

# James Abela ELT

## **AIRFIELD TALES** **Lincolnshire's wartime legacy**

### **Questions**

1. What type of plane flew into the airfield?
2. When was the official handover ceremony scheduled?
3. How many planes were involved in the air raid?
4. For how long did fighter-planes have to go over the bomb?
5. What three things were different about American men?
6. What does 'bought it' mean?
7. What pushed the man 15 feet into the ground?
8. What does "interred" mean?

### **Dialects**

Listen again to the elderly gentleman:

1. What fillers does he use?
2. What contractions does he use?
3. What words does he use for men?

### **Discuss**

1. Do you think that the fighter pilots were nervous flying over a bomb?
2. Do you think that the war made courtships (relationships) difficult?
3. Do you think Americans today behave in such a gentlemanly way?
3. Do you think that soldiers that survived the war had difficulties adjusting to normal life afterwards?

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## ANSWERS

### Questions

1. What type of plane flew into the airfield?  
*P38 Lightnings*
2. When was the official handover ceremony scheduled?  
*Mid August*
3. How many planes were involved in the air raid?  
*1*
4. For how long did fighter-planes have to go over the bomb?  
*3 years*
5. What three things were different about American men?  
*Paid attention to you, opened doors for you and offered you drinks politely*
6. What does 'bought it' mean?  
*Killed / died*
7. What pushed the man 15 feet into the ground?  
*The weight of the engine*
8. What does "interred" mean?  
*(quickly) buried*

### Dialects

Listen again to the elderly gentleman:

1. What fillers does he use?  
Umm, you know & you see.
2. What contractions does he use?  
'im, 'em & 'coz
3. What words does he use for men?  
Blokes & lads

### Script

Once the ground was graded and the buildings for men and machines erected; the planes flew in even before the airfield was completed; for this was wartime.

P38 Lightnings from the 71<sup>st</sup> fighter squadron landed here in July 1942 and the official handover ceremony was scheduled for mid-august General Dwight D Eisenhower later president of the United States was to preside over the ceremony.

On the day before the ceremony Goxhill had its only air raid of the war a lone German bomber flew overhead and dropped a very well aimed bomb right here on the intersection between the two newly concreted runways, but it didn't go off.

The handover ceremony completed the squad spent the next week digging deeper into the hole, but the bomb was so deep it couldn't be uncovered. The hole was filled in and the bomb was left there for the rest of the war. Every day for the next three years, fighters of the 496 fighter group passed over the spot.

### Tales of Romance

There appears to be a lot more in print about airfields than there is about the social impact of the war on the local population. Just imagine what it was like in

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those days for a young woman, it must have seemed virtually impossible that she'd find a boyfriend at all.

**Woman:** My mother was a war-bride and I remember her story was that the Americans were so different, they actually noticed you, they opened doors for you, they politely got you drinks and the British men, from my mother's point of view, didn't do those things.

## Tales of Heroism

**Old Gentleman:** Some of 'em were young men with children of their own and they used to talk to us, you know, and all of a sudden they wouldn't be there anymore and you'd say where's so and so and they wouldn't say anything, 'coz of the poor bloke had bought it, you see, you know, this happened quite a lot. It still a bit um, upsets you, when you think about it.

But it flipped 'im and he went over and he went in backwards his tail section broke off and the engine, the weight of the engine pushed 'im 15 feet down into the ground, I and two other lads went up and before anybody got there, actually. We just got there and the police came and told us to clear away and apparently, I didn't know at the time, but they removed the top section, which was the top half of his body went with it, because it shaved his body off at his waist and err 'coz it'd be protruding above the engine line, the engine line went straight through him so his top part of his body stayed on the top and the top of his body was interred at Scopwick cemetery.