

Welcome

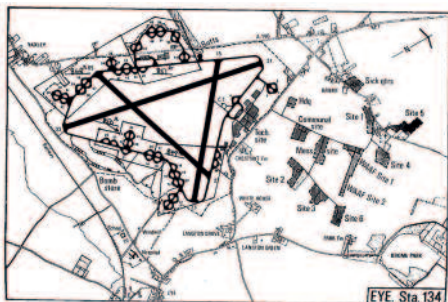
USAAF Station 134 was one of the last wartime bases built in East Anglia; constructed by US Army engineers in September 1942. British contractors were also employed; today rusting construction equipment can be found abandoned around the airfield. The accommodation for those serving, covered an adjoining area across the B1077 into Brome village.

The Airbase was officially opened on 1 May 1944 and handed over to the USAAF's 8th Air Force. The unit returned to Drew Field, Florida on 3 September 1945 and was disbanded shortly after.

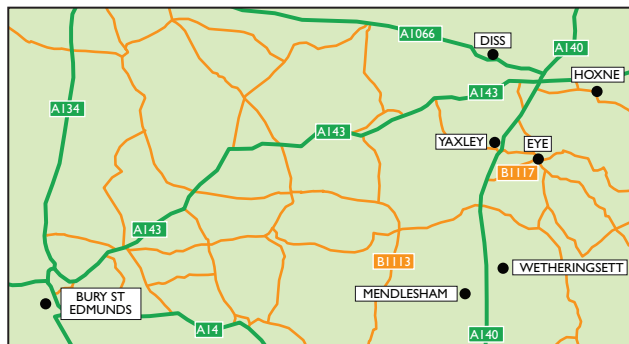
Since that time much of the former technical site has been converted into a busy industrial area. Most of the original runways remain plus a few of the original WW2 buildings, some of the access roads into the industrial site can be identified as peritrack.

The walks are flat and much of them are on the original peritrack. The section leading to the Fuse Store is suitable for people with limited walking and a rest area is available at this point.

Parking is available at Hartismere School; toilet facilities are available when the school is open, please approach the school office.



Location



Eye Airfield lies alongside to the A140, 4 miles south of Diss, 17½ miles north of Ipswich and 28 miles north-east of Bury St Edmunds.

Public Transport

National rail services run from Diss along with bus services. Bus services are also available from Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Stowmarket and Framlingham.

Visit www.suffolkonboard.com (0345 606 6171) or www.travelineeastanglia.co.uk (08712 002 233) to plan your journey.

OS Explorer Map

Use O.S. Explorer Map 230 Diss & Harleston to enjoy this walk and the wider area.

Discover Suffolk

Discover more walking and cycling leaflets by visiting www.discoversuffolk.org.uk.

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Produced by Suffolk County Council and the Friends of the 490th Bomb Group.



Circular Walks

Eye Airfield

The 490th Bomb Group (H)
Heritage Walks



The Perimeter Trail

DISTANCE: 5 miles (8 km)

DURATION: 2½ hours

WAYMARKER: Red Circular Walk



From Hartismere School head left along Castleton Way; turn right onto the footpath ❶ next to an information board. Continue until you reach the WW2 Fuse store on your left.

'The Fuse Store is based on the commonly used airfield building, the Nissen Hut. This area is dedicated to the US Army's Engineer Command, 923rd engineer Aviation Regiment, who were responsible for the construction of the airfield, supported by civilian building companies.

Diagonally opposite from the rear of the building at the furthest corner of the field, was the bomb dump. During WWII a train service ran to Eye, delivering bombs. The train halted at a point beyond Rapsy Tapsy Lane and there the bombs were collected and brought to the dump by truck.

Continue along the path to the remains of the original east-west runway ❷, turn left.

The 850th squadron would have been stationed here on the left.

Continue ahead until you reach the junction with the north-south runway ❸, turn right; this is now an access road, proceed with care.

The runways are traditional in design for the era, roughly based on an 'A' shaped comprising of 3 concrete runways, approximately 2 miles in length. 50 aircraft dispersals in 4 groups were sited along them. (Dispersals are parked aircraft, where they will be less vulnerable in the event of enemy air raid)

Each group accommodated a single squadron; on Eye Airfield it was the 848th, 849th, 850th and 851st.

After the group of buildings, the trail continues through the gate in the metal fence ❹, leading you to the A140.

The dispersals for the 848th were to your left and the 851st to your right, on the opposite side of the road - *we do not encourage anyone to cross this busy and dangerous road to see the remaining hard stands*. Even during WW2, it was necessary to close the A140 whilst the aircraft were transferred between the dispersal and the airfield.

Turn right along the wide roadside verge until you reach the footpath on your right ❻, continue along here past the runway, to reach Liberator Way and the B1077 ❼.

A Romney hut, probably a workshop in WW2, was relocated here after the war. Now used as a depot, was placed on dispersal 3; dispersal 1 can be clearly seen adjacent and dispersal 2 is now under Liberator Way. Around this area was the Technical Site of the Airfield including the Control Tower. The only remaining building is a T2 hangar which can be seen from the road. Permission to view close-up can be gained by approaching Bartrums and Permastore.

Continue down the B1077 to Progress Way ❽; location of the Memorial. From here, head downhill towards Eye. After the houses, take the field edge footpath on your right ❾ back to the airfield. Turn left at the footpath junction, along the track to the footpath ❿, turn left again, back to the school.



The 490th Bomb Group (H) Heritage Walks

A circular inset photograph showing a small, rustic building with a semi-circular, arched roof. The building appears to be constructed from light-colored stone or concrete blocks. It has a single, small, dark-framed window with multiple panes. The roof is covered in a reddish-brown material, possibly corrugated metal or thatch, which shows signs of weathering. The building is situated in a field with green vegetation in the foreground and some trees in the background. The entire image is framed within a circular border.



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The Memorial Trail

DISTANCE: 3 miles (5 km)

DURATION: 1½ hours

WAYMARKER: Blue Circular Walk



Hartismere School was founded in the 15th century; existing as a National and County School and in 1935 as a Secondary Modern. The Grammar School closed in the 1960s.

There is a 490th BG heritage display in the school library, which can be accessed on request to the school.

Follow the directions as per the start of The Perimeter Trail to ②, then turn right ①.

The 850th Squadron laid to the left of the runway at this point and the 849th to the right. The remains of the hard standings for the 849th Sq. can still be viewed the end of this section of old runway

Continue to the end of the runway, take the path left ②, pass to the side of the locked gate ahead to enter Progress Way, turn right to the 490th BG Memorial

The Memorial was dedicated in 2016 making a fine addition to the existing Memorials in Brome Church and at Brome Village Hall, all accompanying the Roll of Honour displayed in Eye Town Hall.

From the Memorial follow The Perimeter Trail from ⑧ onwards.



There and Back Again

DISTANCE: 2 miles (3 km)

DURATION: 1 hour

WAYMARKER: Green Circular Walk



From Hartismere School, turn right along Castleton Way and take the footpath on your left, next to the white house ①.

Continue past the Victoria Mill allotments onto the airfield, turn right at the T junction ②. Follow the path as it curves left, leading you to the gate ahead; pass to the side of the locked gate to enter Progress Way, the 490th BG Memorial is along on the right.

The creation of the Memorial area has uncovered several unusual wild flowers, including Bee and Bell orchids.

Tom, a cat belonging to the ground keeper, can often be found sunning himself here.

Return the same way.

