

REMINDERS OF THE PART PLAYED BY BUSHY PARK IN WORLD WAR TWO

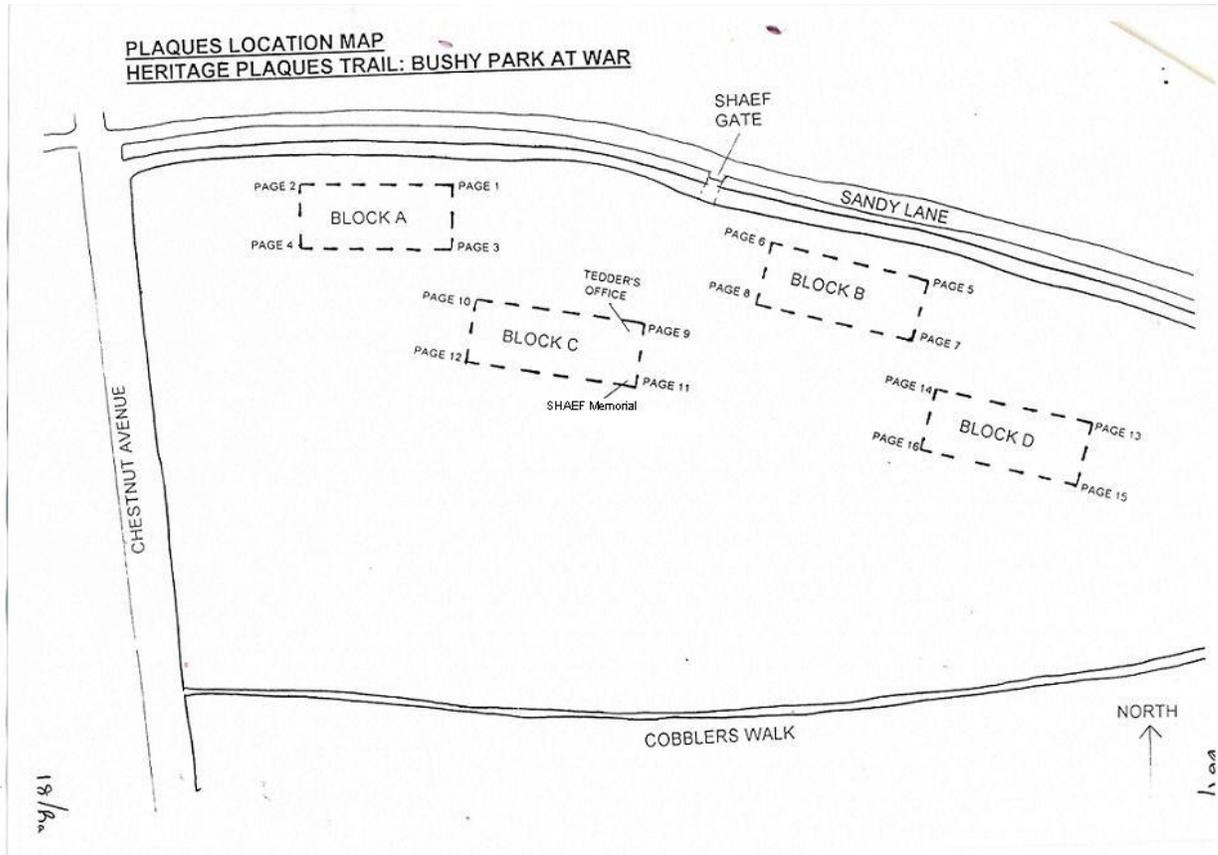
There are a number of **Memorials** and **Plaques** in Bushy Park reminding us of the part played by the Park in WW2. These form the basis of an audio trail “The Yanks Are Coming”. This trail is about 2.5 miles long starting and finishing at the disabled gate into the Pheasantry Garden. Details of this, and other audio trails, can be found on the Royal Parks website.

This document records the same memorials referred to in the audio trail “The Yanks are Coming” and has been written with two purposes in mind:

1. To act as guide to anyone wanting to see the memorials but who lacks the equipment or know-how to download the guides.
2. To bring together in one place a short guide to the WW2 memorials.

Before describing the various memorials it is perhaps worth putting into perspective what we are looking at. By the end of world war two Bushy Park played host to a large number of service personnel, mainly American. In the North Eastern part of the Park (roughly delineated by Chestnut Avenue to the East, Sandy Lane to the North and Cobblers walk to the South) there was a large military camp and headquarters. This was housed in numerous permanent and temporary buildings and under canvas. All physical evidence of what was here has now been demolished. In addition, to house some 750 personnel, two rows of huts were built on each side of Chestnut Avenue, under the trees, between Teddington Gate and the Chestnut Avenue junction to the Pheasantry car park. Officers lived outside the camp, often billeted with local families. In the Park’s North Western corner Upper Lodge, which until the war housed the King’s Canadian School, was requisitioned to house personnel from the US 8th Air Force Service Command. At its peak some 4000 personnel were working, although not necessarily living, in the Park. After the war the buildings in the North East corner continued to be used for various purposes including the co-ordination of the Berlin Airlift in 1948 and then as an American School. The huts either side of Chestnut Avenue were taken over by squatters. The camp was finally demolished in 1963.

The following pages describe the various memorials. Their locations are shown on the plan below.



Heritage Plaques

The corners of four of the main large blocks of buildings in the North East corner of the park have been marked by sixteen “heritage plaques”. During 1942 the Ministry of Works started building four large rectangular blocks to the east of the northern end of Chestnut Avenue, bordering Sandy Lane. These buildings were known simply as blocks A, B, C and D. They were intended to house London firms seeking relief from the blitz. When the U.S. 8th Airforce arrived in Britain in 1942 the buildings were requisitioned for them and became their headquarters with the codename Widewing, later known officially as Camp Griffiss.

These plaques were unveiled on 6 June 1994 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings. There are sixteen at ground level, shaped like open books and numbered Page1, Page 2 etc. They mark the four corners of the four main administrative blocks. Most of the plaques are now covered by grass but pages one and two can still easily be found on the edge of the path that runs parallel to Sandy Lane. Although referred to as “blocks” (about the size of a football pitch) they were in fact groups of buildings made out of concrete blocks on a concrete base either side of a passageway.

The picture below is a typical example of a plaque.



A Block

Pages 1 – 4 Mark the N.E., N.W. S.W. and S.E. corners of A block. Block A was the first to be completed and became the headquarters of the U.S. 8th Air Force under General Spatz when he arrived in June 1942. Page two is about 190 paces from Chestnut Avenue to the right of the path. Page 1 is about 150 paces further, to the left of the path beneath a tree.

B Block

Pages 5 - 8 Mark the N.E., N.W. S.W. and S.E. corners of B block. B block was completed soon after A block and initially became the headquarters of the 8th Air Force Service Command., dealing with maintenance, supply and ancillary services. Service Command personnel were housed in the former Kings Canadian School at Upper Lodge in the North West corner of the park where upgraded facilities housed 1000 men.

C Block

Pages 9 – 13 Mark the N.E., N.W. S.W. and S.E. corners of C block. SHAEF moved into Camp Griffiss in January 1944 and Page 9 marks the corner of the office of the Deputy Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force, Air Marshall Tedder. Page 11 marks the corner of the office of the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower. It is from this office that D-Day was planned. The western end of C block, between pages 10 and 12, housed the officers' mess fitted out by Bentalls of Kingston.

D Block

Pages 14 – 18 Mark the N.E., N.W. S.W. and S.E. corners of D block. This was the last of the four blocks to be completed being ready for occupation on 13 March 1943.

SHAEF Monument

Unveiled at the same time as the Heritage Plaques to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings which were partly planned from this site. The memorial is bronze on Portland stone and is in the form of a five pointed star with the SHAEF emblem in the middle. The inscription reads:

SHAEF

On this spot stood the office of
General Dwight D Eisenhower
Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force.

Here for the three vital months leading up to the
D-Day landings on the 6th June 1944 Eisenhower and his
staff planned the invasion of Europe.

The Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
moved to Bushy Park from Grosvenor Square on
Sunday 5th March 1944. Eisenhower moved to his
advance headquarters at Southwich House
Portsmouth on 2nd June 1944.



USAAF Memorial

Unveiled on 20th August 1945 by Air Chief Marshall Sir Christopher L Courtney to commemorate the occupation of Wide Wing Camp Bushy Park by the United States 8th Air Force as their headquarters during the second world war. The memorial is a round bronze tablet set in a raised Portland stone base in a five star surround of stone, brick and tiles. The inscription reads:

This tablet marks the site of the European Headquarters of
The United States Army Air Force July 1942 – December
1944, and is dedicated by the Royal Air Force to their
comrades in arms.
It is through fraternity that liberty is saved. Victor Hugo.



D. Berlin Airlift Plaque

Unveiled on 14 May 1999 by HRH the Prince of Wales to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the lifting of the blockade of air, sea and road links to East Germany. The memorial is a bronze plaque with cut letters. The plaque is attached to one side of the raised stone base of the USAAF memorial. The inscription reads:

This plaque to commemorate
the 50th anniversary of the ending
of the Berlin Airlift
on 12th May 1949
was unveiled by
HRH the Prince of Wales
On 14th May 1999



SHAEF Gate

Unveiled in June 1994 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of D-Day in the name of SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force). The gate is in the perimeter wall of the park on Sandy Lane. It is an iron gate and stone wall in keeping with other park gates and walls. This new gate marks the position of the original much larger main entrance to the camp. The inscription in the stone lintel reads:

SHAEF Gate

