

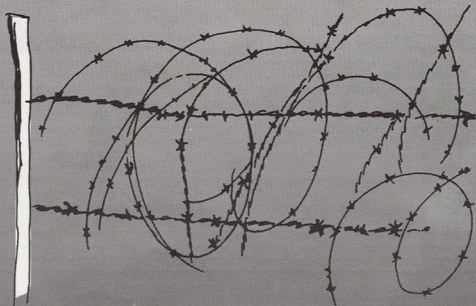
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PLACES IN

WEST SUSSEX

INCLUDING MAP

The places in West Sussex
crucial to the
D-Day landings.



WEST SUSSEX

AND D - DAY 1944



Fifty years ago this June the roads and skies over West Sussex were packed with soldiers, sailors and airmen of our Allied Nations who had arrived in the County as the seconds to D-Day, the 6th June 1944, ticked away.

Even its coastline was not to escape from the hive of activity as huge concrete blocks known as Mulberry Harbours arrived off Pagham Harbour.

Beach areas at Climping, Bracklesham and the Witterings, were used for mock landings as part of Operation Fabius by British and Canadian Troops.

West Sussex had by far the largest concentration of airfields in the country, most of which were Advanced Landing Grounds with British and Allied airmen billeted under canvas.

Fifty five Fighter and Fighter Bomber Squadrons and One Air Sea Rescue Squadron were under the command of RAF Bishop Otter College.

The first meetings to co-ordinate the final D-Day plans were held at The Ship in North Street, Chichester in April 1944.

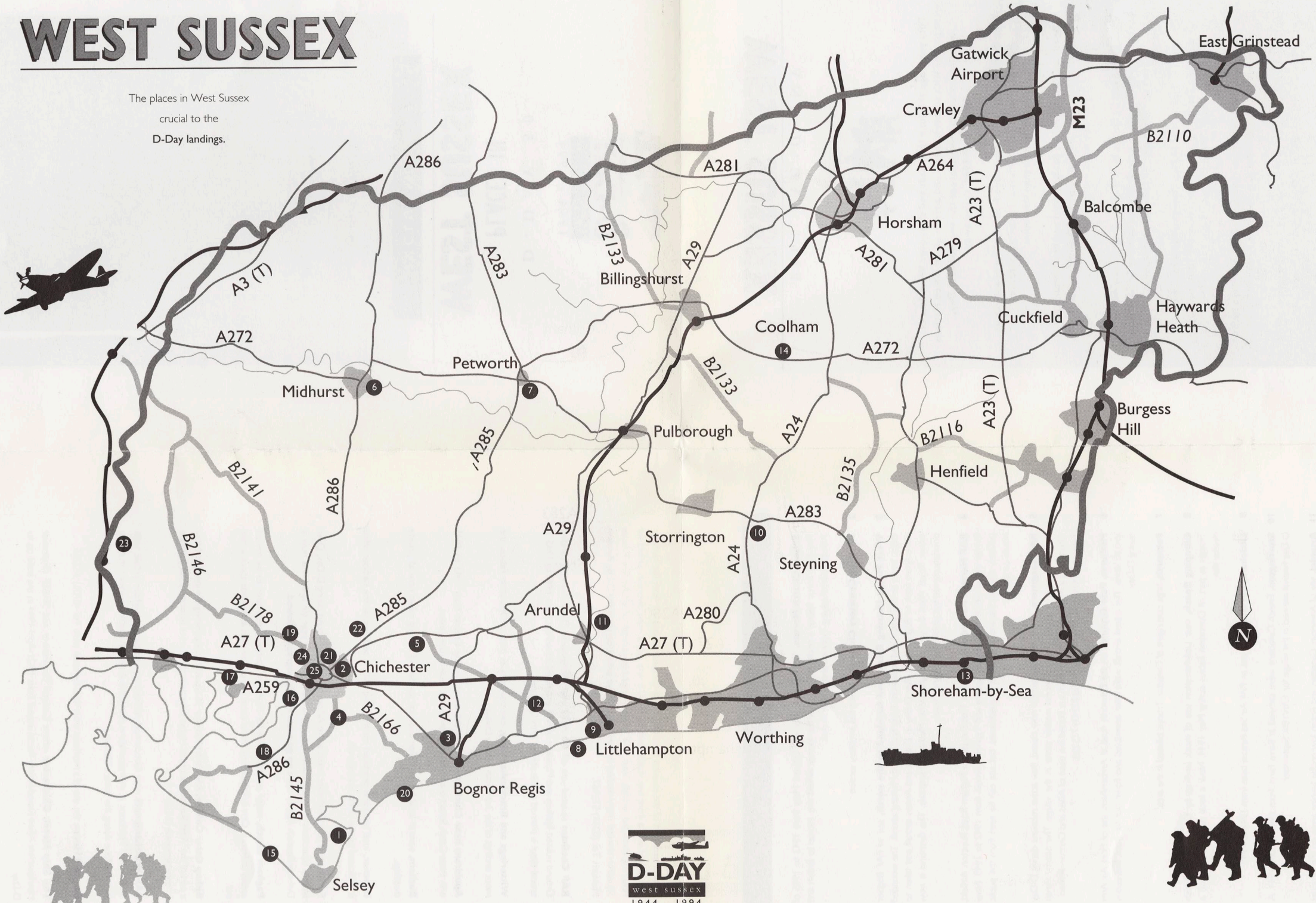
West Sussex can be proud that it was to play a crucial role in D-Day and the liberation of Europe fifty summers ago.

D-Day West Sussex, an illustrated history published by West Sussex County Council will be available from the County Record office and bookshops from late April.

This brochure has been funded by contributions from West Sussex County Council, Arun District Council, Chichester District Council & Chichester City Council.

PLACES IN WEST SUSSEX

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D-DAY
west sussex
1944 - 1994

KEY TO SITES

- 1 **Selsey, Church Norton.** The former Priory was Officers Mess from 1943 to 1945 of Royal Air Force Selsey, a bridle path crosses the former airfield site. Home to British and Allied Squadrons flying Typhoon and Spitfire aircraft.
- 2 **Portfield Cemetery Chichester** which has a military section.
- 3 **West Meads Housing Estate and farmland to the north,** site of RAF Bognor Regis, home to RAF and Allied Squadrons flying Spitfire and Mustang aircraft. The wounded were flown back to Bognor Regis after D-Day in Dakota and Anson aircraft and taken to either Royal West Sussex, or Bognor War Memorial Hospitals. The farmland is now privately owned but visible from Bognor Road.
- 4 **RAF Merston Airfield** near to Walnut Tree Pub on the Pagham Road, Runcton. Airfield, former site of which was home to Spitfire and Typhoon aircraft from 1942 to 1945. Now privately owned, the area is covered in glasshouses, but site can be seen from the public house car park.
- 5 **RAF Tangmere,** Battle of Britain airfield now closed, flew active missions during D-Day period. Museum on site with a memorial marker stone in the village. The nearby Parish Church has a military cemetery in which are buried the dead of Allied and German airmen. Tangmere Military Aviation Museum. Tel (0243) 775223.
- 6 **Midhurst, Polo Grounds** on the Petworth road at Ambersham, site of Fleet Air Arm aircraft store. The crated aircraft were later assembled and flown out for front line duties during D-Day.
- 7 **Petworth,** large contingent of Canadian Troops billeted in the area.
- 8 **Climping Beach,** near Littlehampton site of mock landings by Canadian and British Troops as part of Operation Fabius during May 1944. Now a local nature reserve on a nearby site.
- 9 **Littlehampton Golf Club** was an RAF Air Sea Rescue base from 1942 to 1945.
- 10 **Storrington,** French Canadians were camped at Bams Farm from 1943 to June 1944. A D-Day Festival planned in the village for 17th/18th September.
- 11 **Arundel,** site of American, Canadian and British low profile training areas on the Arundel Estates. The main A27 at Swanbourne was packed with Sherman tanks on the way to Portsmouth and embarkation to Normandy.
- 12 **RAF Ford,** site of front line RAF station on D-Day and reception centre for wounded flown back from Normandy. Now site of Ford Open Prison. Memorial Garden on western boundary of airfield, Climping Church on the eastern side has a number of military graves.

- 13 Shoreham**, part of the invasion fleet, British and Canadian troops left from the harbour. The airfield was a front line station with Spitfires, it was also a main diversion airfield for returning damaged aircraft. Two RAF Walrus amphibian aircraft of an Air Sea Rescue Squadron rescued many ditched airmen. Still an active airfield, on site is the D-Day Aviation Museum. Tel: (0243) 572967.
- 14 RAF Coolham** situated just off the A272 near Billingshurst. This Advanced Landing Ground housed Spitfires and Mustangs of RAF and Allied Squadrons from 1943 to 1945. A special event is planned on the site for 11th/12th June.
- 15 Witterings and Bracklesham Bay**, exercise area as part of Operation Fabius, the mock landings of the 3rd British Infantry Division.
- 16 Apuldram near Chichester**, former Advanced Landing Ground from 1943 to 1945 with three Czech Squadrons operational on D-Day. Now a rose garden.
- 17 Bosham**, several local houses taken over for specialised training roles, now all private dwellings.
- 18 Itchenor**, local boatyards produced many landing craft. A seat outside the harbour office is dedicated to one of the landing craft.
- 19 Funtington** near Chichester, most active Advanced Landing Ground during D-Day. Over twenty squadrons moved through the airfield during its two year life span. It is now a Defence Research Agency and a **no go area. No photography allowed.**
- 20 Paghham Beach**, major assembly area for Mulberry Harbour units, later to be towed across to France. One 6,000 ton unit broke loose and can be seen at low tide about a mile out.
- 21 Bishop Otter College**, RAF control unit for 56 Squadrons supporting the invasion. Now a part of the West Sussex Institute of Higher Education, the science laboratory has a plaque to commemorate D-Day.
- 22 RAF Westhampnett** now Goodwood Airfield, was a front line fighter airfield with Spitfires and Typhoons. A memorial stone marks the American Eagle Squadrons that flew from the base during the Battle of Britain.
- 23 Stansted House**, the site of a memorial cross to a Typhoon pilot. Tel: (0705) 412265
- 24 The Ship Hotel, Chichester** where General Eisenhower and SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) stayed from 19-21 April 1944 in the build up to D-Day.
- 25 Council House (Assembly Room)** North Street Chichester. D-Day Dances were here