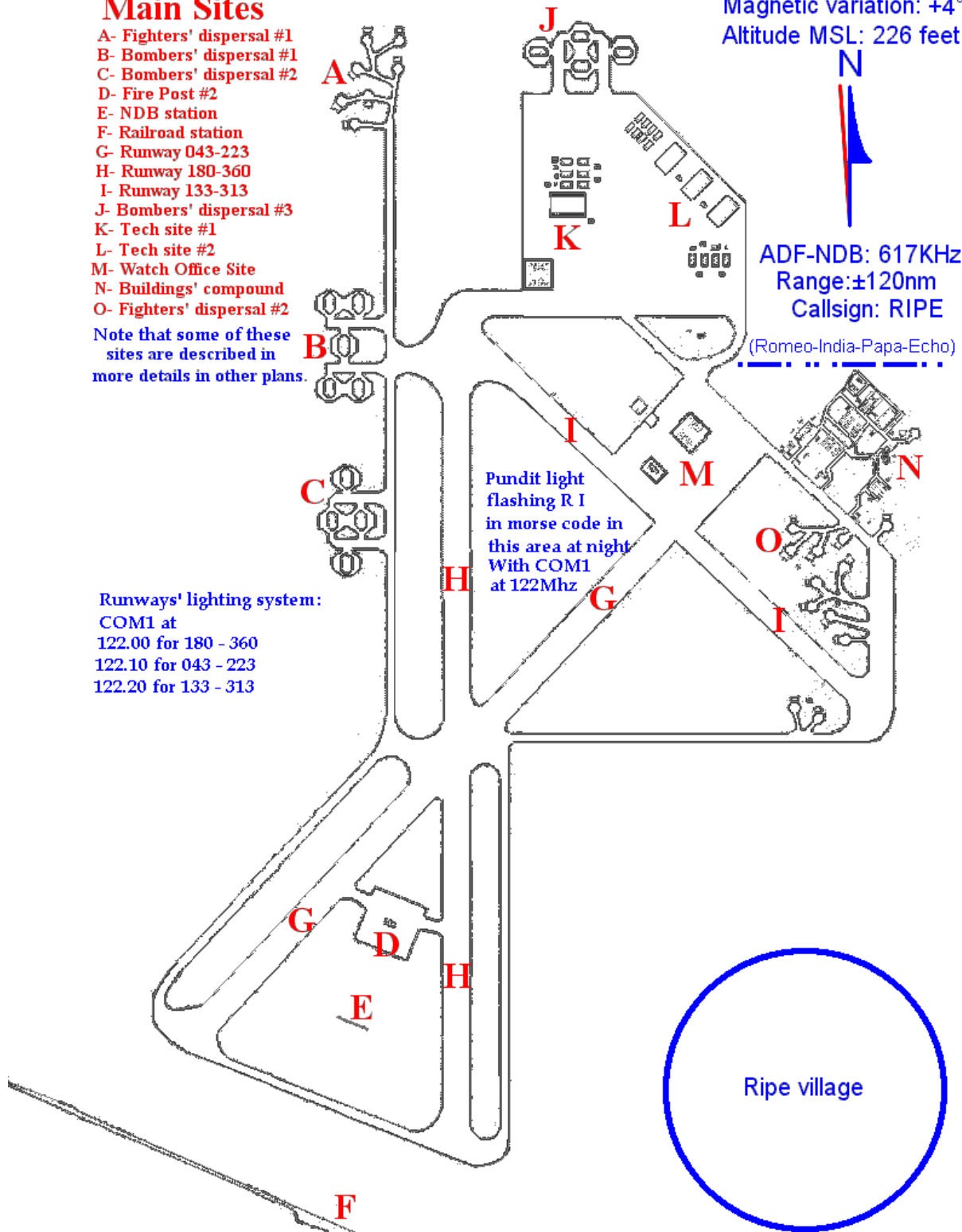
Runways' lighting system:
COM1 at
122.00 for 180 - 360
122.10 for 043 - 223
122.20 for 133 - 313

Pundit light
flashing R I
in morse code in
this area at night
With COM1
at 122Mhz

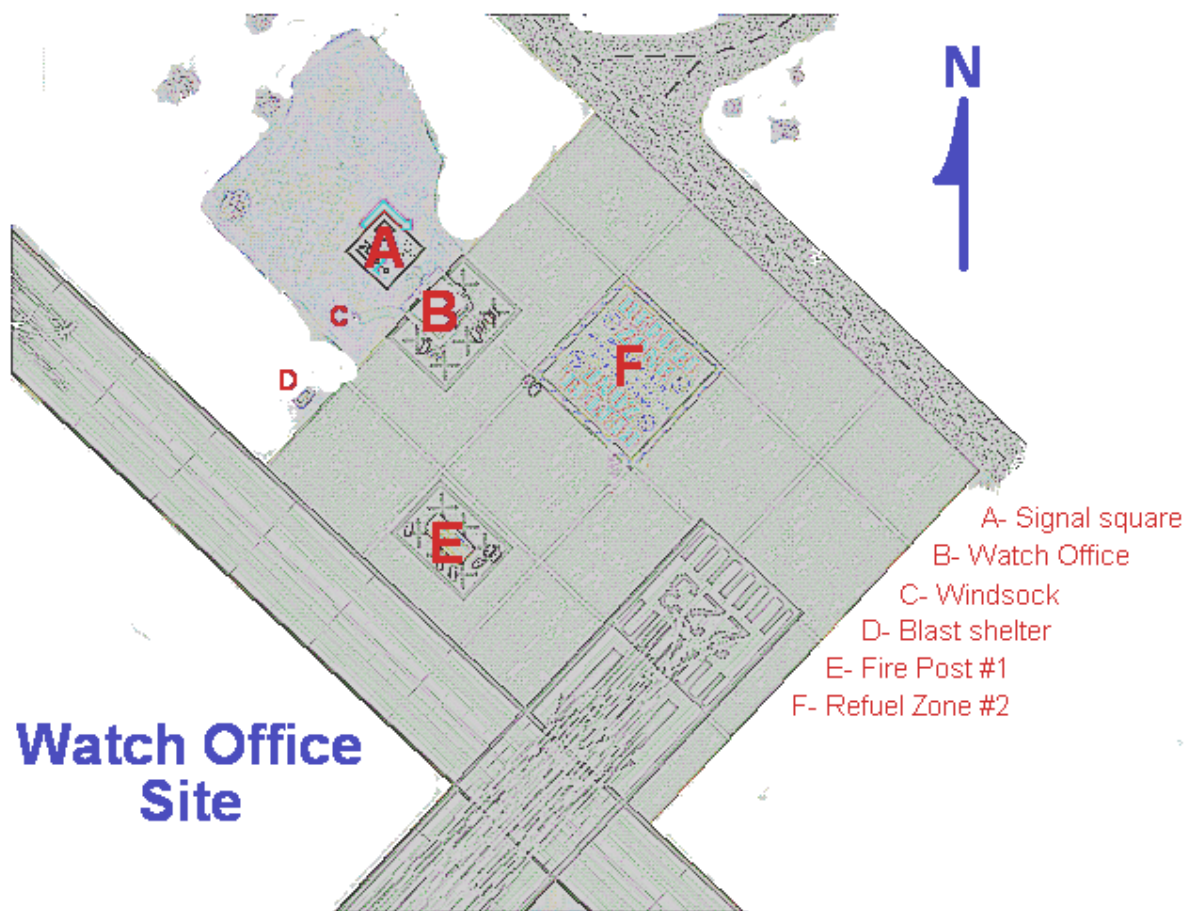
Magnetic variation: +4°
Altitude MSL: 226 feet

ADF-NDB: 617KHz
Range: ±120nm
Callsign: RIPE

(Romeo-India-Papa-Echo)

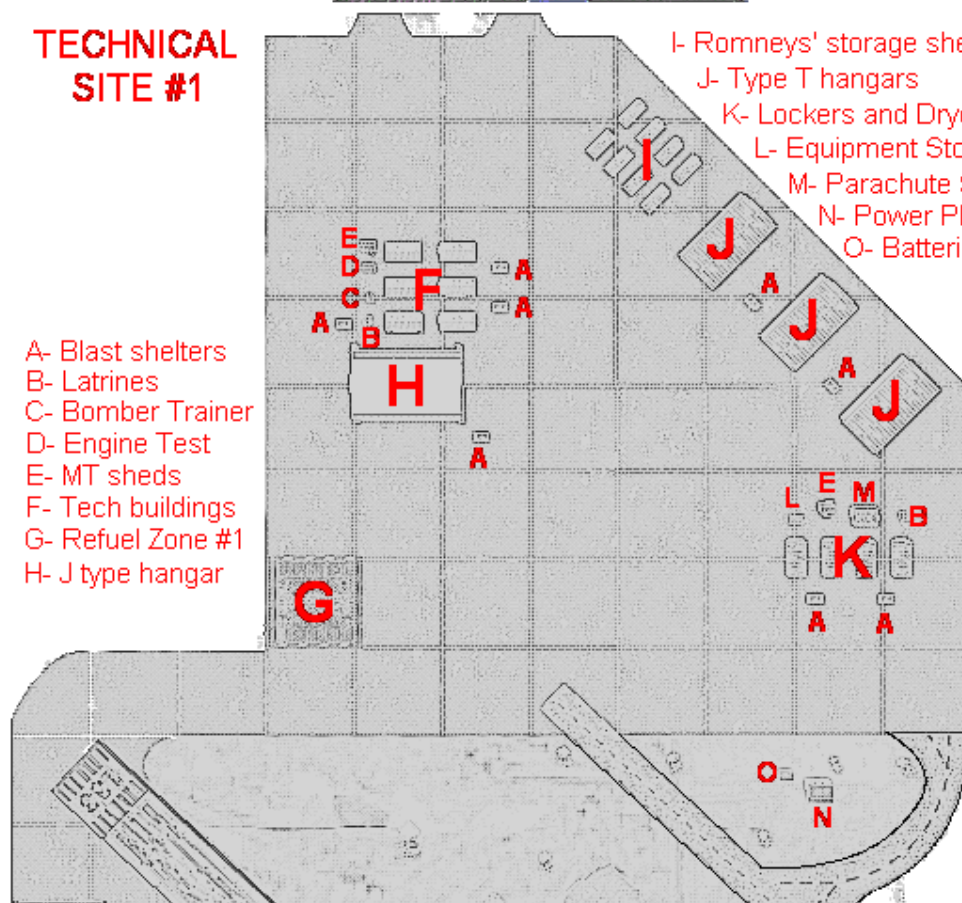


The Watch Office site is North of 043-223 and 133-313 intersection. Apart from the Watch Office itself, it is harbouring Fire Post No 1 and refuel zone No 2. Technical sites No 1 and 2 are sharing the northernmost tarmac, being respectively West and North-East. Technical site No 1 is harbouring a J-type hangar, technical housing installations, and refuel zone No 1. Technical site No 2 is where you will find the three T-type hangars with storage building North and flying crew's buildings South. Power central is South of Tech site No 2.



TECHNICAL SITE #1

- A- Blast shelters
- B- Latrines
- C- Bomber Trainer
- D- Engine Test
- E- MT sheds
- F- Tech buildings
- G- Refuel Zone #1
- H- J type hangar

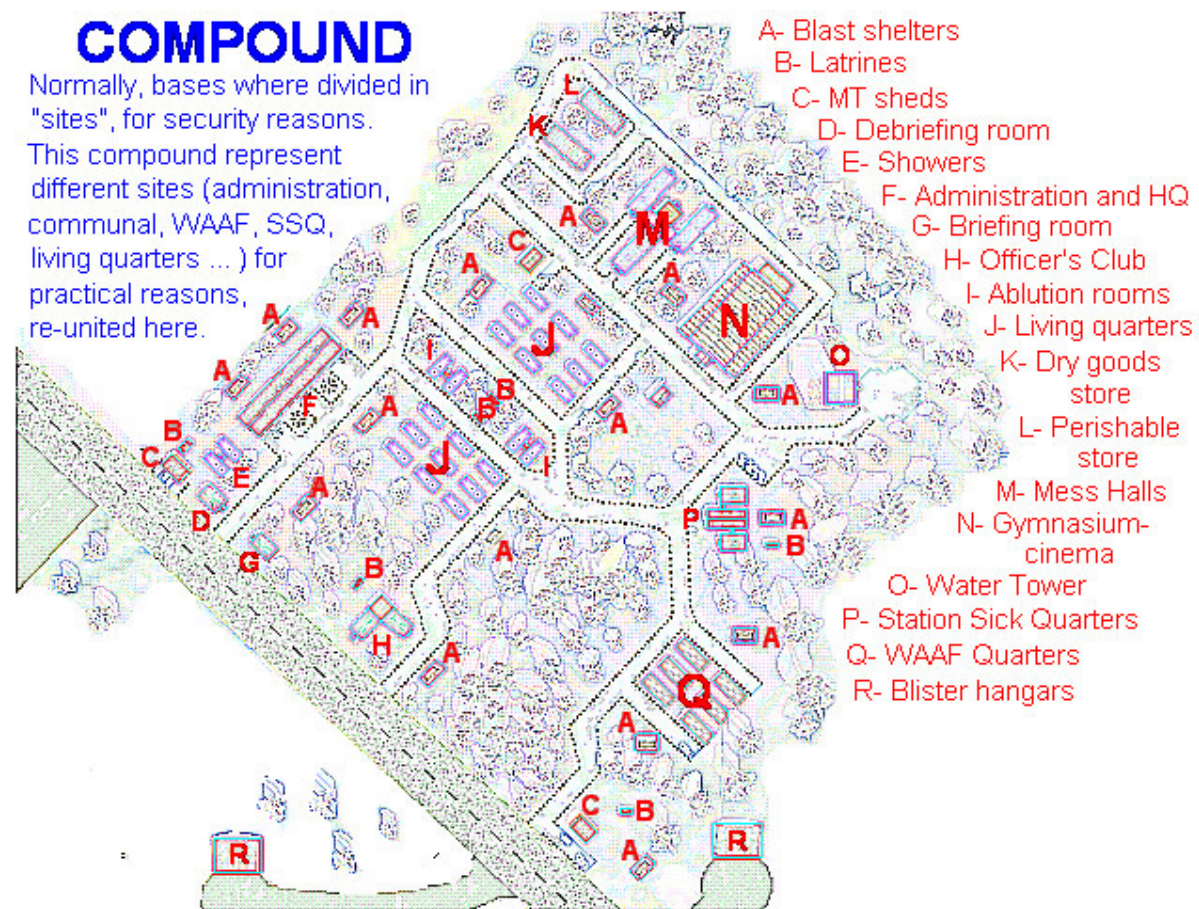


- I- Romneys' storage sheds
- J- Type T hangars
- K- Lockers and Dryers buildings
- L- Equipment Store
- M- Parachute Store
- N- Power Plant
- O- Batteries' Room

TECHNICAL SITE #2



The "compound" is regrouping the Operations site, the Communal site, the SSQ, the WAAF billeting, the living quarters and, naturally, "Humbles' Bees Club", the officer's club open to all on invitation (that comes easy once you buy a round).



What remains of Ripe-Chalvington parishes is suggested by a fistful of houses and farms dominated by the tower of St John the Baptist church. CFS1 memorial is in front of the main entrance of that church. A small train station is visible South of the airfield. West of the main runways, you will find the bomb stores if you look carefully.

I hope that you will enjoy this new addition to the ever growing world of CFS1.

Maj. Hubbabubba, Fitter & Rigger for the AAC.
Corrections by AAC Lt-Col. smilo.

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