

KENT COUNTY CONSTABULARY · C.I.D. · SEVENOAKS DIVISION  
CASE FILE No. 40/217

SUBJECT: Death of Mrs EDITH MARY CRANE (57), W.V.S.,  
at R.A.F. Station HAWKSMOOR, 15th August 1940.  
OFFICER: Det. Sgt. W. PENNOCK.

URGENT

# DEATH AT DISPERSAL

a murder mystery · Kent · August 1940



INQUEST: MONDAY 10 A.M.

A Z3NG adventure  
400 points

Not to be removed  
from the Police House

MEMORANDUM  
From: Det. Insp. F. G. Hollis, C.I.D., Maidstone  
To: Det. Sgt. W. Pennock    Date: 15.8.40    **CONFIDENTIAL**

Walter,

PC Pike at Hawksmoor telephones that a W.V.S. helper, a Mrs Crane, was found dead before dawn at the R.A.F. aerodrome there, on the perimeter track by the dispersal. The Air Ministry say a petrol bowser went over her in the blackout, and would like the coroner to say so on Monday.

Go and have a look. Quietly. It is an operational station, they have been bombed at Manston and Hawkinge since Monday, and nobody will thank you for getting under their feet. You have no powers over anybody in uniform, so be nice to the adjutant.

If it was an accident, say so, and come home. If it was not, I want it proved: means, motive and opportunity, and something a jury at Maidstone can hold in its hands. You have until the inquest.

Mind the knee.  
F.G.H.

*Put up at the Three Horseshoes. Mrs Bunce does a breakfast, when there's bacon.*

RECEIVED  
15 AUG 1940  
SEVENOAKS DIV.

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STANDING ORDERS

How to Play

This is a text adventure. You type what you want to do, in plain English, and the world answers. There are no multiple-choice questions, no quizzes and nothing to click: only a dead woman, a great many people with something to hide, and four days.

```
> X PICKETS
Pike's string, round the place she lay. The bowser's tracks run through it... and there is
less blood than you would expect. Much less.

> ASK PIKE ABOUT STANNARD
"Reg Stannard?" Pike's moustache moves. "Garage. ARP warden... doing very nicely out of
the war for a man who sells petrol with no petrol to sell."
```

|                                                                         |                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>N</u> <u>S</u> <u>E</u> <u>W</u> <u>NE</u> ... <u>UP</u> <u>DOWN</u> | Go that way. <u>GO TO THE GATE</u> works for places you know.               |
| <u>LOOK</u> · <u>EXAMINE (X)</u> · <u>SEARCH</u>                        | Examine everything. Search what looks as if it wants searching.             |
| <u>TAKE</u> · <u>READ</u> · <u>OPEN</u> · <u>I</u>                      | Evidence you pick up stays with you until you give it to Pike.              |
| <u>TALK TO PIKE</u> · <u>ASK PIKE ABOUT X</u>                           | The heart of the job. Ask everybody about everything, and everybody.        |
| <u>SHOW X TO Y</u> · <u>GIVE X TO Y</u> · <u>TELL X ABOUT Y</u>         | Put the evidence in front of people and watch their faces.                  |
| <u>WAIT</u> · <u>WAIT UNTIL EVENING</u> · <u>SLEEP</u>                  | Days run dawn, morning, afternoon, evening, night. Sleep at the Horseshoes. |
| <u>READ POCKETBOOK</u> · <u>CASE</u>                                    | What you have so far: means, motive, opportunity.                           |
| <u>GATHER EVERYONE</u> · <u>ACCUSE name</u>                             | The last chapter. You get one chance.                                       |
| <u>SAVE</u> · <u>RESTORE</u> · <u>UNDO</u> · <u>HINT</u> · <u>SCORE</u> | UNDO is your friend. HINT, if you must.                                     |

The sidebar draws a map as you go and keeps a notepad. There are **400 points**, for evidence found, truths established and people treated decently.

# The Conduct of an Enquiry

- i. **Look first, early.** Some evidence will not wait. Dew burns off. Rain falls. People tidy up, and some people tidy up on purpose.
- ii. **Everybody is somewhere.** People keep hours, and in August 1940 the Luftwaffe keeps them too. Pilots will be scrambled in the middle of your question. Try again when they land.
- iii. **Ask twice, then ask sideways.** A witness who won't talk about the murder may talk about the weather, the tea, or somebody else. What they won't say is evidence too.
- iv. **Authority opens doors.** You are a civilian policeman on an Air Ministry station. Somebody there hands out chits. Find him.
- v. **Mind the blackout.** At night you will see nothing out of doors without a torch, and a torch needs a battery, and batteries are scarce.
- vi. **Take cover.** When the Tannoy says so, go. Nobody questions anybody in a raid.
- vii. **Be kind.** Several people on this station are frightened, and not all of them are guilty. Some points are for putting things right.

| MEANS                                 | MOTIVE                                | OPPORTUNITY                         |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| something that ties a man to the blow | why, and who gains, with a name on it | who was there, and when, in writing |

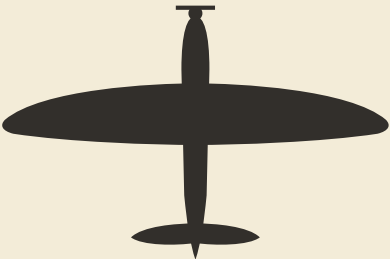


"Twenty years I've been writing things down. Nobody believes it wins cases. It's the only thing that does." – W.P.

# An Aerodrome Dictionary

Everybody on an RAF station speaks a language of initials, slang and numbers, and will assume you speak it too. A policeman should know at least enough to tell when he's being lied to.

- Dispersal.** The edge of the field where aircraft are parked apart, so one bomb can't get them all; and the hut where the pilots wait.
- Readiness.** Pilots in the dispersal hut, ready to be airborne in five minutes. *Available* is longer; *Released* is off duty.
- Scramble.** Take off at once. Rung on a bell and shouted by everybody.
- Angels.** Height in thousands of feet, over the R/T: *Angels one-five* is 15000.
- Bowser.** A petrol tanker lorry that refuels aircraft on the field.
- Trolley acc.** Batteries on wheels, plugged in to start a Spitfire's engine.
- Form 700.** An aircraft's servicing record. The pilot signs it before he flies.
- Erk.** An aircraftman; any of the ground crew who keep it all flying.
- C.O. · Adj · E.O.** Commanding Officer; the Adjutant, who does the paperwork; the Equipment Officer, who holds the stores and the fuel.
- WAAF.** The Women's Auxiliary Air Force: plotters, telephonists, clerks.
- WVS.** The Women's Voluntary Services: canteens, evacuees, salvage, and practically everything else.
- SP.** The RAF's Service Police, with the armband.
- RDF.** Radio direction-finding: the secret that sees them coming. (Nobody says "radar" yet.)
- Pool petrol.** The only petrol sold since 1939, on coupons, and never enough.
- Home Guard.** The Local Defence Volunteers, renamed in July. Most of them still call it the LDV.
- Observer Corps.** Volunteers on hilltops who watch and report every aircraft over land. Sworn special constables.
- Mae West.** A pilot's inflatable life-jacket, named for obvious reasons.



SPITFIRE I  
single-engine fighter · elliptical wing

## Persons at the Station



### Sqn Ldr Rupert Havelock, DFC

*Commanding the Squadron and the station · 26*

Four sorties a day for a week. Would like it to be an accident by Monday, and would like very much to be told it wasn't.

Usually: the dispersal hut by day; his office of an evening



### Flt Lt Maurice Maitland

*Adjutant · "Tubby" · observer, 1917*

A prep-school housemaster in uniform. Loves forms the way a gardener loves weeds. Gives chits the way other men give cigarettes.

Usually: Station Headquarters



### F/O Cyril Oakes

*Equipment Officer · churchwarden · Spitfire Fund treasurer*

Came up through the ranks. Accounts for every pair of boots and every gallon on the station. Very quiet. Very clean hands.

Usually: the Equipment Section



### F/O Tadeusz Wrobel

*"Teddy" · Polish · fought over Poland and France*

Exquisitely polite. Half the station has decided he is a spy, because he writes letters in Polish and talked to Mrs Crane.

Usually: the dispersal hut; the Grange

## Persons at the Station



### P/O Hugo Fanshawe

*Eton and Cranwell · 20*

Laughs a great deal. Needs three matches to light a cigarette. Very pale first thing in the morning.

Usually: the dispersal hut; the Horseshoes



### Sgt Leonard Pardew

*Sergeant pilot · Gateshead · ex-fitter*

Flies the same Spitfires as the officers for less money, and says so. Came down in a turnip field on the 13th. Would like to know why.

Usually: the hut; the Sergeants' Mess



### Cpl Joan Whitlock, WAAF

*Watch office telephonist*

Writes everything down. Has been on the night watch all week, with a cold she is refusing to acknowledge.

Usually: the watch office



### AC2 William Dobbs

*MT driver · Bermondsey · 19*

Was driving the bowser. Believes he killed her. Has been told to believe it.

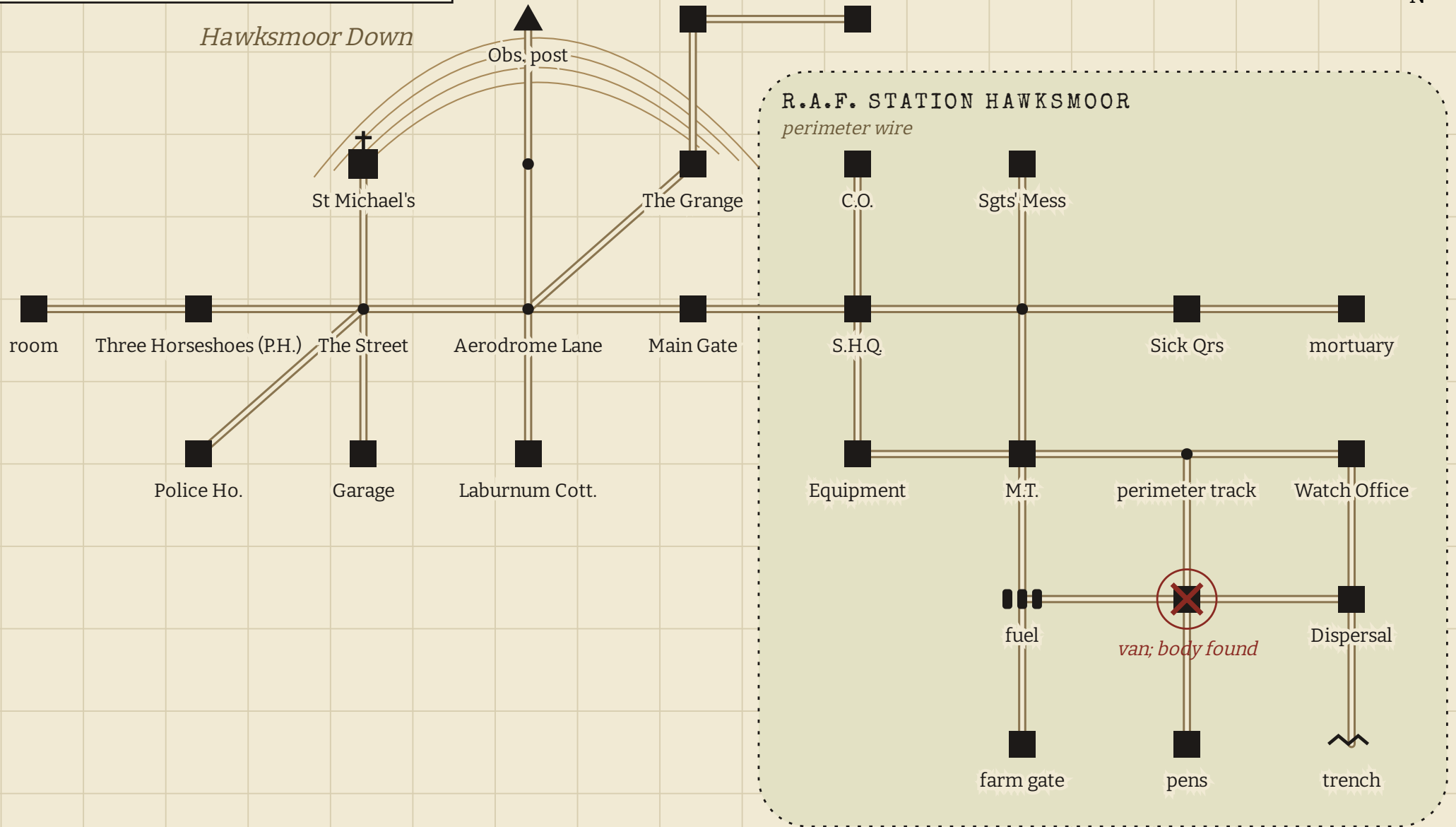
Usually: the MT yard

# SKETCH PLAN: HAWKSMOOR

*not to scale · P.C. 214 Pike · 15.8.40*



*Hawksmoor Down*



## Persons in the Village



**PC Stanley Pike**

*Village constable, Hawksmoor*

Large, slow, pink and patient. Knows every soul in the parish and writes everything in capitals. Has her door key.

Usually: the Police House; the Horseshoes of an evening



**Dr Philippa Anstey**

*GP, and police surgeon for forty years*

Tweeds, cigarette-holder, a voice that could stop a runaway horse. Nothing has ever surprised her. Something may.

Usually: the mortuary at Sick Quarters, Thursday and Friday



**Mrs Venetia Thorne-Rigby**

*WVS Centre Organiser*

Runs the WVS, the Mothers' Union and, it is said, the Rector. Is certain Edith Crane never walked under anything in her life.

Usually: the church, by day



**Mr Reg Stannard**

*Garage proprietor · ARP warden · parish councillor*

Big, red and cheerful. Sells Pool petrol, on coupons, and has a new overcoat. The only man in Hawksmoor with torch batteries.

Usually: his garage; the Horseshoes of an evening



**Flt Sgt Gedge**

"Chiefy". The blast pens.



**Cpl Nutley, SP**

The gate and its book.



**Mr Pocock**

Batman at the Grange.



**Mr Ernest Tapp**

Observer Corps, on the Down.



**Mrs Doris Bunce**

The Three Horseshoes.

## Pocketbook

For your own notes as you play. In the game, READ POCKETBOOK keeps count of your means, motive and opportunity for you.

*Thurs. 15th. Arr. main gate 06.30. PC Pike present.*

*Body removed to Sick Quarters by M.O. (Pike objected.)*

*Tea van left in position. Look at it FIRST.*

MEANS

MOTIVE

OPPORTUNITY

Exhibits

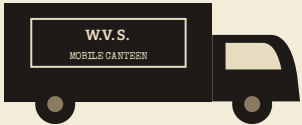


EXHIBIT A

The WVS canteen van. The gift of the people of Guelph, Ontario.



EXHIBIT B

Petrol bowser B2. Driven by AC2 Dobbs at 04.45.



EXHIBIT C

An enamel mug. There are twenty-three, each with initials in nail varnish.

THE HAWKSMOOR  
SPITFIRE FUND

£5,000  
£2,500  
£1,142 7s 6d

Hon. Treasurer: F/O C. Oakes, Churchwarden.  
Accounts available for inspection.

IS YOUR JOURNEY  
REALLY NECESSARY?

WVS CANTEN ROTA, AUGUST  
Every dawn: MRS E. CRANE  
~~Thurs. 15th~~

TEA: 2 oz per person per week, from 9th July.  
Make it stretch.



*Exhibit D is not yet in our possession. Somebody has it.*

The Real Summer of 1940

From July to October 1940 the Luftwaffe tried to destroy the Royal Air Force in the air and on the ground, as the first step towards an invasion. In the middle of August it turned on the airfields of Kent and Sussex. On Monday 12th it hit Manston, Hawkinge and Lympne. **Thursday 15th** was the heaviest day of fighting yet, over the whole country; the Luftwaffe lost more aircraft than on any other day of the Battle, and remembered it as Black Thursday. **Saturday 17th** was, for no reason anyone on the ground could see, quiet. **Sunday 18th** became known as *the Hardest Day*: among much else, nine Dorniers came in at treetop height and bombed Kenley. The raid on Hawksmoor in this game is modelled on that one.

Much of the texture of the game is real. Tea had been rationed at two ounces a week since 9th July. The Local Defence Volunteers had been renamed the Home Guard in July. Signposts had been taken down in case of parachutists, and church bells were to be rung only if the invasion came. Towns and villages up and down the country were raising **Spitfire Funds**: £5,000, it was said, bought a Spitfire. The **WVS** ran canteens everywhere, including on airfields. Families in occupied countries could be sent **Red Cross messages** of twenty-five words by way of Geneva. The **Observer Corps** watched every hill, and its members were sworn special constables. Polish airmen were flying with RAF squadrons before the famous Polish squadrons were formed, and were not always trusted for it.

What is **invented**: Hawksmoor, its aerodrome and its squadron, and every person in this book. The crime is fiction. The people who kept the aircraft flying that summer, in the air and on the ground and in the tea vans, were not.

SPITFIRE I  
*single-engined fighter · elliptical wing*

DORNIER Do 17  
*twin-engined bomber · "flying pencil" · twin fins*

From the recognition cards every observer and gunner learned by heart. A Spitfire I carried about 85 gallons in two tanks in front of the pilot; a fighter that went up short could not come home.

Ask Pike



Type HINT in the game, or find your question and **turn the book upside down**. Each answer goes from a nudge ❶ to a shove ❸. "I'll not say a word to the Inspector, Sarge," says Pike. He will, but slowly, in capitals.

- A.** I don't know where to start.

**C.** What was she writing in her notebook?

**E.** Fanshawe won't talk.

**G.** I can't get into that room.
- B.** Nobody will show me anything.

**D.** Where's the weapon?

**F.** Where did the petrol go?

**H.** How do I finish?

Ranks and Points

There are **400 points**: for the places you go, the evidence you find, the truths you establish, a raid survived, and two innocent people put in the clear. The best ending is worth fifty on its own. Ranks, by the Chief Constable's scale:

- Under 100 ..... Special Constable
- Under 200 ..... Police Constable
- Under 300 ..... Detective Sergeant (as you were)
- Under 400 ..... Detective Inspector
- 400 ..... Superintendent, and a pint at the Horseshoes

Endings

There are several ways for the case to close. Only one of them is justice. Some are quiet, some are unfair, and one is very loud. If you accuse the wrong person, or the right person too soon, the story will go on without you, as stories do.



A Flight, at readiness. Four of them. For now.

ANSWERS (one step at a time!)

**A.** Begin where she died, before the dew burns off.

❶ The tea van is at the dispersal: east through HQ.

❷ Camp Road, the MT yard, the perimeter track.

❸ EXAMINE the GRASS by the van on Thursday morning, then SEARCH the VAN.

**B.** You have no authority on an RAF station.

❶ Somebody there issues it.

❷ The adjutant loves paperwork.

❸ ASK MATTLAND ABOUT a CHIT, then READ the BOOK at the guardroom.

**C.** She wrote everything down twice: once at the van, once at home.

❶ PC Pike has her door key.

❷ At Laburnum Cottage, READ the LEDGER on the bureau.

**D.** Something is missing from the front of her van.

❶ A WAAF in the watch office saw a light that night.

❷ ASK WHITLOCK ABOUT the TORCH, SEARCH the FIRE POINT at the fuel dump. Before Sunday.

**E.** He has a secret, and she kept it.

❶ Look in her kitchen, or ask the sergeant pilot about him.

❷ OPEN the biscuit TIN at the cottage; then, away from the hut, ASK FANSHAW about the SUGAR.

**F.** Somebody at the farm gate at half past three.

❶ Look at the tyre marks there, and at a certain lorry; or ask the man on the Down.

❷ EXAMINE the CANS at the garage, then ASK STANNARD ABOUT PETROL.

**G.** The batman obeys one man.

❶ Show the Squadron Leader what she wrote to him.

❷ ASK HAVELOCK ABOUT the NOTE, then SEARCH the GRATE.

**H.** READ your POCKETBOOK. You need one of each.

❶ When the pocketbook holds, you'll be told.

❷ GATHER EVERYONE, then ACCUSE the murderer (twice).

# Somebody ought to count for her.

Kent, August 1940. Twelve Spitfires, four sorties a day, and a tea van at the edge of the grass. Before dawn on the heaviest day of the Battle so far, the woman who ran it is found dead on the perimeter track, and everybody would like it to have been an accident. A murder mystery in the classic text-adventure style, with a village full of secrets, an aerodrome full of frightened young men, one respectable man with very clean hands, and until Monday to prove it.

"They're saying," you said.

"Yes, Sarge," said Pike. "They are."

— Opening

"I have been a churchwarden for eleven years."

— somebody

"It is raining cats and dogs."

— F/O Wrobel, to his mother

"The dead don't bruise, Sergeant."

— Dr Anstey

## IN THIS FILE

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- ✦ Conduct of an Enquiry
- ✦ Aerodrome Dictionary
- ✦ Persons of Interest, illustrated
- ✦ Plan of Hawksmoor
- ✦ Exhibits
- ✦ The Real Summer of 1940
- ✦ Ask Pike (hints)

CASE OPEN



Written by Carl, MOICR · Runs on the Z3NG adventure engine  
All persons, the station and its squadron are fictitious.

400 POINTS