

BBC Essex report on the 50th reunion event in Silver End, 2 May 1992 ([SA 1/888/1](#))

[Crowds cheer and a band plays the US National Anthem]

Presenter: More than a hundred people waving Union Jacks have gathered outside the hotel in Silver End to greet the Americans. The veterans, from the 363rd Fighter Group stationed at Rivenhall Air Field during the war, were overwhelmed by the reception.

Veteran: We don't have enough words in the English language we use over in America to tell you how we feel about your welcome. It's wonderful, and we sure appreciate it.

Presenter: But it was a special day for the villagers as well, who had been waiting in anticipation for the anniversary celebrations.

Villagers: I'm in the same age group as these chaps and I served during the last war, so I know what it must feel, their emotions, coming back to where they served during the war... Always had lots of chocolate, and lots of chewing gum, and always made a terrific fuss of us, you know... Parties and that, nylons for the older girls... Yeah, it was alright.

Presenters: The Americans were led to the village church, where a special fete and tea party had been laid on. Many of the visitors were delighted to see that amongst the scones and currant buns there were hot dogs and popcorn to make them feel at home. The afternoon was spent chatting amongst friends, catching up on the past.

Veteran: There was a little pub down here that we remembered. We haven't seen it yet, but they say it's still there.

Presenter: Did you used to go there often?

Veteran: Well we couldn't go too often, but we'd go when we could. We had a good time, here... Yeah, I mean to come into the pub to play the darts and watch the elderly men playing cribbage, you know, that used to be their pastime at that time.