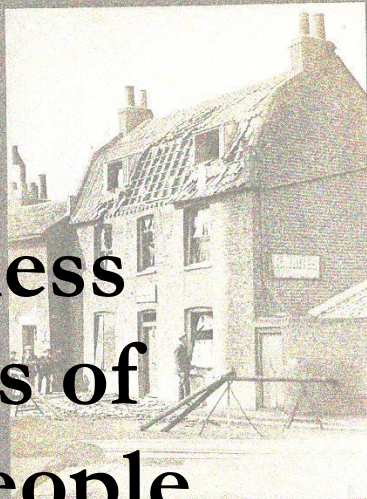
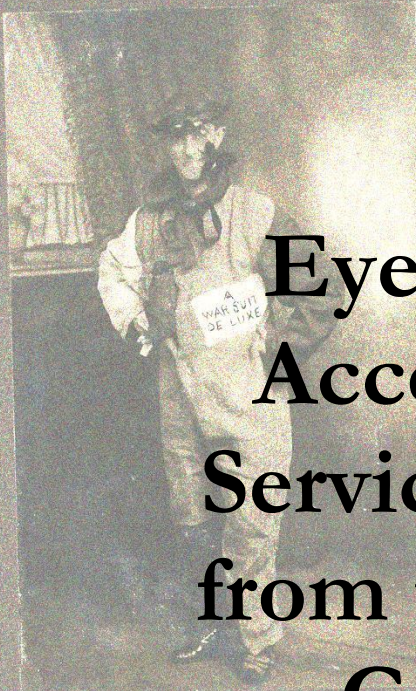


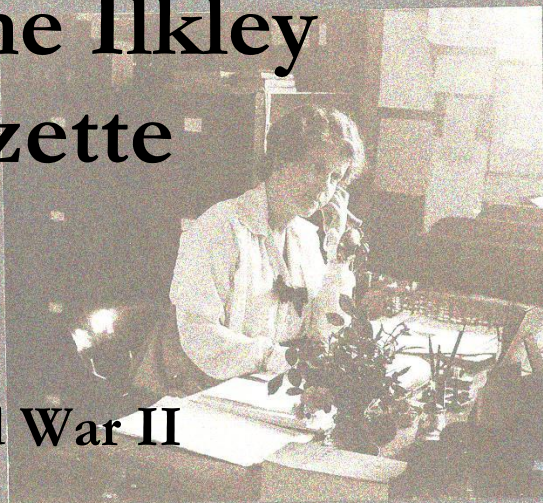
Eyewitness Accounts of Service People from the Ilkley Gazette



After the Explosion - Sep 20th 1917

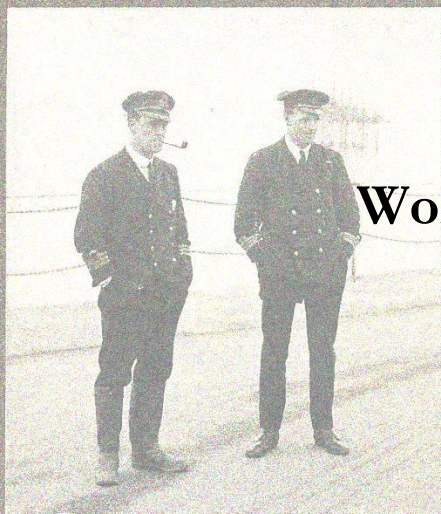


Chief Petty Officer Elite in Front of the



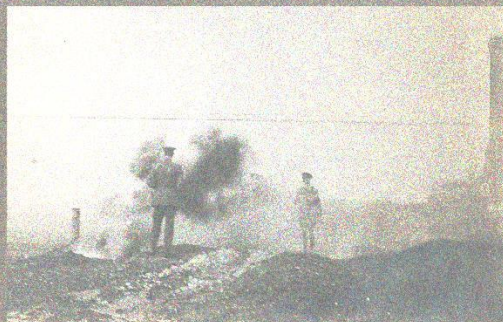
Miss Rowe - Secretary

World War II



At Dover

Wing-Commander Brock RN Eng. Lt-Commander Curre RN
[Killed at Zeebrugge 22 4/18]



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FOREWORD

By 1914 the Ilkley Gazette had been in print for over 60 years – commencing in May 1861, although archival records only date from January 1868. The paper in peacetime not only covered local news but aspects of national and international news.

During the First World War a few more photographs began to appear and there were accounts of the achievements of the living and dead on the battlefields of Europe, and the Middle East; at sea globally; and increasingly the activities of Ilkley personnel in the Royal Flying Corps (later the RAF).

Adverts were rather sparse, but there were regular messages from government sources. Sport and items of interest to women and children were included along with increasing acknowledgement of women's role in the War. The stories of refugees from war-torn Belgium in Ilkley were covered regularly.

Ilkley even in Wartime was seen as a place to holiday, convalesce, walk the Moors, to take the waters and breathe in unpolluted air. People in the pre-radio era relied on the local papers for a great deal of varied information; and the picture houses also played their part.

I wish to thank Newsquest (Yorkshire and North East) Ltd., various editors and all the staff at the offices of the Ilkley Gazette for their support over the three years of my archival research from the original papers. To Craven Stationery very many thanks for all their hard work on my behalf and Jonathan White, Addingham for proof reading the draft copies. I also wish to thank Tim Howson from Ben Rhydding who has in a very effective and painstaking way word processed all my work on this lengthy project about Ilkley in Wartime. Thanks are also

due to Ilkley and Skipton public libraries (for utilising past copies of the Craven Herald).

Richard Thackrah has been a resident of Ilkley for two spells over the last six decades. He gained his degrees in History, Geography and Education and has taught in primary, secondary and adult education. He has written textbooks reference books and general interest books, including a “Guide to Ilkley” and “Victorian Yorkshire” both published by the “Dalesman” and articles and short pieces for the “Ilkley Gazette”.

Tim Howson worked in the Information Technology sector for a prolonged spell after a Masters in Computing from Bradford University. Since then he has gained a Masters in Conservation and Land Management, from Bangor University, and works part-time in moorland restoration but still keeps up to date with technology and put together the database these booklets have been based on. He is currently a committee member and the webmaster for the Wharfedale Naturalists’ Society.

Richard Thackrah (www.ainola.co.uk)

Ackroyd, C.B.

Age:
40

Rank:
Gunner

Regiment:
British Land Army

Pre-war Occupations:
Gardener for Sir Henry Price pre-War.

Experience:
IG 12/1/45

Been with British Land Army since D Day 1. Brings home tribute from Belgian people grateful for liberation. "Thank you. You give with your heart sweets for the children, you give us peace & freedom with your blood."

Ambler, D. L.

Rank:

Major

War Regions:

Burma

Experience:

IG 2/6/44

In Burma retreat, part of rearguard blowing up river bridges and then "everyman for himself". He came through safely after tramping over 600 miles in shocking conditions.

Austin, Kenneth C.

Age:
25

Rank:
L/Bdr

Regiment:
Royal Devonshire Yeomanry

Experience:
IG 28/12/45.

Guard of honour formed by Royal Devonshire Yeomanry at a big ceremonial parade in Ipoh in Malaysia, on disbandment of the Malaysian resistance force. Chinese unit carried all manner of things and arrived on the ground by their own peculiar goose step. The British Liaison Officers who had lived and fought with them in hideouts.

The Malaysian people's Anti Japanese Army was a resistance force directed by British Officers which had liquidated thousands of Japanese in occupation. Price of \$250,000 put on the head of the guerrilla Commanding Officer. High ranking British officers inspected the troops. Devonshire Gunners 'presented' arms in tribute. Guns of RA roared a salute & aircraft swooped overhead dipping wings in a traditional salute.

Barnes, E.

Rank:

Sgt

Regiment:

Army Fire Service

War Regions:

Burma

Experience:

IG 15/6/45.

Army Fire Service Unit mourning Rangoons fire brigade. A fire in a crowded area put out by 16 up-to-date engines and an old Japanese tender. 40 Burmese civilian firemen were working with British fire fighters.

Bellerby, Ida (Miss)

War Regions:

Middle East

Experience:

IG 26/1/45.

Ilkley pianist travelling with ENSA in Iraq. In concert party in Middle East 1943. Formerly at an ENSA party in N. Ireland.

Bennett, B.G.

Rank:

Sgt

Regiment:

RAF

Experience:

IG 3/9/43.

Member of crew Stirling bomber caught fire over Berlin in late August 1943. Attacked by a Messerschmidt which the rear gunner then shot down. Fuselage fire put out with extinguishers. Sgt Bennet in serious condition in UK hospital.

Bennett, John S.

Age:

21

Rank:

Sgt

Regiment:

RAF

War Regions:

W. Africa

Cause of Death:

Missing over enemy territory

Experience:

IG Late Sept / Oct 1943.

Joined Air Force May 1939, missing on his 10th air ops, but now reported OK. Mid gunner in air crew. He spent 18 months in West Africa after training in England.

Bishop, C.de J.

Rank:

Mr

Pre-war Occupations:

Chief Printer of "Empress of Britain" since 1931 maiden voyage.

Experience:

IG 27/12/40 & 1/11/40.

Former Hon Sec Ilkley Chamber Trade. "Empress of Britain" survivor.

Ship bombed and set on fire late October 70 miles off Ireland. Bishop among last 14 to leave vessel and he hung in water by a rope from the ships side for 30 minutes before being picked up. 600 survivors out of 643.

Bravery of Townshend, a Yorkshireman who had been knocked unconscious, who was the ship's electrician. Along with another man, Arthur, climbed out of gun port door (level with the water) & climbed up the ship's side by a rope ladder to release life boat. Helped save the kitchen staff and was one of the last 14 to leave the deck. Bishop in boat for 6 hours & picked up by a destroyer.

"Townshend deserved a VC for what he did."

Bland, Kenneth

Age:

21

Rank:

Driver

Regiment:

RASC

Experience:

IG 18/5/45.

Met in Germany a fellow worker Joe Smith (at Ellis Beanlands)
as he passed by a camp in Germany.

Booth, G.K.

Rank:

Capt

Regiment:

Royal Artillery

War Regions:

Palestine

Experience:

IG 5/5/44

Served 2 years in 8th army in the desert & later with the Claims Committee Palestine. He went to Special Training Centre - for Instructors at Mountain Warfare Training Centre in the Levant to learn how to fight two enemies: the mountains and the Alpine Regiments of the enemy.

A day's operational skiing = to 40 / 60 miles on flat - trained for 6 day marches over 100 miles & sleeping in the snow. Step test 20" high form & down 150 times in 5 minutes. Climb 3000ft snow in 2 hours & down in 20 minutes. Climb rocks without use of ropes & gear. Picked routes to navigate with compass and good at cooking and bivouacking in the snow.

Brayshaw, Frank

Age:

35

Rank:

Gunner

Regiment:

Royal Artillery

Experience:

IG 16/3/45.

Joined up in 1941 and to the ME with 51st Highland Division.
Afterwards to hospital & medically downgraded to base duties.

Location Clerk in ME Artillery Depot HQ. Kept a roll of all RA men that came through the base - over 100,000. He could check any details in 14 seconds including the need for leave!

Bullus, D (Mrs)

War Regions:

Netherlands, France, Belgium

Experience:

IG 23/3/45

Wife of Mr T.E. Bullus of Meanwood, Leeds. Her sister Mrs S Rayner was one of the first two British women to set foot on Walcheren Island in the Netherlands and lived and worked for a time in Ilkley. With Mrs S.K. Tyler of Scarborough drove canteen into Holland. Driving for YMCA for 3 years and in Normandy soon after D Day. Served in France, Belgium, Holland and also South Beveland Island. A Sergeant in the commandos wrote that she "Never lacks energy and is always helpful." Early in the war had served in blitzed areas in Kent and in London before joining the YMCA.

Burdock, N.F.

Rank:

L/Cpl

Regiment:

Royal Artillery

War Regions:

Normandy

Experience:

IG 21/7/44.

Landed in Normandy after a calm sea crossing but roads were mined - decent dry landing from the barges. Living for 2 days on 48 hour packs (biscuits, sweets, choc & dehydrated porridge and meat). Thousands of boats off Normandy beaches in all three directions. Villages suffered from shell fire.

Cawood, A.

Rank:

Driver

Regiment:

ASC

Pre-war Occupations:

Crompton Parkinson IGS, Ilkley.

War Regions:

Singapore

Experience:

IG 31/5/40 & 26/10/45

In a letter home:

"Wounded in leg - when enemy managed to get behind his party, which was engaged in hand to hand fighting in a successful attempt to break through to Dunkirk. Cawood says 37 German prisoners were taken."

Later captured at Singapore - engaged by Japanese in break up of motor cars - then on railway construction laying sleepers & building embankments. Quite well treated. Had met Ilkley men Douthwaite and West in prison who both subsequently died, the former in Singapore and the latter in Thailand. Cawood in French Indo China when the Japanese surrendered but not surprised as he received the news by a secret wireless set!

Clapham, Fred

Age:

24

Rank:

RSM

Pre-war Occupations:

Finance department at Ilkley Town Hall.

War Regions:

India, Persia, Burma

Experience:

IG 12/1/45.

3 years 4 months overseas (18 months in Persia and remaining time in India).

Arrived home from Burma and no one to meet them! After they docked they were told that when they reached Yorkshire army transport was for British Land Army men. They were angry as they believed the local "Get you home" service manned by local Defence Volunteer Drivers was for ALL returning service personnel.

Coan, Jack

Rank:

Ldg Seaman

Regiment:

RN

Experience:

IG 22/10/43.

He had been on a submarine HMS 'Osiris' which Ilkley had adopted for an afternoon visit. Ldg Seaman Coan's elder brother Driver Dennis Coan served with the Army Service Corps in 8th army.

Cook, Ernest

Rank:

Reverend

Experience:

IG 14/11/41.

He worked for nine years at St. George the Martyr as a Rector (in Southwark Diocese). For 91 days and nights on end had air raids or planes overhead. Own rectory near miss with bomb on other side of the road - almost a "wrecktory" rather than a rectory!!

They occupied 1 room on the ground floor and then lived in the basement. Wife slightly hurt by first bomb and 2 buses badly hit. He helped the head warden of Queen's Buildings (one room flats) - strengthened basements where people went in raids. Many families homeless & many deaths in 1 block of buildings. Crypt in his church strengthened for use as an air raid shelter. 200 / 250 people crowded in. Bunks for 150.

Week day services in the crypt & family prayers at night. Canteen - people got suppers, ran a library, had LCC (London County Council) evening classes 3 nights a week, occasional cinema & entertainment parties. Out of 200 families associated with the church only 25 live there now. 10,000 people lived in the parish a 1/4 of a mile square. Most people in 6 story tenement buildings & 60 to 70% very poor (e.g. Casual dock labourers & their wives many of whom were office cleaners).

Condemned buildings. One outside lavatory for 6 families & 1 outside tap. Fighting dirt all the time. His own baby a year old slept in the back but covered in black oily flakes in the atmosphere. Closely associated with the church, featured in Dickens' "Little Dorrit", was where Dorrit wandered when locked out of Marshalsea prison where father was imprisoned for debt. During war became vicar for Ilkley Parish Church from 1941 and remained in post until 1966.

Cooper, Douglas J.A.

Age:

19

Rank:

Cadet

Pre-war Occupations:

With father as a pupil civil engineer.

War Regions:

India

Experience:

IG 1/6/45.

2nd Lt in 1st Gurkha Rifles - Indian army. Sent out to Indian Military HQ 6 months ago. Guard of honour at VE day parade in New Dehli.

Crabtree, Margaret (Miss)

Experience:

IG 16/8/40.

After 5 years mission work in Hankow China, including 2 years under Japanese occupation, home on furlough for 1 year from Shanghai via Vancouver, Quebec to Liverpool in 3 weeks & 5 days.

Stationed at Chinese Girls' High School run by Methodist Missionary Society in Hankow. Japanese took over 2 days after Chinese left. School closed for 3 weeks & school numbers varied 100 to 300. Not worried re her own safety under the Japanese but not pleasant to be occupied.

Foreigners in Hankow freer than Chinese. Cities of Hankow, Hanyung and Wuchang closely joined. 1 million population in total. Hankow almost back to normal, but Wuchang, centre of Universities, almost derelict. Left Hankow by Japanese boat down Yangtze river in 5 days. Home for a year and speaking in various parts of the country on deputation work.

Crawford, J.H.

Rank:

Lt Cmdr

Regiment:

RN

Experience:

IG 7/1/44.

MiD on 21/3/41 for gallant and distinguished service while in destroyer 'Inglefield'. In action against "Scharnhorst" as gunnery officer on HMS Duke of York.

At dawn 1/1/44 Duke of York with cruiser "Jamaica" astern returned to harbour, 2 battle ensigns - 1 torn - flying proudly - battlescarred with mainmast and foremast damaged where splinters hit them - crew jubilant. Action "Messing" with pork chops to eat.

At visibility of 8,000 yards we knew if "Scharnhorst" maintained course would engage her at 5pm. At 4:45pm Belfast fired starshells in direction of enemy - then spotted her huge silver grey shape in white light of the starshells at 12,000 yards. I ordered shooting & crash as our 14 inch gun broadside thundered out - greenish glow along the waterline where hit. Turned away at speed making smoke - another 8 rounds fired through smoke. Enemy's gun flashes - great bursts orange coloured flame. At 6:20pm she slowed to 7 knots. This allowed destroyers to close in. "Scharnhorst's" gunnery good & shell splinters in our masts. Her gun flashes & tracer fire from close range weapons showed us where she was.

She appeared a converging and diverging mass of gunfire and tracer fire. Opened fire at 10,000 yards broadside went off - great sheet flame and terrific explosion quarter deck.

More broadsides went home - "Scharnhorst" on fire and like a blazing warehouse end to end. Fire checked at 7:39pm. All around here were cruisers / destroyers - "Scharnhorst" was just one flaming wreck low in the water. German gunnery good, but ours was better. Caught her 4 times in first phase & our secondary armourment firing all the time.

Only 36 of the crew of the "Scharnhorst" survived out of a crew of nearly 2,000.

Crockatt, Allan

Rank:

Sub Lt.

Regiment:

RNVR

Experience:

IG 15/12/44.

Gunnery Officer HMS "Peacock" asleep on escort duty with Russian convoy. Helped to sink two submarines. Lost the sloop "Kite" in a submarine counter attack.

Large amounts of oil and dead fish on surface of the sea would confirm the end of a U boat & sometimes wreckage as well. Often log dodging to avoid dock cargo from some long sunk ship.

Another sunken sub produced much wreckage, items of clothing and human remains. Lowered our boat to collect wreckage. Sloop "Kite" sunk and we lowered boats and nets to pick up survivors. Then we heard another U boat sunk and survivors were marked with smoke. A further U boat was almost certainly sunk by destroyer "Keppel" and a British plane.

A shadowing enemy aircraft was shot down by one of the carriers planes.

Crook, Arthur E.

Rank:

Lt

Regiment:

Anti-tank Regiment RA

Pre-war Occupations:

Sandoz Chemical Co. Ltd.

War Regions:

India

Experience:

IG 6/4/44.

Recruited Nov 39 Regt RA at Borden Hampshire. To India March 1942 - took his commission there. February 12 in Mayu Range, the Japanese forces surrounded & later captured Div HQ - near Nayakgedauk Pass by Kalayangur River (not far from Maungdaw - Buithidaung Road) and made a stand here.

A one mile square area defended in hills with trenches. Japanese took pass & so supplied by parachute, took three weeks to do four and a half miles and recapture pass. Message from Army Commander Mountbatten to hold fast, "relief in 24 hours", but took two weeks. Well supplied by air.

900 Japanese dead in 1 square mile & then 30 Japanese infiltrated (led by an Indian) & 28 killed - buried with dead mules. Final attack with 1,000 men (300 dead and 400 wounded). Captured Japanese were thin, starving and unshaven. Captured

Japanese plans showed it was beginning of invasion of India. Pass eventually opened. All in good spirits but a little tired.

Japanese shouted at us to surrender & give us a free pardon - rubbish! Hit ammunition dumps just before dark. Thrilling fight and battles with Japanese - a good jungle fighter but not unbeatable - cunning but used to his little tricks, Never thought we should make a stand, but that we would try to get out and our forward troops would be blocked. However, all stood fast & now all intact and pushing forward. Then great day when Pass opened & relief forces came over - some round the back and caught the Japanese trying to get away.

"I have a contented feeling that I have done my duty as expected of me though I take no credit for that."

Crosbie, K.C.

Experience:

IG 28/7/44

Served tea and refreshments for two weeks in bombed out London. For 9 days worked and slept in clothes and no proper bed for 2 weeks.

Dean, Winifred (Miss)

Experience:

IG 22/11/40

Assistant in public library in Coventry for 7 years, survived bombardment and arrived in Ilkley suffering from exhaustion and shock on 15/11/40. In Coventry took shelter in lodgings house but windows & doors blew in & then they took refuge in a public shelter. The public library was severely damaged in the bombardment.

Denby, K.M.C.

Rank:

Lt

Regiment:

RNVR

Experience:

Unknown IG reference.

A fine linguist - especially Italian. Travelled widely throughout Europe, N. Africa, Canada & USA. Lives in Burley and is the only son Mr and Mrs R. C. Denby, Crimpledene, Margerison Road, Ben Rhydding.

Italian fleet surrender:

On board "Caio Duilio" as steamed to Malta with other battleships. In party boarding ships prior armistice. Part of the Italian navy: 2 battleships, 2 cruisers and 1 destroyer appeared on the horizon. Acted as an interpreter for Admiral De Zara regarding where to anchor ships and technical instructions regarding disarmament.

Admiral said no facist in navy and Germany so strong that Italy were forced into war. The next day escorted by the "Valiant" and the "Warspite". The "Vittorio Veneto", several destroyers and 5 cruisers were sent to Malta.

Dibb, William

Rank:

Driver

Regiment:

RASC

Pre-war Occupations:

Butcher with Mr. Frank Midgley, Burley.

Experience:

IG 14/6/40.

Dunkirk:

Called up Oct 39 militiaman & to France with the RASC in Jan 1940. Gruelling time during retreat being bombed & machine gunned continually on way to the coast. Left Dunkirk 29/5/40 (same day as Duell), but Dibb crossed in a fishing boat with 8 Frenchmen - attacked 3 times on the way over & 17 hours to cross the Channel - 2 destroyers and a hospital ship were hit.

Digby, P.J.

Rank:

Driver

Regiment:

RASC

Experience:

IG 28/9/45.

His C.O. says: "For us peace and war make little difference. Supplies are as important as ever, so road maintenance must be on a big scale to continue to carry vast volume of traffic as at present. Ever since fighting ceased men put back into jobs 100%. Among many tasks to which in addition to road maintenance 53 Coy is giving valuable assistance is that of keeping up supplies of materials for repair of dykes in Holland.

Dobson, Miss Doreen

Rank:

Sgt

Regiment:

RAF

Experience:

IG 9/2/45.

Service at RAF night fighting stations & afterwards trained as a Secretary.

Dobson, W.

Rank:

Cpl

Regiment:

British Land Army

Experience:

IG 29/6/45

Letter to Mrs D from Mr & Mrs Raman of Ghentbrugge near Ghent, Belgium - very happy and an honour to have one of liberators in our home. Our son in Belgium army in UK. Grateful thanks to GB people for liberating Belgium. Hope Japanese soon defeated, war will be over.

Dolby, Leslie

Rank:

Flt Sgt

Regiment:

Royal Canadian Air Force

Pre-war Occupations:

Cashier Henley's W.T. Telegraph Works, Co. Ltd, Leeds.

Experience:

IG 7/1/44.

Capt Harold Dolby met up with Flt Sgt Dolby. Harold was serving in Levant. Leslie was in the Royal Canadian Air Force & was an instructor in Vancouver. Served 6 months in the UK and then to Canada and promoted to Flt Sgt.

Duell, Harold

Regiment:

Royal Artillery

Experience:

IG 7/6/40. DUNKIRK experiences:

In France and Belgium from Easter 1940 as an artillery man.
Called up Oct 30 as a militiaman.

In Belgium May 1940 & vehicle abandoned 15 miles from coast
& party moved at night & avoided machine gunning & bombing.
Embarked North of Dunkirk - Waded waist deep to rowing
boats for getting to ships. Bombed 5 times as did so. Attacked
on 3 separate occasions on way over & came through safely. His
younger brother Kenneth Duell had been fighting in Norway
now back in England.

Duell, K.K.

Age:

23

Rank:

Lt

Regiment:

Duke of Wellington, Scots Guards

Pre-war Occupations:

Carpet salesman Firth, Brighouse.

Experience:

IG 17/12/13.

Joined Scots Guards Feb 1939 then serving 2nd Duke of Wellington Regiment India. Before then in Norway. Excellent spirits of men & now at rest camp in India awaiting further orders. Met up with his friend Gunner Surveyor Peter Wardman aged 23 who had worked in Ilkley Town Hall's surveyor's office. Joined up in 1941.

Eagle, William G.

Age:

24

Rank:

Flying Officer

Regiment:

RAF

Experience:

IG 28/1/44.

In Typhoon wing on offensive patrol off Dutch Coast. When flying alone saw 12 ME109's near water. Shot down wing ldr & his No2 shot in cockpit who crashed into next ME109 & crashed into the sea. Eagle shot down 3 of 12 fighters, 4 others flew off and made a failed feint attack on Eagle. They then fled landwards.

Earl, Walter

Rank:

Mechanised Staff Sgt.

Regiment:

RASC

Experience:

IG 18/8/45.

On leave from Germany & been round Belsen Concentration Camp - "The camp is just as dreadful as it is made out to be in the papers and those responsible should be charged with crimes against humanity."

Easby, Basil

Age:

29

Rank:

Lt

Regiment:

Royal Engineers

Experience:

IG 29/12/44.

Lived in Ilkley from 1933 and overseas July 1944. Originally from Durham. Worked for father's firm on Leeds Road, Ilkley, until joining the army.

Meet up with Capt Douglas Schofield in Delhi.

Figures, J.A.

Rank:

Reverend

Experience:

IG 14/12/45 & 18/1/46.

He was reverend pastor at Ilkley Congregational Church 1933 to 1942.

For three and a half years Chaplain to Forces in Egypt. To Egypt via Freetown & Durban & in touch Toc H abroad. Called at Aden & then Suez to Cairo to look after scattered units near Suez canal & Ismailia and later spent 15 months in Baghdad in Iraq. Took 4 or 5 services on a Sunday morning & 2 or 3 in evening in week and ran Toc H fellowships / discussions. Flies in desert & blowing sand were a constant problem. Sometimes ran concert parties RASC base, AA battery. At a Toc H rally in Cairo in Feb 43, 400 attended representing 120 branches. In late 1945 appointed minister in St Ives in Huntingdonshire.

Firth, Basil

Rank:

Major

Regiment:

KOYLI

Experience:

IG 30/11/45.

To India in Nov 41 Poona (now Pune) desert, water shortage and ants plus monsoon season conditions. Initially Indians did not realise war had commenced. He had dysentery & 2 months in hospital near Ranchi. To Burma in 1944 to Divisional HQ. In Mandalay battle and had to cross 1 mile wide Irrawaddy river. Shortage of equipment. Then 4 days and nights tough hand to hand fighting. Indians really won Burma battles backed up by 14th Army. Hindus to left and to the right.

All supplies by air from American planes. Medical station good, very brave nurses. Japanese showed tenacity - but they were unfit and undernourished (1 prisoner for 10 days and had no food).

Flood, Herbert

Rank:

Capt

Regiment:

RAC, Duke of Wellington

Pre-war Occupations:

Prior to war.

War Regions:

North Africa, France (Dunkirk), North Africa

Experience:

IG 7/1/44.

In OTCV territorials prior to the war. To France pre-Dunkirk & marched many miles in retreat to the coast. Also in N. Africa for 9 months. Arrived in time for later action in Tunisia. Received African Star Ribbon.

Ford, Mrs John

Rank:

Mrs (wife of John Ford)

Regiment:

Red Cross

Experience:

IG 15/11/40.

2 weeks British Red Cross work in London with 5 members of Ilkley detachment. She is Commandant 268th Detachment - carrying out relief work to let nurses take a much needed rest. Other Ilkley ladies who went to London: Miss Peggy Firth, Miss Susannah Law. Worked at a "rest house" where people go who are bombed out of houses or time bomb near their house - sleep and have meals there.

Mrs Ford only 50 yards away when a huge bomb dropped on London - crater 85 feet across and 45 feet deep. The house she was in rocked but everything else on opposite side of the road and in front came down like a pack of cards. A heap of coal slack is the only thing you could liken it to.

8 different couples - very calm and no complaints – “we've got each other and house was only bricks.” Shortly after big bomb, warden said 5 minutes to evacuate as a time bomb had fallen - everyone into motor cars & streets lit up by gun fire of London barrage.

Patience, bravery, efficiency fire fighting people & first aid and demolition squads known as suicide squads. Tube stations at night amazing - 600 people & 600 sleeping people but no one grumbles. No one annoyed or put out. Rich and the poor sleep together.

Mrs Ford and her ladies attached to London County Council & other relief parties. Essex, Sussex & N. Wales. On duty 6pm to 7am or until 'All Clear' goes . Hope to go again after Xmas.

Fulda, Mrs J.L.

Rank:

Wife of Major J. L. Fulda

War Regions:

France (Dunkirk)

Experience:

IG 7/6/40.

2 of her relatives returned safely from France. Col R.H. Lawrie, her brother-in-law and 2nd Lt. G.I. Foulkes her nephew. (Dunkirk).

Galer, J.C.

Age:

21

Rank:

Pte

Pre-war Occupations:

LMS Rail Company fireman.

War Regions:

France (Normandy)

Experience:

IG 3/11/44.

Missing August now back with unit - driver of Bren gun Oct 41,
in 1942 and in Normandy on D Day.

Gardiner, F.

Rank:

Driver

Pre-war Occupations:

Worked for F. Mennell, coal merchant.

Experience:

IG 4/2/44

Married with 3 children. Joined up Sept 1940 & overseas Jan 1941. Met up with Driver L. Kaberry when both serving in the Middle East after one of them stopped his lorry and gave the other a lift. Realised they were both from Ilkley.

Garside, Alan

Rank:

L/Bdr

War Regions:

North Africa

Experience:

IG 9/4/43.

Met up with L/Sgt J.E. Woodhouse in North Africa. Both in an AA unit at the time.

Gaunt, L. H.

Rank:

Mrs

Experience:

IG 6/10/44.

In a letter from his eldest daughter who lived for 20 years in Le Havre with her husband who was the Director of Commerce for the port.

"First communication with the outside world since occasional Red Cross messages. Nearly starved in first winter but then managed OK as in an agricultural district. Great suffering in the industrial areas and no electricity, gas or water for weeks."

Opened her house as a sort of rest centre and first aid and soon had it full of British Soldiers.

Gelder, Robert John

Rank:

Flt Lt.

Experience:

IG 5/4/46.

Married Miss Grun Elizabeth Sjoberg at Ilkley Parish Church only daughter Axel Sjoberg and Mrs Mila of Falun Sweden. They met during his internment in Sweden after a forced landing in Sweden in January 1945 due to plane being damaged by German flak while on bombing mission over the Reich.

Gell family

Experience:

IG 13/2/42.

6 sons serving in the forces - highest number in Ilkley:

Dennis (19) in a minesweeper works for Mr E. Naylor, Butcher, Church Street.

Allen (23) RE joiner for Messrs Cowling, Station Road.

Arthur (25) RN Dean and Mannell, Railway Road.

Harry (27) RA , painter & decorator Mr Riley, Brook Street.

Walter (29) Ilkley Council Cemetery Staff.

Norman (35) National Fire Works Messrs Dean and Mannell.

Jack (31) awaiting call up Mr Naylor, Church Street.

Their father employed by Mr. Hampshire, Brook Street, a prisoner in the FWW. Mother does baking in aid of Red Cross.

Goddard, Geoffrey

Regiment:

Highland Light Infantry

War Regions:

Italy

Experience:

IG 3/11/44.

Highland Light Infantry in Italy. Met up with William Whittaker in NW Africa and again in Italy. Whittaker worked at Fox's pork butcher in Ilkley and later worked in Addingham.

Graham, Peter

Rank:

Gunner

War Regions:

Greece

Experience:

IG 18/5/45.

Home from prison camp in Germany - only son of late Mr. William Graham (Ilkley librarian who died when his son a POW). At Stalag VII B in Silesia. Captured near Salonica and conditions very bad in Greece. In Germany there were Red Cross parcels and he worked on the railway.

Grange, Thomas

Age:

24

Rank:

Driver

Pre-war Occupations:

Worked at Hamilton Quarries, Bolton Abbey pre-War.

War Regions:

Tunisia

Experience:

IG 16/7/43.

Met up with Driver George W Grange (23) in Tunisia. Younger brother Donald killed in March 1941 in air raid on Southampton.

Joined territorials in 1936 and called up to 8th army in 1939.

Grange, George W.

Pre-war Occupations:

Worked for E. Clarkson, banker, Skipton Road.

War Regions:

Tunisia

Experience:

IG 16/7/43.

Met up with Driver Thomas Grange (23) in Tunisia. Younger brother Donald killed in March 1941 in air raid on Southampton.

Joined territorials in 1936 and called up to 1st army in 1939.

Green, C.M. (Miss)

Pre-war Occupations:

Voluntary Aid Detachment rest station Ilkley, 1939 - 44.

War Regions:

India

Experience:

IG 27/10/44.

Married Major D.D. Law RA. Charnwood, Easby Drive. Miss Green married in Bombay before back on active service. Worked in VAD rest station in Ilkley 1939 - 44 and then to India. They had known each other 10 years.

Her brother was a member of the crew of submarine HMS "Acasta" missing while escorting aircraft carriers off Norwegian coast in 8/6/1940. Name on Portsmouth Naval War Memorial in Hampshire, Panel 37 Col1.

Griffiths, Anthony Edwards

Age:

19

Regiment:

RN

Experience:

IG 14/2/41.

Joined Navy after Derby School. On cruiser HMS "Sheffield" from 1938. Took part on HMS "Sheffield" in bombardment of Genoa. Specialised in torpedo work and now A-A gunnery.

Haigh, Frank L.

Age:

30

Rank:

Signalman

Regiment:

Royal Corps Signals

Experience:

IG 22/10/43.

Recruited in 1939. Evacuated from Dunkirk to Middle East at the end 1941. Met Signaller Murgatroyd in Cairo in Sept 43.

Hampshire, James

Rank:

Sapper

Regiment:

RE

Pre-war Occupations:

Mr. Rosenthal, Butcher, Church Street.

Experience:

IG 16/6/44. Death details in IG 15/9/44.

In one of the first three tanks to land on D Day. Elder brother Trooper Peter Hampshire serving Armoured Corps in invasion of Normandy. Age 23 and served for 4 years in North Africa in 3 campaigns there.

2nd brother Kenneth (22) serving AA unit in England & 2 years service in Ireland. "French very decent and happy to see you." Many Germans taken prisoner.

His second brother Kenneth in AA unit in England & served 2 years in Iceland.

Hardaker, T.

Rank:

Mr

Experience:

IG 26/12/41.

Nephew of Mr. Holmes of Addingham who escaped from Germany in April 1941 by way of occupied France to reach the UK with wife and daughter. Mr Hardaker was a Paris based Yorkshireman trapped in France in May 1940. He was a representative for a Bradford wool firm in France.

Hargreaves, Henry

Rank:

Pte

Regiment:

AA battery

Pre-war Occupations:

Ilkley Gas Works

War Regions:

France (Dunkirk)

Experience:

IG 14/6/40.

Married with two children. In Army from 1937 & Army Reserve from 1931. Called up 9/39.

Dunkirk:

In France with AA battery from Dec 39 & returning from leave when trouble started in Belgium on 10/5. Arrived in an air raid - never found his own unit therefore took various actions with different units blowing up bridges and houses to block the advancing enemy. Under shell fire & bombing in Dunkirk 10.30pm 29/5 to 3.30 am 30/5 when he boarded a boat back to England. He had witnessed regular bombing and machine gunning during the retreat to Dunkirk.

Hauff, C. Kenneth

Rank:

Capt

Regiment:

Royal Artillery

Experience:

IG 29/3/45.

Evening on Ganges & crossed it by ferry. Part of a small advance party crossed the river before darkness. As service personnel we were received as privileged first class passengers.

Heron, Michael

Age:

23

Rank:

Supply Assistant

Regiment:

Royal Navy

War Regions:

Malta

Experience:

IG 11/9/42

In Malta from November 1939 straight after training as a Militia man. Very impressed with accuracy of British gunfire in almost 3,000 air raids on the island. The Maltese were more angry however with the Italians and Mussolini in particular than with the Germans.

Initially enemy planes 60 or 70 in formation were largely unopposed. The islands balloon barrage was very good and the Luftwaffe lost heavily. Artillery men were also accurate and during an attack on Valleta harbour by E-boats many of them were sunk by direct artillery hits.

The Maltese people live in rock cubicles / caves for self protection. He thumbed a lift in a lorry carrying a 500 lb bomb then whilst having his haircut a sudden air raid occurred and he had to go quickly to the shelter.

Hewitt, Eddie

Rank:

Submarine Commander

Regiment:

Royal Navy

Experience:

IG 13/10/44.

In Singapore he met marine Bobby Harrison, a member of Ilkley Cycling Club, and his next door neighbour in civilian life. Hewitt was lucky to escape from Singapore in 1942.

Hiley, L.B.

Rank:

L/Cpl

War Regions:

India

Experience:

IG 19/11/43.

Served in India.

Hodgson, Bernard

Age:

28

Rank:

Sgt

Regiment:

Royal Corps Signals

Pre-war Occupations:

Thomas Wright Ltd, Bradford.

War Regions:

North Africa, Syria, India

Experience:

IG 26/1/45

He joined the army in 1940. He joined the 23rd Infantry Brigade when it was formed in 1941 and was sent to Syria. He went to North Africa to help relieve Australian Troops at Tobruk before going on to India. The brigade travelled around India and into neighbouring countries until mid 1943.

Holdsworth, Gilbert

Age:

19

Experience:

IG 5/5/44.

A former IGS pupil, he went to India as officer cadet in June 1943. Commissioned after passing through Officer Training School in India.

Holmes, B.T.

Rank:

Flt Lt.

Regiment:

RAF

War Regions:

India

Experience:

IG 15/12/44.

He carried out a remarkable air-sea rescue in India. This was made when Major W.G. Gillespie, an American airforce pilot, was picked up by an RAF amphibian crew from a Ganges tributary 100 miles inland.

An RAF crew saw him flashing a mirror, alighted between the banks of Khan Arial, a river in East Bengal, and took him off in a launch which had brought him from a village where he was staying whilst waiting to be rescued. Within minutes Gillespie was in Calcutta. He had landed many miles from the rail head in a network of waterways and surrounding villages that form the Ganges delta. He came down in a swamp after his engine cut out, but was able to send an approximate position to the nearest air-sea rescue base. The aircraft from the RAF squadron of strategic Airforce Eastern Air Command took off to find him, piloted by Flight Lt. Holmes. He reconnoitered the Major's position, landed and rescued him.

Holmes, John H.

Age:

19

Rank:

Trooper

Pre-war Occupations:

For Mrs Fletcher in Skipton Road.

Experience:

IG 20/10/44.

He went missing in Sept 1944 and he is now back with a Unit in Belgium. To France in June 1944 and in army from April 1944.

Holmes, John W.

Rank:

Radio Officer

Regiment:

Merchant Navy

Pre-war Occupations:

J. Ingham, Brook Street.

Experience:

IG 25/9/42.

He was born in Ilkley. Only 19 when joined up.

He had 9 months service in a large cargo vessel, but in October 1941 his ship was hit by a torpedo. A life boat was lowered and he was picked up 2 hours later by a Corvette (an old converted U.S. Coast Guard Cutter). The boat took some time to sink and he went back on board to try and save her. All ships' crews were forbidden to throw anything overboard lest it should leave a trail by which the convoy could be followed. U-boats had been sighted in the vicinity and Holmes had seen four ships after they had been struck by torpedos.

Hood, Allan

Rank:

Lt

War Regions:

Far East, Malaya

Experience:

IG 9/11/45.

He was reported missing in June 1945, then it was heard he was on HMS "Persimmon". He was fit but undernourished. In a letter to his parents he wrote:

"Off Malaysian coast had been in an operation in which he landed by submarine between Port Sweetenham and Port Dickson. The Japanese were in control of the coast and he and another officer and two ratings were cut off. He went through Japanese lines, other officers and ratings were separated, but Hood joined up with them four days later and stayed with the Chinese Guerrilles for three months. He is currently in Ceylon and the other three colleagues were also in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)."

Horner, John M.

Age:

19

Rank:

Pte

Regiment:

Lancashire Fusiliers, Somerset Infantry

Pre-war Occupations:

General Post Office.

War Regions:

Normandy

Experience:

IG 15/9/44.

Joined up in March 1943. He joined the Lancashire Fusiliers and later the Somerset Light Infantry. He served in Normandy.

Hornshaw, R.A.

Age:

28

Rank:

Capt

Pre-war Occupations:

Lister and Company Ltd, Manningham Mills, Bradford.

Experience:

IG 10/11/44.

Work prior to call up with Lister and Co. Limited. He went overseas shortly after DDay. He taught soldiers German in the Netherlands prior to their moving forwards into Germany. He was particularly teaching about orders in German and German road signs. Popular phrases included "Does anyone here speak any English?" and "How many kilometres is it to Berlin?". This was not teaching language systematically but the orders were to drill squads of enemy prisoners.

Hudson, E.

War Regions:

Italy, North Africa, Sicily

Experience:

IG 22/9/44.

He was wounded in the leg and was in a military hospital in Italy. In a cinema in Rome he met his Brother-in-law Lt Raymond Hopwood, whom he had not seen in 18 months. Initially served in North Africa but in March 1943 he went to Sicily and Italy.

Innes, Stanley

Rank:

Sgt

Pre-war Occupations:

Hong Kong Police.

Experience:

IG 26/12/41.

Sgt in Hong Kong Police which he had joined in 1935. Hong Kong was surrounded by Japanese since they had invaded China in 1932. His job was in river patrol duty on the border. "So far Japanese soldiers on the Chinese bank are friendly, but heard that they are recalling ships on the river. Now the Japanese in Indo-China and perhaps Hong Kong will be blockaded or attacked. With regard to Hong Kong the Japanese were sitting on the fence and there were no more Japanese ships in the harbour, but no doubt the Japanese will soon decide what action to take."

Kaberry, L.

Rank:

Driver

Pre-war Occupations:

Grocer in Leeds pre 1939.

Experience:

IG 4/2/44

Met up with Driver F. Gardiner, Kimberley Street, Ilkley. Both met in the Middle East after one of them stopped his lorry and gave the other a lift, realised both were from Ilkley.

Joined up 1939 & posted overseas early in 1941. A grocer in Leeds pre 1939.

Kenworthy, Albert

Rank:

Gunner

Regiment:

Royal Artillery

War Regions:

France (Dunkirk), India

Experience:

IG 15/9/44

To France 1939. Featured on film of British Soldiers serving overseas - shown at Tower Cinema, Leeds and watched by his mother. Evacuated from Dunkirk and subsequent training in England before being sent to India in 1941.

Kerr, Alastair McDougal (Jasper)

Rank:

Lt

Pre-war Occupations:

Called to bar Middle Temple 1941

War Regions:

France (Dunkirk)

Experience:

IG 22/9/45

Repatriated. At Dunkirk. Arrived home wounded from Germany 15/9/44 and straight from ship to hospital.

Lambert, Gordon

Age:

23

Rank:

Cpl

Regiment:

RAF

Pre-war Occupations:

Spooner Engineering

War Regions:

Egypt

Experience:

Unknown IG reference.

RAF June 1944. Met up with brothers Pte Boden Lambert, 23 & LAC John Lambert, 21. Met up in Cairo as all were in the Western Desert.

Lambert, Boden

Age:

23

Rank:

Pte

Regiment:

Royal Engineers

Pre-war Occupations:

Spooner Engineering

Experience:

Unknown IG reference.

Overseas in June 1942. Met up with brothers Cpl Gordon Lambert, 23 & LAC John Lambert, 21. Met up in Cairo as all were in the Western Desert.

Lambert, John

Age:

21

Rank:

LAC

Regiment:

Royal Engineers

Pre-war Occupations:

John Fox Pork Butchers

Experience:

IG?

Overseas in June 1942. Met up with brothers Cpl Gordon Lambert, 23 & Pte Boden Lambert, 23. Met up in Cairo as all were in the Western Desert.

Lambert, Kathleen (Madame Robert Devigne)

Pre-war Occupations:

Susan's Cupboard, Ilkley

Experience:

IG 27/9/46 & 4/10/46 (picture):

She met Monsieur Devigne in Ilkley in 1933 and married in Paris in November 1933. She has two children (small son and daughter). Active in Wharfedale Foreign Circle.

Diploma given in Paris Cinema for her courage in defying enemy & helping to hide Allied service men. The ceremony was attended by Duff Cooper, GB Ambassador, Mr Caffey, U.S. Ambassador and Basil Embrey, RAF, who had been shot down over France and escaped. She lived with her husband's Aunt and Jewish husband whom she hid through the occupation of France. Smuggled food and other necessities to the house of her friend, a French lady, where fugitives were hidden. Helped to put Canadian airman who was found in field in hiding. Her husband got forged papers preventing him being sent to Germany for forced labour.

Her Ilkley family had no news for two and a half years until March 1944 when an RAF Sgt from Gt Ayton wrote to them about his experiencing Lambert's help in France.

Law, Miss Mary

Regiment:

Women's Voluntary Service

Experience:

IG 17/12/43.

In first WVS work overseas. Moved to Italy to open leave hostels for other ranks. Experience in club / canteen work. YMCA canteen work (voluntary) + work in Italy voluntary and received only living and out of pocket expenses plus NAAFI uniform.

Equivalent status of senior and junior commanders in ATS (Army Rank Major & Captain). Her siblings were:

a brother Major D. Law evacuated from Dunkirk;

another brother who lost his life in the Royal Navy off Norway in 1940;

a third brother invalided out of the Royal Navy;

a sister in the Red Cross;

and another sister in the WRNS.

Lawrence, William

Rank:

Sgt

War Regions:

Middle East

Experience:

IG 14/4/44.

Shot down over Germany after many ops over Italy, France and the Middle East. Met up with Sgt William Pegg in German prison camp. Both POWs in 1942 in different theatres of war.

Laycock, Peter W

Age:

23

Rank:

Major

War Regions:

Italy, North Africa, Sicily

Experience:

IG 29/3/45

Wedding. Married Mlle Viviane Nivelles, elder daughter of Mr & Mrs Henri Nivelles, Brussels. A Nivelles ballet dancer (aged 21) met Laycock when taking part in the concert for Allied troops in Brussels.

1943 wounded while serving in Infantry Unit in 1st Army in North Africa. Later in Sicily and Italy - now in 21st Army Group HQ.

Leach, Jean

Experience:

IG 8/10/43 & 26/5/44.

Evacuated girls return home from Canada to join forces. Joan Roberts and Jean Leach. Evacuated there with nine other girls and two boys from Ilkley in 1940. They were at St Hilda's School, Whitby.

Lived with Canadian families near Toronto. No change over to a new educational system - a seamless situation. Skiing, skating, hockey, cricket, tennis and swimming. 3 month's holiday: mid June to mid September.

Differences - very friendly, no smoking cinemas, only 3 meals a day - breakfast, lunch and dinner. In England people eating all the time. Little blackout in Canada, most depressing to find blackout in the UK. Miss Leach just left St Hilda's. Miss Roberts left some time ago and went to business college in Toronto later taking position under Canadian Government.

IG 7/7/44.

Ann Conyers (15), from BR, arrived home from Canada in July 1944, a pupil at St Hilda's School Whitby. Evacuated in June 1940 & then stayed with relatives in Hamilton for 6 months & went to school in Hamilton in Ontario.

Joan Roberts & Jean Leach returned to the UK in September 1943.

26/5/44.

Elizabeth Roberts (15) and Allison Leach (16), their respective sisters, returned home in May 1944. Among 1,500 children brought safely across the Atlantic, still 90 children left in Canada including 6 from Ilkley.

Lowe, Kenneth

Rank:

Bombardier

Regiment:

Ilkley Territorials

Experience:

IG 3/11/44.

Ilkley Territorials in 1939 and attached to different units overseas.

Meet up with Sgt Andrew Thornton.

McCarthy, F.

Rank:

Cpl

Regiment:

Royal Corps Signals

Experience:

IG 30/7/43.

In N. Africa lived mainly on eggs, plus tomatoes and grapes plentiful. Wounded in foot during an attack on Medjez-el-Bab & returning from Algiers. He has come home on leave from a hospital in Scotland.

Nearing the top of a hill he was in a jeep moving under shellfire towards advanced position where party to repair field telephones. Suddenly a shell exploded outside the car.

Picked up 1/2 hour later by U.S. troops and taken to hospital. Good attention. Travelled on French hospital train to Algiers where he spent two months in hospital. Returned to the UK by sea and subjected to air / submarine attack. Heavy rain and mud. When ground hard again, mobility of tanks and strength of artillery enable us to push through.

Middlebrook, T.J.

Rank:

LAC

Experience:

IG 18/5/45.

Meets former FWW Belgian refugee (in Ilkley) in Brussels who has 2 brothers - one in Ghent and one in Antwerp both of whom had attended Ilkley Grammar School.

Moore, Grace L.

Rank:

Nursing Officer

Regiment:

RAMC

War Regions:

Burma

Experience:

Unknown IG reference.

In RAMC in Burma for two and a half years. Married to a serving radiologist. Trained in Leeds Infirmary and at a specialist Oxford hospital dealing with head wounds suffered by RAF personnel. Her parents were medical missionaries in Thailand for 40 years and now in Japanese hands.

Working on Burma Front with specialist staff from London and Manchester on brain surgery. Only six units like this one (2 in Burma, Italy and Normandy). Her brother Major Denby Clark i/c Field Surgery Unit which was one of the first to land on D day.

Moore, John

Rank:

Signaller

Regiment:

Royal Artillery

Experience:

IG 8/10/43.

Training in Scarborough on an RA Signalling course for 12 weeks; and further training in Sussex, finally with 56th Heavy Regiment RA.

Tunisia Campaign landed in Algiers 17/1/43 - In a canvas camp near Cape Matifou, to Ain M'lila village for oranges and dates and finally to Gualma a larger town to Souk Ahrss. Then to wooded olive grove near the village Teboursouk and finally to gun position at Grenadier Hill near Medjez-el-Bab.

Jerry broke through 2,000 yards away but our artillery responded well - many German prisoners. Then to another position - Gunners Gully near Mel-Bab. Fired on Toulaber and Cheadac. Many German planes. To Flower Gully where shooting all over the place as Jerry broke through with tanks - on to Banana Ridge to collect picks and shovels, sheltered later in the Gully. German position at Grik-el-ned once a German position with lots of dugouts lined with wood - left much personal kit as they'd been surprised by guards while asleep & captured heaps of guns. Comfort dugouts smelt of wine. Dash to Tunis followed over 3 or 4 days & never caught up with Jerry - down

to the Cape Bon Peninsula. Ended up at Aqueduct position near Tunis. A week at Hannam Liff on the coast.

Landed at Salerno in Italy in September 1943 and fought at Monte Cassino. Then to Amalfi and Rome. Refit for Artillery in November 1944. Finally journey from Marseilles to Turnhout in Belgium.

Moxon, Donald

Rank:

Reverend

Regiment:

West Yrks

War Regions:

Burma

Experience:

IG 10/4/42.

Also at St Dunstons Church, Armley, Leeds. Attached to Rangoon Cathedral about 1938. He was a missionary in Burma. In Burma stayed behind in Pegu to help evacuation of wounded after Allied retreat. Evacuated to India and after a spell in the UK returned to Burma soon after the war.

Mulholland, Kitty (Miss)

Experience:

IG 2/8/40.

In June 1940 in Switzerland with another English girl. Tried to get to Bordeaux. 17/6 at Lyons and after nightmare journey nearly surrounded by Germans and arrived at Sète on Mediterranean coast (instead of Bordeaux).

On the train from Lyons and then all civilians ordered off at St Germaine-Le-Fosses (Germans 40 km away). Abandoned everything except rucksacks and, on foot, joined French refugees (no cars, no fuel, no wheel barrows and no bikes).

Went to Vichy but shock awaited as no one to help and stayed in hotel. Tried to reach Clermont Ferrand (but not left Vichy when told the bridge over River Allier guarded by Germans). Eventually clear of Vichy and got a lift in a civilian car for 15 kms on the way to Thiers, 23 kms away (arrived in Thiers and Germans were closing in).

Hitched a lift along with 6 Spanish refugees, with 'Pepita' the Lorry driver. The vehicle after many miles, crashed in ditch and Spanish refugees got on bikes. We walked. Spent the night on straw and caught a lift on a lorry at 4am to Aurillac - well driven and excellent condition. The plan was to go to Montauban and catch a train to Bordeaux or Marseilles but no civilian trains were running out of Aurillac. There was a bus to Rodez and nowhere else (2 girls still with Jean and Jacques) - found 10th rate hotel. Awakened early by Jean to say lift on lorry with soldiers to Toulouse. Goodbye to Jean.

On reaching Albi - soldiers not to Toulouse but to Perpignan. Left Carcassone for Narbonne but suddenly our soldier friends whom we share bread and tinned meat saw lorries of soldier friends in opposite direction, so end of the road for us and no Perpignan. The next day, after night in barn, the soldiers ran us

to nearest town to catch the bus for Perpignan. However, everyone needed a pass to travel on the bus so we joined a military convoy on an old tractor. Then military convoy stoppped and we awaited orders. 4 more soldiers got on lorry at the Department border (needed a laissez passer to pass between one department and another). The soldier refused to help - but two French soldiers, evacuated from Dunkirk, agreed to help and spoke no British. Returned later to the barricade.

The girls wore French army greatcoats and caps and half concealed behind other soldiers - rushed the guard and got through and this way got round the barriers at Narbonne, Beuers and Sète only to be told GB consul in Sète had left days ago. However 6:45am at hotel told GB destroyer in harbour and went on board. It left 8am.

In a few days put on board liner by a destroyer and in two weeks back in England to Worcestershire village of Berrow. Great sympathy for French.

Muncaster, William

Rank:

Sgt

Experience:

IG 30/4/43.

Letter to mother:

Interned in a neutral country (unnamed) following air operations. This was a bit of bad luck and ended up being interned. Country simply marvellous - seen around woods and climbed local hills - billeted in hotel (very big) and food is exceptionally good. Whole crew - everyone OK. No bones broken, no injury, only a severe shaking after a good jump. A good colour and healthy fat. Can do a lot of swimming, but it is frustrating doing nothing!

Murgatroyd, R.

Age:

25

Rank:

Signalman

Pre-war Occupations:

GPO Engineering Dept Keighley.

Experience:

IG 22/10/43.

Met signalman Haigh in Cairo in Sept 43. Both men in Middle East since 1941.

Muschamp, D.

Rank:

Petty Officer Writer

Regiment:

RN

Experience:

IG 3/9/43.

Serving in HMS 'Woolston'. One of V&W class destroyers which it is disclosed took part in the invasion of Sicily. Completed in 1918, & celebrated her 25th birthday by escorting convoy to landing beaches. Once ships safely in, her job was to patrol for lurking U-boats and stand by to give a blazing reception to any enemy plane. Woolston spent 9 days off Sicily and shot down 1 plane. She steamed 7,000 miles UK back to UK and spent 60 out of 62 days at sea.

Naylor, James

Rank:

Cpl

Regiment:

RE

Experience:

IG 5/5/44.

Joined up in Nov 1939 & overseas 3 years. Met brother in law L.Cpl Charles S, Beevers of Wheatley Lane, Ben Rhydding, in the Middle East. Beevers with Royal Corps Signals in Army nearly 4 years and overseas 2 years. Took part in advance with 8th Army and wrote home descriptive letters.

Nicholson, Frank

Age:

22

Rank:

Gunner

Pre-war Occupations:

Barclays Bank, Ilkley

Experience:

IG 19/1/45

In army 3 years - fought El Alamein to Sicily. Came home for Xmas 43 and to France D + 2. Letter received by his parents from a French Doctor who entertained their son post D Day (Dr. Charles Fidelin from Etretat).

They were two kind GB soldiers (inc Frank) - & happy to see them again on leave at anytime. Sent Frank's parents photo of their son.

Oliver, A.G.G.

Age:

21

Rank:

Capt

War Regions:

India, Normandy

Experience:

IG 23/6/44 - IG 12/1/45

Short course on officer training at Hymers College, Hull. Sent to India. In army 3 years including 18 months in India.

Ombler, Peter

Rank:

Lt

Regiment:

AA battery

Pre-war Occupations:

Midland Bank, Ilkley

War Regions:

North Africa

Experience:

IG 22/10/43.

Commisioned May 1942 and overseas Dec 43. Also undertook coastal defence duties in various parts of the UK. Met Capt Papworth from Ilkley as he moved to Italy from North Africa.

He also met Geoffrey Waite frequently in North Africa.

Papworth, George F.

Rank:

Capt

Pre-war Occupations:

On staff of NE Railway, Leeds

Experience:

IG 22/10/43.

Old boy at IGS and Ilkley RUFC.

Joined up early 1940 and served with RE abroad from April 1941. Taken part in North African landings, Sicilian and Italian campaigns.

Pegg, William

Rank:

Sgt

War Regions:

Middle East

Experience:

IG 14/4/44.

Green Howards & captured in the Middle East. Met up with Sgt William Lawrence in German prison camp. Both POWs in 1942 in different theatres of war.

Pollard, E.

Age:

32

Rank:

Trooper

Regiment:

Armoured Brigade (Italy), British Expeditionary Force

Pre-war Occupations:

Ilkley Council until 1939. West Riding Police 18 months in Ilkley.

War Regions:

Italy, Middle East, Sicily, India, Italy

Experience:

IG 23/6/44.

6 years in India until 1935 when joined the West Riding Police and stationed at Ilkley, left police 18 months later and worked for Ilkley council until 1939.

BEF in France 1939 - 1940 (GCHQ). Earned title Monty's Foxhounds and proud record in Middle East, Sicily and Italy and North Africa campaign. Met up with William Robinson.

Pollard, Geoff

Rank:

L/Cpl

Regiment:

British Expeditionary Force

War Regions:

France, Belgium

Experience:

IG 7/6/40.

Adventurous time in the BEF in Belgium. During retreat he sprained ankle badly as he jumped into shell hole to avoid machine gun fire. On the beach he experienced further heavy bombing and machine gun fire and had fortunate escape during an attack which caused the deaths of his 4 companions.

Priestman, Peggy

Age:

15

Experience:

IG 23/8/40.

Evacuation to Canada, with her 2 sisters: Babara aged 13 and Elizabeth aged 11, from a Whitby school, St Hilda's. They were suddenly told by a prefect on 17/6/40 that going to Canada. An Anglo-Catholic convent of 130 girls but only 100 able to come out leaving behind those over 16 years of age.

On 21/6 my parents came over with my 2 sisters, both at a small school in Ilkley, but coming to Canada with St Hilda's, for duration of the war. We were to stay in Toronto where large house taken and school established.

On 25/6 four buses to Liverpool via Ilkley (last glimpse house) and Clitheroe for lunch! Two nights in house at Liverpool University then on boat to Montreal - 2 days rough weather but the rest was good. To Quebec and Montreal then train to Toronto arriving 5/7/40.

To Branksome Hall:

Like it so far in Canada but glad to return to Mother country.

Pye-Smith, Mary Audrey

Experience:

IG 16/8/46.

Oustanding good service and devotion to duty during campaign in N.W. Europe. Overseas shortly after D-Day. Member of British Red Cross Society from 1936 and served beginning war with Group Reception Station at Ilkley.

Distinguished War Service Cert with British Red Cross Society and Cert from 21st Army Group "High appreciation of services rendered by Mrs Audrey Pye-Smith".

Rawson, Mac

Age:

19

Rank:

Pte

Pre-war Occupations:

Imperial Cafes.

Experience:

IG 23/3/45.

Younger son of Mrs Rawson, Gordon Street, severely wounded in both hands by a hand grenade thrown at him while searching for snipers near Goch, Germany in 1945. Landed at Ostend and saw action through Siegfried line. 3 days before he was wounded he had miraculous escape when a shell dropped at his feet and failed to explode. Joined army in 1943.

Rawson, Lewis

Age:

21

Rank:

Pte

Regiment:

Royal Tanks Corps

Pre-war Occupations:

Denby's, Leeds Road, Ilkley.

Experience:

IG 23/3/45.

Wounded at Caen while with Royal Tank Corps. Flew home but soon expects to rejoin unit. Landed in Normandy on D-Day. Pre joining up was employed by Denby's, Leeds Road, Ilkley. Joined army in 1942.

Rhodes, G.E.

Rank:

Colonel

Regiment:

Royal Engineers

Experience:

IG 16/3/45 and IG 5/5/44.

Just promoted from Lt-Col. Achieved rank of Colonel on transfer to Deputy Director Allied Control Commission in Italy. Attended Pope Pius X II audience with allied troops blessed by Pope and talked to the Pope for 2 minutes and shook hands twice. Monty asked Rhodes what Pope had said on his exit, Rhodes was told it was most unusual for Pope to speak so long to one person. Pope asked about flying bombs on London and had stayed in St James Square in London.

IG 5/5/44.

He witnessed the eruption of Vesuvius - the most violent for 75 years: "Flames, molten rocks, lava, thunder of explosions under one's feet and a blast of steam, smoke and rocks, hurled hundreds of feet into the air.

Very quiescent - hardly a wisp of smoke from the central crater. Oceans of red or white hot lava poured down the sides from the crater and violent explosions every few minutes. At night it was awe-inspiring - the whole of the mountain top was a molten inferno - a red glow visible for scores of miles. Wind was from

N/NE and therefore blew some smoke and some ash clouds out to sea. After four days, lava was running in white-hot rivers right down to small villages and towns and many houses engulfed.

A few days later Rhodes travelled in a transport plane level with the volcano 4,000 feet up and saw close up the whole thing. At Bari, 130 miles away, volcanic dust fell and sky became dark! At Salerno cinders and ash accumulated to a depth of inches. Roofs fell in and people were killed - orange groves and fruit trees were ruined. After 10 days the eruption ended in a huge smoking chimney. It was dangerous flying for a few days at least, into "a black dusty night and then out into brilliant sun".

Riley, George

Age:

30

Rank:

Pte

Pre-war Occupations:

West Yorks bus conductor.

Experience:

IG 4/6/43.

Married with 2 children. Joined up in 1941. Met up with Frank Riley (brother) in North Africa in Ilkley Battery. Third brother Fred (22) joined Ilkley Battery at age 14 and called up in 1939 but in 1941 discharged on medical grounds.

Riley, Frank

Age:

28

Regiment:

Royal Field Artillery

Experience:

IG 4/6/43.

In Ilkley Battery at 18 and called up in 1939. Married 1 boy.

IG 4/6/43.

Met up with George Riley (brother) in North Africa in Tank Regiment. Third brother Fred (22) joined Ilkley Battery at age 14 and called up in 1939 but in 1941 discharged on medical grounds.

Roberts, Joan

Experience:

IG 8/10/43 & 26/5/44.

Evacuated girls return home from Canada to join forces. Joan Roberts and Jean Leach. Evacuated there with nine other girls and two boys from Ilkley in 1940. They were boarders at St Hilda's School Whitby.

Lived with Canadian families near Toronto. No change over to a new educational system - a seamless situation. Skiing, skating, hockey, cricket, tennis and swimming. 3 months' holiday: mid June to mid September.

Differences - very friendly, no smoking cinemas, only 3 meals a day - breakfast, lunch and dinner. In England people eating all the time. Little blackout in Canada, most depressing to find blackout in the UK. Miss Leach just left St Hilda's. Miss Roberts left some time ago and went to business college in Toronto later taking position with Canadian Government.

IG 7/7/44.

Ann Conyers (15), from BR, arrived home from Canada in July 1944, a pupil at St Hilda's School, Whitby. Evacuated in June 1940 & then stayed with relatives in Hamilton for 6 months & went to school in Hamilton in Ontario.

Joan Roberts & Jean Leach returned to the UK in September 1943.

26/5/44.

Elizabeth Roberts (15) and Allison Leach (16), their respective sisters, returned home in May 1944. Among 1,500 children brought safely across the Atlantic, still 90 children left in Canada including 6 from Ilkley.

Robinson, William

Age:

38

Rank:

Trooper, Dispatch Rider

Regiment:

Royal Corps Signals

Pre-war Occupations:

Ilkley Gas undertaking.

War Regions:

Tunisia, Egypt

Experience:

IG 18/6/43.

3 Ilkley brothers meet in Tunis. William (37) Hawksworth Street; Tom (35) Castle Hill; George (28) Hawksworth Street. Tom and George in the Royal Artillery in the 1st Army.

Bill had been to Alamein, Hell Fire Pass and Mareth Line. "All boys getting letters from home, hoping 8th Army going home - but I'm afraid will be unlucky yet awhile".

Robshaw, Walter

Rank:

Stoker

Pre-war Occupations:

West Yorkshire Bus Service. Burnside Mill, Addingham.

War Regions:

Italy, North Africa, Malta

Experience:

IG 12/11/43.

Joined up March 1941. Fleet Air Arm Station then big Malta convoy August 1942 when 'Eagle' sunk. North Africa and Sicily landings, bombardment in Southern Italy and in action off Naples.

Rush, Norman

Rank:

Petty Officer

Regiment:

Royal Navy

War Regions:

Normandy

Experience:

IG 16/6/44.

Sunk in English Channel while on board British landing craft, bombed by enemy returning in craft and swam for an hour before being picked up by destroyers and back to the UK. Had led the way on 6/6 in small motor launches to the shores of France.

Schofield, Douglas

Rank:

Pte

Regiment:

Hygiene Section

Pre-war Occupations:

Otley PO.

War Regions:

France (Dunkirk), Belgium

Experience:

IG 14/6/40.

Returned on Navy's last job. In Western France and then to Belgium but at Béthune 18/5/1940 to 22/5/1940; and Germans all around. Dodging around and staying in villages to the North of Arras. A gap found through Lille to Dunkirk arriving on 28/5/1940 at Leffrinkouche near Dunkirk - 3 days at Leffrinkouche being shelled from both sides. Evacuated from Dunkirk.

IG 29/12/44.

Capt Schofield age 25 to Dunkirk, South Africa (2 years) and then to India. Clerk in Otley PO; brother Pte Fred Schofield. RAOC North Africa and now in India.

Meet up in Delhi with Lt. Basil Easby son of Mr R. Easby,
Richmond Place, Ilkley.

Sharpe, Ivan

Rank:

Staff Sgt

War Regions:

Norway

Experience:

IG 21/6/40.

In final evacuation from North Norway (travelled out in April in West Indian liner and came home on a vessel used in Irish Service). Organised Scout games on way home on ship. Said RN very efficient especially Fleet Air Arm.

Smallwood, Dennis R.

Age:

21

Rank:

Pilot Officer

Regiment:

RAF

Pre-war Occupations:

Waterworks Dept. Ilkley Council.

War Regions:

Middle East

Experience:

IG 5/11/43.

Joined RAF 1940 and to the Middle East in May 1942, Came home from 8th Army March 1943.

Smithson, Ronald

Rank:

Pte

Regiment:

RASC

War Regions:

France

Experience:

IG 21/6/40.

Called up Jan 1940 and to France March 1940. Much of the time at Le Havre and subjected to bombing, left France 10/6/40 and crossed in small coal boat which attracted attention of German planes but no hits.

Sowen, Victor W.

Rank:

Naval Telegraphist

War Regions:

Norway

Experience:

IG 24/5/40.

Naval Telegraphist on one of HM Trawlers. In Norway campaign, incessant air attack and some trawlers sunk. 3 enemy bombers attacked ships and 2 shot down. In last ship of big convoy and in darkness found ship's boat carrying 16 crew of Italian steamer which had been mined. No other boat had heard their cries.

Stead, P.M.

Rank:

Cpl

Regiment:

W.A.A.F.

Experience:

IG 6/4/45.

She visited Alamein cemetery to see grave of her friend Jack Butler but could not find him or any details. Proof available he did die in the war.

Still, Ronald J.

Rank:

Dr

Experience:

IG 11/1/46.

From 1935 with baptist Missionary Society in North China and interned in war with Japan - arrived home Jan 1946. From 1937, at Foster Hospital Choutsun in the Province of Shantung when Japanese occupied the area. 8/12/41 the Japanese took over the hospital and told all to stay there until August 1942, went to Shanghai - Chance for repatriation but not enough room on boat for them all.

Free in Shanghai until Feb 1943 and then GB civilians numbering 10,000 interned in 4 or 5 large camps. In April 1945 moved to camp in an industrial area in Shanghai. Suffered badly from lack of food. From 15 August to the end of October looked after by authorities.

Still became M.O. of a Civilian Assembly Centre at Columbia Country Club. Japanese Insp of Consula Guard very humane and ordered his men to look after internees in humane way.

Stirk, W.W.

Age:

31

Rank:

Stoker

Regiment:

Royal Navy

Experience:

IG 22/9/39.

In RN 12 year's watch on reserve in 1938 but ordered to rejoin in June 1939. Lived with wife in Burley, a Leeds man, but his mother lived in Ilkley and he was nephew of Mr and Mrs E. Winterburn of Newall Ave, Otley.

Captain saluted flag as ship went down, HMS Courageous torpedoed and sank on his wedding anniversary. 8:05 pm until 9:30 pm - Swimming in sea one and a half hours before rescued by a destroyer - despite wooden handle of lifeline hitting him in the head.

Storer, F.

Rank:

Nurse

Regiment:

British Expeditionary Force

Pre-war Occupations:

For 13 years a district nurse in Ilkley.

War Regions:

France (Dunkirk)

Experience:

IG 7/6/40.

With BEF in France & Belgium at Dunkirk and now back in England.

Stringer, John

Age:

28

Rank:

Fusilier

Pre-war Occupations:

IUDC gardener.

War Regions:

Tunisia

Experience:

IG 14/1/44.

Lived in Ilkley 10 years pre 1939. Previously lived in Barnsley.
Recruited in May 1940 and with First Army when landed in
North Africa Nov 1942.

Photo in Gazette of a Tunisian concert party - Member Sfax
garrison put on a show for colleagues. "Honest John
Entertains".

Suddards, G.E.

Rank:

Lt Col

Experience:

IG 20/10/44.

In Paris as chief of industrial production section of supply and economics branch of SHAEF US/BR military mission to France. He commanded a light AA unit from 1942 to Feb 1944. Studied for Civil Affairs work at Camberley Staff College.

After Dunkirk his unit to France via Brest and returned from Cherbourg all guns / vehicles saved.

1941 - awarded Territorial Efficiency Decoration having attained 20 years, commissioned service.

Swallow, A.G.

Rank:

Major

Pre-war Occupations:

At IGS.

Experience:

IG 22/12/44.

Serving in Italy - Chianti, bread, margarine, jam, beetroot in the sun. Shopping in Rome and in crowds of thousands in Vatican to see Pope give speech welcome in French and English and to meet as many people as possible.

Magnificent scenery. Rome justifies Lord Macaulay's description. Among the ruins of Italy today the ruins of ancient Rome retain a certain dignity.

Thompson, Geoffery L.

Rank:

Staff Sgt

War Regions:

Norway

Experience:

IG 21/6/40.

In Norway and home on leave this week.

Thornton, Andrew

Rank:

Sgt

Experience:

IG 3/11/44.

Meet up with Bombr Kenneth Lowe son of Mr and Mrs Lowe -
Clifton Terrace, Ilkley.

Tipping, Phillip

Age:
18

War Regions:
India

Experience:
IG 5/5/44.

Following lecture Indian Army at IGS went to India as officer cadet in June 1943. Commissioned after passing through O.T. School in India. Met up with Gilbert Holdsworth.

Tucker, L.

Rank:

Sgt

Pre-war Occupations:

Ilkley Fire Brigade.

War Regions:

France (Dunkirk)

Experience:

IG 14/6/40.

Called up as reservist 1939 to France.

Waite, Geoffrey

Age:

22

Rank:

Lt

Regiment:

AA battery

War Regions:

North Africa

Experience:

IG 22/10/43.

Commissioned 1939 and overseas Feb 1943. Met Lt Peter Omblor frequently in North Africa. Both men attached to AA batteries.

Walker, Pamela

Rank:

2nd Officer

Regiment:

WRNS

Experience:

IG 3/12/43.

Joined up August 1940. In USA from June 1941 as Officer in the Signals in Combined Chief of Staffs (with 150 other Wrens). Liked the United States - friendly, always asking uniform background. Keen on hunting and seen friends from UK. Travelled widely, shared a flat in Portsmouth with a member of the Women's Royal Navy. Now starting a job with the Wrens in the UK.

Waters, Geoffrey S.

Rank:

L/Bdr

War Regions:

Netherlands

Experience:

IG 1/6/45.

Married with baby son. Joined the Territorials in 1939. Abroad from June 1944.

In a note to a Military Observer:

A visit to Amsterdam where evidence shows how much the Dutch people starved by the Germans. Nearly everyone looks ill & haggard - often see people collapse on the street in a dead faint. Cheerful courage Dutch people & our troops given biggest welcome here than anywhere since D-Day. Houses clean and tidy. To a Dutchman end of the war means end of word ersatz (substitutes for everything).

His brother was in Middle East for four and a half years as a wireless operator.

Webster, D.

Rank:

Gunner

War Regions:

Burma

Experience:

IG 31/8/45.

A war of sweat and mud in Burma. Digging, heaving & winding with grand AEC tractors - sometimes stuck in thick desert & soft sand. Sometimes gun attacks at night until all Japanese guns are silenced.

Wharton, Neville R.

Age:

22

Rank:

LAC

Pre-war Occupations:

Fred Trees, Brook Street, Ilkley.

Experience:

IG 1/12/44.

Married Miss Jane Schillenans of Antwerp. Met up when Wharton was with liberation group. Age 22 & worked for Fred Trees Brook Street, Ilkley. Bride was daughter of an Antwerp solicitor.

Whitehead, Harry

Age:

34

Pre-war Occupations:

IUDC

War Regions:

Burma

Experience:

IG 12/1/45.

Homecoming:

Overseas April 1942. Arrived home unexpectedly at 1am 7/1/45 to be greeted by his twin daughters.

Wood, Hubert S.

Rank:

Staff Capt.

Pre-war Occupations:

In father's firm Joseph Wood and Co (Bradford) Ltd.

War Regions:

France (Dunkirk)

Experience:

IG 7/6/40.

Survived 3 weeks in Belgium, Dunkirk 8 hours with no kit, very tired when reached Dover. Very fit at end of period of leave in Blackpool.

Wood, Robin

Age:

14

Experience:

IG 14/1/44.

Canada evacuee:

Returned home after 4 years in Canada as an evacuee at Lakefield Preparatory School at Toronto. Has 17 year old sister Valerie who is head girl of her school in Canada and she is staying in Canada.

Quite a number of boys / girls from Ilkley area staying with families in Toronto area. Gained Canadian football colours and played ice hockey for his school. Now going to his father's old school, Sedbergh - into the same house as his father was in.

Woodhead, Stanley

Age:
27

Rank:
L/Cpl

Regiment:
RASC

Experience:
IG 7/6/40.

Joined the RASC in 1939. To France Oct 1939.

Woodhouse, J.E.

Rank:

L/Sgt

Regiment:

AA Battery

Pre-war Occupations:

Formerly Chauffeur at Denton Park.

War Regions:

North Africa

Experience:

IG 9/4/43.

Meet up:

L/Bmdr Alan Garside, son of Mr and Mrs Garside, Railway Road. Met up in North Africa - both in AA unit.

IG 4/2/44.

The cream of Ack Ack that took part in desert campaign. Had job of guarding WSC Stalin & Roosevelt at Mena Conference November 1943 in Cairo. G.O.C. said they had done a good job as guards at an event which would go down in history as a global changing event for which we should all be proud.

Young, G.M.

Age:
33

Rank:
Major

Regiment:
Royal Scots

Pre-war Occupations:
Blackpool GS.

War Regions:
North Africa, Sicily

Experience:
IG 23/6/44.

Joined Army in 1940, Scots Guards, then onto another unit with commission and fought in North Africa and Sicily. Wounded in arm and abdomen.

Returnees from Burma - SECOND WW

War Regions:

Burma

Experience:

IG 12/1/45.

Ilkley men "welcome" at Leeds & Bradford on return from Burma. When arrived in Leeds hoped as a result of "Get you home" service marred by local volunteer car drivers. Returnees believed they would soon be in Ilkley - but service only for B.L.A people. For instance RSM Fred Chapman of River View had been three and a half years overseas. They had indifferent reception when they docked and no one to meet them & then the reception in Leeds!! Did not want to be treated as heroes but resented the distinction between B.L.A & 14th Army in Burma. Finally 2nd Ilkley motorists from G.Y.H. (Get You Home) service came out to get them. Chapman said "When Mountbatten hears about this he will have something to say!".

Driver Whitehead was asked, while digging under shellfire in Burma, if he wanted to go home by boat - he jumped at the idea and arrived home 1am Sunday morning & one of his 10 year old twin daughters answered the door. A little disappointed to find such an indifferent welcome home from Burma but pleased with the GYH scheme.

Lt A. Oliver from BR arrived Bradford Station on Saturday & told people waiting to take him home but then found out for B.L.A. people only. Oliver had been 2 years in action in Burma fighting with Chindits. Behind enemy lines landed on Allied

made airstrips behind Jap lines. Japanese skilful & brave fighters
but when supply lines broken their toughness weakened.

Ghyll Royd School

Experience:

IG 3/4/42.

School had remarkable figures for War Weapons Week £4,429 - 8s and by beginning Warships Week raised up to £4,779 - 19s - 6d. For Warship Week concluding 28/3/42 raised £4,316-3s-6d. Grand total £9,096-3s.

Two ladies interned in Germany

Experience:

IG 23/4/43.

“We both lived in Germany 30 years and were private tutors with our own little flat in Munich. We went to Germany before the FWW and stayed there throughout it, frequent visits to the UK pre 3/9/39. Then left alone until July 1940. Had to report to police station once a week. Then one day when reported there, detained with the intention of being sent out of the country, and not allowed back to the flat. In prison for a night, wardress was very rough and treated us badly. Then we were told we were UK exceptions and given cheese, butter and beer.

We thought we were being released when taken to Konstanz (on the Swiss border) and then on arrival we were told we were being interned - there four months. Clean toilets and floors - letters sent to German friends never posted yet we were members of important families. Later when our letters were posted we received several parcels.

After 4 months sent to Wurtemberg to a convent of Franciscan Order of nuns - very kind there and there until we were released in January 1943. Miss Mary Booth of the Salvation army was there with us. Gestapo were in attendance and we were punished for trivial issues. Some got solitary confinement. Up at 8am for breakfast - help with cleaning - at 11.30am lunch and tea in the afternoon. In our rooms by 8.30pm and corridors locked.

The Gestapo said that cows were to yield so much milk and poor hens lay 60 eggs a year - no use protesting – the nuns had to get them from elsewhere! We received Red Cross parcels and were amazed at the contents and Germans said it must have been propaganda. Parcels arrived on horse-drawn cart and we shouted ‘Hurrah’ and ‘God save the King’ which upset the Gestapo.

Eventually we were told we were going home - left 18/1/43 by train (full) for 24 hours nothing to drink. In France, everywhere we changed trains, we had to move our own luggage. In Paris the French tried to help but stopped by the Germans. Travelled across France to Spain and Spanish soldiers gave us oranges. A delay in Spain as a bridge was broken so night in a hotel. We were able to have a bath there and a meal for which we had to pay. When we returned to the train the Germans took one coach off and the compartments were very crowded. Swiss Gov rep told us to get on the train but we were told there was no room and he spoke to the German guard who in a furious mood, picked up the luggage and threw it on the train - we followed straight to the guards compartment!! The guards went elsewhere.

From Spain to Portugal - met with kindness - meal with a choice of wine and white bread. British Gov allowed £1 a week pocket money and we bought cakes!! In Lisbon 7 weeks and then back to England in March 1943. All their belongings / papers in flat were never returned to them."

The ladies believed the Germans knew that hopes of winning were fast diminishing and heard Germans asking when war was over and old Germany brought back again.

Canadian army lorry crash in Burley 15/6/44

Experience:

IG 23/6/44.

20 of 21 died. Crash due to fast driving at corner by the Malt Shovel Hotel. Driving 50 - 60 miles an hour towards Otley. Skid marks 14 feet from the point of impact. An 85 American horsepower, 3 tonner capable of 50 / 55 mph. An authorised duty trip but no seating accommodation for men & only a canvas topped lorry. Vehicle crashed at speed into house, 12 Main St. and a wall and this killed the men. 17 died instantly, 2 others in nearby Warden's Post and 1 died in hospital later that day - the sole survivor was Sgt Camile Cote of the Canadian Infantry Corps.

Anonymous

Experience:

IG 6/2/42.

Ilkley Officer wounded in fighting in Libya with 8th Army.

The Battle before Msus (says a Message from British United Press) described by a young artillery officer who had undergone an operation for a shrapnel wound above the wrist in a shell - scarred Italian road house occupied by a mobile surgical unit. Asked where from said Ilkley Moor Baht'at, "We gunners supporting a brigade came down from North and intercepted the enemy who had tanks on plain between Mekili and Msus, only half an hour's action but we made it hot for them. They turned away breaking off action as dusk fell! They presented me with a blighty one, but it will mean Cairo and not Ilkley Moor!"

Anonymous

Experience:

IG 19/6/42

Ilkley officer in a Libiyan desert battle:

"Great schemozzle of sandwiched tanks told in despatch by Richard McMillan, the British United Press correspondent with Ritchie's army.

A young lieutenant from Ilkley served in autumn push Royal Tank Regiment, wounded and captured on 15/12/41 at Gazala and released when Indians reached Derna On 21/12/41. Five of our Valentine tanks loomed out of shimmering haze - just left battle field of Bir Balaffar. At escarpment north of Bir Balaffar, Axis Tanks moved up and tried to encircle us. Suddenly 13 of them attacked us and then 25 more joined in, by this time joined by a number of General Grants (tanks). Fight started at 5.30pm and went on until nightfall. Only then we could see 1 thing - tracer fire both sides. Everytime a burst of fire spluttered out of the darkness of enemy positions we loosed off our guns - some hits as flames spurted out. Not much chance of sleep, at 7.30 am at them again - sandwiched (first Italians, then ourselves, then Germans, then Grants & then more Germans).

We knocked out 6 of their Mark 3's. Ours and Grants did great damage. McMillan said this was second officer from Ilkley Moor. While talking a shell landed a few yards away and an explosion the other side of us. Time to get going & crews into tanks (burning hot from the heat of a broiling sun and to battle once again).

Five German airmen bail out of hit bomber - all captured.

Experience:

IG 9/5/41.

Over Pool-in-Wharfedale a JU 88 engaged by night fighter and was one of 7 German bombers shot down on 7 May 1941. PC Heeley patrolling on a motorcycle saw man land in field who ran off but PC caught up with him, frisked him, and put him on his bike carrier and drove to the nearest police office. Another captured in a ploughed field by a fire watcher - Mr. Bishop and Mr E.C. Whitewick a warden & his 16 year old son Howard. He saw German airman dangling from a parachute & another warden Mr. Arthur Broady who was a captain in a London regiment in last war & served in the East was called to the scene. Broady jumped fence, ran to German, placed hand on man's revolver & disarmed him. Airman a youth of 18 without boots - these blown off in explosion in the plane. Whitewick told military - guard turned out & met Broady and his prisoner coming towards them accompanied by fire watcher & wardens. The boy Howard Whitewick - acted with great promptitude - a member of the ATC & warden's messenger.

One airman landed in neighbouring town & told ARP post member I'm finished, I'm injured. Section leader Frank Dawson (AFS) standing by post & heard JU 88 hit - minutes later a woman screamed as German flopped out of the sky 10 yards away and lay motionless in the road. The German confirmed plane was damaged by machine gun bursts - airman to AFS post and given water & cigarette & handed to the police. German was 25 years old - a tall navigating officer & had damaged ankle - had spent time in England pre War. Grateful for kindness & said believed not much consideration expected from the English.

James Anderson local fire watcher - at his garden gate when the Nazi came down & called for AFS support. Mrs Marsh who lost a son in this war saw the man come down & and gave assistance. Pilot was last to bale out & came to earth not far from Windhill. Plane passed over district at Idle in Bradford - burst into flames & crashed demolishing two cottages in a block of four & damaged the other two. Three people - man, woman and child killed & five injured.

69th (WR) Field Regiment RA Gunners in N.W. Europe including Ilkley links.

War Regions:

Netherlands, Belgium

Experience:

IG 24/8/45.

From D day to VE day Major E.G. Carter, Capt J.M. Carter and Lt. Col. Maufe were the gunners and saw action on the Belgium Canal at Turnhout, Rosendal, Arnhem, Poppel and Breda. At Breda a Dutch civilian cycled to German positions and asked if they were being shelled. Reply was "No" with shells dropping 200 yards North. The civilian returned to Allied side and a correction was made with devastating results on the German positions.

Arctic Convoys

Experience:

IG 23/2/45.

Lt C.D. Chapman and P/O J.R. Spencer 7 day battle against JU 88s and U boats. Lt Carl Donald Chapman (24) eldest son Mrs Chapman Alexandra Crescent, Ilkley & Petty Officer James R. Spencer (20) only son of Mr and Mrs J.H. Spencer, Kimberley Street Ilkley. Rough seas, snow storms and regular poor visibility.

Canadian Aircraft Crash

Experience:

IG 9/11/45.

Canadian killed in Ilkley bomber crash. Injured Sergeant's gallant work on Beamsley Beacon:

At noon Monday 5 Nov Lancaster bomber - heard to pass low over Ilkley flying in Northerly direction, crashed into south slope of Beamsley Beacon. 4 killed, 3 badly injured and 1 man injured but staggered 1 mile down the slope to a farmhouse to summon help. Hit hillside with tremendous force twisted propeller quarter of a mile from fuselage. Lurched upward & forward as it hit the hillside breaking up and bursting into flames. Heat melted metal.

Visibility in fog 50 yards - the pilot "came down to have a look and crashed" - so said the least injured survivor Sgt Joseph Patrick Balenger. He was taken to Coronation Hospital with head injuries, shock and exhaustion. He returned to his unit later that week. He arrived at Black Hill Farm (Mr & Mrs Pullan) and then to Black Foss Farm (Gill family) who phoned the police.

3 badly injured to Coronation Hospital then to High Royds. The plane crashed into steep bank of wet heather over boulders and past a succession of small quarries. The heather was set on fire by leaking fuel. Fire died away after two hours. Even the stretcher bearers got lost returning to the ambulance. They could hardly see as thick fog and had to communicate by blowing whistles.

Other fatal crashes

Experience:

IG 9/11/45.

3rd fatal crash in Ilkley area. Jan 1944 - bomber struck top of moorside above Hebers Ghyll and 6 of the 7 crew killed - sole survivor died at High Royds.

Early in the war a small plane crashed on Keighley Gate Road and the only occupant was killed. Then bomber returning from St Nazaire had a forced landing east of the Keighley Gate Road. Crew fortunately had minor injuries and no fatalities.