

PARHAM Airfield Museum

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN...

Spring 2022

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. Here you will find articles which we hope will be of interest together with information about forthcoming events.

This promises to be a busy season. We opened as planned on 3rd April. The highlight for this Spring is likely to be the official ceremony to open the new Exhibition Hall. This will be on Saturday 14th May. Guests have been invited in the morning and we will be open to the public from 1pm. There will be a gathering of vintage World War Two vehicles that day and on Sunday 3 July. Various car clubs will be visiting on other days. We are also expecting several parties from the National Museum of World War Two in New Orleans. Some schools are already booked. Several relatives of veterans are expected on other dates: we are honoured and will be thrilled to greet them.

We are extremely grateful to David Nelson in North Carolina, who has made and gifted us a diorama of Station 153 as it looked in September 1943— more on this on page 3.

Our volunteer working party has continued throughout the winter. Numerous tasks have

been completed to improve our exhibitions and get the buildings ready to open. We have built a new table to display the airfield plan up in the Watch Office. This will be the first step in replacing the other desks that display the equipment used by Flying Control. An additional memorial for the chapel is almost complete. It will comprise photos of many of those brave young men who did not return.

A future project is the conversion of our old store in the chapel area into a living room of the early 1940s. If you have any furniture, domestic items or similar from that era that you could pass on to the museum, please let us know!

A heartfelt thank you to all those who have supported us financially in recent months. Donations remain our main source of income and are much appreciated.

As ever, we are grateful for the time given by our dedicated band of helpers.

Thank you for keeping in touch with us and supporting our work.

Best wishes to you all. We hope that many of you will be able to visit us soon.



“There never was a good war or a bad peace”

Benjamin Franklin

Remembering the horrors and sacrifices of a war fought in the defence of freedom has become even more relevant over the past couple of months.

Our thoughts are with all who are currently affected by the atrocities in Ukraine.

Maintenance & Improvements

Right, the store that links in to Exhibition Hall is coming on well.

This will house the Jeep.



Left, the Barrack room has been brightened by a fresh coat of paint to the floor.



Station 153 Framlingham Diorama

We have just finished installing the diorama of the airfield which Dave Nelson from Greenville, N. Carolina has donated to our museum. Making it in his front room, it took him some two years to research and construct and shows an accurate and very detailed layout of the airfield, bomb dump, squadron camp sites, and the contours and houses of the immediate surrounding villages.



Built to a scale of 1:2400 it represents the airfield layout as it was in September 1944, with B17s parked on their hardstands. It even incorporates active runway lights! It measures 50 inches X 74 inches. Sited in a prominent position in our Moller Building this amazingly detailed exhibit has already attracted much interest from visitors and volunteers alike.

After a few minor delays with shipping and customs clearance at Stanstead airport it eventually arrived safely at Parham on 6th January securely packaged in its padded plywood container.

Our chairman, proudly showing us his carpentry expertise, has made a timber framed purpose built base which he finished to a very high standard to support and display the diorama. A team of our volunteers have made a transparent canopy to protect the delicate details of the model from damage by the public.

We are very grateful to Dave for all his time and skill spent on this project and we are looking forward to welcoming him in April to see the finished project in situ.

Peter Kindred



Left, Peter Senior in action. Above, Martin and Richard gluing up the frame. Right, the finished display..

Parham Airfield Museum Spring 2022

UPCOMING EVENTS

We are very pleased to be welcoming so many groups back to the museum.

Sun 24th April Visit from volunteers of Lanman Museum, Framlingham

28th & 29th April School visits to the museum

Sat 30th April Dave Nelson– who made our 390th Diorama– is coming to visit

Sun 8th May Party of 32 from WW2 Museum in New Orleans WW2 Museum

80 classic cars visiting from Eastern Counties Motor Club and Suffolk Vehicle Enthusiasts Club.

Members of public are welcome to come and admire these incredible cars

Sat 14th May New Exhibition Hall Opening

The Museum will be open to the general public from 1-4pm

and there will be a static display of military vehicles.

Weds 8th June Visit from a Norfolk car club

Weds 15th June Visit from Classic cars group

Sun 3rd July Again, we are lucky enough to have military vehicles visit the museum.

Do come along and see these beautifully preserved specimens. The owners will be on hand to answer any questions you may have and the day promises to give lots of great opportunities for photos.

We also have descendants of 390th veterans booked in to visit us on the following dates so far: 24th April, 14th May, 4th June and 27th July.

**We are open to the public on Sundays until the end of October,
Bank Holiday Mondays and Wednesdays in June, July and August.**

Click here to view our Trip Advisor page or add your own review: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g186387-d8453897-Reviews-or10-Parham_Airfield_Museum-Woodbridge_Suffolk_East_Anglia_England.html



563rd Postal Unit

This unit was activated in April 1943 in Fort Benning and following serving ground personnel in Colchester for a few months, it arrived at Station 153 on 26th March 1944. Here it served the 390th and three other local air bases.

As many as 3,000 sacks of parcels were handled through this Postal Unit on a normal month, and 6,000 during the Christmas season. The finance section had an average monthly sale of \$125,000 worth of money orders and \$8,000 of stamps.



Left, due to limited space in the post office large shipments had to be sorted outside.

The greatest factors in maintaining and boosting the morale of the army personnel were the letters and packages from home.



Alternative Hydraulic Fluid

This story was told to Mick Tipple by Bob Gilmore, 571st Squadron, at the 390th Veterans Association Reunion at Spokane in 1994.

Bob Gilmore (Tail Gunner) and his Pilot Fran Maher were reminiscing on trivia (as old folks are allowed to do) when Fran Maher told an amusing story that happened on a mission that they had flown on June 12th, 1944, to the airfield at Omer, France, Mission 127.

The aircraft was B17G 42-97830 FC-E of the 571st B.S. 390th B.G. The mission was a milk run, except that on the way home the Lead Navigator got lost and took the group over the heavily defended area of Dunkirk.

Our aircraft received damage, a piece of flak barely missed the lower rudder bearing and cables, passed through the top of the Tail Gun compartment and took out most of the rudder.

The following is the story of other damage sustained, told to me by Fran Maher. When Fran Maher (Pilot) attempted to open the cowl flaps nothing happened. It appears that the main hydraulic reservoir had been holed and as this also supplied hydraulic power to the brakes, there was nothing to stop us running off the end of the runway on landing.

The flight engineer, George Farrell patched up the holes, but we did not carry a spare can of hydraulic fluid. Fran Maher then brought his good old Yankee ingenuity to the rescue.

The tail compartment and other stations had relief tubes, missions often lasted over six hours and even young bodies have their limits! Up in the cockpit and nose compartment there were no facilities and Fran Maher said they regularly used a can. The urine froze at high altitude so there wasn't a problem with spillage.

The relief can had thawed when we descended to a lower altitude and the can was passed around for everyone's 'contribution'. Then George Farrell (Flight Engineer) poured it into the patched up hydraulic reservoir and 'Hey Presto' we had brakes all the way to the hardstand!

Later, Fran Maher said that Red, our Ground Crew Chief didn't seem particularly aggravated at having to purge the hydraulic system of the 'irregular hydraulic fluid'; he was more concerned with the damage we had done to 'his' aircraft.

Red and the ground crew put 830 back together and it floated very well in The Ditching two and a half weeks later (*You may recall reading about this in autumn's newsletter*).

Mick Tipple

AIRMAN OF THE MONTH MARCH



CARLTON DE LAY FISHER

17 JANUARY 1926 – 14 MARCH 1945

Carlton was born in Williams County, Ohio. He enlisted into the USAAF on 14 February 1944. He was a Tail Gunner and was killed on his seventeenth mission from Station 153.

On mission 274 to bomb the marshalling yards at Seelze, near Hanover his plane, the "Heavenly Cent" was hit by another B-17, the "Lady Velma" which had been caught in prop wash. The vertical fin of his plane was hit by A/C831 which bounced off and then hit again. Both aircraft burst into flames and exploded several seconds later. Pieces of plane were seen falling to earth. Only one chute was observed from both crews.

Carlton is buried in Maple Grove Cemetery, in his home town. He was 19.

HAS BEEN RETURNED TO U.S. Navy can't find address in file ORIGINAL

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FOR VERIFICATION	x Wesley J. Fisher 11-18-45				
DATE	11-18-45				
OFFICE	Mellon Ohio				

FORM 623
REV. 1 JAN 43



AIRMAN OF THE MONTH

APRIL



THOMAS JOSEPH SUTTERS

26 FEBRUARY 1918 – 13 APRIL 1944

Thomas was born in New York and enlisted into the USAAF on 24 March 1941. He trained as a Pilot and flew 22 missions from Station 153.

Mission no. 86 was to Augsburg, Germany to bomb the Ju-88 sub-depot. According to the top turret gunner, “we hadn’t released our bombs yet and the flak was really intense. It got our pilot, who I removed from his seat and gave him oxygen. He died as we were approaching the English coast on our return.”

Thomas is buried at the American Cemetery in Cambridge, England. He was 26.

SECTION A	
HEADSTONE INSCRIPTION AND INTERMENT RECORD	
INSCRIPTION (From: Name, Rank, Organization, State, Date of Death, Grave No.)	
THOMAS J. SUTTERS 1 LT 570 BOMB SQ 390 BOMB GP (H) NEW YORK APR 13 1944 15	
INSCRIPTION (From: Service Number)	
0804534	
CAMPUS: CAMBRIDGE 1601	
GROUP 2	PLAT 1
SECTION B	COORDINATES AM (3 OLC) PH
ROW 1615	ROW D
ROW 6	ROW 11
NAME AND ADDRESS OF NEXT OF KIN	
MRS. LORRAINE C. SUTTERS 2924-21 AVENUE ASTORIA, NEW YORK	
RECORD REFERENCE: 164	



AIRMAN OF THE MONTH

MAY



RICHARD JOSEPH CASERIO

27 MARCH 1921 – 11 MAY 1944

Richard was born in Pennsylvania. He enlisted into the USAAF on 23 July 1942 and was trained as a Radio Operator. Richard flew 4 missions from Station 153.

On mission 103 to Liege, Belgium, 8 minutes before the enemy coast, another plane test fired its guns on the left-hand side. Bullets injured and killed the Radioman, who was not wearing a flak suit at the time, and damaged the plane. A/C715 aborted the mission to seek aid and brought its bombs back to base.

Richard is buried in St Bernard Cemetery, Bradford Pa. He was buried on 12 August 1948 under the repatriation program. He was 23.

From app death rpt #293 file (2)

ORIGINAL

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CASERIO, RICHARD J. DATE OF BIRTH (Month, Day, Year) March 27, 1921 DATE OF DEATH (Month, Day, Year) May 11, 1944 PLACE OF BIRTH (City and State) Bradford, Pa.		RANK S/SGT. LOCATION (City and State) Bradford, Pa. NEAREST FREIGHT STATION (City and State) Bradford, Pa. POST OFFICE ADDRESS OF COUSIN, (Name, Address, City and State) Mrs. Anna Caserio, 1544 Main St, Bradford Pa.	
DO NOT WRITE HERE FOR VERIFICATION SEP 1 1948 OFFICE W. CHELMSFORD, MASS 14 OCT 1943 TEL. 3979831 SHIPPED		I certify this application is submitted for a stone for the unmarked grave of a veteran. I hereby agree to assume full responsibility for the removal of the stone promptly upon arrival at destination, and properly place it at the decedent's grave at my expense. Mrs. Anna Caserio Aug 18, 1948 ADDRESS (Street, City, State) 1544 Main St Bradford Pa.	

IMPORTANT—Complete Reverse Side

FORMER BRADFORD BEES STAR KILLED IN AIR WAR

BRADFORD, May 25.—UP —Staff Sgt. Richard J. Caserio, 25, former baseball player in the Pony League, was killed in action May 11 while serving as a radio operator over Germany with the American Air Forces.

Caserio was a member of the executive staff of the Bradford Bees while they were controlled by the Boston Nationals in 1941 and 1942.

The Bomber stations released articles that could be published in newspapers in the US without giving anything away militarily but mentioning 'the boys' by name, presumably to increase morale.

PRESS RELEASE (OFFICIAL)

Published in The Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester, New York— 19 February 1944

An American Bomber Base in Britain - Hundreds of airmen have parachuted from their planes, but it is doubtful that any crew had such a cock-eyed experience as the 10 men on the Flying Fortress "Skippy" who bailed out when their plane caught fire over England recently.

One gunner was knocked cold when he hit the ground and woke up in the arms of a beautiful English girl who kissed him - he thought he was "in heaven."

Another landed in the middle of a railroad track in front of a speeding train. The Co-pilot plopped down atop a warehouse and wound-up drinking sherry with an RAF air vicemarshal, while the ball turret gunner dropped in a marsh 500 feet from the sea and sank up to his ears in muck.

Lieut. Leo M. Haynes of Spokane, Wash., the navigator was left dangling helplessly over the edge of the roof of a three-storey house when his chute caught in a chimney. Two Englishmen helped free him.

Sergt. S. A. Depietro of Schenectady, N. Y., fell into a lake and got tangled in his parachute harness. He thought he was drowning when he discovered he was standing on the bottom. All he had to do was wade out.

The top turret gunner Sergt. Otto B. Fugett of Orange, Tex., landed on a jagged ledge and tumbled 150 feet into a stone quarry but escaped with only slightly sprained ankles.

"It was the craziest thing that ever happened to me - nice too," said Sergt. E. Jensen of North Hollywood, Calif., the tail gunner was kissed back to consciousness by a trim young lady he had never seen before. "For a few seconds I thought I'd dropped into Heaven."

She insisted on taking him home. Jensen was in no mood to argue.

Sergt. Albert J. Selvidio of Norwich, Conn., a radio operator-gunner, was picking himself off a railroad track when a train came around the bend. He jumped off the tracks and scooted up a ladder provided by two Englishmen who later argued over whose place it was to take him for tea.

After floating down dangerously close to a big harbor where everyone is suspicious of parachutists, the co-pilot, Lieut. R. Cooper of Emporium, Pa., was taken aboard a warship and later was invited to an RAF base as the guest of an air vicemarshal. But for a regiment of British soldiers on maneuvers nearby, Sergt. Joseph M. Collector of Norfolk, Va., still might be trying to dig himself out of the mud. Lieut. Walter C. Lunden Jr., of Tampa, Fla., was the hard luck of the outfit. He suffered a fractured leg when he landed in the middle of a paved highway.

Jennie Smith
Archivist

THE BRITISH RESISTANCE ORGANISATION MUSEUM

Major Peter Ronald Anthony Forbes
Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders
16th September 1915 - 1st February 2009

Part Two



When asked about injuries or fatalities during training Forbes told the story of one man who pulled up a trip wire outside the St Boswells HQ and lost both his hands in the explosion. Unfortunately he died in hospital that night.

The building of the OBs and the recruitment of patrols was discussed at some length. Different IOs had different methods of recruiting but Forbes said that *"I recruited the leader, the sergeant, left it to the sergeant to recruit the other 6 or 7 extra ones, so they all knew each other, they were friends and then I went round and interviewed them and made them sign the Official Secrets Act"*.

When asked if he enjoyed this time he said *"I loved it, it was the best time of my life. It was unusual in the army to be given a General's car and promoted to Captain and to be three or four hundred miles away from ones bosses, whom one probably saw once or twice a year"*.

Forbes made it very clear that, come invasion, he and his staff would have gone underground as well so would have been in the same danger as the patrol members. There was no general instruction about this and I am not sure that it would have been the norm amongst the IOs. Interestingly he stated that his men would have worn Home Guard uniforms, when in action, in the hope that they be treated as regular soldiers if captured. Again, from my understanding, this would not have been the norm. He did say that as the war progressed and they learnt how the Germans dealt with saboteurs and the reprisals that came with it that they would probably have been shot.

The next stage of Forbes's career came when Col Douglas, CO of GHQ Auxiliary Units, approached him and asked him to run Special Duties Section (SDS). Not knowing anything about the SDS, in July 1943, he went down to Coleshill and on 29th August 1943 he was promoted to Major and took over his new responsibilities.

One of his duties was to write exercises for the whole of Great Britain in which runners would make up stories to be conveyed through the radio network to the 'IN' Stations and he would attend the 'IN' Stations at night to hear the made up stories coming in. He told the interviewer that once the threat of invasion had diminished the role of the runner was changed "*.....along the south coast and probably in East Anglia as well, to report on what people were talking about in pubs about where the invasion ('D' Day) was going to be and what British troops were moving into their areas, in fact anything the War Office wanted to know about leaked information about our invasion, as to where it was going to be*". This was an aspect of their role that I had not heard of before.

As part of the deception plans of Operation Fortitude he helped to set up all sorts of dummy aircraft, tanks and invasion paraphernalia.

Returning to his time in Scotland Forbes said that the invasion was expected from the south which is why General Andrew Thorne (GOC in C Scotland) ordered that Operational Patrols' Bases would be sited along the England/Scotland border rather than always being on the coast.

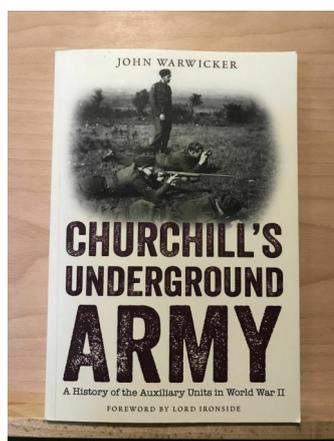
In closing the interview Forbes made the point "*They went unpaid, they were all volunteers no one gave them any compensation for that work - incredible*".

For further reading:

Original transcript held at the Museum of The British Resistance Organisation.

"Churchill's Underground Army" by John Warwicker.

www.staybehinds.com



*Chris Pratt
Curator*

Left, signed copies of this book are available from the museum or our eBay shop.

The “Jelly Man” goes towards the War!

May 1944, The Allied Invasion Force is massing on the southern coast awaiting the signal to invade France. All available manpower is essential. The regular troops attached to the Auxiliary Units have been returned to their county regiments with the day to day management transferred to the County Territorial Associations. The new role for the Auxiliary Unit Patrols is to provide rapid intervention squads to counteract any enemy diversionary attacks which threatens the imminent invasion.

May 2022, I discover an 88 year old Joe Robson who had been a “sleeper” when researching for my book on the East Riding Secret Resistance. Interviewed on two occasions Joe gave a detailed account of his involvement with the D-Day preparations. Both he and Arthur Clubley, the only remaining members of the Skirlaugh Patrol, were taken to the East Yorkshire Regiment Depot at Beverley. They had been selected for an unspecified role linked to D-Day and briefing was to be carried out by an appropriate officer. Whilst Arthur Clubley was a corporal Joe was only a private. The officer said he would not continue unless that private was removed. The impasse was quickly resolved by borrowing a corporals jacket from the Barracks. Standard military procedure... “you salute the uniform not the man”!

A few nights later they were collected from their homes by army transport and taken to York railway station. They were still uncertain as to their destination and precise role. They were confined to a separate compartment away from other military personnel. Secrecy was still essential prior to D-Day. Joe recalled that the train was very crowded, and they had to sit on their small suitcases, which apart from their fighting knives and revolvers was the only equipment they were allowed to carry. There were women on the train who clattered all night on their high heels. Joe did not like that!

On arriving at Kings Cross Station, they were met by another officer. Arthur Clubley recalled that their own Intelligence Officer, Capt. Leigh-Lye, also on the train but not with their draft, was arrested by the Military Police. He had no travel warrant or orders, just using the Auxiliary Units as a cover. Joe and the rest were taken by this new officer to Lyons Corner House for a Full English Breakfast! Another part of military procedure...“the army marches on its stomach”. Both Joe and Arthur clearly recalled the V1 missiles flying overhead and exploding whilst on their bus journey for breakfast.

Their next destination was Waterloo. Joe said he was pleased it was the railway station and not that other place in Belgium! Due to traffic congestion, they were marched there and caught the train to Portsmouth. On arrival there they boarded a ferry still uncertain as to their final destination. They discussed the possibility of France, but they landed instead at the Ryde Pier on the Isle of Wight.

The next stop was a “stately home” near Newport. This was Billingham Manor then used as a military HQ. Finally, they moved to Freshwater, taking over guard duties from the South Wales Borderers, who were needed in France. As a counter invasion force, they were required to keep a low profile. No lights, including cigarettes, were permitted at night, for which Joe used special night vision glasses. To be further unobtrusive they had to lay flat covered by two ground sheets. They patrolled about 1/3rd of the coast and were given “two other men”, presumably they were also Aux Units members from other areas.

On one occasion the South Wales Borderers sought Joe's help to demolish a pillbox obstructing a roadway for heavy vehicles. He inserted three Gelignite charges with double detonators to make sure of ignition. It is possible the vehicles were carrying pumping equipment for the Pluto Pipeline being installed in the former seafront hotels at Freshwater. Joe said he did not know about Pluto. Just as well, as this was the most guarded secret on the Isle and critical to the Invasion. Due to the demolition he became known as the "Jelly Man". His vision was not perfect for shooting but explosives were his specialty.

As the Allied Invasion duly went ahead on 6th June 1944, Arthur recalled seeing the large warships shelling Cherbourg. This port was to be the terminal for the Isle of Wight Pluto pipeline. With the invasion being successful this covert defence force was stood down. They were sent home as quietly as they had arrived. They had been there for up to three weeks and having signed the Official Secrets Act kept this episode untold until their late old age. Joe and Arthur, due to their demolition works, had unknowingly been in action on D-Day!

Later in August 1944, at the stand down of the Auxiliary Units, Joe and Arthur liberated a large cache of explosives stored in the Rise Hall icehouse. Linked all together the explosives were detonated on the dried bed of the adjoining lake, the perimeter being patrolled by the estate workers and police.

This was the last explosive act of the man know as THE JELLY MAN.

Alan Williamson



Our Home Guard has been fitted with a new battledress



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<http://eepurl.com/dM24L6>

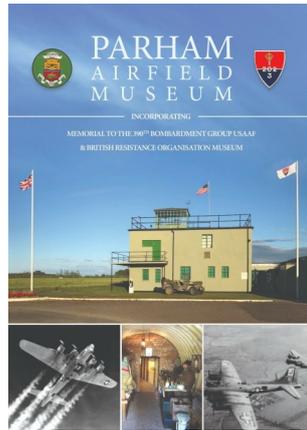
Past editions of our newsletter are available on our website.

From Our Shop

The days before the first opening of the new season saw the shelves of the shop filling with a wide array of products. From traditional treats to pocket money toys, there's something to tempt everyone. The new mugs, featuring colourful badges and quality photographs, are proving particularly popular. The t-shirts, polo shirts and sweaters make lovely, useful souvenirs of a day out- and further supplies of the ever-popular baseball hats are on their way. Business was steady and it was particularly good to be able to welcome new volunteer Priscilla who was learning the ropes.

Our stocks of second-hand books have increased significantly over the winter and there are some great bargains to be had, for aviation enthusiasts and fiction-lovers alike!

We enjoyed welcoming visitors new to the museum as well as those who have been coming for many years- and now all can enjoy their drinks with the fantastic new diorama within a few metres of their table.



Judy Moore



Above, Florence, our youngest volunteer, stands ready to help customers on the first day of the season.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We are hard working crew but are always in need of more volunteers to spread the work.

We are in need of friendly volunteers to meet and greet visitors or serve refreshments in our tearoom. Please get in contact if you could spare one or two days a month to join our roster, or if you would like to join our behind-the-scenes work crew to help maintain and preserve the exhibits and work on new displays.

We do not charge admission to our Museum and donations are always gratefully received. Donation boxes are located around the museum or can be made online via Paypal or bank transfer. We also have a card reader so can accept card payments for shop purchases and donations during your visit.

Thank you for your support.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

We welcome contributions for our newsletter.

Please email your questions for us or other readers, articles, letters or photos for inclusion in the next edition by 25th May.

We would love to hear from you.

**Parham Airfield Museum
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www.parhamairfieldmuseum.co.uk

Follow us on Facebook for regular updates and to connect with other supporters.

Our Museum is run solely by volunteers—apologies if responses are slow at times.



“We are proud of our Museum and are very grateful to all those who help it not only survive, but thrive.”

