

# PARHAM Airfield Museum

## SPRING 2025

# NEWSLETTER



## IN THIS EDITION

- Our new Season is off to a flying start
- Unveiling of commissioned artwork
- The next instalment from Eugene's Wartime Diary
- Visits from more descendants
- A refurb for the Watchtower
- Donation of a very special artefact
- VE Day 80 is commemorated locally
- & much more....



**Travellers' Choice  
2024**

We are proud to have received a  
Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Award  
for the third year in a row.

Thank you to everyone who has written a review  
and please keep them coming to help us aim for  
another award in 2025!



[WWW.PARHAMAIRFIELDMUSEUM.CO.UK](http://WWW.PARHAMAIRFIELDMUSEUM.CO.UK)

# FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF OUR TRUSTEES

Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of our newsletter. You will see that we had a great first opening day on 6 April. There have been several group visits and already various relatives from the USA have come to see us.

Our volunteers were busy working on improvements and maintenance during the winter and this will continue as the warmer weather arrives. As ever, we are grateful for their dedication, just as we appreciate the various gifts we receive from our supporters. Feedback in our visitors' book has been very appreciative of the way the museum is presented and the friendliness and knowledge of our volunteer staff.

We look forward to a busy programme this season. Please visit the museum if you can and do stay in contact.

Best wishes to all our readers.

Peter Senior  
Chair of Trustees



## FREE ADMISSION

We are open on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays until the end of October, between 11am and 4pm. Last admissions will be at 3pm. The museum is also open at the same times on Wednesdays in June, July and August.

## About Us

Parham Airfield Museum is located on the site of a former World War II United States Air Force station, deep in the heart of rural Suffolk.

Today, it brings together two unique museums, offering visitors a fascinating insight into how this quiet corner of England was shaped by the war in two very different ways. The 390th Bomb Group Memorial Air Museum pays tribute to the 743 servicemen who were killed or listed as Missing in Action from this airfield, as well as the 754 who were taken as Prisoners of War. Through a collection of authentic artefacts, personal stories, and carefully preserved displays, the museum honours the sacrifices made in the name of freedom.

Alongside it, the Museum of the British Resistance Organisation reveals the remarkable story of Britain's Secret Army. Housed within original Nissen huts and featuring a unique replica underground bunker, the museum offers a rare glimpse into what has been described as 'Britain's best-kept war secret'.

Both museums are operated under a single Management Committee. We rely entirely on volunteers and donations to continue our work – maintaining the site, preserving its remarkable collections and sharing this important history with future generations.

Thank you for your support.

See page 5 for more information on this special 390<sup>th</sup> artwork



## The 2025 Season is off to a Flying Start...

We are pleased to report that the special fundraising event on 6<sup>th</sup> April, marking our official reopening for the 2025 season, was a great success.

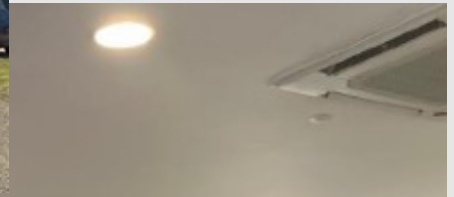
Visitors enjoyed exploring our exhibits, some of which have been refreshed for the new season, as well as relaxing in our tearoom. One of the day's highlights was the opportunity to see such a fine array of military vehicles which had come to visit us and were a real crowd-pleaser! We were even graced by blue sky and some sunshine which was very well received after a long grey winter and fitting for our spring opening.



Guests gathered to witness the much-anticipated unveiling of *Mission Accomplished*, a brand-new limited-edition 390th artwork- there is more on this in the the next article.

We'd like to extend a thank you to everyone who attended and supported the event, especially those who brought their marvellous vehicles out for the day.

If you missed out on the launch, don't worry—there are plenty more days to come and see us and the *Mission Accomplished* prints are available to purchase from our shop and online.



# New Limited Edition Print – Mission Accomplished

We are thrilled to announce the launch and general sale of a new limited edition print titled *Mission Accomplished* – a powerful tribute to the brave men of the 390th Bomb Group. In summer 2024, we were pleased to welcome Colin Smith of Vector Fine Art Prints to the museum. During his visit, Colin shared that his company supports a different charity each year – and in 2025, he had chosen *us!* Colin went on to commission an exclusive artwork by the renowned American aviation artist Wade Meyers. The result is *Mission Accomplished* – a moving piece based on a historic photograph of the crew of a B-17 Flying Fortress. Tragically, this very aircraft was shot down on its 30th mission – the same number a crew member needed to complete in order to finish their tour of duty.



*Print Inscription: B17-F 42-30337B '8Ball/Flak Hack' of the 390th Bomb Group (H), 570th Bomb Squadron parked up at Station 153 Framlingham.*

*After a hazardous mission deep into Germany, the battle-weary crew heads for debriefing, coffee, and a hot meal. On the 10th February 1944, on her 30th bombing mission, she was attacked by enemy fighters, crashing in Streipe, Germany.*

Thanks to Colin, we have been given the rights to sell 390 individually numbered copies of this limited edition print, with all proceeds supporting our mission to remember the 743 men who flew from Framlingham's Station 153 in defence of freedom but who never made it home.

Each print is priced at £35 and comes with a certificate of authenticity, hand-signed by both Colin Smith and our Chairman. These prints make a thoughtful and meaningful gift for anyone with a connection to the 390th Bomb Group, or for those with an interest in WWII aviation or local history. International shipping is available, including to the USA, although please note that postal costs are high, but multiple copies can be sent in each mailing tube which works out as better value.

We are very grateful to Colin for his generous support of our work.



**Above, the limited edition, specially commissioned print and the separate squadron patches can be purchased from the museum or via our Ebay store. Above right, Colin Smith with our Chair, Peter Senior**



To mark the launch, the first 20 buyers of the numbered prints on 6<sup>th</sup> April also received a remarkable piece of 390<sup>th</sup> history: a genuine .50 calibre Browning M2 cartridge from Station 153. These cartridges were discovered during an archaeological excavation of the airfield and are believed to have flown aboard B-17 missions over occupied Europe. After use, they would have been discarded into pits beside each aircraft's hardstanding – where they lay buried for nearly 80 years.



# VERY IMPORTANT VISITORS



## Visits from 390<sup>th</sup> Descendants



*Left, and above left: We were pleased to welcome Pat Penovich with her husband and friends on 6<sup>th</sup> April. Pat's father, Bob Penovich 570<sup>th</sup> Squadron, completed 30 missions and also some chowhound food drops.*

*Above: William Evans visited with his wife and daughter. William's father Vincent was a pilot with the 570<sup>th</sup> Squadron and flew 35 missions.*



*Another branch of the DeMarco family visited us on 13<sup>th</sup> April for the first time. Their father/grandfather was Prospero DeMarco, a navigator with the 568th Sq. He was shot down in 1944 and became a P.O.W at Stalag Luft 1*

## AIRMAN OF THE MONTH

### MARCH



### ROBERT G PETERSON

**21 JUNE 1925 – 14 MARCH 1945**

Robert was born in Erie County, New York. He enlisted into the USAAF on 13 July 1943. He was a Navigator and was killed on his fourth mission from Station 153 and five days after his first mission.

On mission 274 to bomb the marshalling yards at Seelze, near Hanover his plane, A/C 831, "Lady Velma" hit another B-17, the "Boston Blackie" due to being caught in prop wash. His plane hit the vertical fin of A/C 972, 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.

Robert is buried in the Netherlands American Cemetery. He was 19.



The Bradford Era (Bradford, Pennsylvania) - 11 April 1945

#### Lt. R. G. Peterson Killed Over Germany

Lt. Robert G. Peterson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Mentry Peterson of DuBois, Pa., was killed in action over Germany Mar. 14. He was a navigator on a B-17 stationed with the Eighth Army Air Forces in England. Word was received Apr. 4 he was missing in action. On June 7 his parents received a cablegram saying he was killed. He was a nephew of Mrs. George G. Hanson of Hawthorne road.



# VICTORY IN EUROPE DAY

Thursday 8th May marks 80 years since VE (Victory in Europe) Day when the Second World War came to an end in Europe. The long anticipated news resulted in spontaneous celebrations breaking out across the nation. A national holiday was declared and people from all walks of life came together to mark the moment.

The war in the East did not end until 15th August 1945, when Japan surrendered. The day was celebrated across the world as 'Victory over Japan' (VJ Day).

Whilst the Museum is not open on the 8<sup>th</sup> May, we will be hosting a group of special visitors from America on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> and open as normal on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>. To help commemorate VE Day, we will be playing period music throughout the weekend and proudly hanging our flags and bunting. Locally, events are also planned in nearby Framlingham and Earl Soham. Our very own volunteer Chris Pratt is doing the talk at Earl Soham and £50 from ticket sales will be donated to us. The event in Framlingham includes a static VE day display by local historian and author John Bridges.



**COMMEMORATING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY**

**THURSDAY 8th MAY MARKET HILL FRAMLINGHAM**

**\*Free Community Event\***

**HISTORICAL VE DAY DISPLAY IN THE CROWN HOTEL FROM 1-5PM**

- ACTIVITIES ON THE MARKET HILL FROM 5-6PM INCLUDING PERIOD SONGS FROM KELLY BAYFIELD, MILITARY VEHICLES & 'LIFTING THE FEAR' TALKS AND Q & A FROM LOCAL AUTHOR RUTH LEIGH
- BBQ BY HALL FARM BUTCHERS FROM 5PM
- FREE CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES FROM 4-5PM INCLUDING BISCUIT DECORATING, FLAG MAKING, CHALK DRAWINGS & MORE

**VE DAY 80 1945 - 2025**

**Framlingham Town Council**

**ALL WELCOME - WE HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US**

SEE [WWW.FRAMLINGHAMTOWN.COV.UK](http://WWW.FRAMLINGHAMTOWN.COV.UK) FOR MORE INFORMATION

## VE DAY 80 COMMEMORATION : AFTERNOON TALK 'WW2 Accident and Disasters' Earl Soham & Local Villages

Sun 04 May | Venue: Earl Soham Village Hall

Earl Soham and local villages' World War II Casualties and Events.  
Join us for tea and cake and a relaxed and informative talk on a Sunday afternoon to join the VE 80 Celebrations.

### About The Event

Accident and Disasters – WW2 in Earl Soham, Ashfield, Charfield and Morewden.

An illustrated talk by Chris Pratt, bringing to life the names on Rolls of Honour from Earl Soham and the nearby villages of Ashfield, Charfield and Morewden. A glimpse of the amusing, the uplifting as well as the tragedy of life and death during wartime.

To commemorate VE Day 80 – 8th May 2025 – A Shared Moment of Celebration.

TICKETS: £10 to include tea, coffee and delicious home-made cake!

Tickets available on the door (cash or card) and in advance via the website.

An accompanying book 'Commemorating the Men of Earl Soham 1914-1918 1939-1945' will be on sale for £5. Proceeds from book sales support the upkeep of the Earl Soham War Memorial.



*"Mankind must put an end to war before war puts an end to mankind"*

President John F. Kennedy, 1961

# AIRMAN OF THE MONTH

## APRIL



Lt. Anthony C. Formato, Bronckville  
flier, reported missing after raid over  
Germany.

## ANTHONY CARMEN FORMATO

16 DECEMBER 1920 – 18 APRIL 1944

Anthony was born in Westchester, New York and enlisted into the USAAF on 5 September 1942. He trained as a navigator and flew six missions from Station 153.

On Mission 87 to ~~Oranienburg~~, at about 14:40 hours near Berlin, A/C 242 was damaged by flak. The first right elevator and horizontal stabilizers came off. Then the whole tail assembly from the waist door back came off. The aircraft was last seen going down in a steep dive. None of the crew had a chance to bail out.

Anthony is buried at the Arlington National Cemetery. He was 23.

REGISTRATION CARD - (See back in the Manual, 2, 187 and in the letter Number 2, 101)  
REG. NO. 1144  
NAME: ANTHONY CARMEN FORMATO  
ADDRESS: 48 PONDFIELD RD. WEST-YONKERS, WESTCHESTER, N.Y.  
48 PONDFIELD RD. WEST, BRONCKVILLE, N.Y.  
CITY: BRONCKVILLE  
STATE: N.Y.  
DATE OF BIRTH: 2485 DEC 16 1920  
NEW YORK  
MAILING ADDRESS: 48 PONDFIELD RD. WEST-YONKERS, N.Y.  
HERALD TRIBUNE  
230 WEST 41ST, NEW YORK, N.Y.  
ANTHONY CARMEN FORMATO

STATE OF NEW YORK, 1944  
ADDRESS: 48 PONDFIELD RD. WEST-YONKERS, N.Y.  
CITY: BRONCKVILLE  
STATE: N.Y.  
DATE OF BIRTH: 2485 DEC 16 1920  
NEW YORK  
REG. NO. 1144  
6512227  
ANTHONY CARMEN FORMATO

# THE WATCHTOWER RENOVATION PROJECT

We are pleased to confirm that thanks to sterling work from our maintenance team over the closed season the much-needed renovation of the watchtower has been completed in time for our new season opening. Our watchtower on top of the Control Tower was a replica built by the founding volunteers in the late 1970s. It had reached the end of its life and become a safety concern. This replacement meets modern building regulations and will also better protect the internal displays from the elements. Many thanks to the following volunteers who deserve a special mention for all their hard work in very testing wintry conditions- Steve Brand, Paul Calver, Richard Clark, Kevin Coe, Peter Kindred, Martin Scripps, Peter Senior and Steve Smith.

The watchtower played a vital role in the daily operations of airfields like Parham. It provided an elevated, panoramic view of the runways and surrounding landscape, allowing ground personnel to monitor aircraft movements in real time.

Essentially, the watchtower was the eyes of the airfield – a critical post for maintaining order, safety and co-ordination during busy and often demanding operations. Now, thanks to its recent renovation, visitors can continue to get a glimpse into what it was like to ‘stand watch’ at Station 153.

*Our thanks go to Mike Dooley for these photos.*



# Annual General Meeting

On 23rd March, our AGM was held in the presence of a good number of members. Our Annual Report was noted and the accounts were approved. Trustees and Office Holders were also elected.



We became incorporated in January 2023 & we can have up to 12 trustees appointed. We have no paid positions and we rely on volunteers for our continued existence.

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## Easter Sunday

We were open as usual on Easter Sunday and were joined by some MG cars and a group from the Bond Owners Club, much to some of our volunteers' excitement! If you are in a car club and your group would like to come and visit us on a Sunday please drop us an email- we'd love to see you.



# A SPECIAL NEW ARTEFACT ARRIVES AT PARHAM

We are thrilled to announce the newest addition to our collection—a Bofors 40mm anti-aircraft gun, a remarkable piece of military history that played a vital role in 20th-century warfare. This was kindly donated by an anonymous supporter of the museum. Fittingly, the gun once belonged to Charlie Cairnes, and it will be housed in the Cairnes building which is at the planning stage- more on this in our next edition. Similar Bofors anti-aircraft guns were deployed at this airfield.

Originally developed in the 1930s by the Swedish arms manufacturer Bofors, the gun became one of the most widely used anti-aircraft weapons during World War II. Its reliability, rapid rate of fire and effectiveness made it a staple of Allied forces, used extensively by the British Army, Royal Navy, and other Allied nations to defend against low-flying aircraft.

The Bofors gun is a great example of wartime innovation, but also a testament to the efforts made to protect troops and civilians alike during conflict. It continued to serve well into the late 20th century, seeing action in Korea, Vietnam and beyond.

We look forward to showcasing our newly acquired piece as part of our efforts to preserve and share military heritage.



## Many hands make light work... Could you join our team of volunteers?



Do you have a few hours to spare each month? We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help during our open days—Sundays and Wednesdays—throughout the season. Whether you can commit to one day a month or a few, we would love to hear from you!

Volunteering at the museum is a rewarding experience. Many of our volunteers leave with a smile on their face, knowing they've added to people's visitor experience and been a valued team member. Visitors often praise our crew for being friendly and helpful, as seen in our glowing Tripadvisor reviews.

You don't need to be a WWII expert—we all learn as we go and none of us have all the answers! What matters most is your enthusiasm and a warm, welcoming attitude. New volunteers are also welcome to shadow an experienced team member for as long as necessary.

We're also looking for volunteers to work in our tea room. This includes making hot drinks, washing up, handling souvenir sales and light cleaning- we really are short on numbers here. Do you know anyone who might enjoy helping out with this?

We are very keen to hear from volunteers who would be willing and able to assume responsibility as a Duty Officer, helping to oversee the volunteer team on open days.

Full training on all these roles is provided and you'll be part of a supportive and friendly group. If you'd like to get involved or have any questions, please email us [parhamairfieldmuseum@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:parhamairfieldmuseum@yahoo.co.uk) . We would love to hear from you!

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### Help Us Spread the Word!

We've recently reprinted our leaflets to reflect our new status as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and we'd love your help distributing them locally.

If you can drop off leaflets at nearby tourist hotspots, please get in touch. You can collect leaflets from our shop on open days or let us know and we'll do our best to get some to you.

Every leaflet placed helps us to attract more visitors.



## AIRMAN OF THE MONTH

MAY



### LAYTON PAUL VERMIE

01 OCTOBER 1918 – 19 MAY 1944

Layton was born in Des Moines, Iowa and enlisted into the USAAF on 10 March 1943. He trained as a Co Pilot and was killed on his first mission from Station 153.

On Mission 106 to Berlin, Layton was Co Piloting A/C 42-102532. At 15:36 the plane was observed to leave the formation under control after being attacked by fighters. The aircraft was on fire in the section near No.2 engine. A/C 532 fell behind and lost altitude. It was last seen on a heading of 240° true. All Layton's crew members bailed out and were taken prisoner. Layton's body was never found.

Layton is remembered on the Tablets of the Missing at the Netherlands American Cemetery. He was 25.

PERSONNEL FILE INFORMATION		APPLICABLE FOR READING IN BOXES	
NAME: Vermie, Layton P.	UNIT: 42-102532	DATE OF BIRTH: 01 OCT 1918	PLACE OF BIRTH: Des Moines, Iowa
GRADE: 2nd Lt	COMPONENT: 153	DATE OF ENTRY: 10 MAR 1943	PLACE OF ENTRY: [unclear]
STATUS: [unclear]	TYPE OF SERVICE: [unclear]	DATE OF DEATH: 19 MAY 1944	PLACE OF DEATH: [unclear]
REASON FOR DEATH: [unclear]	TYPE OF DEATH: [unclear]	DATE OF BURIAL: [unclear]	PLACE OF BURIAL: [unclear]



We were privileged to receive a transcript of an Operational Diary belonging to a 390th Airman, generously provided by Mark Adamic, the custodian of 1/Lt Eugene Peterson's wartime memorabilia. We are pleased to share the next excerpts from Eugene's diary with you .

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## OPERATIONAL DIARY OF LT. EUGENE PETERSON

### Feb- March 1944

Feb 21, 1944: #5

Target: Brunswick (Hanover)-Aircraft Factory

Alt: 21,600

"Mission was going very well up to the target which was obscured by clouds. Hanover was chosen as alternate target and was probably heavily hit. Lead ship was damaged by flak over Brunswick. Our ship (O40) was hit by flak one minute before 'bombs away'. All positions in the ship seemed to have had close calls. My brief case saved me from flak also. Piece went clear thru it. Ship will be laid up for a few days for engine change and possibly new wings. We were pretty hard hit! Fighter protection was good. We flew high squadron lead."

A/c # 238040-Little Butch

Group Mission #60

Feb 24, 1944: #6

Target: Posen-Poland (Rostock, Germany)-Aircraft Factory

Alt: 20,000

"Mission was the longest yet flown as we were in the air 11 hours. We could not bomb original target because of 10/10 undercast. PFF took over and we dropped our bombs on Rostock, Germany. Results were probably not too good. We had no fighter support but were not troubled too much by the Luftwaffe because they are becoming not too eager. We caught Flak at Stettin + the target that was fairly intense. Route was followed very well and Flak areas were pretty well avoided. We flew low sqdn. Lead."

A/c #231466- Sitting Pretty

Group Mission #61



Feb 25, 1944: #7

Target: Regensburg-Aircraft Factory

Alt: 17,000

"This mission was highly successful. Weather CAVU all over continent and target which was smoking from bombs of 15th Air Force. Fighter support was very good and little fighter opposition was encountered. However, they did manage to get two planes out of 'B' group. We hit some Flak but it was most intense over target but we avoided most of it. Route was very well followed and our position was again, low lead."

*A/c # 239927-The Skillet*

*Group Mission #62-2 group a/c MIA*

Mar 2, 1944: #8

Target: Chartes-Airfield-DNB

Altitude: 17,000'

"We sent out one group to bomb the airfield and had to be careful about hitting the famous Notre Dame Cathedral. The lead ship had trouble releasing their bombs and on the third run on the target we were told to take over, having been flying deputy group lead. We did not go over target third time and looked for a suitable target to bomb.

Clouds upset these plans and we returned with our bombs. There were no enemy fighters and we lost one ship to Flak. His tail was blown off and no one got out. We got a few holes-some in the nose."

*A/c # 237906-Angel in Disguise*

*Group Mission #65-1group a/c MIA*

Mar 3, 1944: #9

Target: Berlin-Manufacturing-Recall

Altitude: 24,000'

"This is the first time we were to go to the Big B. We flew group lead and also 13<sup>th</sup> 'B' wing lead. Almost died of fright but luckily the mission was scrubbed just as we hit the enemy coast. We came home thru snow storms and generally bad weather but we came home.

No fighters-no Flak."

*A/c # 231732-Paper Doll II*

*Group Mission #66*

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**Please note:** All of the items marked in italics or bold are Mark's research, the rest is Eugene's writing verbatim. Mark has added information about the aircraft flown and nose-art, actual targets and locations and what group mission number it was.

# The British Resistance Organisation Museum

*In our last newsletter, Gareth Evans described how he discovered, during a visit to the BRO Museum at PAM, that his grandfather, Claude Riches, pictured on the right, was an Auxilier in WWII, a secret that Claude, like many Auxiliers, took to his grave.*

*Gareth's discovery at Parham inspired him to volunteer with the Coleshill Auxiliary Research Team (CART) and to help others learn about their family members' roles in the Auxiliary Units.*

*He describes more about his work researching for CART below.*



## **My Most Memorable Research**

Researching and tracking down family members of Auxiliary Unit patrols really gives me a buzz—especially when someone discovers their father's or grandfather's role during the war. One of the furthest relatives I've contacted was in America. He had no idea his father was involved with the organisation and was over the moon when I sent him a group photo—he'd never even seen his father in uniform before.

## **The Polstead Patrol Discovery**

One of my most memorable bits of research has been with the Polstead Patrol. Even though Polstead is in Suffolk, in 1940 it was part of Essex Group No. 3, alongside Bures. Around 1942, it was officially moved to Suffolk.

I often drive for work and had noticed signposts to Polstead while heading to Sudbury. I looked it up on the CART website and saw that the location of the Operational Base (OB) was still marked as 'unknown.' That immediately sparked my interest—especially since most of Suffolk's OBs had already been documented for the Suffolk and Norfolk book by Evelyn Simak and Adrian Pye.

I joined the village's local Facebook page and shared some details about the patrol members and the reason I was reaching out. I've used this approach in other areas and it's a great way to connect with families and raise awareness of the Auxiliary Units. It worked. One woman replied to say she was the daughter of patrol member Arthur James Sowman—although CART had him listed as Arthur Felix Sowman. A few emails with long-time CART researchers confirmed that both her father and grandfather were in the patrol. We updated the records, and I arranged to interview her in Sudbury.

She kindly shared photos of both men, which are now on the Staybehinds website. As a bonus, she also had photos from the opening at Parham that showed my own grandfather—images I'd never seen before. She recalled that her father rarely spoke about his time in the Auxiliary Units, but shared a little more when he became unwell. He mentioned a possible OB location near the lane where he'd grown up, close to the patrol leader's farm. That gave me something to go on.

Then another lead came in—this time from a gentleman on Facebook who had done fencing work on local estates. He remembered, back in the late '80s or early '90s, seeing some metal sticking out of the ground in nearby woods. That got my research senses tingling again.

I arranged to meet him, and he took me to the area and pointed me toward the house of the current landowner. It took a couple of tries to catch them in, but when I finally did, they were very understanding and let me explore. The owner even said she remembered the site and used to worry her children would hurt themselves playing around it.

The woods were thick with brambles, but eventually, I spotted metal sticking out of the ground. After some clearing, I was able to see much more of the structure. I took photos and passed them along to CART. It felt great to have my name attached to that find.

## **Ongoing Research**

I've watched pretty much every YouTube video on the subject—many of them more than once. My favourite is still the interview with Roger Weeley, the Patrol Leader from Weeley in Essex. He gives a fantastic account of how the patrols started, their training, and some of the mischief they got up to. It really sounds like they had a good time, despite knowing their mission could very well be a one-way ticket.

I also picked up a copy of *The Last Ditch*—interestingly, retired from a library in Florida—and I've started listening to the CART Press Office book as an audiobook.

As I said earlier, I keep my eye out for new locations as my work takes me around. I hope to eventually visit all of the Suffolk sites. Some are going to be difficult, especially where landowners are wary about letting people in. I've probably spent too much time already trying to find the Ipswich 1 Patrol OB!

So far, I haven't found any of Suffolk's OBs in good enough condition to enter—but hopefully that'll change soon. I'd love to get a better feel for what it was like for patrol members spending those training weekends underground.

## **Final Thoughts**

What strikes me most about the Auxiliary Units is the level of sacrifice they were prepared for. If Operation Sealion had gone ahead and enemy forces had landed, these men would have disappeared without a word to their families—leaving at the very moment they were most needed. And if they had managed to carry out their missions, the consequences for local civilians—including their own loved ones—could have been devastating.

When I speak to people about the Auxiliary Units and they show a real interest, I always recommend a visit to Parham Museum. I hope that's led to a few visits already. I still have questions myself and plan to return. Eventually, I'd like to give some of my time to help out there too.

## **Acknowledgments**

I must give special thanks to a lady in Debenham who has been a huge help in tracking down family members. She's managed to find several relatives I've since spoken to, and thanks to her, I've been able to gather some really valuable information.

One of the best finds was a photo of the Ipswich Group 1 patrol, which wasn't on the CART website or at Parham Museum. She also came across a fascinating document—an Auxilier's Stand Down form, showing him signing back his equipment.

# The British Resistance Organisation Museum

## Coleshill 1940s Day

Find out more about Coleshill's unique wartime history, complete with re-enactors, displays, pop-up museum and plenty of 1940s themed activities.



Parham Airfield Museum will have representation at the following event which might be of interest to readers with connections to the BRO.

### Auxiliary Units Open Day at Coleshill Estate 10am- 4.30 pm 6<sup>th</sup> September

*During the Second World War Coleshill was home to a secret band of underground fighters, the Auxiliary Units, who in case of invasion would have disappeared into underground hideaways, to re-emerge under the cover of darkness to cause mayhem behind enemy lines.*

*During the weekend there will be a chance to find out more about the Auxiliary Units, including a chance to visit a replica secret 'Operational Base' the underground hideaway that would have been home to an Auxiliary Unit patrol. There will also be a chance to see some of the surviving traces from the wartime occupation of Coleshill.*

*There will also be a chance to see what life on the Home Front in Coleshill would have been like during the 1940s, as well as children's activities and a self-led walk to give you a chance to see some of the wartime sites from across the wider estate.*

See here for more information:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/oxfordshire-buckinghamshire-berkshire/buscot-and-coleshill-estates>

## From our Facebook page

Are you a member of our Facebook page? If not, why not join today? Joining is quick and simple and you can connect with other followers to see posts like these....



David Nash  
11 March · 🌐

The British Resistance Organisation Museum at Parham has just had a mention in the excellent series "Churchill's Secret Army" that Talking Pictures TV are currently broadcasting 📺



17



Jennie Smith

Admin Top contributor · 24 February · 🌐

24 February 1944

Target: Rostock, Germany

39 aircraft airborne, 4 returned early, all the rest returned to base.  
1WIA

A good day.



23



Bogdan Chmielecki

2 March · 🌐

📅 70 years ago today.

🇺🇸 🇫🇷 🇨🇦 🇨🇦 🇨🇦 🇨🇦 🇨🇦 "Milwaukee Chief" from

390th Bomb Group and 370th Bomb Squadron took off on its last combat mission over Dresden from Framlingham airfield.

Despite engine damage received over target, machine flew 250 miles further and reached central Poland. Over Turek all crew bailed out safely and returned home.

B-17G hit the farm between Dąbki and Klodawa.

I salute to all airman during World War II.



Maurice Claessen

14 March · 🌐

Today it's 80 years ago (March 14, 1945 – March 14, 2025) that the tragic accident occurred with two B-17 planes named the Lady Velma and the Boston Blackie/Heavenly Cent.

Sgt. Paul M. Akosevich was a B-17G Flying Fortress Engineer/Top Turret Gunner assigned to the 571st Bombardment Squadron of the 390th Bombardment Group (Heavy), Eighth Air Force stationed near Framlingham, England. On March 14th, 1945, he was on a mission to destroy the marshalling yards in Seelze, near Hanover, Germany when his plane (B-17 tail #43-37831, nicknamed "Lady Velma"; Missing Air Crew Report 13024) collided with another B-17G (tail #42-102972; "Heavenly Cent" aka "Boston Blackie") and both planes crashed. There was only one survivor of both bombers, Francis Joseph "Joe" Nix Sr., from the "Lady Velma".

A special word of thanks must be given to Francis Joe. Nix, who has documented his first-hand account of the accident.

Later, after his liberation, he personally went to the family of Paul Michael Akosevich as prisoners of war to tell how this tragic accident happened, and his comrades died in an accident.

We have deep respect for him and all the heroes, after all, they fought for our freedom.



Jennie Smith

Admin Top contributor · 23 February · 🌐

23 February 1944

Tower Log:

1000 - German aircraft crashed between Yoxford and The Grove. Grid Ref 835861.

Leiston in charge. 3 men killed.

1230 - Obstructions (repaired spots) on end of runway 10. Planes to land 100 yards down runway.

1900 - Major Tuttle - intersection is not to be dug up unless his department is first consulted - he was pissed off.



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Jennie Smith

Admin Top contributor · 19 March · 🌐

19 March 1944

Target: Mimoyecques, France.

T/O 1600-1615 hrs. All planes landed by 1931 hrs.

21 B'17s dispatched & 21 B'17s returned.



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# 390th Gathering

## In Warner Robins, GA

### July 11-12<sup>th</sup> 2025


**EVENT DETAILS:**  
 Join the friends and family of the 390th Bomb Group in Warner Robins, GA, for a weekend of remembrance and camaraderie.

Friday, July 11 | 6-8 PM – Cocktail Meet & Greet at our hotel.

Saturday, July 12 – Visit the Museum of Aviation at Robins AFB, GA, home to a rare B-17 bomber and other exhibits.

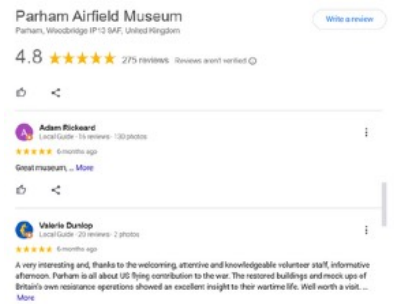
Saturday Evening | 6-8 PM – Dinner at the museum with a special guest speaker.

All are welcome. For details or to RSVP, email Kevin Drain at [kevindrain10@gmail.com](mailto:kevindrain10@gmail.com).



# SAVE THE DATE

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### *Editor's Note*

Dear readers,

We would welcome your contributions for our summer newsletter.

Please email your articles, letters or photos by 28th June.

We would love to hear from you.

*Lydia Kindred*

