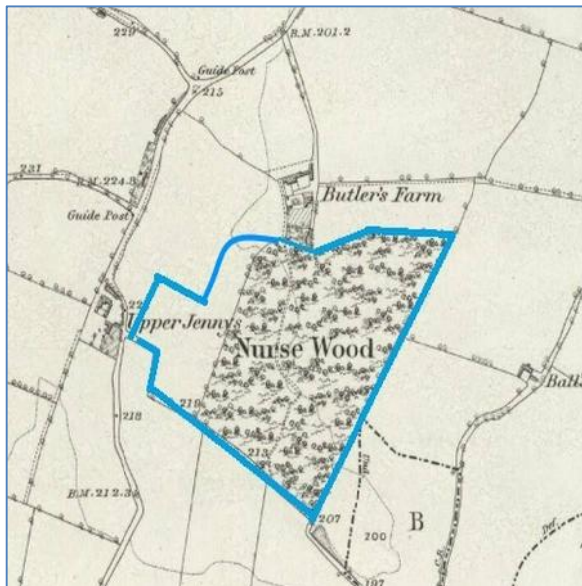


CHAPTER 11
BUTLERS FARM AND NURSES WOOD



Butlers Farm by Charlotte
Laurie

**This is PRIVATE
PROPERTY**

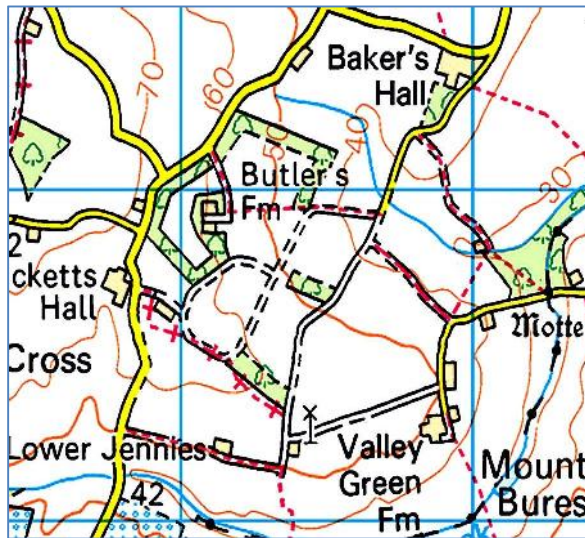


Butlers Farm is located to the
West of Bures Hamlet along
the Colne Road.

The OS Map dated 1876,
clearly shows Nurses Wood.

The blue outline indicates the
area of woodland according
to the 1838 OS map

This was probably known in earlier times as Norse Wood. It was roughly 3 acres in size,
a remnant of the large oak forests that spread across East Anglia.



During 1947 the War Agricultural Executive Committee (War-Ag) ordered the wood to be removed, to increase the urgent demand for food.

The owners of Butlers at that time were Mr. & Mrs. Smith. They removed Nurses Wood as instructed, but the wife asked if a small piece could be retained so that the son had somewhere to play. This small section of wood still remains today, south of the farmhouse



The concrete loop road on the OS Map dated 1956, can clearly be seen to the south of the farm, with Nurses Wood obliterated.

Satellite image:
Nurses Wood was located inside the concrete perimeter road to provide

camouflage from unwanted visitors.



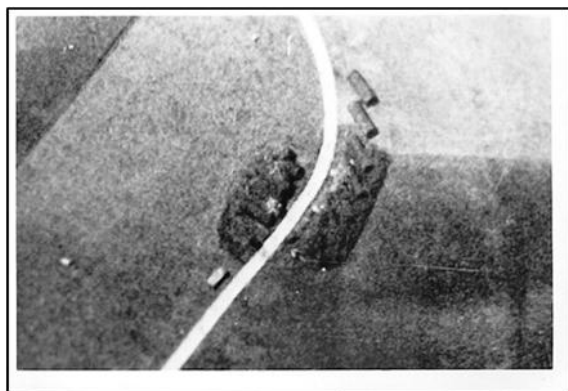
Photograph taken in 2010 taken from Point "A" on the previous page



Photograph taken from point "B" on the previous page. Arable land to the left which was once Nurses Wood.



Similar photograph taken in the summer of 2007, with the land growing a wheat harvest



Possibly a Luftwaffe aerial photograph, taken of the huts at Butlers Farm.

The wood was described in 1940 as:-

A typical oak wood, with lots of hazel throughout, ash, elm, lime, elder, willow and maple, and a belt of wild cherry near to the house. Blackberries were abundant for several years before the war, groups of pickers were recruited to send the fruit by rail to Covent Garden.

Blackthorn flourished in some areas, and there were plenty of honeysuckle, both pink and white wild roses, and some rarer shrubs like guelder rose, spindle-berry with its psychedelic pink and scarlet flowers, and in one particular area, wild barberry.

There was also some broom, a glory of deep, burnished gold in its season.

There was a great variety of wildflowers in addition to the ubiquitous primroses; violets and celandines, masses of bluebells, early purple orchids, wild strawberries, delicate harebells, bugle, mauve cuckoo flower, pink and white champions, ragged robin, dog's mercury and deadly nightshade. In the clearings, there was lots of purple willow herb, and teasel grew in one spot near to top hollow.

Once we found a foxglove.

Charlotte (Busky) Laurie 2007



Two of the original huts, still standing in perfect condition in 2007 near Butlers Farm.



This Satellite Image clearly shows them along a track to the west of Pricketts Hall Farm along the Colne Road.

This text was derived from another interview with Busky Laurie.

The day war broke out in 1939, Arthur Beaumont from the local Bures Radio Shop came and installed a radio. Mrs Laurie, my mother was furious, as she thought it would contaminate her children`s mind. However, my father ruled the day and it was left working.

The first sacrifice of war came early in the autumn. A cavalry officer called at the house one day when Father was away and demanded to see all of our horses.

I took him across the meadow to where were several small ponies grazing, my 15-hand mare Gene and Booter together with other thoroughbreds grazing in the field. The uniformed visitor cast a cold, experienced eye over the horses. He seemed only interested in my father's Booter, then he drove away.

Soon afterwards, my father's treasured mount was removed without our approval.

We heard later that he had been shipped out to Palestine, and we never saw him again.

During 1943 the Americans arrived and with no consultation whatsoever with my parents, took over the task of building roads and clearing the wood ready for the import of munitions. My mother was furious, she even tried to stop the diggers tearing up the land, unfortunately nobody took any notice of her protestations.

Nurses Wood was confiscated from my father as the military saw it as the ideal site for the storage of ammunition, providing perfect camouflage against detection from the air. It was subsequently linked up with a wide network of roadside and woodland dumping grounds.

The GI's of the United States Army Air Force arrived in droves. First, they laid a concrete roadway well inside its boundary of Nurses Wood. Then they unloaded great stacks of khaki-coloured bombs and mountains of brown ammunition crates at intervals along the roadway on widened bomb bays.

It was mainly Black American Servicemen who constructed the roads. On very hot days these poor labourers would queue up at Butlers Farm for a drink of water. Our own farm worker used to man the pump in order to supply their needs. Sometimes, they secretly left "oranges" to say thank you. Some of them would stand their open-mouthed looking at the barn roof.

They had never seen a Thatched roof before

Busky Laurie, recalls on the 6th Feb 1944 (her diary entry) she saw her very first black gentleman. She was out riding in the wood one day when she came across a parked

52

American lorry. All she could see was a pair of white eyes staring out of the cab window.

Once the roads were constructed, it was quickly followed by lorry loads of bombs and boxes of ammunition. Large 2000lb bombs stored everywhere and checked every hour by USAAF personnel on a jeep. Nurses wood packed to capacity with bombs mainly incendiaries. The dense wood provided excellent camouflage.

For the rest of the war, the wood was occupied territory, patrolled day and night by soldiers in jeeps. Cranes used to work mainly at night, loading the munitions onto trucks which were stacked high and driven away to the nearby airfields to replenish their stock. A great mountain of scrap metal bands, boxes and cans rose up near to our pond. We used to get wolf whistles from passing trucks and from thirsty Yanks, knocking at the back door asking for water to fill their billy cans.

Notes from Busky Laurie,

Residents at the farm often heard the crash of bombs in the distance. The Germans were guided to Bures by the Stoke by Nayland Church. This was confirmed by Lord Haw Haw (William Joyce) during one of his radio broadcasts.

A Security Pass was required to get to the farm from Bures, via the Guard Post at Bakers Hall corner.

Busky used to ride her pony around the farm and sometimes a young serviceman called Leonard Hartman, would take the opportunity to ride the animal.

He was always welcome at the farmhouse, as he brought oranges for the family.

Busky referred to him as Sergeant, but this is totally unfounded.

Extract from Notes written by Mary Laurie (aged 20, Busky sister)

I took the Cambridge entrance exam in Natural Sciences in February 1944, but to no one's surprise, least of all my own I failed.

My call-up papers for National Service had already arrived and the call-up had been deferred until the result of the exam was known. It turned out that my striving with science had not been completely in vain. My name was put on the Women's Technical Service Register.

I was called for an interview almost immediately at the Royal College of Surgeons and offered a job as an assistant lab technician, at the highly satisfactory salary of £300 a year.

It was the location of the job that intrigued me more, being located at the Pathological Laboratory of the 121st Static Hospital of the US Army Air force, a sprawling complex of Nissen Huts located along the London Road, just south of Braintree.

There beneath the Stars and Stripes, a small joint British and American medical research project was to be carried out alongside the routine work of the Hospital. It was to be operated by two unqualified British girls working in a corner of the Path Lab, courtesy of the American Medical Authority. Digs were found for me in a village a few miles from the hospital and I was taken there by pony cart. But when my mother realised the distance I would have to travel to work, she put her foot down.

No way was I going to live in that situation. She organised a pony and trap for the next day to return me home and another extremely complicated routine worked out.

Subsequently, I set out from home every day at 6.30 am, cycle the first two miles to leave my "bike undercover" at White Colne Station, then get a bus to Halstead, this being the half-way stop.

I then had to catch another bus to Braintree and pick up my second bicycle from the care of the "bus park superintendent". The last leg of the journey was only a couple of miles or so.

I dismounted at the entrance gate to the hospital and showed my pass to the sentry. With my colleague, medical student Wendy Watts, I worked under the direction of a British Colonel in the R.A.M.C, who was a Professor at the Royal College of Surgeons. The project involved carrying out chemical tests to determine the nitrogen intake and

output of a few selected patients with infective hepatitis, a form of jaundice that was causing a lot of concern at the time.

Most of our patients were American and a few from the British Armed Forces.

In charge was Captain Johnson, but with his tendency to mumble and the strangeness of the American accent, I found it rather difficult to understand him at first.

Twice a day I went to the hospital mess to weigh out special diets for the hepatitis patients. From the vantage point of the little side office where the diet scales were kept, I could observe the shuffling mealtime queue of hospital patients, known locally as the chow line.

Here I met the hospital dietician, Lieutenant Ruth Jamieson. Wendy and I had our midday meal in the officer's mess. To a young Britisher used to wartime food rationing, the food was a revelation. For the first time in my life I tasted sauerkraut, coleslaw, tuna fish and other foreign dishes such as sweet-and-sour pork, and there was the luxury of tinned grapefruit and pineapple. Good quality meat was flown over from the States.

Occasionally the American Red Cross visited the hospital, where we were treated to coffee and doughnuts.

Back at Butlers, high above the fields of East Anglia, German bombers passed nightly overhead on their way to attack targets in the Midlands. British and American bombers flew eastwards towards the coast, we listened to the rhythmic roar as they passed, trying to distinguish between "them" and "us".

When the Battle of Britain was in progress, I looked up one sunny autumn afternoon and witnessed a dog-fight between a German fighter and a Spitfire circling and dipping and swooping up again. They disappeared into the misty sky and disappeared.

I was not able to see the outcome.

One quiet Sunday morning, we were sitting in the garden, noticing lots of gliders being towed overhead. There were more and more of them, moving quietly eastwards towards the coast, along the Stour Valley, then hundreds and hundreds. We did not realise what was afoot, or how few of those fighting men would come through the tragedy of Arnhem. **Mary Laurie** *(reproduced just as it was written)*



This plaque stands today outside the location of the Hospital.

The inscription reads;

AMERICAN ARMY HOSPITAL

U.S. ARMY 12TH EVACUATION HOSPITAL

29th APRIL 1943 - 11th JULY 1943

U.S. ARMY 121st STATION HOSPITAL 30th JUNE
1943 - 11th JUNE 1945

Opened as a 750 bed, later becoming a 1354 bed Hospital.

Providing Medical service to the 35US 8th and 9th Air Force Units, following the D-Day invasion in 1944

It consisted largely of Nissen huts linked by sheltered walkways

To begin with, many of those treated were injured and sick U.S. airmen from the local airfields but following the invasion of Europe by the allies, specially equipped hospital trains loaded with injured soldiers began to arrive at Braintree Station.

The Hospital closed on the 11th June 1945.

Left: East Anglian Daily Times

December 13th 2000

Wednesday, December 13, 2000 Page 9

ANGLIAN Briefing

Much-travelled woman dies

A WOMAN who grew up on an Essex farm then sailed alone to work in South Africa before returning to settle in Suffolk has died.

Mary Scrimgeour, nee Laurie, was born in Frinton in 1924 and grew up on a farm in Bures. She was an accomplished pianist and organist and educated privately, before gaining a BSc in Household and Social Science from London University in 1949, followed by a post-graduate diploma in dietetics.

When war broke out she had worked at a hospital in Braintree and after completing her degrees she worked for three years at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. But in 1955 she set sail for South Africa, where she was to work in an alcoholics rehabilitation centre in Durban. It was there she met her late husband Colin and the two returned to England in 1959 to live in Suffolk, where Colin waged a long battle against his alcoholism.

For the last 20 years of her life Mrs Scrimgeour lived in Hadleigh, where she was a keen WI member and bridge player as well as the writer of several books.

Left:- The obituary of Mary Laurie

In 29/9/1954
Conveyance
between Smith &
Mrs Whitbread
Particulars of Sale from
H. J. Turner & Son of
Sudbury Estate Agents
2 double lined Nissen huts
with concrete floors
10 Nissen Shelters

October 29th 1954

Conveyance between Smith and Mrs
Whitebread.

Particulars of Sale taken from H.J Turner
& Sons, Sudbury.

2 Double Lined Nissen Huts with

Concrete Floor.

10 Nissen Shelters

Leonard Hartman, Service Record No 33800820

Busky often spoke about a Leonard Hartman, who often came to ride the horses on the farm. No doubt because Busky would have been sixteen with Leonard at twenty years of age and being very impressionable in his new USAAF uniform.

She often remarked “ I wonder what happened to my dear Leonard”

This is the result of my research into his career:-

108 12619

REGISTRATION CARD (Men born on or after July 1, 1924, and on or before December 31, 1924)
(Also for the registration of men as they reach the 18th anniversary of the date of their birth on or after January 1, 1943.)

SERIAL NUMBER W 108	1. NAME (Print) Leonard Hartman	ORDER NUMBER 12619
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 1508 Widener Place Phila Pa (City and county) (State, territory, or other) (County) (State)		
3. MAJINO ADDRESS Same		
4. TELEPHONE May 6923	5. AGE IN YEARS 18 yrs DATE OF BIRTH MARCH 26, 1925	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Chicago Illinois (City or county) (State or territory)
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Sylvia Hartman Mother same address		
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Benjamin Franklin Paint & Varnish Co. Langdon St. Phila		
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS		
10. SIGNATURE I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE. Leonard Hartman		

DSS Form 1 (Rev. 11-18-42) 419-51830-4 (OTHER)

Date of birth-

26th March 1925 in Illinois

Relocated-

In 1940 the family were in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Service Registration;

30th September 1943

(Age 18)

Marriage/Death - I was unable to verify this information with any certainty.

According to Busky he was at the farm during 1943, so he must have been shipped to the UK soon after joining up.

All the personnel at Bures at that time, were Black-American runaway and road-building Engineering Regiments. , so why was an 18 year old assigned to Bures ?

I could find no service record of him stationed at Bures with the USAAF, but he is later recorded as being posted to Glatton near to Peterborough.

This was the home of the 457th US Bombardment Squadron, flying B17 Flying



Fortress Bombers.
He later he appears
in a photograph
(top 3rd right) of a
B29 Super Fortress,
known as the "City
of Louisville",
aircraft registration
49-93935.

Leonard was now
listed as Sergeant
and Tail Gunner as

part of Flight Crew 703, possibly one of the most hazardous gun positions on any aircraft. Leonard had become a Sergeant only after 12 months from enlisting. However, there were No B29's operating in the UK during the WW2, they were all assigned to the Pacific, so his stay at Glatton was presumably very short. So Leonard must have been posted once again overseas.



The crew completed a total of 19 missions
and received multiple air medals.

One citation on the 18th Sept 1944 awards
him the "Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air
Medal"

In the summer of 1945, they were sent to
Muroc (now Edwards Air Force Base) in the
Mojave Desert, California where they
stayed until the war ended. Leonard
survived the war after carrying out 19 or

more hazardous missions and presumably returned home safe and well.

CHAPTER 12
BUTLERS FARM
WASHINGTON, HOYTON AND PADGET

During 2007, the current landowner Mrs Roberts, while walking her dog was intrigued by marks in the concrete loop road that was once inside Nurses Wood. They appeared



to have been made with a stick or something similar. Mrs Roberts duly contacted me and asked if I would like to call at the farm with the possibility of translating these marks into something meaningful. Were they just random lines made in wet concrete or something more interesting like lettering?

Later in the week, I met with Mrs Roberts at the site in question but on arrival, it seemed impossible to decipher the marks.

However, I was very intrigued, as

they definitely had the appearance of writing.

I tried various methods to highlight the etching, after trial and error, a bag of the cheapest flour magically brought them to life.

The text was confirmed by the USAAF in the USA, as being authentic.



The inscription in the concrete reads:-

**PAVED BY 3 PLATOON
CO "F"
1330 ENG RMT
Feb—Mar 45**

The 1330th Engineering Regiments primary task, was the construction and repair of runways and roads.

Then further along, I discovered yet more markings etched in the concrete. These were definitely names, presumably made by USAAF Black American workers.



- (1) H M Padget
- (2) 98 Hoyton
- (3) Horace Washington



Padget, 98 Hoyton and Horace: I spent many hours searching through USAAF staff records, where I eventually found two of them recorded in the US Army Enlistments records.

98 Hoyton or Hayton:- unable to trace any evidence of this name

Henry M Padget

Born in Virginia 1918 and died in 1955.

Enlisted 11th November 1942 in the State of New York.

Education: Two years at High School.

Occupation: Glass Works.

Horace J Washington

Born in Mississippi 1919 and died in 1986.

Buried Natchez National Cemetery, Mississippi.

Enlisted April 1944 in the State of Georgia.

Education: Two years at High School.

Occupation: Construction Worker.

Horace didn't enlist until April 1944, some nine months before the 1330th arrival.

I posted these names on several American War Forums during 2004—2006, in the quest of finding their living relatives.

During 2017, I also placed adverts in their home town newspapers, again looking for a response.

Unfortunately, I received no feedback to any of my searches.

I live in hope that someone may read this page in the USA, where Horace and Henry will be remembered once again.

Notes: Information supplied direct from the USAAF Archives.

US Army 1330th General Service Regiment:

This was a US Army Regiment (Black-American), based at Camp Clairborne, Louisiana, before moving to Camp Shanks, New York.

Departed New York 26th December 1944 arriving in the UK on the 7th January 1945.

The 1330th only spent three months in the UK, before being moved to France on the