



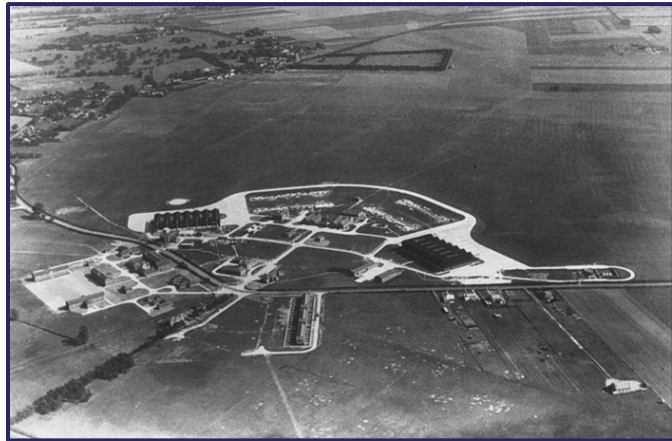
1934

Royal Air Force (RAF) Mildenhall's history of being a large aircraft base goes all the way back to late 1920s. During that time, the British military developed the idea to site a RAF bomber base at Mildenhall in order to meet a perceived "continental threat."

The government purchased land in 1929 and began construction in October 1930. The first official base name was RAF Beck Row, but that changed in 1933 to RAF Station Mildenhall. Contractors completed the first buildings in 1931. Three years later the station was ready for its official opening. RAF Station Mildenhall opened on October 16, 1934.



The MacRoberson Air Race



RAF Station Mildenhall 1934

However, King George V officially dedicated the base on October 19, 1934. Queen Mary, the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of York accompanied the king during the dedication. On the same day, Wing Commander F.J. Linnell, O.B.E., assumed his position as the base's first station commander.

The date for the dedication was, in part, due to the Royal Aero Club, who wanted to begin their England-to-Australia air race on October 20, 1934. The dedication, as well as the start of the MacRoberson Air Race from Mildenhall to Melbourne, Australia, drew 70,000 people to witness both events. Twenty aircraft began the race at RAF Station Mildenhall, but it was two Englishmen, who flew the 11,300 miles to Melbourne in 70 hours, 54 minutes and won the prize of £10,000.



*The De Havilland DH.88 Comet
Grosvenor House, winner of the Air Race*

RAF Mildenhall did not receive its first operational unit until November 15, 1934, when No. 99 (Madras Presidency) Bomber Squadron, arrived at RAF Station Mildenhall. Along with the No. 99 Squadron came the Heyford Night Bomber. The squadron re-equipped with Wellington Bombers in 1938 and left the station in March 1941. Its motto was QUISQUE TENAX (Each Tenacious).



Heyford Night Bombers