

PARHAM AIRFIELD MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER JULY 2019



Registered Charity Number 284146

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the July edition of our monthly newsletter. Our museum has again been popular with visitors, particularly now the weather is warmer. By 26th June this had included 288 children, including two classes of 11-year olds from Morland Primary School in Ipswich. Readers will appreciate the importance of explaining to younger generations Station 153's role in the war against Nazism.

Sometimes it feels as though we are part of a large, international family. Our new Prisoner of War room has attracted a lot of interest. As always it is a pleasure to welcome the relatives of those who served. S/Sgt. Marion Laird, flight engineer and gunner, was one of the Ed Weldon crew who became POWs. He has left us fascinating accounts of his parachute jump and the long trek from Stalag Luft III to Moosburg, South of Munich. His son Robert and family were thrilled to see their father featured in the exhibition and have donated more artefacts for our archive.

Another downed airman who became a prisoner was Robert O'Hara of the 571st. His two daughters, Patti and Sheila, visited us with their husbands, right. They too were moved by our exhibition and have given the museum access to more archive material about life in the camps.



A different aspect of the war was illustrated by a visit by the son and family of Major Alexander McElvie, Royal Artillery. Having survived Dunkirk,

he was in command of an anti-aircraft searchlight battery in Monewden, Suffolk. Their HQ was at Brandeston Hall, now the prep school for Framlingham College.

Various historians also contact us. In the last month we have had a visit from one investigating the impact of the P51 Mustang on the air campaign. Another is researching for a TV documentary and asked to see our exhibits relating to the accident in which Joseph Kennedy, John F Kennedy's elder brother, was killed when a bomber converted to a remote-controlled flying bomb exploded prematurely over Blythburgh, Suffolk.

As ever we are indebted to our volunteers, who give a warm, informed welcome to our guests and carry out all those essential jobs behind the scenes. Entries on Trip Advisor have again been very complimentary. Some volunteers even get a personal mention!

I hope you enjoy your reading and we look forward to welcoming you to Station 153 again soon!

Peter Senior

PLEASE HELP US MAKE OUR 'HIDDEN GEM' LESS HIDDEN!

Visitors often comment on our museum being a 'hidden gem' - we are keen to resolve this! Please look out for our adverts in 'Summer in Suffolk' supplements, 'Families' magazine (this is given out to 16,000 primary school children), Ipswich24, The East Anglian Daily Times, Nearthecoast.com and other local publications.

We are also trying to make sure that a supply of our leaflets has been left in local hotels, tourist information centres, camp sites and other places likely to attract visitors to our area. Most proprietors are very happy to have them. If you are visiting us again soon and have easy access to any possible places that we may not have visited, please ask a volunteer for some leaflets and help us get the word around.

If you have enjoyed your visit to the museum please do tell friends and family about us- word of mouth is very powerful advertising!



FREE ADMISSION

PARHAM AIRFIELD MUSEUM

Comprising
The 390th Bomb Group Memorial Air Museum

The Museum of the British Resistance Organisation - The Auxillary Units

Parham, Nr. Framlingham,
Suffolk IP13 9AF
01728 621373
www.parhamairfieldmuseum.co.uk
Email: parhamairfield@yahoo.co.uk
Join us on Facebook: ParhamAirfieldMuseum



"Fantastic, Awesome, Touching" J.L. (USA)
"Back to see the new building - an asset to an already excellent museum." A+J.N
"Another splendid visit - will be back again. Good displays and wonderful volunteers." HM
"Very informative with a wide range of exhibits" L.L



PARHAM AIRFIELD MUSEUM
FREE ADMISSION

FREE Children's Ink Stampers Trail

WW2 military exhibits displayed in original 390th BG Control Tower.
Also underground replica bunker, uniforms, roof-top views from the glass house, gift shop & tea room.

Open 11-5 Sundays & Bank Holiday Mondays until end of October
11-4 Wednesdays in June, July & August

www.parhamairfieldmuseum.co.uk

Sat Nav postcode: IP13 9AF. Museum is signposted from the A12.

Parham Airfield Museum
is situated on a World War II United States Air Force station.

The 390th Bomb Group Memorial Air Museum pays tribute to the 740 servicemen killed or "missing in action" from this airfield and the further 754 who were taken as Prisoners of War.

The Museum of the British Resistance Organisation provides an insight into "Britain's Secret Army", with contemporary artefacts housed in the Nissen huts and a unique replica secret underground bunker. The museum aims to shed light on "Britain's best kept war secret".

"A hidden gem",
"A very moving tribute",
"A cracking museum"
"It made our kids think- we all learnt something"



SOME OF OUR RECENT VISITORS

We have been fortunate to have many wonderful visitors with special connections to the museum during the past month.

We were delighted to welcome the family of Robert O'Hara. Patti's and Sheila's father was a Radio Operator with the 571st squadron. Following their visit, Patti and her husband Ted made contact to express how much they enjoyed their trip. An extract of their letter is below & they have allowed us to share this with you.

"Words can never truly express our thankfulness to you and your amazing volunteers during our visit to the airstrip and museum last Wednesday, June 5th. It was a magical day that we will remember for the rest of our lives. The kindness, grace and incredible amount of knowledge everyone bestowed upon us was truly remarkable.

I remember as Peter was showing us the Control Tower, I closed my eyes for a moment and was transported back to 1944. I could see the planes using the access roads heading toward the main runway readying themselves for take-off as well as the ground crews making sure everything was just right. I could hear the control tower instructing the pilots they were cleared for take-off and wishing them a safe return home. I could see the relief of the crews and mechanics as they made it back with their planes shot up but everyone safe. For the briefest of moments, I was there.

Please use our donation any way you see fit to keep the spirit of the airfield, museum and the dedication and sacrifice of the men and women who served there alive to educate future generations. The work you and your great volunteers do is simply too important. It has to be preserved."

We think this really does capture the essence of the museum wonderfully. We very much agree that being in the Control Tower with Glen Miller playing, surrounded by WWII paraphernalia is hauntingly evocative.

Other relatives visiting recently include Robert Harriman and family, right. Robert's father William Harriman was a radio operator/gunner for the Stutzman crew.



Left, Jim Bolger and family came to see us too: Jim's father James served in the 570th. Through our Facebook page David Biddlecombe discovered James was on the same crew as his own father. We love hearing of descendants making such connections.

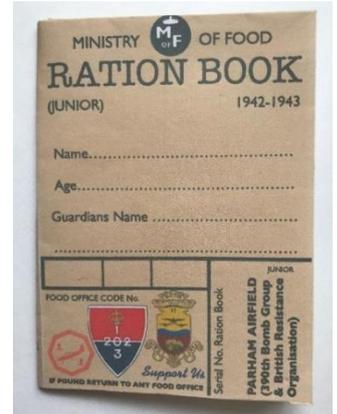




New for summer 2019, we have special replica ration books for children to collect special WWII ink stamps in during their visit. These are proving very popular with younger visitors, who get a small edible prize on completion of the trail!

Increasing our number of displays and attractions to engage younger visitors is an area we are keen to work on.

Watch this space!



SPECIAL EVENT

Kevin Drain and Anna Hartman, both 390th descendants, are organising a regional gathering in Ohio on Saturday 27th July.

Kevin writes *“On behalf of the Friends and Family of the 390th Memorial Museum I wanted to invite everyone to our 1 day regional gathering in Dayton, Ohio. The purpose of this gathering is to strengthen our community, and preserve the history of our 390th veterans. If you have any photos or stories please bring them to share with the group. If you are interested in attending please fill out the survey below <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/390th-memorial-museum-regional-gathering-dayton-ohio-tickets-62024193031>*



If you have any questions, please email kevindrain10@gmail.com

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

You may register for the morning tour of the National Museum of the USAF until the morning of the 27th.

However, tickets for dinner must be purchased by Wednesday, July 24th.

8:30 am: Meet at the National Museum of the USAF

- Join us out front of the Museum for a group photo. Take a chance to look around the Museum, and join our group for the 10:00 am tour.

5:00 pm: Dinner at the Champaign Aviation Museum

- Meet and greet starts at 5 pm, with presentations from Frank Drain and Kate Doak-Keszler. A buffet style BBQ dinner will be served at 6 pm.

FROM OUR ARCHIVIST

AIRMAN OF THE MONTH



RICHARD O. SMITH

21 August 1921– 19 July 1944

Richard was born in Pennsylvania and enlisted into the USAAF on 31st August 1942. He trained as a Pilot and tragically flew just 1 mission from Station 153. On mission 153 to Schweinfurt, Richard was piloting 42-30642 'Geronimo'. At approximately 08:45am he called in over VHF and said he could not feather an engine and had to turn around as he was losing altitude fast. The plane crashed at Haren, Belgium with no survivors.

Richard is buried at the Ardennes American Cemetery with the rest of his crew. He was 23.



Deceased Killed in action

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after February 17, 1897 and on or before December 31, 1921)		ORDER NUMBER
SERIAL NUMBER T F 875	1. NAME (Print) Richard Oliver Smith	T 10,903
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) Covington, Tioga Pa.		
3. MAILING ADDRESS Covington, R.D. #1.		
4. TELEPHONE 55R11 Wellsboro	5. AGE IN YEARS 20 DATE OF BIRTH Aug. 21 1921	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Covington, Pa.
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Oscar D. Smith, Covington, R.D. 1		
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Corning Glass Wks., Wellsboro Pa.		
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Wellsboro Tioga Pa.		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE Richard O. Smith (Registration's signature)		

D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 1-1-42) 10-21030-1

Jennie Smith

ORAL HISTORY



We are pleased to announce, that by kind permission of Ray & Sally McFalone, we will soon be sharing some very special oral history preserved from their interviews with 390th Veterans. The McFalones recorded hundreds of Veterans' accounts and are pleased for us to share some of these precious memories with you. More on this in our next newsletter...

BRITISH RESISTANCE ORGANISATION MUSEUM

Obituary of Sir Clive Rose GCMG, Former Patron of Parham Airfield Museum

Several hundreds of people crowded the cathedral size Church of St Peter and St Paul, Lavenham, Suffolk, during the afternoon of Friday, 17th May 2019, to commemorate the life of Sir Clive Rose, distinguished soldier, defence expert and diplomat, who died a month earlier, aged 98. They were treated to a festival of music, poetry, memories of his long life and achievements; and his Christian religious commitment.



Sir Clive, one of Britain's most powerful officials, deputy to Sir John, later Lord Hunt, Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service, had a variety of worldwide responsibilities during his Government service for which he was honoured with the Grand Cross of St Michael and St George, Britain's highest civil award.

In 1978, Sir Clive was the principal advisor of Constitutional precedents available to the then Prime Minister, James Callaghan, and the PM's powers and responsibilities if it was decided that the country should be placed under Martial Law, during the anxious Winter of Discontent.

After retirement in Suffolk, Sir Clive was a director of Control Risks, a quasi-official public company, skilled as negotiators in cases of terrorist hostage taking and ransom payments. At home, he deployed his wide sphere of influence greatly to the advantage of the people of Suffolk - and the village of Lavenham in particular.

For more than a decade, Parham Airfield Museum was privileged to record him among the list of their Patrons. John and Jill Warwicker represented the Museum at his memorial service.

Thank you to John Warwicker for providing this obituary.