

Our speakers have a wealth of experience gained from both their previous training and mentoring roles in business and current speaking engagements. Like many organisations we have adapted our talks to be delivered via the Zoom platform, whilst not as intimate as a face to face talk, it does allow something approaching normal club activities to continue.

We are currently offering four talks:

"Destination Utah" (The USAAF in a Typical English Village)

Featuring Upottery Airfield in Devon, this talk illustrates the impact of around 1500 American servicemen taking up residence in a quiet English village. The talk looks at the impact on the local population, the role of the airfield in the conflict and the missions undertaken. The airfield gained international recognition as being the departure point of Easy Company in Steven Spielberg's "Band of Brothers"

"Hunting the Hunter" (The Story of the only US Navy Airbase in Europe)

Centred on RAF Dunkeswell, this talk features the Battle of the Atlantic, the only battle that continued throughout the six years of conflict. The effect of Germany's submarines on Allied shipping required immediate defensive action and required the cooperation between RAF's Coastal Command and the USAAF and then the US Navy. Life on the base was documented by an American magazine providing a wealth of visual material which coupled with the personal anecdotes of people who were there provides a fascinating insight to the life of the submarine hunters. One of those hunting was Joe Kennedy, brother of JFK, we feature President Kennedy, only days before his death reminiscing about his brother's time in the navy.

"The Battle of Britain Outside of London" (RAF Exeter's role in the conflict)

Much has been written about the Battle, most of which is centred around London, which to point is understandable, however, there was action in other parts of the country. We look at the involvement in the Exeter based squadrons and their role in proceedings, the tragedy of friendly fire incidents, the memoirs of TSR2 test pilot Roland Beamont and learn of the luck of the Australian pilot who scored the first aerial "kill" for his country.

"'Jumping' Joe Byerle" (The only US Serviceman to fight with both the American and Soviet Armies)

Growing up during the great depression Joe Byerle (pronounced buy early) might have been a renown international athlete had the war not have intervened. He joined the famous 101st Airborne and flew from Exeter to France on D-Day. He'd been there before on a secret mission, making him the first US paratrooper to set foot in occupied Europe. Unfortunately, his campaign didn't last long before he was captured by the Germans. That's when the story really starts, with escapes from prison camps, interrogation by the Gestapo and eventually fighting with a Russian tank group. Joe's story is uplifting and shows what a human being is capable of with the will and determination to survive.

We are happy to host the meeting or are equally happy if you would prefer to do that yourselves. As we do not incur any travelling expenses, we are offering our talks at the reduced rate of £60 against our normal rate of £75.

Please visit our website <https://www.southwestairfields.co.uk> for more information about the trust.

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