

## A Walk Through History - Rattlesden Airfield, Suffolk



On a beautiful spring eve in May we were once again thrilled to have a fantastic turn out of people as we led our twelfth Walk Through History around the historic airfield at Rattlesden, home to the 447th Bomb Group of the 8th USAAF during World War Two.

The evening saw 80 people (and once again quite a few dogs) explore their local airfield, led by our community archaeologist Martin Cuthbert. The weather was far better than our first attempt at this walk last July and it gave our walkers the chance to have an atmospheric evening walk in the unique landscape of a World War Two airfield.

Construction began in 1942 and at this peak time a new airfield was under construction every 3 days. Station 126 as it was known (by the US Army Air Forces) was home to four squadrons of B17 Flying Fortresses who flew 257 missions in total, with the first being on Christmas Eve 1943.

The walk began at the original WW2 Control Tower, now the clubhouse of the Rattlesden Gliding Club, and enabled us to take in the main runway, that still survives to its full width. We explored the Cold War Bloodhound missile site and the WW2 Technical Site and learned how the pilots and bombardiers trained at the Bomber teacher and Link trainer buildings. The final leg of the walk enabled us to visit the sites of the living quarters where the 3000 personnel once lived, it was amazing to see that only 6 of 350 buildings still survive.

We would like to say a big thank you to the local landowners who gave us permission to access their land, [Rattlesden Gliding Club](#) who supported the walk and kindly opened up the Control Tower on the day, our walk stewards and all those who came along to share the evening with us. Thank you.

We hope the gallery below provides an insight into the walk's highlights.

## 8th in the East

Exploring the legacy of the USAAF

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The intrepid walkers



On route



The surviving runway



Where B17s once flew



Martin explains all



Listening intently



A Cold War Bloodhound Missile



Cold War HQ





Cold War Guard House and turnstiles



The Bomber Teacher building





A Romney hut



A local historian



One of the 447th BG

Our next planned walk will be on Sunday 19th June around Martlesham Heath Airfield, near Ipswich, at 3pm. The walk is part of the **Eighth in the East Festival**. Find out more details on our [Festival Web Post](#).

Following the great success of our first Twelve heritage walks, we will be delivering more across the region in the future. If you would like to keep in touch about future events, or if you, or your museum would like to host an event then please [drop us a line](#).