



THE NATIONAL  
WWII MUSEUM  
TRAVEL

# MASTERS OF THE AIR

THE MIGHTY EIGHTH OVER THE SKIES OF EUROPE

East Anglia • Duxford • Cambridge • Thorpe Abbots  
Horham • Parham • Bletchley Park • London

*Book early and save \$1,000 per couple!*

Aerial view of Thorpe Abbots, home of the "Bloody Hundredth" Bomb Group. Photo by Stuart Bertie.



Donald Miller and Kirk Saduski pose with a restored Spitfire at the Imperial War Museum Duxford. Photo by Stuart Bertie.



**A nine-day tour of East Anglia and London, based on the works of best-selling author and historian Donald L. Miller, PhD.**

Listen to the *Making Masters of the Air* podcast presented by Boeing and co-hosted by Donald Miller and Playtone's Kirk Saduski.



A tour guest locates an image of her uncle within the American Air Museum display while visiting the Imperial War Museum Duxford.



STEPHEN J. WATSON

Dear Friend of the Museum,

I invite you to join a tour of England, exploring the storied airfields of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. This tour is a one-of-a-kind journey led by expert local guides and special guests along the way.

This unique tour of East Anglia incorporates meetings with locals who have carried on the stories of the air war by lovingly restoring and maintaining the bases that at one time transformed pastures into “bomber country.” Listening to the tales of the American men who flew and fought, visiting the museums built in old concrete control towers, and standing on the observation decks at Thorpe Abbots and Parham gets you closer to the air war than anywhere else in the world. These people appreciate the sacrifices the American “bomber boys” made for them. That’s what motivates them to maintain, without expectation of gain, the bases they rebuilt on the soil of their ancestors.

In London, you will learn more about the Royal Air Force and stand where history was made: beneath the streets, where Winston Churchill and his cabinet directed the war effort.

Honor the heroic young Americans who were part of the “friendly invasion” of England. This deeply moving experience connects you to the brave bomber crews who risked it all, flying and fighting to end the war at last.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve'.

Stephen J. Watson  
President & CEO, The National WWII Museum

## STAND WHERE HISTORY WAS MADE

*Aircraft and Airfields*



Trainee pilots rush to their aircraft prior to a flight.  
Courtesy of Military Images/Alamy Stock.

The rural farmland of East Anglia became the headquarters for the "Bomber War." Villages, with prewar populations in the hundreds, suddenly buzzed with the energy of thousands of pilots, crew, and support staff carrying out the missions to bring about the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany. Almost daily, residents of villages such as Thorpe Abbots, Parham, and Horham could hear the roar of the engines and watch B-17s, B-24s, and fighter escorts take to the skies. This was a new type of warfare, a war waged from the skies against an unseen enemy.

## LEARN THEIR NAMES HEAR THEIR STORIES



American bombardiers undergo training.  
Courtesy of Military Images.

## ACES, WARRIORS, AND WINGMEN

The duties of a bomber crew were vastly different from those of ground troops. A B-17 crew was able to live in relative quiet for the majority of their service. But when the combat mission came, it was intense, chaotic, and dangerous. One critical malfunction, one piece of flak, or one error could mean death or capture for all. The noise was deafening, the air was cold, and the enemy could hear the approach. A successful mission only brought about the prospect of another. For men like Robert "Rosie" Rosenthal, Louis Loevsky, and Eugene Carson, each mission was either one step closer to the end of the war, or one step closer to an unfortunate end.

## CLARK GABLE

Clark Gable was easily the most recognizable airman in the Eighth Air Force. Already a major film star when he enlisted in 1943, Gable insisted on going to officer candidate school and becoming an aerial gunner. After training, Gable joined the 351st Bomb Group based in Polebrook, England. Careful to not make him a target, the US Army Air Forces tasked him with creating a film about aerial gunners called *Combat America*, which would be used as a recruiting tool. Gable flew five combat missions, including one in which his B-17 encountered German resistance. A flak burst disabled one engine; one crewman was killed and another two injured. Gable was reassigned after this mission, returning to the United States in November 1943 to edit the film.



Captain Clark Gable edits combat footage for his Army Air Forces recruitment and training films at MGM Studios in Hollywood.

# MASTERS OF THE AIR

## THE MIGHTY EIGHTH OVER THE SKIES OF EUROPE

East Anglia • Duxford • Cambridge • Thorpe Abbots  
Horham • Parham • Bletchley Park • London

MAY 13-21, 2026 | JUNE 10-18, 2026 | SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 1, 2026

Limited availability on 2025 departures. Inquire with the Sales Team for inventory and pricing.

~~\$9,095~~ **\$8,595\*** per person double, ~~\$10,699~~ **\$10,199\*** per person single  
\*\$229 per person taxes and fees are additional.

### TOUR INCLUSIONS

- 9-day journey through the heart of East Anglia and London
- 8 Breakfasts, 6 Lunches, 4 Dinners, 4 Receptions
- Welcome and Farewell Receptions
- Beer, wine, and soft drinks with included lunches and dinners
- Full-time logistical tour manager, expert WWII-focused local guides and guest speakers
- 3 nights at the four-star Hotel Gonville, Cambridge
- 3 nights at the four-star Angel Hotel, Bury St. Edmunds
- 3 nights at the 5-star Rubens at the Palace, London
- Roundtrip airport transfers when arriving and departing on scheduled group tour dates
- Private, first-class, air-conditioned motor coach transportation
- VIP access to sites not offered on other tours
- Oral history presentations from the Museum's Digital Collection
- Personal listening devices on all included touring
- Gratuities to guides, drivers, porters, and servers
- Informative map book including useful battlefield maps and archival images to be throughout your journey
- Personalized luggage tags and customized name badge



## YOUTH OF THE FLYING FORTRESSES



In 1942, thousands of young Americans arrived in East Anglia to take to the skies in the world's first and only "Bomber War." From bases dotting this history-haunted landscape, pilots and crewmen fought their battles above continental Europe through a succession of aerial encounters that lasted sometimes only minutes. These intense battles were followed by periods of relative calm back at the base, but each airman of the Eighth Air Force fought knowing that each mission could be his last. One well-placed shot by a German pilot, a hit from the flak below, or a critical malfunction could mean the end of the plane and its crew.

This National WWII Museum's exclusive nine-day Masters of the Air tour will visit the villages and airfields from which American flyboys launched their massive bombing campaign against Nazi Germany. The bases, control towers, and museums that tell the story of the US Eighth Air Force will be part of the tour, but so too will the opportunity to view restored aircraft like the ones the bomber boys flew, to immerse yourself in the very pubs and country inns they frequented, and to meet, in London and elsewhere, survivors of the German Blitzkrieg.

**Photo:** Staff Sergeant Roger D. Palmer of the 385th Bomb Group cleans the machine guns on the top turret of his B-17 Flying Fortress after a mission. *Courtesy of IWM, Roger Freeman Collection.*



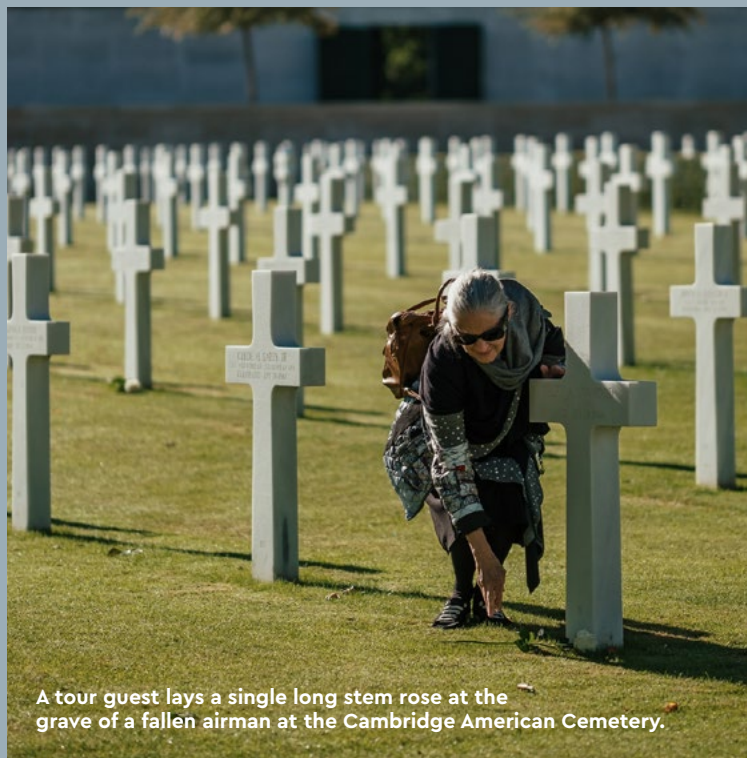
Kings College Chapel, Cambridge

### DAY 1

## LONDON/CAMBRIDGE

After morning arrivals into London Heathrow Airport (LHR), depart with the group to Cambridge. Enjoy lunch on your own then take a walking tour of Cambridge prior to a reception and group dinner at the hotel this evening.

**Accommodations:** *Hotel Gonville (R, D)*



A tour guest lays a single long stem rose at the grave of a fallen airman at the Cambridge American Cemetery.

## DAY 2

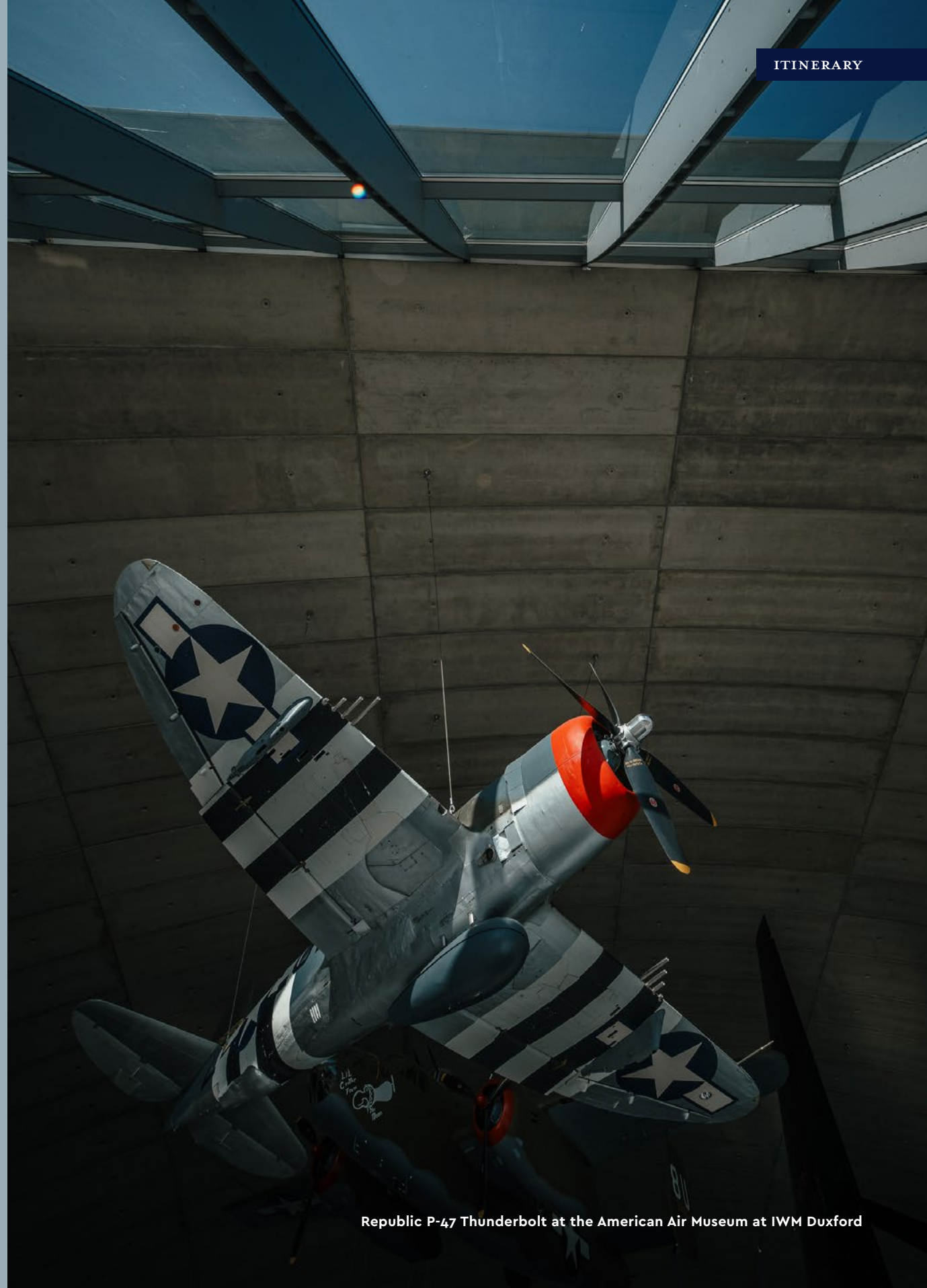
### DUXFORD

The American Air Museum, part of the Imperial War Museum Duxford, is home to the best collection of US military aircraft on public display outside of North America. The museum features the warplanes and equipment of not only the Eighth Air Force, but also of aircraft that flew before and after World War II. After lunch on your own on the museum's campus, witness a simulated dogfight between a British Spitfire and a Messerschmitt Bf 109 in the skies over Duxford.

This afternoon, reflect upon the carnage of the "Bomber War" at the Cambridge American Cemetery. The cemetery contains the remains of 3,812 of our military dead, and 5,127 names are recorded on the Tablets of the Missing. Most died in the Battle of the Atlantic or in bombing raids over Hitler's Reich.

Tonight, sample traditional British fare with fellow tour members at the Eagle Pub.

**Accommodations:** *Hotel Gonville (B, D)*



Republic P-47 Thunderbolt at the American Air Museum at IWM Duxford



## HISTORY IN FLIGHT: A Simulated Dog Fight above East Anglia

Outnumbered by Germany in both planes and pilots in July 1940, the Royal Air Force made a heroic stand against an enemy that had steamrolled through Europe. For more than three months, RAF pilots repelled numerous German attempts to gain air superiority and fought back against devastating bombing raids. By August, Germany was unable to combat the RAF during the day, and the *Luftwaffe* resorted to night raids and bombings of Britain's factories, public utilities, and food supplies. As the air battle entered October, Britain had caught up with, and surpassed, Germany in fighter aircraft production. Unable to gain the necessary air superiority, Operation Sea Lion—Hitler's planned invasion of Britain—was postponed. In honor of their courage, the RAF pilots of the Battle of Britain are known as "The Few," recalling Churchill's line, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

Relive the heroism of the RAF pilots with a simulated dog fight in the skies above Duxford. Exclusively for guests on the Mighty Eighth tour, expert pilots will reenact maneuvers from the Battle of Britain. A Spitfire representing X4474 of Duxford's 19 Squadron flown by Sergeant Bernard Jennings in 1940 will face off against a Messerschmitt, restored as a Bf 109. Watch to see if the Spitfire can properly use altitude and the sun to gain the advantage over the Bf 109 as the skilled RAF pilots did in 1940 while defending their home.



From left, Captain Walker L. Boone, Flight Officer Manuel S. Martinez, and Flight Officer Gerry E. Brasher, pilots of the 82nd Fighter Squadron, 8th Fighter Group, sit on the bonnet of a Dodge Weapons Carrier at Duxford Airfield.

Restored and operated by Aircraft Restoration Company at Duxford, each plane has a noteworthy history. The company's Spitfire was built in 1944 as a single-seat LFI fighter and flew more than 20 sorties over France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany from October 1944 through the end of the war. In the decades since World War II, the plane was used as a trainer, underwent modifications to a two-seat design, and was almost completely destroyed in a crash in 2000. Since its reconstruction, the plane has flown in numerous airshows and has represented the Spitfires of the Battle of Britain since 2010.

The Messerschmitt Bf 109 will be represented by a close cousin, a Hispano Buchon fighter constructed in Spain from Bf 109 airframes given to the Spanish air force by Germany. Spitfire Productions purchased the aircraft from Spain in 1968 for use in the film *The Battle of Britain*. In preparation for the film, the Buchon underwent its full transformation to a Messerschmitt Bf 109. Wing tips were squared off, tail struts were added, and dummy machine guns were fitted to the wings to match the 1940s appearance of a Bf 109. While filming, the plane simulated its first dogfight over the skies of East Anglia. After 40 years, the aircraft was once again a movie star with a role in the 2008 film *Valkyrie* starring Tom Cruise.

**Photo page 12:** Two Supermarine Spitfires with the D-Day livery and a Messerschmitt Bf 109 in action during the D-Day memorial display at RAF Duxford.



The Swan at Lavenham

Guests tour the control tower at the 100th Bomb Group Memorial Museum in Thorpe Abbots.



### DAY 3

## THORPE ABBOTTS

After breakfast, depart Cambridge and head toward Bury St. Edmunds. The first stop is lunch at The Swan at Lavenham. Set in the middle of the charming and historic medieval wool town called Lavenham, discover a glimpse of the unique heritage and beauty of the Suffolk countryside. The Airmen's Bar at The Swan boasts an inspiring collection of signatures and mementos that adorn the walls, a living history courtesy of the men from the 487th Bombardment Group who were stationed in Lavenham in 1944-45.

This afternoon, explore the control tower and museums at Thorpe Abbots, the wartime base of the 100th Bombardment Group. "The Bloody Hundredth," as the group was called, is remembered for the staggering losses its B-17 crews suffered in daylight raids over Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe.

Continue to Bury St. Edmunds and enjoy dinner with the group at the Angel Hotel.

**Accommodations:** *The Angel Hotel (B, L, D)*



Lt. Col. Robert Rosenthal. Courtesy of 100th Bomb Group Foundation, [www.100thbg.com](http://www.100thbg.com).

### Lieutenant Colonel Robert "Rosie" Rosenthal

was one of the most decorated airmen of the Eighth Air Force. Working at a law firm in Manhattan in 1941, Rosenthal, a star athlete at Brooklyn College, enlisted the day after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He was assigned to the 100th Bombardment Group at Thorpe Abbots.

Less than a year later, Rosenthal was shot down over France, breaking his arm and nose. He resumed flying one month after being released from the hospital. He was shot down once more, on his 52nd mission, and was rescued by the Red Army and returned to England. By the war's end, he had flown 52 missions, 27 more than required. In June 1946, Rosenthal was able to return to his career in law as an assistant to the United States prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials. One of his fellow litigators was a beautiful Navy attorney, whom he met onboard the ocean liner that brought them to Germany. They married in Nuremberg.



Lieutenant Colonel  
Robert "Rosie" Rosenthal  
1917-2007

Robert Rosenthal, second from left, with other members of the 100th Bomb Group. Courtesy of 100th Bomb Group Foundation, [www.100thbg.com](http://www.100thbg.com).

Watch  
*Masters of the Air*  
on Apple TV+.





Tour guests take a ride in a jeep at Horham Airfield. Photo courtesy of Stuart Bertie.



95th Bombardment Group crewmembers in Horham.  
Courtesy of IWM, Roger Freeman Collection.

#### DAY 4

## PARHAM AND HORHAM

Stationed at RAF Framlingham (now Parham Airfield), the men of the 390th Bomb Group flew missions of varying intensity, from hitting targets in Normandy before D-Day to dropping food to the Dutch during the "Hunger Winter," significantly aiding in Allied victory. The 390th Museum at Parham is unique in the region for its section on the British Resistance Organization. British operatives were trained to go into action in the event of a German invasion. Parham also features a re-created underground bunker typical of those designed for potential use against the Germans.

Continue to a lunch complete with a big band and dancing at the Red Feather Club, a re-creation of a WWII-era NCO social club complete with reenactors in period attire. Dancing shoes and 1940s-style clothing encouraged!

This afternoon, tour Horham Airfield, the home of the 95th Bomb Group, the only Eighth Air Force bomb group to receive the Distinguished Unit Citation three times. Horham is a living museum and monument to the 95th, which flew 334 missions between 1943 and 1945 and was the first American bomb group to perform a daytime raid on Berlin.

**Accommodations:** *The Angel Hotel (B, L)*



Control tower at Thorpe Abbots.

Army Air Forces Lieutenant Ernest W. Wagner 'talks' with planes in the air via a searchlight on the roof of an American bomber station in England, October 1943.  
*Courtesy of Bettmann/Getty Images.*



# HP

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

## CONTROL TOWERS OF EAST ANGLIA

When traveling through the low-lying countryside of East Anglia, one might see, off in the distance, a square-shaped concrete tower located in the middle of a farmer's grain field. This would be the once-active control tower of a WWII American bomber base and self-contained military village. Clustered closely together, these bases comprised a war front, one of the strangest war fronts in all of history. It was from these bases, beginning in August 1942, that the Eighth Air Force flew the first of nearly 1,000 missions against Nazi Germany. Every one of these strikes was directed, from takeoff to landing, by the highly trained personnel in these ancient-looking stone towers. Today they are priceless pieces of wartime archeology that have been restored and revived by local residents as museums.

With England's constantly changing island weather, its perpetual cloud cover, and the immense number of bomber bases crowded into this small region, conducting air operations was exceedingly chancy, sometimes nearly as risky as the time spent by the bombers in enemy flak fields over their targets.

When the big brown bombers returned home from Germany, they were "counted in" by air commanders standing on the open-air observation decks of the stone towers. And from here ambulances and fire trucks were rushed out to the landing strips to bring back the wounded and the dead and to put out furious oil fires caused by crash landings. Thousands of bomber boys died on English soil, not only in the air over the Reich.

Several of the towers have been turned into museums containing memorabilia and artifacts from both the airmen who flew here and the civilians who lived alongside them. Thorpe Abbots has dedicated their museum to the 100th Bombardment Group while Bury St. Edmunds is in remembrance of the 94th Bombardment Group. Many of the volunteers who maintain these control tower museums are the descendants of the locals who welcomed, and sometimes tolerated, the brash, gum-chewing Americans in the summer of 1943.



Tour guests pose on a bench made from the wing of a B-17 Flying Fortress, in the John Appleby Rose Garden in Bury St. Edmunds. Photo courtesy of Stuart Bertie.

## DAY 5

# BOTTISHAM AND BURY ST. EDMUNDS

Today's touring focuses on the contributions of the Royal Air Force and the British civilians during the "Friendly Invasion." Bottisham Airfield was opened in 1940 as a satellite of RAF Waterbeach, built as a grass airfield that was initially used by the Cambridge-based Tiger Moths of No. 22 Elementary Flying Training School as a relief landing ground. A museum was opened in 2009 to commemorate the sometimes forgotten role of the airfield at Bottisham in World War II. It is the only UK museum dedicated to the Royal Air Force, US Eighth Army Air Force, and Belgian Air Forces.

After indulging in a proper Sunday Roast at Ravenwood Hall, embark on a walking tour of Bury St. Edmunds, a country shire with 1,000 years of history to explore. Visit the Abbey and gardens on a guided tour before heading into town to learn the role Bury St. Edmunds played in World War II. Today, Bury St. Edmunds is known as Suffolk's "Foodie Capital" with everything from award-winning fine dining to quality home-cooked pub grub each with their own unique atmosphere. Enjoy a reception with locals at the Guildhall, then the evening is free to have dinner on your own.

**Accommodations:** *The Angel Hotel (B, L, R)*



94th Bombardment Group Monument



Bletchley Park

## London



## DAY 6

**BLETCHLEY PARK**

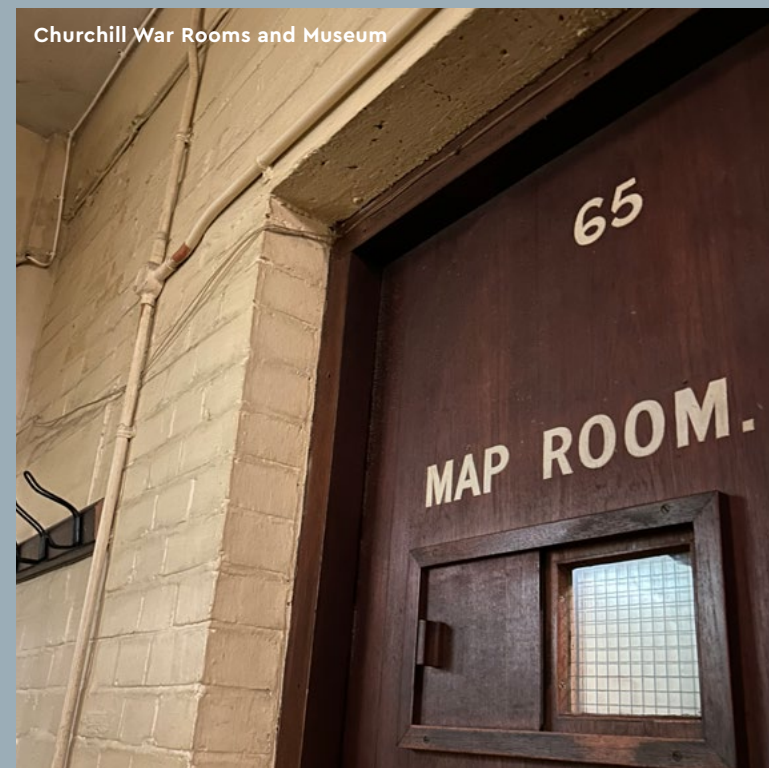
Visit Bletchley Park, the home of Britain's WWII codebreakers. Located along the rail line north of London and between Oxford and Cambridge, Bletchley Park could attract the country's top mathematicians. During a guided tour, learn of WWII SIGINT and strategic deception through the recruitment, codebreaking, and computing operations at Bletchley. Through the exhibits in the various buildings, find out how the intelligence gained at Bletchley truly impacted the war. Transfer to London and check in to Rubens at the Palace. After a reception and lecture at the hotel, venture out into London for dinner on your own.

***Accommodations: Rubens at the Palace (B, L, R)***



Imperial War Museum London

Churchill War Rooms and Museum

**DAY 7****CHURCHILL'S LONDON**

During today's touring, hear stories of the man who inspired the free world, Sir Winston S. Churchill. The morning begins at the recently renovated Imperial War Museum London, renowned for its exhibits on World War I, the Holocaust, the Air War, and the British Home Front during World War II. After a pub lunch, continue below the streets of London at the Churchill War Rooms. Explore the underground bunker that protected the staff and secrets at the heart of Britain's government during the World War II. An afternoon driving tour of London highlights the landmarks of the town, then the evening is free for dinner and independent exploration.

***Accommodations: Rubens at the Palace (B, L)***



**The Polish Hearth Club**, or Ognisko Polskie, was established in 1940 during one of the darkest chapters of Poland's history. After the invasion and partition of Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939, the Polish government-in-exile relocated to London, where it coordinated resistance efforts and worked with the Allies to secure Poland's future. Ognisko Polskie became the cultural and social heart of this displaced community. It was a meeting place for Polish diplomats, military officers, and intellectuals, as well as British allies who sought to support Poland's cause.

The club played a key role in maintaining morale and fostering unity among Poles during the war. It hosted gatherings, cultural events, and discussions, providing a sense of continuity and national identity. Polish airmen, celebrated for their bravery during the Battle of Britain, were among the many who frequented the club, and its walls witnessed countless conversations about strategy, resistance, and hope for liberation.

Beyond its wartime significance, the Polish Hearth Club symbolizes the enduring bond between Poland and the United Kingdom. The contributions of Polish forces to the Allied war effort were coordinated in part by the community centered here. To this day, the club remains a vital cultural institution, preserving the memory of Poland's wartime sacrifices and its contributions to the Allied victory. Holding our farewell reception and dinner in this historic venue provides a unique opportunity to appreciate the wartime experiences of the Polish community in exile and to reflect on the broader themes of resilience and collaboration.



Polish Air Force  
Memorial

#### DAY 8

## UXBRIDGE AND POLISH CONTRIBUTIONS

The last day of touring starts at Uxbridge and the Battle of Britain Bunker, home to the RAF Fighter Command No.11 Group Operations Room, from which most commands during the Battle of Britain were coordinated. Key decisions that would decide the fate of the nation were taken in the Bunker throughout 1940 and it was thanks to the tireless work of the plotters and controllers that the RAF's fighter pilots managed to keep the *Luftwaffe* at bay. After an included lunch, pay respects at the Polish War Memorial, erected to remember the contribution of airmen from Poland who helped the Allied cause during World War II. The tour culminates with a farewell reception and dinner at the Polish Club this evening.

*Accommodations: Rubens at the Palace (B, L, R, D)*

#### DAY 9

## FLIGHT HOME FROM LONDON HEATHROW AIRPORT

After breakfast, transfer to London Heathrow Airport (LHR) for your return flight home. **(B)**



The Battle of Britain Bunker at RAF Uxbridge



### HOTEL GONVILLE CAMBRIDGE

Winner of multiple accolades for quality, the hotel originated in 1830 as the Gonville & Caius College as a house for one of the college's Senior Fellows. This lovely hotel offers everything you'll need for the perfect stay in this beautiful and historic city, and is an ideal location for an easy stroll to the city's attractions; it also boasts a view overlooking 25 acres of open parkland. Guests will enjoy both a casual Brasserie, as well as Cotto, their fine dining venue on-site.



### THE ANGEL HOTEL BURY ST. EDMUNDS

A contemporary boutique hotel set in the heart of historic Bury St. Edmunds, The Angel is a sumptuous haven for our guests. The individuality of each room makes staying here a truly personal and luxurious experience. The hotel offers multiple dining and meal venues, including the recently refurbished restaurant and an extensive lounge area. The Angel is located adjacent to the famous Abbey Gardens, a perfect location for an afternoon or evening stroll among the flowers and ruins of the old abbey.



### RUBENS AT THE PALACE

This historic 5-star property, which dates back to the 1700s, has served royalty throughout the centuries. Overlooking Buckingham Palace and within easy walking distance to Victoria Station, Rubens at the Palace has now been fully renovated and offers a host of new restaurants and bars. Guests can enjoy live music in The New York Bar, a royal afternoon tea in the Palace Lounge, delicious cuisine in the newly opened English Grill, and authentic flavors in The Curry Room.

**"Our Masters of the Air tour was expertly crafted and executed. All guides, logistics, and accommodations were excellent. Site selection was rewarding and informative, for the subject matter expert and the novice alike. This tour is most highly recommended."**

**- John S. from Miami, FL**

**"To be able to walk in the footsteps of these airmen and women [at the airbases where they] lived and fought was very unique. You can read about history in school, but it will never be the same as walking on the same ground as these men and women did 80 years ago. The National WWII Museum's Travel Program makes sure your experience is first-class."**

**- Cherry W. from Houston, TX**

**"History becomes personal for everyone at each place on the Masters of the Air trip. Feel the presence of our bomber boys at Thorpe Abbots. Socialize with the volunteers who keep WWII memories alive."**

**- Bonnie E from Carey, OH**

**"Tours with The National WWII Museum Travel Department are LIFE-CHANGING! Each and every tour has been carefully planned to provide an educational experience while traveling in comfort.**

**An arrival at each destination is a pleasurable and welcoming experience because of the reputation of the WWII Museum staff and the years of friendship and business. The Museum team is well-known and loved by their vendors, and the guests are treated with great appreciation."**

**- Bill and Grace K. from West Monroe, LA**



**The National WWII Museum Travel  
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