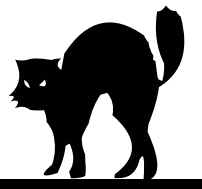




# Peconic Bay SHOPPER

*preserving your North Fork history*

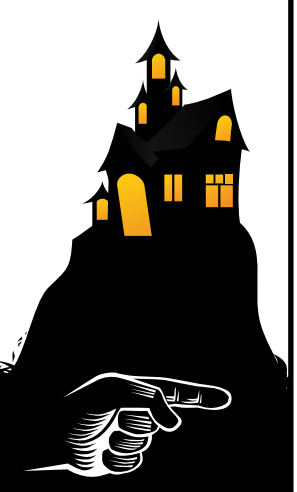


**FREE**

OCTOBER 2019



## Southold's AWS Volunteers



calendar of events & centerfold map tourist guide



## Peconic Bay SHOPPER

...preserving North Fork History

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Hartranft house on the northeast corner of Main Road and Youngs Avenue, Southold, seen behind a small replica of the Barnabas Horton House that was built for the 1940 Tercentennial Celebration parade in Southold. (Currently the location of a public park with a gazebo and benches. Photo above was the cover of our September 2019 issue.

## On The Cover—

Volunteer observers for the U.S. Army Airforce Aircraft Warning Service posted in the tower of the Southold High School on Oaklawn Avenue, circa 1942.

Photo courtesy of Southold native Edna Terry.

In this issue we honor those that volunteered on the North Fork.

## Reader Feedback

You may or may not know that the replica Barnabas Horton House was built by Charles F. Kramer, my grandfather, for the celebration. At some point after that it was in the back yard of his home behind the drug store, where it remained for 10 or 15 years until it was crushed by a tree limb in a hurricane. I also recall Joe Hartranft Jr. telling of his organizing and conducting the Air Show you mentioned.

— John Kramer

We thank John for taking the time to share his memories and help us preserve local history.

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# Southhold's AWS Volunteers



*Two of Southhold's observation posts were the Southhold High School's cupola and the Horton Point Light House.*

At these posts the volunteers were trained specifically to identify all aircraft sighted, be it U.S., British, German, Japanese or Italian. When a plane did fly over, a report was immediately filled out to record direction, number of engines, approximate altitude and finally the type of plane. The observer would then phone the operator with the key words "ARMY FLASH" for a quick connect to the Army Tracking Station to relay the information.

*All photos and scans courtesy of Edna Terry, who's father Howard Terry was a volunteer observer. Howard's memorabilia helps preserve this part of our local history.*

*Thank you Edna for sharing!*



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High above the Southold High School, circa 1942. This shot allows for a panoramic view of the bay and sky.  
— also a very undeveloped Southold and a distant Paradise Point.

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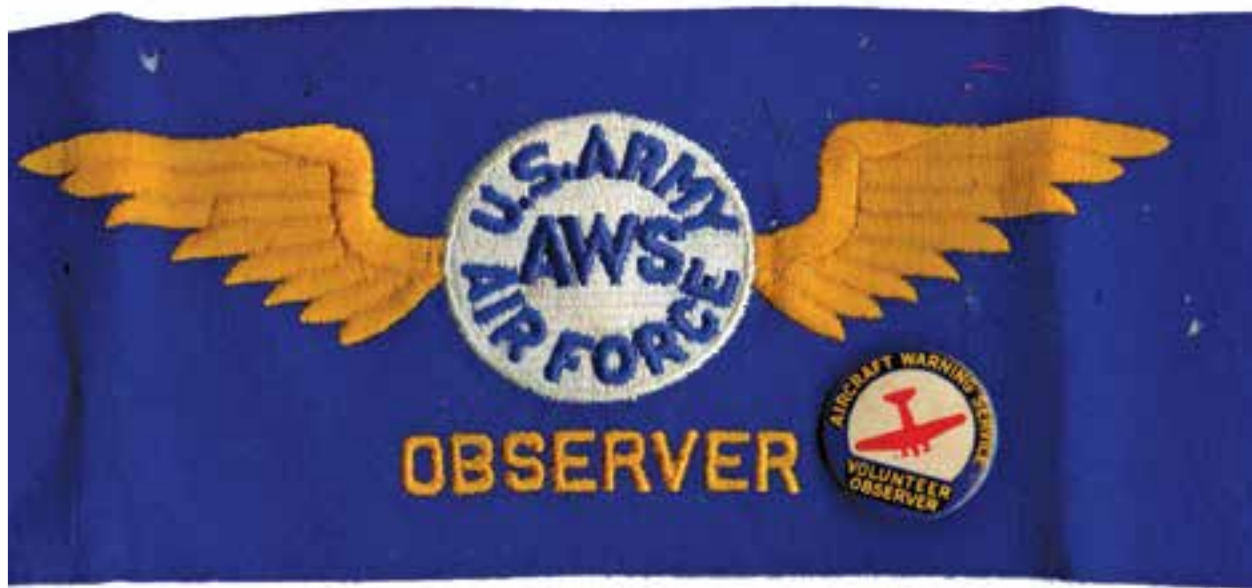
During WWII, the east and west coasts of the United States were protected by civilian volunteer aircraft spotters, a component of the Aircraft Warning Service (AWS) that was established in May 1941 in response to the development of heavy bomber aircraft capable of flying over 1,000 miles.

Since it wasn't practical to use military personnel as ground observers, the logical solution was to call on civilians to watch the skies. Newspaper ads, radio programs, and other means were used to recruit the tens of thousands of volunteers needed to join the Ground Observer Corps and man the observation posts. From all walks of life, all ages, all professions, the volunteers were united in a common goal—to protect the United States.

While the ground observers were the eyes of the AWS, the nerve center was the Aircraft Warning Corps. The AWC was made up of information and filter centers based in secret locations. These centers, also manned by volunteers, received reports from the observation posts and plotted and tracked aircraft aerial activity. Aircraft spotters learned to identify all types of aircraft through intensive training classes and training aids such as aircraft spotter cards, guides, and silhouette models. Buttons and arm-bands identified ground observers, and special pins and medals were awarded to those with the highest number of volunteer hours. When the focus of the war moved from a defensive position at home to an offensive position in Europe and Asia, the risk of attack on the home front was reduced. In May 1944 the War Department ordered the inactivation of the Ground Observer Corps and the Aircraft Warning Corps.<sup>1</sup>

Volunteer Aircraft Observers of the Aircraft Warning Service carried identification cards and wore the arm bands and pins as seen above. Note the lapel pin in this issue's cover photo.

<sup>1</sup> Air Mobility Command Museum, Dover, DE.



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Left:  
This circa 1942 picture shows volunteers peering down from the floor of the Southold High School cupola.

Above:  
The view looking up.

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Southold High School cupola south west window, with table full of important paraphernalia.



The unheated cupola was warmed with a space heater.

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Waypoint Salad topped with a balsamic vinaigrette dressing

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