

Celebrating 40 Years
1981- 2021

PARHAM

Airfield Museum



FROM OUR CHAIRMAN...

Welcome to our Christmas newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as our volunteers have enjoyed being busy at little old Parham!

Given the enforced late start to last season we had a good year. People were keen to see what had been achieved during lockdown. A total of 2,871 visitors came through the doors, including 516 children. Parties coming by special arrangement included four classes of primary age children and we are in discussion with additional schools for next year. The curriculum for that age group includes the Second World War. Teachers are keen to relate events to what happened locally, which is exactly the intention in our new displays. We have also given illustrated talks to several local organisations, which have been well received.

Last month we held our customary Christmas Party for volunteers. This was a popular and successful event, especially since our last one was two years ago. We all enjoyed John Curtis's Square J Christmas cake.

Winter 2021



Thanks are due to all those who work so hard to operate and improve our museum, whether it be welcoming visitors or working behind-the-scenes. *However, we do need to recruit more people who are keen to share the work. Can you help? Please get in contact if you would like to know more or offer your services.*

Thanks too for the various donations received, many of them unsolicited. Without these we would not be able to continue our mission to tell people about the heroic sacrifices made between 1939 and 1945.

Our regular "Old n' Colds" working parties have resumed. Routine maintenance occurs every Wednesday and often on Sundays too. We also have several improvement projects in hand.

The entrance corridor to the new building will have new wall displays on a Home Front theme. The old BRO store in the chapel area is being refurbished, as are our displays about the *Liberty Belle* and our section on German air defences. The RAF room includes a 20 mm Hispano cannon from a Mosquito and parts of another: these have been conserved and even look a little shiny!

Construction work has begun to add storage for the jeep to the new building. It will include storage space for artefacts, especially those from the replica Operational Base that cannot be left underground over winter. At the time of writing, we have a steel frame, some brick work and a concrete base. The store will be a secure, modern building and even have underfloor heating.



We plan to open the new cinema for 2022 and will improve the ventilation to make this possible. The room now includes a set of original Ministry of Information fundraising posters. They were displayed around local villages early in the War and some are now very rare.



Plans for next year include the official opening ceremony for our new Exhibition Hall on Saturday 14th May. Special guests will be invited for 10.30 and the museum will open to the public at 1pm. We will have a display of military vehicles and possibly some other attractions, so, watch this space!

We wish you all a happy festive season, which will hopefully be with your loved ones. Best wishes for the new year too. If you have been unable to visit us recently, we hope to welcome you next year. We all hope that 2022 will be a bit less challenging than 2021!

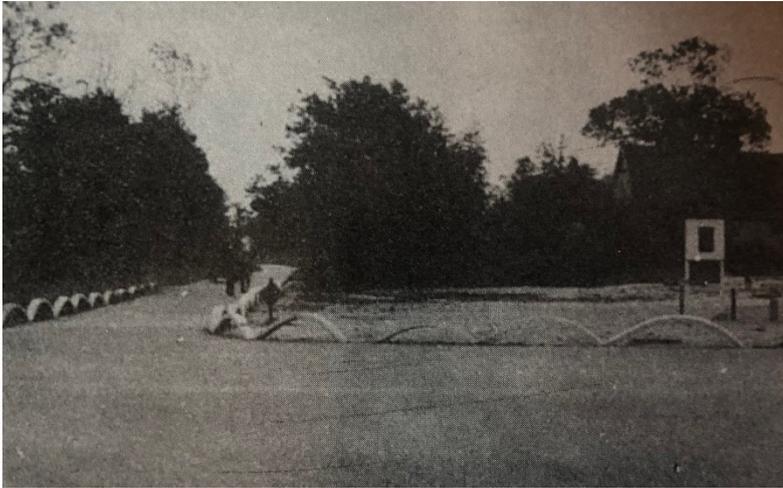
Peter Senior

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2021

Our volunteers were joined by RAF cadets, officers and the chaplain from Framlingham College for a short service of Remembrance on 11th November.



Four Corners



Above left, the road to Headquarters showing hoops used to keep military vehicles on the road, and above right the same view today. Interestingly, the apple tree at the top of this drive, shown on the right, is believed to have grown from the pip of an apple core discarded by one of the men of the 390th. The apples have been taken for identification but the apple experts had no idea as to the mix of varieties. Regardless of their variety, we always remember those in the 390th when we eat them.

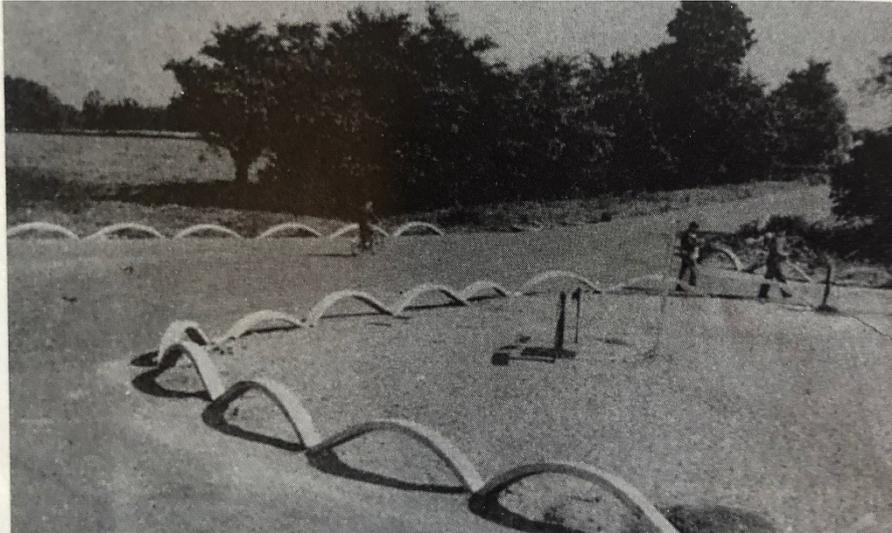


Left, this red Oak was planted at Four Corners in May 1995 when a group of 390th Veterans returned to Parham. The American veterans all brought little bags of soil from their home states to scatter around the tree as it was planted.



Airbase Hoops

Another view
of Four
Corners- then
and now.



Above, our replica hoops lead to the Moller Building and Exhibition Hall. Above, right, two original hoops from Four Corners were used to create this flower bed outside the Control Tower. Thanks to Gerry Senior for maintaining the bed.

The 390th's Norden Bombsight Vault

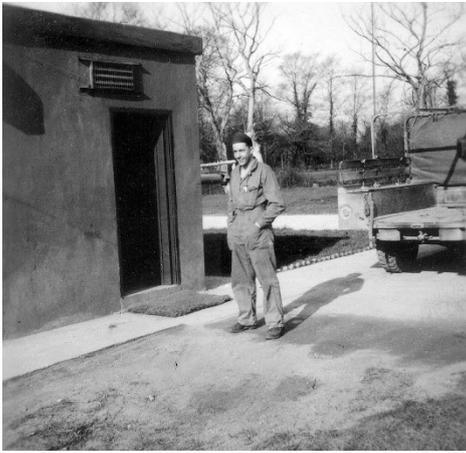
The Norden Bombsight Vault, situated near the Operations Block, was a key building on the base. It provided strongly built secure storage plus facilities for servicing the bombsights. After the war the vault was converted into a bungalow and became the first home of Peter and Kath Kindred. It is now a rental property on the farm and

a room is being added.

390th Bombsight Department with their mascot

A technician outside the 390th Norden Vault.

The building is now a three bedroomed bungalow.



I took some photographs of the doorway that has been cut in the external wall.

Breaking through was very difficult and specialist, heavy equipment had to be used! The dense, blast resistant brickwork's cavity was filled with cement, as the photos show. There were also rods and heavy wire of twisted steel, placed vertically. Please excuse the white background the photos show in the doorway, which is the modern insulation added when the vault became a home.



It took a lot of work to cut this doorway! Note the steel rods set in the foundations. Brickwork cavity walls showing cement filler .

Why was all this considered necessary?

The Norden Bombsight was treated as highly secret and after each mission the sights were taken from the B17s under guard and locked in this purpose-built building. We now know that the British had a similar device and Nazi intelligence knew all about it. At the time, the fear was that the sight's secrets might be of assistance to the enemy. Perhaps a daring raid by Nazi paratroopers or "Fifth Columnists" would try to break in and steal an example, or an accurate air raid might wipe out the 390th's stock and ruin some planned missions.



CALIBRATING A BOMB SIGHT: T/Sgt. Edwards, Capt. Cochrane and S/Sgt. Miller

How the building was used:

The Group was allocated about 70 Norden Sights. They were maintained by a team of 22 skilled technicians, who worked two shifts so the delicate equipment could be serviced ready for every mission. No failure of this essential equipment was ever recorded on a 390th mission. This record earned Capt. John Cochrane, the Group Bombsight Officer, a Bronze Star medal. Another team member was Lt. Daniel Constant, who was commissioned after perfecting a bomb release system that increased accuracy. It was adopted throughout the 3rd Air Division. The maintenance of the related auto-pilot equipment was directed by Capt. Harald Van Horn.



Checking A.F.C.E. amplifier in the bomb-sight vault. Left to right: Cpl. Overholser, S/Sgt. Dunkel and Lt. Constant.

The private wartime photographs of the Norden Bombsite Vault have been kindly made available by Dan Dunkel, whose father, S/Sgt. Robert Dunkel, was one of the bombsight technicians. They were amongst the most highly skilled ground crew on the base.



Left, The cartoonist's take on the 390th Technicians' security precautions

Peter Senior

RECENT REVIEWS

5 * Amazing

When you walk into engine room, it's like stepping back in time, as you can still smell oil and fuel. Going again next Sunday. Love, love, love it !!

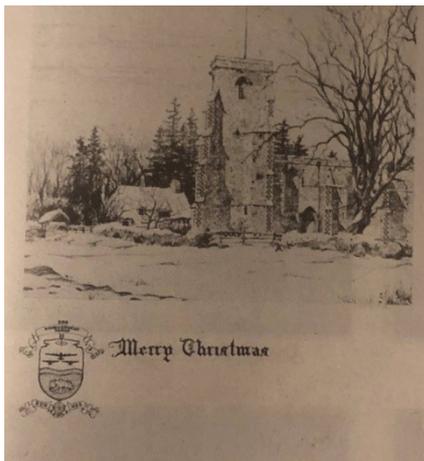
5 * Fantastic

I have visited the base twice now coming from Aberdeen - I could spend all day there reading and learning from the exhibits and volunteers. A superb museum and so much to learn from stories of the base.

Nice cafe as well to sit and chat. A must visit when in the area. Bought an airfield map from the very well stocked shop and now framed on my wall. Thanks again folks and keep up the great work!

5 * Great Visit for all Ages

Loved it! Such an interesting place, loads to see. The children were given quizzes which they really enjoyed and got a little prize (sweets) at the end. All ages equally enjoyed it. My only disappointment was that we didn't give ourselves enough time to see it all .



Christmas at the base

Above, the 390th's Christmas card from 1945, right, photos from our 'Blue Book' . *Among the warmest experiences of the two Christmas seasons spent in England were the children's parties sponsored by 390th men. The parties were big events in the lives of children who had known only barren Yule seasons during four years of war.*



THE MISSION BY BOB GILLMORE

PART II – THE RESCUE AND THE AFTERMATH

As told to Mervyn Wilson and Mick Tipple

It wasn't until we were safely aboard HSL2551 that a crewman told me that we had ditched in an enemy minefield, but they came and rescued us anyway. After we were all safely aboard, the skipper of the HSL2551 set a course back to Gorleston. At this time our P-38 escort left the area, probably low on fuel. At the same time, Don Downie's ankle was checked and it was found to be broken. He was put in a bunk in the forward part of the boat. The rest of us stayed in a midship cabin.

After about half an hour all hell broke loose and bullets and 20 mm cannon shells were flying around me. I was told that a pair of German Me. 410's had strafed us.

The boat was now dead in the water and on fire; we all scrambled out of the cabin and onto the deck. I asked one of the boats crew about Don Downie and was told that he had been killed along with three of the boat's crew. We put our lifejackets back on but had to re-inflate them by lung power. The rubber dinghies still had air in them but along with the boat dinghies they were pretty well shot up.

Everybody then jumped into the water and held onto the ropes around the dinghies; we couldn't get in them as they were too badly shot up. The boat continued to burn, sending up a plume of black smoke.

After a while, Lt James Mayall (Navigator) lost his grip on the rope and just drifted away. Nobody was in a position to help him.

Round about noon, a single engine fighter spotted us, it was a P-47. He apparently radioed for help, as about 45 minutes later another P-47 turned up with a tube attached to the belly of the aircraft (this was possibly an aircraft from the 5th Emergency Rescue Squadron). He dropped a large pack and on hitting the water it inflated as a large round dinghy. It landed 40-50 feet from one of our dinghies, but we were so cold we decided to hang onto the dinghies that we had.

What I didn't know was that the 5th Emergency Rescue Squadrons P-47's always flew in pairs, one always stayed up high to relay our position back to the controllers. The two pilots with us were Lt Paul J Trudeau and Lt Charles Todd. Two Air Sea Rescue HSL's came out to pick us up, HSL 158 under Flying Officer Sutch and HSL 132 under Flying Officer Clark. Two USAAF Medical Officers, Captains Falkner and Foster were aboard HSL 158. Also a Royal Navy Surgeon was aboard launch 2679 under Flying Officer Herrick, which also came out to assist.

The 390th survivors were taken aboard one launch and the survivors of HSL 2551 were taken aboard the other. The bodies of Lt Mayall, Sgt Downie and three of the crew of the HSL 2551 were never recovered. The body of Flt Lt Lindsay, skipper of 2551 was recovered.

The two ASR launches then headed for Great Yarmouth where there was a Royal Navy Hospital.

The casualties were 390th B.G. 2nd Lt J.S. Mayall (Navigator) and Sgt D Downie (Ball Turret Gunner).

HSL 2551 crew members killed in action were F/Lt G Lindsay (Skipper), Cpl J.G. Stewart, LAC R.G. Sykes and LAC D. Wood.

After hospital the crew were flown back to Stn 153. We were given two weeks R and R at Berkley House, a beautiful English country estate. On returning to Station 153 I found that our crew had been promoted to a P.F.F. crew.



The B.T.G Sgt Downie is commemorated on the wall of the missing at Madingley, Cambridge and 2nd Lt Mayall on a tablet of the missing Netherlands Cemetery, Holland.

On June 19th 1995, exactly ten days short of fifty one years after the original event, Bob Gillmore had the pleasure of meeting up with Harry Stamp, the Coxswain of HSL 2551, the launch that had picked up Lt Moody's crew after they had ditched off the Dutch coast.

This story can be read in full in the book "Crash Boats of Gorleston" by Tony Overill.

FROM OUR ARCHIVIST

So far I have found 548 faces of the boys who never made it home. Some are grainy newspaper print but some are formal portraits. What is so obvious is how young they all were. I have also been retyping the Station History where I can make the print out and came across this diary extract in the Jan 1944 history :

568th Squadron Diary, 1944

January, in the 568th Squadron, was the month that the byword "I don't want a furlough, I like it here" changed to "I want to go home." The allotment of coke, sufficient in the autumn months, trickled to a 4,000 pounds to supply the complete area for a week. Broken down in terms of individual barracks and huts, the common scene at 1800 hours in the latrine where the coke compartment was located, was for First Sergeant Robert Forrest to post himself with pad and pencil in hand.

To one and all, Sergeant Forrest had a directive. "One scuttle and no more for you, bud," he told each barracks representative. "No, you don't have to count the shovels-full, but just take it easy on the pile."

As a result fraternal life in the squadron centered more than ever around the ARC Canteen, the movies, and the beer tent. But few nights were spent in the barracks until bed-time.

For many officers, January was the month of promotions. Lts. Row and Stutzman of the flying personnel became Captains. Squadron Adjutant John A. Williams became a captain and likewise Garland G Weir, Intelligence Officer. 2/Lt. John M. Green became a first lieutenant in the Intelligence Section and Captain Zelman became the group surgeon.

As for enlisted men, the squadron was struck by a wave of requests from ground personnel to become part of the flying echelon. The number of men asking to become aerial gunners became so great that Major Good was forced to issue a memorandum telling the men to stay at their assigned jobs and not request gunnery at this time. Likewise, there was an epidemic of applications for cadet training. Of all those who applied, T/Sgt Joseph Horton of the photo section was the only man who passed the Board of Examiners.

Sergeant Horton had gained a fine reputation throughout the Eighth Air Force as a crack photographer. His shots of the Marienburg raid were widely reproduced in Air Force and civilian magazines.

When he appeared before the Board, he was wearing his wings, and besides having his hands bandaged, walked with a pronounced limp – the result of severe burns suffered a few days before when he started a fire with alcohol.

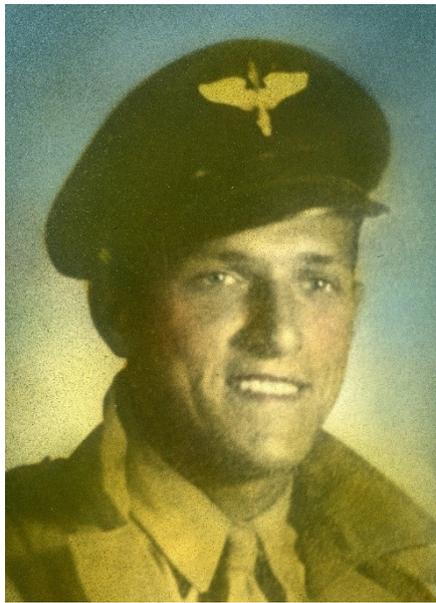
"How did you do, Joe?" his friends asked. "Oh, I passed alright. The Board thought I was a hero just recovering from wounds received in action."

In a few days, Sergeant Horton was back in the States, ready for cadet training.

Captain William's attempts to beautify the squadron area no longer were greeted with catcalls of Williams' Folly. The squadron commenced to take pride in the site. The archway that marked the entrance to the squadron area no longer was called a hanging post. It became, as had been intended, a barrier to vehicles that dragged mud into the area. The dividend was that Site 2 was rated highest of the regular squadron areas on January inspection days.

The assimilation of new flying personnel proceeded with the arrival of Captain D. D. Everly and the new crew #5 and of Lt. W. L. McAllister and a new crew #1. Captains Stutzman and Row finished their tour of missions and most of Lt. Sabel's crew finished, also. 1/Lt. C. A. Strawn, fully recovered from injuries suffered when he parachuted from his burning plane over England in November, gathered a new crew and was ready for operations once more. Lt. J. C. Waggoner, who lost most of his crew on the Heuringhem mission of January 21st, was transferred to the 569th Squadron.

AIRMAN OF THE MONTH DECEMBER



STANLEY VINCENT WRUBLESKI

29 JULY 1923 – 25 DECEMBER 1944

Stanley was born in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania and enlisted into the USAAF on 15 November 1943. He trained as a waist gunner and flew 23 missions from Station 153.

On Christmas day 1944, the mission was to Morscheid Bridge, Germany. Stanley was waist gunner on a/c 44-8323 'Blonde Bombshell'. The plane received a direct hit by flak in No. 4 engine, which flew off in pieces. The A/C made a shallow peel off to the right with the wing on fire. It exploded at about 20,000 feet with only 2 chutes being reported.

Stanley is buried in the Luxemburg American Cemetery. He was 21.



AIRMAN OF THE MONTH

JANUARY



WARD CROCKETT GILLESPIE

21 MAY 1924 – 10 JANUARY 1945

Ward was born in Houston, Texas and enlisted into the USAAF on 19 February 1943. He trained as a waist gunner and flew 22 missions from Station 153.

On mission 241 to bomb Cologne, A/C 43-38668 received a direct flak hit at Dusseldorf between the No. 1 and No. 2 engines. The a/c peeled out of formation and went into a 30° dive in an attempt to extinguish the fire. The a/c levelled off at about 25,000 feet for a short time but then the left wing came off completely and the a/c went into an uncontrolled dive. It was observed to hit the ground in a mass of flames. No chutes were reported.

Ward is buried in the Glenwood Cemetery, Harris County, Texas. He was 20.

CHECK TYPE REQUIRED (See instructions)		APPLICATION FOR HEADSTONE OR MARKER		ORIGINAL	
<input type="checkbox"/> UPRIGHT MARBLE HEADSTONE	RETIREMENT DATE	SERIAL NO.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CORRECTION (Check one)	NO DUPLICATION
<input type="checkbox"/> FLAT MARBLE MARKER	Dec. 8, 1942	1827125		<input type="checkbox"/> REMOVE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FLAT GRANITE MARKER	DECEASED DATE	STATE	RANK	COMPANY	
<input type="checkbox"/> BRASS MONUMENT (SEE INSTRUCTIONS)	Killed in action.	Texas	S. SGT		
NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)		US AIR FORCE			
OTLIFSPIT, WARD C.		Houston 6, Texas			
DATE OF BIRTH (Month, Day, Year)	DATE OF BIRTH (Month, Day, Year)	LOCATION (City and State)			
May 21 st 1924	Jan. 10, 1945	Houston, Tex.			
NAME OF CEMETERY		PREP. OFFICE, ADDRESS & CITY			
Glenwood		Houston, Tex.			
DO NOT WRITE HERE		I certify this application is submitted for a stone for the unmarked grave of a veteran.			
FOR VERIFICATION	APR 28 1949	I hereby agree to assume all responsibility for the removal of the stone promptly upon arrival at destination, and properly place it at the decedent's grave at the expense.			
ENCLAVED	Columbus, Miss. 6 MAY 1949	John W. Gillespie		4-23-49	
ALL	6283550	1810 Grand St. Houston 6, Tex.		DATE OF APPLICATION	
INDEXED					



AIRMAN OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY



ROBERT FREDERICK GLAMAN

22 DECEMBER 1923 – 14 FEBRUARY 1945

Robert was born in Freeport, Illinois. He enlisted into the USAAF on 20 April 1943. He trained as a tail gunner and flew 22 missions from Station 153.

A/C 079 was on mission 254 to Cheb Airfield in Czechoslovakia on Valentine's Day 1945. The plane was hit by flak around the radio room which bent the a/c into a 'V' for a moment. It then broke formation and into two sections with the forward section going into the ground and exploding with the tail section spinning slowly down. Several crews reported three bodies leaving the rear section with only one chute seen which seemed to only partially open.

Ward is buried in the Netherlands American Cemetery. He was 21.

1. NAME OF DECEASED: LAST-FIRST-MIDDLE (Print or Type) FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES GLAMAN, Robert Frederick		APPLICATION FOR HEADSTONE OR MARKER (See attached instructions. Complete and submit both copies)	
2. SERVICE NUMBER 36 698 598	3. PENSION OR VA CLAIM NUMBER 20-3 910 715	13. NAME AND LOCATION OF CEMETERY (City and State) Chapel Hill Memorial Park Freeport, Illinois	
4. ENLISTMENT DATE (Month, day, year) 4-20-1943	5. DISCHARGE DATE (Month, day, year) Died in service	14. This application is submitted for a stone or marker for the unmarked grave of a deceased member or former member of the Armed Forces of the United States, soldier of the Union or Confederate Armies of the Civil War or for an unmarked nonmilitary plot for a non-recoverable deceased member of the Armed Forces of the United States.	
6. STATE Illinois	7. MEDALS DH	I hereby agree to accept responsibility for properly placing the stone or marker at the grave or memorial plot at no expense to the Government.	
8. BRANCH OF SERVICE, COMPANY, REGIMENT AND DIVISION 3d Air Force 390 Bomb Sq	9. DATE OF BIRTH (Month, day, year) 12-22-1923	10. CHECK TYPE REQUIRED <input type="checkbox"/> UPRIGHT MARBLE HEADSTONE <input type="checkbox"/> FLAT MARBLE MARKER <input type="checkbox"/> STAR OF DAVID (Hebrew) <input type="checkbox"/> FLAT GRANITE MARKER <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FLAT BRONZE MARKER	11. DATE OF DEATH (Month, day, year) 2-14-1945
12. RELIGIOUS SYMBOL (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> LATIN CROSS (Christian) <input type="checkbox"/> STAR OF DAVID (Hebrew) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO SYMBOL	15. NAME AND ADDRESS OF APPLICANT (Print or Type) Henry J. Glaman Father		16. SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT Henry J. Glaman DATE 7-26-1961
FOR VERIFICATION AUG 8 1961		17. SIGNATURE OF CONTRACTOR Richard S. Moll	

**Memorial Service
Sunday At St. John's
For S-Sgt. R. F. Glaman**

A memorial service for Staff Sergeant Robert F. Glaman, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Glaman, 544 East Illinois street, who was killed in action over Germany on Feb. 14, will be held in connection with the regular service at St. John's Evangelical and Reformed church on Sunday morning.

Jennie Smith

THE BRITISH RESISTANCE ORGANISATION MUSEUM

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

Intelligence Officer Borders September 1941 - 1943
CO Special Duties Section August 1943 - 3rd December 1944



Amongst our transcript interviews is a BBC interview with Major Forbes. Unfortunately there is no date or reference to whom the interviewer might be. The interviewer begins with Major Forbes's first role with the Auxiliary Units but he had been a regular soldier since 1935, when he was commissioned as a Lieutenant, into the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders. In 1939 he was appointed Aide de Camp (ADC) to the Governor of Gibraltar before returning to England with the Governor on 14th May 1941. Having met an old friend, Major Eustace Maxwell (Intelligence Officer (IO) for Highlands & Islands), he was promoted to Captain and sent to the Scottish Borders to set up and run the Auxiliary Units.

To return to the interview. Major Forbes was asked what his first job was with the Aux Units. He explained that it was his role to recruit and train men in the use of explosives and building underground bases having been given the responsibility of setting up units in the six Border counties by Major Maxwell. His first target for recruits was the Home Guard and he explained that he would ask the men *"Would you volunteer for a job that could be very dangerous. I can only tell you after you have agreed and after you have signed the Official Secrets Act and no-one ever said no"*. All the prospective candidates were vetted by the police and, when asked if this would have been a possible security risk, he suggested not as the police had no idea why these men were being vetted.

On first being appointed Forbes had spent some time at Coleshill learning all the skills required to be able to pass them on to the new recruits. He mentioned that they were given all the best available equipment with which to train and all aspects of sabotage and the use of firearms and sticky bombs were covered.

Forbes was asked if he knew Anthony Quayle, the actor, and he replied that he had recruited him firstly as his replacement as ADC to the Governor of Gibraltar and then as the IO in Northumberland.

A total of 21 Operational Bases were built during his time in the Borders. The interview included a great deal of information about the siting and construction of many of these OBs. They then went on to discuss the men recruited to each patrol. Forbes said that *"They were a very rugged type of men and the great thing was that they knew their bit of countryside like the back of their hand....."*. To illustrate the various backgrounds of the recruits he pointed out that amongst them was *".....a headmaster, a trainer of racehorses (Capt. JS Wright, Area Commander Group 1) dentists, a QC, gamekeepers (Capt. JG Carruthers, Group Commander Dumfriesshire was a Factor and Gamekeeper), rabbit trappers and people who worked on the railway"*.

Major Forbes was asked if he had thought that the Germans would invade. His reply was very firmly that they were certain the Germans would invade. *"Certainly in the first year '40-'41 and the beginning of '42. It became less likely later on, but we were always told that there might be some parachute brigade division who would suddenly come down in Scotland"*. He went on to explain that, come invasion, the patrols would have gone into their OBs ready to venture out at night destroying enemy vehicles and tanks. He pointed out *".....we didn't realise at that time early in the war, was that the Germans would have taken hostages in the villages and shot people and how members of the patrols would have dealt with that, I don't know, if their wives and children were being rounded up and shot. We didn't seem to think about it at the time"*.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT EDITION

**Chris Pratt
Curator**



Having monitored our newsletter statistics over 2020 and 2021, we have decided to try sending our newsletters quarterly .

Seasonal newsletters will still allow us to keep in regular contact with our supporters,, and we hope that sending them less frequently might result in more people opening these emails and reading our news.



Official Opening

We will be officially opening our Kindred Exhibition Hall in May.

We would love to hear from any BRO Auxiliars or descendants in order to invite them to the event. Please contact our curator,

Chris Pratt via the Museum's email address if you haven't received an invitation yet. We also hope to transmit the event online for others to view it.



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