

[<Files\HFRT001 Joan Garwood>](#) - § 3 references coded [6.08% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.00% Coverage

No - me Dad was busy. Me Dad was in the fire service - the AFS. He went through all the Blitz and then he found out that if he got killed - when he'd gone through it all - that there was no pension for my mother. So he decided he'd come out of that and he went into the Home Guard and he used to be on the Ack-Ack guns.

Reference 2 - 0.42% Coverage

Yes, oh yes, yes! I think they started just before the War - AFS.

Reference 3 - 3.66% Coverage

Maurice: Auxiliary Fire Service.

Auxiliary Fire Service, yes.

And did he have to go to, I mean... Obviously Birmingham itself was badly bombed, but did he have to go to Coventry, for example, when Coventry was....?

No, no, because they were too busy in Birmingham. They had to look after Birmingham - they couldn't send them there. But we could see... if it was very bad in Birmin... in Coventry, we could see the red glow in the sky. Because that was all very badly bombed, you see? A lot of factories, I suppose. We had factories but our city centre was blown up - all of it.

[<Files\HFRT002 Maurice Garwood>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.34% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.34% Coverage

And did you... you were saying that you... so you worked for the twelve hours a day - you didn't have to do any other voluntary duties after that?

Yes.

What was that then?

Fire watching. Making sure the factory didn't catch alight during the evening, so many nights a week.

So that after you'd done your twelve-hour shift, you then had to stay on, through the night, watching....

Yes, for fire watching on the roof of the factory. We'd have our sleep, like. You know what I mean? It would be a sort of a duty, all the way through.

[<Files\HFRT003 William Patterson>](#) - § 1 reference coded [7.62% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.62% Coverage

What was your abiding memory of that time, as you were growing up? Any particular strong memories that come to mind?

Err, various little incidents possibly. The, er... we had a very heavy bombing raid, which went right across the back of our property. The nearest bomb was about a hundred yards away and it turned out to be a delayed action bomb, thank God. Obviously we understood afterwards that it was an attempt to wipe out Northolt airport, which was literally in a straight line from where they were aiming - about five mile away. So they did a lot of damage there unnecessarily. I remember that. I remember the first fire bombs that fell in the area - one man being very badly injured because a stupid woman threw a bucket of water at it while he was trying to put some sand on it.

What effect did that have then?

Because they explode. The bombs - the firebombs - are like a long cylinder of thermite which has got an automatic ignition device in it and they burn with a very, very intense heat - a very intense light - very intense heat. And one of the things you should do is just smother them with sand. If it was in a house - where it was possible - they would punch a hole in the tiles, grab the bomb by its fins and lob it out. If it was outside, it couldn't do any harm then they could put the fire out inside quite easily. But if, because of the intense heat generated, if you threw water in quantity over it, the whole thing would ignite in one go and it would explode, and throw burning embers into people, which was not very funny.

The ideal thing was that you used a very, very fine spray stirrup pump and it had a fine head on it and you just sprayed the very fine water over it which kept the surrounding area damp but allowed the bomb to burn. In other words it would burn itself out and that was it. It didn't last long but you had to use your head and do it properly.

[<Files\HFRT004 Edith Wood>](#) - § 2 references coded [6.08% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.33% Coverage

I had to join the AR - not ARP - the stirrup pump... what did they call it?
Firewatching.

Oh right.

So I had to become a Firewatcher and I had to go for classes to the First Aid.

So, did that mean, if you were a Firewatcher, you had to go out in the evenings?

Yes. You were on your doorstep and if anything fell anywhere within your area - you all had little areas to do - I was with the man opposite. And then you went out to that area and helped to put that fire out, or whatever it was, yes.

How did you do that? I mean, did you....?

We'd got a stirrup pump and a bucket!

(Laughing) Not very much!

You had a tin helmet, a gas mask, a stirrup pump and a bucket! A bucket of water! (laughter) No, not very much.

Reference 2 - 3.75% Coverage

And when you went out to rescue people with your fire...

My firewatching? I never had to do that either! I was lucky. The only time I used the firewatching thing, was when we were in... where were we? In Kennington, in this basement house. He dropped a fire... a string of firebombs and one fell in our house upstairs and it fell right behind my aunts gas cooker. And it was a flare - they caught light very easily. And of course, somebody said 'Oh, there's one upstairs!'

So my father went upstairs with the pump – the blessed thing was only a little tiny thing like this! And I had the bucket downstairs, doing this, you see? They were filling it with water and I'm pumping like this and my father's putting it out up there. And I could hear him shouting down 'I'm not getting any water!' And I said 'Well I'm pumping!' He said, 'Well I'm not getting it!' And they were filling the bucket. But I'd got a hole in it!

The bucket had a hole in it? Ohh! (laughing)

I'd pumped a hole in the bucket! I'd pushed it so hard I'd put a hole in it and he wasn't getting the water - it was all going down the basement. (laughing)
But the firebrigade came and put that out for us.

[<Files\HFRT005 Betsy Stanley>](#) - § 2 references coded [18.17% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 9.62% Coverage

Brilliant. What I want to do, 'cause I'm conscious of the fact that we've got to get.. only got half an hour. So what I wanted to do, was to get you to tell me, you were telling me about the ATS. How old were you when you joined the ATS?

Um, I went in in early 1945. So what would I have been? Eighteen, nineteen? Coming nineteen.

Coming up nineteen. Yes.

I was nineteen in the April, yes. So that's me there. (photograph)

On the right.

That's Cynthia. That's Christine, that's me and that's Cynthia, but I can't remember them. But I had a lot more, but my granddaughter took 'em to school for a project and they never came back. They got lost.

So what do you do at the ATS?

Well, we went to Pontefract first, we went - from Liverpool Street up to Pontefract. And we did our six weeks basic training, which is square bashing, inoculations... They all fainted around me and I thought 'what they doing' 'cause I never faint, touch wood – never have.

And um, and they had us... because the War was coming to an end, they had us scrape.... We were in the barracks at Pontefract and they had us scraping

all the blackout tape off the windows - to keep your arms going. And they were all going, 'Uurggh' and going to bed. This idiot don't faint so...! .

Anyway, we did our square bashing, we went through the gas chamber. Um, what else did we do? Oh, we had to clean the latrines, naturally. And then after that we were posted down to Camberley in Surrey to a school that they'd taken over. Court Wallace it was called and... oh, before that, at Pontefract you did an aptitude test. What did you want to do? Well, I was sick of being in an office. I said 'ooh, I'd like to be a driver'. 'Right we'll give you an aptitude test'.

So you go in this room - lovely. They gave me a box of Meccano! And they said build whatever it was, with Meccano. Well, I'd done it in about - I dunno - five minutes. My brother always had Meccano for Christmas! (laughing) And I liked it better than dolls. So I went in the army and, as I say, we went down to Camberley for our driving instruction. And it... the Queen had been there, the intake before. You know you see her looking in a... Well, that was me, in the next intake - looking in the engine and learning to drive. And she came back to us and spoke to us and had a chat with us all, inspected us on the parade ground. Lovely lady - I've loved her ever since! And, well, she is the same age as me.

Then, after that, I forget how long we were there - probably only six weeks - so all crash courses. You had to drive in the dark and, of course, there was no lights, no headlights, nothing. But I like driving in the dark.

Reference 2 - 8.55% Coverage

00:25:03

Anyway, get back to the army. We went to, um, Shropshire, from there - Craven Arms. We took over Craven House. Now, when I went back a few years ago, my husband - well we were caravanning - Craven House didn't exist. I said it must have done! All my letters used to be delivered there. It had got an animal cemetery in the grounds. I think it's a hotel now - they just couldn't... they changed the name I expect. Anyway, we on a VRD, which was Stretton - Church Stretton bypass.

What's VRD?

Vehicle Reserve Depot. Where all the reserve vehicles were. You had to maintain them and then you went - took them - in convoy to one docks or the other for shipping abroad. I mean, we used to take them to Glasgow, Tilbury - or one of the London docks - and Liverpool. They were the main three from where we were.

Well, when they wanted to reopen the bypass, we moved into Attingham Hall - the grounds of Attingham Hall. And we lived in the servants quarters up the top. And we had a big vehicles reserve depot there and we used to go off there. We had a canteen where we used to play bingo and sing along and there was - in Church Stretton itself - there was a St Dunstons and the... a lot of the Airforce boys were there - they were blind. And terribly burnt. And they had a big hall in Attingham House which they opened, and us girls went along and we took these boys and danced with them and spoke to them. I don't think I shall ever forget.

There was one lad, he was absolutely burnt - his ears were all chewed away and his face was, you know? And he pulled this photograph out of his pocket. Handsome lad you ever wished to see with this beautiful girl beside him. Now, did she stay with him - I often wondered. Could she stand it? You don't know, do you?

And, of course, when the War ended, I ended up at Bardney in Lincolnshire, where I take the major home, 'cause he was being demobbed - you know, standard utility truck and it was 1947 - winter. Do you remember?!

I was only one then.

There was deep snow, up to your eyeballs, and, um, he took me home with him - I took him home - and his wife gave me a meal and I think that was somewhere at Castle Bromwich. From there with no signs, and the snow banked high, I had to find my way back to Lincolnshire! I don't know how I got there! To this day I cannot think how I got there. That's a miracle.

[<Files\HFRT006 Ted Stanley>](#) - § 1 reference coded [35.35% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 35.35% Coverage

That's fascinating. I want to concentrate though on, if you like, the Home Front bit – on the bit, you know...

Before that.

Before that. This telegram....

Yes. Telegram boy?

Yes. That was, um... You were you doing that in Bletchley, were you?

Yeah. And district here.

Tell me a little bit about, you know.... did you have to... presumably you did.... take telegrams which had bad news?

Bad news, yes. We were always warned by the, you know, the operator, 'That's a bad 'un.' You know? So, you'd get to the door and say 'I'm sorry but....' Oh yes you had the bad... death ones, I'm afraid.

Can you remember any particular... have you any particular memories of that?

Not really. I remember, I mean before the War, we used to have the fetes at Bletchley Park - Lord and Lady Leon; I used to go to that as a child, you know?

I want say, the thing about the telegrams, can you remember any particular memories of taking a bad news telegram to anyone?

Well, yes, quite a few. Some, you know, just took it ok and some fainted on the door and all sorts, you know? Hysterics. Being a boy of, what, fifteen or sixteen, it was a bit traumatic. The best telegram was for Great Brickhill - Sir Everard Duncombe. You always got sixpence off Everard Duncombe for going up Great Brickhill Hill. The butler used to come out with a big silver tray with a

00:05:02

sixpence and I used to go down to Mr Mobb's sweetshop in Fenny and get two bars of Cadbury's chocolate and a penny change. (laughing)

And so.. how would you... you'd be on a bike would you?

Oh yes. Bloomin' heavy old Post Office bike an' all. I mean you could only push it - you came down like the clappers, you know, down that hill. But you could never ride up it. You had to push the thing up. You had to push it up because you wanted it to come back again, you know? But that was one of the nice places. But you went all 'round the district, you know? With telegrams.

Yeah. And how long were you doing that for?

Uh, oh dear... '41, '42, '43 - four years. Well, no, I wasn't doing it for that... that's a lie - I was doing it for a year. 'Cause they... In those days the Post Office telephones and GPO were all one. And they had messengers down at this repeater station, which has now gone. It was repeating the power on the telephone lines, you see? They now wanted two boys - one for... well both for messengers, but answering this PBX box when the phone calls came in, you know? 'Cause you had the Blue Caps at the gates then, not the Red Caps. The Blue Capped Police - army police.

Right. Was this... was this repeater station, was this to do with the Bletchley Park Code Breaking or not?

Well, no, no, no. Telephones. Telephones.

Just an ordinary telephone exchange? So why did they have a military guard on it then?

In case it got blown up. If it got blown up, well you could forget about telephones. In those days, this repeater would repeat in the power through the country. There were only about four, I think, in the whole country - these repeater stations. But it's all gone - they've built houses on it now.

And when you say you were taking messages, what kind of messages were you taking at repeater stations then? You were saying, you as a boy were there....

Oh yeah, well when I was a telegram boy - on telegrams, yes, taking from the Post Office. I mean, I used to go up to Bletchley Park. And I other than being in uniform - I suppose we had some sort of pass. But I mean everybody was in uniform. That was the funny bit.

Hubert Faulkner bought the Park before the War and then he maintained it - he was a builder, you know? So, as everybody is in uniform, they made him a captain straight away and his foreman was made a sergeant. You had to be, you know, in uniform and of course, being a telegram boy you were then in uniform again and you were allowed through to the mansion, you know?

Did you have to go through any special security when you went to Bletchley Park?

No, but you was known, you know? You got some sort of pass.

But... What did you think was going on there, then?

No idea. All I was interested in was the Ford V8 Estates - all the ATS girls were driving these V8 Fords. And of course at Whaddon - Whaddon Hall - they'd got Packards. And opposite the Repeater Station, it's still there - it's not a petrol station any more but they took over the petrol station opposite the Repeater. And all these Packards used to come in and fill up. I think, by the time they got back to Whaddon they were nearly empty! (laughing) But I was fascinated by motors - there was every type and model of Packard you could think of. All camouflaged, you know? Camouflage paint.

In those days, when you were delivering post and so on, how many deliveries were there in a day?

Oh, two a day. Two a day. You know?

[<Files\HFRT008 Derek Denchfield>](#) - § 2 references coded [13.89% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.66% Coverage

Is there anything about Leighton Buzzard and the Home Front during the war? They didn't do anything special did they?

Well, being a lady, you'd have heard of Gossards corsets.

Yes.

Well they made barrage balloons during the war. Amongst other things. Barrage balloons and small parachutes and that sort of thing. The whole factory went over to war work you see. That was only just one of them. Then there was the brickworks and that. The tile works were there. But there was a lot of hush, hush stuff in Leighton Buzzard because there was a big RAF station in Stanbridge Road, which worked in conjunction with all the other outstations doing secret work plus Bletchley Park you see. So it was all one big complex. There was also a small receiving station on the outskirts of Stoke Hammond. They'd got the big pylons up and a receiving station there, just for a time.

Reference 2 - 9.23% Coverage

Were you in the army?

00:22:14

The army.

Was your father...

My father worked on his brother-in-law's farm, you see, for several years they worked together. Worked for his brother-in-law and he was in the farming business all his life, my father, so that was another reason I suppose we had a bit more to eat than some people. But it was hard work though and then he used to come home and do his allotment after he'd finished his day's work, so it was... We used to help him at that time.

Was he in the ARP or anything like that, the Home Guard?

He wasn't in the Home Guard but he was in... he did help with the ARP a bit, wardens and that sort of thing. But I was a messenger boy when I was ... probably when I was about fifteen during the early part of the war before I went in the army. I was in the Messenger Service, ARP Messenger Service.

What did that mean, what were your duties?

Well, we used to... not a lot really, not in a village, I suppose you'd be answerable to the people in Bletchley or Aylesbury, the county town. But you had to learn different things and we used to have to meet up with the chap who was the Parish Council Chairman, a Mr Gadsden, in his house. And he'd tell you, give you, you know, give you different things to do and instructions about how to do a bit of First Aid and that sort of thing. But also at the same time, when I was... just before I left school up till I was about sixteen or seventeen I was in the Bletchley Air Training Corps.

Bletchley Air Training Corps?

Air Training, ATC which was for young lads from about twelve up until when they joined in the forces, to see if they wanted to go in the forces. That was the old Bletchley Air Training Corps, 456 Squadron.

[<Files\HFRT010 Betty Wise>](#) - § 3 references coded [11.60% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.70% Coverage

So when did you join St Johns?

Well, it was in 1939, I think?

You were about 20 when you joined; and did you have a role to play during the war?

Well, not really.

Were you on standby?

Well that was it, because there were others in Wolverton, my mother was in it too. It was railway, you see, because I was working in the Rail Works, because they'd got a good St Johns team there and they won competitions after and I think before the war; not everybody joined, not many in the offices, but a few of us did.

So was it like war work to be a member of St Johns, so that you had the skills if something happened?

Well, we were reserves. I mean if they invaded we probably would have been useful then, but you see, in Wolverton we were very fortunate because there was nothing... we had no bombing. There was only that one at Bradwell. It was surprising, especially with the viaduct. I can't understand why that wasn't bombed, because it was the main line to the north and there was no petrol for anything else. There was a tremendous amount of traffic on the railway back and forth to London.

Reference 2 - 7.16% Coverage

00:45:00

Tell me again about the bomb and your mum and the Rec?

Did you know about the little emergency hospital up there at the Rec?

No, in Victoria Road Rec?

No, the one up here, the playing fields. It was a fair sized building, really, wooden, it was temporary, you see. It wasn't manned night and day, I don't think it was anyway, but I don't know whether it was in the daytime, I just can't say. But they were there when the bomb fell on Bradwell and they brought the patients up there. I think a man died and I know a boy was badly injured. My mother wasn't on duty, but my cousin Lily was up there and I think they had to amputate his leg, or something like that, and he died afterwards, I don't think he died that night. But the next day Lily came to work, she did, even though she'd been up there half the night. My mother went on duty the next day up there, but it was only to sort of tidy up really then, because they'd take anyone who was hurt to more suitable accommodation. Mr Stubbs came round to Lily and asked her what happened when the bomb fell, and she said that she didn't wish to talk about it – and I thought, good for Lily.

So it was like a little hospital?

Well, I don't think you could call it... I don't know what you would call it.

A First Aid Post?

That were it, that's it really, a First Aid Post. Doctors came I think, one did if not two; they called them.

It had beds?

I think so, there wouldn't have been many, perhaps two. I'm not sure that my mother didn't sleep up there sometimes, I think she did.

Did you go up there?

No, I never did that, not ever.

How interesting.

I may have got the things wrong about who died.

But it was a First Aid Station set up so that... if there were casualties in the area, because otherwise they would have to go to Northampton?

That was the nearest hospital.

I wonder if there are any photographs of it. Was it run by St Johns?

Yes, it would be. I expect the men were there probably too, I expect there was a man on duty each night. I really don't know the details, my cousin Lily could tell you about that, but she's over 90.

Did they have air raid wardens and things?

They blew the whatsit, you know, siren. It was the Works siren but you could hear it all over Wolverton. So you all put the lights out, well, made sure there was... (blackout.)

[<Files\HFRT013 Joan Draper>](#) - § 1 reference coded [0.83% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.83% Coverage

Did you have any Land Girls on the farm?

Only in the distance and because we were children, you know they used to say, 'Go on, get out of it!' sort of thing.

But they were there?

00:20:39 They were there, yes.

[<Files\HFRT014 Diane Lillian Bowsher>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.93% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.93% Coverage

What did your Father do during war

He was, he has bronchial he was a bronchial asthmatic so he couldn't join up so he was still in the grocery trade at Madame Tussauds, Baker Street is it?

Well he was in the bakery trade

In the grocery trade yes

Did he have any ARP or fire fighting at home do you remember?

He would be a warden to go down and see about the lights but if when he was bronchial so bronchial bad he couldn't do fire fighting and anything. But he would walk the length of the estate to make sure that all the black out was done.

[<Files\HFRT016 GladysBanks>](#) - § 1 reference coded [2.94% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.94% Coverage

Oh another thing I do remember clear that when I was working down Whitehall we were compelled twice a week to do fire watching. I loved it because I had young chap with me, we worked in pairs and we were on a rota and that's when I was, it was actually where, I think it's the Home Office now. I know when they, November 5th you know when they lay the wreaths at the Cenotaph that's the building. I had to go down to London practically every week and time and times again I look up at that building, because its quite high and think I spent a lot of time. I used to go up there most nights er really when I stayed in overnight in the building.

26.52

Twice a week I was on duty with this young chap but the other nights in a way I shouldn't have been there but I went up there and I have seen all the bombing when it first started down the docks night after night. Wonderful view , my regret looking back, I never had a camera but I can see now St Paul's a miracle how it stood out and London was burning all night, the next day and

all through the next night and that's how it carried on. And I stayed up there, you know, that's what I did some evenings when I didn't go home.

[<Files\\HFRT018 Lena Jakeman>](#) - § 2 references coded [11.67% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.34% Coverage

one thing I can remember quite vividly doing the job in the war was Fire Watching at night. Because we were sixteen we had to do fire watch at night that meant you stayed up till about 2 o'clock in the morning in case anything happened and you were all given a tin helmet and a bucket and a stirrup pump, what on earth we'd ever have done with a bucket and a stirrup pump I really don't know. But that's what we were given and we were told we were on fire watch for that night so you stayed up till 2 o'clock in case anything happened then you'd just put your bucket and stirrup pump away and went to bed and just forgot all about it!

Reference 2 - 8.33% Coverage

Were you up on the roof at McCorquodales?

No, no not McCorquodales just staying in the streets, you all, you took your turn down in... anyway certain members of you in the streets so you were on patrol if anything happened.

Right, how often was that about once a week you say?

No, it just depends on how many people were available to do it but when it was your turn you just did it you know.

And that carried on though out the war did it?

20.11

No, no when things quietened down it didn't when it was obvious, well not obvious but I mean when we weren't getting any bombs and things the war was moving that way then that sort of thing stopped.

During the war we had troops around one night and they built, they, in theory they blew up the paint shop bridge, you know which bridge I mean do you and they built a Bailey Bridge in Glynn Square so that's marvellous we were out there nearly, you know. They were Canadian soldiers and they built this Bailey Bridge in Glynn Square because they had to construct the bridge and they couldn't stop the road. And Miss Fry who was then our Sunday School teacher was very prim and proper and she came down to have a look at it when it was there. And one of the soldiers said something, she said something to one of the soldiers, cause he dropped a bit on his foot. So she said, 'And what did you say?' and he said, 'What do you think you'd have said if you'd have dropped that on your foot?' Well we said, 'Well Miss fry would probably have said oh dear!' He said, 'I can tell you I would have said a damn sight more than that!'

[<Files\\HFRT021 Stanley Petts>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.84% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.84% Coverage

So during the blackout was your Dad ARP or anything like that?

8.00

No he was Home Guard until he got invalided out because he couldn't do much, sometime. He served in the First World War and got knocked about a bit as a prisoner of war and it affected him well he lost the lining of his stomach basically and he had to be very, very careful what he ate. Then he used to have regular bouts of Malaria and that was frightening, believe you me.

When you say he was in the Home Guard, that was in the Wolverton Works was it?

Yes there was a Wolverton Works battalion and there was also the outside Home Guard and ARP but the Works mustered their own battalion. One night a week so many of the Home Guard, Works own battalion would do night guard in the Works. They used to go, as far as I can recollect, somewhere about 7 or 8 o'clock at night until 7 o'clock the next morning. They was given half an hour grace if they had been on night duty to go home, have breakfast, was shave and change and get into their working clothes and come back to work, and do a days work.