

# AMERICAN GHOST BASES OF EASTERN ENGLAND

Memories of the US Army Air Corps in World War Two

**Martin W. Bowman**

*'A pilot told his bunkmate, a staff officer who worked in the control tower, that if he was killed he would come back to haunt the tower.'*

From the author of the highly successful books, *Echoes of East Anglia*, *Ghost Fields of East Anglia* and *The Air War in East Anglia* comes this new volume containing even more fascinating stories and images of the United States Army Air Corps in Eastern England in World War Two.

Martin Bowman is among the best-known aircraft photographers and aviation writers in Britain, with seven largely photographic books published by Halsgrove on a variety of aviation-related subjects. These include his celebrated classic aircraft photography volumes *Airs & Graces* and *The Immortal Few*, his distinguished study of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, as well as his earlier evocative images of steam trains and the Norfolk landscape from the air. All have been produced after almost forty years of in-depth research and photographic sorties throughout the world.

This latest work brings down the curtain on the historically rich period of East Anglia when the men and women of the Eighth Air Force and RAF Bomber Command waged war 'around the clock', hitting targets in Germany and the occupied countries of Western Europe - the Americans by day and the RAF by night.

If there are ghosts they surely haunt the East Anglian wartime airfields.

As well as the myriad number of ghost bases secreted in remote corners of England that will be forever America with their almost extinct artwork and crumbling dwellings and control towers, the author pays a pictorial tribute to movie stars such as 'Jimmy' Stewart, Clark Gable and Glenn Miller; the famous and often risqué nose art on the USAAF aircraft; and the often overlooked stately houses and mansions that became hospitals, headquarters and rest homes.

The Propaganda War is not forgotten either. Hollywood helped keep up morale at home and in war-torn Britain, with 'docu-dramas' like *Memphis Belle* whose 'star' was a Flying Fortress of the same name. When the war was over movies, which were inspired by recent events, such as *Twelve O'clock High*, *Command Decision* starring Clark Gable, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, and *The Glenn Miller Story*, which starred James Stewart, became ynonymous with the almost mystical memory of the Eighth in the East.

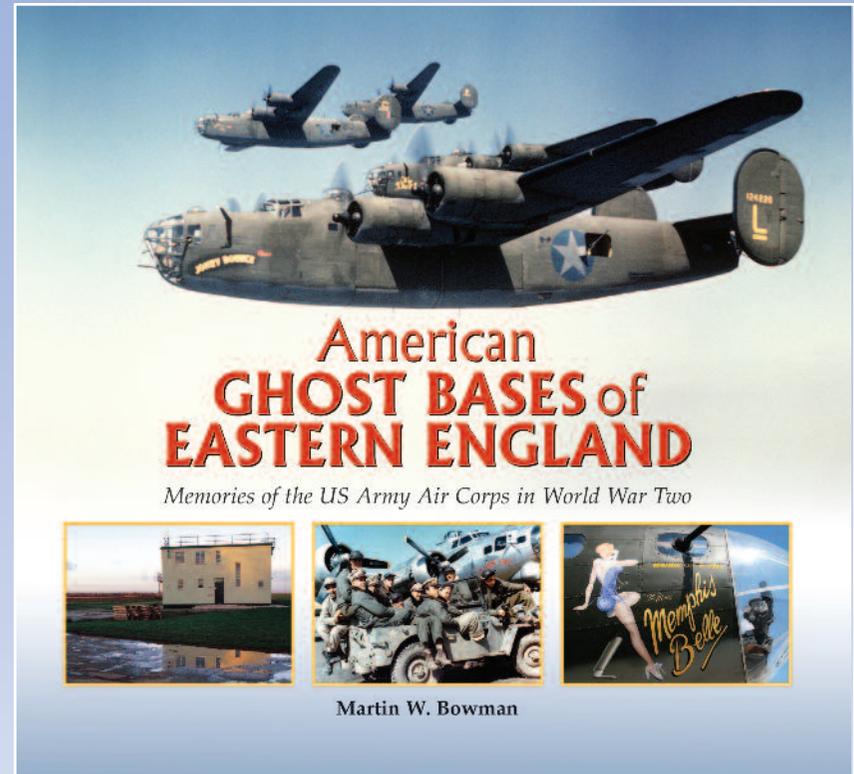
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Martin Bowman's** interest in World War Two began at the age of nine when his father gave him an Airfix model aircraft kit. A few years later he joined 231 (Norwich) Air Training Cadet (ATC) Squadron where he only ever got to fly in gliders before he suffered a serious leg injury playing football for his school. His love of British and US aviation meanwhile was fired by the proliferation of US and RAF air bases in his native East Anglia. His first book, *Fields of Little America*, a history of the US 2nd Air Division, was published in 1977. He is the author of over 200 books on military and commercial aviation as well as photographic books on a variety of subjects. His many years of painstaking and fact-finding research and interviews has taken him to many countries, including the USA, Australia, Russia and in Africa where he has flown in the cockpits of many types of military aircraft. An accomplished aerial and landscape photographer, *American Ghost Bases of Eastern England* is his eighth photographic book for Halsgrove.

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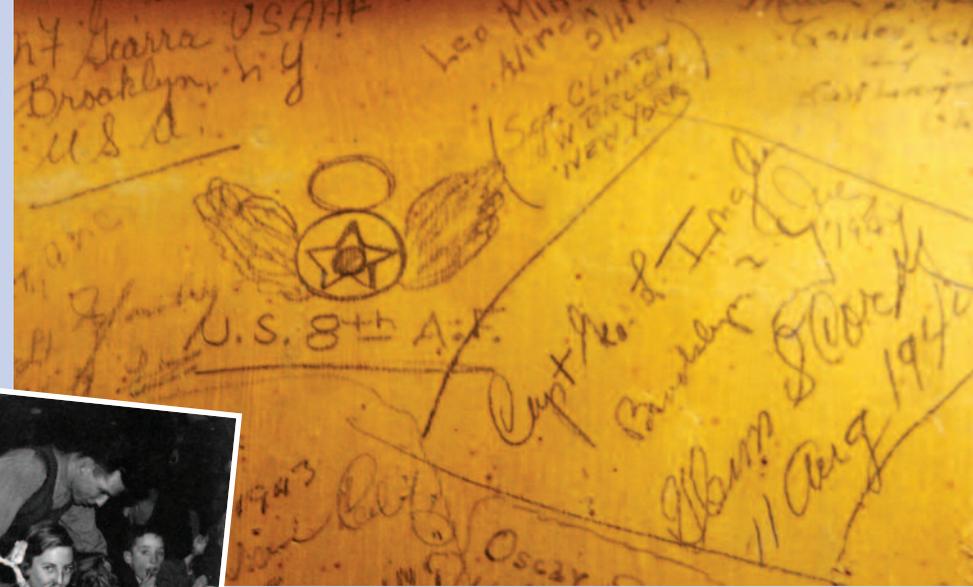


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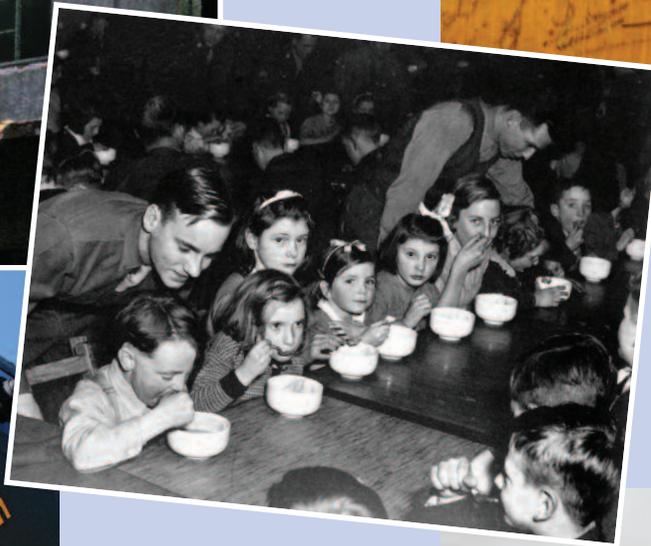
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The author pictured at Deenethorpe in the early 1970s.



Above: Wartime signatures on a wall in the Swan at Lavenham.



Left: A Christmas party for British children at Kimbolton.

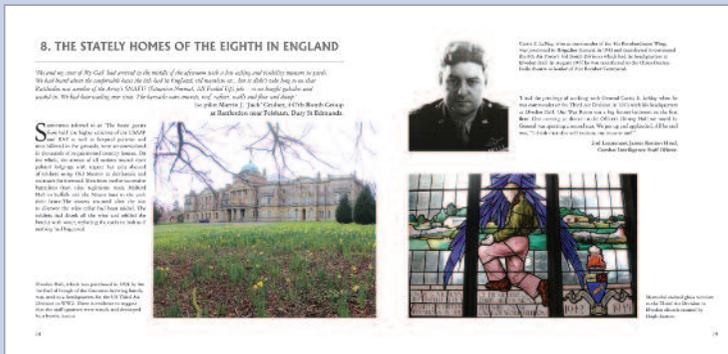


Below: B-17 bomber crews in the 401st Bomb Group look over a P-51 Mustang in the 354th Fighter Group from Boxted at Deenethorpe airfield on 27 December 1943. The 354th was known as the Pioneer Mustang Group and was the first to fly the P-51B Mustang in combat.

Left: The left side of the nose of the 'Belle'. In WW2 Corporal Tony Starcer was responsible for the artwork for this and 126 other Fortresses at Basingstoun.



At Chelveston Bruce Bairnsfather applied his 'Old Bill' cartoon both to the mess wall and to the nose of a B-17.



Example of a double-page spread.

