

Remembering those who served at RAF Kenley

The Kenley Tribute commemorates all who served here between 1917 and 1959 both on the ground and in the air.

The white Portland stone was sculpted by Bridget Powell and takes the form of an open book whose pages list the number of each squadron stationed here. The figures on the central panel represent the ground staff, aircrew and women personnel who played such an important role in the defence of Britain.



Funded by public subscription the Tribute was built as a millennium project by both the Kenley Residents' and the local RAF Associations.

Please respect the meaning of this place



Keeping them safe, keeping them flying, the ground crew at work.

You are standing in front of a Second World War blast pen designed to protect fighter aircraft from the effects of bombs exploding nearby. Built into the back wall is an air raid shelter that couldn't withstand a direct hit and which doubled as a store. Ground crew had to hurry to rearm, refuel and overhaul the aircraft so they were ready for their next combat sortie.



Reconstruction of the blast bay as it would have appeared during the Battle of Britain, summer 1940.

Imagine you are one of the essential staff who keep the Spitfires and Hurricanes airworthy in August 1940. Your fighter aircraft have already taken off when the siren wails signalling that the airfield is under German attack.

"We raced into the shelter, slammed shut the metal doors at either end and sat on wooden boxes packed with ammunition waiting for the bombs to fall. The noise was deafening as they exploded closer and closer - the ground shook and the kerosene lamp fell to the ground plunging us into total darkness."



Inside the shelter today.



Armourers reload the four machine guns in this Hurricane's wing, 1940.



Instruments are cleaned and the oxygen cylinder replaced before the next flight, 30th November 1940.



Refuelling a Spitfire during the Battle of Britain, September 1940.



An aircrewman helps a pilot with his heavy gear into his aircraft after the call to scramble, 12th November 1940.



This board forms part of the Kenley Heritage Trail created and funded by a partnership between the City of London Corporation, Kenley Airfield Friends Group and Tandridge District Council.