



A local history resource pack exploring the impact of war on people living, working and stationed in East Anglia during World War Two

By Emma Winch

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Images reproduced in the pack with the kind permission of Norfolk Record Office, Freeman Archive, Fold 3 Archive, British Cartoon Archive, Lee Miller Archive, Airforce Memorials, Colin Rudd, Airfield Research Group, 100th Bomb Group Memorial Museum, Luton News and Eighth in the East.

Introduction

ABOUT EIGHTH IN THE EAST

In May 1942, the first aeroplanes of the Eighth U.S. Army Air Force (8AF) arrived in East Anglia. With them came air and ground crew of American GIs who, by 1944, outnumbered the local population (in some places) 50 to 1. This unique moment in history, often referred to as 'the friendly invasion', had a wider impact on social and cultural life in the region and is now in danger of being forgotten.

This resource is part of Eighth in the East (EITE) project that aims to rethink the way we look at our region, its role in WW2 and the immense social and cultural impact of the so-called 'friendly invasion'.

In archives and airbases across the region EITE have uncovered photographs, diaries, letters, maps, graffiti and archaeological finds that give us a glimpse into the lives of people connected to East Anglia during WW2. The pack contains lesser-known stories and previously untold histories of local people, Land Girls, famous visitors to the region and the Black and White servicemen of the segregated American air force stationed in the East of England.

Using archaeology, photography, oral history, film and whatever other records the 8AF left behind, we will ensure the full record of their physical presence will be captured for posterity. In so doing we will encourage local groups, schools, and the legion of small museums and site groups to begin to understand the meaning of these objects and the stories they tell.

The pack and website provide schools with resources to integrate this pivotal moment in the East of England's history into their curriculums.

ABOUT THIS PACK

The learning resource consists of a teachers' pack and website that bring together primary source material to support teachers in their delivery of the History curriculum (local history study in particular), and wider curriculum subjects including Art and Design, Geography, Citizenship, English and to support enrichment activities such as Black History Month.

The pack and accompanying website are not designed to address the whole complex topic of WW2 but instead to enliven and enrich learning about WW2 with local connections, familiar places and personal narratives that are not available in general textbooks or other WW2 related teaching resources.

Viewing WW2 through a local lens will enable children and young people in East Anglia to gain a deeper understanding of how the war connected to all areas of local life and the challenges facing the region at war.

We hope that you will enjoy using the resource with your learners, and that it will support you to find ways to inspire your learners to engage with the rich history and heritage we have in our region.

HOW TO USE THE RESOURCES

Primary and secondary school teachers may wish to use the **Background Information** in Section Two of the pack for their own research and the **Curriculum Activities** in Section Three to help shape lessons and projects suitable for KS2 and KS3 learners.

Classroom activities, questions and creative approaches are provided in the pack to help prepare and follow up visits to airbases and heritage sites, and to conduct stand alone projects in school. Images, maps, archive and audio-visual material are collected together on the website and can be downloaded and printed or shown on interactive whiteboards. In the **My Resources** section of the website teachers can save and organise their own material for presentations, and each theme can also be downloaded as a PDF to use as a hand out in the classroom.



Where further source material relating to themes explored in the pack is required, the pack lists what resources are available on the EITE website and where to find them using the EITE logo.

The learning resource is also suitable for heritage professionals, volunteers and educators working with groups in informal, family, community and reminiscence settings to help conduct activities with participants of discussion groups, workshops and events.

Visit the learning pages of the website to discover more:



www.8theast.org

Section One

The resources



SOCIAL/A

Image courtesy of Norfolk Record Office

KEY COLLECTIONS

Photographs

Found in record offices, archives and private collections across the region, photographs documenting the presence of the American servicemen and their interactions with local people in East Anglia are brought together with previously unpublished photographs of abandoned airbases and fascinating archaeological finds recorded by EITE. Organised thematically, the image bank gives access to collections of photographs of African-American GIs, women, life on the airbases and even the pet animals that were kept by the servicemen.



Locals at Seething
Norfolk Record Office



WOMEN, AFRICAN-AMERICAN GIs, ANIMALS, CHILDREN, THEN & NOW:
[search images by theme.](#)

Letters

Found in the Norfolk Record Office, Bob and Alice's letters to one other give a personalised account of life on the airbases and how American servicemen conveyed their experiences to loved ones back home in the U.S. The letters offer us a snapshot of daily life on the airbase and the social lives of the men and women connected to East Anglia during WW2.



BOB AND ALICE: [see the original letters and transcriptions.](#)

Oral histories

Interviews recorded with local people who were children during WW2 give us privileged access to fascinating and previously unpublished stories. Explore WW2 through the eyes of children who encountered first-hand the influx of Americans to their village. Discover friendships that were formed, previously unknown stories, eyewitness accounts and unofficial records of events.



MIKE BAILEY, LILLIAN WOODLEY: [hear a different side to the WW2 story using our oral history interviews.](#) EITE have also identified useful oral history films on other websites to help you explore some of the more complex histories in this pack such as racism, segregation and the role of African-American GIs in WW2.

Stories of the Bloody 100th

Stories of the Bloody 100th is a film that uses oral history to explore the special relationships formed by local people and the 8AF during WW2. Made by the 100th Bomb Group Memorial Museum the film combines oral history with archival film footage and images of the GIs and local people living near the airbase at Thorpe Abbots. In their own words, the villagers, who were children at the time, discuss the impact of that period on their young lives.



AUDIO VISUAL: watch the film to introduce the subject and use the guidelines to develop your own oral history project in class .

Archival material and ephemera

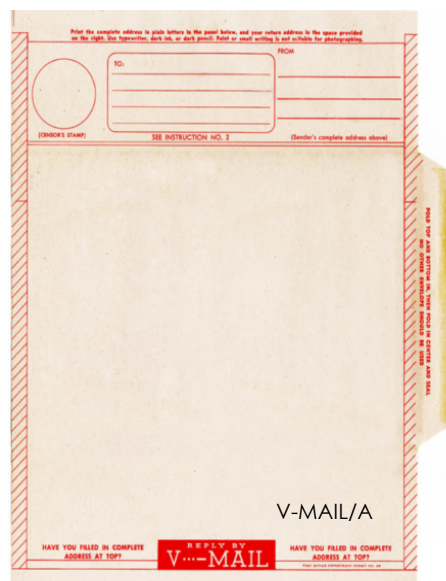
Through our research in record offices, archives and private collections across East Anglia we have been able to collect together primary source material; newspaper articles, crash reports, maps and official documents that relate to specific events that occurred in our region during **WW2; and ephemera** which gives us an idea of the social lives that airmen and local people enjoyed during WW2.



PAUL GORMAN: piece together the evidence about the life and death of an airman in our region. **SOCIAL:** explore flyers, greetings cards, theatre programmes and other ephemera material documenting the social lives of the airmen.

Vmail

V-mail or *Victory mail*, was a valuable tool for the military during WW2. Servicemen hand-wrote letters to loved ones, which were then photographed, reduced in size and copied onto the template using microfilm. V-mail was light-weight and cheap to send. American servicemen stationed in the region wrote thousands of letters to their family and friends using V-mail. Though the content of V-mail was tightly controlled to prevent war secrets getting into the wrong hands, it was highly encouraged as it was thought to be good for morale.



VMAIL: see the V-mail we found at Norfolk Record Office and use the template provided to create your own.

Diaries

The private diary of an American airman stationed in East Anglia during 1944 gives us a fascinating insight into daily life on an airbase near Norwich. In diary extracts the author records his first impressions of East Anglia, his direct experience of combat and his personal reflections and private thoughts about the war. The diary includes extracts of his mother's letters, which gives us a deeper understanding of how WW2 impacted on the families of GIs, thousands of miles away in America.

14 March 1944

We were shipped by train...the British trains caused a lot of comment. They are much smaller than we are accustomed to and the entrance ifs made to each compartment from the outside. I am quartered in a nice barracks and being served some pretty good chow for a change.

Before leaving Topeka, Mother gave me a letter to be opened after reaching my destination.

...War, it seems, is much harder on the mothers and wives than it is on sons and husbands. Headlines, casualty lists and accounts of engagements mean only one thing to you all. "Is my boy alright?" You would probably switch places if it were possible. I am, indeed, a most fortunate young man, undeserving but deeply appreciative. I will quit for tonight.

GI DIARY



GI DIARY: read the mother's letter in full and regular diary entries written by an American serviceman stationed in East Anglia during 1944.

Archaeological finds

Explore previously unseen photographs of the domestic and military items EITE have uncovered through the project together with photographs of abandoned airbases, murals, WW2 graffiti and personal items.



ABANDONED, TRACES & MURALS: photographs of abandoned airbases, archaeological finds and murals.

Section Two

Background Information

The People



HOW WE EXPERIENCED WW2: THE LOCALS

Often referred to as the 'friendly invasion', the arrival of the Americans had a significant impact on the residents of East Anglian villages. In a short three-year span the 8AF occupied nearly 70 airfields in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire, bringing around 3,000 men and women to each of these places.

Their presence affected the lives of the people living in villages surrounding the airbases including the young children who played near the bases, the women who cooked, cleaned and cared for the servicemen, the land girls working on the surrounding fields and the families who welcomed the servicemen into their homes.

The biographies, oral histories and resources that appear in this section give us a fascinating insight into what it was like for those who experienced first hand the 'friendly' or 'not so friendly' invasion, as we shall reveal. These are just some stories and do not speak for all but, as the last survivors of WW2 pass away, these stories, together with the archival and archaeological material we have uncovered are the legacy of WW2 in our region.



IMAGE BANK: photographs in this section can be found on the website.

Explore the images together with stories, diaries, letters and other archival material to discover personal experiences of war in East Anglia.

Oral History

Stories from the Bloody 100th

“We heard the drone of the aircraft and I watched the B-17 land...the 100th Bomb Group had arrived”

John Goldsmith was a child during WW2 and in June 1943, in a sleepy Norfolk village near the airbase in Thorpe Abbots, he was one of hundreds of people who lined the streets surrounding the base to see the heavy bomber planes ready to take off for the very first time. This would have been a typical sight across East Anglia and in the film Gordon Debenham, who was also present that day, recalls:

“I was scared to death, I'd never seen an aircraft on the ground before”

The adults interviewed in the film, children at the time, share memories about the arrival, impact and departure of the American air force in the region and how it changed their young lives. Some speak of squeezing through hedges to get a closer glimpse of the enormous planes and to meet the servicemen who gave them sweets in return for running errands. Others discuss the parties organised by the servicemen and one particular outing to the airbase for the local scout group. Mary Bailey explains how her family welcomed the servicemen:

“we had Americans every night of the week...it was home to them during the war”

For local families, the Americans provided a distraction from the challenges of life during WW2, and for the servicemen, the presence of children going about their daily lives was a welcome relief from the horror of fighting a war. For the 100th Bomb Group stationed at Thorpe Abbots this was particularly pertinent, for these servicemen had only a one in three chance of surviving the war. John Goldsmith explains:

“they were called the Bloody 100th because so many died”

Exerts and quotes from the film feature throughout the pack to illustrate how the presence of Americans in East Anglia affected local people and almost every aspect of their daily lives during WW2.



STORIES FROM THE BLOODY 100TH: watch the full film to hear villagers discussing the arrival of American airmen. The film has been produced by the 100th Bomb Group Memorial Museum.

Mike Bailey

Mike spent his childhood in Norwich during WWII. Some of his earliest memories were of the city being bombed – an event which led to the death of his best friend. In an oral history interview he gave EITE he speaks of the destruction of parts of the city, and how he, and his mother had to move in with relatives after the bomb damage to the area of Norwich in which they lived.

Mike vividly remembers the arrival of the Americans, the formation of the B-24 Liberators in the morning and the excitement of being a child in the war zone. As a child, Mike, and some other youngsters used to hang out on the base at Horsham St Faith - getting up to all sorts of mischief. He recalls sitting in the airplane cockpits, the hustle and bustle of airbase life and the kindness of the ground crew he encountered.

One of Mike's key memories of WWII was of the fatal crash of a B-24, Lady Jane, which smashed into St Phillips Church near Heigham Street. Today Mike works as an artist, selling detailed paintings of B-24 Liberators. One of his most evocative paintings is of the crash at Heigham Street, something that he said he will never forget.

EITE have uncovered an archive collection that contains documents relating to the crash at Heigham Street that Mike Bailey witnessed as a child. The collection contains other eyewitness accounts, letters to the families of the servicemen who lost their lives and official documents and photographs that give us a range of experiences to compare with Mike's own recollection of events that occurred that day.



MIKE BAILEY: hear Mike's oral history interview. GORMAN: piece together evidence about one of the airman who died in the crash.

Carl Giles

Moving from London to Ipswich in 1943, Carl Giles worked as a war correspondent cartoonist for the Daily Express newspaper. A motorcycle accident had left him blind in one eye and deaf in one ear, so he was rejected for war service, but his work reflected the lives of those involved in the war, including the first batch of soldiers to enter East Anglia who were African-American labourers from the southern states of America and members of the engineering battalion.



Photo of Giles and American servicemen at
The Fountain, Tuddenham, 1944
Image courtesy of Norfolk Record Office

When the African-Americans arrived in East Anglia many of the servicemen spent Saturday evenings at Carl Giles' local pub, The Fountain in Tuddenham St Martin near Ipswich. Balancing instruments on the handlebars of their bicycles they cycled from the base at Debach where they were stationed into the village to accompany Giles on the piano.

Giles sketched the servicemen, and the cartoon images he produced of his friends lined the walls of pub. Two servicemen – Butch and Ike – feature in many of the cartoons.



GILES/B

Photo of Giles with GI friend Ike
CG/5/4/6/22/3 Image courtesy of British Cartoon Archive



GILES/C

Colour portrait of Ike holding a double bass
CG/1/1/11/19
Image courtesy of British Cartoon Archive

At the time the American air force was officially segregated, resulting in many small market towns facing the difficult decision of whether to adopt racist policies designed to keep Black and White troops apart. Whilst the scene at The Fountain would have certainly not have been unique, it was uncommon for Black and White servicemen to drink in the same pubs and many locals witnessed first-hand the brutal consequences of segregation.

When the African-American servicemen had finished their work and moved away, White GI's took their place. At The Fountain it soon became clear that Giles' pictures of Black GIs that hung in the bar were causing offence to the newly arrived White Americans so the landlady took them down. '*It was a bloody disgrace*', said Giles. Today, the collection of Carl Giles' cartoons at the British Cartoon Archive, survives as one of very few records we have of African-American GIs in East Anglia. The memory of Black GIs in the region, it seems, has faded with the physical traces of their presence in the region.



GILES: discover more of Carl Giles' illustrations and photographs of Giles taken by a famous WW2 photographer for Vogue magazine, 1944.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN: explore images of African-Americans in East Anglia, original film footage of the engineering battalion and photographs of the men at work and at play. **SEGREGATION:** see page 31 for more information.

HOW WE EXPERIENCED WW2: WOMEN

British women at war

On the front line: By 1942, 400,000 British women were serving in the army, navy and air force, flying planes from factories to RAF bases. When the Army Act (which had previously prevented people who were 'not of pure European descent' from joining the Army) was changed, women of African descent from across the commonwealth were recruited to support the war effort. Depending on her role, each woman would have experienced WW2 differently but on the home front and on the front line remarkable British women, Black and White, made a significant contribution to WW2 in our region.

On the home front: With fathers, husbands and sons away in the British Forces many women were left to hold the fort and some answered advertisements to work on buses and trains, on farms and in factories, hospitals and schools. For many women this was their first experience of work and for the 80,000 women who joined the Women's Land Army to work on farms, the adjustment from urban to rural life would have been an additional challenge. Yet despite this, young women from all walks of life volunteered to serve their country, flocking to the countryside to grow crops and tend to livestock. In *Land Girls: Women's Voices from the Wartime Farm* by Joan Mant, former land girl Joan Law remembers:

"The field was a steep slope so no machinery could be used. A sack of seed potatoes was put at one end of

each row and we had to carry enough for a row in a big bag with a strap over one shoulder. We had to drop one potato in front of each foot as we walked along. By the time we finished the groove was thick and deep cut into our shoulders.”ⁱ



The days were long, work was hard, living conditions were basic and wages were low. Some women lived alone with farming families, some in hostels with other land girls working on different farms as needed. Many great friendships were made at these hostels and sharing the experience with others made the task of living away from family and home comforts easier.

Another welcome distraction was the arrival of the Americans into East Anglia, which had a lasting impact on the land girls stationed in the surrounding areas. In *Land Girls* Gladys Benton remembers meeting the Americans for the first time:

“The first time the Americans saw us girls working in the fields they thought we were prisoners doing time. They had never seen girls working so hard”ⁱⁱ

The influx of thousands of Americans meant sleepy villages and pubs suddenly bustled with life, and dances and cinemas to entertain the servicemen sprung up all over the region. I Pamphlett vividly recalls the GIs:

“I remember one time they asked us out on a picnic, so they came and picked us up with a flat hay cart with the hay laid on it. There were about 20 of us and they got all the drinks and food, and we danced all day and had a lovely day”ⁱⁱⁱ



LAND GIRLS: further images of land girls in East Anglia at work and at play in East Anglia. For further information on the Women's Land Army read *Land Girls: Women's Voices from the Wartime Farm* by Joan Mant.

Local Land Girls on Film

Girl Forest Fire Watcher (1944) by British Pathe Film

Original footage of Land Girls cutting timber and operating a forest fire lookout point in Rendlesham Forest, Suffolk: <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/girl-forest-fire-watcher-aka-fire-watches-issue/query/land+girls+east+anglia>



LANDGIRLS/E

Amelia King and the Women's Land Army

In 1943, Amelia E. King, a young woman of British Guyanan heritage, volunteered for service in the Women's Land Army but was rejected by the Essex county committee because she was Black. Amelia's story was highlighted in several newspapers and an opinion poll by the organisation Mass Observation was conducted to gauge public opinion on the case. It is stated that 49% of the 62% who had heard of Amelia, 'strongly disapproved' of the act of racism^{iv}. We don't know what happened to Amelia King in her later years but her case attracted so much attention it was debated in the House of Commons and eventually she was accepted for a land girl position on a farm in Hampshire. Amelia's story highlights the growing numbers of British public at the time who felt it wrong to racially discriminate during a war to defeat Hitler and fascist Germany.



For further information on Amelia King read *The Motherland Calls: Britain's Black Servicemen & Women*, by Stephen Bourne.

American women on the front line

350,000 American women served in the military during WW2 but only a tiny percentage of these women served in Britain. In 1945 the US Army allowed Black women to apply for roles serving in Britain in the Women's Army Corps (WAC). 700 African-American women served in a segregated unit called the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion and were based in Birmingham.

Women's roles were many and varied and we have found evidence of some remarkable American photographers who visited the region, and whose impact and legacy endure through the photographs they captured of the home front and the front line.

Lee Miller



Famous in America as a fashion model, Lee Miller moved to London in the 1930s where she took a job as a photographer for Vogue magazine. During WW2 Miller recorded the many aspects of the home front – from famous visitors to the region to daily life on the airbases. Among the celebrities she captured on film were famous American actor Clark Gable who spent time with the 8AF and 'Maggie the Indestructible' - another well-known female photographer who flew many missions with the 8AF.

In 1944, Miller was asked to photograph the English cartoonist Carl Giles for a special feature in Vogue. She chose the setting of Giles' local pub, The Fountain,

and her images captured Giles at play as he jammed with African-American musicians from the nearby 8AF base at Debach, Suffolk.



In the days immediately after the image of Giles was taken, Miller became a correspondent with the US Army. She was one of a team of photographers who captured the aftermath of the invasion of France. Miller witnessed the Liberation of Paris and was one of the first allied photographers to record the liberation of the concentration camps in occupied Europe. Miller struggled to leave behind the trauma she encountered in the Dachau concentration camp, and was troubled by the traumatic images she witnessed throughout the rest of her life.



LEE MILLER: images taken by, and of, Lee Miller. For further information about Lee Miller and to access her online digital archive, visit the Lee Miller website: www.leemiller.co.uk. GILES/A: photograph from the Norfolk Record Office taken by another photographer at the same event.

Maggie the Indestructable

Born in 1904, Margaret Bourke-White was one of 4 photographers for the famous LIFE magazine in America, and it was one of her photos that was used on the cover of the magazine's debut issue in 1936.



Margaret was one of a small group of female war correspondants and in 1942 she spent time with the 8AF in England. She was able to photograph not only daily life on base but also the missions, and was the first woman photographer of WW2 to be authorised to fly a combat mission to North Africa



Margaret was one of the first photographers to document the Nazi concentration camps in spring 1945, and the last person to interview Gandhi before he was assassinated.

After being torpedoed in the Mediterranean whilst on an Africa bound troop ship, strafed by the Luftwaffe, bombed in Moscow, pulled out of a crashed chopper, and stranded on an Arctic island, photographer Margaret Bourke-White became known as Maggie the Indestructible.



MAGGIE: images of Maggie the Indestructible. For further information about Margaret Bourke-White and to view her colour images of WW2, visit Life Magazine website: <http://life.time.com/history/world-war-ii-color-photos-of-u-s-bombers-and-crews-in-england-1942/#1>

HOW WE EXPERIENCED WW2: THE AIRMEN

WW2 was a war that involved troops from across the world. What set apart the American troops stationed in East Anglia from the rest of the UK was that the GIs were experiencing 'Total War '. For white and black, ground and combat troops, in Europe and on bases across the region, dealing with loss became part of daily life.

Given the scale of WW2 history, the human stories of individuals are sometimes in danger of being lost among the facts and figures of official documents. But, if you look hard enough, in archives across the region there are diaries, letters, newspaper articles and sometimes whole collections, that document the lives and deaths of the young Americans who served in WW2. Though personal accounts don't provide the whole story, they give us parts of a jigsaw from which we can start to build a picture of how WW2 was experienced on a human, personal and local level. In *Beneath the Clouds* by Jackie Stewart airman Dan O'Keefe remembers:

'With each mission I kept expecting the worse. As friends were either shot down or finished their tour of duty and went home I made few new ones...I wasn't writing home much either. I couldn't express what I was experiencing: a thing so large that everything else was trivial.' √

Paul Gorman

In November 1944 a plane containing American servicemen from the 8AF crashed into St Philips Church in the city of Norwich. Flying over the busy city the plane lost power and the airmen took the brave decision to fly into the church tower, away from residential areas, to minimise the loss of life in the crash.

Research in the Norfolk Record Office has revealed a set of records that relate to one of the nine servicemen to lose their life that day. Viewed together the letters from eyewitnesses, official records, photographs and newspaper articles give us a greater understanding of the tragedy and the events following the crash that led to locals erecting a memorial to the servicemen involved. All the documents we found are provided for you to view online.

Piecing together the evidence:

A crash report from November 1944 explains how a plane flew into the church tower at Heigham Street, Norwich and provides a list of the names of the servicemen who were killed, including a man called Paul Gorman: (GORMAN/A).

Also found among the documents was an official letter to Paul Gorman's family describing the ceremony that took place for the benefit of the family who live in New York (GORMAN/B) and a personal letter expressing sympathy from the co-pilot of the plane who survived the crash (GORMAN/C).

A photograph of the crew taken before the crash (GORMAN/D) was sent to Paul's mother with an accompanying letter (GORMAN/E), which explains how Paul's personal belongings will be shipped to her in America.



GORMAN/D

Image courtesy of Norfolk Record Office

A letter from the Lord Mayor of Norwich on behalf of the residents of the area explains how the locals came together to fundraise to purchase a bronze plaque to remember the brave servicemen who lost their lives in the crash (GORMAN/F).

A further letter from a fellow serviceman explains how the installation of the bronze plaque “will be an everlasting list between our two nations” (GORMAN/G) and he includes with the letter a cutting from the local newspaper that pays tribute to those who lost their lives (GORMAN/H) and in a feature remembering Paul Gorman's achievements (GORMAN/I)



GORMAN/H

Image courtesy of Norfolk Record Office

We have also found a photograph taken in Topeka, Kansas of Paul Gorman and his crew (GORMAN/J).

As previously mentioned, local resident, Mike Bailey, was a child at the time and one of his strongest memories of WW2 was of the crash that killed Paul Gorman. Today Mike works as an artist, selling detailed paintings of aeroplanes. One of his favourite paintings is of the crash at Heigham Street, something that he said he will never forget. (MIKE BAILEY)

The locals remember

Following the crash the locals erected a memorial to the men, which reads:

“The pilot of the bomber as his last act avoided crashing on this and surrounding cottages thus preventing the loss of civilian lives”

This, and hundreds of similar plaques and memorials erected across the region to honour the USAAF, can be viewed online at:

<http://www.airforcememorials.co.uk/>.



© Air Force Memorials



GORMAN/A-GORMAN/J: view the letters and newspaper cuttings.
MIKE BAILEY: hear Mike's eyewitness account of the crash.

HOW WE EXPERIENCED WW2: AFRICAN-AMERICAN GIs

African-American GIs

During WW2 around 3 million American service personnel came to Britain. Among them were 130,000 African-Americans, including the 8AF Combat Support Wing, who arrived in 1943-44 and were stationed on airbases across East Anglia.

In segregated units African-American GIs contributed to the war effort constructing the airbases, driving trucks and tanks and flying bomber planes. More often than not African-Americans were given lower grade and more menial tasks than their fellow White GIs but, for a short while during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944, a lack of troops meant African-American soldiers were required to fight on the front line. 2,000 African-American GIs volunteered for this role, which saw African-American GIs fighting in combat alongside previously White-only military units for the very first time.

However, despite their contribution to the war effort, the lives and experiences of these men has too often been poorly documented. No official records or memorials to the African-Americans exist in this region and EITE struggled to find oral histories to help us to understand the complex human stories behind the statistics. The photographs that have survived in local and national archives, and in collections like Giles' at the British Cartoon Archive and the Lee Miller Archive, directly link the African-American GIs to East Anglia and give us a glimpse of these men and their contribution to WW2.

Images and footage of African-American GIs in the region

Within their broader collections of photographs the Fold 3 Archive, British Cartoon Archive and Lee Miller Archive each have a few images of African-American GIs in East Anglia. Those we have found are collected together on the EITE website, along with film footage available on Youtube and Pathe films.



Search images of African-American GIs at work and play in the region
by theme: AFRICAN-AMERICANS, SOCIAL, CONSTRUCTION



Joe Louis 'The Brown Bomber'



In 1944 the American Heavyweight Champion of the World, Joe Louis, visited Stowmarket in Suffolk to meet with thousands of African-American troops stationed across East Anglia. Louis travelled more than 21,000 miles and staged 96 boxing exhibitions before two million soldiers. On the day of celebration African-American troops paraded through the town before joining Louis at nearby Haughley Park for festivities, which included a boxing match to entertain servicemen from the aviation engineer regiments of the 8AF.

Despite the military's racial segregation laws, Joe Louis became the focus of a media recruitment campaign encouraging African-American men to enlist in the Armed Services. The publicity of the campaign made Louis widely popular in America and amongst the troops stationed in East Anglia. Never before had White Americans embraced a Black man as their representative to the world.



LOUIS: further images of the GIs parading through Stowmarket and links to archive footage of Joe Louis in the region. AMBASSADORS: lists of EITE endorsed artists, actors, historians to invite into your school to bring this subject alive.

Joe Louis on film

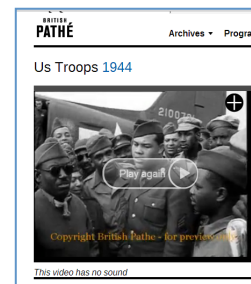
US Troops (1944) by British Pathe Film (silent film)

Joe Louis arrives on an airbase in East Anglia to meet members of the African-American Engineering Battalion stationed in the region. Excellent footage of the servicemen meeting Joe Louis from the plane and of a parade organised to mark the visit.

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/us-troops/query/joe+louis>



AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM E (running time 3.5 minutes)



Joe Louis joins the army in 1942 by British Pathe Film

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3UvhhDG688>



AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM C (running time 45 seconds)



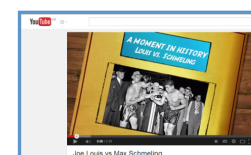
Joe Louis vs Max Schmeling by North Avenue Nation TV

The film discusses the significance of the fight taking place between a German and an African-American boxer during WW2.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSv68xNGQyQ>

AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM D (running time 3 minutes)



Racism and segregation

During WW2 colour was a sensitive subject in America and the UK. Unlike their British comrades, African-American troops were segregated following the Jim Crow laws and customs observed in America that were designed to keep Black and White people apart in public. This meant Black people had to sit in different carriages in trains and at the back of buses and use separate toilets.

In its own way British society was equally prejudiced and at the beginning of WW2 racist attitudes within the American forces were observed for a period of time across the UK. White women were prevented from dancing with or dating African-American GIs and attacks on Black GIs and fights between White and Black troops were a regular occurrence in pubs and dances across the region. To try and stem the violence, and often at the request of the White GIs, many pubs and transport

facilities were segregated. White troops were separated from Black troops on the airbases and in the villages during leisure time and the Jim Crow laws of the USA were a daily fact of life on the streets of our villages and towns.

In smaller towns and villages it was not unusual to find "Black nights" and "White nights", but in larger towns like Ipswich, which was a centre for White servicemen and Black support construction troops, the Army established a network of Black and White pubs and dance halls, such as the ARC Club for Black GIs in St. Peters Street. Eye and Diss were both branded 'Black towns', but all the villages east of the River Dove in Suffolk were out of bounds for African-American GIs.

Though measures were introduced to segregate the servicemen in East Anglia, naturally Black and White GIs came into contact. This is hardly surprising given that Eye, a 'Black town' was only four miles away from Horham, a 'White' town. Johnny Speight, a scriptwriter who was based in East Anglia during WW2 recalls:

'I was in a Suffolk pub one evening and there was a...riot. All these Americans were objecting to one of their black soldiers who had taken up with a local girl. She was White of course. They had him up at one end of the bar and they were going to lynch him...terrifying it was'^{vi}

By 1944 there were 4,000 men and women of Caribbean descent serving as ground staff on RAF bases across the UK and on the front line for the British forces who also suffered racial discrimination similar to that experienced by the African-American GIs. They too were sworn at, told not to walk on the pavements and forced to leave restaurants and dances attended by White American GIs. One incident recorded in *Rich Relations* involved Sergeant Arthur Waldron, a Caribbean man who volunteered for the RAF and was beaten up for dancing with a White woman at an event in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Waldron intended to press charges against the White American GIs that had attacked him, but he was tragically killed in Germany before the case came to court^{vii}.

In Stephen Bourne's book *The Motherland Calls*, war veteran Allan Wilmot, who enlisted in Jamaica and served in the Royal Navy and RAF, discusses the complex relationship between the Caribbean servicemen of the British Empire and the White American GIs. According to Wilmot, many didn't get along and it was not uncommon for Caribbean servicemen to step in to defend African-American GIs from racist attacks by White GIs. Allan explains:

"...we had open wars, especially in the dance halls and various places of entertainment, with the local

Whites as back up on our side. The Black American GIs were a different story. We got along very well indeed. British Black servicemen were their protectors. At times they were attacked by groups of White GIs, especially if they were in the company of White girls. If they attempted to defend themselves against the White GIs, the American police were always at hand to arrest the Black ones...so we would go to their rescue and try to prevent them from being arrested"^{viii}

One particularly painful, but fairly typical, story of the time is recalled in this short film about African-American soldiers in Britain:

African-American Soldiers in WW2

This film addresses racism and segregation in the American Air forces and the impact it had on Britain. The film combines archival images of African-American GIs in Britain with oral histories with GIs and English people who witnessed the racism first hand: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbR8qDLAAk8>



AFRICAN-AMERICAN FILM A (running time 7 minutes)

Changing attitudes and race relations in Britain

Despite thousands of volunteers from Caribbean islands and across the commonwealth signing up to fight for the mother country, and long before American servicemen arrived in the region, Britain itself had racist practices which meant it was not uncommon for a person to be refused a position in the Army simply because of the colour of their skin. In the late 1930s, Joe Moody, who had a Jamaican father and English mother, was rejected by the British Army on the grounds that officers had to be of 'pure European descent' and in 1943 Amelia King was refused by the Women's Land Army because she was Black.

However, for some in Britain and in the USAAF, colour had never been an issue and in some towns and villages across the UK scenes like those in the Fountain pub would have been a regular part of daily life. Carl Giles reflects:

'They especially got on with me. They knew, you see, that their colour didn't matter a damn'^{ix}

And in Haughley, a village near Stowmarket in Suffolk, the local vicar and his wife had a letter published in the local newspaper in 1942 that announced the church would ‘...welcome visits from coloured troops’^x

Carl Giles, the vicar and his wife however, were in the minority, and many local communities accepted segregation without question. These painful and upsetting stories remind us of a dark chapter in British and American history that endured long after the war had ended. Despite people of African descent fighting and dying alongside White soldiers in WW2 it would take another two decades for the civil rights movement to gain momentum in America and for Britain to address racist practices that prevented people like Joe and Amelia from applying for positions in the Armed Forces.

After the Amelia King case went to court and *The League of Coloured Peoples*, the *International African Service Bureau* and the *West African Students' Union* lobbied the government on behalf of Joe Moody, the initial decisions that had prevented Amelia and Joe volunteering for service were overturned. One meeting between Joe Moody's father and the colonial office started the process that led to the Army Act being changed, which meant the colour bar that had previously existed in the British Army was relaxed for the war period.

Delving more deeply into stories of Amelia and Joe reveals a great deal about the changing attitudes of some local people at the time. When the British government finally introduced the Race Relations Act of 1965, which made it illegal to racially discriminate in the workplace, it was in some part a response to a number of events during and following WW2 that suggested the public at large had a growing uneasiness with racial discrimination.

Three Fronts by Lili Bernard

This film features African-American war veterans talking about life during WW2, the contribution of African-American GIs to the war effort, the racism they experienced and how the history of African-American GIs has been hidden from history:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX7xeHMa7to>



AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM B (running time 6 minutes)



AFRICAN-AMERICAN: watch these films online, search through images of African-American at work and at play. For more information about British servicemen and women from commonwealth countries including Amelia King and Joe Moody see *The Motherland Calls* by Stephen Bourne.

East Anglia at war



ANGLIA AT WAR/D
Image courtesy of Fold 3 Archive

'In Norfolk the Americans made a huge impact on the local population...they had always led quiet unassuming lives, in quiet peaceful villages, and now suddenly the Americans arrived. People were shocked, suddenly airfields sprung up all over East Anglia. Long convoys of lorries came rumbling through their country lanes full of Americans in strange uniforms, and soon they were followed by huge four engined bombers which dropped out of the sky to land: where once cattle had grazed and sugar beet had grown. They roared around the countryside in things called jeeps and seemed to acquire just about every pedal cycle in the county! People began to notice that these Americans were very friendly, and what's more they seemed to love kids. It was not too long before friendships were formed, some of which endure even to this day'^{xi}



Peter Steele, 9 years old when WW2 broke out and now curator of Shipdham Museum. Read his full account of war on East Anglia at <http://www.8thairforce.com/44thbg/PeterSteeleStory.htm>

IMPACT ON AN EAST ANGLIAN VILLAGE: THORPE ABBOTS

In rural East Anglia, the ideal site for bombing crews to prepare for raids on Germany, newly constructed airbases had a huge impact on the flat and largely agricultural landscape and on rural communities. Oral history with local people who witnessed these events gives us unique access to new perspectives on how WW2 transformed the region and the lives of people living in surrounding villages. In *Stories of the Bloody 100th* Sam Hurry recalls:

“It was the best thing that happened to us because we suddenly had a new life”

In their own words, local people speak of the impact of that period on their young lives - the fears and the thrills, the enchantment of having a working airfield as their playground and the anxiety of awaiting the return of planes from missions over Germany. They discuss the impact on village life, how children interacted with the soldiers and what happened when they moved away.

The film combines oral histories of the last surviving children of Thorpe Abbots with footage and images of GIs stationed in the village at the time.



AUDIO VISUAL: watch the full film *Stories of the Bloody 100th* by the 100th Bomb Group Memorial Museum.

IMPACT ON AN EAST ANGLIAN TOWN: LUTON

Luton, in Bedfordshire, was touched by many aspects of the conflict during WW2. Alongside other large towns and cities such as Ipswich, Norwich and Peterborough, it came far closer to experiencing Total War than other parts of the region.

The town was a key target for German bombers owing to the many factories in the town producing military equipment and components. Vauxhall Motors, for example, was home to production of both Bedford Trucks and Churchill Tanks for the British Army.

In July 1940, following the retreat from Dunkirk, the British Army had only 100 tanks left. It was then that Vauxhall was instructed to build new tanks as quickly as possible. Throughout the course of the war the factory produced over 5,000 tanks and supplied the British Army with 1000 Bedford Trucks per week. This amounted to a third of all the trucks provided to the forces - a quarter of a million vehicles before the war ended. The importance of Luton's contribution was marked by visits to the factory by both the King and Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Whilst supporting the allied war effort, the production of military equipment put Luton on the map for German air raids. Luton endured 900 air raid warnings. In 24 actual raids, 107 people were killed and over 500 seriously injured. The damage to the town and its buildings was significant.



Monday 14th October 1940

One raid, Early in the war, illustrates the impact that German bombing had on the town.

At about 12 noon a lone aircraft was seen circling above the town, shortly afterwards at 12:15 PM a single large bomb detonated on a small area of high town, located between the Old Bedford Road and the junctions of Frederick Street and Mussons Path, in which 13 people were killed and 35 injured. The bomb blast was concentrated on two neighboring hat factories, W. O. Scales & Co. and Gregory's. Most of the deaths were the women and girls employed at these factories,

Ribbons and hats were blown up and ended up caught in trees as far away as Lansdowne Road on the other side of New Bedford Road. Roofs and windows of nearby buildings such as 'The Mount' and North Street Methodist Church were also badly damaged.



The aftermath of the bon attack on the Luton Hat factories, Image courtesy of Luton News

Eyewitness account: Peter Chalkley

'I was at work in King Street when the sirens sounded as the bombs were falling around Vauxhall motors and Park Street area. I ran to the depot and we were soon called out to attend houses that had been damaged in and around Park Street. After about two hours we were moved to a public house on the corner of Hastings Street and Hibbert Street. There we cleared rubble and found a Grandma with a baby in her arms half way down the cellar steps, they were the first dead persons I had seen.

The second incident was when the warning had gone and on the way to the depot I was cycling round Park Street where the present day roundabout is when a land mine was dropped on the bus depot in Park Street. I didn't hear anything but landed in the shop window with glass all around me and my bicycle on top.

I'd been catapulted about twenty feet by the blast, the amazing thing, I sustained no injuries whatsoever...I heard the bomb drop and ...went straight to the incident which was the hat factory in Old Bedford road. I helped remove debris to release some persons, I took a rest standing on top of the rubble and in the Luton museum there is a photograph of me just standing there and my boys say 'that is typical of you doing nothing'.



Shortly after that, I don't know if it was second sense, I remember removing debris and saw what looked like a dirty ragged doll, I touched and realised it was a human being. I learned later that the young lady had survived.'



PETER CHALKEY: member of the rescue squad and on the scene of the hat factory bombing on Monday 14th October 1940, read Chalkey's full eyewitness account on the website

'The Donut Club'

All over in East Anglia, clubs and bars were established to accommodate the large numbers of American GIs stationed in the region. For the 8th USAAF men stationed in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, Luton became a place for rest and relaxation. An American Red Cross building was established in George Street, Luton known as 'The Donut club' to provide for overnight accommodation for the GIs, many of whom would sleep the night with local residents in the town's large underground air raid shelters.

Printing press and propaganda

Luton's wartime link with the forces went into full production in the summer of 1944. The town's printing presses were commissioned to print propaganda to be dropped over occupied Europe in the immediate aftermath of D-Day. The local workers were locked in to their print works until D-Day had commenced, to ensure that perhaps the biggest secret of the war was not given away.



The leaflets printed in Luton were shipped in specially designed bombs to the 8th USAAF bases situated in the region. From there they were dropped by B-17 and B-24 Bombers, the town thus playing a key part in winning the battles which helped to bring an end to the long years of war.

Not long after this vital contribution, another interesting event took place in Luton. The leading American Baseball teams of the day, The Brooklyn Dodgers and the St. Louis Cardinals, played out a baseball game at the Kenilworth Road, home to Luton Town Football Club.

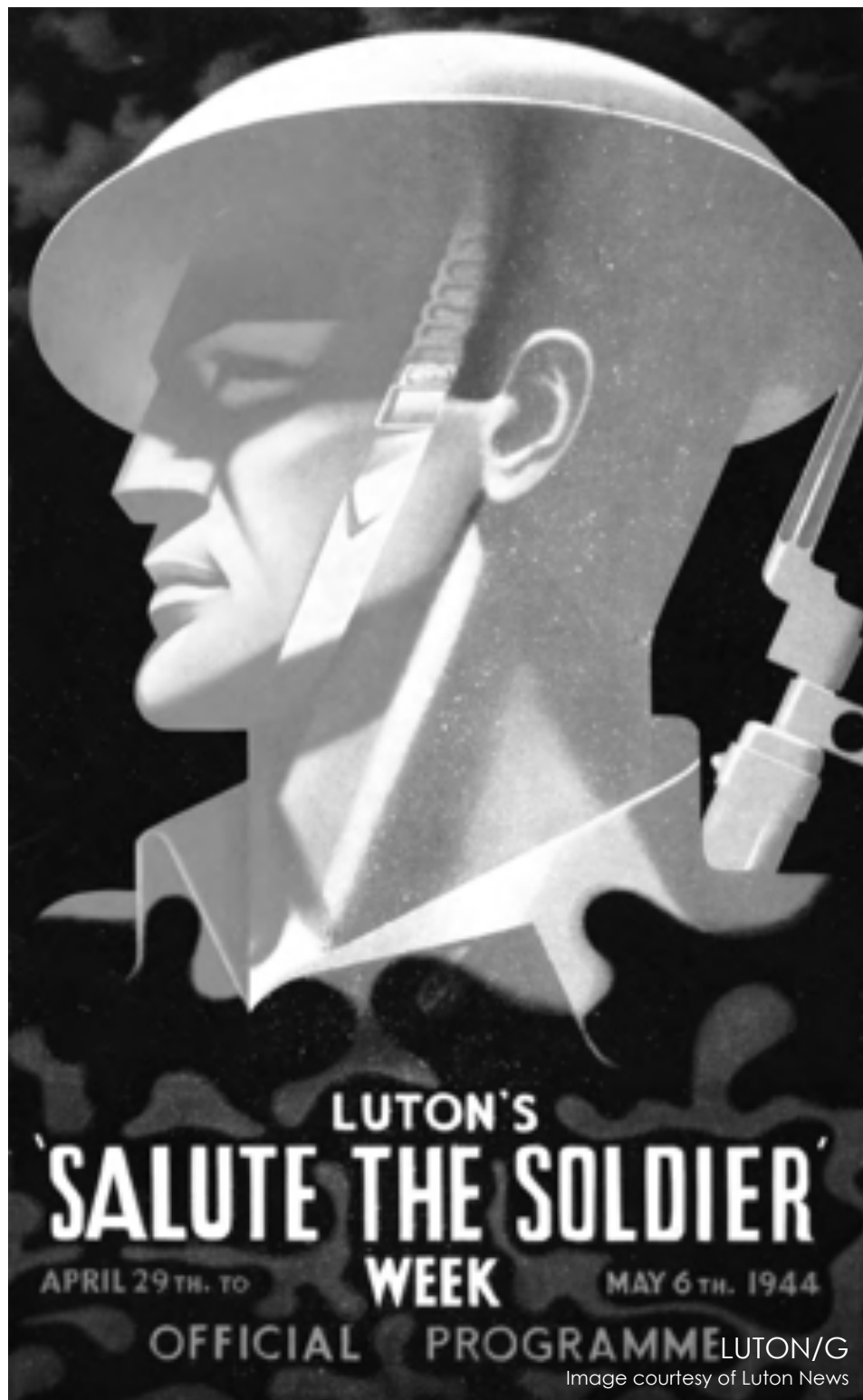


The game, played before a capacity audience, was part of the Towns fundraiser camping for Salute the Solider week in August 1944, helping the town to raise over £1,522,635 towards the war effort. Over the five year course of the war the pole of Luton raised a grand total of £15,255,321 through a variety of fund-raising and savings campaigns.



VE Day celebrations in Luton.
Image courtesy of Luton News

When the war in Europe finally came to an end, on May 8th 1944, local residents and American troops came together one last time to celebrate Victory in Europe day. They joined together in the streets of the town and danced long in to the night at the Palais Gilde.



LUTON: view images of Luton at War. For more information see: *Luton at War, Volume 1 & 2*, compiled by The Luton News, 2000.

Life on the airbase



Constructing the sites

The impact of the 8AF on East Anglia began with the construction of many of the sites, which usually took 6 months to build and devastated whole areas of farmland and countryside. Built by Irish navvies and African-American GIs, a typical base, like Ridgewell in Essex, required thirty miles of drains, five hundred separate buildings, and a sewerage plant for 25,000 people.



During the blitz in London vast quantities of rubble had accumulated, which was transported from London to East Anglia to create the runways needed to get the planes into the air.

Amongst the first batch of soldiers to enter East Anglia were African-American labourers from the Southern states of America and members of the engineering battalion. Arriving in East Anglia for the first time, the engineering battalion found themselves working long hours to shift the rubble in terrible conditions and only the emergency rations they carried to fuel them. With shelters and accommodation yet to be built, they were often forced to sleep in tents and ditches.



CONSTRUCTION: further images of African-American engineering battalion constructing the airbases.

After the foundations and runways were built came the service buildings, control towers and living quarters. Invented by the British, tens of thousands nissen huts were built across East Anglia to house the newly arrived American GIs, who were less than impressed with their new homes. In Norman Longmate's book about American GIs one Squadron described the hut as '*an ice-box open at both ends*'^{xii} and on 7th April 1944 the diarist records how one GI, too cold to get out of bed to switch the lights off, shot the lights with his gun to put them out.



In *Beneath the Clouds* by Jackie Stewart, Robert Arbib describes the simple construction of the nissen huts:

'A nissen hut is not a difficult thing to build. You put down a rectangle of concrete on the floor, you place spanning arched ribs across the longer dimensions, bracing them with longitudinal stays. You cover the inside and outside of these ribs with thin sheets of corrugated steel. You seal up the ends with bricks, wood, or concrete. A couple of windows and a door at each end and you are ready to take up residence.'^{xiii}



LIFE, CONSTRUCTION, NISSEN HUTS: images of the engineers constructing the sites, the nissen huts built to house the airmen and the conditions on the base.

Arriving in East Anglia

Very few GIs knew they were being sent from America to Britain. When they arrived in East Anglia, sometimes in the middle of the night and often with no idea where they were, they awoke to new sights, sounds and smells. Many GIs recalled the revolting stench of kippers and the unfamiliar taste and texture of porridge.

To help the GIs to adjust to life in Britain the War Department produced a pamphlet called *Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain*. It contained useful information about popular British customs and slang words. It gave strict advice never to criticise the King or Queen, to show off, and in general stressed the need to get along with the British to help defeat Hitler.

The letters and diaries we have uncovered show just how unprepared many of these servicemen were for life outside America and contain frequent references to the appalling weather, comments about how close together the houses were, how the English drove on wrong side of the road and how beautiful the countryside was compared with back home in America.

13 March 1944

'England is quite beautiful from the air. A patchwork quilt of different shades of green. Unlike our country every inch of ground seems to be under cultivation. After the usual hassle with eighteen clerks our quarters were assigned and we moved in and later attended a movie to pass the time. English currency takes a bit of getting used to and figuring our movies fares was a challenge. From the little I have been able to see the whole of England appears to be in uniform'

5th April 1944

Nothing much doing today so I borrowed the crew bicycle and toured some of the area around the base. The view at ground level is quite different from that from the air. The houses for the most part are old...heating these places must be difficult as well as expensive, and I think more expensive than most can afford.

GI DIARY



GI DIARY: [view the full diary entry and explore arrival, life on the airbase, war and departure through the eyes of an American GI stationed in the region.](#)

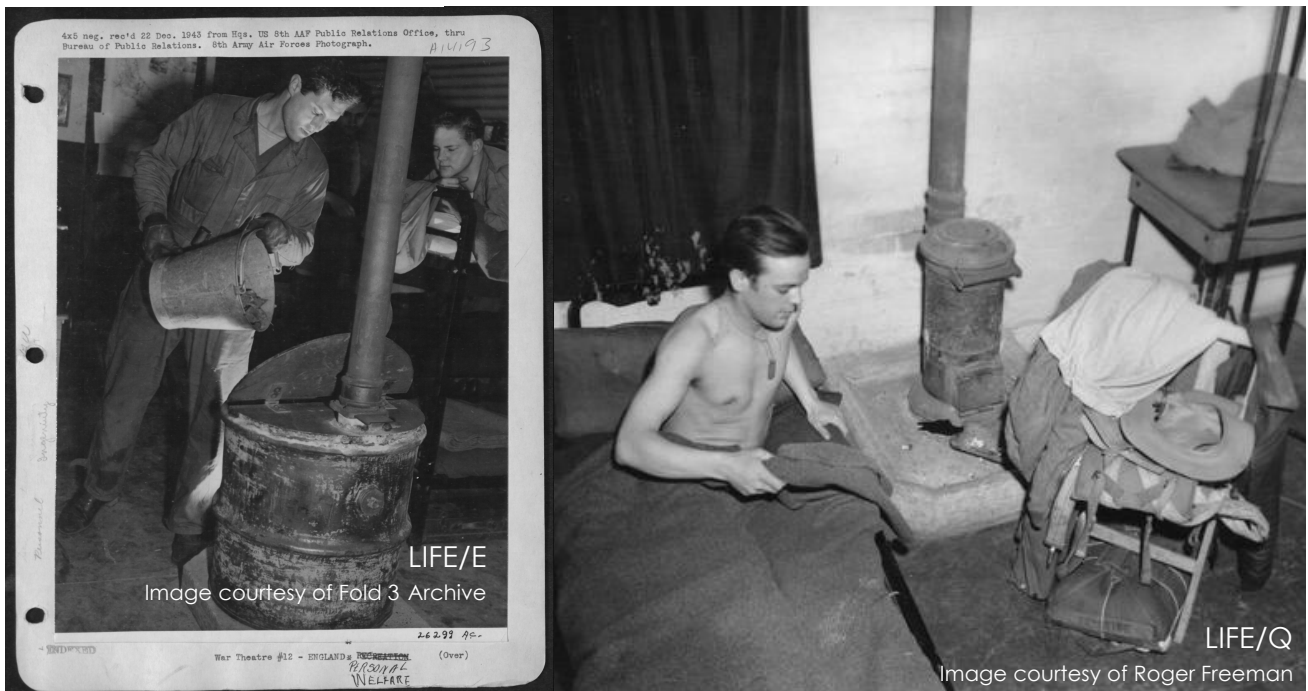
Living conditions

Few Americans were prepared for the weather conditions in Britain and as such mud features heavily in diaries, letters and in many of the cartoons drawn by Americans that survive from the period. During the period they were stationed in Britain, a quarter of all days were non-operational because of the appalling weather. On the reverse of a photograph found in the Freeman archive it reads:

‘Mud, mud and still more mud - that's England in the fall” P.F.C. William R. Sauerland looking out over the landscape and thinking of his home at 7206 St. Lawrence Ave, Chicago.’



In the official history of the first year, living conditions on the bases were described as 'rugged'. Many servicemen faced water shortages, basic rations and, in the early days even having a toilet block within walking distance was considered a luxury. The little coke fuelled stoves provided in the nissen huts needed continuous re-fuelling to keep them warm.



'After supper the first man back to the hut built a fire, if we had any fuel, and out up the blackout screens. Our heating plant for this airy, uninsulated steel shed was one small iron stove. To get the fire going entailed a ritual that involved profanity... a half dozen false starts, and a hut full of smoke... We were not allowed to keep a fire in the stove during the day when we were out working. Our coal was strictly rationed, and our hut was always damp and cold when we returned at night.'



LIFE: view images of daily life on the airbases. GI DIARY: read diary extracts about living conditions in the nissen huts and on the airbases.

Letters, love and loss

Although they don't speak for all GIs, and surprisingly given the living conditions, many of the diaries and letters we have found contain overwhelmingly positive reflections on life in wartime Britain. The warm reception many received from the families they encountered would have been a welcome relief from the dangerous and stressful daily reality of leading a strategic bombing campaign over the battlefields of Europe.

During the four years they were stationed in our region 26,000 airmen who took off from East Anglian airfields were killed and 6,000 aircraft destroyed. The odds were stacked against the young men who flew the B-17 and B-24 Liberators and conventional wisdom was that they had a one in three chance of surviving the war. The 381st Bomb Group based in Ridgewell, Essex for example, lost seven of their nine crews. In *Stories of the Bloody 100th* Peter Seaman describes how he and his friends “used to count how many went out and came back...not a lot” he says.

For the airmen who survived each mission, protecting loved ones back in America, who waited anxiously for their next letter as proof that their sons were alive, would have been a priority. They communicated with family through letters and V-Mail and in one GI diary the author includes extracts of the letters his mother sent him.

14 March 1944

Before leaving Topeka, Mother gave me a letter to be opened after reaching my destination.

My Dearest Son;

When you read this you will be on your way to a great adventure, to fight for your country. I will be thinking of you every minute and praying for your safety. No mother has ever had a son who has given so much joy or so many reasons to be proud...

...War, it seems, is much harder on the mothers and wives than it is on sons and husbands. Headlines, casualty lists and accounts of engagements mean only one thing to you all. “Is my boy alright?” You would probably switch places if it were possible. I am, indeed, a most fortunate young man, undeserving but deeply appreciative. I will quit for tonight.

GI DIARY

In the air they were a target for German gunners but the servicemen also had to contend with technical faults, failing oxygen supplies and even frostbite. Personal accounts of life as a member of the 8AF give us a greater understanding of how these men dealt with the loss of friends and the pain of being parted from loved ones back home in America. The letters sent between Bob and Alice reveal just how difficult it must have been for them to be apart.



England
30th September 1944

Alice Dearest,

Please excuse the paper, but it is all I have anymore. I'm trying to get something else but until I do this will have to suffice even though I am ashamed to use it....

...If I wrote to you each time I thought of you, you'd have a letter every minute of the day. Really you are constantly on my mind. I can't concentrate on anything else. I only hope that it won't be too long before the war is over and we can sit down and talk and get to know and understand one another better. Right now I am most anxious to get home, and see you, and be with you, we have so much to talk about...

*Well Alice, I better sign off, goodnight.
With all my love,*

Bob



BOB & ALICE: birthday cards, hand-written letters and transcribed copies of Bob and Alice's letters to one another. GI DIARY: read the rest of the mother's letter and explore the full diary.

In addition to the thousands of casualties and deaths in Europe, sometimes just the task of getting the heavy bomber aircraft into the air led to deaths on the airbases, fields and surrounding villages. For the GIs these crashes would have led to the almost certain deaths of fellow airmen and friends. The author of the GI diary describes one such crash that occurred on the airbase he was stationed at.

27 April 1944

'Another horror story raised its head this evening. A B-24 crashed on landing this afternoon. The impact of the crash tore the upper turret loose from the mounts and it fell on the radio operator. The poor guy was pinned down by about 1000 pounds of turret. The remaining fuel on board began to burn and a couple of the men tried to get him loose but were unable to do so and were forced back by the heat'

GI DIARY

An Airmen Prays. Before going into combat, Sgt Thomas M. Barber of Seattle, Washington, kneels before the altar at the 96th Bombardment Group chapel. The window in the background honors the dead of the group.

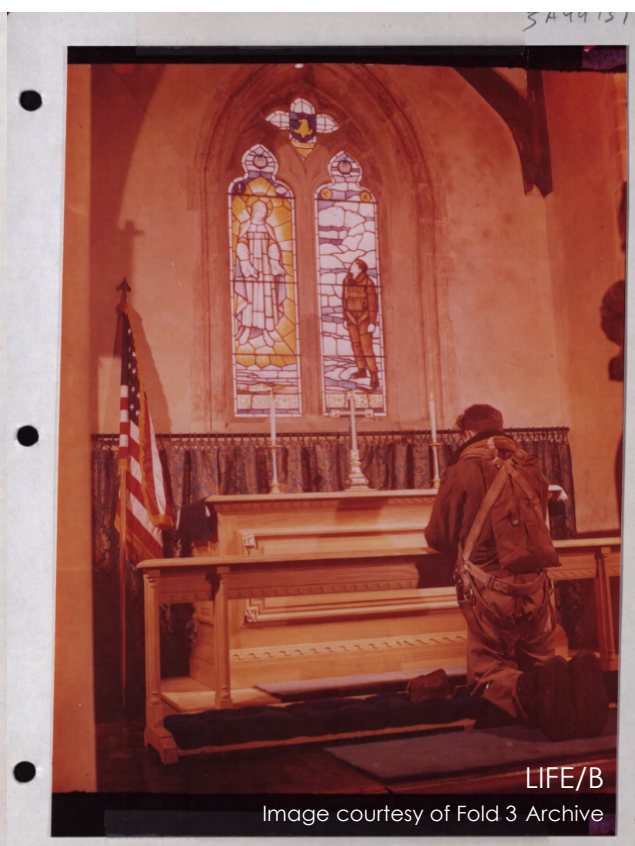
Before going into combat, many airmen say a silent prayer, some call on the minister or rabbi, and offer chaplains bless both plane and crew before the take off; but this Airmen has gone to the group's chapel before taking off on a mission into Germany (bombing). Sgt Thomas M. Barber, 23, Seattle, Washington, kneels before the altar and memorial window dedicated to the airmen of the US 8th AF 96th Bombardment Group who have been killed in action. The men have contributed more than \$1600 for this chapel in the 12th century St Andrew's church.

US AIR FORCE PHOTO

4x5 received 28 April 1945 from BPR. Stamped: Certified as having been passed by SHAEF Censor #85.

Filed - War Theatre #12 (England) RELIGION

USSTAF Kodachrome taken by Sgt J. Pazen. Used in the Feb 46 issue of National Geographic Magazine.



In *Beneath the Clouds* Jim McMahon recalls:

‘When Fred was killed, the enlisted men in our crew went down to the flight line and stayed long after dark waiting for him to return. It was a strange thing to do because we knew he was dead. We packed his things ourselves and would not let anyone outside our crew touch his belongings.’^{xv}

However it was not just the Americans who were affected by these crashes but also the residents of surrounding villages, particularly the children. In his oral history we can hear Mike Bailey’s eyewitness account of the Heigham Street crash that killed Paul Gorman, the scene he witnessed having an impact that endured long after the war had ended.

In *Stories of the Bloody 100th* original film footage of a crash on the base at Thorpe Abbots is shown accompanied by oral testimonies describing a number of tragic crash landings on the base. Tony Mark recalls how part of an exploding plane crashed into his house and landed on his mother’s bed as she slept. John Goldsmith describes a crash he heard whilst at school *“In the middle of the afternoon we saw a plume of smoke and knew an aircraft had crashed, not realising at the time ten people had been killed”*. Ray Hubbard recalls seeing two planes crashing into each other in the sky and Sam Hurry remembers seeing a plane crash land in a sheepfold. Crashes affected everyone in the area and had a lasting impact on those who witnessed them. Ken Everett says:

‘It turned out we were in far greater danger from the battle damaged planes coming back than we were from the Germans’



MIKE BAILEY: in his oral history discusses the loss of his best friend when he was just 11 years old. *STORIES OF THE BLOODY 100TH*: see original film footage and hear eyewitness accounts of crashes from the locals at Thorpe Abbots.

Social life – meeting host families

Away from loved ones and the normality of family life, some GIs struck up relationships with families in villages surrounding the airbases. Others in more rural locals had visits arranged for them by the American Red Cross. One and a quarter of a million of these visits were organised for GIs to have meals, parties or longer breaks with families who had signed up to the scheme. In return for their kindness, host families were offered extra rations and were often lavished with gifts from the visiting soldiers. Naturally some visits were not successful but many led to the GIs developing close and long lasting relationships with local families that endured long after the war ended and the GIs had returned to their own families and homes in America. In *Beneath the Clouds* Peter Ardizzi recalls:



‘I had my mother send me a pair of nylon hosiery at least once a month, including a can of canned fruit. I always took the nylon hosiery and canned fruit to the host family that had invited me to a home cooked meal and an overnight stay in a bed. They usually served breakfast in bed. They would not accept money for my stay...’^{xvi}

The local women that welcomed GIs into their homes cooked for them and did their washing and sewing. In *Stories of the Bloody 100th* Mary Bailey said her mother was “*proud to do it*” and not just on special occasions like Christmas, but throughout the year and for the duration of the war. She says:

‘We had Americans every night of the week...it was home to them during the war’

Social life – meeting the village children

Life for children during the war was tough. With fathers and older brothers serving in the war, and mothers taking on new jobs and long hours, many children were left to fend for themselves. To make matters worse, from 1942 rations were placed on sweets and a ban on ice cream production was introduced. The arrival of the Americans in 1942 brought gifts of candy, peanuts and chewing gum and the possibility for adventure and new experiences.

In *Beneath the Clouds* Al Jones describes an exciting encounter with a local child:

‘One day I asked Herbie’s mother if I could take him for an aeroplane ride. She agreed...I went to the farm and got Herb and took him to the mess hall for breakfast. Now here’s a lad who has never been 15 miles away from home, or ridden in a car...I told the crew chief what I was doing and we smuggled Herb aboard...I stationed Herb right back of the pilot during take off as I had certain duties to perform during this time. As we went down the runway to take off his eyes got as big as saucers and he clung on for dear life. Once in the air we headed for London...We then went up to the bombing practice range on the Wash. I took Herb up in the nose while I dropped a few practice bombs...We flew up to Scotland and across the Irish Sea. I took him back into the waist through the bomb bay and to the waist guns. We got down on the ocean and I let him fire the guns into the water, without shooting off the tail of course! We then headed home where we buzzed the farm and we waved to his parents and sisters before going in on our landing.’^{xvii}

Not all encounters would have been as exciting as Herbie's but for the children the arrival of Americans in the region changed everything about normal village life. In the *Stories from the Bloody 100th* Sam Hurry, a child at the time recalls:

'It was the best thing that happened to us because we suddenly had a new life'

In 1939 at the outbreak of WW2 few British children had ever travelled outside Britain. If they had a holiday, most went to the seaside or the countryside. When the Americans arrived in East Anglia for many children this would have been the first time they had heard an American accent in real life. In Thorpe Abbots the interviewees discuss their fond memories of one particular airman called Rowan "*an actual cowboy that joined the military*". Sam Hurry and Ray Hubbard go on to discuss how Rowan, on a mission in Africa, was presented with a donkey, which he brought back to the Thorpe Abbots base with him. And it would appear that Rowan was not the only cowboy serving in the 8AF. In the Fold 3 archive we found photographs of another cowboy, Sergeant Vaughn Davis, meeting village children.



CHILDREN: images of local children meeting airmen. FILM: hear the locals reminisce about Rowan and other airmen they met and see original footage of Rowan and the donkey in Africa. ANIMALS: images of animals kept as mascots/pets by the airmen.

These men did not replace fathers and brothers serving overseas, but the presence of Americans, cowboys and exotic animals in small villages provided a welcome distraction for many children. The feeling, it seems, was mutual and for those GIs missing the families they had left behind in America, the children of East Anglia became a symbol of normality. The author of the GI DIARY writes about a day he spent meeting children in the nearby village.

5 April 1944

Nothing much doing today so I borrowed the crew bicycle and toured some of the area around the base...I met and talked to a number of local folk...the kids are making hay whilst the Yanks shine "Any gum, chum" is the usual opening of the sales pitch...I passed out what little goodies I had and they are sure tickled to get these little luxuries. There aren't too many of the troops who turn down these children. Little reminders of home and the thought that except for geographical luck these could be American kids.

GI DIARY

In *Stories of the Bloody 100th* John Bartrum recalls the relief in the faces of the servicemen as they saw the friendly faces of local children as they arrived back safely from the front line '*If I was there, they knew they were back home safe*'.

The GIs left East Anglia as quickly as they had arrived, usually without time for a formal goodbye to the family who had played host to them during their stay in the region. The children in particular were sad to see them go. In *Stories of the Bloody 100th* the interviewees speak of the huge sense of loss they felt when the war ended, the troops returned to America and normal village life resumed. Mary Bailey and John Bartrum remember: "*when they went it left a huge gap*" and Sam Hurry says:

"It took a long time to get back to normal. I don't think it ever did"



GI DIARY: read full extract. CHILDREN: more images of children visiting the airbases. STORIES OF THE BLOODY 100TH: hear how the locals in the villages surrounding the airbase at Thorpe Abbots welcomed the airmen into their homes.

Social life – American servicemen and the land girls

On the airbases the lack of radios, magazines and baseball equipment was a constant complaint of the 8AF, so when they were off duty, many ventured to larger towns where they could visit cinemas, churches, clubs and pubs. Special events were organised across the region to entertain the Americans including baseball games, rodeos and film screenings. Other regular events were dances and picnics with the land girls working on surrounding farms who were also missing family and home.



Land girl Gladys Benton recalls a typical evening when the Americans were in town:

‘the evenings were spent either in walking down to the village pub or else in the lounge of the hostel, where we would sit around an old piano singing...Some evenings we would be taken by truck to a nearby American Air Force base. The Americans treated us well. We taught them how to ballroom dance and they enjoyed giving us lessons on

how to jive. We looked forward to those evenings, not only for the music and the company, but also the food.'^{xviii}

In the village of Thorpe Abbots GIs swamped local pubs in the evenings, so much so, that The Red Lion and The Half Moon would often run out of beer. *In Stories from the Bloody 100th* the villagers describe the special treatment given to the Americans by pub landlords who often reserved for them the best beer. But, it seems, the special privileges went both ways. When the Americans were in town local children, who had previously not been allowed anywhere near the British RAF bases, were welcomed onto 8AF sites to meet the servicemen and see the planes. The servicemen organised Christmas parties and gifts for youngsters and Land Girls who, on a typical night would have a strict curfew, were given a special late pass to attend 8AF dances. I Pamphlett recalls:

'There were three USAAF aerodromes around us so we had a good time as the village had a dance every week. We got a late pass for that, as other times we had to be in by 10.30pm, a late pass was until 12pm...The USAAF had dances at their bases which was great as they had such lovely food and plenty of ice cream. They had these big bands and we even had Glenn Miller's band'^{xix}

WW2 affected the lives of everyone in Britain at the time, rich and poor, famous and unknown, on the home front and the front line, The King and Queen grew crops on their land at Sandringham in Norfolk to help with the shortage of food and famous people, including Joe Louis, volunteered for service. Some well-known Americans were based in East Anglia. James Stewart served with the American army for two years and was stationed on a base in Norfolk. Glenn Miller, who served in the U.S. Army, toured all over England from his base in Bedford singing to the troops, before being tragically killed in an air crash in 1944. Famous people who passed through the region included Bing Crosby and Eleanor Roosevelt, and in 1943 the actor Clark Gable made a film on an airbase near Peterborough and visited the troops to acknowledge their contribution to the war effort.



[SOCIAL LIFE: search images of dances, rodeos and boxing matches, adverts etc...](#)

Creativity: American artwork

American artists were often paid a lot of money to paint aeroplanes, jackets and even the walls of buildings. At the start of WW2 the 'nose art' on the front of airplanes was very popular in the United States American Air Force, but less common in the British Royal Air Force.



Compared with the comic and cartoon style of American art work popular at the time, British art work was a lot more smart, serious and formal. It did not take long for American art to catch on and soon English planes were painted in a similar style to the American ones. However, the work of Carl Giles shows just how different the British artistic style was. Throughout the war Carl Giles' British comic style remained a familiar sight in the newspapers he worked for including The Daily Express and Sunday Express and on posters for the Executive Railway Committee and animations he made for the Ministry of Information.



Artwork for a Ministry of Information animation film
"The Grenade" Archive
GA5659 Image courtesy of British Cartoon Archive



EIGHT BALL, NOSE ART: more examples of this style of art
GILES: to see the full archive:
<http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/GA5659>

Naming the aircraft became a popular tradition preserved for the pilots of the planes. The figures and motifs painted on the noses of the aircraft became an art form in itself and many of the artists became famous and in demand.



One example is the *Flying Eight Balls*, which was the nickname given to the 44th Bombardment Group, who were based in East Anglia from October 1942

– April 1945. The airmen flew from their base in Shipdham, Norfolk to complete 343 bombing missions in Europe and were awarded medals and honours for their contribution to the war effort.

The legacy of the *Flying Eight Balls* is still felt in the region and the murals they painted on the walls of buildings at Shipdham airbase can still be seen.

EIGHT BALLS/C
Image courtesy of Airfield Research Group



EIGHT BALLS/C
Image courtesy of Airfield Research Group



EIGHT BALLS: see nose art, murals, decorated bomber jackets and the memorial to the Flying Eight Ball online.

Creativity: The poems of servicemen Hyam Plutzik

Hyam Plutzik was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1911, the son of Jewish emigrants from Belarus who arrived in the United States in 1905. Plutzik enlisted in the US Army in 1942 shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. He was first a drill sergeant, then a 1st lieutenant stationed at various bases throughout the American South, an experience that brought him into direct contact with racial segregation and that inspired his poem "To Abraham Lincoln, That He Walk By Day." During the war, Plutzik served as an army education officer for the Army Air Corps in Norfolk, participating in the support activities for the D-Day invasion. Plutzik wrote several poems inspired by his military experience in England including "Bomber Base," "On the Airfield at Shipdham," "The Airman Who Flew Over Shakespeare's England," and "The Old War." His poem Bomber Base talks about East Anglia the ancient.

Bomber Base

The machines are quiet before the day's struggle.
Geometric lines subtend the air at random.
In the half-dark, propeller, wing and fin
Loom out of space. A searchlight lifts a far
Pillar of white and flare falls slowly,
In isolation, so calm, so secretly.

There are many messages coursing the earth
In this wartime night: of command, terror, despair;
In guttural syllables, in soft; by lights in the sky.
And none so beautiful as the white flare sinking
On a distant field, in East Anglia the ancient.

And space is full of the mutter of engines passing
Over the clouds, like a great organ playing.

Now the thatched farmhouse sleeps in the dark
Among wakeful men, moving swift to their task.
The runways stretch silent; somewhere in the blackness
The guards stand, unseen, longing for home,
And a woman's arms, a warm bed in a house.

Upon the fields the stone weapons of dead men
Lie awaiting the outcome, which they will survive.
And the bomb-trucks move down the deserted perimeter
Where the cold North Sea wind stifles all.

Listen: the King's airmen are at large tonight.
But this is no story. Already the enemy.

© Copyright 2010 by The Estate of Hyam Plutzik. All Rights Reserved.

Animals on the airbase

‘We were all asleep one night and all of a sudden I woke up and felt something walking around on top of my blanket down near my feet. The first thing I thought was that a cat had got in and somehow jumped on my bed. I let him walk around and when he got up near my waist, I swung my arm real hard and knocked him clean across the ten. I got up and turned the light on and to my surprise it wasn’t a cat, but a very large rat.’^{xx}

In *Beneath the Clouds* Frank Holm remembers this night time encounter with a rat. Diary entries and letters are rich with hair-raising stories about the rats that plagued the airbases, scurrying around in the servicemen's beds and stealing food at night, but it was not uncommon for household pets to also be found in the nissen huts. Roger Freeman took hundreds of photographs servicemen and the animal mascots kept on airbases in East Anglia. In most cases servicemen kept dogs and cats but in the Freeman archive we have found a monkey and a duck; in *Stories from the Bloody 100th* a donkey at the airbase in Thorpe Abbots, Norfolk, and at Parham, Suffolk, they have records of a bear nicknamed Roscoe Ann.



Roscoe Ann

Before coming to Britain American GI Captain Tuttle and eleven other officers had been inducted into the Blackfeet Indian Tribe. One of the officers - Lt. George Nelson - had been presented with a small brown bear cub by a park ranger who was flown to England in the radio room of a B-17 plane. The bear cub was given the name 'Roscoe' and became the official mascot of the 569th, which became known as the bombing Bruins' Roscoe.

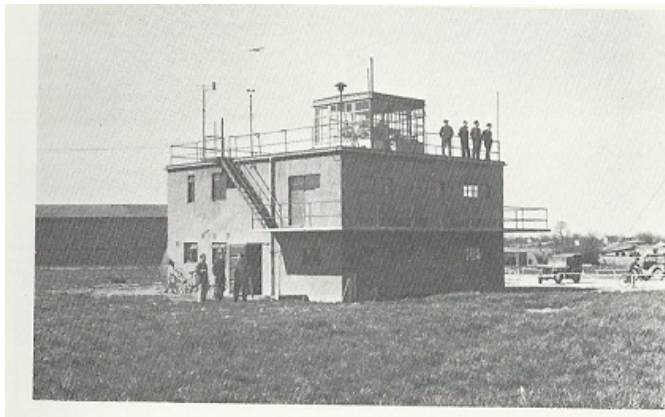


Roscoe the bear had the run of the 390th base and a choice of bunks to sleep on. He would take a stroll into the village of Parham to the delight of the English children who had never been confronted by a bear before. Roscoe grew and became more adventurous and locals recall that one day he strolled into the Parham church right up to the pulpit and stood staring at the vicar. By now it had been discovered that Roscoe was a female and her name was changed to Roscoe Ann. Roscoe Ann developed a taste for sweets, which led to severe health problems and only six months after joining the men of the 390th, she had to be put to sleep.



ANIMALS: see more pictures of Roscoe Ann, the Native American tribe who gave her away and her life on the airbase at Parham. Also view photographs of other interesting animal mascots.

Then and Now



THEN&NOW/F1

Parham control tower, 1944
Image courtesy of Roger Freeman



THEN&NOW/F2

Parham control tower, 1977
Image courtesy of Roger Freeman



THEN&NOW/F3

Parham control tower, 2014
Image courtesy of Eighth in the East

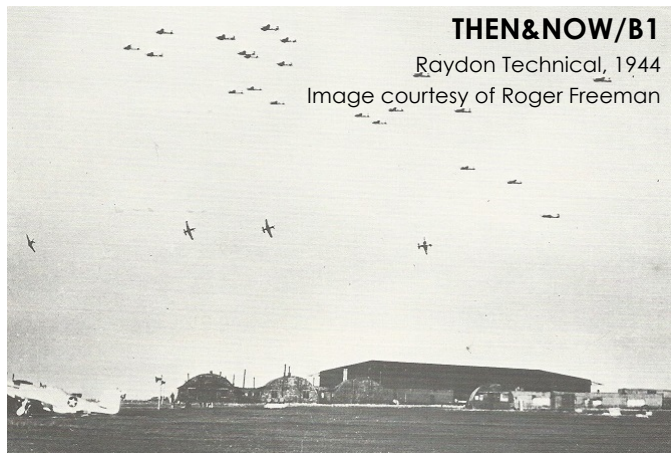
What remains of the airfields is one of the most evocative legacies of the American presence in Eastern England during the Second World War. The 8th USAAF have long gone but a quick look on Google Maps or using the images provided on our website you will soon recognise the familiar “A” shapes of airfields.



THEN&NOW/A1
Map of Shipdham airfield taken before WW2
Image courtesy of Norfolk Historic Maps



THEN&NOW/A2
Aerial photograph of Shipdham airfield taken during WW2
Image courtesy of Norfolk Historic Maps



THEN&NOW/B1
Raydon Technical, 1944
Image courtesy of Roger Freeman



THEN&NOW/B2
Raydon Technical, 2014
Image courtesy of Eighth in the East

The remains of many buildings, runways and personal items survive in the landscape in various states of decay in woodlands, industrial estates, farmyards and gardens. They offer us a gateway to the past, providing a tangible link to the memories of local people and veterans.

Whilst the military past of these sites might be apparent, the important stories that go with them have been disconnected and are in danger of being lost. Part of the problem is that there is no clear understanding of how much has already been demolished, and perhaps more importantly, the extent of what survives.

THEN&NOW/C1

Debach Headquarters, 1945
Image courtesy of Roger Freeman



THEN&NOW/C2

Debach Headquarters, 2014
Image courtesy of Eighth in the East



THEN&NOW/E1

African-American GIs march in Stowmarket
Image courtesy of Norfolk Record Office



THEN&NOW/E2

Stowmarket, 2014
Image courtesy of Eighth in the East



THEN&NOW – explore more images and maps and find out how to organise a trip to an airbase or heritage site in East Anglia. Details of sites are provided and guidance for using your nearest record office to source examples in your own locality.

Legacy

History on our doorstep



ABANDONED/K

Image courtesy of Eighth in the East

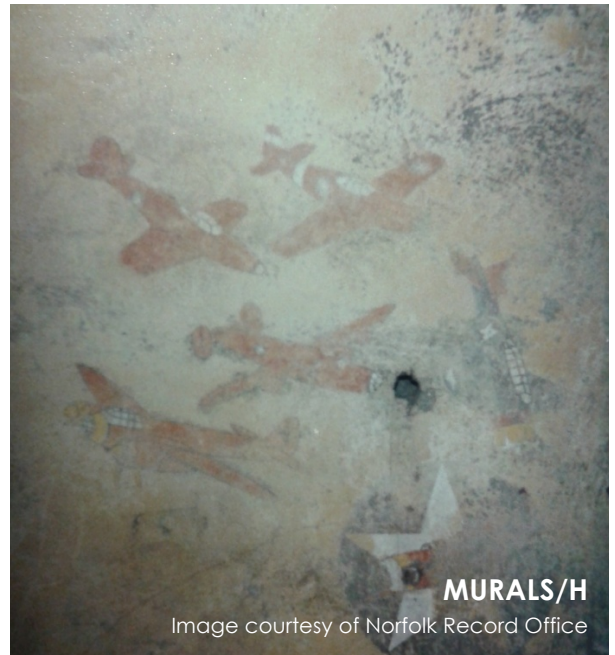
Abandoned airbases:

The archaeological finds, archival material and photographs that have been uncovered give us a greater understanding of the social history of these spaces and a snapshot of the lives of the people who occupied them.

What's remarkable about WW2 archaeology is that we have photographs from the time that we can match with what's there now. But we are on the verge of this period becoming history. The few remaining survivors are passing away and with them the legacy in the landscape is fading too. On the walls of airbases that weren't built to last murals which, when photographed in the 1980s, were brightly coloured, have now gone.

In the surrounding fields we have retrieved rusty tin cans and other domestic items, objects without traceable stories, but, when we start to dig a little deeper, to bring the finds together with the diary entries and oral histories, we start to discover significant links between objects and stories that give us a deeper understanding of the daily routines of the servicemen that once occupied these spaces.

Were the murals and graffiti created out of boredom, a way to pass the time during long spells away from the action or are they indicative of an innate human need to create, decorate and make a mark on their environment, to record their presence in East Anglia?



21st March 1944

Buck and I are together in one of the Nisson huts. There are about nine or ten men to a hut...showers and tubs are in a nearby building and can be of use if you can stand the frigid air between where you undress and the water. Inside the hut is a pot bellied stove that provides heat as well as being a hot plate for an assortment of bread, cans, biscuits and an occasional pair of socks I am already fond of that little stove and its red hot lid...

GI DIARY

Memorials

War memorials act as historical touchstones, which link the past with the present. Across the region memorials have been erected to honour the memory of the USAAF in the region and to acknowledge the sacrifices made by past generations. EITE has been working with local schools in a number of ways to explore the meaning of memorials with the aim of supporting young people to understand the role they play in preservation and remembrance, that new generations to take on this history, to remember and preserve the memories, stories etc..

The locals remember

Following the crash, that took the life of American airman Paul Gorman, a memorial to the men who took the brave decision to fly into the church tower, away from residential areas, in order to minimise the loss of civilian life in the crash. The plaque reads:

“The pilot of the bomber as his last act avoided crashing on this and surrounding cottages thus preventing the loss of civilian lives”

This, and hundreds of similar plaques and memorials erected across the region to honour the USAAF, can be viewed online at: <http://www.airforcememorials.co.uk/>.



What is remembered?

New memorials, to past and present conflicts, are installed and old memorials are added to as new stories come to light. The archive collection at Norfolk Record Office shows how the community came together to erect the memorial to Paul Gorman and his crew, but what would have happened to Paul Gorman's story if this had not been the case, and what about the untold stories and forgotten heroes? It is not just about *how* we remember but also *what* we remember that is vital. *Which* events and individuals are memorialised and *whose* histories are recorded send important messages about what we as a nation value. The official histories of WW2 have long excluded the contributions made by African-American GIs and Britain's Black servicemen and women to the war effort and finding these

stories happens through the work of committed individuals and communities who search through the vaults of archives to retrieve the stories of forgotten heroes.

Memorials to African-American servicemen

Together with the images from Lee Miller and Fold 3 Archives, the collection of Carl Giles' cartoons at the British Cartoon Archive, survives as one of very few records we have of African-American GIs in East Anglia. When the African-American servicemen had finished their work and moved away from Suffolk the memory of these men faded with the physical traces of their presence in the region. Soon after the war ended Jamaican socialist DaCosta wrote:

"Colour prejudice...still persists in the hearts and minds of many people of Britain, and it may increase again as war memories fade"^{xxi}

DaCosta's fears weren't unfounded. In Britain Black servicemen and women were not awarded the same privileges as fellow White veterans and even 50 years on, were still fighting to attend VE Day celebrations to which they had previously not been invited to participate in. In recent years the US Army has admitted racial discrimination in the way medals were awarded during WW2, meaning many African-American servicemen had to wait until 2007, over 60 years later, to be awarded a medal for their contribution to the war effort. As far as we know, the only memorial that exists in the whole of Europe to the African-American GIs is the Wereth monument in Belgium.

In 2009 Barak Obama attended an event to commemorate D-Day in Normandy, which was covered in The Telegraph by Philip Sherwell. In the article Sherwell interviews African-American D-Day veterans about the significance of Obama's visit and about the time they spent serving in Britain during WW2. Comparing life in Britain in the 1940s with life under segregation in America, former corporal in the 490th Port Battalion who participated in D-Day, Charles Sprawl says

"My time in England was the first time I had really felt free in my life"^{xxii}

Charles discusses the contributions of fellow African-American servicemen, many of whom were stationed in our region, and how they have been forgotten from public memory. Referring to two of the best known films about D-Day he says:

"Where were we in The Longest Day or Saving Private Ryan...where were we in the history books?"^{xxiii}

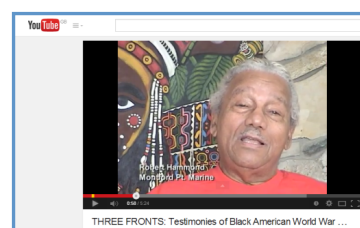
The freedom that British people have enjoyed following WW2 was only made possible with the support of these people. Because the camera lenses were not focused on these individuals, their stories have disappeared from history and a great silence has fallen on the African-American GIs and their contribution.. Charles Sprawl concludes:

‘I think people are finally realising that there were African-Americans there too and how important we were in the operation, but it’s been a long time, too long.’^{xxiv}

Three Fronts by Lili Bernard

African-American war veterans talking about life during WW2, the racism they experienced and how the history of Black GIs has been hidden from history:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX7xeHMa7to>



MEMORIALS: explore images and description of school project to preserve war memorials. GORMAN/A-GORMAN/J: view the letters and newspaper cuttings relating to the Heigham Street memorial.

Legacy of the 'friendly invasion'

The industrialisation of the rural East Anglian landscape that occurred as a result of the airfields being built left an enduring legacy upon the region. Ancient field systems were built on, hedgerows plucked out and tens of thousands of trees felled.

However, soon after 1945, these landscapes became the homes to those displaced by the upheaval of war. One example is a family who moved into the wireless transmitter at Hethel in Norfolk.



Now, however, many of the buildings have fallen into disrepair and only a few can be accessed by the public. Some have become small museums with a dedicated group of volunteers to keep the memory alive but, in many cases, the day the Americans left the region, nature reclaimed the airbases and buildings and, as peaceful life resumed, only faint traces of the Americans remained in the region.

The villagers interviewed for *Stories of the Bloody 100th* talk about the departure of the Americans from East Anglia with an overwhelming sense of loss. The men who were stationed on the airbases had a profound effect on the villagers they encountered and, in many cases, the close friendships formed between them were never forgotten. For young people, the presence of the Americans and the influence of American culture had been eye opening. The accents, food, gifts, music and dance styles that had, for a fleeting moment, awakened sleepy villages, disappeared as quickly as they had arrived. The people in the film speak of the silence that fell on the village as the planes left and normal life resumed. Mary Bartrum, a child at the time, remembers:

“Everything fell back to being dead, a little village of about 40 people in it”

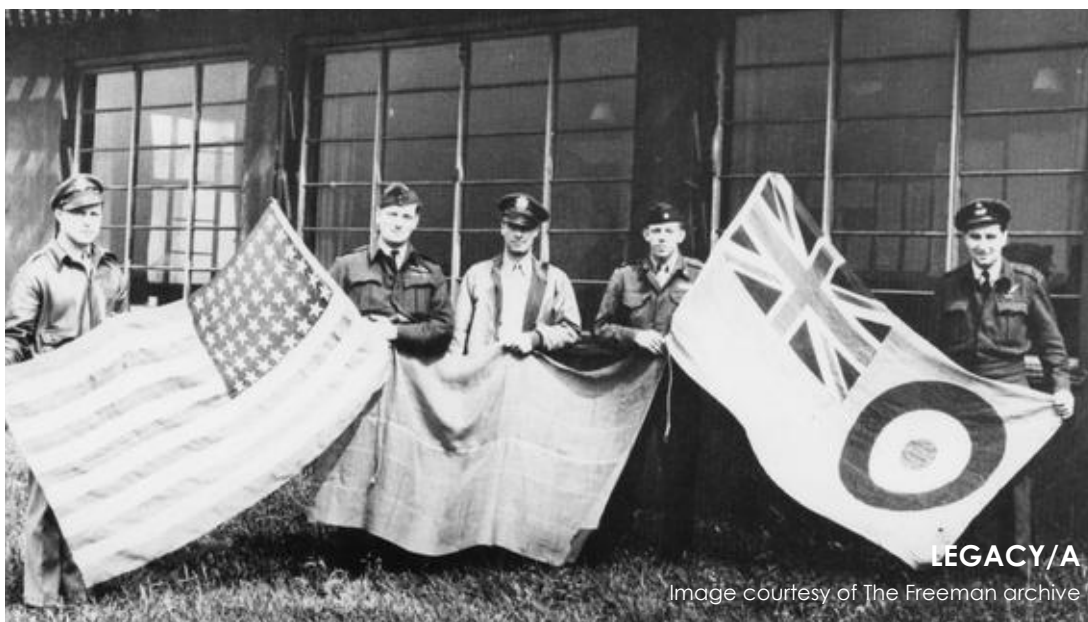
In *Stories of the Bloody 100th* Tony Mark describes:

“Suddenly you could hear the skylarks and turtle doves...along with various other birds and the noise that were all lost were suddenly back, it was so still”

After WW2 the American servicemen who once lived on the bases returned to Britain to visit host families, to support museums and site groups and to erect monuments to remember their colleagues who paid such a heavy price. However, those visitors now dwindle as the last survivors fade away.

In 1992 a 50 year celebration event was organised bringing people together to remember. A pamphlet was produced by the American attendees, which contained the slogan ‘Never in history has such a lasting and sincere friendship ever existed’.

But as historians, archaeologists and volunteers delve deeper to recover more evidence of these relationships, we are learning that with the ‘friendly invasion’ also came some not-so-friendly events that have left a huge gap in the archives. And as the last survivors pass away, so do the eyewitness accounts that would have helped us to piece together the jigsaw and reveal hidden truths about the full impact of the 8th USAAF in East Anglia.



Section Three

Curriculum Activities

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS

The Eight in the East is dedicated to providing a first rate teaching and learning program and aims to compliment the national curriculum in numerous ways by addressing:

- The experience of American servicemen in East Anglia
- The social and cultural impact of the 'friendly invasion' and the effect it had on people living, working and serving in the region
- The historical legacy left behind by the Eighth U.S Army Air Force
- The different ways local people, servicemen and the government at the time experienced and responded to segregation and racism
- The geographical impact of airfields on the East Anglian Landscape

HOW TO USE THE RESOURCE

The learning resource consists of a teachers' pack and website that bring together primary source material to support teachers in their delivery of the History curriculum (local history study in particular), and wider curriculum subjects including Art and Design, Geography, Citizenship, English and to support enrichment activities such as Black History Month.

The pack and accompanying website are not designed to address the whole complex topic of WW2 but instead to enliven and enrich learning about WW2 with local connections, familiar places and personal narratives that are not available in general textbooks or other WW2 related teaching resources.

Primary and secondary school teachers may wish to use the **Background Information** in Section Two of the pack for their own research and the **Curriculum Activities** in this section to help shape lessons and projects suitable for KS2 and KS3 learners.

Classroom activities, questions and creative approaches are provided in the pack to help prepare and follow up visits to airbases and heritage sites, and to conduct stand alone projects in school. Images, maps, archive and audio-visual material are collected together on the website and can be downloaded and printed or shown on interactive whiteboards. In the **My Resources** section of the website teachers can save and organise their own material for presentations, and each theme can also be downloaded as a PDF to use as a handout in the classroom.



Where further source material relating to themes explored in the pack is required, the pack lists what resources are available on the EITE website and where to find them using the EITE logo.

The learning resource is also suitable for heritage professionals, volunteers and educators working with groups in informal, family, community and reminiscence settings to help conduct activities with participants of discussion groups, workshops and events.

Visit the learning pages of the website to discover more:



www.8theast.org

History

Historical enquiry skills

Paul Gorman

Collect together the source material exploring Paul Gorman (GORMAN images, archive material and Mike Bailey's oral history BAILEY). Use the background information in the pack to structure the investigation of materials. Ask learners what they know about Paul Gorman from the initial piece of evidence (GORMAN/A) and ask again when they have seen all the evidence and heard Mike Bailey's oral history. What knowledge have they gained? Explain the importance of collecting full accounts of events from different perspectives and how they can give us greater understanding of how events such as crashes impacted, not just on the servicemen killed but also on their families, the locals and children who witnessed the crash. Discuss the response from the military and the response from locals and use the background information on memorials to consider how the locals came together to remember the airmen who lost their lives in their area. Use the background information in the pack to discuss the history behind the creation of memorials and their importance.

Role of women

Women had a crucial role to play in WW2 and the roles they took on were many and varied. Use the background information in this pack together with LAND GIRLS, LEE MILLER and MAGGIE to explore some of these roles. Some of the images that survive of WW2 were taken by women who were working on the front line who witnessed some of the biggest events during WW2, such as the liberation of the concentration camps. Use the background information to discuss the many ways women helped to support the war effort on the home front, working in fields and factories, and on the front line, flying planes into war zones. Explore the contribution of women to documenting WW2.

Watch *Stories from the Bloody 100th*. How do these individuals remember the role of women during WW2 - their older sisters and their mothers? Use the background information to discuss host families and to explore how the Americans interacted

with local people. How important were women in these host families to making the American GIs feel at home, as friends, mothers and girlfriends? How did the events of WW2 change the role of women?

African-American GIs in Britain

Collect together the source material exploring African-American GIs (images, AFRICAN-AMERICANS, LOUIS, GILES, YouTube and Pathe films) Use the background information in the pack to explore the role of African-American servicemen stationed in region. Use the CONSTRUCTION images to explore the contribution of these servicemen and LOUIS, GILES and SOCIAL to consider the social life and cultural impact of African-Americans on British music, entertainment and culture.

Racism, segregation and the colour bar

Watch AFRICAN-AMERICAN/FILM A to introduce segregation in the American Air forces and the racism and colour bar that existed in Britain.

Explore the images of GILES and his African-American GI friends at The Fountain pub in Tuddenham. After the African-American GIs had moved and White GIs took their place, the landlady removed Giles' images of his Black GI friends. Giles' said it was 'a bloody disgrace' and accused the landlady of giving in to the racist White GIs who were offended by the images. Use the background information to discuss the pressure felt by people in surrounding villages to keep the Americans happy. Given that the Americans spent a great deal of their money in the local pubs, many local businesses relied on their custom to survive. How do you feel about the actions of the landlady? How would you have dealt with the situation?

Now remind the class of the woman they heard in AFRICAN-AMERICAN/FILM A who spoke about the African-American GI she befriended and the consequences of that friendship that led to his death. During WW2 British women and Black GIs were often treated very badly for having a relationship, dancing together or even just speaking to each other on the street.

Compare the responses of the two women to the racism they witnessed. Discuss peer pressure, bravery, equality, kindness and how friendships were formed despite segregation and racism.

Changing opinions

Use the background information in the pack to discuss Amelia King's experience when she applied for the Women's Land Army. Being turned down for a role simply because of your race was a typical experience for many men and women of African and Caribbean descent in Britain at the start of WW2. Discuss the wider effect of the decision not to place Amelia in Essex because of the colour of her skin and the impact it had on race relations in the UK. Discuss the survey that took place of the British public and how the majority voted in favour of overturning the

decision and allowing Amelia King to join the Women's Land Army. Why did British people vote this way? Was this a sign that many British people were tired of the racism they encountered from many white GIs stationed in the region?

Memorials to African-American GIs

Use AFRICAN-AMERICAN/FILM B and background information about memorials to inspire a class discussion about legacy and memorials. Why is it important to remember the contribution of the African-American servicemen to the war effort? What would happen if a person was turned down for a job or not allowed into a public space because of the colour of their skin in Britain today? Why was a memorial to these men not erected in the region? Are segregation and racism to blame? Why has this history been forgotten? Why do White people feature more prominently in history than Black people? Why has nothing been done about it until now? What would be a fitting memorial? Design a memorial?

Tracing how several aspects of national history are reflected in the locality

Explain to the children that they are to become history detectives, finding clues about people, places and points in history. Take your class on a tour of your local area, a memorial, airfield museum or an airbase. Use the archival images and maps provided to prepare them for their visit. Look for evidence of WW2 in the landscape, buildings. Take cameras with you to record your findings.

Historic site study

Use the background information in the pack together with the MAPS and THEN & NOW images on the website to explore the changing shape, appearance and function of the airbases in our region. Organise a class visit to a local site, take historical images with you and a camera to capture your own photographs. Use the photographs of abandoned airbases and archaeological finds (ABANDONED, TRACES) to help you prepare. Can you find traces of WW2 history in the buildings and landscape? Some museums and airbases offer educational programmes and guided visits; others may allow you to explore the site for yourself. Use the resources in MAPS to locate your nearest air base. Featured on the EITE site is a link to an interactive map of airbases in East Anglia created by EITE partners The American Air Museum in Britain. Use this to find your local airbases.

On a local history walk – look at the rendering on buildings, rendering was applied to repair bomb damaged buildings, look for houses that look out of place in a row of terraced houses. It's likely the out of place house was bombed during WW2 and replaced with a newer style house.

Archaeology

On your site study you may discover archaeological finds of your own. Make sure you tell us about anything you find and upload photographs to the website!

Use the FINDS images with your class. Give them images of tin cans, dog tags, guns, parts of planes etc... and ask them to answer questions about the different finds. Discuss the 'value' of archaeological finds with them - financial, historical, social etc...

	What colour is it? What is it made from?	What is it designed to do? Is made by hand or by a machine?	What do you think it is worth? What is its value? Now? In the past?	What does it tell us about life during WW2? Why was it abandoned?
Object 1				
Object 2				

A turning point in British history

World War Two

Use the background information in the pack together with the images and maps on the website to explore the impact of WW2 on Britain. How did the influx of people impact on the local area? How did people from the local area contribute to the war effort? Think about how different the American culture was to the British culture. There were all sorts of difficulties that came with the 'friendly invasion'. The Americans brought with them their modern technology, their music, dance, food and different expectations of living standards. You should also think about language difference. How many American words can you think of that are different to British words? How might this have caused confusion in initial meetings between the two cultures?

Using the five senses (sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste) list all the differences that would have been experienced by local people as a result of the arrival of the Americans.

American Civil Rights/ British Civil Rights

During WW2 colour was a sensitive subject in America and the UK. Use the background information together with the AFRICAN-AMERICAN FILMS and AFRICAN-AMERICAN images online to discuss segregation, racism and the colour bar and the challenges facing the British government at the time.

How did the British attempt to overcome the problem of American segregation in Britain? Did they deal with the problem effectively? What would you have done differently? What effect did the visits of people like African-American boxer Joe Louis have on the morale of African-American servicemen? What impact did it have on the British public? During a period when America was racially segregated, the American government sent an African-American man to Britain as a representative of America, what message did this send to the rest of the world? Does this mark the start of changes in America? What effect did these events during WW2 have on the civil rights movement in America two decades later? Segregation in the American Army ended in 1948. Why did it take so long to bring it to an end?

How did the British public express their dissatisfaction with racism and segregation? Explore CARL GILES and AMELIA KING. How important were the attitudes/responses and reactions of the general public to racism to bringing about a change in British Race Relations? Use the background information in 'Legacy' and African-American GIs' to support your discussions.

African-American GIs in Britain

Collect together the source material exploring African-American GIs (images, AFRICAN-AMERICANS, LOUIS, GILES, YouTube and Pathe films) Use the background information in the pack to explore the role of African-American servicemen stationed in region. Use the CONSTRUCTION images to explore the contribution of these servicemen and LOUIS, GILES and SOCIAL to consider the social life and cultural impact of African-Americans on British music, entertainment and culture.

Social history

Use the background information in the pack together with the people, archival images and films to explore the social changes as a result of WW2. Explore culture, diversity, migration and equality. Explore the many and varied roles of women before, during and after WW2. Explore the stories of MILLER and MAGGIE. How did women's roles change during the war? In what ways were women crucial in

helping Britain to win the war? List the different ways women contributed on the home front and on the front line.

How did attitudes to race change during and after the war? Which events might have been significant in bringing about these changes? LOUIS and KING.

Following a lesson about racism and segregation, explore MILLER/D and GILES/A - one picture from the Lee Miller archive, one taken by Lee Miller, the other by an unknown photographer present on the day and now in the collection of Norfolk Record Office. We know the Lee Miller shot was used in Vogue magazine in America. The other photo was probably taken by local press. Why was there an interest in The Fountain pub in Tuddenham? What was different about this pub to many other pubs in the region and across the UK? Look at the people in the photograph. Given what we know about segregation and racism why is this picture interesting? (Black men, White men, White women). Why were these pictures taken?

A 'special relationship'

Explore social life on the airbases; the living conditions, off duty activities and friendships made (SOCIAL, CHILDREN, LIFE). How easy/difficult would it have been for the young American soldiers to adjust to life in Britain? How important were the host families, land girls and children in local villages to keeping them sane whilst fighting a war?

'Never in history has such a lasting and sincere friendship ever existed'

Use this quote and the background information about legacy to discuss the relationship between Britain and America following WW2. How important was the relationship between America and England after the war? How has this relationship been maintained in contemporary conflicts?

Oral History

Oral history gives us unique access to new perspectives on WW2 and how it was experienced differently by local people who were children at the time. Use the FILMS and ORAL HISTORIES to explore the impact of American airbases on the children living in villages in surrounding areas. Compare the accounts given in the oral histories with the experiences recorded in diaries, letters and V-mails.

The film contains interviews with people of Thorpe Abbots of who were children at the time the GIs were stationed in their village. It combines oral histories of the last surviving children of Thorpe Abbots with footage and images of GIs stationed in the village at the time. Listen to their accounts of the impact on village life, how children interacted with the soldiers and what happened when the soldiers moved away.

What do the children understand by the term 'friendly invasion'? In some towns the number of American GIs would have outnumbered the local population 50 to 1. What impact did that have on the children of Thorpe Abbots? Can the children imagine how a similar occurrence would impact on a town like theirs today? Think about the introduction of new language or slang, changes to local amenities etc.... Think about the cultural influence on fashion, music, sport etc...

Did any of the children's relatives grow up in East Anglia during WW2? Do they remember what it was like? Conduct oral histories with them. Develop a class project to capture these hidden histories before the last remaining survivors are lost.

Conducting oral histories

Discuss the value of oral history with your learners. Why is it important we interview local people about their memories of WW2? What can we learn from the people who were not involved in fighting on the front line?

The history of this period is still being written today. The stories of people who do not appear in the history books – women, children, working-class men and ethnic and racial groups – contain vital clues that may help historians to gain different perspectives on more well known stories and enhance official records. You may uncover a story which has never been told before, a missing piece of the jigsaw. Join with us to help to write history – upload your oral histories onto the website www.8theast.org. The children of WW2 are now elderly; if we don't capture and record these stories now then they will be lost.

The National World War Two Museum in America provides excellent guidelines for developing oral history projects with young people and conducting interviews with veterans: <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/oral-history-guidelines.html>

Chronology

Use THEN & NOW images to explore change over time. With younger learners discuss old and new, then and now, before and after. Use the picture enquiry notes on page 96 to support questioning. With older learners try to find the sites EITE have photographed on Google maps. How has the landscape changed since WW2? Is your school close to any of the airbases photographed in the THEN & NOW section? Organise a field trip to a local base to find the location of the photograph. Take old photographs with you and cameras to record your own 'then and now' images.

Use the GI DIARY and IMAGE BANK to conduct activities exploring chronology. Select entries/ images related to a specific theme and ask the class to sort them into time order using the headings 'before', 'during' and 'after'. You might select one of the following themes...

Themes	Before	During	After
GI DIARY	Arrival	Life on airbase	Departure
Events	Constructing	Bombing	D-day -Luton
Region	Rural	Bases	Abandoned

Use THEN&NOW/E, LANDGIRLS/B and LANDGIRLS/C to explore how the 'friendly invasion' affected rural and agricultural life in East Anglia. Many fields and farms were cleared to make way for runways and airbases but normal farming life continued throughout WW2. The heavy bomber planes took off and landed alongside the land girls gathering crops and tending to farm animals. Use the picture enquiry notes on page 96 to help with questioning.

Time Capsules

A time capsule is a collection of objects, artefacts and information that can be hidden or buried for future generations and future archaeologists to find. Work with your local airbase to develop your own WW2 time capsule. Think carefully about the messages you are hoping to communicate through your time capsule. Will your time capsule have a specific theme such as; 'land girls', 'music', 'our school during WW2 and now', 'the relationship between American servicemen and people in your local village' or will your time capsule contain a memorial to the African-American GIs who served in our region? Create a collection of 'then and now' images and conduct oral histories to put inside. Maybe your local airbase will allow you to include a local archaeological find or a photograph of a significant find in your time capsule?

Introducing your class to maps

Use Google maps to place your local area in its context of where it is in the solar system, the world, Europe, the UK and East Anglia.

Slowly zoom in closer. Can you find your school and your home? Trace your journey to school? Trace journeys you have made out of your village/town to other areas of East Anglia, London and the wider world; through the countryside and urban areas and across the sea to America. Can you find any evidence of airbases or memorials on the maps you find?

Use the EITE airfield maps to compare the shape and size of different sites and how each airfield looked before and after WW2. Was your school built before or after WW2? Can you find your school on Google maps? Can you find your school on any of the old maps provided? Also included on the EITE site are links to EITE partner sites that have a wide range of maps available for teachers to use in the classroom. The American Air Museum (part of the Imperial War Museum) in Britain have developed a map of East Anglia that shows all the airbases in the region and IWM Duxford also has a wealth of material available, all of which can be accessed by visiting: www.8theast.org

Using aerial photographs

Use SHIPDHAM aerial plan and photo to explore the impact of WW2 on the landscape. Compare SHIPDHAM/A (before WW2) and SHIPDHAM/B (after WW2). Shipdham is just one example but there are many A-shapes examples seen from the air. What do you think the triangular shape in the photograph is? How did this part of Norfolk change during the war? How do you think local people felt about the airfield being built? Does the airfield cut through any roads, hedges, woodlands or fields? Can you trace the airfield onto the picture?

To source your own maps contact your local record office, a full list appears on the website.

Fieldwork study

Use the background information in the pack together with the MAPS and THEN & NOW images on the website to explore the changing shape, appearance and

function of the airbases in our region. Organise a class visit to a local site, take maps and compasses with you and a camera to capture to record key features of the landscape. Can you find traces of WW2 history in the buildings and landscape? Remember that in many ways the absence of WW2 archaeology is just as significant as an obvious presence. This shows how rapid landscape change was after the war – often airfields were ripped up and returned to agricultural land in order to meet the needs of a booming population.

Some sites offer educational programmes and guided visits; others allow you to explore the site for yourself. Find your local WW2 memorials online. The PAUL GORMAN and hundreds of similar plaques and memorials erected across the region to honour the USAAF can be viewed: <http://www.airforcememorials.co.uk/>.

American influence

Collect together the photographs of MURALS, EIGHT BALL and CARL GILES.

MURALS – many of these murals can still be seen at sites across East Anglia. They were found on the walls of club rooms and living quarters. Why do you think the servicemen painted murals on the walls? Do you recognise any of the characters featured in the murals? (Bugs Bunny, Hitler) What styles have the murals been painted in? Many people feel passionately about wanting to protect the murals created by servicemen during WW2. Do you think they should be preserved? What are the challenges in preserving work like this? Discuss the ways they could be restored/preserved? Create your own mural – the Americans summed up their thought, emotions and sense of individuality in their murals. What design would you create and what story does it tell?

EIGHT BALL – what is a Flying Eight Ball? Who designed the motif? Why do you think Servicemen had them painted on their jackets, walls and made into patches? What do you think the image represents? What do you think people in England thought about the image? What does the image remind you of? What sort of style is it? Do you like it? Can you find other examples of motifs? Create your own logos or designs.

CARL GILES – do you think artists like Carl Giles were influenced by the American style of art? Official records do not give us information about the African-American GIs stationed in East Anglia. How important is the work of Carl Giles and the war photographer MILLER to documenting this hidden history? What would have happened to the memory of African-American GIs if artists/photographers hadn't documented their presence through their work? What would have happened if their work hadn't been preserved by archives?

ARTISTIC MERIT OF DECAY – think about the aesthetic resonance of the abandoned airfield sites. Even those sites that are intact often provide huge views across the landscape that in certain weathers can be very dramatic looking. Think about how to capture these landscapes on film. How can these sites be presented as art in their own right? Do you think that an airfield can be beautiful?

Abandoned airbases - site visit

Collect together photographs of ABANDONED airbases. Explore traces of lives, nature reclaiming buildings and sites. What role does an artist or photographer play in preserving the memory of these sites? Organise a visit to an abandoned

airbase and spend a day recording key features of the site, be inspired by the lives that came before. Create sketches, paintings or photographs. Think about the significant role of war artists at the time and war photo journalists in contemporary wars. Discuss MAGGIE and MILLER and their role as war photographers. Explore their photos of the sites. Record the sites as they are now or re-imagine the sites as occupied spaces.

Citizenship, diversity and community

Black History Month

African-American GIs in Britain

Collect together the source material exploring African-American GIs (images, AFRICAN-AMERICANS, LOUIS, GILES, YouTube and Pathe films) Use the background information in the pack to explore the role of African-American servicemen stationed in region. Use the CONSTRUCTION images to explore the contribution of these servicemen and LOUIS, GILES and SOCIAL to consider the social life and cultural impact of African-Americans on British music, entertainment and culture.

Racism, segregation and the colour bar

Watch AFRICAN-AMERICAN/FILM A to introduce segregation in the American Air forces and the racism and colour bar that existed in Britain.

Explore the images of GILES and his African-American GI friends at The Fountain pub in Tuddenham. After the African-American GIs had moved and White GIs took their place, the landlady removed Giles' images of his Black GI friends. Giles' said it was '*a bloody disgrace*' and accused the landlady of giving in to the racist White GIs who were offended by the images. Use the background information to discuss the pressure felt by people in surrounding villages to keep the Americans happy. Given that the Americans spent a great deal of their money in the local pubs, many local businesses relied on their custom to survive. How do you feel about the actions of the landlady? How would you have dealt with the situation?

Now remind the class of the woman they heard in AFRICAN-AMERICAN/FILM A who spoke about the African-American GI she befriended and the consequences of that friendship that led to his death. During WW2 British women and Black GIs were often treated very badly for having a relationship, dancing together or even just speaking to each other on the street.

Compare the responses of the two women to the racism they witnessed. Discuss peer pressure, bravery, equality, kindness and how friendships were formed despite segregation and racism.

Changing opinions

Use the background information in the pack to discuss Amelia King's experience when she applied for the Women's Land Army. Being turned down for a role simply because of your race was a typical experience for many men and women of African and Caribbean descent in Britain at the start of WW2. Discuss the wider

effect of the decision not to place Amelia in Essex because of the colour of her skin and the impact it had on race relations in the UK. Discuss the survey that took place of the British public and how the majority voted in favour of overturning the decision and allowing Amelia King to join the Women's Land Army. Why did British people vote this way? Was this a sign that many British people were tired of the racism they encountered from many white GIs stationed in the region?

Memorials

Use AFRICAN-AMERICAN/FILM B and the background information about memorials to inspire a class discussion about legacy and memorials. Why is it important to remember the contribution of the African-American servicemen to the war effort? Why do White people feature more prominently in history than Black people? What would happen if a person was turned down for a job or not allowed into a public space because of the colour of their skin in Britain today? Why was a memorial to these men not erected in the region? Are segregation and racism to blame? Why has this history been forgotten? Why has nothing been done about it now? What would be a fitting memorial? Design a memorial.

English and Drama

Character development

Character profiles

Create a character profile for a person in one of the archive images, oral history film, oral histories. If they are unnamed then give them a name. If they have an untold history then re-imagine their history using the information you have discovered about the lives of people during WW2. Use the **Picture Enquiry** notes on page 96 to help you to explore photographs.

Role play

Select two people from the same or from different pictures. This could be an American serviceman and a village child, a mother waiting to hear from her son, Bob and Alice, Carl Giles and Ike. Use the pack and website to conduct background research about each person – what life was/might have been like, the experiences they might have had as an airman, mother. In pairs write and perform a dialogue between the two characters.

Hot seating

Select people from photographs and take it in turns to be hot seated by the whole class. Provide simple props to help them to get into character; a helmet, flat cap, walking stick or shawl

Literacy, creativity and writing

Collect together a range of source material from the LETTERS HOME section of the website. Read Vmail, diary extracts, the letters and greetings cards sent by Bob and Alice. Discuss the subjects covered in the letters, how much the letters reveal about life in East Anglia during WW2 and how war affected differently servicemen and family 'back home'.

Letters home: V-mail

Use the V-MAIL TEMPLATE to create your own letters home. Pretend you are an American serviceman living at on an airbase in East Anglia. Use everything you have learnt about Second World War, about life, love and loss to write a piece of V-mail home to America. Include information about: life in England, the weather, countryside, buildings and food; the English people, friends you have made; life on

an airbase - what you do in your spare time, what the local village is like; your hopes for the future, your fears about the war. How much will you reveal about the war effort? Would this level of detail have been allowed (secrecy)?

Creative writing

Choose a person in the image and given them a name and write a story about what happened before, or just after, the picture was taken

Diary entries

Examine the GI DIARY and create your own for your chosen person. Think about how your chosen person would have experienced WW2. Use IMAGE BANK and ARCHIVE MATERIAL to explore WW2 through the eyes of the different people present in the region at the time; a GI, local woman, child, and African-American GI, a shopkeeper. Write diary entries for 1939, 1942 and 1945. How much does your chosen person reveal through their diary? Does the diary entry change in tone over the course of WW2?

Poetry

Read the poem about East Anglia Bomber Base or select your own war poem from the many available online. Examine the structure and content of your chosen poem and create your own poems inspired by the images or film

Speaking and listening

Discussions and debates

Use the following quotes to spark discussion and debate in the classroom. What does the author of the quote mean? What feelings does it convey? Is this a minority or a majority opinion? What does it tell us about this period in history? How reliable is the quote?

How the local children viewed the American servicemen:

'It was the best thing that happened to us because we suddenly had a new life'

Sam Hurry (Stories of the Bloody 100th)

Impact on the families of servicemen:

'War, it seems, is much harder on the mothers and wives than it is on sons and husbands'

Mother of the diary author

The role of women:

“The first time the Americans saw us girls working in the fields they thought we were prisoners doing time. They had never seen girls working so hard”

Gladys Benton (Land Girls)

African-American GIs in England:

“My time in England was the first time I had really felt free in my life’

African-American war veteran Corporal Charles Sprawl

After the Americans had gone:

“It took a long time to get back to normal. I don’t think it ever did”

Sam Hurry (*Stories of the Bloody 100th*)

Picture Enquiry

People

What are people wearing, what do they look like and what are they doing in the image? What do these things tell us about the time they lived in, their age, their job, how wealthy they are, and what their life was like? Why was their picture taken and by whom?

Buildings

What buildings can you see? What is their function? What does the size of the buildings tell us about who built it/lives/works there? What do the details tell us about the time they were built? What state is the building in and what does it tell us about the time the picture was taken? Was it before, during or after WW2? If you can see a shop, what do you think was sold there? If you can see a farm building, what do you think was produced on the farm? How do the images reveal changes in the landscape, to the locality, to the people living, working and stationed in the region during WW2?

Posters, signs and symbols

Can you see any posters, writing, signs or text anywhere? What does it tell us? Were the signs produced in a factory or by hand; by a professional or amateur? What purpose does the sign or notice serve; information, decorative, personal? When was it written/designed? Was it before, during or after WW2?

Transport

Can you see any forms of transport in the image? What does this tell us about the age of the picture; the way people lived in this area; who owned or used the transport? What purpose or function does the transport serve? Tractors, trains, jeep etc..

Technology

What evidence can you find of types of energy used for lighting and transport in the image? What else can you tell about the technology in use at the time the image was produced?

Extension Activities:

Comparison and chronology

Use THEN AND NOW images on the website to compare change over time. What has changed and what has stayed the same? Discuss clothing, transport, buildings and technology. What would it have been like to live in the area during each time period?

New pictures

On a field trip, take a print of a historical picture with you and try to take a picture of the new view, or hold up the picture to incorporate the historical view in a new picture.

What do we know, what don't we know?

Create a class list of all things the pictures can tell us about a historical era and all the things they can't tell us. What else would we like to know? How can we find out the answers to our questions? What other sources of information are there? (maps, census data, aerial view photos, oral histories)

One picture, a thousand stories

Look at GILES/A and MILLER/D together. Look for similarities/differences, which picture was taken first? Which picture do they students prefer? What happened immediately before and just after the photographs were taken? Why was Lee Miller invited to take this picture for Vogue magazine? Use the Background Information to help with this – explore Lee Miller, African-American GIs, racism and segregation.

Further Support for Teachers

LONGER PROJECTS

Use the pack and resources to deliver short, one-off lessons or as part of longer term projects in school.

Case Study:

Firside Junior School's War Memorials Project



In July 2014, a year six class from Firside Junior School and some of the EITE team spent two days at Norwich International Airport restoring the previously vandalised Horsham St Faith war memorial that sits adjacent to the entrance of the airport.

Learning about the past

The children spent the first half of the week in the classroom using the resources to examine the local impact and significance of the USAAF in their area, building on their previous knowledge about WW2 from their history lessons.

They learnt about the geographical impact that the airfields had on the area and the difference in culture between the English and the Americans. Using images and oral histories to explore life on the airbases, they created artworks inspired by the murals, cartoons and sketches the Americans left behind.

Later in the week, the students moved on to look at the importance of war memorials and to design a leaflet for year three students at their school to share their newly acquired knowledge.

By this stage they had become experts on war memorials, which meant they were shocked to hear about a recent act of vandalism on the memorial at the airport and were excited and motivated to help EITE with the restoration work.



Restoring the memorial

EITE Ambassador Mike Bailey took part in an oral history session with the children, sharing stories about his childhood encounters with the Americans during the war and his work to design the memorial.

The children cleaned, polished and varnished the memorial and memorial bench, painting the RAF and USAAF ensigns, and planting lavender and American grasses leading up to and surrounding the memorial headstone.

After putting all of the tools away and taking a step back, it became clear the children had given the memorial a whole new lease of life and they deservedly received a lot of praise from those passing by into the terminal! One child brought his father back to the memorial after school to look at all the hard work he'd put in.

Overall, the week was a great success for all those involved, and everyone ended up learning a lot about both War Memorials, and the impact of the Americans in their area.



MEMORIALS: explore images and description of school project to preserve war memorials. GORMAN/A-GORMAN/J: view the letters and newspaper cuttings relating to the Heigham Street memorial. BAILEY: hear Mike Bailey's oral history interview.

ACCESSING ARCHIVES

Norfolk Record Office (research and study centre)

The Archive Centre is the home of the Norfolk Record Office, the Norfolk Sound Archive and the East Anglian Film Archive. It has excellent facilities for research, and extensive collections related to the air bases in Norfolk. WW2 teachers' packs, bomb maps, and 'online exhibitions' such as 'Norfolk's American Connections' are available online.

<http://www.archives.norfolk.gov.uk/>

Essex Record Office (research and study centre)

Search the catalogue online for photographs, oral histories and archival material related to WW2 in Essex, some of which has been digitised.

<http://seax.essexcc.gov.uk/>

Essex Record Office also offers an 'Essex at War' schools session, details of which can be found on their website.

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Libraries-Archives/Record-Office/Pages/Essex-Record-Office-Workshops,-Classes,-Education.aspx>

Fold 3: Photographs of servicemen (website)

Fold3 is an online archive which brings together US military records, stories, photos, and personal documents of the men and women who during WW2. Thousands of images of American airmen in England are available free of charge. Browse: WW2/WW2 US Air Force Photos/Europe/England for photos of the air bases, maps, aircraft, recreation, African-Americans.

<http://www.fold3.com/>

The American Air Museum Archive: social and aviation history (website)

As a teenager Roger Freeman and others photographed the 8th UAAF stationed near to his home at Boxted air base, Essex. Growing up on the Essex/Suffolk border Freeman dedicated his life to documenting the friendly invasion; the aircraft, airmen at leisure, the locals, even animals on the bases. His extensive collection can be accessed via Duxford Museum website.

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-duxford>

The British Cartoon Archive: Carl Giles (website)

Artwork, files and related documents from the studio of cartoonist Carl Giles. Includes approximately 6,500 original artworks for the cartoons; reference files of

photographs and cuttings, on which to base his drawings; business correspondence with the Daily Express, Sunday Express and others; 'studio correspondence' with readers and admirers; general and family correspondence, a reference book collection including publications featuring his own work; an almost complete set of Giles annuals; cards; photographs; films and objects.

<http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/collections/CG>

Lee Miller Archive (website)

Search the Lee Miller Archive online: www.leemiller

FURTHER READING

Beneath the Clouds: Social History of the USAAF in East Anglia, Jackie Stuart (Poppyland Publishing, 2012)

This book explores the social history of the air bases and how war-time life in Britain affected the fighting men and the ground personnel. The book brings together the words of the men themselves, and of those who met and mingled with them and extracts of the book are used in this pack.

The Motherland Calls: Britain's Black servicemen and Women 1939-45, Stephen Bourne (The History Press, 2012)

The Motherland Calls is Stephen Bourne's second book to unearth a hidden history of Black Britain and the Second World War. This book highlights some of thousands of Black British, Caribbean and West African servicemen and women who supported the British war effort from 1939-45.

Rich Relations, David Reynolds (Random House, 1995)

Using documents from America and Britain and interviews with survivors of WW2, David Reynolds explores the relationships between American GIs and local people and the impact the Americans had on Britain and British society. This book is great because you can search in the index for local towns and villages.

The GIs: The Americans in Britain 1942-1945, Norman Longmate (Hutchinson & Co, 1975)

Norman Longmate investigates the relationship between America and Britain during WW2 and the experiences of airmen.

When Jim Crow met John Bull, Black American Soldiers in World War Two Britain, Graham Smith (I.B.Taurus & Co. Ltd, 1987)

This book explores the experience of African-American GIs in Britain from their arrival to the legacy they left behind and you can search in the index for local towns and villages.

Land Girls: Women's Voices from the Wartime Farm, Joan Mant (Amberley Publishing, 2014)

Joan Moat's history draws on the memories of over 300 land girls, many of who were stationed in East Anglia, to tell the story of life on a wartime farm.

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- i Page 196 *Land Girls: Women's Voices from the Wartime Farm*, Joan Mant (Amberley Publishing, 2014)
- ii Page 144 *Land Girls: Women's Voices from the Wartime Farm*, Joan Mant
- iii Page 109 *Land Girls: Women's Voices from the Wartime Farm*, Joan Mant
- iv Page 35 *The Motherland Calls: Britain's Black servicemen and Women 1939-45*, Stephen Bourne (The History Press, 2012)
- v Page 94 *Beneath the Clouds*, Jackie Stuart (Poppyland Publishing, 2012)
- vi Carl Giles 1916 – 1995, Barbara Butler http://www.witnesham.org/Carl_Giles.html
- vii Page 306 *Rich Relations*, David Reynolds (Random House, 1995)
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