

Traces of Lives

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 upon, hedgerow torn up and tens of thousands of trees felled.

However, soon after 1945 these landscapes rapidly changed. Some were used as homes for those who had been displaced by the upheaval of war, some remained military sites, but many fell into disrepair. Hundreds of WW2 buildings have since been knocked down or totally destroyed. The little that do survive have become store sheds, farm buildings, and parts of industrial estates. However, a lucky few have become museums which are run by volunteers dedicated to keeping the memory of the 8AF alive.

In many cases it seems, that as quickly as peace was restored, the Americans left taking with them the glamour and excitement that they introduced. The villagers interviewed for *The Stories of The Bloody 100th* talk about the departure of the Americans and their overwhelming sense of loss. Mary Bartrum, a child at the time remembers:

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

Tony Mark describes:

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