

[<Files\HFRT001 Joan Garwood>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.36% Coverage

Have you any memories of that day? The day that War broke....

Yes! Yes, absolutely vivid! Yes because we heard it on the radio at eleven o'clock, and Mr Chamberlain said we were at war and just at the back of us was a barrage balloon and as he was talking, so this barrage balloon went up. I always remember that ever so clearly - yeah.

And when you say we?

The family, yes. My mother and father and two sisters.

Can you remember anyone's reaction to that news?

Well, I suppose we were expecting it, so that was it. I think, sort of, umm, bit heroic really. Yeah. Yeah, you know – we're going to defend people - I think that was probably it, really it as much as anything. Yes.

[<Files\HFRT002 Maurice Garwood>](#) - § 2 references coded [14.92% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 9.04% Coverage

we're talking about the Second World War - your memory of the day war that broke out?

Ur, Sunday it was. And I was near the end of my choirboy activities because I was seventeen then. There were three brothers in the choir with me at that time. It was during the sermon that the vicar usually gave, and the verger came up the church, and whispered in his ear. And then he announced that Neville Chamberlain hadn't heard from Hitler. So 'We are now at war with Germany.'

So we sang the next hymn, said our prayers. The choir were crying (gets emotional). Then after a bit we got home and we were jumping about. Two of my brothers then were in the Territorials and they had to report for duty - they were in the signals - 48th Div Signals which were about half a mile away from where we lived. They went down to report - one never came back, he went up into Yorkshire as a soldier and he was conscripted. The other one was stationed in the Barracks and he used to sneak home every night.

I had another elder brother he was a slaughterman. Now, he was actually called up because they had regular calls up every so often – sort of an age group would go in. I was the fourth son of

the family - there were two more younger than me, there were six boys. Well I was a hairdressers apprentice then, just finishing me time. And Mum says, 'I've got three sons in the Forces' - there was one at the grammar school and he went into the Navy and I hadn't got me papers yet. But before then my parents organised that I'd go into the.... What did they call it, um...?

Reserve?

A reserved occupation, that was it, and I was in an aircraft factory -seven miles away - that was in the centre of Birmingham, you see? You used to work twelve hours a day, six days a week. Six o'clock in the morning until six at night. And during the raids, we used to go on duty in the morning, at night time. And of course I had a bike then - a motor bike - and we used to.... usual journey straight through - get to work. And if the siren or the 'all clear' hadn't gone, we'd go straight down into the shelter before we started work.

Reference 2 - 5.87% Coverage

Okay, I wanna come back to that memory – that very, obviously, poignant memory - can you remember the hymn that was sung, when the announcement was made - you said that there was a final prayer and a hymn?

I didn't take much notice then, no.

00:05:02

But why do you think... you know, you were youngish lads, why was there so much emotion, do you think, in that choir? What was it that triggered that? What were you frightened of? What were you....? Where had you got this fear....?

The choir men behind me were ex war - World War One - the tenors and the bass.

They'd been there.

They'd been there, they'd been through it. Of course I should imagine before the War, it didn't dawn on me then, but years later when I think about it, we were actually preparing. They'd prepared us for another war. Because you had got your Boys Brigade, your Boy Scouts - it was all sort of military way of life, before the War.

Yes, yes. That's interesting.

That's my sort of view. But I didn't think it then, but I did later on. When I think of life today, there's no such of military sort of acumen.

Well, yes, they're there but they're very small numbers, aren't they? They're very small numbers. Not like... not the popularity of those...

And I mean you had to do as you were told, when you were in there - especially the Boys Brigade - they were very strict.

[<Files\\HFRT003 William Patterson>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.06% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.06% Coverage

Right, and have you have you any special memories of the day that war broke out?

Oh many. One of the main ones was... when the announcement was made on the radio, we heard, um, - an air raid alarm sounded - and we thought 'Oh God! We've started already!' and everybody panicked and, of course, shelters weren't built or anything like that, so.... But it turned out to be a false alarm. It was just testing the equipment. Making sure we knew what it was.

So when this alarm... what did people do when you say there was panic? What did people do?

Well, we had quite a few... I think my father was the local bobby - the local policeman - and they all come running to him - where should they go, where should they hide, how to protect themselves? And he was literally running like the proverbial fly - directing them where to go, what to do, how to take cover. And basically speaking, he was saying stay inside, and keep away from glass but near a solid wall. That was all he could tell them at the time.

[<Files\\HFRT004 Edith Wood>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.28% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.28% Coverage

Ah, well, now that's funny. It didn't really strike me! I thought, oh! It was a Sunday morning and we were all - it was on a morning like this - beautiful sunshine. We were all standing on the steps of our house - we had a house with steps. And we were all standing there - it was Dad, Mum, myself, my grandfather and my aunt - because they used to live upstairs. And they announced it and we all looked at one another and my mother went berserk. She was running up and down the steps

saying, 'Ooh my boy, ooh my boy. Because he was in the forces'. It didn't matter about anybody else - just her boy!
(laughing)

Right.

But, I mean, it didn't strike us and it didn't start for a few weeks after that so...

Yes. Well how did she hear the news then?

On the radio.

On the radio.

Mmmm.

And do you remember how it was announced or...?

Yes. It was, I suppose, it was about eleven o'clock in the morning and they said 'We are now at War with Germany.'

And how old were you at that time?

Sixteen.

Sixteen.

Mmmmm

[<Files\\HFRT008 Derek Denchfield>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.63% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.63% Coverage

What were your feelings when you heard the news?

Well, I think we wondered what was going to happen. We thought probably we would see nothing but aeroplanes buzzing over and bombing us but of course that didn't come to start off with did it? But I think we had a certain amount of fear wondering what was going to happen. 'Cause we'd only got, well, the radio, which didn't tell us a lot, and the newspapers.

It's very apprehensive when you don't know what is going to happen. How did you hear the news? Were you told or was it on the radio?

We heard it I think as most people did on the Sunday morning as it, war broke out: they announced it on the radio didn't they. Of course that was in the papers the next day, but children of our

age, I don't think took too much notice. In their early teens, it was just something else that happened I think, at that age.

[<Files\HFRT010 Betty Wise>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.49% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.49% Coverage

Do you remember the day war was declared?

Yes – well, we knew it was on the cards – I think in a way it was a relief to know it was definite, that something was going to happen. What was his name, Chamberlain? The year before; it was very dodgy then and they put it off for a year, but at least it gave us another 12 months to get prepared for it because otherwise, well, we'd got nothing – well, I don't know what we'd got or what we hadn't got.

[<Files\HFRT013 Joan Draper>](#) - § 2 references coded [8.69% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.80% Coverage

What age were you when war broke out?

Six.

Did you have any feelings when you heard?

It didn't happen at all, I didn't have any feelings. I know there were murmurings and mutterings with Mum and Dad but it didn't mean anything to me. It didn't mean anything to me at all.

But your parents must have been quite concerned mustn't they?

Yes, it wasn't until we came home from school and found that there was a man there and he was measuring us up for gas masks, and then the war came into it.

Do you remember how you heard the news that war had broken out?

No, I don't.

Six is quite young really.

Things still went on the same really. It was still... everything in the house was the same. The only thing was coming home from school. One day it was the gas masks, the next time the guy came round it was for the baby gas mask for my younger brother and then another time was when they came and started building the Anderson Shelters and those were the sort of things that went on.

Reference 2 - 4.89% Coverage

Do you remember how this affected your life?

It was just a thing that he was there and measured, and that was it. The only time I got upset was when they brought the baby gas mask in and put my brother in it and I didn't like that.

How old was your brother?

Oh he was months... August, he was three months and they picked him up and put him in that and I had a wobbly with that. My mother must have been quite tense, she said, 'Be quiet Joan!' 'I don't want them to put him in there.' Then the Anderson Shelter was being dug. But somehow or other you were still safe because you were with your Mum and Dad. There wasn't any inkling that we were going to be sent away at the time.

When you talk about the gas mask for baby and you say they put him in it can you describe it?

You literally put the baby in it, and it was as heavy as a car seat now, and you held it like that. You put the baby in there, he would have looked out. Laying down and looking out through a glass quite happy. He would have then been totally encased and on the side was a ventilator, because he was totally in there, you had to get air to him. But saying that and knowing now there's all asbestos in that and there was all asbestos in all the gas masks we had and were breathing in during the war, so...

[<Files\\HFRT014 Diane Lillian Bowsher>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.55% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.55% Coverage

What age were you when war broke out do you remember?

Coming up for eight.

What were your feelings when you heard the news?

I don't know at the time I was getting bees in a jam jar and my father came out and said, 'War has been declared.' It meant nothing to me really, nothing at all.

[<Files\\HFRT016 GladysBanks>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.51% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.51% Coverage

How did you hear the news?

Ah, it was a Sunday morning and every Sunday morning before years before then we always went to church three times a day, morning, afternoon, Sunday school and the evening. And the church was five minutes walk from me. Highgate Road Baptist Church, north west five and I was in . er got into church about ten to eleven er cos I wasn't working then on that Sunday and the minister started, Mr Wilmot started we had hymn and a few minutes talk and then all of a sudden he said, I can see myself sitting there in the pew quite near the front. All of a sudden he said, 'I have just heard the news that war has just been declared, I think everybody should get home as quick as they can.' And I ran, I did the four minute mile cross Highgate Road and down Glenhurst Avenue and that was quarter past eleven and when I got back home er my father hadn't gone to church that Sunday morning and he had just heard it on the radio.

What were your feelings when you heard the news?

2.09

Umm bit mixed because my father was always, since I started to work for the government particularly. He was always talking to me about world war one. That was in the front line and he was one of the odd survivors of the battle of the Somme and so I knew quite a bit about what war was like. My father used to say that he felt that war was going to come in a minute and he used to throw his arms up in the air. And he said, cos I used to, I'm sorry I used to laugh at him and my brother and sister, used to say, 'Every cat and dog in the country will have to work and fight for their freedom!' I think my feelings were just mixed and then I thought to myself oh had to ought to get down to Whitehall and I though well I'm going down there really early tomorrow morning and that as far as I can remember.

[<Files\\HFRT018 Lena Jakeman>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.51% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.51% Coverage

Where were you?

0.53

I was at my grandma's on holiday. It was September and I was over there. I was at grandma's and grandad came in from the field because e knew it was going to be announced and we all sat there and quietly listened and that was it. We just carried on then as if nothing had happened because we was out in the village and you know it didn't seem to affect us in anyway.

Whereabouts were your grandparents?

Oving. Near Aylesbury, over near Aylesbury.