



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

• MUSEUM FLAGSHIP COLLECTION •

MASTERS OF THE AIR:
The Mighty Eighth
Over the Skies of Europe

London • Cambridge • Thorpe Abbott • East Anglia
Parham • Duxford



Bringing history to life

Visit St. Clement Danes Church, the spiritual heart of the Royal Air Force in London, England.

Cover photo: Candid portrait of Captain Clark Gable when he was serving as an Aerial Gunner in the US Army Air Forces during World War II. Courtesy of Masheter Movie Archive/Alamy Stock. Archival photo this page: St Clement Danes church ablaze May 10, 1941. Background Photo by Antiqua Print Gallery, courtesy of Alamy Stock Photo.



Photo: A tour guest on the Masters of the Air tour visits the Imperial War Museum-Duxford and locates an image of her uncle within the American Air Museum display.



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 local farm families 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 boys who flew and fought, visiting the museums they have built in old concrete control towers, and standing on the observation deck at Thorpe Abbots, get 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, learn more about the Royal Air Force and stand where history was made beneath the streets where 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 Bomber Boys who flew and fought to end the war, at last.

Sincerely,

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

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Stand where history was made

Aircraft and Airfields

The rural farmland of East Anglia became the headquarters for the “Bomber War.” Villages, with pre-war 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, citizens of villages such as Thorpe Abbots, Rougham, and Horham would 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.

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

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



Learn Their Names

Aces, Warriors, and Wingmen

The duties of a bomber crew were vastly different from that of the ground troops. The crew of a B-17 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. Each successful mission only brought about the prospect of more. 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.

Photo: American USAAF bombardier bomb aimers undergo training. *Courtesy of Military Images.*



Hear Their Stories

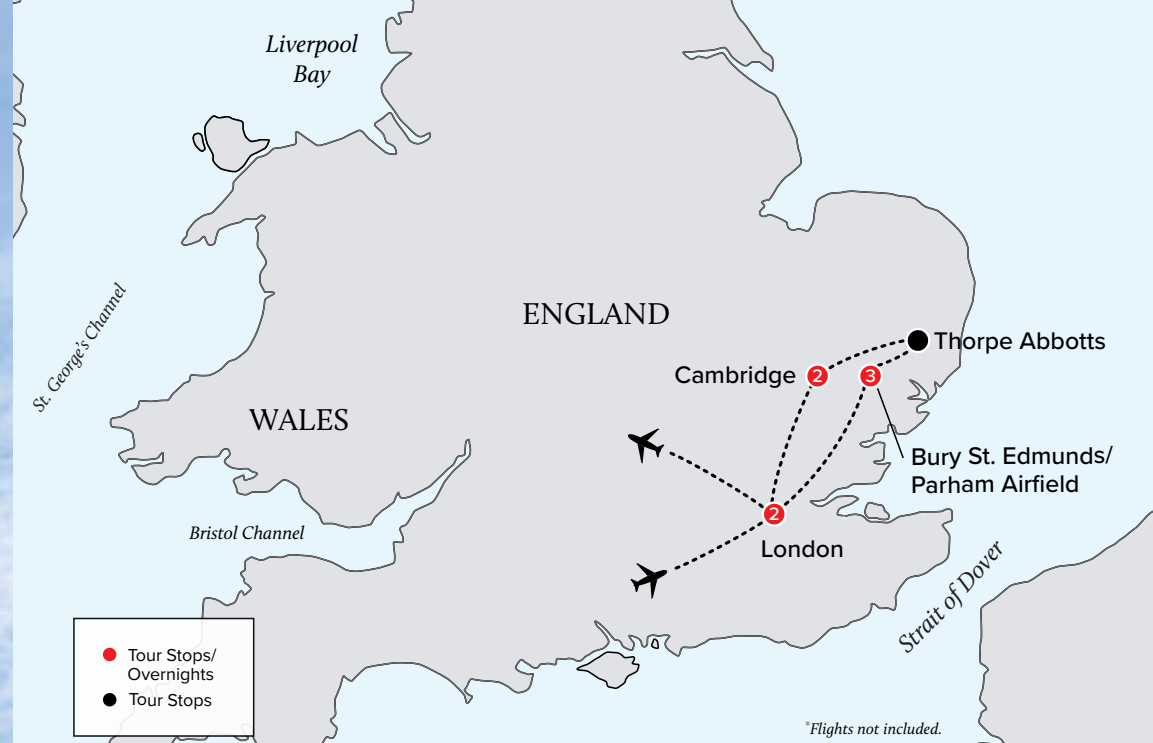
Clark Gable

Clark Gable was easily the most recognizable airman in the 8th 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 Army assigned him to 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, and 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.

Photo: aptain CLARK GABLE of the US Army Air Forces at MGM Studios in Hollywood in November 1943 working with a Moviola on the editing down of his combat footage to make Training Films for the US military publicity for Metro Goldwyn Mayer.



Photo: Imperial War Museum, London, England.



Masters of the Air: *The Mighty Eighth Over the Skies of Europe*

Travel with John M Curatola LtCol USMC (Ret), PhD, the Samuel Zemurray Stone Senior Historian at The National WWII Museum's Institute for the Study of War and Democracy and also featuring best-selling author and historian Dr. Donald L. Miller on select departures

Tour Inclusions

- 8-day journey through the heart of East Anglia and London
- 7 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners
- 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
- 2 nights at the four-star Hotel Gonville, Cambridge
- 3 nights at the four-star Angel Hotel, Bury St. Edmunds
- 2 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
- Video 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 flank below, or a critical malfunction could mean the end of the plane and its crew.

This National WWII Museum’s exclusive week-long Mighty Eighth 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.*



Photo: Tablets of the Missing at Cambridge American Cemetery.

DAY 1

London/Cambridge

Arrive at London Heathrow Airport (LHR) in the morning, and meet the tour management staff. Depart for Cambridge with a lunch stop along the way. This evening settle in to East Anglia and enjoy a welcome dinner with the tour group.

Accommodations: Hotel Gonville (D)

DAY 2

Cambridge History, Transformation, and Sacrifice

The first stop on the itinerary offers a chance to 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. In the afternoon, visit the Churchill Archives at Cambridge University, featuring Winston Churchill’s official papers along with those of 600 other British figures of the 20th century. Contemporaries of Winston Churchill sit alongside major political, military, and scientific figures such as Margaret Thatcher, Ernest Bevin, John Major, Neil Kinnock, Admiral Ramsay, and Field Marshal Slim. Tonight, enjoy a group dinner with fellow tour members.

Accommodations: Hotel Gonville (B, L, D)

Photo: British Pilot Col. Donald J. M. Blakeslee reclines in a wicker chair in front of a Spitfire in a posed photo for the US press. *Courtesy of IWM, Roger Freeman Collection.*



Photo: Tour guests at the American Air Museum, Duxford.

DAY 3

American Air Museum

The American Air Museum in Britain, part of the Imperial War Museums, is located at Duxford, near Cambridge. It is home to the best collection of American 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. The experience is designed exclusively for the Mighty Eighth Over the Skies of Europe tour. Continue to Bury St. Edmunds this evening, and enjoy free time exploring the village for dinner on your own.

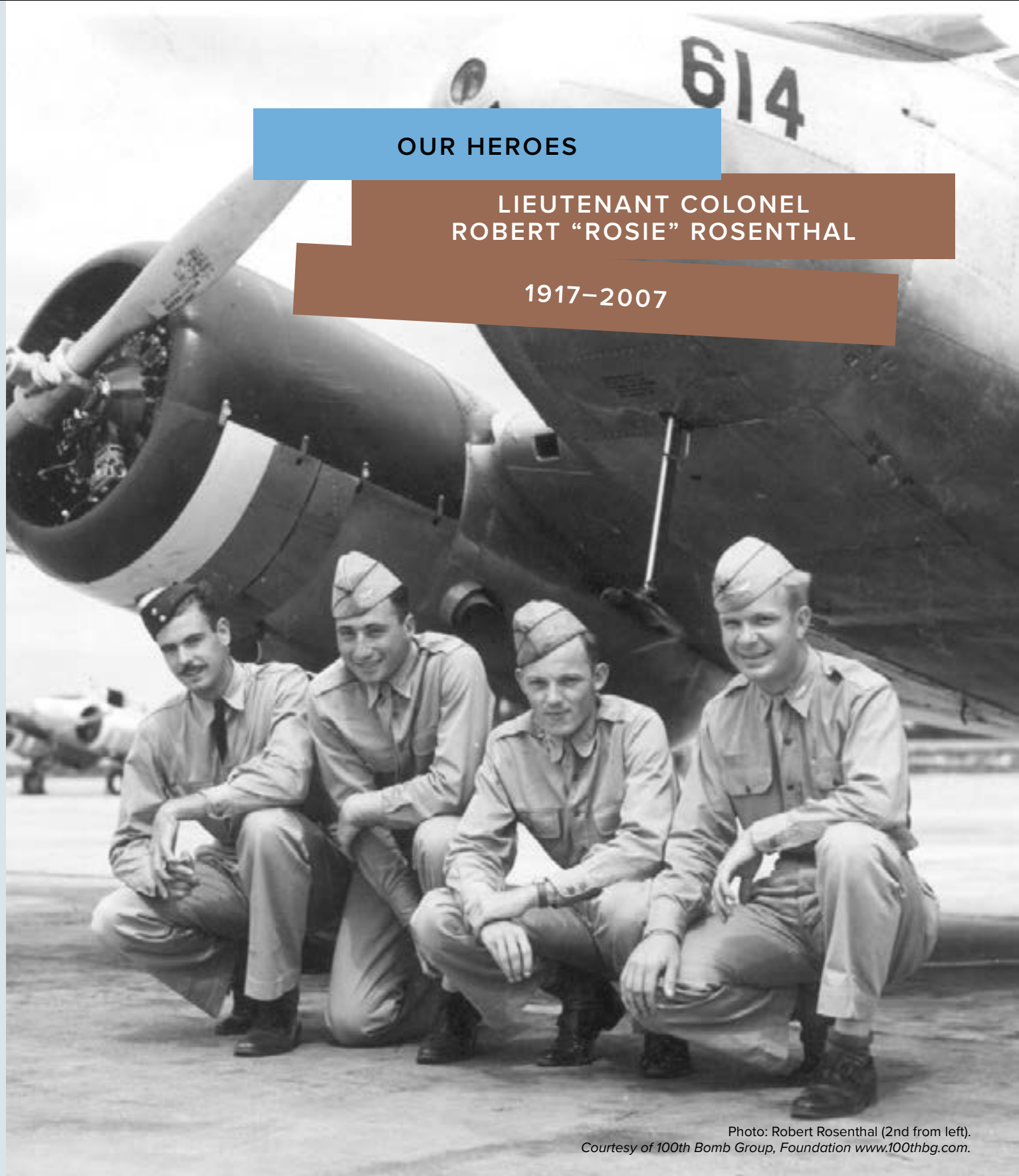
Accommodations: The Angel Hotel (B)



Photo: Lt Col. Robert Rosenthal. Courtesy of 100th Bomb Group Foundation 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 one more time, 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 were 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 War Trials, where one of his fellow litigators was a beautiful Navy attorney he met onboard the ocean liner that carried them to Germany. They married in Nuremberg.



OUR HEROES

LIEUTENANT COLONEL
ROBERT “ROSIE” ROSENTHAL

1917–2007

Photo: Robert Rosenthal (2nd from left).
Courtesy of 100th Bomb Group, Foundation www.100thbg.com.



Gunner mans his M2 Browning .50" machine gun in a WWII USAAF B-17 Flying Fortress. *Courtesy of Military Images/Alamy Stock Photo.*



Photo: 95th Bombardment Group Crew in Horham. *Courtesy of IWM, Roger Freeman Collection.*

DAY 4

Thorpe Abbots

Touring begins 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. A nostalgic visit to the airbase includes Eighth Air Force re-enactors and a fish & chips wagon to transport guests back to the 1940s. Local villagers greet tour members and provide a guided tour around the air base they have lovingly brought back to life. Many of these locals lived in the area as young boys and girls when the American fliers arrived in the spring of 1943, and they have wonderful stories to share with the group. Continue to nearby Horham, home of the 95th Bombardment Group, one of the most decorated air units of the war. The villagers who restored the base host a pub party in their officer’s club complete with local musicians celebrating the music of the Glenn Miller Band.

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

HP

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE CONTROL TOWERS OF EAST ANGLIA



Photo: Control tower at Thorpe Abbots. Courtesy of Alamy Stock Photo.

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 both from the airmen who flew here and from the civilians who lived alongside. 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.

Photo: On the roof of a control tower of a US Bomber station in Britain, Lt. Ernest W. Wagner of Philadelphia, PA, operates a searchlight as he 'talks' with planes in the air. This equipment was supplied by Britain to US forces, October 1, 1943. Courtesy of Bettmann/Getty Images.



Photo: Guests Royal Observer Corps room in the Guildhall of Bury St. Edmunds.

Parham

From Framlingham, also known as Parham Air Field, the men of the 390th Bomb Group flew missions through the end of the war. Through hitting targets in Normandy before D-Day to dropping food to the Dutch during the “Hunger Winter,” the 390th aided significantly in the 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 features a recreated underground bunker typical of those designed for potential use against the Germans. This afternoon and evening are free to take advantage of Bury St. Edmund’s historic charm with a visit to one of the many local pubs or a stroll through the magnificent Abbey Gardens.

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



Photo: Vapor trails from US Eighth Air Force fighters streaking through the skies above and through a B-17 flying fortress formation as the fighters comb the sky for possible enemy planes over northern Germany to attack transportation facilities. *Courtesy of Bettmann/Getty Images.*

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 homes.



Restored and operated by Aircraft Restoration Company at Duxford, each plane has a noteworthy history. The Spitfire was built in 1944 as a single-seat LFIX 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 22: Two Supermarine Spitfires with the D-Day livery and a Messerschmitt Bf 109 in action during the D-Day memorial display at RAF Duxford. Photo page 23: From left to right: Captain Walker L. Boone, Flight Officer Manuel S. Martinez and Flight Officer Gerry E. Brasher, pilots of the 82nd Fighter Squadron, Eighth Fighter Group, sit on the bonnet of a Dodge WC (weapons carrier) at Duxford air base. Courtesy of IWM, Roger Freeman Collection.



Photo: Craftsmen cutting the stained glass windows designed by Carl Edwards at his studio at Apothecaries Hall, City of London, for Saint Clement Danes Church in the Strand, London, where the apse is being restored as an RAF memorial – May 1957. Courtesy of Central Press/Getty Images.



Photo: St. Clement Danes church, London. Courtesy of DavidCC / Alamy Stock Photo.

DAY 6

The Royal Air Force

Bid farewell to East Anglia, and enjoy a scenic return to London. The touring begins with a visit to Bentley Priory, the headquarters of RAF Fighter Command during World War II. At this 18th century estate, analysts would review radar data and information from the aircraft spotters of the Royal Observer Corps. The order to scramble would go to the fighter groups who would counter the German bombers in the air. The next stop is St. Clement Danes Church, the spiritual heart of the Royal Air Force. Destroyed by a German air raid in 1941, the RAF spearheaded the effort to rebuild the church, an artistic gem. Outside the building, are statues of Arthur “Bomber” Harris, head of the RAF’s Bomber Command, and Hugh Dowding, who directed the Battle of the Britain and air operations over Dunkirk. Explore London on your own this evening. Our hotel, the historic Rubens at the Palace, overlooks Buckingham Palace and is walking distance to Victoria Station.

Accommodations: Rubens at the Palace (B, L)



Photo: 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, spend a free afternoon in London before reconvening for a closing dinner at the Churchill War Rooms. Explore the underground bunker that protected the staff and secrets at the heart of Britain's government during the Second World War. See the Map Room where Churchill and his war cabinet directed the British war effort.

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

DAY 8

*Flight home from London
Heathrow Airport*

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

ACCOMMODATIONS



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.

ACCOMMODATIONS



Rubens at the Palace

This historic 5-star property, that 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.



The National WWII Museum Travel, 945 Magazine Street, New Orleans, LA 70130

Call: 1-877-813-3329 x 257 • Visit: ww2museumtours.org

Email: travel@nationalww2museum.org