

## No. 6 (RCAF) Group - RAF Bomber Command



### Prologue:

At the Declaration of War with Germany in September 1939, the Royal Air Force policy regarding Air Operations was that *"the RAF wanted trained, preferably English speaking air crew, who could be integrated into Royal Air Force Units – in particular to Bomber Command; but there was no requirement for complete units from Allied Nations"*.

Canada – as the Host Nation of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan provided thousands of trained aircrew for RAF Units. *By the end of the War, over one third of all air crew members in RAF Bomber Command were Canadians.* Most were part of RCAF Units, but many hundreds of RCAF Air Crew members served throughout the War in Royal Air Force Bomber Command Squadrons.

The British Government was of the opinion in 1940 that the BCATP effort would require all of Canada's Air resources, and that the formation of Canadian Air Force Operational Units Overseas was not practical.

However, because of World War One experience, and the strong National identity in Canada that followed that War, the Canadian Government had adopted a policy of maintaining National control over all Military Units sent for combat Overseas; Army, Navy, and eventually Air Force. From the beginning of the War, Canadian Army Divisions retained their identities, and were commanded by Officers who were Canadian Citizens - even when operating within the context of a larger, British Strategic Force; e.g., Canada's 1<sup>st</sup> Army Division, within the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army.

The 'Integrated Air Crew' policy of the British Government was not acceptable to Canada, or politically sustainable, and by 1941 RCAF Squadrons were being formed in England and operating as Units attached to RAF Bomber, Fighter, and Coastal Commands. By 1945, forty-eight of the RCAF's eighty-eight Squadrons had either been sent Overseas, or were formed Overseas.

In late 1942, the British Government agreed to provide 'air field' accommodation for the formation of a distinct Canadian Air Force Group – to carry out *'Strategic and Tactical'* bombing operations over enemy occupied Europe.

No. 6 (Royal Canadian Air Force) Group – RAF Bomber Command – was formed on airfields in Yorkshire, in northern England, on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1942

## No. 6 (RCAF) Group - RAF Bomber Command

No. 6 (RCAF) Group was created on **October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1942** by Canadian Government "Order in Council", and was designated a "*Strategic and Tactical Bombing Unit*", operating within the Royal Air Force Bomber Command.



Eight existing RCAF Bomber Squadrons; then operating within other RAF Bomber Command Groups, were designated to be the nuclei of the new No. 6 RCAF Group.

The British Government allocated eleven (11) RAF airports to the Royal Canadian Air Force, although all eleven Stations were not immediately operational with No. 6 RCAF Group Squadrons.

*No.6 (RCAF) Group badge*

*Motto: Sollertia et Ingenium – (Initiative & Skill)*

The transfers of Squadrons – men, aircraft, and ground equipment; and the provision of accommodations, administration, etc., required several months of intense RCAF and RAF Staff activity. Although Operations of the designated Squadrons was somewhat curtailed, Bombing Operations did continue throughout the re-alignment process.

No. 6 (RCAF) Group was formed at RAF Linton-on-Louse Air Station, Yorkshire, Eng., on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1942, and Group Headquarters was moved to Allerton Park, Yorks.; the former of home of Lord Mowbray – on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1942. Allerton Park was 22 miles northwest of the City of York – near the town of Knaresborough, Yorks.

No. 6 (RCAF) Group was declared 'Operational' on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943, and the first Squadron Operations by No. 6 (RCAF) Group were flown on **January 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>, 1943**.

Beginning in October, 1942 with eight RCAF Squadrons, No. 6 (RCAF) Group grew in strength as the allocated RAF Stations became available or were completed; and as new RCAF Squadrons were created or transferred to the Group Command. The initial eight (8) Squadrons grew to be fourteen (14) Squadrons by April, 1945.

Royal Air Force Bomber Command organizational structure of a 'Base' system was established, to provide efficient administrative and technical oversight over multiple Operational Stations.

A 'Base' consisted of a *main base station*, and two to three other *sub- Stations*.

Initially, the four RCAF Bases were referred to by the name of the Station (Airfield) where the Base HQ was established, but in mid-1943 No.6 Group adopted a number system for the four Group Bases:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> Number identified No. 6 Group
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Number identified an individual Base within the Group, e.g. 61, 62, 63, 64.



**Allerton Park** – Yorkshire, England. HQ - No.6 (RCAF) Group, Bomber Command (Google 'Earth')

**No. 6 (RCAF) Group – Commanders - Allerton Park, Yorks.**

Dates:	Rank:	Name:
25 Oct. 42 - 28 Feb. 44	A/V/M RCAF	Brookes, G.E. OBE
29 Feb. 44 - 13 July 45	A/V/M RCAF	McEwen, C.M. CB, MC, DFC

**No. 6 (RCAF) Group – Commanders – Eastern Air Command**

Dates	Rank:	Name:	Location:
14 July 45 - 1 Sep. 45	A/C RCAF	Kerr, J.G. AFC	Main, HQ – Halifax, NS
14 July 45 – 1 Sep. 45	A/C RCAF	Hurley, J.L	Rear HQ – Allerton Park

No. 6 (RCAF) Group was transferred on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1945 to RCAF Eastern Command, HQ at Halifax, NS – to reorganize and train for Operations in the Pacific Theatre, as part of the planned RAF 'Tiger Force'.

**No. 6 (RCAF) Group was disbanded at Halifax, NS, Canada on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945**

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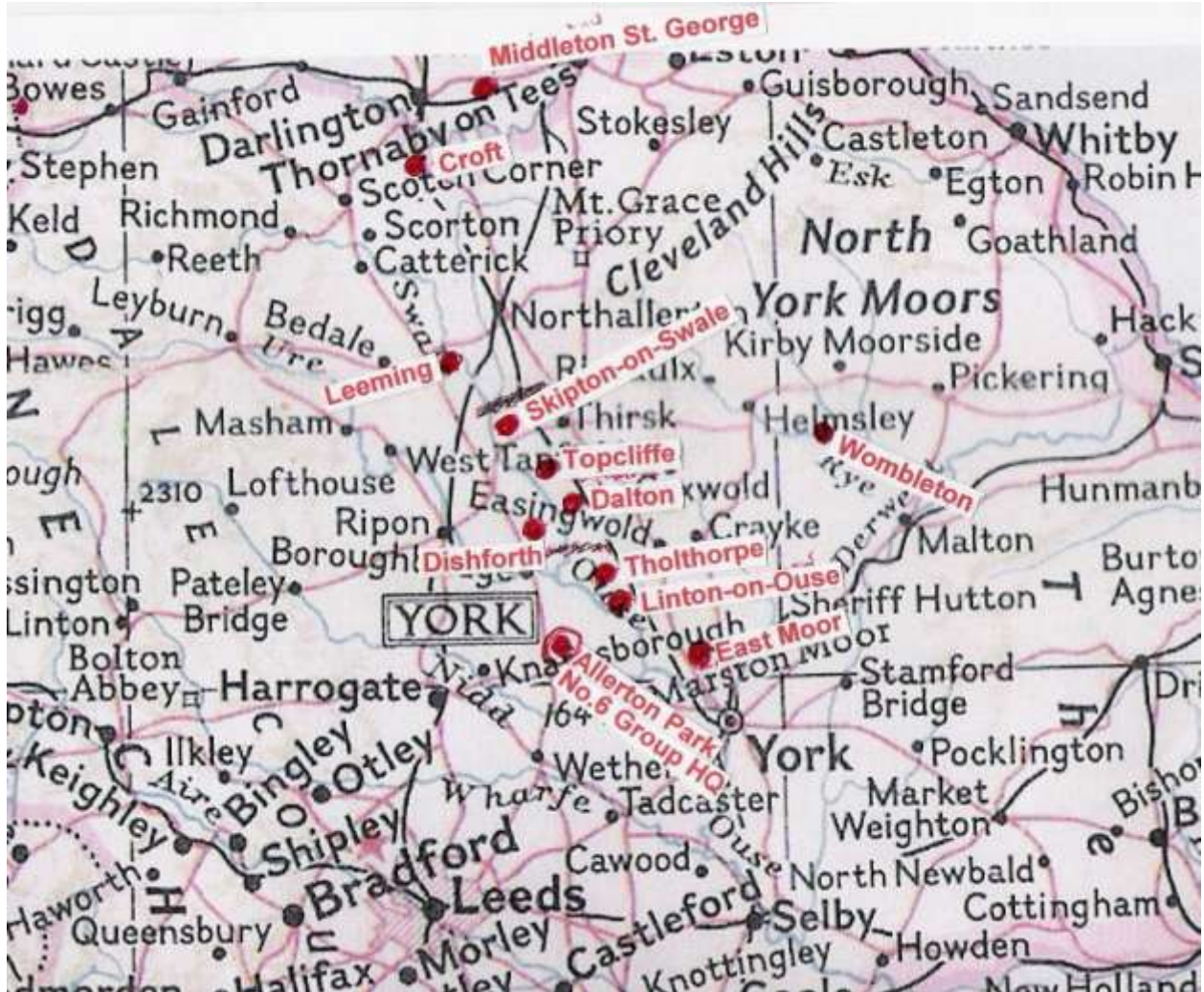
*Bibliography/Resources:*

- "RCAF Squadrons & Aircraft" – Kosteniuk & Griffin
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No\\_6\\_Group\\_RCAF](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_6_Group_RCAF)
- <http://www.raf.mod.uk.bombercomman/h6gp.html>
- Google "Earth"
- "Aerodrome of Democracy". – Hatch.



## No. 6 (Royal Canadian Air Force) Group - RAF Bomber Command 1942 – 1945

### Air Field locations



Ten (10) airfields of No. 6 (RCAF) Group – RAF Bomber Command - were located in the '**Vale of York**' – in North Yorkshire, England - between Darlington and the City of York - Along the Swale River and the Ouse River.

The distance from the airfield at *East Moor*, near the City of York – and the airfield at *Middleton St. George*, near the city of Darlington, is approximately sixty (60) miles. Most of the ten airfields were located within 5 to 10 miles of each other.

The Main Bases and their Satellite Stations were grouped by geographic proximity; e.g. *Topcliffe Training Base* and Satellite stations *Dalton* and *Dishforth* were only five or six miles apart, in an area just south of Thirsk, Yorks. The Training airfield of *Wombledon*, was twenty miles east of *Topcliffe Air Base*; along the foot of the North York Moors.