

Community Right to Bid

NOMINATION FORM

Section 1 ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Q1 Name and address of your organisation

Organisation name:	Stebbing Parish Council
Address and postcode:	The Old Stables, High Street, Stebbing, CM6 3SG
Registration number (if you are a charity, company, CIC or social enterprise)	

Q2 Please specify what type of organisation you are

Category	Tick
Parish/Town Council	x
Unconstituted / unincorporated Community Group whose members include at least 21 individuals who appear on the electoral roll	
Neighbourhood Forum designated as pursuant to section 61F of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990	
Industrial & Provident Society which does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members	
Company Limited by Guarantee which does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members	
Community Interest Company which satisfies the requirements of Part 2 of the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004	
Charity	

Q3 Who should we contact to discuss this nomination?

Name:	Clerk . Greg King
Address and postcode:	The Old Stables, High Street,Stebbing,CM6 3SG
Telephone number	01371 855805
Email address	clerk@stebbingparishcouncil.org.uk

Section 2 ABOUT THE PROPERTY TO BE NOMINATED

Q4 Which asset do you wish to nominate?	
Name of property:	Andrewsfield Airfield including runway
Address and postcode:	Andrews Airfield, Saling Road, Stebbing< Dunmow, CM6 3TH
Name of property owner	1. Sharon Harvey 2. Robert Bucknell
Address and postcode:	1. Blake House Blake End, Great Saling CM77 6RA 2. Onchors Farm, Blake End Road, Great Saling, CM7 5DS
Telephone number	
Email address (if known)	robertbucknell@gmail.com
Current occupier's name (if different from property owner)	Andrewsfield Aviation Ltd
Details of occupier's interest in property	Leaseholders of the airfield and club house

Section 3 DEMONSTRATING THE COMMUNITY VALUE OF THE ASSET

Q5a Why do you feel the property is an asset of community value?

Please give as much information as possible about the current use of the asset i.e. what activities take place, what groups use the facility currently or in the recent past etc. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary. Definition of an asset of community value can be found in the guidance notes.

Andrewsfield Airfield, Stebbing has a unique place in Uttlesford's history, it is the only surviving Second World War airfield still in operation. At its height in 1942/43 over 800 US Airfield were stationed around the airfield and it was the home of the iconic Flying Fortress US bombers. Later in the war it housed both RAF and Polish air squadrons. It's loss would be a major blow to the 20th century history of the region and the important part these airfields played in first the defence of Britain and later the defeat of Nazi Germany. It is of particular significance this year being the 75th anniversary of VE Day. The historical significance of the airfield has been somewhat overlooked in recent years, however, local parish councils are determined to reverse this and build on the current facilities to create a site of interest to local schools, aircraft enthusiasts, WW2 veterans and their families and weekend visitors. More details of this are covered under question Q5b.

Andrewsfield is an active local airfield that has been in use since the Second World War. The club and Flying school has been active since 1973. Currently there are 60 resident aircraft and 387 Club members. The site comprises of a number of buildings including the Club House Café, original grass runway and two original WW2 aircraft hangers which is open to the general public.(see photographs at Appendix A)

Currently the Café is listed as an Asset of Community Value but the remainder of the site is not. The actual airfield itself is an integral part of the site and is intrinsically linked to the Café and as such is not considered ancillary to the ACV that is the clubhouse Café. Entrance to the club house is via a private road through the airfield and obviously the Café could not function without the entrance road.

The entirety of the site is a part of local life furthering the social wellbeing and social interests and history of the local community. The Airfield is a sports and recreation asset to the district which is well established and a vibrant economic one. The Airfield is a unique asset, unlike any other site in the District.

The runway has a physical and functional relationship with the Club house and Hangers, already protected by ACV. You cannot have one without the other. The Airfield is also a visual amenity enjoyed by members and the public when using the Club house Café, which enhances the experience.

The Airfield because of its open nature and maintenance regime provides a suitable habitat to act as an important staging post for migrant birds where they feed before moving north in the spring.

3 species that are recorded annually on the Airfield are Yellow Wag tail, Wheatear and Whinchat.

Whinchat is now regarded as a globally threatened species.

The local bird watching community regularly watch the site to record the numbers of birds that are not found on other habitats in the local area. One such species is Grey Partridge which are present in very small numbers, often seen feeding on the edge of the Airfield.

Apart from the use by the local communities of Stebbing, the Salings, Rayne and Felsted there is also use and support of a much wider catchment of a significant aviation community who use the airfield for recreational purposes, including flying private aircraft, flight training and meeting in the Club House Café. It is one of the few airfields that provide training in Essex and the sub-region for both private and commercial pilots. This is generally a declining activity due to the closure of many private airfields.

The use of the Airfield is not a minor or infrequent in relationship to the café and should be considered as non-ancillary. That is, they are clearly inter-dependent and complementary.

While this, as with any activity such as rugby or football, may not be used by every member of the community, it is open to all who wish to participate.

All flying to and from Andrewsfield is by ordinary members of both the local and wider community. It is a non-commercial airfield.

Currently 1,500 signatories are held at the Airfield supporting the retention of the entire site as a valuable part of their community.

Community consultation undertaken for the Draft Neighbourhood Plans for both Stebbing and the Salings shows a resounding support for Andrewsfield.

This airfield not only formed a valuable part of the first East Anglian USAAF initiative in World War II, but is of particular importance and interest because it was the first of 14 airfields built by the USAAF in the UK.

800 US airman lived at Andrewsfield during WW2 and many of their families visit each year in memory of their relatives' service in WW2. The airfield was home to the famous Flying Fortress US bombers and RAF Spitfires and Mustangs also flew from the airfield.

It still opens daily and continues to provide a valuable service as a social gathering place for many local residents being licensed and has excellent catering facilities. Lt & Gt Saling villages no longer have a public house. Stebbing has one pub which is currently for sale.

A visit to Andrewsfield is a popular local amenity not just for pilots, but families, cyclists, motorcycle clubs, walkers, historic aircraft enthusiasts and as a tourist point for visitors to the

area. Future generations would not think generously if this significant connection with a vital period in British and American co-operation was lost. Attached at appendix B & C are letters received from the families of American Veterans who were based at Andrewsfield during WWII.

The clubhouse provides an important link with the extensively documented history of the American Air Force by the Imperial War Museum and Andrewsfield is part of the tourist trail of wartime airfields. Should the airfield be lost to development, it is imperative that some recognition remains to honour the site's important past as many former US Airmen, their families and groups of aviation historians pay regular commemorative visits in tribute to the site.

The local Historical Society holds a photographic archive on the airfield during its active years (examples at Appendix D) and the clubhouse provides a fitting backdrop to hold future exhibitions to honour the American Airmen who gave their lives in dangerous missions, flying the impressive 'flying fortresses' over Scandinavia and Germany.

Stebbing and Saling villages are proud of the role of the brave pilots that flew from Andrewsfield and consider it an intrinsic part of our history.

Q5b How could the building or land be acquired and used in future?

If it is listed as an asset of community value, community interest groups (not limited to your organisation) will get the opportunity to bid for it if it comes up for sale. Please set out how you think such a group could fund the purchase of the building or land, and how they could run it for the benefit of the community. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

If listed as an Asset of Community Value, Stebbing Parish Council would be prepared to work with neighbouring parishes in applying for funding via a PWLB, appropriate grants, approaching community shareholders, etc. Or, a local group could have the opportunity to apply for Heritage Lottery Funding to create a centre dedicated to the 'Special Relationship' between UK and the USA within this Unique setting.

Stebbing Parish Council would work with the active Flying Club which currently operates from Andrewsfield, other parishes and interested groups to support enterprise and provide stewardship, which would be managed as at present. We would work with local schools and other bodies to educate all ages in the history of the East Anglian Airfields i.e. the living conditions of the airmen, the pressure of war etc via photographic displays, re-enactment, role play, exhibitions and so on.

Stebbing Parish Council would plan to develop a small museum on the site, built around the existing memorabilia in the club house. This will be for visiting airman's families, air enthusiasts and tourists and would be a fitting memorial to those that served.

We would also endeavour to continue the education and training of existing and new pilots.

We anticipate the site would become self-funding and be run by a management team of volunteers, with appointed custodians. Stebbing Village Hall and the Friends Meeting House are already managed in this manner and run successfully.

Q6 What do you consider to be the boundary of the property?

Please give as much detail as you can, including an Ordnance Survey plan outlining the site.

The boundary of the entire airfield is marked in red.

The club house and ancillary buildings and carparks (Listed as an ACV) are outlined in light blue.

Grid Refertence: TL68848

x/y co-ords: 568892/224801

Attachment checklist

- ☐ Copy of group constitution (if applicable)
- ☐ Names and home addresses of 21 members registered to vote in nomination area (if group is not constituted)
- ☐ Site boundary plan
- ☐ Evidence of current community use e.g. activity programmes, website links etc

Declaration

I can confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information contained in this nomination form is complete and accurate

Signed:
..

Print Name:
.

Position in Organisation:
.

Date:
.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
Date received:		Decision deadline:	

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B

My name is Tom Farrell. I was contacted by Linda Coviello regarding the plans to develop Andrews Field for housing, and the movement to challenge these development plans. As many with a distant connection to Andrews Field I am saddened that this is even a topic of discussion. Andrews Field has been, and always will be, hallowed ground and a monument to the men and women who used it as a base to fight Nazi Germany and protect our way of life.

We here in the USA have little say in what transpires in Essex, but we can raise our voice along with the local Great Sailing citizens to protect some, if not all of this historical site.

My father is Jim “Boss” Farrell, the first pilot of Flak-Bait. My father conceived the name and designed the nose art, which was painted on the plane by company artist Ted Simonitis. My father’s name is still evident under the Captain’s window on Flak Bait.

I have never had a chance to visit Andrews Field. I understand that there is a small memorial to the 322nd Bomb Group in one of the remaining buildings. At the very least this monument and as many original buildings as possible should be saved. My father also spoke of the White Hart Tavern where many of the American pilots and crew would relax after their missions. I understand that the White Hart is still standing, but it is a Tea Room / Restaurant today. If the White Hart has any artifacts from the days when the 322nd was active at Andrews Field, they should be saved as well.

I don’t know what else I can do from the States. If you have any ideas or need me to contact others I’d be happy to do so.

Tom Farrell
Williamsburg, Virginia, USA.

APPENDIX C

Thank you for inviting our family to provide feedback regarding the proposed destruction of Andrews Field to make way for a housing development in the Great Saling area.

When you told me what the plan was, I can’t begin to describe how upset it made me. I can only imagine how your residents feel. Andrews Field is an historical aviation site, a national and world treasure. My father, Capt. Sherman Best, 322nd Bomb Group, 449th Bomb Squadron, who passed away in 2016 at the age of 95, was stationed there in World War II and flew 20 missions as the pilot of Flak-Bait (which is now being restored in the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum – see this article which was written by astronaut Tom Jones, featuring my father along with the Curator of the museum <https://www.airspacemag.com/airspacemag/hundreds-holes-iflak-baiti-180954662/>). We heard so many stories about Andrews Field from my Dad, that we traveled there with him from the US in September 2000 so he could sign the Reunion Board in the clubhouse. The atmosphere was thick with history as we made our way to

the clubhouse. In my mind, I pictured all the stories he told, and what it must have been like for the airmen stationed there during the “war to end all wars”. When Dad walked up and signed the Reunion Board, there were dozens of people in the clubhouse. They stood up and applauded and cheered. I don’t think I’ve ever been more overcome with emotion and pride. There wasn’t a dry eye in the house. As we walked back out onto the tarmac, overlooking the Quonset hut, my father’s shoulders began to shake and he started to sob. It seems that was the spot that he and his best friend, both piloting their own planes, were making a night landing without lights. Dad chose one runway, his friend chose the other. What they couldn’t see in the blackout was a bulldozer parked on the runway. Dad watched his best friend crash into the bulldozer and die in the flames. The memory was so strong that my father was completely overcome on that beautiful day 56 years later. Now it is 19 years after that scene outside the clubhouse, and I too am still filled with emotion, I will never forget my father reliving that awful moment.

I am asking the powers that be for this development project to honor the lives lost on that spot, that sacred piece of ground where history was made, where my father took off on 3 missions on D-Day along with countless others. That little air field played a very important part in World War II. Lives were sacrificed there. Surely you can preserve Andrews Field as an important historical monument and give it, and the memory of all who served there, the honor and dignity it deserves.

Thank you for allowing me a voice on this important issue. I will never forget the kindness of the gentleman in the White Hart Pub (a hangout of Dad’s when he was allowed off the base), when we showed up near 3:00 so Dad could raise a pint to the memory of his airmen friends. The barkeep insisted on staying open and bought us all a round. He had the deep respect and honor that the developers seem to be lacking. Maybe someday I can return to your beautiful countryside – I have ancestors who built the Church of Stratford St. Mary, over by Dedham – and if the White Hart is still there, it would be my pleasure to raise a pint to you and your committee in celebration of your victory!

Wishing you much success,

Linda Best Coviello

Maiden, NC, USA

APPENDIX D



Royal Air Force Andrews Field or more simply **RAF Andrews Field** (also known as **RAF Andrewsfield** and **RAF Great Saling**) is a former Royal Air Force station located 4 miles (6.4 km) east-northeast of Great Dunmow Essex, England.

Originally designated as Great Saling when designed and under construction, the base was renamed "Andrews Field" in honor of United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) General Frank M. Andrews, who was killed in an airplane crash in Iceland in May 1943.^[2] Andrews Field was primarily the home of the USAAF Ninth Air Force 322d Bombardment Group during the Second World War, which flew the Martin B-26 Marauder medium bomber. After being transferred to the Air Ministry in late 1944, it was used briefly by RAF Fighter Command for Gloster Meteor jet fighter testing before being finally closed in late 1945.^[1]

Today the remains of the airfield are located on private property, being used as agricultural fields, with a small portion used by the Andrewsfield Flying Club.

History

United States Army Air Forces use
96th Bombardment Group (Heavy)
322d Bombardment Group (Medium)
RAF Fighter Command use

Current use

Units assigned

See also

References

Citations
Bibliography

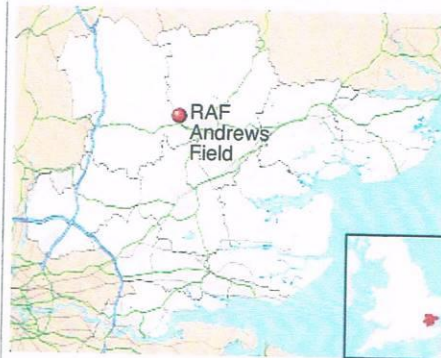
External links

History

Great Dunmow, Essex



War-time photo of Andrews Field, taken on 4 September 1943. Numerous B-26 Marauders of the 322d Bomb Group are on the hardstands surrounding the airfield.



Location in Essex

Coordinates 51°53'51"N 000°27'37"E

Site information

Owner	Air Ministry
Operator	Royal Air Force ^[1] United States Army Air Forces

Andrews Field was the first of fourteen "Type A" airfields built by the United States Army Air Forces in the United Kingdom during the Second World War. Originally designated as "Great Saling", the facility was built by the United States Army 819th Engineer Battalion (Aviation), which began work on the field during July 1942.^[3]

Andrews Field had three runways, a main of 1,830m aligned 09/27 and two crosswind secondary runways of 1,280m aligned 02/20 and 15/33. It had an enclosing perimeter track that had three separate dispersal areas totaling 50 loop type hardstands and one "frying pan" type. Barracks facilities for about 3,000 personnel were constructed along with a technical site that had two T-2 type hangars for aircraft maintenance.^[3] Main construction was supposed to be completed in early January 1943, and it continued until March.^[4]

United States Army Air Forces use

On 21 May 1943 the official name was changed to Andrews Field in honour of Lieutenant General Frank M Andrews.^[5] Andrews Field was known as **USAAF Station AAF-485** for security reasons by the USAAF during the war, by which name it was referred to instead of location. Its USAAF Station Code was "GZ".^[1] Although the name Andrews Field (or Andrewsfield) appears on RAF air maps and was widely used by that service, some USAAF agencies still referred to the airfield by the name Great Saling.^[5]

USAAF Station Units assigned to RAF Andrews Field were:^[2]

- 42d Service Group (VIII Air Force Composite Command)^[6]
 - 356th, 361st Service Squadron, HHS, 42d Service Group
- 18th Station Complement Squadron
- 21st Weather Squadron
- 28th Mobile Reclamation and Repair Squadron

Regular Army Station Units included:

- 1020th Signal Company
- 1136th Quartermaster Company
- 1175th Military Police Company
- 1642nd Ordnance Supply & Maintenance Company

Controlled by	Eighth Air Force (1943-1944) Ninth Air Force (1944) RAF Fighter Command (1945-1946)
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Site history

Built	1942-43
In use	1943-1945
Battles/wars	Second World War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Air Offensive, Europe ▪ Normandy Campaign ▪ Northern France Campaign

Airfield information

Elevation	88 metres (289 ft) AMSL
Runways	
Direction	Length and surface
02/20	1,280 metres (4,199 ft) Asphalt
08/26	1,830 metres (6,004 ft) Asphalt
14/32	1,280 metres (4,199 ft) Asphalt

Photograph of construction of RAF Andrews Field by the 819th Engineer Battalion (Aviation) of the United States Army during 1942.

- 2253rd Quartermaster Truck Company
- 819th Chemical Company (Air Operations)
- 878th Signal Depot Company
- 2044th Engineer Fire Fighting Platoon
- 111th Army Postal Unit
- 201st Medical Dispensary
- Weather Detachment BB, 21st Weather Squadron

96th Bombardment Group (Heavy)

When opened in January 1943, Andrews Field was assigned to the VIII Bomber Command of Eighth Air Force,^[1] however it didn't receive its first combat group until May, when the 4th Bombardment Wing **96th Bombardment Group (Heavy)** flying Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses arrived from RAF Grafton Underwood (AAF-106) in Northamptonshire.^[7]

The group consisted of the following squadrons:^[8]

- 337th Bombardment Squadron (AX)^[9]
- 338th Bombardment Squadron (BX)^[9]
- 339th Bombardment Squadron (QJ)^[9]
- 413th Bombardment Squadron (MZ)^[9]

The 96th appears to have only carried out one mission while posted to Andrews Field. On 29 May 1943 they took part in a raid on Rennes naval storage depot from which one B-17 failed to return. The group was moved to RAF Snetterton Heath on 12 June 1943 in a general exchange of airfields with Martin B-26 Marauder 3d Bombardment Wing groups.^[4]

322d Bombardment Group (Medium)

Replacing the 96th was the **322d Bombardment Group (Medium)**^[10] which arrived from RAF Bury St. Edmunds on 12 June.^[4] The group was assigned to the 3d Bomb Wing and flew Martin B-26B/C Marauders.^[4] Operational squadrons of the 322d were:

- 449th Bombardment Squadron^[11] (PN)^[12]
- 450th Bombardment Squadron^[11] (ER)^[12]
- 451st Bombardment Squadron^[11] (SS) ^[12]
- 452d Bombardment Squadron^[11] (DR)^[12]
- 1st Pathfinder Squadron (Provisional) (Attached) (1H)^[13]



Douglas-Long Beach B-17F-25-DL Fortress Serial 42-3123 of the 96th Bomb Group at unfinished Andrews Field, 1943. Later transferred to the 381st Bomb Group at RAF Ridgewell, this aircraft crashed near Fladderlohhausen, 10 mile SE of Quakenbruck near Bremen Germany 8 October 1943. Ten crew KIA.

B-26 of the 322d Medium Bomb Group on the perimeter track prior to takeoff

The 322nd was the first B-26 group to enter combat (in May 1943) from the UK, during which its combat performance helped to prove the effectiveness of the medium bombers flying tactical combat missions.^[1]

In common with other Marauder units of the 3rd Bomb Wing, the 322d was transferred to Ninth Air Force on 16 October 1943.^[1] The group attacked enemy airfields in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands attacking the principal targets but the group also attacked secondary targets such as power stations, shipyards, construction works, and marshalling yards.^[14]

Beginning in March 1944 the 322nd bombed railway and highway bridges, oil tanks, and missile sites in preparation for the invasion of Normandy.^[14]

B-26 Marauder of the 322d Bomb Group on a mission over enemy-occupied territory, 1944.

On 8 May 1944, one of the 322nd aircraft, nicknamed "Mild and Bitter" (serial 41-31819) became the first B-26 flying from England to complete 100 combat missions. Another B-26, "Flak Bait" (41-31773) survived to the end of hostilities with 202 missions to its credit, the only US bomber involved in combat over Europe to pass the 200 mark.^[1]

On D-Day, 6 June 1944 the 322d Bomb Group attacked coastal defences and gun batteries. Afterwards, during the Normandy campaign, the 322nd pounded fuel and ammunition dumps, bridges, and road junctions, supporting the Allied offensive at Caen and the breakthrough at Saint-Lô in July.^[1]

Farmers collect hay at Andrews Field whilst personnel of the 322nd Bomb Group work on a B-26 Marauder (serial number 41-31814) nicknamed "Bag Of Bolts".

From Andrews Field the 322d received a Distinguished Unit Citation for the period 14 May 1943 – 24 July 1944.^[14] The group moved during September 1944, transferring to Beauvais (A-61) Airfield in northern France, and aiding the drive of Third Army across France.^[11] On the continent, the 322nd BG used the following Advanced Landing Grounds:^[7]

- Beauvais/Tille Airfield (A-61), France September 1944
- Le Culot Airfield (A-89), Belgium March 1945
- Fritzlar Airfield (Y-86), Germany June - November 1945

The 322d flew its last mission on 24 April 1945.^[14] After V-E Day, the group was assigned to occupation duty in Germany beginning in June 1945, engaging in inventorying and disassembling German Air Force equipment and facilities. Returned to the Camp Kilmer, New Jersey in December 1945, and was inactivated on 15 December.^[11]

1st Pathfinder Squadron (Provisional)

The **1st Pathfinder Squadron (Provisional)** was formed at Andrews Field in February 1944 and equipped with B-26s, carrying the Oboe radio transponder blind-bombing device.^[1] When the unit was formed the squadron consisted of 14 aircraft. The squadron was attached to the 322nd

Bombardment Group,^[13] but provided bad weather leads for all IX Ninth Bombing Command groups.^[1]

The first B-26 night mission was flown by the 1st Pathfinder Squadron on the night of 1 June 1944 when three B-26's bombed gun positions at St Marie au Bois, France. This was purely a Pathfinder mission and no other unit participated.^[13] On the night of 8 July 1944, using Oboe, the 322d undertook a night mission but nine of its aircraft fell victim to Luftwaffe fighters.^[13] At the end of hostilities the squadron strength was 36 B-26's.^[13]



B-26 crew photo from the 1st Pathfinder Squadron (Provisional)

RAF Fighter Command use

Unlike most of the airfields vacated by the Ninth Air Force in the area, Andrews Field was immediately returned to RAF Fighter Command control on 7 October - to provide an airfield for North American Mustang squadrons^[4] escorting Bomber Command daylight operations being used by 11 Group, Air Defence of Great Britain (ADGB). At this time the airfield was also under consideration for extension of runways to house Very Heavy Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers.

Within a week the HQ of No. 150 (Polish) Wing RAF and an advance party of No. 19 Squadron moved in. By the middle of October 1944, Nos. 19, 65 and 122 Squadrons (No. 122 Wing) had joined the Polish Wing consisting of Nos. 129, 306 and 315 Squadrons.^[4]

At the end of February 1945 the Gloster Meteor III jet fighters of 616 Squadron arrived, they stayed for a month^[15] before being replaced by a detachment of Meteor IIIs from 504 Squadron.^[16]

In addition to the combat squadrons, the Air Sea Rescue Supermarine Walruses of 276 Squadron, RAF Coastal Command were resident from early June 1945. They left for Kjevik, Norway on 23 August.^[17]

With the end of the war, No 303 Squadron departed in December 1945^[18] and the airfield was placed under care and maintenance and became a satellite of RAF Great Sampford in 1946.

Current use

With the end of military control, Andrews Field was virtually abandoned by 1948 and soon took on an air of neglect. In common with other disused airfields, some of the buildings were taken over as temporary housing, even as late as 1953. From there on, virtually all the buildings with the exception of the two T-2 hangars and most of the ground works (runways, etc.) were removed and the land reverted to agriculture.^[4]

In 1972, aircraft again returned to Andrews Field (renamed Andrewsfield Aerodrome) when a 915m grass strip along part of the line of the original main runway was constructed. As flying increased, a clubhouse and flying control were erected in 1975 for the Andrewsfield Flying Club. The airfield was licensed by the CAA in 1976.^[4]

The Rebel Air Museum was housed in a blister hangar near the clubhouse for some time, until it moved to new premises on Earls Colne airfield.

Other than the two T2 hangars, the firing-in butts and a few Nissen huts in the dispersed sites, little remains of the once-busy wartime airfield. Only a small amount of single track perimeter remains along the south side of the airfield, although the wartime runways are visible as disturbed earth in aerial photography.^[4] There are two memorials, one in the village is positioned in front of the former Sick Quarters Site and commemorates the 819th Aviation Engineer Battalion who built the airfield. The other memorial is along the lane from the A120 to Great Saling and is to the memory of the 322nd Bomb Group (M). A mural depicting a B-26 adorns an interior wall of the Andrewsfield Flying Club clubhouse. Also on display are a number of photographs showing the airfield under construction.

Units assigned

Royal Air Force^[19]

- HQ, No. 133 Wing (10–24 October 1944)
- 129 Squadron (10 October - 12 December 1944)
- 306 Squadron (10 October 1944 – 10 August 1945)
- 315 Squadron (Polish) (10–24 October 1944, 15 January - 8 August 1945)
- 19 Squadron (14 October 1944 – 13 February 1945)
- 65 Squadron (14 October 1944 – 16 January 1945, 6–15 May 1945)
- 122 Squadron (14 October 1944 – 1 May 1945)
- HQ, No 150 Wing (15 October - 23 December 1944)
- 316 Squadron (24 October 1944 – 16 May 1945, 10 August - 17 September 1945, 5 October - 28 November 1945)
- 309 Squadron (12 December 1944 – 10 August 1945)
- 616 Squadron (28 February – 31 March 1945)
- 303 Squadron (Polish) (4 April – 16 May 1945, 9 August - 28 November 1945)
- 276 Squadron (8 June - 23 August 1945)
- 2766 Squadron RAF Regiment^[20]
- 2769 Squadron RAF Regiment^[20]



US memorial to those who served at Andrews Field airfield in WW2. It is on the green in Vicarage Close, Great Saling.

United States Army Air Forces^[19]

- 96th Bombardment Group, (13 May - 11 June 1943)
- 332nd Bombardment Group, (12 June 1943 – 25 September 1944)

See also

- List of former Royal Air Force stations
- Frank Maxwell Andrews

References

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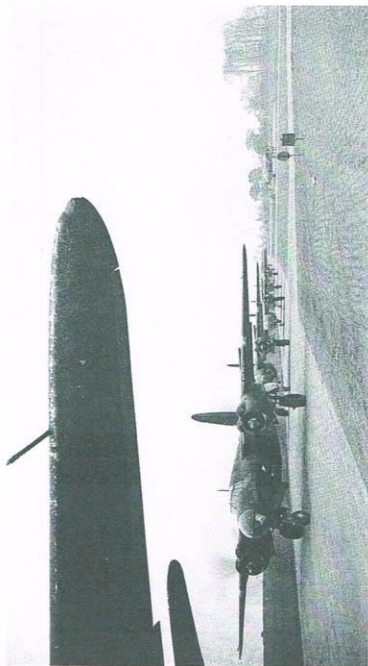
External links

- Current-Day photos of the remnants of RAF Andrews Field (<http://archive.wikiwix.com/cache/20090907143535/http://airfields.fotopic.net/c1674122.html>)
 - 322d Bomb Group website (<https://web.archive.org/web/20061018135945/http://www.b26marauder.com/322nd/b26.html>)
 - Andrewsfield Aviation (<http://www.andrewsfield.com>)
 - Photographs of RAF Andrews Field from the Geograph British Isles project (<https://www.geograph.org.uk/gridref/TL6889125064>)
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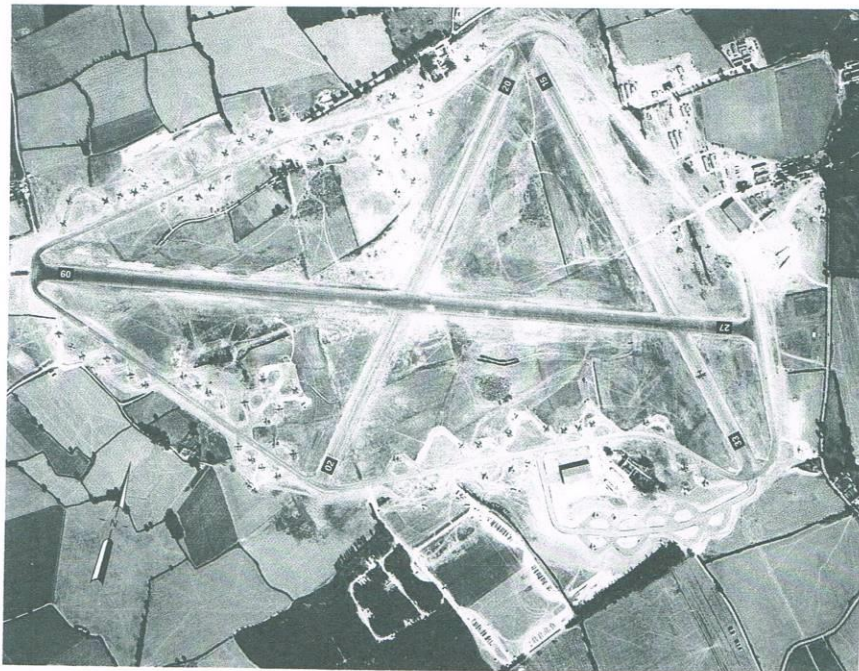
Above: Andrews Field, May 1944. Marauders of the 451st Bomb Squadron taxi westward on runway 08 for take-off. Below: Andrews Field, May 1944. A B-26 Marauder taxiing on runway 08 for take-off. Below: Andrews Field, May 1944. A B-26 Marauder taxiing on runway 08 for take-off. Below: Andrews Field, May 1944. A B-26 Marauder taxiing on runway 08 for take-off.

Andrews Field (Great Saling)

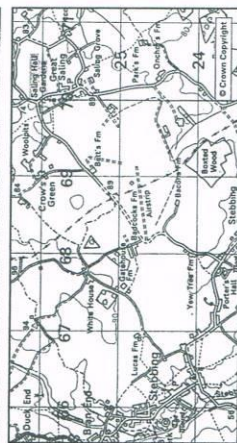
STATION 485

The third bomber airfield in Essex to be completed, Great Saling was also the first to be built on a former RAF site. It was located approximately four miles west of Braintree, to the north of the A120, the old main road from Braintree to Braintree. The 451st Bomb Squadron (Aviation) commenced work on the site in July 1942. The runways were completed by the end of the year, and the base of fine weather work continued during the winter of 1942-43. By the end of the year, the base was considered ready for operational use. It was officially opened on May 21, 1944, by the commanding officer of the US Army in the ETO, General M. M. Andrews, who had recently been killed in a B-24 crash in Iceland.

A standard bomber airfield to Class A, Andrews Field was built on a former RAF site. The main runway aligned 08-26, and the 4,200ft auxiliary at 02-20 and 15-33. Fifty-one hardstands, 100 ft long and 40 ft wide, were built. There were two large hangars and one pan. There were two dispersed T2 hangars and accommodation for 100 personnel. The base was first host to Eighth Air Force's 96th Bomb Group and its B-17s in August 1942. It was then transferred to the 451st Bomb Group with B-26 Marauders the following month. On October 16 that year, in common with other B-26 groups, the 451st Air Support Group was redesignated as the 451st Bomb Group. The 451st Bomb Group was the first B-26 group to enter the theatre over 40 missions when it became part of the Ninth Air Force. Andrews Field was attacked by the Luftwaffe but little damage was done. Operations continued apace during the winter and spring and on May 8,



More than 70 aircraft, mostly Martin B-26 Marauders, are visible in this official USAAF picture taken on September 4, 1944. General M. M. Andrews was killed in action on August 4, 1944, while leading a mission over Germany. He was replaced by General Jacob L. Daves until Eisenhower was brought back in December 1943 as Supreme Commander of the ETO. Although the US Eighth Air Force had been carrying out strategic bombing since August 1942, it was not until the role was perceived as strategic and complementary to RAF Bomber Command, whereas the invasion of Europe would require the direct support of the land forces, that the Eighth Air Force was brought into being in October 1943 to perform this role alongside the Second Tactical Air Force of the RAF which had come into existence on June 1 that year.



Andrews Field, grid reference TL692248 on Ordnance Survey 1:50 000 Sheet 107.

[illegible]

Lieutenant General Frank M. Andrews
died just six days before his death.
He was interred in Arlington National
Cemetery, Washington, DC, (Grave 1883
in Section 3).

944, one of the 322nd aircraft, nicknamed *Mild and Bitter* (serial 41-31819) became the first B-26 flying from England to complete 100 combat missions. Another B-26, *Flak Jant* (41-31773) then nearing this figure, survived to the end of hostilities with 202 missions to its credit, the only US bomber involved in combat over Europe to pass the 200-mission mark.

The 322nd's Marauders were distinguished from those of other IX Bomber Command groups by having no tail markings. The four squadrons, however, carried the standard code identifications on the fuselage of their aircraft: PN for 449th Bomb Squadron, ER for 451st and 452nd, SS for the 450th, and

The 1st Pathfinder Squadron (Provisional) was formed at Andrews Field in February 1944 and equipped with B-26s carrying the Oboe's radar blind-bombing device. The unit provided bad weather leads for all groups in the IX Bomber Command. On the night of July 1, 1944, missing Oboe, the 322nd undertook a night mission but nine of its aircraft fell victim to enemy fighters.

The 322nd or 'Nye's Annihilators' as they dubbed themselves (Colonel Glenn Nye being the first CO at Andrews Field), remained at this one UK base longer than any other B-26 group's stay at one location. They eventually moved to Beauvais/Tille, France, during the last week of September

944. Unlike most of the airfields vacated by the Twelfth Air Force in the area, Andrews Field was immediately returned to RAF control — in October 1 — to provide a base for Mustang squadrons escorting Bomber Command daylight operations. At this time the airfield was also under consideration for extension of runways to house very heavy bomber

Mustang squadrons remained in residence for a few months after the end of hostilities in Europe and the Pacific. By the end of 1945 the station was used for repair and maintenance and the following year local farmers were permitted to cultivate around the runways. Hangars and other facilities were sold or removed and in the mid-1960s, like other abandoned airfields in the area, the runways and perimeter tracks were broken up for use as hardcore for road making. In 1973, one of the landowners, John Harvey, utilised the grass strip close to the site of the main runway for private flying. Three years later the Andrewsfield Flying Club was formed.