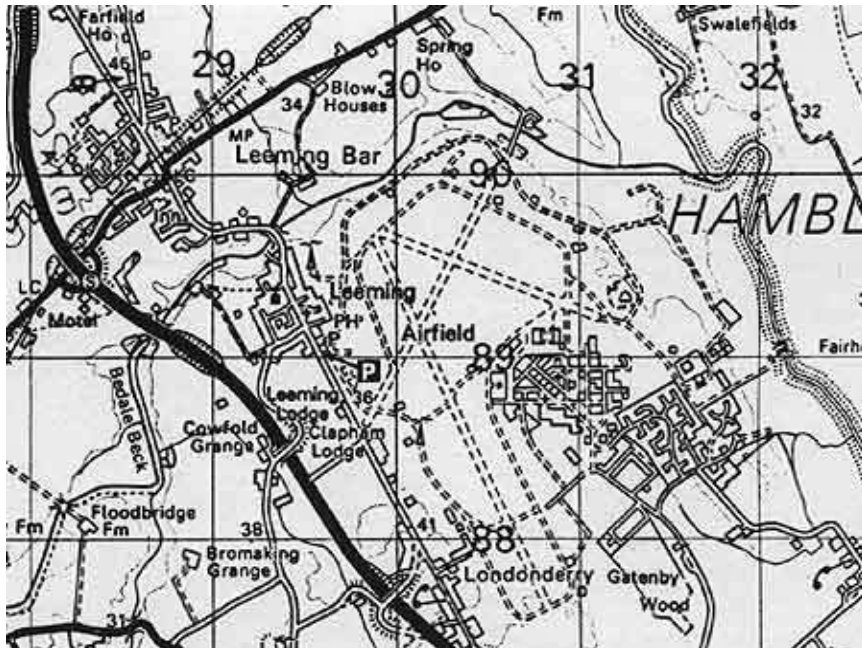


## Leeming, Yorkshire, England - No. 63 (Operational) Base – No. 6 (RCAF) Group



Leeming airfield came into being in 1937, when Yorkshire Air Services acquired a large area of meadowland as an aerodrome for club and private aviation.

Shortly after the start of flying activities, Leeming airfield was taken over by the Royal Air Force. The airfield remained as a turf field at the start of the War; and was home to RAF Squadrons flying 'Blenheims', & 'Whitleys'.

In late 1940, and on into early 1941 – hard surface runways were constructed at Leeming airfield. Runway 17/35 was 5,900 feet in length; runway 02/22 4,900 feet, and runway 13/31 4,200 feet long, and with a perimeter track with 32 pan hardstands

Royal Air Force Squadrons, flying the new four-engine 'Sterling' and 'Halifax' B.Mk.II aircraft operated from Leeming until August of 1942, when the RAF units were transferred out to make room for the new No.6 (RCAF) Group to be formed in October.

In the organization process of No. 6 (RCAF) Group in October 1942, Leeming Air Station saw a number of Unit Transfers from August 1942 to March 1943. No. 419 Squadron RCAF, with 'Wellington' B.Mk.III aircraft, was transferred in August 1942, from No. 3 Group Bomber Command to No. 4 Group at Leeming – remaining for only a week before re-locating to Topcliffe Air Station.

No. 408 Squadron RCAF, with 'Hampdens' came to Leeming in September, 1942, as part of No. 4 Group, and converted to 'Halifax' Mk.II aircraft at Leeming. No. 408 Squadron became part of No. 6 Group in January, 1943; and remained at Leeming until August 1943.

From October 1942 until March 1943, No. 1659 Heavy Conversion Unit operated at Leeming Air Station – re-equipping Canadian Squadrons with Halifax B.Mk.III aircraft.

No. 405 Squadron RCAF was based at Leeming for only a few weeks in March, 1943; before being moved to No. 8 Pathfinder Group at Gransden Lodge. No. 424 Squadron RCAF also had a very short two week stay at Leeming in April, 1943.

In May of 1943, No. 427 Squadron RCAF arrived from Croft, and No. 429 Squadron RCAF arrived from East Moor. Those two Squadrons remained as the only RCAF Operational Units at Leeming Air Station, for the remainder of the War.

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1944, Leeming Air Station was designated as No. 63 (Operational) Base, as the third de-centralized Base organization in No. 6 (RCAF) Group. No. 63 Base Command included Leeming and Skipton-on-Swale Air Stations. The 'Base' concept provided for improved administrative and technical services for the group of Stations attached to a Base. No. 63 Base disbanded on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1945 at Leeming.

#### **RCAF Commanders – No. 63 (Operational Base) Leeming, Yorks.**

May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1944 to January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1945 - A/C Bryans, J.G.

January 13, 1945 to May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1945 - A/C Miller, F.R.

May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1945 to July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1945 - A/C Hurley, J.L.

Both No. 427 and No. 429 Squadrons RCAF remained at Leeming until August 1945 as part of No. 6 (RCAF) Group, and then in No. 1 Group until disbanded in June of 1946.

#### **RCAF Squadrons based at Leeming – 1942 to 1945**

No. 419 'Moose' - No. 4 Group - August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1942 to August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1942

No. 408 'Canada Goose' - No. 4 Group – September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1942 to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1942

No. 408 'Canada Goose' - No. 6 Group – January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943 to August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1943

No. 405 'Eagle' - No. 6 Group - March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1943 to April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1943

No. 424 'Tiger' - No. 6 Group - April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1943 to April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1943

No. 427 'Lion' - No. 6 Group - May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1943 to August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1945

No. 427 'Lion' - No. 1 Group - August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1945 to June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1946

No. 429 'Bison' - No. 6 Group - August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1945 to August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1945

No. 429 'Bison' - No. 1 Group - August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1945 to June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1946



*Lancaster B.Mk.I  
PA260 – ZL+Q  
No. 427 Sqn.  
Leeming, Yorks.  
February 1945.  
Navigator:  
F/O Doug Mackie  
Beaver lodge AB*

*Nose Art:  
"Queenie Get up  
them stairs"*



*Leeming Air  
Station –*

*(Google Earth  
photo 2010).*

Leeming Air Station remained in RAF service after the war, as an Operational Training Unit – with Mosquito, Brigand, Meteors, and Javelin aircraft, until disbanded in 1961.

Additional technical facilities and runway extensions were constructed at Leeming in the 1960's and the Station functioned as No. 3 Flying Training School until 1984.

In 1987, after further runway extensions, three RAF Squadrons operating Tornado F3 fighter aircraft were based at Leeming; and in September 1995, one Squadron flying 'Hawk' aircraft.

Leeming Air Station remains an RAF Operational airfield in 2011.

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