

[<Files\HFRT001 Joan Garwood>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.80% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.80% Coverage

00:15:02 *And what about the Americans? Did you have much contact with the Americans?*

Ur, no. They were... a lot of those were in Blackpool, because we did go to Blackpool in the War on holiday. And there were a lot in the dances there.

Not many around Birmingham?

No, no.

[<Files\HFRT002 Maurice Garwood>](#) - § 3 references coded [19.89% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.07% Coverage

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?

Reference 2 - 7.28% Coverage

And, those brothers - how many of them came back? That went away?

I lost one. He was... he went through Dunkirk and he was training at... give me that seaside place again... yes, Weymouth. And the boat capsized and he was drowned. And that was a run of people getting drowned in my family.

That was practising for the Normandy landings, was it?

No, it was sort of a drill – it was after Dunkirk. That was in 1940, in '41.

Oh earlier? Oh sorry, yes, yes.

Yes. And being a lad - a young lad - I was the eldest one at home, of course, I went to the Police Station and said 'I want me brother home. For burial of me brother'. The sergeant said, 'Hang on.' He said, 'You want your brothers home from the Forces to bury your brother?' I said, 'Yes'. He said, 'How many brother's you got, you're not pulling my leg are you?' Anyway we fetched one from Ireland, one from Yorkshire. Because, of course, he wasn't in the Navy then, me younger brother - he was younger. And they came for the funeral but we had no body.

They never found the body?

They found a body but there was a mix up between our funeral directors and the Army. The Army said 'we'll bury him' and we said we wanted him at home. And they said alright, we'll send the body up. The funeral directors went down to fetch the body and the body wasn't there.

(laughing) This is kind of....

And if my mother found out where Tom left his life - like in Shirley - she'd have had a fit. In twenty-four hours he was on a siding in the railway. Because the funeral directors were down at Weymouth - he had to come back - go to the railway siding, take it out, put it in the ward before the funeral.

A remarkable memory, that.

Reference 3 - 9.54% Coverage

it says you experienced the Underground - people sleeping in the Underground?

Yes, when I was... I joined up eventually.

You did?

Yeah, because when me younger brother went into the Navy I'd done about three years in the factory. And every six months they used to send you a postcard, 'are you still in the reserved occupation' you see? And the foreman used to say, 'Have you had your postcard?' 'Yeah.' 'Have you posted it yet?' 'Yeah.' Well, it was this particular time I never sent the postcard - that I was still employed. And within a few weeks I'd had me papers. The foreman said, 'Did you send that postcard?' I said, 'No.' he said, 'Do you want to go in the Forces?' Right... and he....

00:10:01

But there must have been a lot of pressure from your Mum not to go?

She knew what she'd done wrong. I was sort of going down and down, you know? All the people were in the Forces and there was me, in the family.

Did you feel kind of left out, a bit, of it then?

To a point, yes. I was enjoying myself, admittedly. I mean, I was picking the money up (laughing). But there was something missing. Then I had me papers and, do you know where I had to go from Birmingham? To sign on? Glasgow!

Why couldn't you sign on in Birmingham? Was it the particular regiment that they sent you to then?

No, that was the place. I had me details in Birmingham, like, you see? And they said, 'oh, we'll let me know'. Any rate, there were two trains - fast trains. Took eight hours didn't they? Glasgow, Birmingham... yeah. There was one in the mornings, which got there in the evening and there was one the night before. Mum said, 'You'd better take the one the night before.' I said, It said, that day... I said, I've got until 23.59 which was minute to twelve o'clock! And I got up there at half past ten at night. Took the tram to Maryhill from the

centre of Glasgow, which cost me four-pence. The sergeant there, he was in the HLI - Highland Light Infantry. 'Come on then! You're not soldiers yet!' They kitted us all out with very nice.... 'You'll be alright now'. They didn't say you were late or anything like that. You were there on time 23.59 which it's stuck in my mind - I use that more than once!

[<Files\HFRT003 William Patterson>](#) - § 2 references coded [5.01% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.88% Coverage

A lot of them, of course, a lot of them, as they got older, got whipped into the forces. I got... I wanted to go in the forces but I unfortunately - the job I'd started working at, made me, um, an essential worker - I came under the essential works order. And you were not allowed to volunteer. So I stuck that until I think the week after VE Day was announced, I got me call up papers. The works order had been cancelled so I got me call up papers. (laughs) I wanted to go in the navy and was sent for the usual medical, interview and all that. Finished up in the RAF. It was a good time, in many respects, I suppose. You had a lot of mates and you saw a lot of life. Made me very independent which is a good thing.

Reference 2 - 2.12% Coverage

Yes, first time, it's always like.... You know, you didn't do it but... It's like when you would have gone to university, in the old days, you went, you know... or you would have - like I did - you went away to a different town - that's when you became independent, wasn't it?

Yes, yes. Well with this essential works order, one of the conditions was that we had day release and it included Saturday mornings (laughs) - you had to go to school. I went to the local technical college and started there. It's a long while ago.

[<Files\HFRT006 Ted Stanley>](#) - § 2 references coded [24.09% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 18.37% Coverage

Yeah, 3rd September. I joined the Post Office in August 1939 - a month before war broke out. And then I was messenger boy - telegram boy - for at least twelve months before they sent me down to the repeater station at Fenny Stratford as a messenger boy. And on the PBX, on the... you know? On the telephone exchange 'till 1943. Then I was made a postman and, of course, in those days you had to pass the Civil Service exam to get on the Post Office. And much to my surprise I did.

I should have gone in the army September '43 but the Post Office got me deferred because of Christmas. So I went in the army March '44. I went to Bury St Edmunds for six weeks, basic training, and you went before an officer and he said, 'What would you like to do sir?' You know? 'I'd like to go in the RASC please.' Everybody else was going in the....

Royal?

Royal Army Service Corps - driving. And all the others were in the Beds and Herts and Suffolks, you know? I said, oh, don't really want to be in the infantry.

You get all dirty, you know? Anyway, I came home after my six weeks basic training - we had a weekend leave - and at that time Bletchley Post Office was by the railway station at Bletchley. And I walked in there - 'How you getting on?' and all this. And the boss said 'Alright, are you going in the Signals?' which most of them did. I said, 'well no, I really... I'd like to go in the RASC'. I said 'everyone else is going in blooming infantry. Climbing walls and getting all dirty!' You know?

Anyway when we got back and they had the ... where you were going, there were three hundred at a time. Me and me mate were A1 - we were the only A1's that went in the RASC. All the rest went in the Beds and Herts infantry. From there I went to Carlisle -Hadrians Camp. Did a six week driving on anything,everything and then I went on DunRs course.

A what?

Dun R - Despatch Rider. And, uh, I was at Hadrians Camp on the 6th June, when it came over the tannoy that forces had landed in Normandy, you know? Whipped straight down to a place called Weybridge in Surrey to replace two drivers that had been killed with their lorries turning over. Charming. And during ... about fourteen days later we was going up Aromanches - up the beaches, you know? Into France.

Then we was carrying fuel - petrol mainly. 'Cos we had what they called Bedford QL's - semi artics - sixty foot trailer on it. And then, when we got to Boulogne, they brought the Pluto pipeline up by the beach and we laid that all the way through to Germany.

Reference 2 - 5.72% Coverage

Is this because the Americans were giving us aid?

Yes, lease lend wasn't it mainly in. After twelve months abroad we changed our Bedfords to Macks, Yankees jobs, you know, left hand drive and I had one of those ten-ton Macks we took over then. That was a carry-on because when I went in the army up at Carlisle, I mean in those days you had to be twenty-one to have an HGV (licence) and I was just over eighteen. 'Can't drive....': 'Get in it and drive it! never mind about over twenty-one that's scrapped.' When we had these left-hand drive air-braked Macks, bloomin' great things ... 'well all you've got to do is drive it, you know.' If you could drive them you could drive anything, beautiful things but you didn't have any training on them. You were there and that's it, that's your wagon.

[<Files\\HFRT007 June Woodward>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.76% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.76% Coverage

I can remember my brother being called up for the war, he went into the Merchant Navy, no... the Royal Navy. He was on submarines, that was about '43, '43. And then my other brother who was younger, he got sent to the mines, he was a "Bevin boy", he got sent to the coal mines.

Right.

00:10:00

That was a bit upsetting, I suppose, for my parents because my mother used to say, 'I've got one under the sea and one under the ground!' (laughs) but they both came home safely.

[<Files\HFRT008 Derek Denchfield>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.46% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.46% Coverage

Did you really want to go into the forces?

Well I must admit I didn't mind but there was no case of whether you wanted to or not, you were conscripted, you see, as soon as you were eighteen. I was eighteen on the 19th July and on the 20th I was on the train to Blackpool.

[<Files\HFRT010 Betty Wise>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.69% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.69% Coverage

Stuart was the eldest one, he was an engineer with the Post Office and he was at Wing when London was bombed, it was where they sent messages out and he was there then. It was the only one left working, or the only one in the area when London was badly bombed, and then he went to Bletchley Park afterwards. My second brother was on the Railways down at Lancing. He did volunteer in the end and he went in the Air Force. My youngest brother, who is younger than me, he was in the Civil Service and he volunteered, but they wouldn't pass him because they said his hearing wasn't good enough. He went and had his ears cleaned or something and went back again, but he wasn't called up as such; but he volunteered, he was younger than me so the war was well on... and he went out to Rhodesia for his training.

[<Files\HFRT012 May Webster>](#) - § 1 reference coded [17.41% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 17.41% Coverage

What about VE Day, did you have a party?

(Friend) It was all down by *(can't understand)* Park, it was all down there

(Mrs W) We didn't have a personal... we didn't anyway have a personal. We didn't really want anything because the boys were still away. Everybody was waiting for their sons coming home. We had quite a big contingent from round where we lived went out to, not the Europe one, the other one. Johnny Willis, lived in Trent Road, they all went out to the Far East and they got caught up in the Singapore business, there was quite a contingent from that area, well from the area were we lived.

00:13:39

But my brother happened to fall off a wall and hurt his leg in hospital . They (the battalion) they went out, so (of) course when (he) got better he was put in another battalion and he went out the other way. He went out to Egypt. He fought right though Tobruk, El Alamein, all the lot. He was in... but he never used to talk about it, but he did one day, my friend got him talking. We'd been out to a dance and I went to bed and left them downstairs. And he was telling her that he was on the boat and they took them out. I think it was El Alamein or Tobruk, I can't remember now, but the boat took them and it couldn't go any further in and they had to walk. With the ammunition on (he was in the

engineers), bombs and everything on his back, dynamite. They had to walk in, he says they got actually on the land and were pushing the Italians back and then they run out of the stuff, the bullets and everything. The ships were right out there and they had to go all the way back and get picked up again. Then when they got the stuff come in again, they did eventually take it, it was Tobruk.

00:15:22

(*Cousin*) He had a mad Major, he'd been under fire from a German tank and the Major says we're going to get that bugger there, then they put a load of gun cotton and bombs back, they had to cross the river to get to it. They got the tank.

(*Mrs W*) They probably lost a lot of men.

END OF INTERVIEW

[<Files\HFRT015 Janet Chamberlain>](#) - § 1 reference coded [18.70% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 18.70% Coverage

Tell me about your father?

My father was a regular in the Air Force he enlisted, he went in as a boy apprentice went to Horton as an apprentice in about 1917 I would think or 1918 and during the war (WW2) he was partly in England and my mother I moved around with him so I don't remember because I was too little. Then in 1943 he was sent abroad and he came back in 1946. But while he was in England, I'm not sure where he was stationed the first German bomber that was shot down came down in the sea just off Sheringham (Norfolk). He and a party of men were sent up to rescue it because they wanted to have a look at it.

0.57 He went up, apparently he was second in command of this group of men and we went for holiday in Sheringham and I didn't know about this story because he didn't talk about things much. You know they didn't talk about much that went on at all during the war. We went to the railway museum and I was interested to see a photograph of a bomber and a group of RAF men it was the page of a newspaper but you couldn't see the faces. Because my father was in the Air Force and we'd lived on RAF stations I was interested.

1.27 So when we went home I was talking about going to Sheringham and he said, 'Is the lamp post still bent?' 'Pardon?' he said, he told us about being sent with this group of men to collect this plane, try and pull it out of the sea when the tide was low. What had happened was they tried to shift it and they couldn't so somebody had the idea of fixing this very heavy rope round a lamp post on the esplanade at Sheringham which they did. They were busily heaving on this rope and suddenly there was this huge roar of laughter. They all looked up and there were hundreds of people all standing on this concrete esplanade watching them. The lamp post had bent.

That photo in the museum was your Dad, one of those people?

Yes. Next time we went we went in and specifically had a look but they had taken it to the archives so I wasn't really sure who to approach about that. Then I was thinking of writing to them but then my father died in 1990, this was the late 1980's so I never did actually did get round to telling them about it, because I'm sure they would have been interested.

[<Files\HFRT018 Lena Jakeman>](#) - § 1 reference coded [6.74% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.74% Coverage

I suppose a lot of people in this area were in reserved occupation weren't they. There were lots of people who didn't go away this time.

22.40

(Sister)

There was quite a few people before war started. Dad was on the Royal Naval reserves and they sent for Dad before war was actually declared and he had to go to Portsmouth and we all cried when he left and everything didn't we? The next morning he was back because his eyesight didn't pass test so he didn't have to go but my brother went. Because he chose the navy because he was old enough you see so he went. He was on Corvettes and the Destroyer wasn't he? He was at the evacuation of Dunkirk and he was on the Destroyer, Codrington and it had come back presumably to Portsmouth and he was on shore leave and the Codrington was sunk while he was shore leave. He lost everything and came home. They gave him shore leave and he came home. Mum and I went to Wolverton Station to meet him and he came up the steps and that and then he realised he'd left his gas mask on the train and that was about all he'd got left so he tore back down the station fortunately it was still there. He came up with it and a man came along on a bicycle and it took off his hat to my brother because he obviously realised he'd been at Dunkirk.

[<Files\SHLT038 Phyllis Brocklehurst>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.74% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.74% Coverage

So when it came to VJ Day after the dropping of the bomb....

Yeah.

What were your feelings then? What were the family feelings then?

Oh just tremendous relief. But then again you couldn't throw your hat too much in the air because again we didn't know whether Wally was alive. So you didn't know what you were going to find.

And when did you find out then?

I can't remember precisely but we did get some sort of message back. And as a matter of fact, we were luckier than lots of people, I think because umm, my sister-in-law had two brothers who were in the Far East. They were with the Indian troops and one of them, he was an off, well both officers actually and I think they tried to get messages through and I'm pretty sure that through them we did get some information. And then of course the Red Cross went in pretty quickly. My brother has a tremendous admiration for Lady Mountbatten because she was very high up in the Red Cross and she apparently, I think she was flown in and he said she came into these camps you know. He was in a, he was in a, he was in the RAMC and he was a Staff Sergeant and he was in charge of the infectious diseases area of one of the very, very big umm, sick camps. So it was tuberculosis, dysentery, leprosy – they got a few lepers. All things like that and they were dying like flies. And umm, he said honestly, you know, this camp just wasn't fit for a fine woman or somebody who hadn't lived like this, to sort of come in and see. But apparently she did. She came in and visited the place and umm, the Red Cross of course got busy and they got lists. They got lists home to people as quickly as ever they could. You know, once, once the places were open, it was, they did as much as they could as quickly as they could. And they had a tremendous sort out for a start because they had to decide of the various categories. Those that

were too sick to move and were going to die anyway. Those who could stand being in the camp a bit longer and be, with, could, could be, with being nursed a bit longer, umm, well with a bit more food and a bit of care, they'd make it. And the others who were in a pretty dicey state and if they weren't shipped out quick, would almost certainly die anyway so umm, there was all this big sort out and lots of organisation and heaven knows what going on. But I think in the sick camps there probably was a bit more organisation anyway because the British doctors had got a lot of say and the Japs respected them more. They were about the only people that the Japs did, did have any respect for and they did collaborate with them to some degree. So that was a unique situation actually. But really very traumatic.

[<Files\HFRT001 Joan Garwood>](#) - § 1 reference coded [1.80% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.80% Coverage

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Ur, no. They were... a lot of those were in Blackpool, because we did go to Blackpool in the War on holiday. And there were a lot in the dances there.

Not many around Birmingham?

No, no.

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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?

Reference 2 - 7.28% Coverage

And, those brothers - how many of them came back? That went away?

I lost one. He was... he went through Dunkirk and he was training at... give me that seaside place again... yes, Weymouth. And the boat capsized and he was drowned. And that was a run of people getting drowned in my family.

That was practising for the Normandy landings, was it?

No, it was sort of a drill – it was after Dunkirk. That was in 1940, in '41.

Oh earlier? Oh sorry, yes, yes.

Yes. And being a lad - a young lad - I was the eldest one at home, of course, I went to the Police Station and said 'I want me brother home. For burial of me brother'. The sergeant said, 'Hang on.' He said, 'You want your brothers home from the Forces to bury your brother?' I said, 'Yes'. He said, 'How many brother's you got, you're not pulling my leg are you?' Anyway we fetched one from Ireland, one from Yorkshire. Because, of course, he wasn't in the Navy then, me younger brother - he was younger. And they came for the funeral but we had no body.

They never found the body?

They found a body but there was a mix up between our funeral directors and the Army. The Army said 'we'll bury him' and we said we wanted him at home. And they said alright, we'll send the body up. The funeral directors went down to fetch the body and the body wasn't there.

(laughing) This is kind of....

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A remarkable memory, that.

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You did?

Yeah, because when me younger brother went into the Navy I'd done about three years in the factory. And every six months they used to send you a postcard, 'are you still in the reserved occupation' you see? And the foreman used to say, 'Have you had your postcard?' 'Yeah.' 'Have you posted it yet?' 'Yeah.' Well, it was this particular time I never sent the postcard - that I was still employed. And within a few weeks I'd had me papers. The foreman said, 'Did you send that postcard?' I said, 'No.' he said, 'Do you want to go in the Forces?' Right... and he....

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But there must have been a lot of pressure from your Mum not to go?

She knew what she'd done wrong. I was sort of going down and down, you know? All the people were in the Forces and there was me, in the family.

Did you feel kind of left out, a bit, of it then?

To a point, yes. I was enjoying myself, admittedly. I mean, I was picking the money up (laughing). But there was something missing. Then I had me

papers and, do you know where I had to go from Birmingham? To sign on? Glasgow!

Why couldn't you sign on in Birmingham? Was it the particular regiment that they sent you to then?

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Did you really want to go into the forces?

Well I must admit I didn't mind but there was no case of whether you wanted to or not, you were conscripted, you see, as soon as you were eighteen. I was eighteen on the 19th July and on the 20th I was on the train to Blackpool.

[<Files\HFRT010 Betty Wise>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.69% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.69% Coverage

Stuart was the eldest one, he was an engineer with the Post Office and he was at Wing when London was bombed, it was where they sent messages out and he was there then. It was the only one left working, or the only one in the area when London was badly bombed, and then he went to Bletchley Park afterwards. My second brother was on the Railways down at Lancing. He did volunteer in the end and he went in the Air Force. My youngest brother, who is younger than me, he was in the Civil Service and he volunteered, but they wouldn't pass him because they said his hearing wasn't good enough. He went and had his ears cleaned or something and went back again, but he wasn't called up as such; but he volunteered, he was younger than me so the war was well on... and he went out to Rhodesia for his training.

[<Files\HFRT012 May Webster>](#) - § 1 reference coded [17.41% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 17.41% Coverage

What about VE Day, did you have a party?

(Friend) It was all down by *(can't understand)* Park, it was all down there

(Mrs W) We didn't have a personal... we didn't anyway have a personal. We didn't really want anything because the boys were still away. Everybody was waiting for their sons coming home. We had quite a big contingent from round where we lived went out to, not the Europe one, the other one. Johnny Willis, lived in Trent Road, they all went out to the Far East and they got caught up in

the Singapore business, there was quite a contingent from that area, well from the area where we lived.

00:13:39

But my brother happened to fall off a wall and hurt his leg in hospital. They (the battalion) they went out, so (of) course when (he) got better he was put in another battalion and he went out the other way. He went out to Egypt. He fought right through Tobruk, El Alamein, all the lot. He was in... but he never used to talk about it, but he did one day, my friend got him talking. We'd been out to a dance and I went to bed and left them downstairs. And he was telling her that he was on the boat and they took them out. I think it was El Alamein or Tobruk, I can't remember now, but the boat took them and it couldn't go any further in and they had to walk. With the ammunition on (he was in the engineers), bombs and everything on his back, dynamite. They had to walk in, he says they got actually on the land and were pushing the Italians back and then they run out of the stuff, the bullets and everything. The ships were right out there and they had to go all the way back and get picked up again. Then when they got the stuff come in again, they did eventually take it, it was Tobruk.

00:15:22

(*Cousin*) He had a mad Major, he'd been under fire from a German tank and the Major says we're going to get that bugger there, then they put a load of gun cotton and bombs back, they had to cross the river to get to it. They got the tank.

(*Mrs W*) They probably lost a lot of men.

END OF INTERVIEW

[<Files\HFRT015 Janet Chamberlain>](#) - § 1 reference coded [18.70% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 18.70% Coverage

Tell me about your father?

My father was a regular in the Air Force he enlisted, he went in as a boy apprentice went to Horton as an apprentice in about 1917 I would think or 1918 and during the war (WW2) he was partly in England and my mother I moved around with him so I don't remember because I was too little. Then in 1943 he was sent abroad and he came back in 1946. But while he was in England, I'm not sure where he was stationed the first German bomber that was shot down came down in the sea just off Sheringham (Norfolk). He and a party of men were sent up to rescue it because they wanted to have a look at it.

0.57 He went up, apparently he was second in command of this group of men and we went for holiday in Sheringham and I didn't know about this story because he didn't talk about things much. You know they didn't talk about much that went on at all during the war. We went to the railway museum and I was interested to see a photograph of a bomber and a group of RAF men it was the page of a newspaper but you couldn't see the faces. Because my father was in the Air Force and we'd lived on RAF stations I was interested.

1.27 So when we went home I was talking about going to Sheringham and he said, 'Is the lamp post still bent?' 'Pardon?' he said, he told us about being sent with this group of men to collect this plane, try and pull it out of the sea when the tide was low. What had happened was they tried to shift it and they couldn't so somebody had the idea of fixing this very heavy rope round a lamp post on the esplanade at Sheringham which they did. They were busily heaving on this rope and

suddenly there was this huge roar of laughter. They all looked up and there were hundreds of people all standing on this concrete esplanade watching them. The lamp post had bent.

That photo in the museum was your Dad, one of those people?

Yes. Next time we went we went in and specifically had a look but they had taken it to the archives so I wasn't really sure who to approach about that. Then I was thinking of writing to them but then my father died in 1990, this was the late 1980's so I never did actually did get round to telling them about it, because I'm sure they would have been interested.

[<Files\HFRT018 Lena Jakeman>](#) - § 1 reference coded [6.74% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.74% Coverage

I suppose a lot of people in this area were in reserved occupation weren't they. There were lots of people who didn't go away this time.

22.40

(Sister)

There was quite a few people before war started. Dad was on the Royal Naval reserves and they sent for Dad before war was actually declared and he had to go to Portsmouth and we all cried when he left and everything didn't we? The next morning he was back because his eyesight didn't pass test so he didn't have to go but my brother went. Because he chose the navy because he was old enough you see so he went. He was on Corvettes and the Destroyer wasn't he? He was at the evacuation of Dunkirk and he was on the Destroyer, Codrington and it had come back presumably to Portsmouth and he was on shore leave and the Codrington was sunk while he was shore leave. He lost everything and came home. They gave him shore leave and he came home. Mum and I went to Wolverton Station to meet him and he came up the steps and that and then he realised he'd left his gas mask on the train and that was about all he'd got left so he tore back down the station fortunately it was still there. He came up with it and a man came along on a bicycle and it took off his hat to my brother because he obviously realised he'd been at Dunkirk.

[<Files\SHLT038 Phyllis Brocklehurst>](#) - § 1 reference coded [4.74% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.74% Coverage

So when it came to VJ Day after the dropping of the bomb....

Yeah.

What were your feelings then? What were the family feelings then?

Oh just tremendous relief. But then again you couldn't throw your hat too much in the air because again we didn't know whether Wally was alive. So you didn't know what you were going to find.

And when did you find out then?

I can't remember precisely but we did get some sort of message back. And as a matter of fact, we were luckier than lots of people, I think because umm, my sister-in-law had two brothers who we in the Far East. They were with the Indian troops and one of them, he was an off, well both officers actually and I think they tried to get messages through and I'm pretty sure that through them we did get some information. And then of course the Red Cross went in pretty quickly. My brother has a tremendous admiration for Lady Mountbatten

because she was very high up in the Red Cross and she apparently, I think she was flown in and he said she came into these camps you know. He was in a, he was in a, he was in the RAMC and he was a Staff Sergeant and he was in charge of the infectious diseases area of one of the very, very big umm, sick camps. So it was tuberculosis, dysentery, leprosy – they got a few lepers. All things like that and they were dying like flies. And umm, he said honestly, you know, this camp just wasn't fit for a fine woman or somebody who hadn't lived like this, to sort of come in and see. But apparently she did. She came in and visited the place and umm, the Red Cross of course got busy and they got lists. They got lists home to people as quickly as ever they could. You know, once, once the places were open, it was, they did as much as they could as quickly as they could. And they had a tremendous sort out for a start because they had to decide of the various categories. Those that were too sick to move and were going to die anyway. Those who could stand being in the camp a bit longer and be, with, could, could be, with being nursed a bit longer, umm, well with a bit more food and a bit of care, they'd make it. And the others who were in a pretty dicey state and if they weren't shipped out quick, would almost certainly die anyway so umm, there was all this big sort out and lots of organisation and heaven knows what going on. But I think in the sick camps there probably was a bit more organisation anyway because the British doctors had got a lot of say and the Japs respected them more. They were about the only people that the Japs did, did have any respect for and they did collaborate with them to some degree. So that was a unique situation actually. But really very traumatic.