

**THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION  
PORTUGAL BRANCH**

**WAR STORIES**

The Royal British Legion Portugal Branch

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## INTRODUCTION

Requests have been made for the war time experiences of World War II and Korean War veterans by various Governments while it is still possible to obtain them. In the United States the Library of Congress has established a World War II Oral History Section with money appropriated by the Congress. US Veterans of WW II are dying at the rate of 1500 a day. The website for the Veterans History Project is [www.loc.gov/veterans](http://www.loc.gov/veterans)

The BBC is also collecting WW II stories at its website:  
[www.bbc.co.uk/dna/ww2/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/ww2/)

Here in Portugal we have a number of members of The Royal British Legion with interesting experiences and we want to obtain summaries, no matter how mundane we might think they are, from all veterans of World War II, Korea, Suez, Malaysia, Falklands and the recent Gulf Wars.

If we do not do it now many of the stories will be lost.

A questionnaire was sent out with the Legion mailing to members in 2004 and a follow-up was sent via the internet . As the returns come in the information has been recorded and the record left open for as long as the writer is around to keep them up to date. Everyone who submits a filled out questionnaire will receive a copy of the War Stories.

### The Kiss

By Siegfried Sassoon, 25 April 1916

To these I turn, in these I trust –  
Brother Lead and Sister Steel.  
To his blind power I make appeal.  
I guard her beauty clean from rust.

He spins and burns and loves the air,  
And splits a skull to win my praise;  
But up the nobly marching days  
She glitters naked, cold and fair.

Sweet Sister, grant your soldier this:  
That in good fury he may feel  
The body where he sets his heel  
Quail from your downward darting kiss.

The following list of THE FALLEN and THE SERVING dated October 1944 is courtesy the British Community Council of 1941-1945. According to the Minutes of the British Community Council the names were selected based on residents of the Lisbon Consular area as of 3 September 1939 or the residence of their parents.

### THE FALLEN

**OCTOBER 1944**

NAME		SERVICE	DIED	
BLAIR	Colin	R.A.F.	England	1941
FRAZER	John	R.A.F.	England	1943
HICKIE	Cecil	R.A.F.	Burmah	1943
MORETON	Eric	Army	Singapore	1942
NORTON	Frederick	Paratroops	North Africa	1941
NORTON	Douglas			
ORAM	Louis, L.	R.A.F.		
RAWES	Eric	R.A.F.	At Sea	1941
SHERVINGTON	Tyrrell Mildmay	Civilian	Bay of Biscay (1/6)	1943
STILWELL	Anthony	Army	Italy	1943
STILWELL	Peter	Army	North Africa	1943
SCOTT	Edward	Army	France	1940
SCOTT	Jervoise	Army	North Africa	1942

### THE SERVING

ABREU	Reginald	R.N.
ADAM	Archie	R.N.
ABREU	R.E.P.	ARMY
ABREU	Ronald	ARMY
BAILEY	William	R.N. George Medal 1941 and Bar, DSC
BAKER	J.	R.N.
BURNE	Fred	R.N.
BERRY	Douglas	ARMY
BROWN	J.S.Vesey	ARMY
BAILEY	Elizabeth, Miss	W.A.A.F.
BUCKNALL	Margaret, Miss	Hosp.Almoner (Civil) 1942/1943
BENSUSAN	Mesod	ARMY
CONNEL	Gordon	R.N. D.S.C. 1943.
CALVIOU		R.A.F.
COWL	C.O.	R.A.F.
CONNELL	Margaret, Miss	W.A.A.F.
CONNELL	Joan, Miss	NURSING (Mil)
CONNELL	Kathleen, Miss	NURSING (Mil)
CONNELL	William	R.N.
CRAIG		R.N.
COGHLAN-HAY	R.	R.N.

(CHARLES)	pencilled in	
D'ALBERTANSEN	Nigel (?)	(pencilled in not actually in fighting forces)
DAWSON	Peter	ARMY
FRAGOSO	John	R.N.
FRAZER	Stephen	R.A.F.
FRAZER	Letitia, Miss	A.T.S.
GRAY	James	R.F.A.
GOLDING	Gordon	ARMY
GIBBON	Patricia, Miss	NURSING (Civil)
HARVEY	Allan	ARMY
HARVEY	John	ARMY
HATHERLY	H.M.F.	ARMY
HICKIE	Betty, Miss	NURSING (Navy)
HICKIE	Doreen, Miss	NURSING (Mil)
HICKIE	Peg, Miss	NURSING (Civil)
JAYNE	R.F.G.	ARMY D.S.O. AND BAR
KING	G.R.H.	R.N.
KAY		ARMY
KNOWLES	William	R.A.F.
LITTLE	Haeburn, W.	R.N.
LITHGOW	Douglas	ARMY
MORETON	Albert	ARMY Pris. War Singapore 1942
McCAMMOND	Ian	ARMY
McINROY	John	ARMY
McLEAN	Keith	ARMY
MENDELSON	A.C.	ARMY
MACPHERSON	Elizabeth, Miss	W.R.N.S.
MACPHERSON	Margaret, Miss	W.R.N.S.
MITCHELL	Enid, Miss	NURSING (Civil)
McINROY	David	R.N.
NIBLETT	George	R.A.F. Pris. War Germany 1943
NORTON	John	R.N.
NEVILLE	W.W.	
NORTH	Thomas	R.A.F.
NEVILLE	W. Mrs.	W.A.A.F.
NORTON	Thomas	R.A.F.
O'MEAGHER	C.P.	ARMY
PERKINS	Geoffray	ARMY
POWIS		ARMY
PHILLIPS		ARMY
PEARSON	Gerald	R.A.F. (Land)
PEARSON	Ivor	R.A.F.
PERKINS	Victoria, Miss	NURSING (Navy)
ROBERTSON	Alan Stuart	R.A.F.
RAWES	Douglas	R.A.F. DFC
SELLERS	Fred, Jr	ARMY
STILWELL	Francis	R.N.

<b>STILWELL</b>	<b>Henry</b>	<b>ARMY</b>
<b>STILWELL</b>	<b>John</b>	<b>ARMY</b>
<b>STILWELL</b>	<b>Michael</b>	<b>ARMY</b>
<b>SHERVINGTON</b>	<b>Michael</b>	<b>R.A.F.</b>
<b>SHIROI</b>	<b>L.</b>	<b>R.A.F.</b>
<b>SMITH</b>	<b>D.W. Etherington</b>	<b>R.A.F.</b>
<b>SMITH</b>	<b>V.W. Etherington, Miss</b>	<b>W.A.A.F.</b>
<b>SMITH</b>	<b>M.F. Etherington, Mrs.</b>	<b>V.A.D.</b>
<b>SHERVINGTON</b>	<b>Molly, Mrs.</b>	<b>TRANSPORT</b>
<b>SELBY</b>	<b>Derek</b>	<b>ARMY</b>
<b>SELBY</b>	<b>Ralph</b>	<b>ARMY</b>
<b>TISSHAW</b>	<b>Stanley</b>	<b>CIVILIAN Pris. War Singapore 1942 (pencilled in died)</b>
<b>WALKER</b>	<b>Kenneth</b>	<b>R.A.F. Pris. War Germany 1943</b>
<b>WILLIAMS</b>	<b>Charles</b>	<b>C.C. SERVICE Pris. War Gilb. Isl. 1941</b>
<b>WALFORD</b>	<b>F.C.E.</b>	<b>Gordon Highlanders</b>
<b>WALFORD</b>	<b>R.T.R. Lieut Col. O.B.E.</b>	<b>(Mil) Mention Desp.</b>
<b>WILLIAMS</b>	<b>Robert L.</b>	<b>R.A.F.</b>
<b>WALKER</b>	<b>Eileen, Mary, Miss</b>	<b>W.A.A.F.</b>

# WAR STORIES

## William Bailey Oeiras

The following is an extract of 'A Wartime Tribute' (with photos) to Lt. Cdr. William Bailey, CBE, DSC, GM with Bar, a copy of which is lodged in the archives of the British Historical Society in Portugal:

William "Bill" Bailey was born in Lisbon in 1918 and on qualifying as an electrical engineer in London, joined the RNVR early in 1940 as Temporary Electrical Sub. Lieutenant.

He trained at HMS Vernon, school of torpedoes and mines specialising in mine recovery and disposal.

After minesweeping service in Scottish waters and in the Atlantic, he joined the 'Land Incident Section' which was made up from a small group of Naval Officers, specialists in rendering safe mines and bombs.

The Magnetic Mine, 'Hitler's secret weapon', was devised to cripple Britain's shipping and thereby starve it's people into submission by being placed in the estuaries of major ports which awaited vital food supplies and materials. Officers of the Land Incident Section would be rushed to any part of the country to deal with the unexploded menace.

Bill Bailey rendered safe his first magnetic mine on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1940 near Spurn Head, on the river Humber. There was a period when one in fourteen mines were ingeniously booby tapped, so vastly increasing the risks facing the officers engaged in rendering them safe.

In the early stages of the war, life expectancy of these officers was four weeks. More than 35,000 enemy mines were laid around Britain's coast during the Second World War and only in 1972 was it considered that clearance had been completed.

In September 1941 Bill Bailey completed training as a diver and was sent to Gibraltar as Senior Diving Officer and Render Mines Safe Officer, where Italian frogmen saboteurs were attaching bombs to Allied ships which either suffered damage and sank in Gibraltar or shortly after sailing.

He called for volunteers to be trained in shallow water diving using Davis Submarine Escape Apparatus, which equipment was designed to evacuate and save the crews of sunken submarines. The supply of oxygen was limited to a few minutes however the breathing sets were converted to allow a diver to stay underwater for up to twenty minutes, the minimum necessary to be operationally useful when searching a vessel's bottom for bombs.

The Italian frogmen operated from Algeciras, in neutral Spain, and would ride their two man human torpedo with its detachable war-head containing 500 pounds of high explosive. In darkness they would approach their targets with their heads just above water and then dive as they closed with their targeted vessel to attach the war-head and sometimes smaller limpet mines, secured by magnets to the hull.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1942, an attack on Allied shipping by six Italian frogmen on three human torpedoes, resulted in three killed and two captured, while the sixth Italian was able to return to base.

As a result of the measures taken to search and protect Allied shipping at Gibraltar in 1941 and in 1942, the number of ships crippled or sunk diminished considerably.

As plans for 'D Day' were being prepared in 1943, the Royal Navy worked hard on the development of diving suits (self contained breathing) and diver training. Volunteers were sought for 'Special Service in Hazardous Operations' and trained to dive to depths of 120 feet. Bill Bailey was part of this selection and training team.

As the Normandy landing approached, it was known from experience that German thoroughness extended to the sabotage of ports and dock installations before they were surrendered. Ingenious explosive devices were placed so that berths for supply ships were rendered impossible for use unless searched and cleared by divers.

Four 'P' or 'Port Parties' were formed, known as human minesweepers, each with specific objectives for 'D Day' and the following months, clearing the ports of Cherbourg in the west to Ouistreham (at the mouth of the Caen canal) in the east of France. Bill Bailey commanded Party 1574 which comprised of six divers (later eight), their objective to clear the harbour basin at Ouistreham and ensure operation of the lock gates that gave access to the Caen canal (10 km) which had to be cleared to provide safe passage for supply vessels to reach Caen. Control of Caen opened the way to Paris.

Party 1574 landed early on Sword beach on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 with British and Canadian troops and made their way, on foot with all their diving gear, to Ouistreham where diving commenced to examine the lock gates. They came under fire from a mobile mortar across the river Orne which made any diving activity extremely dangerous. Bailey dived and found a mine with a clock pocket attached to one of the gates. It was made safe underwater and the lock gates were ready to operate. It took about a month for Caen to fall "10<sup>th</sup> July" to Canadian and British forces after bitter fighting. The canal and the Port of Caen were cleared of mines and booby-traps and ready to receive vital supply vessels to feed the advancing troops.

Party 1574 then moved on to Boulogne and Calais to carry out similar work, followed by Le Havre, Flushing, Breskens, Antwerp, Bremen and Hamburg. At the latter three ports all four 'P' Parties joined together and worked in unison to

clear the ports. The mission to clear all ports from Cherbourg to Hamburg and open them to shipping was complete by March 1946.

In the work 'P' Parties, comprising forty officers and men, spent more than six hundred days diving and searched more than twenty million square feet; they travelled underwater more than one thousand three hundred miles; 150 mines, 50 teller mines, 121 charges and a V2 rocket bomb were found and dealt with.

While carrying out their hazardous duties only one man was killed. This ironically happened when an Able Seaman was off duty in an Antwerp cinema which received a direct hit from a V1 rocket bomb.

Later Bill Bailey trained divers at their base HMS Vernon, in Brixham, for operations in the Far East after VJ day (August 1945). He was discharged from the Royal Navy in 1947 with a forty percent disability as a result of suffering underwater explosions.

He was promoted Lieutenant Commander in March 1945, aged 27 and in addition to his George Medal for his work in Gibraltar, was awarded the DSC in connection with the Normandy landings and a Bar to his George Medal for mine disposal in France and the low Countries.

He was a past President of The Royal British Legion, Portugal Branch and died in Oeiras in 1985.

**William Thomas Boyle  
Fallen  
By Michael Pease**

This story commemorates a seaman of the British Royal Navy whose body lies buried in plot 499, Portimão cemetery which is open between 08.00 and 17.00 hours throughout the year. On the grave is inscribed the words 'ERECTED BY HIS SHIPMATES, FEBRUARY 10 1918'.

William Thomas Boyle was born in London in 1897. He enlisted in the Royal Navy as a Boy 2<sup>nd</sup> Class aged 16 and was posted firstly to H.M.S. Powerful, a Boys Training Ship. In July 1914 he joined the training cruiser, H.M.S. Crescent as a Boy 1<sup>st</sup> Class and thence to H.M.S. Victory at the Naval Barracks, Portsmouth at the outbreak of WWI. Next he joined a pre-Dreadnought battleship in October 1914 and began his 12-year continuous service engagement on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1915. His 'Man's Time' as Ordinary Seaman thus began early, before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, in recognition of his good behaviour and aptitude in training and he was advanced to Able Seaman within six months on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1916, just 9 weeks after he turned 18.

He was next drafted to H.M.S. Vernon, the Torpedo and Mining School in October 1916 and qualified for the Seaman Torpedo-man sub-rating in December 1916. In February 1917 he was drafted to H.M.S. Cormorant, Torpedo Boat Depot Ship at Gibraltar for service with H.M. Torpedo Boat (MTB) Number 92, a unit of the Gibraltar area local defence flotilla.

William Boyle had brown hair and hazel eyes with a fresh complexion and was above average height at over 5' 10". His character assessments during his short career were 'very good, satisfactory or superior'. So, if he had survived the war he would likely have advanced far in the navy. Sadly, he drowned at Portimão in early 1918.

MTB N<sup>o</sup> 92 set out from her base at Gibraltar on routine anti-submarine patrol and escort duties and anchored in Lagos Bay at 07.30 hours in the morning and, after routine shipboard duties, she weighed anchor and sailed for Portimão where she anchored at 14.30 hours, close to where the final cache is set. In the evening, at about 20.30 hours, the stern of the MTB swung foul of the moorings of a sailing lighter. In seeking to clear the moorings William Boyle was knocked overboard by a spar of the sailing lighter and was either killed outright or knocked unconscious and subsequently drowned. A search for his body continued until 23.30 hours when it was abandoned. The following day MTB N<sup>o</sup> 92 left for her home base at Gibraltar. Subsequently the body of Able Seaman William Boyle was washed up in Portimão harbour and he was buried in the town cemetery where his body now remains for evermore. A Court of Enquiry recorded that "he accidentally drowned and that no blame was attributable to anyone for the accident."

William Boyle may have drowned at about N 37° 07.724'; W 008° 31.928'. near the long-since abandoned monastery, of São Francisco, now a ruin.

**Lieut. Henry Chapman Cabral, 1928 – 1951**  
**The Gloucestershire Regiment**  
**Fallen**

The following is a resumé of Henry's story:

Born in a Crown Colony in 1928 of a British Mother and a Portuguese anglophile Father, Henry came to Portugal and attended St. Julian's School, Carcavelos. In his teens, Henry was a leader and organised a team of saboteurs constantly and successfully attacking enemy property in the Estoril area.

After World War II, he went to school in England, then on to Sandhurst for officer training. Subsequently, he served briefly in Jamaica and was a popular officer. Later, Henry shipped out to Korea with the "Glorious Glosters" as Intelligence Officer. In action, he was captured by the enemy at Imjinh and sent to a prison camp where he died after undergoing terrible torture. He strongly resisted interrogation and imprisonment.

Henry died on November 26, 1951, one month short of his 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

Posthumously, he was mentioned in despatches.

Submitted by Mrs. V. R. Bensusan, M.B.E.  
(Henry's colleague at St.Julian's)

A more extensive biography of Lt. Cabral, written by Malcolm Howe, appears in the British Historical Society of Portugal Annual Report for 2008.

**Lillimor Carnegie**  
**(originally reported as anonymous)**  
**Portalegre**

As a very newly promoted third Officer in the WRNS I was drafted to North Eastern Scotland as an Air Engineer. In fact to Carnegie land and where John was born, but I did not know about Carnegies in the beginning.

However our First Officer was Captain Sandy Carnegie, an absolutely charming man. Our boss was fierce, highly efficient and a bully. He lambasted the WRNS officers for not giving their orders loud enough on Sunday parade. It was to be my turn the following Sunday So I went and chatted up the Chief Petty Officer and he taught me how to give orders that resounded the place.

Along came Sunday and in my newly acquired voice I told the WRNS on parade to do their various parade marchings and halting etc. in a voice that really was loud.

Of course it caused titters. I was called to the Captain's office and dressed down but I told him that he had said the WRNS did not give their orders loudly enough, so what should I do? He just told me to give the orders in a less commanding voice.

Fortunately he was sent to another station and we all lived a happier life.

## **Guy ff. Bellairs Funchal**

Guy saw the war coming, so applied in 1936 and was granted a commission as a 2/Lieutenant in a Regular Army reserve unit of the Royal Signals. After a brief session at boot camp (he can still make himself heard!) he would travel every Monday to his H.Q. in Southwest London and study the duties of an Army Officer. During the fortnight's annual manoeuvres he was paid according to rank but otherwise his services were unpaid and the job grew as War approached.

The King called out the Army Reserve on August 31, 1939, Guy (proud of his second pip) was mobilised and travelled to France to provide base line communications for the British Expeditionary Force.

In May 1940 the Germans attacked and destroyed the Franco British resistance in six weeks. He and his unit were evacuated at the last moment from St. Malo aboard a 400 ton collier. Coming into Weymouth they were nearly blown out of the water due to Naval incompetence.

In February 1941 with five year's service and a degree in electrical engineering Guy was serving as Company Commander in a Royal Signals Unit in Kent. A signal came from the blue for him to report for duty as a GSO3 (staff officer) with the newly formed Signals Directorate in the War Office. Upon arrival Guy was assigned the task of building a world wide radio telegraph network which would have the traffic capacity needed by a country at war. Within 6 months he had in operation a high powered sender with directional antennae, diversity reception also with directional features and commercial high speed Morse code transmitting equipment using paper tape. The first test messages were with Cairo and it worked beautifully! A world wide network was then developed as fast as men and material could be found.

To extend the network to mobile operations Guy later designed the "Wireless Station Golden Arrow" complete with air conditioning for dusty, tropical stations. Grateful operators found the cold air duct ideal for keeping the beer!

Army messages were then enciphered by women using "Typex" machines. In 1943 Guy patented an online cipher machine called "Apparatus Secratype" which enciphered messages automatically 'on line', dispensing with the manual "Typex" and their women operators. A pity it wouldn't make tea.

Later that year he made a tour of Egypt, India and Ceylon to extend the Army Wireless Chain there. He remembers flying from Cairo to Delhi in a flying boat – 3 days! – mostly over miles and miles of damn all, for the Middle East is bigger than one can imagine. An Indian Rajah travelled with him, complete with personal servant and a solid silver chamber pot with lid! On the way back in 1944 shortage of aircraft forced Guy to spend a blissful week resting in the luxury hotel of Marrakesh, before returning to his 'dungeon' under Whitehall to complete the Army Wireless Chain and plan the British cross channel radio links

for the D-Day assault under tremendous pressure and the strictest secrecy one can imagine.

Late in 1944 he married and was seconded to the Control Commission for Germany. This combined some technical snooping with the reconstruction of all the Radio communications facilities of the British Zone of Germany. The Commission had been meticulously planned, so work proceeded with few difficulties, in complete contrast to the way that Iraq's occupation is being handled today. He was now a Lt Col doing a Col's job. In April 1946, at the ripe old age of 30, his active service ceased and he was transferred to the Reg. Army Reserve of Officers and returned to the arms of his bride.

He wears the 1939-45 and Europe Stars, the usual Defence and War Medals and the Emergency Reserve Decoration.

Guy comments, "When I was given my assignment in February 1941 I certainly had no idea what I was starting. I had an interesting War."

## **Ben Bensusan Carcavelos**

Ben Bensusan was born 6 April 1922 in Gibraltar and was living in the Lisbon area when WW II began. He joined the Royal Armoured Corps at Tidworth and served until 7 May 1945.

His story of how he got to England from Portugal during the war follows:  
“In 1939, Col. Martin Leslie was British Military Attaché in Lisbon and I was 17.

When war broke out, I felt I should go to England and join up. I approached Col Leslie who said I was too young to be accepted by the Army and advised me to wait until I was 19 years old. I was disappointed, but decided to do something that, in a way, would facilitate joining a tank regiment. The nearest thing to a tank was a tractor, so I got a job, without pay, with the importer of Caterpillar tractors in Lisbon. During the following two years, I learnt how to drive tractors and some of their mechanics.

I was 19 on 6 April 1941 and once again I saw Col Leslie. He introduced me to his aid, Major Beaver, who gave me a letter of reference stating that I was well known to the British Community in Lisbon and that I was going to England to join the Army, preferably a tank regiment.

At that time, transportation by air or passenger ships was practically non-existent, so I decided to apply for a job on a British freighter bound for England. I did not have long to wait. A few days later, someone in the British Shipping Office called me to say that a small British freighter called “Dinaric” had a vacancy for a galley boy. I wasted no time and moved on board forthwith. I was presented to the ship’s cook, who was half Portuguese, half something else, and half drunk most of the time. I started my training immediately. The most important job I had was peeling spuds, and I don’t know how many potatoes I peeled in two months!

We sailed for Gibraltar early May 1941 and then on to Halifax, Canada, to pick up cargo. Empty, we rolled for one month all the way there, and I soon got my sea legs.

Three days after our arrival in Canada and with a full load of paper pulp, we sailed from Halifax to join a convoy of over fifty vessels escorted by a few destroyers. I remember that we were often shaken when the destroyers fired depth charges.

Finally, we arrived in England and docked at Grimsby. I applied for discharge, but the Captain flatly refused to do so. In desperation, I ran away and sought help from the Military Police. I showed them my letter of reference written by Major Beaver and explained my dilemma. They were kind and promised to go on board and talk to the skipper. He then agreed to release me on the condition I found a replacement. I rushed to the Grimsby Shipping Office and, fortunately, there was a young boy applying for a job. He was undecided and wanted to go

home first, and I, fearing that he might change his mind, convinced him to sign the necessary papers and go straight to the ship. I even said he could keep the clothes that I had left on board. As I had already received my pay, I did not return to the ship. I thanked the Military Police and caught a train to London.

The next step was to get my official discharge. At the Merchant Navy Pool, (authority dealing with these matters), I was told, in no pleasant terms, that I could not leave the Merchant Navy and that I had become a seaman when I joined the "Dinaric" in Lisbon. I did not know a soul in London, and for a while, I could not decide what to do, but I was lucky when I suddenly remembered that the Portuguese Ambassador to Britain was Dr. Amindo Monteiro and a friend of the family. I rang up the Portuguese Embassy for an appointment, and the Ambassador received me the same day at his Residence. He proved to be a kind and charming man, and was amused to hear my story. He said that he was having dinner at the Admiralty that evening and would talk to his hosts about my case. At his request, I went back to the Residence the following morning. He said that the Admirals had been amused with my story and that they would order my official release immediately. I was delighted.

On 17 July 1941 I visited the Merchant Navy Pool again, and this time, the red carpet was laid out for me. I received a Certificate of Discharge with my title, "Galley Boy", mentioning my general conduct and ability as being Very Good. Well, did I deserve a "Very Good?" "Excellent," would have been better because I wasted not a single potato!"

On 13 November 1941 Ben joined the Royal Armoured Corps at Tidworth and after a period of training was posted to India where he joined 7<sup>th</sup> Queen's Own Hussars, a cavalry regiment (tanks). In September 1943, he left India with the Regiment, and on 27 April 1944 sailed from Suez to Taranto, Italy where they landed with Sherman tanks and began pushing their way North on the Adriatic Coast.

In Italy 1944 Ben wrote the following:

### THOUGHTS

It is snowing in no man's land and fighting continues. Sporadically, the rattling of machine guns, enemy and our own, can be heard in the distance. It is dark and very cold, and the full moon in a clear sky, illuminates the great mountain not far away. The searchlights sweeping the skies, probing, in an attempt to spot enemy planes, fill the moonlight with silver and beauty. "No man's land" is no place to be in, I thought. It is sad and depressing. The bodies of men and animals, killed when the battle was on, not quite two hours ago, make it a horrible sight, in contrast with the beauty of the night and the snow.

I said to myself, **Will there be a tomorrow...?"**

## **THE DAY I WAS REPORTED MISSING**

### **Somewhere in Italy in 1944**

The Sherman was a medium tank weighing between 30 and 32 tons, (depending on the model), equipped with either a 75-pounder or a 105mm gun. Some were powered by a petrol engine, others diesel. If hit, the latter was safer as it didn't catch fire so easily. It was 11.1 feet (3.37 meters) high, and to climb into the turret, one had to do it in 2, 3, or more steps easing the body down carefully into it. Once inside, care had to be taken not to knock one's head against protruding parts. At the beginning, this wasn't easy. A Sherman had a crew of 5 men. Two, the driver, and co-driver sat in front, whilst the other three, the tank commander, gunner, and gun loader (also wireless operator), occupied the turret. It is now obsolete, but a great tank in those days.

The thing we prized most was our tea-brewing kit, which was tied up to the rear of the turret outside. We were great tea drinkers and were very angry indeed when our tea kit was shot away.

I am now retired and a senior citizen, the term used in the United States when one reaches a certain age. I still enjoy driving my car and recently, I had a medical and my driver's licence extended for a further 2 years. The only problem is that I just don't remember things as I did before. For instance, I am not quite sure whether the regiment's record time for bailing out of a burning tank, or for any other reason, was 10 or 15 seconds! Bailing out was a part of our training and we were proud of the records achieved.

Anyway, here was I "travelling" in a Sherman tank, minding my own business, when a shell hit us. There was a loud explosion and a lot of smoke. I was stunned, and when I looked round me, I saw no one. My comrades in arms had all bailed out in record time and must have been picked up by another tank. I tried to bail out myself, but as I put my head outside the turret, something heavy fell on my back, and, although there was no serious injury, I was in pain for a while. When I recovered, I decided that with all that shelling, inside was "safer" than outside. Fortunately, there was no fire, and I learnt later that only one of the tracks had been hit and badly damaged. I closed the turret flap for "safety" and tried not to panic. The best thing was to find something to do, so I picked up all the charts and hid them away in the shell storage compartment, together with our precious bottle of rum. As a matter of interest, all tank crews were each issued with a tablespoon of Navy rum a day, and we saved it, drinking it only when we thought we were about to catch a cold! Then, I tried to survey the area through the periscope, "submarine fashion." Luckily, there was a house about 100 yards down the hill and a trench in front of it. I saw two machine guns and 2 helmets showing just above the ground. I made sure the helmets were not of German issue, and when the shelling subsided, I jumped out of the tank, waved at the men, and made for the trench. The 2 men, who covered me while I ran, belonged to the Black Watch. An advance party of this Scottish infantry regiment was occupying the house using it as an observation post. I spent most of the day there. This was a very good excuse for me to eat my emergency rations, which had a high chocolate content. I had had my eye on them for a

long time but dared not eat them to avoid infringing regulations. I considered the situation an “emergency,” and so, I ate my delicious rations.

Late in the afternoon, still in daylight, I decided to go back to my tank and wait there hoping to be rescued. There was sporadic shelling but I reached the tank safely. My non-appearance with the rest of the crew may have alerted somebody in my unit. I was right. Suddenly, all hell broke loose again and, through the periscope, I saw a Sherman approaching mine. The noise of engines always attracted fire. I saw the turret flap open and someone shouting what I thought was my name. I couldn't hear but I understood.

What I fail to comprehend is how I got inside the approaching Sherman. The only thing I remember was racing towards it, with shells falling all around me, and finding myself inside sitting on top of the shell storage compartment, next to a big white pet rabbit and my friend McGee. I have no recollection of climbing up to the turret or stepping on any part of the tank. I must have gone in headfirst. I had no bruises other than one on my back.

And this is how I was reported missing for one day, I was told. Thank God it was just for one day and not forever.

On 7 May 1945 the end of the war came to Europe and Ben was discharged from a hospital somewhere in Italy where he had spent two months recovering from war wounds. Some months later, medically downgraded, he was transferred to the Intelligence Corps-Field Security and served until his discharge in February 1947. His awards include: 1939-45 Star, Italy Star, Defence Medal, and War Medal 1939-45.

**Manuel Nunes Branco**  
**Private First Class, US Army**  
**Fallen**  
**Town Cemetery Murtosa**

Manuel Nunes Branco was born in Murtosa on September 5, 1931 and died while serving with Company B, 180<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Korea on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1953 – only a few days before the Armistice – when his jeep hit a mine. He was survived by four siblings, including a sister living in Newark, NJ.

## Margaret Brown Algarve

Sent to a boarding school closely associated with agriculture at the age of six and having spent my formative years as scholar and farm worker, I was happy to leave home at the first opportunity. My parents sent me to a friend's dairy farm in Dorset, one of the 'safe' places where a series of Jews was placed after their escape from Germany in 1940. There followed a year of sweated labour during which we were bombed and local residents suspected the farmer was harbouring spies. Fed up with working from four in the morning to six at night as well as fire watching every other night, I volunteered to join the WAAFs and was sent to Exeter Recruitment Center for a Medical. In a hall full of other women I was told to strip and wait in one of the open fronted cubicles. Vetted by a young man with stethoscope as if he were buying a horse, he called over four other Medics saying "Come and have a look at this!"

I was nineteen years old, unused to male company and very embarrassed as they discussed my broad shoulders, musculature and ruddy complexion resulting from a childhood of hard outdoor work. Passed A.1 I was offered a job in the kitchens which I refused, and withdrew my voluntary services unless I could join the Transport Section. That was in the autumn of 1941 and as we left the hall an air raid siren sent us running for the nearest shelter.

Called up for driver training in January 1942 I was sent to Innesworth Lane, Gloucestershire. There I was kitted out, lectured about the dangers of casual sex, drilled, shown into a bleak Nissen hut containing two lines of iron beds and put to cleaning out the ablution block. I found excrement in the baths, under the baths and plastered on the walls and I wondered for what I had volunteered. Mucking out a line of cows at four in the morning was a breeze compared with that. A few days later I was sent to Morecombe for square bashing, vaccination and physical training on the bleak sea front. There we stripped to our underwear for a daily work-out, often in driving snow and much to the delight of passers-by. Bedded down in what had been low cost holiday accommodation pre-war, I and my fellow rookies were billeted on a disgruntled middle-aged couple. The food was unappetizing, the beds grubby and at no time were we made welcome which, looking back, was understandable. In desperation we paid a small sum to hire a bed bug in a match box. This had already helped others to find new accommodation and it also worked for us.

## **Elisabeth Katherine Burca (nee Stephens) Canico**

Cpl Stephens was born May 5, 1920 and served with the Camberley Motor Transport Unit of the Auxiliary Territorial Service from August 1941 until July 1944.

When the war started, her fiancé-to-be held a commission in the Territorial Army and was sent to France. He was evacuated from Dunkirk. They were engaged during his 10 day leave and he was posted to Northern Ireland. Soon he was promoted to Major at the age of 23 and from there sent to India: she never saw him again!

She joined the Women's Voluntary Services (WVS) at the time of the first bombing of London and used to cycle to the canteen at Wimbledon for an 04:30 start, cooking breakfasts for the Civil Defence workers, Air Raid Precautions wardens (ARP), rescue workers and auxiliary Fire Service firemen (AFS). She next joined the Women's Land Army and worked on a farm at Bourne, Lincolnshire picking potatoes and cutting sprouts in autumn and winter. It was cold back-breaking work and she stayed only 4 months.

To be upgraded she now joined the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANys) and was posted to Camberley. The FANYs were at this time amalgamated with the ATS and she was posted to Aldershot. Here she drove ambulances and sometimes staff cars, occasionally driving senior officers to the War Office, where she remembered the front door being heavily sandbagged. Next she was posted back to the training camp at Camberley as an instructor, teaching first aid, map reading, mechanics and driving in all types of vehicles and remained there 3 years. Just after she left Camberley, Princess Elizabeth joined the unit.

She met her future husband, Jean Burca, at an Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) concert at the Free-French camp nearby. He was a Captain in the FF Paratroopers. They were married 3 months later and after a one week honeymoon he was dropped into enemy occupied Central France. She heard nothing from him for 3 months by which time his area had been liberated. He stayed on in the French Army for a year after the War. Meanwhile, she discovered she was pregnant and was demobbed under Para 11. Their son was born in January 1945 and died 3 months later. He had a hole in the heart defect, which in those days was inoperable. Instead of having to return to the ATS, Elisabeth became the chauffeuse for the Deputy Sheriff of London until 1946. He was a friend of her grandfather and lived near them in Wimbledon. Elisabeth's brother had been a Captain in the Gurkha Rifles and sadly was killed at Monte Cassino in Italy in 1944.

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Michael Tillotson 15 August 2011

## Lieutenant-Colonel 'Joe' Cêtre

Short in stature but a resolute fighting soldier, 'Joe' Cêtre won his first Military Cross during the withdrawal to Dunkirk in 1940 and the second four and a half years later, in the immediate aftermath of the defeat of the German Ardennes offensive in January 1945. An enthusiast for the history of war, after completing his service as a professional soldier, he became a professor at the Portuguese Military Academy in Lisbon.

Fernand Octavo Cêtre was born in Clapham, the only son of a French immigrant father from Burgundy and a German mother. The family was devoutly Catholic, resulting in the young Cêtre attending the long-established Catholic Clapham College before going to Sandhurst.

Commissioned in July 1937 he joined the East Lancashire Regiment, for which he had applied because of the high proportion of Roman Catholics among the officers and men. On joining the 1st Battalion in Palace Barracks, Belfast, the bushy moustache he wore at the time earned him the nickname 'Joe' after the Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin. The name stuck for life.

His battalion joined the British Expeditionary Force in France in April 1940, three weeks before the German onslaught through Holland, Belgium and Northern France. Moved forward into Belgium with the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division to help try to stem the enemy offensive, the 1<sup>st</sup> East Lancashires established their initial defensive position at Tournai, on the bank of the Escaut Canal, but were quickly outflanked and forced to withdraw.

Although seeing action for the first time, Cêtre's leadership and initiative quickly became apparent. Twice he led forward fighting patrols to clear the enemy from threatening positions on the battalion's flanks and, at one point where the enemy broke through, turned their attack away by the sheer dynamism of the local counter-attack he inspired and led. He was the acting second-in-command of his company when they reached the Dunkirk; there he brought forward – under fire - ammunition essential for the battalion to plug a widening gap in the defensive perimeter. In the ensuing action his company commander, Major Marcus Ervine-Andrews, won the only VC of the campaign.

Cêtre received the MC for his gallantry and outstanding leadership throughout the withdrawal. Twenty years later, while commanding the successor battalion, he unveiled the commemorative painting of the stand of 1<sup>st</sup> East Lancashires on the Dunkirk perimeter on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1940.

The years between the withdrawal of the BEF from the Continent and the invasion of Normandy in June 1944 involved intensive training: first to repel the expected German invasion that threatened until Hitler turned on Soviet Russia in June 1941, then in anticipation of D-Day. Cêtre served with the same battalion throughout and was commanding a company when it crossed to France with the 53<sup>rd</sup> (Wessex) Division on June 25, 1944.

The battalion was soon heavily involved in the fighting around Caen, then in the advance through dense bocage country towards the River Orne before staging a battalion attack on the fortified village of Bois Halbout. This was taken successfully but with significant losses.

Cêtre's battalion had its toughest battle of the North-West Europe campaign at Grimbiemont in the Ardennes in January 1945. By then, the German offensive intended to divide the Allied armies and retake the port of Antwerp had been contained and defeated, following Eisenhower's decision put all forces on the northern flank of the incursion – British and American – under Montgomery's command. But German resistance remained determined and professionally highly competent.

The Grimbiemont attack required a 1500 yard advance across open, snow-covered ground with Cêtre's A Company on the right flank supported by a squadron of Sherman tanks. The snow prevented the tanks reaching the start line, so Cêtre pushed forward towards its first objective – supported only by indirect fire – reaching it with just one of his three platoons and his own tactical headquarters.

Isolated, but holding ground key to the battalion's success, he held on until the enemy had been driven from the forward edge of Grimbiemont. Having by then gathered up the survivors of his two missing platoons, he moved forward to secure the far end of the objective allowing the battalion to consolidate its hold and clear the rest of the village. He was awarded an immediate Bar to his MC.

Severely wounded by a shell that struck his company headquarters after the Rhine crossing in March 1945, Cêtre was evacuated to the regimental aid post. A young officer of the battalion who was informed that his brother had been injured in the same attack went to the aid post to find out about him. Discovering that his brother was not seriously injured, he asked the medical orderlies who was the casualty on a stretcher covered with a blanket. When they told him it was Major Cêtre and they were unsure whether he was still alive. The young officer lifted the blanket to reveal a pale sweating figure. He asked 'Joe are you still with us?' The response from Cêtre was that not only was he still alive, but that he would back in the fight in the morning.

His wounds were too serious for that but on recovery in England he attended the Staff College. Subsequently he served in Palestine, Malaya and in various staff appointments until assuming command of his regiment, taking it through amalgamation with the South Lancashire Regiment to form the Lancashire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Volunteers) in 1958.

After an appointment with the NATO Mission in Portugal he retired from the Army in 1967 initially to manage a holiday complex near Lisbon. He was later the General Secretary of the British-Portuguese Chamber of Commerce from 1973 to 1976, then Professor of English at the Portuguese officer training college, the Academia Militar in Lisbon, from 1976-1986. He also became a recognized authority on Wellington's Peninsular War defences – the Lines at

Torres Vedras - and served for many years as the Honorary Secretary of the Royal British Legion in Portugal.

His wife Margaret predeceased him. There were no children.

*Lieutenant-Colonel F O Cêtre, MC and Bar was born on July 30, 1916.*

*He died on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 aged 94.*

**Aileen Coates  
(Sister Aedris)  
Bom Successo, Alges**

**Aileen's childhood memories - Singapore**

'Come and see the very bright lights!' called my parents. I scrambled out of bed pulling at the mosquito net and rushed out through my parent's room on to the lounge veranda down the steps, through the opening, under the house and on to the terrace. The sky was ablaze with yellow and red lights. 'Is it fireworks? Is it a practice?' The scent from the frangipane, chicoos, and rambutan trees, all mingled together, wafted around us in the warm air. It was the night of 7 December 1941. The Japanese had already bombed Pearl Harbour and Singapore was on the alert.

I remember next morning going with Mother to buy material to make black-out curtains for the windows. Our house was a large bungalow type built on columns so that the air circulated underneath and kept it cool. We children played here quite freely but now Father got a part of it made into an air raid shelter – the part under the front nursery. It was enclosed with sandbags and inside was placed the table tennis top with a mattress on the top. Underneath it was a carpet and whenever we heard the sirens we went to this shelter. If there was no sound of planes overhead or anti aircraft guns we sat on chairs in this little 'room'. I remember we pinned holy pictures on the wooden beams and usually we prayed the rosary during a raid.

In January the schools did not reopen. I went to school in the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus run by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur - a beautiful building or rather many buildings enclosed by a wall. They occupied a huge block in front of the Good Shepherd Cathedral. The Convent Church is still there but it is part of a shopping mall. Terry and Denis went to St Joseph's a school run by the De la Salle Brothers – another beautiful building in a block opposite one side of the cathedral. This building is still there and the beautiful arcade in front is being restored.

Father said we were to continue our lessons and we set up 'school' in the back nursery. Father marked the work we had to do and I remember well that I was doing Algebra from a blue Baker-Browne book on the morning of the 20 January 1942 when the warning siren sounded. Daddy had gone as usual to the office in Fort Canning with Flora who had begun to attend Pittman's College and with Mother who usually did the shopping in the market each day. Terry, Denis, Anne, Amah and I were in the house with Ah Chin, the houseboy, Cookie and his wife and family and Kaboon the gardener and Tim our dog.

I said we better go to the air raid shelter, which we did and we went under the tennis table because the guns were going off. We heard the sound of the car, a big Huppmobile which had belonged to the Sultan of Johore, coming up the drive and into the garage then the sound of Mother coming up the steps. We may have called to her that we were in the shelter as she came up because she

came directly into the shelter and under the table. From the time we heard the car, the noise of the guns had stopped and everything was very quiet. Within minutes of Mother coming into the shelter, the bombs exploded above us. I can still hear them – three loud explosions. The side of the table where I was collapsed and I was pressed to the ground but I could move. Mother called out to me ‘Are you alright darling?’ and I replied ‘Yes’.

When all was quiet again, Mother said ‘We must get out children’. She could see a hole of light and thought she could see some smoke too, but it was the fine dust of our broken house. We pushed our way out through the rubble and on to the grass terrace. The bombs had fallen directly on the other end of the bungalow – our parent’s bedroom. Mother said ‘We must get shelter in case the bombers return to machine gun us’, so we slithered down the steps to the tennis court which had big holes in it, ran down the drive of the house and onto the road. There were holes in the road, no leaves on the trees and the telephone wires were big loops touching the ground.

We went to our Chinese neighbours who had built an air raid shelter in the grounds of their house. The shelter was underground and quite full but they made room for us. The women were praying on their Buddhist beads. The ‘all clear’ had not sounded when Daddy appeared at the top of the steps to the shelter. At Fort Canning they knew where the bombs were falling, in our area, so Daddy and other men from the office came quickly to see that we were safe. At the end of Cairnhill Road leading into Orchard Road, Daddy met Ah Chin, our houseboy and Kaboon the gardener who told him that Mem, Misses and Tuans were safe but in the Chinese shelter. It was good that they had told Daddy because when he came to our house and saw it destroyed he would have thought we were all killed.

I can only remember being taken by car to the Doughty’s house. My Mother and Father and the men from the office tried to salvage what they could from the house. I think there was very little because I know I had to wear clothes given to me by Mrs Dowell.

I think we must have been a week or more in this house, which now housed fourteen or fifteen people. Now, when we heard the warning siren of a bombing attack and they became more frequent – several times a day, we children would run under the nearest table and begin shouting prayers.

Two memories of this time are about dogs. We found a dog with a litter of the most beautiful puppies, which we promptly brought back to the house. The first night they yelped and growled most of the time and kept the men in the house awake – so they said. A day or two later the puppies disappeared and I think one of the men took them away. The other doggy memory is about our darling dog Tim, a little black and white terrier that Uncle Mac gave us. When the house was bombed Tim could not be found but a few days later, Uncle Mac found him. He had been cut badly and was very nervous. I remember Uncle Mac brought him to us in his car but we could not keep him as we were living with others. So that day Uncle Mac left with Tim in the back of his car and I turned to the wall of

the house and cried bitterly. The Colonel asked me what was wrong and when I told him he tried to console me.

We knew now that we would have to leave Singapore. All the women and children were being sent out and we were waiting for places on a ship. The dreaded day came. I know I could not eat anything. We were driven to the go-down where a big grey ship loomed up in front of us. There was thick black smoke covering everywhere and a smell of rubber burning. The wharfs where the rubber was stored for export had been bombed that day. We were given a cabin, which we shared with another family but we were lucky as many people had to find spaces on the deck. I recall that Flora was badly bitten by bugs – the cleanliness was not the best. I have a memory of seeing Daddy walking alone away from the ship, in a lane between the go-downs and watching him until he disappeared and wondering when we would see him again.

We put on lifebelts and these we kept on all the time even while we were eating. That night we sailed out to the 'roads' and we were there for the next day, I think waiting for other ships as we were to travel in convoy. Our ship was called the Duchess of Bedford. It had been turned into a troop carrier, which meant that the lounges were used as sleeping areas with rows and rows of bunks. All the doors leading to decks were covered so one had to walk through a succession of little corridors to reach the open deck. We were instructed about what to do if the ship was in danger of being bombed – we all had to go to the hold of the ship where there was a possibility of us being safe as the bombs would explode on the deck. If the ship was being attacked by torpedoes from submarines we were to go to the deck stations. I remember being on deck only once but we had to go to the hold several times because of attacks from the bombers. I specially remember the night when the ship was lying off Surabaya (Java) now Indonesia. We had to go to the dining rooms just above the hold of the ship. I can still see the women with their children going down the steep steps, the children crying and trailing their teddy bears and toys.

From Indonesia our convoy moved across the Indian Ocean. The ships were in sight of each other but not close together and each ship moved in a zig-zag path to avoid torpedoes which gave an unpleasant lurch to the movement of the ship. A sad event occurred several times while we were in the Indian Ocean. Young babies died and for their burial the ship slowed down and after a short prayer the 'coffin' was lowered into the sea. It was very sad for the bereaved mothers.

There were so many people on board that there were three 'sittings' for meals. Mother had, with great foresight packed a basket with cups, plates and cutlery which I remember Flora had to look after. It was a big round basket and quite heavy to carry. We brought this basket with us to the dining room because there was food available but no china or cutlery. I recall the food was not too good, which Pop would call 'Good food, foully murdered'. We had to wash up in very dirty water. Drinking water was very scarce and of course we were in the tropics and it was very hot. Most peoples suffered from diarrhoea – children developed boils and other skin ailments.

Each day we eagerly listened to news about Singapore and the day we heard that Singapore had fallen to the Japanese and an unconditional surrender had been signed there was much crying and mourning from all the women.

We came within sight of Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, and the ships anchored quite far away from the shore off Colombo. There was a huge swell all the time and the ships kept turning around in a circle. We went ashore in launches as we hoped to get news of Daddy. My only recollection of that day was when we were waiting to return to the ship, there were crowds of Australian soldiers on the pier. Some were drunk and shouting and we children were very frightened.

After a day or two we left Sri Lanka and sailed west and south. There was a more relaxed atmosphere as we were outside the range of Japanese bombers and submarines. We reached Mombassa but this time we were not allowed off the ship and could only watch the dark figures on the wharfs. We sailed further south and Durban came in sight with beautiful beaches and thundering surf. We children were hoping we would be allowed off the ship to go the beaches. Military personnel came on board and began interviewing each family. Mother told us that she had been advised to leave the ship and that she and the family would be housed in South Africa until further notice. Mother thought it would be good to leave the ship and live in South Africa as there was no war there and we children were all very nervous whenever we heard any noise that sounded like bombs exploding or gun shots. She also thought that we would be nearer to Singapore and we would get news of Daddy more easily. On the dock by the ship there was a railway line and a train awaited us there. A group of people also stood on the dock playing musical instruments and a big tall lady sang 'Land of Hope and Glory'. She sang for every ship that came in and I believe that in 1995 when Queen Elizabeth of England visited South Africa there was a photo taken of the Queen standing beside a statue of this wonderful lady.

We travelled by train along the coast over a hundred miles to Port Shepstone and from there by bus to Margate. We and other families were housed in annexes of the Lucien Hotel. I will always remember when we went to the dining room for a meal we were astonished to see glasses of milk and real food! We really looked forward to our meals! We children went to school - to the Government School - school began at 8.00am and finished at 1.00pm. We were then free to go to the beaches for surf-riding, to climb the rocks towards Port Shepstone or to trail after the men who were shark fishing. I joined the Girl Guides and we followed trails and learnt the Morse code.

**Austin Coates**  
**COLARES**  
**Deceased**

Austin was born April 16, 1922 and educated at Stowe. Afterwards he studied in Paris and then Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London hoping to become a playwright. He was called for a preliminary interview for the R.A.F. on January 3, 1942. Starting on August 24, 1942 he commenced secretarial duties at R.A.F. Weeton near Blackpool, Lancs.

After initial training. Austin was mentioned in notes for pay parade at the famous Winter Gardens, Blackpool. He was remustered and passed fit for pilot training. On August 30, 1943 he was posted to Biggin Hill and commissioned to the rank of Flt. Lt. and seconded to R.A.F. intelligence. Austin went on to serve in India, Burma, Singapore and Indonesia which sparked his love for the Far East and prompted him to join the British Colonial Service after leaving the R.A.F. in 1947.

Austin was appointed assistance Colonial Secretary in Hong Kong in 1949 and devoted his remaining years to writing, lecturing and travel.

His book, MYSELF A MANDARIN, tells of his experiences as a Special Magistrate of the New Territories in Hong Kong. After many years in the Far East he moved to Colares, Portugal where he died.

## **JOHN COATES**

### **Cascais**

#### **A CASE OF TEMPORARY INSANITY**

.....seems to be the only explanation for my enlisting in the Canadian Armed Forces in the summer of '42 (fish were jumpin' and the cotton was high), unless it was to save the world for Democracy and my dear old Mum. Whatever the reason, the result was my being posted to Camp Borden in Ontario, in the Engineers Corps.

We were responsible for all the services and amenities: roads, electricity, water, buildings, everything my architectural background had prepared me for. Our collection of heavy construction equipment attracted many problems to our office, with the attending C.O.'s

Having just arrived from "Civvy Street" it was immediately evident to me that we were grossly underpaid to deal with such onerous responsibility, so I decided to do something about it! I drew up a manifesto, signed by everyone in the Corps, that declared that if we did not receive our trades' pay by a certain date, we would walk out! I posted it on the bulletin board, and it became a constant source of amusement for all the visiting C.O.'s. Now, by the deadline, we still had no response, including our 'trades pay', so I marched everyone out, down to my 'hut'. The Army reacted immediately: first in the shape of a Lance Corporal. "Are you going back?" "NO". This scene was re-enacted throughout the whole roster of ranks, culminating in the formidable form of the R.S.M., who was already not a fan of mine. We went back..... In due course we got our trades' pay, and I became a lithographer (on paper), which years later resulted in my being in London with The Ministry of Town & Country Planning.

My career as a lithographer during the war was with the Engineers in the Third Canadian Armoured Division, refit & reinforcement, building bridges.

We were en route to Willemshaven, and bivouacked at a small German village named Sogel. We were on a farm, with outbuildings, open on one side to common grounds, with trees in the distance. At chow one morning, our medic was lamenting the shortage of drugs. The previous day I had been rooting around in the town square, in a shed which had obviously been used by an F.D.S. for the infantry which had just gone through. There was the smouldering frame of a Bren Carrier outside. Our medic seemed interested in checking out this shed, so we left the chow line and made off to the 'cache' if indeed there was one. There was nothing of use, and on emerging from the shed, there was obviously something going on, small arms fire very close, so we ran for the hotel on the corner.

We didn't bother to check in, but high-tailed it up the stairs where we found a number of refugees. There wasn't a weapon in the group, but now there were also two engineers, one with a Luger. He looked out the window, suddenly loosed off a couple of rounds, then ducked back in. Silence. Then we heard

someone (or two) coming in down below. Silence. We could wait no longer: we crept down the stairs with the Luger man up front. We found two men: a deceased German paratrooper, in full fig, with a bazooka, and beside him, a German soldier with a bullet hole in his arm. I left and went out front into the lobby, where I looked out the window, just as an armoured halftrack came by, very close. The armour plate was down over the wind screen. Then the impossible – a bullet went through the eyescreen, taking out the driver. Enough! I ran out of the hotel and across the street. There was a photographer there – gutsy guys – whom I crouched down beside as he took a picture. Now I was mad..... I went into the building which served as our F.D.S., grabbed a rifle, not bothering to see if it was loaded, dashed across the street and into a passage. At the end of the passage I surprised two Germans with a machine gun, crouched down in the hollow beneath a bush. Brandishing my (un)loaded gun, I confronted them, and, mirabile dictu, they surrendered! I confiscated their gun and marched them off to the provost.

I went back to our bivouac where I found our 2nd I.C. to be dead, and his replacement badly wounded. There was also a large number of German bodies over by the barn, and lots of walking wounded – and still more gunfire. Our C.O. arrived in his jeep. We were sheltering behind the house on the street, and warned the C.O. not to go round the back. He insisted in going there, and came staggering back with a bullet through his neck! Luckily, in this case, curiosity did not kill the cat – he survived.

Now fast forward about 30 years to the book department of a large store in Toronto. There, while browsing in the 'war books' section, I happened upon a history of the Canadian Army in World War II, whose centerfold was the very same photograph shot by the photographer beside whom I was crouched on that unforgettable day .....

**Antonio Conceicao**  
**Seaman, US Coast Guard**  
**Deceased**  
**Queluz Cemetery**

Seaman Conceicao was placed to rest in the Queluz Cemetery on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2001. His parents and brother brought his ashes from Connecticut where he and 4 other young men had been killed in an automobile accident.

**Peter Costeloe**  
**Cascais, Portugal**

Peter joined the RAF during WW II and was trained as a navigator. Because of an ear infection he was removed from flight status and transferred to a casual company of "lost souls".

In order to be reassigned he was given an interview and the personnel officer found out that he could speak Russian. In 1908 his father left Ireland and went to Moscow to work as a teacher where he met his Russian wife. As a result of the revolution, he and his wife returned to the UK where he found work as a teacher. As a result Peter and his sister grew up in a Russian speaking household.

After the first interview he was sent to the language school where the officer in charge of Russian found out he could not read or write Cyrillic. Peter then challenged the officer in Russian and they found out he spoke better Russian than the officer. Because of his good spoken Russian he was sent to the School of Slavonic Languages at London University for three months to learn to read and write in Cyrillic.

His first assignment while at London University was to work with Russian Foreign Minister Molotov's itinerary when Molotov visited London. Since he was only a flight sergeant he was given the temporary pips of an RAF officer.

At some point Peter brought a group of Russians to visit his family's home. They could not believe that ordinary people would have such large quarters.

After the war Peter went to hotel management school in Switzerland and worked as a hotel manager all over the world. While working in Rhodesia he had the sad duty to tell Princess Elizabeth that her father King George had died. His biggest assignment was opening the Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong. While there he met his wife Frisca from Macau.

**James Arthur Crabtree**  
**Deceased**  
**As reported by his widow: Mavis Crabtree**  
**Santa Barbara de Nexe**  
**Faro**

James was born February 7, 1922 and joined the Army (Royal Engineers) on November 20, 1941. He served until November 11, 1946 mostly in the Near East and Greece and particularly with 1238 Field Company (Arkforce) in the invasion of Greece in 1944. James died in July 2003 while working on his memoirs and Mavis has forwarded 17 typed pages of which only the exploits in Greece are abstracted below.

His awards included the Africa Star, Italy Star, 1939-45 Star and the Hellenic Republic Medal 1941-45.

On August 10, 1944 James was posted to 746 Artesian Works Company, Royal Engineers in Tobruk. This posting only lasted 2 hours and he was ordered to 1238 Field Company, Royal Engineers that was in formation.

Churchill wanted to protect "the soft under belly of Europe" and send an expedition force into Greece while Eisenhower did not agree.

Having an invasion in mind James had 10 days to form the 1238 Field Company.

The emerging 1238 Field Company was to be in support of the tankless 23<sup>rd</sup> Armoured Brigade under the command of Brigadier Arkwright, known as Arkforce, and James' platoon supported the Kings Royal Rifles.

His unit was assembled at Mina and then moved to Armarya between El Alamein and Alexandria to join the formation of about 6000 men ready for embarkation. During the 6 week wait for departure James plotted (as the only the draftsman in the company) on maps the water supply for Athens and Pireaus where they were to land. Information was supplied by agents in Greece.

Embarkation took place on October 13, 1944 and the members of 1238 Field Company were the guests of the Royal Navy on the cruiser Black Prince. The convoy consisted of about 60 ships along with the old Greek Battleship AVEROF which soon fell behind.

The sea approaches to Greece were heavily mined and James counted 6 badly disabled minesweepers and destroyers and the bay looked like a graveyard. The landing was badly delayed and off Poros Island James saw a water ship disintegrate before his eyes.

On October 15, 1944 James and his platoon disembarked into 2 Landing Craft Infantry with 2 motorcycles and they landed at Heraklion Pireaus near the

power station. They met with no resistance and, on the contrary, a civilian gave James his visiting card and invited him to lunch at the tennis club in Patission.

For the first 6 weeks James' platoon worked to remove demolition charges from the harbour at LIMIN ALON Piraeus and from roads and bridges. Work parties went as far as Salamis Island and Khalkis near the island of Euboea.

James had the good fortune to find a German map which covered the entire harbour from Iraklious power station to Faliron Bay on which a series of crosses in pencil marked the explosive charges in the harbour.

After a party with the staff of the Piraeus General Hospital while visiting a wounded member of the platoon therein James had an accident while riding his motorcycle and wound up as a patient in the 97th General Hospital located in the American College in Psychio.

While in hospital his platoon was ordered to evacuate immediately because ELAS (Greek Communists) had their guns trained on the billet. The platoon took up a position in the old Turkish Barracks near what is now the Hilton Hotel. James was in a ward on the top floor of the hospital with a commanding view to the South where there was a German ammunition depot now controlled by the Communists.

He watched a Hurricane Fighter/Bomber fly over the depot and drop a bomb. The force of the explosion of the bombed depot broke all the closed windows on that side of the hospital. Later he watched the progress of a battle over a hill in the same direction. On one side was a cluster of guerrillas in dark civilian clothing and on the other a single tank.

At this time something like 26,000 Communist guerrillas encircled Athens and Piraeus against Arkforce and its ancillary troops of about 6,000 strong. The air command in Kifissa was overwhelmed and marched into captivity. It began to look as if another one of Churchill's personally ordered expeditions might finish in disaster.

The 97<sup>th</sup> General Hospital was now 4 miles within ELAS territory, water and electricity was cut off and operations took place under candle light. The dead were buried in the garden of the chapel next door. In addition ELAS started bringing in their casualties.

A 25 pounder shell hit the front wall of the hospital, did not explode and dropped into the courtyard. James got a ladder, picked up the shell, took it to a far wall of the garden and dropped it over with no mishap.

Churchill remembering the Dodecanese tried to come to an accommodation with ELAS but was told "I have Greece, you have two streets in Athens, Mr Churchill go home". He had no alternative but to order General Alexander, already deeply involved in Northern Italy to come to Greece. He ordered in the 4<sup>th</sup> British and 4<sup>th</sup> Indian Divisions from Italy.

James was ordered back to his unit and a white scout car packed with sand bags came to get him. He arrived at the old Turkish Barracks and nearly missed being shot by his own men. The platoon was ordered to fill bomb craters in Kalamaki airfield under sniper fire. One man was injured and 2 killed in an accident that should have been avoided. James buried the 2 engineers himself and put the wounded man on a plane out.

For his new HQ he picked the offices of the Acropolis Newspaper where the resident owner was married to a daughter of Admiral Levidie, master of the Royal Household. The Admiral subsequently invited James to lunch. The first sign of help was a band of British paras from the 4<sup>th</sup> Para Division marching jauntily up Odos Singrou singing "roll out the barrel".

During Churchill's meeting at the Grand Bretagne Hotel in Constitution Square, ELAS had placed explosives in the sewer below the hotel. James was ordered to make an opening into the sewer from Bucharest Street and to construct a barbed wire entanglement nailed to its wall upstream of the opening. While working under sniper fire, John Nixon of the BBC appeared for a story and got it.

The civil war continued in Northern Greece until the 1950s

## **Kathleen Knowles Deffense** **Deceased** **S. Pedro do Estoril**

During WW II the Civil Service had moved to North Wales where there is a ridge of mountains (called Snowdon). Kathleen lived in North Wales, in Rhyl with her parents, sisters and brothers.

Kathleen joined up hoping to get into Boats Crews as her sister Maureen was already in Boats Crews, but there was a very long waiting list. So she was offered Fleet Air Arm, which they said was better because they needed more young girls to become Industrial Draftswomen which is exactly what she did and was assigned as a WREN to HMS Daedalus. Her other sister, Valerie, was off to Blethchley Park to break the German codes! Before Alan Turing and other geniuses invented Bunburyismus and Colossus to help break the supposedly-impregnable German "Enigma" cipher machine it is said that the British used the Welsh language for transferring orders and information. Anyone familiar with the Welsh language will know that it looks like code language, which was what it was meant to look like to the Germans!

Kathleen had to sign a document on her honour, never to tell anyone anything about what they were doing or where exactly they were. This applied to anyone else in the service doing any sort of work which involved a certain amount of secrecy. They were in close contact all the time to the Radar, which today has a lot to do with all telecommunications. The ladies were told constantly never to stay too long near the Radar and Kathleen worries when she sees all her children and grandchildren stuck to mobile phones all the time. It was thanks to the "Boffins" working in Farnborough that they had Radar to warn them that German planes were coming down over the Channel to bomb London and Coventry. After that it was said that bringing the German planes down over the Channel had to do with all the carrots the pilots were eating (carrots for breakfast, for lunch, tea, dinner, snacks!) because carrots were quite rife at that time, everything else was rationed.

She and her mates were the original "back to the drawing board" lot – so from the workshop what was wanted was sent to them to draw, or to specify where nuts and bolts should be put for the Radar for the plane, in this case the Walrus, and make space for the co-pilot, they would do this and send it back to the workshop. It would then be made to specifications and, oh dear, too big or too small, no space for the co-pilot, so "back to the drawing board".

Kathleen met her husband, Willy Victor Deffense, during the war as did her sisters also meet their respective husbands. Willy and his two brothers (who were Belgian) were studying Engineering. The brothers were in Portugal at the time that war broke out and so joined up in England. They went to England going all the way to the Hebrides so as not to be caught by the Germans. Willy became an officer in the British Army joining the Royal Engineers. He was D-Day +2 (blowing up bridges and putting them back again). One story – He was moving in his tank in France, having just arrived and saw a tank coming towards

him. He got out of the way, waved them on and then stopped a little further on. Twenty minutes later the same tank came past again and then a British tank which stopped and the officer said to Willy “what the he— do you think you are doing? Jokingly he replied, “waiting for the war to finish”. The British officer said didn’t you see that was a German tank? Willy said, oops, no, we only just arrived.

Kathleen says she went to lots of dances during the war, biked everywhere and getting a lift back to where they had come from was never a worry, people helped one another.

**Manuel Evaristo**  
**Private First Class, US Army**  
**Fallen**  
**Monte Cemetery Murtosa**

Manuel Evaristo was born in Murtosa in 1916 and emigrated to the US (Newark, NJ) about 1941. He was serving with the 99<sup>th</sup> Division during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 when he was wounded, captured and died in captivity. At first he was buried in a US cemetery in the Benelux and his wife had his body moved to Monte Cemetery in Murtosa during the 1950s.

He was survived by a brother, who also served in WW II, and numerous cousins in the Murtosa area.

**Eugene B. Fluckey**  
**Rear Admiral, US Navy**

**Commanding U.S.S. Barb:**  
**“The sub that sank a train”**

In 1973 an Italian submarine named Enrique Tazzoli was sold for a paltry \$100,000 as scrap metal. The submarine, given to the Italian Navy in 1953 was actually an incredible veteran of World War II service with a heritage that never should have passed so unnoticed into the graveyards of the metal recyclers.

The U.S.S. Barb was a pioneer, paving the way for the first submarine launched missiles and flying a battle flag unlike that of any other ship. In addition to the Medal of Honor ribbon at the top of the flag identifying the heroism of its captain, Commander Eugene "Lucky" Fluckey, the bottom border of the flag bore the image of a Japanese locomotive. The U.S.S. Barb was indeed, the submarine that "SANK A TRAIN".

July 18, 1945 (Patience Bay, Off the coast of Karafuto , Japan ) It was after 4 A.M. and Commander Fluckey rubbed his eyes as he peered over the map spread before him. It was the twelfth war patrol of the Barb, the fifth under Commander Fluckey. He should have turned command over to another skipper after four patrols, but had managed to strike a deal with Admiral Lockwood to make one more trip with the men he cared for like a father, should his fourth patrol be successful. Of course, no one suspected when he had struck that deal prior to his fourth and what should have been his final war patrol on the Barb, that Commander Fluckey's success would be so great he would be awarded the Medal of Honor.

Commander Fluckey smiled as he remembered that patrol. "Lucky" Fluckey they called him. On January 8th the Barb had emerged victorious from a running two-hour night battle after sinking a large enemy ammunition ship. Two weeks later in Mamkwan Harbor he found the "mother-lode" ...more than 30 enemy ships. In only 5 fathoms (30 feet) of water his crew had unleashed the sub's forward torpedoes, then turned and fired four from the stern. As he pushed the Barb to the full limit of its speed through the dangerous waters in a daring withdrawal to the open sea, he recorded eight direct hits on six enemy ships.

That could possibly be left for the Commander to accomplish who, just three months earlier had been in Washington , DC to receive the Medal of Honor? He smiled to himself as he looked again at the map showing the rail line that ran along the enemy coastline.

Now his crew was buzzing excitedly about bagging a train.

PROBLEM? The rail line itself wouldn't be a problem. A shore patrol could go ashore under cover of darkness to plant the explosives.. .one of the sub's 55-pound scuttling charges. But this early morning Lucky Fluckey and his officers were puzzling over how they could blow not only the rails, but also one of the frequent trains that shuttled supplies to equip the Japanese war machine. But no matter how crazy the idea might have sounded, the Barb's skipper would not risk the lives of his men. Thus the problem... how to detonate the charge at the moment the train passed, without endangering the life of a shore party.

Solutions! If you don't look for them, you'll never find them. And even then, sometimes they arrive in the most unusual fashion. Cruising slowly beneath the surface to evade the enemy plane now circling overhead, the monotony is broken with an exciting new idea. Instead of having a crewman on shore to trigger explosives to blow both rail and a passing train, why not let the train BLOW ITSELF up. Billy Hatfield was excitedly explaining how he had cracked nuts on the railroad tracks as a kid, placing the nuts between two ties so the sagging of the rail under the weight of a train would break them open. "Just like cracking walnuts," he explained. "To complete the circuit (detonating the 55-pound charge) we hook in a micro switch ...between two ties. We don't set it off, the TRAIN does." Not only did Hatfield have the plan, he wanted to be part of the volunteer shore party.

The solution found, there was no shortage of volunteers, all that was needed was the proper weather...a little cloud cover to darken the moon for the mission ashore. Lucky Fluckey established his own criteria for the volunteer party: ...No married men would be included, except for Hatfield, ...The party would include members from each department, ...The opportunity would be split between regular Navy and Navy Reserve sailors, ...At least half of the men had to have been Boy Scouts, experienced in how to handle themselves in medical emergencies and in the woods. FINALLY, "Lucky" Fluckey would lead the saboteurs himself.

When the names of the 8 selected sailors was announced it was greeted with a mixture of excitement and disappointment. Among the disappointed was Commander Fluckey who surrendered his opportunity at the insistence of his officers that "as commander he belonged with the Barb," coupled with the threat from one that "I swear I'll send a message to ComSubPac if you attempt this (joining the shore party himself)." Even a Japanese POW being held on the Barb wanted to go, promising not to try to escape.

In the meantime, there would be no more harassment of Japanese shipping or shore operations by the Barb until the train mission had been accomplished. The crew would "lay low", prepare their equipment, train, and wait for the weather.

July 22, 1945 (Patience Bay, Off the coast of Karafuto , Japan )  
Patience Bay was wearing thin the patience of Commander Fluckey and his innovative crew. Everything was ready. In the four days the saboteurs had anxiously watched the skies for cloud cover, the inventive crew of the Barb had built their micro switch. When the need was posed for a pick and shovel to bury the explosive charge and batteries, the Barb's engineers had cut up steel plates in the lower flats of an engine room, then bent and welded them to create the needed tools. The only things beyond their control were the weather....and time. Only five days remained in the Barb's patrol.

Anxiously watching the skies, Commander Fluckey noticed plumes of cirrus clouds, then white stratus capping the mountain peaks ashore. A cloud cover was building to hide the three-quarters moon. This would be the night.

MIDNIGHT, July 23, 1945 The Barb had crept within 950 yards of the shoreline. If it was somehow seen from the shore it would probably be mistaken for a schooner or Japanese patrol boat. No one would suspect an American

submarine so close to shore or in such shallow water. Slowly the small boats were lowered to the water and the 8 saboteurs began paddling toward the enemy beach. Twenty-five minutes later they pulled the boats ashore and walked on the surface of the Japanese homeland.

Stumbling through noisy waist-high grasses, crossing a highway and then into a 4-foot drainage ditch, the saboteurs made their way to the railroad tracks. Three men were posted as guards, Markuson assigned to examine a nearby water tower. The Barb's auxiliary man climbed the ladder, then stopped in shock as he realized it was an enemy lookout tower....an OCCUPIED tower. Fortunately the Japanese sentry was peacefully sleeping and Markuson was able to quietly withdraw and warn his raiding party.

The news from Markuson caused the men digging the placement for the explosive charge to continue their work more slowly and quietly. Twenty minutes later the holes had been dug and the explosives and batteries hidden beneath fresh soil.

During planning for the mission the saboteurs had been told that, with the explosives in place, all would retreat a safe distance while Hatfield made the final connection. If the sailor who had once cracked walnuts on the railroad tracks slipped during this final, dangerous procedure, his would be the only life lost. On this night it was the only order the saboteurs refused to obey, all of them peering anxiously over Hatfield's shoulder to make sure he did it right. The men had come too far to be disappointed by a switch failure.

1:32 A.M. Watching from the deck of the Barb, Commander Fluckey allowed himself a sigh of relief as he noticed the flashlight signal from the beach announcing the departure of the shore party. He had skillfully, and daringly, guided the Barb within 600 yards of the enemy beach. There was less than 6 feet of water beneath the sub's keel, but Fluckey wanted to be close in case trouble arose and a daring rescue of his saboteurs became necessary.

1:45 A.M. The two boats carrying his saboteurs were only halfway back to the Barb when the sub's machine gunner yelled, "CAPTAIN! Another train coming up the tracks!" The Commander grabbed a megaphone and yelled through the night, "Paddle like the devil!", knowing full well that they wouldn't reach the Barb before the train hit the micro switch.

1:47 A.M. The darkness was shattered by brilliant light and the roar of the explosion. The boilers of the locomotive blew, shattered pieces of the engine blowing 200 feet into the air. Behind it the cars began to accordion into each other, bursting into flame and adding to the magnificent fireworks display. Five minutes later the saboteurs were lifted to the deck by their exuberant comrades as the Barb turned to slip back to safer waters. Moving at only two knots, it would be a while before the Barb was into waters deep enough to allow it to submerge. It was a moment to savor, the culmination of teamwork, ingenuity and daring by the Commander and all his crew. "Lucky" Fluckey's voice came over the intercom. "All hands below deck not absolutely needed to maneuver the ship have permission to come topside." He didn't have to repeat the invitation. Hatches sprang open as the proud sailors of the Barb gathered on her decks to proudly watch the distant fireworks display. The Barb had "sunk" a Japanese TRAIN!

On August 2, 1945 the Barb arrived at Midway, her twelfth war patrol concluded. Meanwhile United States military commanders had pondered the prospect of an armed assault on the Japanese homeland. Military tacticians estimated such an invasion would cost more than a million American casualties. Instead of such a costly armed offensive to end the war, on August 6th the B-29 bomber Enola Gay dropped a single atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima , Japan . A second such bomb, unleashed 4 days later on Nagasaki , Japan , caused Japan to agree to surrender terms on August 15th. On September 2, 1945 in Tokyo Harbor the documents ending the war in the Pacific were signed.

The story of the saboteurs of the U.S.S. Barb is one of those unique, little known stories of World War II. It becomes increasingly important when one realizes that the 8 sailors who blew up the train at near Kashiho , Japan conducted the **ONLY GROUND COMBAT OPERATION** on the Japanese "homeland" of World War II. The eight saboteurs were:

Paul Saunders, William Hatfield, Francis Sever, Lawrence Newland, Edward Klinglesmith, James Richard, John Markuson, and William Walker.

Footnote: Eugene Bennett Fluckey retired from the Navy as a Rear Admiral, and wears in addition to his Medal of Honor, **FOUR** Navy Crosses...a record of awards unmatched by any living American. In 1992 his own history of the U.S.S. Barb was published in the award winning book, **THUNDER BELOW**. Over the past several years proceeds from the sale of this exciting book have been used by Admiral Fluckey to provide free reunions for the men who served him aboard the Barb, and their wives.

(Note) The Admiral graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1935 and lived to age 93, passing on in 2007. After WW II he served as both US Naval Attaché and the first Commander of NATO in Portugal.

**Rui Matos da Fonseca**  
**Corporal, US Army**  
**Fallen**  
**Pardilhó Town Cemetery**

Rui Matos da Fonseca, born in Pardilhó on 14 December 1928 boarded the Serpa Pinto in November 1942 to go to America to join his father. He was the son of Jose R da Fonseca and Maria Candida Fonseca. Prior to the Korean War he enlisted in the US Army and served with Company K, 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division in Korea. He was killed by enemy fire 14 September 1950 and is buried in the Pardilhó Cemetery. During the withdrawal of his company, he covered them and, when his companions returned, they found 130 dead enemy soldiers in front of his position.

The story appeared in the Portuguese Newspaper JORNAL de ESTARREJA on 29 August 2003.

## **Ian Duncan Fraser Madeira**

Ian, born in 1918, was at Christ Church, Oxford when war broke out. He was allocated to the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm and then sent back to Oxford for three months, to graduate while awaiting the preparation of facilities for training pilots. On completion of basic flying training, he was commissioned and sent to learn about dropping torpedoes and deck-landings etc. This training emphasised night flying because the Navy's torpedo aircraft, 'Swordfish', could fly at only 100 knots and were extremely vulnerable by day.

As Fraser completed his Fleet Air Arm training and was preparing to go home for Christmas 1940, he was unexpectedly posted to RAF 252 squadron and found that, having been trained on single-engined biplanes and for night torpedo work, he was a founder member of the very first squadron to fly Beaufighters, which were large, twin-engined monoplanes with 10 guns. He took part in the very brief battle for Crete, both strafing German aircraft before the German invasion of Crete and covering the evacuation of allied troops a few weeks later. On return from the latter operation he was shot down by a nightfighter into the Western Desert, where, with a wound in each arm, he lay for three days before being found. His observer was killed.

After 7 months in hospitals in Egypt, South Africa and a hospital ship, he returned to Britain, regained flying confidence in a Fleet Air Arm ferrying squadron and the Naval Air Fighting Development unit, did a refresher course on torpedo work and in September 1942 was posted to 828/830 squadron in Malta. This battered squadron had already sunk more enemy shipping than any other allied unit; and during Fraser's time many more of the ships supplying Rommel's Afrika Korps were sunk. He was awarded a DSC for torpedoing an Italian cruiser and then shot down again, when investigating whether it might be possible to attack shipping near Palermo by flying over Sicily – at night, of course.

Fraser and his observer were picked up by a German frigate after they had floated about in the sea for six days without food or water. His observer died and was buried at sea; but Fraser was landed at Biserta, flown to Naples and trained to German, where he was a POW for 27 months.

He was repatriated after VE-Day, weighing 50 pounds below his pre-war weight; and, after being fed by his family and tidied up by the great plastic surgeon Macindoe, he was released from further naval duty to join the Colonial Service, for which he had been selected before the war. He then did a crash course in the Malay language and joined the British Military Administration in Malaya, which had recently been recovered from the Japanese. He served in the Malayan Civil Service till 1960, when Malaya and Singapore became self-governing, was awarded an OBE and subsequently served as a 'retread' administrator in Aden and the Bahamas.

He comments that he is preparing some “war memories” for his grandchildren that will run to 20 pages and that the 1939-1945 war will be as distant, primitive and strange to them as the Boer War was to us.

**Humphry W. Friend**  
**Blackheath, England**

Humphry was born 16 May 1920 and entered the Royal Navy in May 1937 from the Nautical College and served mostly on fleet destroyers during WW II. He received a Reserve Decoration.

**WARREN GLENN**  
**Baltimore**

The Glenns were Okies (refugees from the Oklahoma Dust Bowl of the 1930s) and instead of heading West during the Dust Bowl they headed East. Their Model T broke down in the Mt Washington community of North Baltimore, Maryland and Shrine of Sacred Heart Church took them in.

There were 3 boys: Warren, John and Calvin. There was also a much younger girl but I do not remember her name.

Warren was a year ahead of me at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart and during the summer of 1940 I met him hitchhiking to the old Curtis Wright Airport where I always went on Catholic holydays because there were never any other kids around. Warren and I would sit in the old cockpits and play airplanes.

Warren told me he was going to join the Army Air Corps and I asked how old he was: 15. He said his parents would sign and tell them he was 17. Warren did exactly as he had promised.

In 1943 Warren came home. He was a Staff Sergeant, had 25 missions as a gunner on a B 17 flying out of North Africa and was being sent as a gunnery instructor to Keesler Field, Mississippi. He told me his war stories.

Warren was very low key. He said their B 17s bombed Rome. His position was as a top turret gunner and the gunners would sleep until about 10 minutes before the target. The pilot would wake them and the Me 109s would come up for greetings. Warren never had to fire his machine guns. On the way back the Me 210s would approach and fire a few shots and that was it. Then they all went back to sleep.

John served in the Army and was disabled from falling off a truck.

While I was a student at the U of Md in the late 40s I met Calvin on a Greyhound bus. He was a Sgt in the USMC and was on his way back to camp in North Carolina.

## **Ronald Goddard**

### **Lisbon**

CDR Ronald Goddard, AFC, Royal Navy joined the Royal Navy in 1967 and followed a traditional seaman officer career pattern, until 1973 when he started flying training. Graduated in Chipmunks, Hillers and Whirlwind before joining an operational Sea King Squadron attached to HMS TIGER in 1975.

In 1976 he transferred to the Wasp and then completed instructor training at RAF Shawbury in 1977. After teaching pilots for a few years transferred to the new Lynx helicopter and formed the first operational Lynx squadron at RNAS Yeovilton during which time he developed the tactics for Maritime Counter terrorist activities in conjunction with the special forces.

Ronald became Flight Commander of HMS EXETER and took part in the Falklands war. HMS EXETER distinguished herself by shooting down an Argentinian aircraft with a Sea Dart missile from inside San Carlos water. During operation Corporate Ron flew many surface probe sorties, missile decoy sorties and conducted special forces insertions. After the war he was awarded the Air Force Cross. He remained as HMS EXETER flight commander for a further tour in the Falklands in 1983.

In 1985 he commanded 815 Naval Air Squadron, the largest helicopter squadron in NATO before taking command of the Leander class frigate HMS PENELOPE in 1987.

Ron left the Royal Navy in 2000 after serving as Defence Attaché in the British Embassy in Lisbon.

FALKLAND WAR WEBSITE  
HMS SHEFFIELD D 80  
<http://www.hmssheffield.com/>

## **John Morris Grant Funchal**

John was born 1 January 1927 and served in the Royal Navy from March 1945 to November 1947 as a Petty Officer Radio Mechanic on board the HMS Mercury.

On the day WW II broke out he was vacationing with his family at Newquay in Cornwall. He heard the 11 am announcement on 3 September 1939 by Neville Chamberlain from a radio on the beach. His family cut short their holiday and returned to London.

Although the autumn term at Bancroft's School, Woodford Green, started late life went on very much as usual. John's father was a civil servant in the Inland Revenue and commuted to work. He walked to school and walked home for lunch. His older sister was at school at Loughton located a short bus journey away.

At the time of Dunquerque in May 1940 he wanted to help in the evacuation but did not know anyone with a boat. He and his sister were nearly sent to live with an uncle and aunt in Canada but after the sinking of a ship with many evacuating children the scheme was abandoned. When the Local Defence Volunteers, later the Home Guard, was formed his WW I, POW in Germany father could not join because of his reserved occupation. John was a Boy Scout and later a Sea Scout and remembers the arrival of cases of .300 rifles from the USA while working at the Home Guard HQ.

In September 1940 he was at the local swimming pool when the Blitz began. He remembers the nights in NE London with incendiaries falling all around but his house suffered little damage. The family listened avidly to and were heartened by Churchill's speeches.

John's desire was to join the Royal Navy when old enough because an uncle had been commissioned as a Sub-Lieutenant. He had some boat experience and membership in the Sea Scouts. In 1942 he joined the Y-Scheme, a Royal Navy pre-selection plan. Later he joined the Air Training Corps at another school in Essex and had his first flight in a DH Dragon Rapide. After D-Day the ATC plotted the Allied advance through France.

From October 1944 he was in uniform in the University Naval Division at Cambridge and matriculated at Downing College. Along with his academic subjects he learned signalling and seamanship. In March 1945 he was briefly on board HMS Foudroyant, a ship from the Napoleonic area. Then he went to HMS Raleigh, Torpoint for basic training. On VE-Day the crew spliced the mainbrace and spent the afternoon in an alcoholic haze on Plymouth Hoe. John did not make the commission course and was sent to St. Budreux and Wembury. At this former holiday camp he came close to weapons being fired for the only time of his service. There were some 3.7 AA guns for the defence of Plymouth and in anti-flash gear he and a group of others had to carry shells

some 50 yards downhill to the guns. VJ-Day arrived and the possibility of being in harm's way became remote.

He was remustered for Radar Plot and was sent to the former Butlin's camp in Ayr and then to Douglas IOM where the Navy occupied boarding houses along the front. Douglas was a good billet because his aunt, the Sub-Lieutenant's wife lived nearby with her sister and baby daughter. They went dancing at the Villa Marina and beer was only 8d a pint.

At Douglas he learned that the next stop on the Radar Plot was Whale Island with all its gunnery drill. The escape route was a 6 month course for radio mechanics which took him to Rugby. There he lived in civilian digs and studied at the Technical College where he failed to learn snooker and went to concerts in Birmingham. The students were promised Petty Officer ratings but their evaluations were delayed.

The ratings' mess was primitive and John was now in a camp of Nissen huts in the grounds of a large country house near Petersfield, HMS Mercury. After joining the PO's mess life was more comfortable. He employed his time in reducing B 38 radio receivers into their component parts and in making educational breadboards mounted with various electronic components. Then he got a real job on board HMS Queen Elizabeth, a WW I battleship moored to a buoy off Ryde Pier, to refurbish radar compartments. The compartments had dozens of runs of cable passing through and the task was to make the cabins airtight. This was accomplished with oilcloth and Callendar's compound. The next ship for this treatment was HMS Royalist, a light cruiser of the 1940s on a trot in Portsmouth Harbour. He spent the cold winter of 1946-7 onboard the Royalist but it was relieved by 3 weekends at home per month.

Back at Petersfield someone rigged a TV link that enabled the men to see the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten. This was shortly before he was demobbed in November 1947.

**William R. Grigsby**  
**Deceased**  
**Quinta Do Anjo**

On 3 September 1939 Bill mailed the application for membership of the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve and in the third week of October he was called for an interview. He received a medical examination, acceptance for wireless operator-air gunner and given the choice between immediate mobilization or awaiting a call. He chose the former.

He arrived the same day at the initial training school, Cardington (toothbrush following by mail) and on 25 October 1939 accepted the King's Shilling and was sworn in as Aircraftsman second class.

A month later Bill was transferred to Wireless Training School at Yatesbury and passed out in May 1940. The final interview was brief and to the point: Glasses-ground crew.

In early August 1940 he sailed from England and arrived the end of August at Takoradi, Gold Coast as part of the initial draft to start up the West African Reinforcement Route.

He was placed in charge of the Watch because of previous experience of Morse transmission. A few months later, a small error of procedure was noted and Bill was passed to Aircraftsman first class. From there he advanced to Leading Aircraftsman and then Corporal.

In February 1942 he received a home posting to West Malling, a night fighter station in Kent and put in charge of the administration and training of wireless and teleprinter operators. Later he was given the duty of serving as Duty Signals Officer every third night.

After a short course in Direction Finding Bill was promoted to Sergeant in March 1943 but he had already applied for an advertised commission in Filter.

After a written examination, medical and interview at Air Ministry in May 1943 Bill was sent on a filter course in June and duly blossomed in September as a Pilot Officer.

His first posting as filterer was at Number 11 Group Filter Room near Fighter Command HQ and found constant employment during the bombing campaign, D-Day and V1 flying bombs. Bill was transferred to Number 12 Group in October 1944 and after May 1945 he passed to various administrative duties until demobilization in March 1946.

Final Rank-Flying Officer  
Campaign Medal-Defence  
War Service Medal  
(OBE Civil-1975)

We had a Service of Thanksgiving for Bill's life at St. George's Church, Lisbon on Friday 5 March 2004. This abstract of Bill's wartime experiences was prepared with his assistance before he died. Bill was the longest serving member of the Royal British Legion Portugal Branch Committee with many years of service as Treasurer. Many of us who knew him have enjoyed his pertinent letters concerning important issues within the British Community.

## Lajes War Cemetery, Azores

**Location:** This cemetery is located on the island of Terceira. It is known as the British Cemetery or "Cemiterio dos Ingleses", located near "Bairro Joaquim Alves". Taking the highway from Angra to Praia, turn left at the first roundabout, driving for approximately 150m, where you will find the cemetery. When exiting from the airport, follow the sign for Angra la Herosima and Praia da Vitoria. At the T junction turn left in the direction of Praia da Vitoria. Turn left at the first roundabout. Follow this road past a school and the cemetery will be found on the right hand side after approximately 200 metres.

**Visiting:** The Cemetery Register is kept at the Angraflor Florist shop at the following address: Mercado Municipal da Paia da Vitoria Florista Angraflor 9760 - Praia da Vitoria Açores - Portugal Opening Hours: Monday to Friday: 08:00 to 12:00, 13:00 to 16:00 Saturday: 08:00 to 13:00

**Historical:** Lajes War Cemetery was established during the Second World War, when Commonwealth forces were stationed on the island and the aerodrome was used by the Commonwealth and American air forces. Originally it contained both Commonwealth and American war graves - some of which were moved in from the town cemetery at Angra - but the remains of the American servicemen were later repatriated. Lajes War Cemetery now contains 47 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, one of which is unidentified. Nineteen of the graves are those of the passengers and crew of a Liberator which crashed into the hills when taking off on 14 March 1945. There is also one Polish war grave and one non-war burial in the cemetery

**Lisbon: War in the Shadows of the City of Light, 1939-45** by Neill Lochery  
(PublicAffairs, 2011).  
Portugal's Casablanca

**Neill Lochery**  
**National Post**

Dec. 27, 2011

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At the end of the movie *Casablanca*, as Rick Blaine and Captain Louis Renault head off to start their "beautiful friendship" by joining the Free French Garrison at Brazzaville, the plane carrying Victor Laszlo and Ilsa Lund takes off into the fog. It is to "neutral" Lisbon that they are headed with their letters of transit.

In real life, the city of Lisbon during the Second World War more than resembled the film set; to many people who worked in the city during the latter stages of the war, Lisbon became affectionately known as "Casablanca II." The real-life version had all the ingredients of the fictional storyline: broken romances; desperate refugees trying to obtain the correct paperwork and selling the family jewels to finance their onward passage; a thriving black market as supply dictated that the prices of diamonds and other rare stones fell to record low levels; cafés and hotel bars full of refugees and spies scattered across the city centre and along Lisbon's coastline resorts.

There was also a real-life Captain Renault in Lisbon: The greatly feared head of the Portuguese Secret Police, Captain Agostinho Lourenço. Senior figures of the German Reichsbank were in the city from time to time, busy arranging payment terms for Portuguese goods. The city had the last great gambling house in wartime Europe, located along its coastline at Estoril. Here, the roulette wheel was spun long into the night with the exiled royalty of much of Europe playing blackjack at the tables, or engaged in private sessions of poker in the discrete side rooms. It was here that wealthy Jewish refugees gambled against suntanned German Gestapo agents dressed in badly cut civilian clothes, with the house taking 5% of everybody's winnings.

During the years of the Second World War, Lisbon was at the very centre of world attention, and was the only European city where both the Allies and the Axis powers openly operated. Lisbon's story was set within the context of a country that was frantically trying to hold on to its self-proclaimed wartime neutrality, but which, in reality, was increasingly caught in the middle of the economic, and naval, wars between the Allies and the Nazis. It was not, however, a conventional tale of war: Barely a shot was fired, or a bomb dropped. Instead, it was a tale of intrigue, betrayal, opportunism and double dealing, all of which took place in the Cidade da Luz (City of Light), and along its idyllic Atlantic coastline.

Ultimately a relatively poor European country not only survived the war physically intact, but came out at the end of it in 1945 much wealthier than it had been when war had broken out in 1939. Although much of this wealth was considered by the Allies to be "ill-gotten gains," the Portuguese were allowed to retain the vast majority of it as post-1945 Cold War political realities re-emphasized the importance of the country, and its Atlantic Islands (the Azores), to the cause of the Western Powers.

Lisbon was a city in which an apparent German plot to kidnap the Duke and Duchess of Windsor was foiled. They were among the more exotic refugees, many of them Jewish, who flooded into the city seeking a passage to the United States or Palestine on one of the ships that sailed from the neutral port, or for the super rich, via the Azores on the Pan-American Boeing Clipper "flying boat" service to New York. Most refugees, however, had to wait months, or even years, in the city before securing their onward passage. On the run from the Germans since the fall of France in the summer of 1940, many of the refugees survived on a clandestine network of financial and organizational support, which originated from the offices of wealthy American Jews in New York City. The not so fortunate had to rely on the limited help from the British, the Portuguese authorities and locally run rescue organizations.

Allied and German agents operated openly in the city and monitored every move of the "enemy." Their role was to log enemy shipping movements in and around the busy, deep-water port of Lisbon, to spread propaganda, and to disrupt the supply of vital goods to the enemy. Among the agents who visited Lisbon was a young Ian Fleming, busy devising Operation Golden Eye and playing blackjack at the Estoril Casino - a location that was to later provide the inspiration for a James Bond film. The Iberian Desk of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) was led by the brilliant spy chief, and traitor, Kim Philby, who controlled the British agents operating in the city from London. The writers Graham Greene and Malcolm Muggeridge worked at the same desk as Philby, before Muggeridge was briefly posted to Lisbon and eventually on to the Portuguese colonies.

As the British and German agents watched each other, their movements were, in turn, shadowed and recorded by Captain Agostinho Lourenço's Portuguese secret police, the Polícia de Vigilância e Defesa do Estado (PVDE). Lourenço's reports and decisions determined which espionage activities in the city the authorities tolerated, and which they did not. As a number of British, German and Italian secret agents, and journalists (including the local correspondent of the London Times) found to their cost, if you tried to cross Captain Lourenço, your stay in Portugal was severely shortened.

Lisbon was also the end of the line for escaped Allied prisoners of war (POWs) who arrived in the city to be flown back to England on the threetimes-per-week BOAC (British Airways)-operated flights from Lisbon to Whitchurch, near Bristol. The passenger lists of the flights were a who's who of the senior network of British spies in the city, as well as shadowy Allied industrialists involved in the trade war with the Germans. Competition for places on the planes was strong with various British agencies fighting for the limited number of seats. There were also instances when wealthy members of Lisbon's large Anglo community were caught trying to use the service to transport their maids down to Lisbon. The much loved British Hollywood actor, and star of *Gone with the Wind*, Leslie Howard, would fatefully take one of those flights. Allied and Axis agents operated at the airport 24 hours a day bribing local customs officials to gain access to the cargo and passenger lists of the enemy. Both BOAC and Lufthansa operated flights out of the city's airport, with their aircraft parked

almost next to one another on the tarmac. Writing in 1944, the chief BOAC operations officer in the city described the daily scene at Lisbon's airport as being like the movie *Casablanca*, but twentyfold. During the hours of darkness, Lisbon Airport was highly susceptible to mist from the river, which added to its atmospheric mystery.

Central to the story of Lisbon is the Portuguese leader, António de Oliveira Salazar, who had come to power with the establishment of the Estado Novo in 1932. For Salazar, the Second World War presented a potentially lethal challenge to his regime, and to Portugal in general. Such was the concentration that Salazar devoted to steering Portugal through the war that, in addition to serving as prime minister for the duration of the war, he also served as minister of foreign affairs, minister of war, minister of the interior, and for the first part of the war, minister of finance. Salazar viewed it as his personal mission, and challenge, to prevent Portugal from being dragged into the war and repeating the mistakes of the First World War.

Salazar believed that the Second World War brought two major threats to Portugal: A potential German, or Spanish invasion, and the possibility of Portugal losing its empire. Portugal had backed General Franco in the Spanish Civil War: Lisbon was used as a supply port for Franco's forces, and Salazar sent Portuguese brigades to fight on Franco's side. Despite this, there was still a feeling in Lisbon that Franco, and some of his key supporters, harboured territorial ambitions over Portugal. Recent unpublished documents indicate the existence of very detailed Spanish military plans for the invasion of Portugal during the Second World War.

The changing order of priorities for Salazar during the Second World War fit into two fairly distinct time periods. The first part of the war, 1939-1942, was devoted to preventing the threat of Axis (or proxy) invasion. The second part of the war, 1943-1945, was spent dealing with increasing Allied demands on Portugal, particularly over the Portuguese Atlantic Islands (the Azores) - where both the British and Americans planned secret invasions if Portugal did not comply with Allied demands. Although Salazar initially feared a German victory, as the war developed he became increasingly apprehensive about the prospects of a total Allied victory. Two issues worried him about this: What such an outcome would mean for Portugal and its colonies; and equally worryingly, what it would mean in terms of the power of the Soviet Union.

The Portuguese leader saw the major enemy of his regime, and indeed the coming threat to Europe as a whole, to be not Naziism but communism, and specifically the Soviet Union. Salazar showed a Cold War mentality well before the Iron Curtain fell over Eastern Europe. He believed that the internal Portuguese communist opposition would use the war (as indeed it did in 1944/45 with strikes and mass protests) as a means to mount a challenge against him. At different times during the war Salazar also suspected that Portugal's oldest ally, Britain, would prefer to see the back of his authoritarian regime and replace it with a more democratic government linked to the return of the Portuguese monarchy.

There was an additional crucial economic element to the role of Lisbon during the Second World War, which came to dominate Salazar's thinking during the war, and was to eventually lead to the country making a small fortune. Wolfram (also known as tungsten) was mined in Portugal. It was a vital ingredient of the German war machine. By 1943 the Germans and their European allies were almost totally dependent on Portuguese and Spanish wolfram to keep their armaments industry functioning. They threatened military action if Portugal bowed to Allied pressure to cut its sales to the Nazis. Given that the German army and air force were located only 270 miles from Portugal's eastern border, this threat was taken seriously in Lisbon.

The exporting of wolfram became conditional on payment in gold, and so another layer of intrigue entered Lisbon. During the war, gold was a far safer form of payment than paper currencies, but the Allies disputed the origins of a large percentage of the gold. They argued that gold had been looted by the Germans from the countries they had occupied, and later taken from the victims of the Holocaust. At the end of the war, Nazis smuggled gold into Lisbon on its way out to Brazil and from there dispersed it across South America to help finance their postwar Nazi communities in the region. To this day, the vaults of the Bank of Portugal are alleged to still contain gold bars stamped with the Nazi insignia. In an embarrassing revelation, the Catholic Church in Portugal was forced to admit that rebuilding work at the Catholic shrine in Fatima (north of Lisbon) was paid for with Nazi gold bars that the church had mysteriously acquired from the Bank of Portugal.

After the war, the Allies, while insisting that the actions of the Portuguese government in selling wolfram had, in effect, prolonged the war, did not make Portugal return the Nazi gold it had received in payment. Instead, a quiet accord was reached in which Portugal was allowed to keep nearly all of the gold in return for allowing the United States continued access to an airbase on the Azores. The Allies' decision was in stark contrast to the hard-line policy they adopted toward other neutral countries that had received Nazi gold and were made to return virtually all of it.

For Portugal, and the regime, the war represented as great an existential challenge as a literal battle for their lives would be, even though in practice no fighting ever came to Portugal. The drama was to manoeuvre the country away from the attention of either of the warring powers. It was a policy of knife-edge neutrality, a poker game for the future. And in Salazar, Portugal possessed as wily a player as any of the belligerent nations. He was able to continue to rule Portugal until a stroke incapacitated him in 1968 and eventually led to his death in 1970. The Nazi gold remained largely untouched in Portuguese accounts scattered across the globe. This is the story of how Salazar and Lisbon got away with it, navigating the shadowy back alleys of wartime subterfuge to outwit fiercer and larger opponents.

- Excerpted with permission from *Lisbon: War in the Shadows of the City of Light, 1939-45* by Neill Lochery (PublicAffairs, 2011).

**Jean Daniel Lomont**  
**Monte Estoril**

I was born in Paris, France on August 4, 1937. When I was two and a half, my mother who was divorced from my father, joined a taxi driver and the three of us drove to Nice because of the Germans moving into France. My brother and sister who at that time were six and a half and ten and a half, stayed on in France with my grandparents; however they were much older and did not feel they could take of me as well since I was only two and a half.

Once we arrived in Nice, according to my mother, we only stayed for a couple of weeks and then left for Portugal.

We arrived in Portugal in June of 1939 and my mother found work. I was placed with a Portuguese family and would see my mother on weekends and on holidays. It was not the best way to live but then at my age it did not really matter except I still remember missing my mother.

From what I was told I learned Portuguese in about 4 months and used to translate for my mother when we were together and then she learned the language.

When I was five and a half, my mother met David Hartley, who was in Portugal working for the American Friends Service Committee, arranging for Jewish children to be sent to America because of the war. He asked my mother if she would to have me go to America, although it would mean my being put with another family. She agreed and Mr Hartley contacted his parents and asked if they would like to have a little French boy come and live with them. They agreed.

On January 9, 1943 I was put on the Portuguese boat, The Serpa Pinto, along with some other children and we were sent to America. My understanding was that this boat had schedules and on the 9<sup>th</sup> there were supposed to be about 200 children on the boat, but I was told we only sailed with about 40 children total. There were two things I remember about the trip, one was the Punch and Judy shows they had for us and the other thing was the so called life boat drill. We all thought this was great fun and put on life jackets, went to the life boats with our escorts and once we were in the water and away from the boat, a German u-boat surfaced.

The u-boat launched a rubber raft with German sailors and they went on board to check out the Serpa Pinto as the captain had told the German captain that there were only women and children on board. When they were satisfied, they left the Serpa Pinto and we were allowed to re-board and continue our trip.

When I think about it now I feel very lucky, as the German captain could have just fired and destroyed our boat with everyone on board. Maybe he just was not a killer or maybe he had children and knew how important his children were

to him. Regardless I owe my life and I am so glad that he checked first before firing on us.

During the time we were in the water and in life boats there was one boy, about 16 that was taken off of our boat and the Germans took him with them. I guess he was considered to be of military age and we never saw him again.

Our next stop was the United States. After a couple of weeks in a center for children I was taken to Dover, Delaware and introduced to Mr and Mrs Byron Hartley, David's parents. The only English I knew at the time was: I alright, how are you? I only spoke French and Portuguese but I had to learn English because that September I had to start school. Mr Hartley was principal of the Dover, Delaware schools. The problem was that they wanted me to learn English very quickly that everyone forgot that I spoke two other languages. There were French teachers in the high school but they did not think about that I have lost both languages; and now at 70 it is very hard to learn them again.

Once I arrived in Dover, at a fine brick house, the first one I met after the Harley's was Lassie, a beautiful collie and I fell in love with her. I had never had a dog before so it was great. I was taken to my room and it was wonderful, my own room. Mr Hartley had the wood working shop at the school close in a corner of the house to make me a bedroom, all knotty pine. I could not believe I had a room that was all mine and I did not have to share it with anyone. While I was sitting on my bed wondering what next, I met Sadie, a black and white cat who was also part of the family. As a five and a half year old I thought I was in heaven. I had a dog and a cat, what more could a boy ask for, his own room, a dog and a cat.

I started school in September and grew up in the Hartley home. In fifth grade like most boys, I broke my arm jumping out of a tree. I was in a cast for six weeks. Two week later at school I broke the same arm again but in a different place. Boys will be boys.

Mr Hartley got a job in York, Pennsylvania as Dean of the junior college so we moved from Dover to York, where I finished sixth grade and went on to junior high school. I did not like school very much and York was a tough place to live. When I got to the tenth grade I hated school and quit school. As most kids that quit school, I got in with the wrong crowd and got into trouble. Not like the kids do today but at the time it was trouble. David Hartley had come back to America and was at that time Dean of Men at Albany, New York State Teachers College. He came to York and got me to come back to Albany with him and take a look at the new school that had just been built in Delmar, New York, which was the town, just outside of Albany where he and his family lived. He convinced me to come and live with his family and go back to school and I think the big reason was that the new school had a swimming pool and I could go out for the swimming team. So I came to New York, but there were a few catches. One was that in Pennsylvania I could drive at 16 where in New York you had to be 18. That was hard for me because I had my own car that I had worked summers to be able to buy. So without a choice I sold the car and went back to walking like the other kids.

I was not an "A" student but I kept my grades up so I could be on the swimming team. I also played football and ran track and the last two years of school were really fun.

After graduating from high school I got my naturalization papers as I could not be an American citizen until I was 18, since no one else in my family was in the states. I became an American citizen two weeks after I graduated. Then I got a passport and came back to Portugal to visit my mother who I had not seen since I was 12 years old. I was in Portugal from May to the end of October 1956, then returned to the States. I joined the US Air Force. I did one tour in Libya, North Africa. While in the service I got married and was married 33 years, got divorced, remarried 4 years later to a wonderful Portuguese lady and now live back in Portugal where this story really began.

**Marie Augusta de Sousa Leitão**  
**Deceased**  
**Birre, Portugal**

As Canadian troops arrived in Singapore to be marched into captivity auntie Marie along with her husband Eduardo and children Maria Luisa and Edurado were able to get onto this last boat out. In the confusion auntie Marie had forgotten her jewelry and Miss Leung Mo Kit, the amah, volunteered to risk missing the boat and went back to the house and returned with the jewelry. It came in handy later as a means of barter.

The ship dropped them in Goa but there was no way of making a living there and eventually the family moved to Bangalore. They were taken in by the Rebellos, a Portuguese/Indian family, at 22 Cubon Road. Maria Luisa attended the Sacred Heart High School and Eduardo was at St Joseph's B.H. School in Bangalore.

Her husband Eduardo died of pneumonia in April 1945, aged 51, and is buried at the Roman Catholic Cemetery, Hosur Road in Bangalore. The inscription on his tombstone, chosen by Maria Luisa, is:

"One who never turned his back,  
But marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Hold we fail to rise, are baffled  
To fight better, sleep to wake"  
(Browning)

The jewelry came in handy to sustain the family while Auntie Marie worked for the WRVS in Bangalore.

When WW II ended Auntie Marie contacted her brother, Mickey, and also Mr. Childe (Eduardo's old employer at China Underwriters) in Hong Kong who helped the family reach Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong auntie Marie had a souvenir shop and worked 10 years as the assistant manager at the Miramar Hotel on Kimberley Road, Kowloon. When the Chinese bought the hotel she was paid off and she invested the money in a property which she rented to employees of Pan American Airways. With the remaining funds she and Maria Luisa went to Portugal where they remained. Her son, Eduardo, was already living and studying in England by then.

## **Erich von Marbod Virginia, USA**

My father was a junior officer in the Austrian army and served with a unit in Hungary, during the time of the Austro Hungarian Empire (K u K Monarchy). He went to the US in 1910 with his mother, a former opera singer. My mother, at age 19, went to the US, with her mother, and married my father in Portland, Oregon. After the wedding, my mother's mother returned to Dresden, Germany. My mother would say that my father was the most handsome man on a horse and he should have remained in the Army. He was also a very good violinist. But his military background was not useful for him in the US. It was more a burden than a benefit as the US prepared for the wars of WWI in Europe.

When WWI was raging, my father wanted to return to his Regiment to fight the Russians. Later, he wanted to fight the Italians after Italy attacked Austria to seize the Austrian Tyrol.

He said not returning to serve made him feel sad and at times guilty because the Italian army was three times larger than the Austrian army. But my mother had children and wartime travel restrictions would have made a return to Dresden very difficult for her.

My father and mother were very concerned about the Weimar Republic and the inflation in Germany during the 1920s, because many people were starving. My father was quite critical (bitter) of the Versailles Treaty and the economic punishment visited on the German people. He was happy when Germany violated the Treaty and sent troops back into the Rhineland in 1936, eighteen years after the end of the war. He liked Hitler in the early years when poor and starving Germans were given jobs, and he seemed to agree with the Austrian and Sudetenland actions. But he started to become disenchanted when the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was announced in 1939 because he hated the Bolsheviks. My father and mother were distressed when pictures of young frozen German soldiers arrived from Russia in late 1942. We also had Jewish relatives and speeches in Germany against Jews upset my parents.

My father and mother had 12 children. I was the 9<sup>th</sup> child. My father was a violin teacher and he started a 160 acre farm. He had to clear the trees from the land and my mother described the farm as a "stump ranch". His violin lessons, profitable for a number of years, dried up when people lost money during the depression and could not afford music lessons. He worked WPA and we were on relief. We were very, very poor during the depression years. Two of my brothers were in the US Army Air Corps during WWII. I joined the Army in 1945 at age 16. My parents loved the United States and they loved Germany. They hated the Nazis once the war started hurting the people, long before the Totaler Krieg speech.

My mother was born in Dresden, Germany and was from a rather wealthy family. To this day, I cannot understand how she could live in such poverty,

married to my father. He was a beautiful dreamer, loved people, music and the outdoors, but he was a poor provider. I cannot describe how stressful it was for my mother and the impact on her mental health, after Dresden was fire-bombed on 13 February 1945. She was raised in Dresden and left many friends there at age 19. Dresden was the most beautiful city in Germany: "Florence on the Elbe". It was never a military city and it was crowded with civilian refugees fleeing the Soviet Armies when 90% of the city was destroyed by a well-planned and executed fire storm. My mother sang songs about Dresden until she died at the age of 101 ½.

The Germans have a saying: "The good news in the bad news". The bad news was the terrible war. The good news was the war took my family out of poverty. But we always look back.

After joining the US Army in 1945 at age 16, I trained as a combat infantryman and rifleman at the Infantry Replacement Training Center (IRTC), Camp Roberts, California. Many units in the US and Europe were being deactivated after I completed my basic training. I was assigned to Battery B, 675 Glider Field Artillery Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division on occupation duty in Yonezawa, Japan. We lived in a Japanese schoolhouse until barracks were built for my unit and we were moved to Jinmachi Station, Japan. I went through parachute jump school and I trained in CG4A (Waco) Gliders at Yamoto, Japan on the WWII Japanese Naval Aviation Base: Matsushima. General Swing, 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division Commander, required all men assigned to glider units to qualify as parachutists. I had never been in an airplane before being sent to the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division. My first flight was in a C 46 Commando aircraft and I made my first parachute jump from the aircraft. My first landing in an aircraft was in CG4A Glider and we got banged-up a bit. I was honorably discharged from the US Army in 1947 as a T/4 and I joined the US Army Reserve (USAR).. I was promoted to Master Sergeant in USAR in 1950 and I was appointed Warrant Officer (WOJG) in 1951.

After discharge from the Army in summer of 1947, I got a job digging ditches for irrigation systems and I worked at a Shell service station. I also went back to high school because I had not graduated when I went into the US Army at age 16. I enrolled in the University of Washington in 1948 under the GI Bill. In 1952, I went to Germany to visit with a brother working for Department of State. I was required to register with the US Army when I arrived in Germany because I was a Reserve Officer and the Korean war was intensifying. I was asked if I would like to be recalled to active duty. I said no, but I accepted a short tour of active duty because the pay and logistical support were very helpful at that time.

I started work as a Department of the Army civilian employee in Germany in 1952. I helped implement the Mutual Defense Assistance Program in Europe, Turkey, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Ethiopia and Pakistan. I was based in Heidelberg, Germany and Paris, France. When Germany received sovereignty in 1955, we worked with the new military. All officers were WWII combat veterans and walking war stories. Most carried painful memories. Most were very modest.

In 1961, I moved to the Pentagon and worked for the Department of the Air Force as Chief, Mutual Defense Assistance Program Branch in Air Force Comptroller. From that job I moved to Office, Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs. I was later appointed: Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), with special assignments for Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos.

After Saigon was captured, I helped with the resettlement of 130,000 Indo China refugees. In September 1975 I was sent to Teheran, Iran as Senior US Department of Defense Representative.

In 1977, I was moved back to: Office, Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs. I was later appointed: Director, Defense Security Assistance Agency. I retired in January 1982 with 31 years service, including military time, from 1945-1947.

The government was very good to me and I enjoyed all of my assignments. I also enjoyed my work in Corporate America, after government service, and I retired from Lockheed Martin in 2005 at age 76 ½

I was never in combat during WWII but I was proud to make parachute jumps and CG4A glider rides with WWII combat veterans serving in the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division in Japan after the war had ended.

## **Mark McLaughlin** **Deceased**

Mark McLaughlin died on the morning of April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Mark was a long-standing member of the Royal British Legion and was always very supportive of the Legion and its aims. Until recently Mark helped raise considerable sums through the Charity Bridge Association for the Annual Poppy Appeal.

Mark was in Cambodia at the time of the Japanese surrender and was the British Officer who officially received the sword of surrender from the Japanese Commanding Officer there. He subsequently was the British Officer who was invited by the Japanese to attend the 1st anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and was extremely moved by the ruination he witnessed there and the warm reception he was given by the Japanese. It is also with pride that we mention the fact that in 2004 he was knighted by the King of Cambodia, whom he had met and spoken with at length at the time of the Japanese surrender.

Mark's funeral took place at St. George's Church in Lisbon on Friday 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009

## **John Martin Albert Moore** **Faro**

John was born 24<sup>th</sup> March 1927 and so when the war broke out he was 12. He felt that one day he would be called to serve his country, so he immediately joined the Latymer Upper School Cadet Force. On his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday he received a Lord Lieutenants commission in the Middlesex Regiment. On 7<sup>th</sup> June 1944 he joined the Army as a private and after Basic Training and a course at Sandhurst was commissioned and posted to the Sudan Defence Force at age 18. At that time the Sudan was jointly administered by Britain and Egypt and all British Officers seconded thereto were granted the honorary rank of Lt Col. In May 1947 he was posted to Asmara, Eritrea where he reverted to a Lieutenant in the British Army.

John was discharged on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1948 and shortly afterwards joined the Fulham Branch of the RBL, where for many years, he served as a part time steward in their club.

He retired to the Algarve in 1991 with his Portuguese wife.

## **Christopher Thomas North** **Oeiras**

Tom was born 20 November 1919 and took the easy way to get to England, he bought a ticket on an airliner and flew over to enlist in the RAF. He served in the 103 Squadron Bomber Command as a navigator. His awards include: 1939/45 Star-France/Germany Star – Defence Medal and the 1939-1945 Medal.

He submitted the following fascinating story of one bombing mission:

## 1000 BOMBERS

Around lunchtime on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1945, "Groupy" pinned the roster for the night's operation on the notice board of the officer's mess. Gradually the members of 103 Squadron gathered round it.

"Ye Gods, it's a big one, nearly everyone is on it,"  
"Where can it be?"  
"0400 assemble in the Ops Room, bloody hell!"

Lunch was a solemn affair, all available kites were on this one, judging from the assembly time it could be an early raid not too far but, it could also be a long daylight one.

So what! We were confined to barracks so the only solution was to relax and read or sleep; it was even possible to drop the folks a line, the latter solution, under the circumstances was not very popular. Sleep was a good option. Soon all the easy chairs and sofas of the lounge were full of recumbent forms trying to make up on their sleep for what was ahead of them.

All who had been chosen to be on the raid were woken about 0300 hrs. of the 25<sup>th</sup>. Early enough to wash the sleep out of their eyes and to proceed to their various messes for a breakfast of fried eggs and bacon for those who wanted it. Thermos flasks were filled with tea or coffee, flying rations of sandwiches, chocolate bar, raisins and chewing gum as well as escape kits were collected.

It was a cool clear morning with what little wind there was from the SE. Come 0400 and the operations room was full with all the members of the various crews. As was normal the navigators, complete with their bag of tricks, and the pilots were the first to arrive, the Briefing Officer was standing at the end of the room in front of the curtains which hid the map on which our destination would be indicated. When everyone was seated and the door closed he drew them aside.

A long thin red ribbon stretched all the way across the map, missing the red patches which denoted the areas where the anti aircraft guns were implanted. There was a sudden silence as it was realized where the target was located. It was what once had been the small village of Berchtesgaden high up in the mountains above Salzburg where Hitler had his hideout, the "Eagle's Nest". But now it had grown into a town where Nazi leaders like Goering and Martin Borman had acquired their own houses.

Apparently the Third Army under General Patton had been directed south towards Bavaria and Austria by General Eisenhower as it was suspected that Hitler had ordered one of his generals to prepare a "fanatical resistance" guerrilla warfare from that region. It, therefore, was hoped that a raid on Hitler's "Aerie" would, if he was not there, at least eliminate some of his top henchmen.

We were told that there would be 1000 bombers on the raid so it would be necessary to be very accurate as regards keeping to track and time. At 9°E., there would be an escort of American fighters, Mustangs and Thunderbolts, "large cheers", also the target would be marked by Pathfinders flying mosquitoes, "more cheers", this time from the navigators and the bomb aimers! The Met Officer told us that the weather would be fine, maybe a few clouds, not much wind, mostly southeasterly.

As navigator I was busy filling out my flight plan with all the necessary orders and information, such as, T.O.T, (Time on Target), 0952, bombing height, 18,000 feet, H2S on from 0700E. to Base, (it could not be connected before, on the way to the target, as the enemy radar could pick it up), flying height along each of the legs. It was also essential to calculate the E.T.A., at each of the turning points to make sure we arrived "on time".

The crews piled into vans and were driven to the various dispersal areas where the kites were waiting for us, ours for today was "S" for "Sugar"; the ground crew reported that all was O.K. We climbed in, the ladder was removed, door closed; we each checked our instruments, Mac, the pilot, made his cockpit check, Butch, the bomb aimer, his guns, bombsight and bomb selector, Jock, the flight engineer, his instruments, Reg, the wireless op., switched on and tested the set, Wally, the mid upper and Smith, the rear gunner, checked and loaded their guns, I switched on and confirmed that the "H2S", (radar which could be picked up by the enemy), that "G", (an instrument which measured two crossing beams thus determining the position and could not be picked up by the enemy, but it had a restricted range), and that the "A.P.I", (Air Position Indicator) were all functioning.

Mac got his clearance and at 0532.5 we were airborne, at 0547 we were at 9,000 feet with a course of 159° T. on the first leg of our journey, the temperature was -2°.

At 0645 we crossed the English coast between Dover and South Foreland and 6 minutes later it was the French coast at Cape Gris Nez.

At 0810 we were 23 miles due E. of Nancy, and at 7° E., up to now the trip had gone very well, it was a nice clear morning but still cold at -2°. "G" had decided that this was far enough for it and no longer gave satisfactory fixes. So what! It was now permissible to switch on to "H2S" so decided to have a quick look. Underneath the countryside was lush, in the distance there were snow capped mountains and there were a number of villages and towns dotted around, it looked so peaceful until I looked around the sky; as far as I could see whether ahead, behind or to port or starboard, above and below there were Lancasters from full sized ones to great sized ones, it was unbelievable. No wonder we had to keep in place and on time.

Forty minutes later it was time to alter course nearly due E. to meet our fighter cover, to climb to 18,000 feet where the temperature was -21° and prepare for the last couple of hundred miles or so.

All went well and at 0930 there was another alteration of course to place us about 20 miles SSW of the target, Jock started throwing out "window" and Butch got down over the bombsight. We could hear the pathfinders egging us on, "Come on fellows, it's a piece of cake", sure it was, there was flack all round us, some like nice white puffs of cotton wool, those were beneath us, the ones at the sides and above were dirty looking, the ones that smelt were too close, the kite shook but Mac kept it steady, we wanted the target to be seen on the photo and there would be very little enjoyment if we had to go round again!

Bomb doors open...Butch selected all the bombs and took over calling for whatever slight alterations were necessary.

0956 Bombs Gone.

Mac had the course out and we went like bats out of hell, nose slightly down and our speed went from 175 m.p.h. to 210. After about 20 miles "window" was stopped as it was no longer necessary. For those who are unfamiliar with "Windows" it consisted of metallic paper, about 30 cms. long by 3 cms. wide; hundreds were packed in bundles that were pushed out through a chute in the nose of the aircraft. The bundles burst open in mid air and floated down to earth over the aircraft that were following behind jamming the enemy radar that was connected to the anti-aircraft guns. Obviously it did not help the kites in front nor the one that was tossing it out but it must have saved many airmen as the guns could not concentrate on individual targets but had to fire any old how into the middle. A bit like shooting into a flock of sparrows and hoping for the best.

The journey back was uneventful, we maintained our speed around 190 m.p.h. and soon after crossing the border into France gradually descended to 7,000 feet and although the "A.S.I." went on the blink at 1106 it was no problem because "G" kindly started to come through.

1235.5 saw us crossing the English coast close to where we had left it nearly 6 hours ago. At 1336 we were over Base and at 1348 the wheels touched the deck. We breathed a sigh of relief and wondered which pub to visit later on.

It had been a trip of about 1,400 miles and taken us 8 hrs. 15 mins. Luckily 103 had not suffered any casualties and only one kite had a few holes in one of the wings.

Unfortunately not all the other squadrons had the same luck.

**Robert Owen**  
**Sao Joao do Estoril**  
**Alderley Edge, Cheshire**

Robert was born August 18, 1928 and his experiences were typical of those available to his contemporaries – the age group which, in words of the WW II song, “were either too young or too old”—too young to fight but too old to forget it!

Service in the UK context during WW II began at age 14 when Robert enrolled as a messenger in Civil Defence to maintain contact between C.D. posts in the event of loss of telephone connections due to enemy action.

His village lies only 14 miles south of Manchester and it provided a grandstand view of the “blitzes” of late 1940 and early 1941 which destroyed the centre of the city, mostly by incendiary bombs. Anti Aircraft guns surrounded the village in defence of Manchester and rained shrapnel on it, plus high explosives and incendiaries jettisoned by bombers caught in the Anti Aircraft “cones”.

The Air Training Corps provided pre-entry experience from age 16 to 18 and covered Principles of Flight, Navigation (including astral), Meteorology, Gliding Instruction and Powered Flight. This latter mainly involved carrying paratroops from Para Training School No. 1 at Manchester Ringway aerodrome to drop zones in Cheshire.

Robert entered the RAF just 18 months too late. He and his fellow cadets suffered the heart break of seeing dozens of winged pilots employed as clerks, cooks, etc. thus destroying their ambition to fly against the enemy, action they had long anticipated and trained for.

## **PBY 5 CATALINA CALAMITY**

**22 March 1943**  
**by Michael Pease**

This cache commemorates an historic incident in March 1943 at Sagres. Sagres Cemetery in the Algarve of Portugal is open to the public all hours and on all days except May 1<sup>st</sup> and December 25<sup>th</sup>.



On the heavily overcast afternoon of March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1943 farm workers in fields around Sagres became aware of a deep continuous growl emanating from somewhere deep within the mist to the north. As the noise grew louder, the workers looked up to see the dark hulking shape of a large sea-plane lumbering towards them at a very low altitude. The roar of the twin engines was almost deafening and the ground shook as the Royal Air Force PBY-5 Catalina passed close overhead. But the noise of the engines, though terrific was, at the same time, uneven – one engine stuttered and back-fired. “It’s going to crash into the town!” the cry went up and men dropped their tools to race back towards the houses. At the same time a contingent of marines, stationed in the nearby Fortaleza, fearing imminent disaster, broke from their barracks at a sprint and headed for the centre of town.

Just as the Catalina seemed certain to go careering into the buildings, it managed to gain a little altitude and immediately went into a steep but faltering starboard (right handed) turn, arching unsteadily towards the sea. Both villagers and marines were now racing after it towards the cliffs of Tonel Bay. “It seemed like the plane might have been trying to ditch into the sea, or perhaps dump its munitions before crashing. “We never found out”, said one elderly resident. It was low over the waves of the bay when one wing may have clipped the cliffs and the plane then exploded in mid-air. Flames billowed in all directions and the wreckage fell into the water. Everyone was horrified.

Local fishermen immediately launched small boats to search for survivors. Another group of villagers, along with some marines, searched the cliffs just to the north of the Capela de Nossa Senhora da Graça on the Porta de Sagres outcrop (42 m above sea level). Not far from this location and wedged into the rocks, they found the body of air gunner, Sergeant Gilbert Orton (21), outwardly undamaged and still strapped into his aircraft seat.

No others of the Catalina's ten-man crew were found that day. But, a few days later, the body of wireless operator and air gunner, flight sergeant George Gibson (23), was washed up on Tonel Beach. "It was a great tragedy. They were so young...just boys. Everyone in the village was very upset", recalls an elderly villager.

The Catalina belonged to 210 squadron RAF, and had been based at Gibraltar since November of 1942. PBY-5 Catalinas were the favoured aircraft of British Coastal Command. Their long-range fuel tanks, substantial weapons load and amphibious ability made them ideal for anti-submarine work and high-sea rescues. It was the task of 210 squadron to provide air support for the allied invasion of North Africa and, from then on, to patrol the Atlantic coasts from Gibraltar to the Bay of Biscay, undertaking a variety of tasks including U-boat search and destroy missions.

Portugal was officially neutral in WWII but, from the beginning in 1939, the Portuguese dictator, Salazar, had, given a degree of support to the Axis Powers permitting German U-boats and other naval craft to use the Açores as a refuelling base. Consequently the Atlantic, off Portugal's south-western coast, was an active area for British anti-submarine activities. It was not until towards the end of 1943 that Salazar recognised the direction that the war was turning, at which point he disallowed use of the Açores to the Axis and made them available to the Allied powers.

Some villagers recall that, within the community, there was a known Nazi supporter. It is said that he had contacts so that when Allied planes were in the vicinity of Sagres he could summon Axis air forces to do battle. For certain, some villagers can recall four separate incidents involving air and sea forces with 'bullets all around' and even a cow was reportedly killed as a result. But because witnesses are now aged it is difficult to disentangle one incident from another.

Gibson and Orton were buried at the given coordinates, with full military honours. The funeral was a major event in Sagres, nearly everyone attending except for the known Nazi sympathiser.

Today, Gibson and Orton lie side by side in a shared plot that is well maintained by local villagers, with funds provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The story remains part of Sagres' folk lore. Every year, on All Souls Day (November 1<sup>st</sup>), villagers place flowers on their graves so that "the two RAF boys" are not forgotten.

Some villagers have expressed sadness that the two boys have not been taken home to lie next to their families. But British military tradition is that a serviceman is buried where he falls. In the midst of the horror of World War I Rupert Brooke wrote the immortal lines:

If I should die, think only this of me;  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be

In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

The given coordinates are those of the common grave of the two sergeants that lie, side-by-side, in Sagres Cemetery. Perhaps you might like to take a flower or two with you and to place them on their combined grave. At the head of this grave you will find a small urn surrounding which is recorded the names of the ten airmen that perished in this incident. Within the urn you will find some plastic packets, each containing a paper poppy together with a copy of a poem that tells in verse why these are worn in the days leading up to November 11<sup>th</sup> each year - The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month is the Day of Remembrance. Please feel free to take one and perhaps you might like to retain it in memory of this little piece of Sagres' history. Surrounding the urn you will also find 10 small local beach pebbles in memory of the 10 crew members of the PBV-5 Catalina whose names are painted on the urn.

**PB4Y FLIGHT 63931**  
**30 NOVEMBER 1943**  
**by Michael Pease**

Jaime Henriques Nunes together with his friend José Mascarenhas, both aged about 30, viewed this Tuesday morning as no different to any other working day in their lives as fishermen of Faro town, the capital of Portugal's southernmost region, the Algarve. But November 30th 1943 was to prove very different. They were busy, in what is now Faro Marina where Jaime kept his boat moored, repairing and sorting nets and readying Jaime's small 5-meter uncovered row boat for a night's fishing off the coast. They planned to leave later that evening when the outgoing tide would be sufficiently high to permit them to row via the channels and waterways of the Ria Formosa to a fishing ground south of Baretta Island (N 36° 57.00'; W 007° 54.00'), some 6 km in a direct line south of the Faro marina. Off Baretta they hoped to get a good catch of corvina (bass), their only source of income, before returning with the incoming tide in the early hours of the following day. High tide was scheduled for 06.00 hours on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

They would be joined later by Manuel, José's 10 year-old son. Meanwhile, they checked the ship's gear and fittings and ensured that the hurricane lamp that hung from a pole in the stern was filled with paraffin. Later that evening, before casting off for their expedition, they would load a few blankets, an item or two of spare clothing and a little food as the night would be cold and it was an open boat. There would be no moon to see by and a storm was expected later. Both fishermen smoked. So they took with them tobacco and paper with which to make themselves smokes to while away the time. This little boat had a small sail whose mast, when not in use, projected from the front like a bowsprit. Otherwise, the boat was propelled only by one set of oars.

But other events were taking place 200 km to the south that would dramatically change the lives of Jaime and José.

At between 9 and 10 a.m., when Jaime and José were working on their boat in Faro Marina, aerodrome controllers were despatching four United States Navy four-engined Liberator bombers (PB4Ys – the Navy's version of the B249) of Squadron VPB-112 from the airstrip at Port Lyautey (Kenitra) in Morocco. This tactically important airstrip was captured from Vichy and Axis forces by the mainly U.S. forces shortly after the North African landings on November 8<sup>th</sup> 1942. The action of commencing an eastwards facing front in North Africa was designed to place the Axis forces in a pincer movement as the British and Commonwealth forces were advancing rapidly westwards through Libya and Tunisia. The Axis forces in North Africa finally surrendered on May 13<sup>th</sup> 1943. But, by November, at the time of this story, Allied forces had invaded Italy and were fighting their way northwards but had yet to reach Monte Casino and Rome.

The four Liberators operated independently; but the mission of each was to patrol for German U-boats and to act as convoy escort. Their route took them far to the north-west over the Atlantic towards the Açores and then eastwards,

off the southern coast of Portugal before returning to base. They expected to be airborne for at least 12 tedious hours. But each aircraft's 11-man crew was not exposed to the elements, as were Jaime and José, and they had plenty of food and warm clothing. Two of these four aircraft completed their missions successfully and returned to Port Lyautey on schedule. One ran out of fuel shortly before the end of its mission and ditched into the Atlantic not far from their home base. There were no survivors.

But all was not well also for the fourth of these aircraft, Flight 63931. The pilot and captain was Richard Trum and his co-pilot was Lt. John Eden. Another of the crew was Lyle G. Van Hook (machinist's Mate) who was to play a significant part as the story unfolded. It had been an uneventful and therefore tedious patrol. But as they flew along Portugal's southern coastline the navigator, Clarence Miller, and radio operator, George Doane, picked up conflicting beacon signals from Seville in Spain and other stations in Portugal and Morocco that led them to a navigational error. As a result, Trum and Eden were eventually forced to acknowledge that they were 'lost'. Fuel was running low and it became clear that they would not be able to return to base successfully. But now they noted the lights of towns near Faro and, despite there being no moon the crew thought they could see a potentially adequate hard beach on which they might land. However, this landing attempt had to be aborted after the wheels touched only soft sand that would have been disastrous on which to land. Trum and Eden reacted quickly by abandoning this potential landing and regaining height. Lyle was then sent to consult the rest of the 11-man crew and it was agreed that parachuting into the sea was not an acceptable option. They had earlier noted the hilly land to the north of the town below them. So Trum decided to jettison all ordnance, bombs and depth charges, and to ditch the aircraft into the sea off Baretta Island.

And this is where we meet Jaime and his crew again. They had left Faro marina with the high tide at about at about 17.00 hours and, after rowing through the maze of channels and inlets of the Ria Formosa, had arrived at their selected fishing ground some 2 nautical miles south of Baretta Island, at about 19.00 hours. There they anchored, cast out their nets and, as is the custom of fisher folk, sat down to wait. It was a quiet but dark night and they settled down to talk in low murmurs and to enjoy a smoke whilst waiting for their nets to fill. However the silence of the night was soon to be shattered as they first became aware of a large aeroplane close to where they were fishing when it attempted to land on a sand bar outside Faro, failed and gained height again. Jaime recognised it for what it was – a four-engined bomber. Then, despite the dark night, they were aware of the plane jettisoning its load of ordnance into the sea not far from where they were fishing as some of the depth charges exploded on impact. But now, the huge bomber circled and flew low overhead scaring the fishermen with its thunderous roar of power. When it crashed into the sea at 125 miles per hour at about 22.15 hours no more than 200 meters from Jaime's boat, he and his crew were, for a moment speechless and aghast.

Meanwhile in Faro town it had become apparent that an aircraft was in trouble so a motor-powered naval rescue vessel set out on a search-and-rescue mission shortly after 22.00 hours. However, they found nothing and returned to

harbour some two hours later. Also the fire service (Bombeiros) was alerted but, again finding nothing returned to their land-base in Faro at about 02.00 hours.

Meanwhile, at the scene of the crash, there was clearly not a moment to lose. So Jaime and José abandoned their nets which were moored with corks and rowed swiftly to the scene of the disaster. They arrived none too early for the plane was already settling into the water and had disintegrated into at least two parts. Figures were clambering over the fuselage and one wing as Jamie, José and his son immediately set about rescuing the six members of crew that had survived. The official report records that the surviving crew were in the water for some 20-30 minutes before being rescued. The other five were probably killed by the impact; but in any event, they sank with the aircraft as it settled and then disappeared below the surface to rest forever 18 meters below on the seafloor. The official investigation recorded that that the crash was due to a navigational error and that well-rehearsed procedures for ditching an aircraft were not followed, i.e. the crew stationed themselves before impact in the bomb bays and under the deck turret, contrary to the recommended procedures. It was not until 2007 that divers located the wreck and noted the smashed cockpit, the scattered wings and the engines some distance away.

Rex McCoy and William Stultz were hurt, the latter with a severe leg injury that later resulted in amputation, and they were the first to be hauled aboard the small fishing vessel. Jaime took off his heavy duty coat and wrapped Stultz in it. Subsequently they were joined in the boat by Lyle and Richard together with Julian Pierce and John Eden. All were cold and wet and Jaime, José and Manuel set about trying to dry them out as best they could and to wrap them in the few blankets that they had chanced to bring with them.

But now there was little else that Jaime and José could do, for the tide was still ebbing and they could not attempt to row to shore for some time until there was an adequate depth of water. High water was not scheduled until about 06.00 hours on Wednesday morning (01/12). So they settled down to wait, cheered only by the little tobacco and paper that they had brought with them to roll cigarettes. It was a cold and cheerless November night lit only by the hurricane lamp that was rigged on a pole above the stern. William was in considerable pain from his leg injury but suffered stoically.

The bomber's crew spoke only English so all communication with Jaime, José and Manuel had to be conducted in sign language.

Jaime and José could not begin their long and tedious row back to Faro marina until after midnight when there was just sufficient water to permit them to navigate through the shallow winding inlets of the Ria Formosa. The boat was now heavily laden with 8 men and a boy on board so it was not until about 3.15 a.m. on Wednesday morning that they finally tied up in the marina. Jaime and José were exhausted.

On arrival they were met by the Faro Fire Service (Bombeiros) who quickly took over the five airmen leaving Jaime, José and Manuel to retire wearily to their homes.

The airmen were deposited at the nearby Misericórdia (church house of mercy) where they were welcomed by Irma (sister) Noraldina, previously from Brazil, who immediately took charge of the two injured airmen and also ensured warm clothing and food for the remainder. She proved a constant 'Angel from Heaven' throughout the airmen's stay.

Faro was suffering from one of its frequent general power cuts and there was only one x-ray machine available in the town, owned by a private doctor. But, of course, without power it was useless until much later in the day.

At this point the story took a turn for the worse as far as Jaime, José and his son were concerned. For, despite all that they had done and what it had cost them in supplying blankets, clothes, smokes and the temporary loss of their fishing gear and the night's catch, they were side-tracked, ignored and not allowed to visit the rescued airmen for some 5 days. They felt very aggrieved. However, they did return to Baretta Island waters on the following day to retrieve their fishing nets.

On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, the day after the crash, the two injured airmen were taken by ambulance to Lisbon where they were hospitalised until able to complete their journey via Gibraltar back to Port Lyautey in Morocco.

Meanwhile, there were many visitors to see the uninjured airmen back at the misericórdia. These included Mr. Faulkner, the British Consul from Vila Real de S. António, but, importantly, the officer in charge of a U.S. naval delegation that happened to be located in Faro. This officer immediately recognised that if the crash was officially registered as having occurred only 12 km from shore, as had originally been stated by Jaime Nunes, the Portuguese government would have been obliged, under international procedures for neutrality, to intern the rescued airmen for the duration of hostilities. Consequently, he 'persuaded' Jaime to adjust his reported find so as to state that he had rescued the airmen 32 km from shore. This would place the location of the crash outside Portuguese territorial limits and the airmen could then be repatriated without infringing the laws of neutrality. Whilst it is clearly ridiculous to suggest that a small rowing boat would be fishing 32 km from the coast, bureaucracy was satisfied.

On December 6<sup>th</sup> the four uninjured, surviving airmen - Richard, John, Julian Pierce and Lyle, were flown to Lisbon where they were housed in a hotel, from where they were able to enjoy the city by day and by night.

Four days later and ten days after the crash, they were able to board a British Sunderland flying boat that took off from Lisbon at 2 a.m. on December 10<sup>th</sup> for Gibraltar from where, after a brief stop-over, they were flown back to their home base at Port Lyautey in a USAF C-47 aircraft.

But the story was not yet over. On December 14<sup>th</sup> 1998, 55 years after the event, Lyle, now a civilian working in the insurance business in the United States, received a letter from Carlos Guerreiro, a journalist, resident in Faro

who was pursuing the story behind the crash of Flight 63931. Lyle was surprised and delighted and commenced an exchange of correspondence with Carlos. Both felt that Jaime and José had been hard done by and were determined that their actions should be officially recognised before the end of their days.

In the first instance, on February 8<sup>th</sup> 1998, Lyle wrote to His Excellency, the United States Ambassador in Lisbon, detailing the incident and calling upon the United States government to “correct an obvious wrong done to those men to whom we owe our lives.”

However, it was not until April 16<sup>th</sup> 1999, nearly a year later, that Carlos Guerreiro was able to inform Lyle that, as a result of the latter’s letter to the U.S. Ambassador in Lisbon, “The Portuguese Ministry of Defence wished to pay homage to Jaime Nunes”.

The diplomatic wheels ground slowly forward and it wasn’t until May 5<sup>th</sup> 1999 that Lyle was informed by telephone that the U.S. Government in conjunction with the Portuguese Ministry of Defence proposed to honour Jaime Nunes (José Mascarenhas had, by this time died) in the Açores – the location of a U.S. air base. But this proposal had to be discarded because Jaime, in his old age, was suffering from ill health and could not make the journey to the Açores.

So, finally, the occasion was fixed for Saturday July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1999 at Gambelas University near Faro when an International TV Conference call would take place to honour Jaime.

Present at the University in the Algarve, apart from Jaime and members of his family and Portuguese government officials, were: Lt. Col. Kelly M. Langdorf of the United States Army, an attaché of the U.S. Embassy to Portugal; Greg Adams, representing the U.S. Ambassador’s Office in Portugal; and Carlos Guerreiro to whom special credit must be given for instigating the whole exercise. Through the TV conference facility, Lyle Van Hook, his wife, Jean, and other family members were able to participate in the ceremony. Jaime was presented with a special plaque to mark the occasion that is held to this day by his grandson. During the ceremony a special and personal message from Lyle honouring Jaime’s and José’s heroism on the night of November 30<sup>th</sup> 1943 was read out.

Subsequently, a special personal arrangement was engineered by Carlos Guerreiro whereby Jaime received a fine new coat from the Liberator squadron commander of VPB-112 in recognition of Jaime’s actions and the loss of his coat that he had used to wrap the injured Stultz. No other compensation appears to have been made.

Jaime Henrique Nunes died in 2007 and was buried in Faro cemetery. José had died earlier and Manuel died more recently. Lyle G. Van Hook died on January 26<sup>th</sup> 2009, aged 87, at Hot Springs Village, Arkansas.

## **Fred J. S. Pearce Funchal**

Fred was born May 31, 1919 and joined the RCAF in 1940 and served until October 1945 with the RAF (50 Squadron). He says he spent 1 ½ years in training and had 4 ½ combat missions in a Manchester bomber and the remainder of the time as a POW before his escape in April 1945.

His awards include (1) for serving, (1) for leaving, (1) for Europe, (1) for unidentified mission and a bunch of clasps.

After prompting I received the following:

On 17-18 April 1942 Fred was acting as the co-pilot of a Manchester bomber on a raid on Hamburg, Germany.

Over the target a bizarre event took place, one engine caught fire, the engine was feathered and the fire extinguisher was released. The extinguisher must have been filled with petrol as the fire burned brighter.

The aircraft was put into a steep dive, expecting the fire might be blown out but it didn't happen and then it wouldn't pull out of the dive.

The order came "Bailout" and Fred left his beloved Manchester at a speed of over three hundred miles per hour. Two of the crew did not get out.

At a low level one does not count 3 seconds before one pulls the rip cord. The parachute billowed out and Fred swung like a pendulum for a second before he hit the ground. The instruction for a jump is: land vertically. Fred forgot or didn't have time to correct the swing by letting air out on one side. He landed horizontally.

At least Fred had enough sense to follow some instructions. He buried his parachute. Then, as any good airman would do he gazed at the heavens, found the North Star and set his course for Copenhagen. It would be N-W 10 degrees. With one good leg he was dragging himself to freedom some few hundred miles to the north.

Just before morning Fred realized it would be winter before he would get to the selected freedom centre. He pulled himself up beside the road through the woods and hailed a ride on the bicycle of a passing farm worker. He sat on the seat and the farmer pushed the bike. Then Fred passed out.

When he came back to reality he was lying on a sofa, his left leg was rapped in towels and an old lady was spooning cold water over the towels. He was then fed soup while a dozen spectators stood by and watched.

He spent 3 months in a hospital and then was housed in Stalag Luft 3 where Red Cross parcels were something to look forward to.

After a visit to the interrogation centre and then a hospital it would be nice to visit other parts of Germany. One always fights boredom and if a new prison camp is to be opened one can always volunteer to be one of the charter residents. During the 3 years as a P.O.W. Fred was a resident of seven camps, but not always as a volunteer. Transportation was usually by cattle car where one took turns lying down so there was never enough space for every traveller.

The most memorable camp was one at the upper end of the Baltic. One day the prisoners heard a roar of guns coming from the East. Great, the Russians were there to rescue them. But the Germans had other plans. Word was circulated that all were to pack whatever could be carried, as the camp was to be evacuated. For a full day all the Kriegies travelled the back roads until they reached Koenigsberg.

It would be the first time that Fred had travelled by ship through the Baltic Sea. It would be distressing to realize that nothing was to be seen as all the men were herded into the hold of the ship. It was the old story as there wasn't enough space for all to lie down.

After landing the prisoners began the long trek through Germany. They did not know where they were going and neither did the guards. For a couple of days they marched in one direction, maybe toward Berlin and then they would head westerly. Eventually they arrived at a camp somewhere near Hanover.

They had a day or two of leisure before being rounded up and put out on the road again, travelling toward Hamburg. Rumour came down the line that they were to be used as hostages. Then later the old rumour was squelched as Hitler had ordered all prisoners to be shot.

It was 17 April 1945, the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary for Fred as a P.O.W. He just had enough of this nonsense. The British were somewhere to the west and it would be a pleasure to join them. Some of the group had the same idea but found themselves mauled by a patrolling dog who was out after them. But now escape was on everyone's mind.

By now, after weeks of travelling, the remaining group were lean and sinewy. In contrast the new set of guards may have been lean but they were too old for front line combat duty. In the beginning they carried rifles but soon they were abandoned and they carried only sidearms.

Near the end of the second day of marching there were fewer guards. The stronger ones held positions for the lead couple of hundred feet while the weaker guards kept dropping back. Eventually there was a space of a hundred feet or more where there were no guards.

Then came the opportunity that only comes once in a lifetime. The column was passing through a reforested area and there was a curve in the path. The lead guards would be looking forward and at one point just for a second the rear guards would not be able to see the prisoners on the inside of the column.

Fred and a Canadian friend jumped from the column, rushed through the trees and quickly plunged into a low area between two small trees.

For the remainder of that day the two airmen stayed hugging the ground between the two trees. The ground seemed to vibrate with every beat of the heart. Please don't let us be found!

The next day the decision was made to move westerly. In four days the advance could not have been more than a few miles. During the nights there was always the roar of vehicles on the roads as well as aircraft in the air, dropping flares.

Then one day all was quiet. Another great decision was made: so the two escapees ventured into the adjacent small village. White towels were hanging from the windows.

It was somewhat disconcerting to find one looking down the barrel of a gun on a tank. A soldier sitting on top of the tank posed the following question: "What are you blokes doing out here?" The reply, "How do you know we are not Germans?" The soldier replied: "No German would be dressed as miserable as you or look as unkempt".

After some harrowing experiences in getting back to England there was the joy of being housed in a palatial hotel in Bournemouth. With five meals a day and snacks in between it didn't take more than a month to put on forty pounds and get back to a reasonable weight.

## **Daisy Chambers de Sousa Pinto Porto**

Daisy Chambers was born in Portugal in 1923 and she served in Fighter Command, the Royal Air Force from March 1942 until October 1946.

She was awarded the Defence Medal and the General Service Medal.

When the war in Europe started Daisy was 16 and still at the Oporto British School. Her brother, Tony Chambers, was already in England and in the Royal Navy.

She says: "As Hitler might turn towards Spain and Portugal, my parents decided to go to England. In July 1941 we set off. It took us 19 days, with never sighting land until we arrived in Liverpool.

My father went to work at a Rolls Royce factory in Glasgow and there I later joined the WAFs.

I became a plotter and went to Uxbridge HQ Fighter Command except for about one month maybe in 43, when we exchanged with girls from aerodromes. I was sent to Biggin Hill.

While there two funny things happened. 3 or 4 of us were coming off duty at night when we heard the sirens; we then heard a plane and then a screeching. We dived into the ditch! We then heard a man laughing a very American voice saying, 'Don't worry, that wasn't a bomb coming down, it was ack-ack going up'. We did feel foolish and pretty dirty from the ditch.

Another day I was getting ready to go on watch about lunchtime when I heard what I thought was a plane coming from Biggin Hill field. I was standing at the bay window on the second floor, when the plane passed in front of my eyes. The pilot turned and I saw his face! I said how lovely!! The girl standing beside me said 'lovely, it had crosses on the wings!' How foolish can one feel!

Back in Uxbridge nothing else happened until 'D Day'. On the 6 of June 44 at midnight I walked into the ops room and saw the table crammed full of plots. What a wonderfully well kept secret!"

Two years later Daisy was demobbed and came back home to Portugal.

Thank you Daisy for your interesting story! Gilbert

## Ponta Delgada British Protestant Cemetery

**Historical:** Ponta Delgada British Protestant Cemetery contains three Commonwealth burials of the Second World War

**Boy BLACK, DONALD**

Unit: S.S. Avila Star (London).

Regiment: Merchant Navy

Age: 17

Date of Death: 17 July 1942

Commemoration: PONTA DELGADA BRITISH PROTESTANT CEMETERY  
Azores

**Additional Information:** Son of Duncan and Eliza Jane Black, of Walton, Liverpool.

**Stoker 1st Class SPRINGALL, HENRY**

Unit: H.M.S. Cossack.

Regiment: Royal Navy

Service No: P/SS 125711

Age: 39

Date of Death: 27 October 1941

Commemoration: PONTA DELGADA BRITISH PROTESTANT CEMETERY  
Azores

**Additional Information:** Son of Thomas James Springall and Agnes Emma Springall; husband of Alice Louisa Springall, of Stepney, London.

**Able Seaman WALLACE, REGINALD THOMAS GRADIN**

Unit: H.M.S. Cossack.

Regiment: Royal Navy

Service No: P/JX 153368

Age: 19

Date of Death: 3 November 1941

Commemoration: PONTA DELGADA BRITISH PROTESTANT CEMETERY  
Azores

**Additional Information:** Son of Hugh Leslie and Esther Wallace, of Gosport, Hampshire.

**Location:** Ponta Delgada is a town and seaport of the island of San (or Sao) Miguel (Ilha De St. Miguel). The British Protestant Church and cemetery are in the Rua Mae da Deus. Cemetery address: Rua de Mãe de Deus 9500 Ponta Delgada - São Miguel Açores. GPS Co-ordinates: 37.744733, -25.661753.

**Visiting:** The cemetery is kept locked but the British Consulate arranges for it to be opened if requested. The telephone number of the British Consulate in Lisbon is: 00 35123924000. The cemetery is known locally as Ponta Delgada (St Georges) Anglican Churchyard (Igreja Evangelica Presbiteriana de Ponta Delgada). This cemetery is only open on Sundays, between 11:00 and 12:00. To visit at other times, an appointment will need to be made; telephone: (+351) 91 811 6387.

**Evelyn Burton Rangel**  
**Mary Burton Rangel**  
**Deceased**

These sisters, born in Lisbon of a Welsh Mother and a Portuguese Father, nursed valiantly in France in World War I. Briefly trained by the Portuguese Red Cross, they were sent to France in 1916, traveling with the Portuguese Army expeditionary force. They were posted to Flanders to a front line casualty clearing station.

Quartered under canvas, often up to their knees in mud, and frequently under fire, they faced the treatment of massive wounds, impressive amputations, gas gangrene and other ailments.

The wounded thought the team of eight nurses and a few doctors to be a Godsend.

On their return home to Lisbon in 1918, both Evelyn and Mary, were awarded the "Cruz de Cristo com Palma", the Red Cross Medal and citations for valor. They wore army uniforms and had the rank of subalterns

In 1927, Evelyn married a Scot, John Nicholson Wallace.

Submitted by Mrs. Vera R. Bensusan, M.B.E.  
(Evelyn Burton was my Mother)

**Joaquim (Jack) Vaz Rebelo**  
**Corporal, USMC**  
**Fallen**  
**Monte Cemetery Murtosa**

Corporal Rebelo was born September 1st, 1946 in Fiscal (Murtosa) and died in combat on May 13, 1967 near the town of Dinh Na, 64 Km south of DaNang, Vietnam. He went to rescue 2 of his downed comrades and his last words were, "Cover me, God'll cover us all". He was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart medals posthumously. His citation reads, in part, "For bravery and exceptional intrepidity in combat on January 29, 1967 while a radio operator for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Company B, First Marines, 1<sup>st</sup> Division in the Republic of Vietnam. He had been transported by helicopter into a blocking position in cooperation with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and received immediate and intensive fire. After reaching an area about 200 meters from the drop off point, the unit received intense fire of grenades and automatic weapons from entrenched Viet Cong. Later as a result of intense heat some members of the platoon and the commander were rendered inoperative. Corporal Rebelo assumed responsibility for reorganization of the unit and obtained medical assistance for the wounded. He called in 3 air attacks against the enemy position and twice went alone under fire to obtain water for his isolated companions. He gave mouth to mouth respiration to the wounded. Due to his energy and determination the unit beat off enemy attacks and maintained their positions." He is survived by his sister, Laurinda Rebelo, of Newark, NJ.

**Douglas Manuel Rogers**  
**Corporal, USMC**  
**Fallen**  
**Atouguia da Baleia Town Cemetery**

Douglas was born June 29, 1945. He served with G Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marines, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division. He died in combat on May 31, 1968 in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam. He was participating in Operation Scotland II and was killed in an attack on his position by the North Vietnamese Army. His death was instantaneous and he was given the last rites by Navy Chaplain D. F. Fogarty. According to Mario Fonseca, a Purple Heart veteran of the Americal Division in Vietnam, Douglas lived in the same neighborhood in New Jersey and when the Red Cross representative arrived at the Fonseca home to inform them of Mario's wounding, the same person went to the Rogers house to tell of the death of Douglas.

**Manuel Rogers**  
**Private First Class, US Army**  
**Deceased**  
**Atouguia da Baleia Town Cemetery**

Manuel is the father of Douglas and he served in the US Army in WW II. He was wounded in the assault on Monte Casino in Italy. He died in 2003.

## **George Roberts Warsaw**

I am a retired WW2, Service Connected Disabled vet, currently living in Warsaw, Poland, Godollo, Hungary and Ermioni, Greece.

This already brings back old memories of WW2 days of the cartoons of Willie & Joe of Bill Mauldin from those pages. But I digress. I am reaching 80 and I have lived a very rich life under 5 names and 8 countries, three armies and dual citizenship, not to mention being permanent resident of another two countries.

Having said all that, I hasten to tell you that I am so passionately the son (or nephew) of Uncle Sam that I even wear red-white & blue shorts and have US stamped on my rump.....and damned proud of it.

I was discharged honorably from the US Air Force, where I hoped to complete my career in the USAF CIC newly formed in 1947 and had orders cut to report to Camp Holabird, Baltimore for CIC school. However, man proposes and God disposes and so, I wound up at Valley Forge General Hospital, Phoenixville, Pa. where I was discharged after nearly a year. I was treated for Hodgkin's Disease, pseudo-leukemia . After receiving maximum hospital benefits, I was discharged to a VA hospital and given 100 % disability pension as a Service Connected WW2 vet. So much for an Air Force CIC career.

I was just 18 years old, no friends or relatives and so I went back to Albuquerque to enroll as a Freshman Engineering student under the G.I. Bill and the care of my only relative....Uncle Sam. He took real good care of me, for which I am eternally grateful. I was also given further radiation treatments and told that I had roughly an 18 mos life expectancy in 1948. I was just 19 years old.

I am happy to tell you that the Hodgkin's have gone into an unexplained remission even though at the time they only had surgery and deep X ray radiation as retardants and no cure. My Guardian Angel has remained on vigil, just as it has all my life.

I was born in Budapest as only child of a working class family, who progressed up into middle class. Both my parents perished before reaching 50. I lead a very independent and adventurous life and by age 13 have even tried the life of a summer farm laborer, just to get a taste of the hardship, even though I was a big city boy. It was on the estates of the Fascist dictator of Hungary, Admiral Horthy. I came from a strongly left-leaning , labor unionist family, so it was not all that surprising that I joined the Armed Resistance underground under a false identity, what was different was that I was 15.

My hatred of the Germans and their Hungarian fascist cohorts, was fueled by the drafting of my partly disabled father into the forced labor battalions and ultimately deported and murdered at Mauthausen camp in Germany. I did take my revenge for him. I served with an underground detachment and was also

drafted into the Fascist National Guard as all men 15-70. My principal assignment was arms smuggling, since I left my barracks every morning with a rifle and returned every night to the barracks, without it. Ultimately I and a comrade in arms were caught by the Hungarian Arrow Cross SS and after interrogation, as a result of fast talking (and probably our tender age), we were released, but on the condition of volunteering for front-line service and so we were fed supper and shipped to the trenches at the outskirts of Budapest, where we were captured by the Red Army. It took even more fast talking to convince a steely eyed NKVD officer that I was really a "partizan" in wolf's clothing. It helped that the capturing troops testified that after capture I have "bravely rushed the German occupied buildings throwing a few hand grenades".....being 15 years old also helped. I spent 2-3 weeks with the Red Army shock-troops as sort of a mascot. The food was plenty and they treated me well.

Most interestingly, I was told as I was returning from night patrol. while in the trenches with the Fascist troops, that my buddy Leslie, was shot through the head. 18 months later in Sept 1946 I was riding a subway at Time Square, New York and when the doors opened I was face-to-face with Leslie !!!! Today, Leslie Schnee lives in Budapest and we reminisce over a glass of wine of those horror days of December 1944 and his rich life in 6 countries and even becoming an associate of newspaper magnet Murdoch and raising two different families on two different Continents.

As for me, the end of WW2 found me in Budapest, but I could see that it was not the Brave New World, I and many millions were hoping for, so I hightailed it for Vienna and further to the American Zone in Germany. I had the name, rank, unit of a Hungarian born US Army CIC officer. He welcomed me, arranged for de briefing both about Russians and captured Hungarian Fascists who escaped to Germany. The 7th Army, 3rd Division, 970th CIC Detachment in Marburg am Lahn, Germany has been the Guardian Angel who helped me obtain the necessary documents with the help of the US Consulate in Frankfurt am Main .

Thanks to their help I sailed on the SS Marine Perch from Bremenhaven and landed in Manhattan on July 27 1946 and by Thanks Giving Day 1946 I was in the Land of Enchantment , tracing the footsteps of my hero Ernie Pyle.

The rest is a different chapter of my varied life.By the way there is a 2 hour taped interview in the archives of the Steven Spielberg Foundation called SHOA, interviews with various survivors and those who helped survivors of the Holocaust.

## **William Martin Francis Stilwell**

### **Deceased**

William was born 26 January 1886 and arrived in Portugal in 1904 to join an uncle by marriage who was established in business in Lisbon. In 1913 he married Maria Ferreira Pinto Basto.

After the outbreak of World War I he returned to England to volunteer for service in the British Army. In 1916 he joined the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The London Regiment, known as the Artists Rifles.

In 1917 he was commissioned as a Lieutenant and was posted to the 48<sup>th</sup> Division in France. The Division participated in the battle of Passchendaele during the Ypres offensive.

The Austrian Army had inflicted a severe defeat on the Italian Army in May of 1917 and a British Army, including the 48<sup>th</sup> Division, was transferred to Italy to support the Italians. William was appointed to the Divisional Staff under Lieutenant General Lord Cavan.

He attained the rank of Major and was commended by the General Officer Commanding in Italy in the following terms:

“I have been very pleased with Major Stilwell’s work with the 48<sup>th</sup> Division. consider he effected considerable improvements in a very short time in method and liaison with the troops. He has lots of energy and common sense and gets on well with Staffs and Regimental people. I recommend him strongly for any responsible position.”

The 48<sup>th</sup> British Division took part in the final offensive in Italy which led to the defeat of the Austrian Army.

William Stilwell ended his service in 1919 and returned to Portugal.

He again volunteered for service in 1939 but was turned down on grounds of his age.

**Maria Stilwell, nee Pinto Basto**  
**Widow of William Stilwell who served in WW1**  
Obituary

Maria was born in Lisbon in 1892. Her mother, Anita Shaw, was English and she married William Stilwell in 1913. With the outbreak of the First World War, William Stilwell was posted with the British Army Staff to Italy. Maria, for her part, came over to England where she worked as a V.A.D.

The Second World War saw Mrs Stilwell back in Lisbon where she became one of the principal organizers of a group of voluntary workers who, in the face of widespread disruption of Red Cross parcels after Dunkirk, obtained supplies of food and cigarettes from local manufacturers, often freely given, and sent them to Germany where they were distributed among the prisoner of war camps. For this work she received a decoration from the Portuguese Red Cross and for many years after the war Mrs Stilwell continued to receive expressions of gratitude from the soldiers who had benefited from her efforts. Mr and Mrs Stilwell were also unstinting in the help and hospitality which they gave to refugees and to those survivors of torpedoed ships who landed at Lisbon from time to time.

Mrs Stilwell had ten children including six sons, all of whom were serving officers during the War: the eldest in the Royal Navy and the remaining five in the Coldstream Guards. Of the latter, two lost their lives while a third was wounded, earning a Military Cross.

**Anthony Paul Stilwell**  
Fallen

Anthony Paul Stilwell trained at the Guards Depot, Caterham and Pirbright before attending the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.

5 February 1943 Commissioned in the Coldstream Guards.

24 April 1943 After further training at Pirbright, joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards.

10 September 1943 landed at SALERNO, ITALY with reinforcements for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards.

(It might be noted that the US Fifth Army that carried out the landing at SALERNO was half British – one US Corps and one British Corps.)

After the breakout from the SALERNO beachhead the next strongly held German position was MONTE CASINO.

Leading a patrol in the foothills of CAMINO, Anthony Stilwell was mortally wounded by a mortar bomb and died in hospital on 18 December 1943.

## **Peter Joseph Stilwell**

Fallen

After attending the Royal Military College, Sandhurst Peter Stilwell was commissioned in the Coldstream Guards on 27 September 1941.

After further training in the U.K. Peter Stilwell with reinforcements for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, which had been fighting in the WESTERN DESERT since the beginning of the war, sailed in the Queen Mary, round the Cape of Good Hope to Egypt.

After reforming and retraining the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards rejoined the 8<sup>th</sup> ARMY at MEDENINE on the LIBYA/TUNISIA border.

There they sustained the last major armoured counter attack by ROMMEL'S AFRIKA KORPS, destroying 52 of the German tanks, the bulk of the remaining German armour.

After further battles, the 8<sup>th</sup> Army reached ENFIDAVILLE where Peter Stilwell was tragically killed on 15 May 1943.

## **Francis Bartholomew Stilwell**

Deceased

Francis enlisted in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, RNVR, Intelligence Branch at the Naval Attaché's Office, British Embassy, Lisbon in the rank of Sub-Lieutenant.

After serving as Assistant Naval Attaché, Lisbon, and promotion to Lieutenant, Francis Stilwell was posted to the Royal Navy College, Greenwich, London for further training in 1942.

His next post was at the Royal Naval Base SCAPA FLOW where he assisted in the organization of clandestine landings of men and supplies on the coast of Germany occupied Norway.

He eventually returned to the Naval Attaché's Office in Lisbon in 1945.

## **Henry Russell Stilwell**

### **London**

Henry enlisted as a volunteer at the age of 17 in the Coldstream Guards on 17 February 1944. He reported to the Guards Depot, Caterham for 3 months initial training followed by 4 months potential officer training at the Guards Training Battalion, Pirbright and then on to the Royal Military College. After obtaining a commission in the Coldstream Guards and further training he joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Regiment in Italy, where his brother John was already serving.

The battalion eventually returned to London for Public Duties and he volunteered to join the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion which had been posted to Palestine where his brother Michael was a Company Commander.

While in Palestine he was appointed Aide de Camp, ADC to the General Officer Commanding Palestine, General Sir Richard Gale.

He returned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion when the Guards Brigade went to Jordan, then called Transjordan. The Battalion later returned to Palestine and later back to England.

He remained in the Regular Army Reserve of Officers until September 1976 and from 1976 to 1997 served in the Ministry of Defence, London.

## **John Benedict Stilwell**

### **Alvor**

Lt. John Benedict Stilwell was born 21 February 1925 and was a resident of Portugal when World War II began. In March 1943 he volunteered and joined at the Coldstream Guards Depot at Caterham, thence to the Coldstream Training Battalion and then to the Royal Military College at Mons Barracks, Aldershot. In October 1943 John was commissioned and joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards during 1944 in Italy and served until January 1947 .

In Italy the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion had many engagements as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Guards Brigades moved from the American 5<sup>th</sup> Army to the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army, back and forth, as became necessary. The Battle of the Argenta Gap (Battle Honour) was perhaps the most important in which he engaged. He holds a M.B.E.

Excerpts from BATTLE HONOURS AND ANNIVERSARIES OF THE COLDSTREAM GUARDS edited by LSGT L. PEARCE, Regimental Headquarters Coldstream Guards (September 1990):

### **The Battle of Chiesa del Bando**

17-18 April 1945

by Ashley Ponsonby

“---the battalion advanced up its axis towards Chiesa del Bando, a small and battered village of about thirty cottages which lay at the far end of the Argenta Gap bottle-neck. And it was here, on the night of the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> April (1945), that we took part in what was without question one of the most important battles during this final push towards the Po.”

“After the company had obtained the first objective, John Stilwell’s platoon, aided by one of Pat Forbes’ sections, attacked and captured with little opposition what remained of the houses and sheds around the crossroads.”

“The leading platoon (John Stilwell’s) was following very close behind the barrage and a great number of Germans surrendered in and near the cemetery”

“Whilst bringing up reinforcements to help John Stilwell, who had been left to hold the village, Gdsm. Alroft stepped on a mine, killing himself and Gdsm. Taylor, the company runner, and wounding Pat Forbes.”

“John Stilwell, Sgt. Chappell, Sgt. Dedicote and about twenty men held the village, which, was under incessant fire from air bursts (artillery), until 4 p.m., when Charlie Darley arrived with his platoon from No. 2 Company.”

“It has also been said of the Argenta Gap battle: It was only by such great leadership and example as show by Peter that that particular battle could have been won.”

## **Michael Stilwell Sintra**

When WW II broke out Michael went to England and accepted a commission in the Cold Stream Guards. According to Julian Paget in *SECOND TO NONE, The Coldstream Guards, 1650-2000* "Winston Churchill wrote on 18 June 1940, "there should be at least 20,000 Storm Troops or Leopards drawn from existing units to spring at the throats of any small landings or descents".

Michael was seconded to the Commandos and took part in Commando actions in the Balkans.

Again Julian says: "Major Michael Stilwell CBE MC served as a troop commander with No 2 Commando based on the island of Vis. The aim was to retake the Dalmation Islands and deny them to the enemy, the Commando task consisted of raids and boarding parties. On the night of 3 February 1944 Lieutenant Stillwell and six men were travelling in a Motor Torpedo Boat when they closed with a schooner that had been impressed into service with the Germans. His party lay low on the deck as the MTB drew alongside. He leapt aboard with his men, accompanied by two sailors, each armed with a cutlass. After a roughhouse seventeen disconsolate Germans surrendered; they were on their way home for leave!

He also took part in six major raids in 1944, notably on the island of Solta, capturing many prisoners, and later at Spilje in Albania. As they were waiting to withdraw with their prisoners from the former an irate woman appeared from her house. She demanded to know why the English from London and the Germans from Berlin had to come and fight over her garden and who was going to repair the wall they had knocked down."

Major Stilwell's Report On the Activities of No 1 Troop, No 2 Commando during Operation 'Detained 1' on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1944 follows:

"No 1 Troop paraded ready for embarkation at 1800hrs on the 18<sup>th</sup> on the sea front at Komiza and embarked in LCI 133 at approx 1820hrs in "H" hold. LCI 133 put to sea at approx 1930hrs. The voyage was uneventful and the Troop dressed at 2245hrs and came up deck at 2305hrs and lined the deck as arranged with 1 Section on the Port deck and 2 Section on Starboard deck. The LCI 133 made a bad beaching effort and as a result only one gangway could be used and the landing was slow and a bit confused.

The troop soon cleared the beach and closely followed by 3 Troop climbed about 800 feet of hillside before halting and reforming in the following order: Scout group; consisted of Lt Barton MC, Tpr Mandeville, Pte Pirth (German speaker) and two Yugoslav Partisan guides. Advance guard group; consisting of OC Troop with four men with silent stens and two with TSMGs. Main body, consisting of A Sub-Section, HQ Section, C and D Sub-Sections under Lt Farrell. The Scout group moved in bounds and waited for the Advance Guard to contact them before moving on again. The approach march was quite

uneventful and the whole Troop moved extremely well and silently, despite the stony nature of the ground.

The Troop reached the high ground to the NW of Grohote at approx 0350hrs on the 19<sup>th</sup>, and after sentries had been posted the Troop Commander carried out a final recce, and at 0430hrs the Troop began to move up to its allotted positions. At 0500hrs when the Troop was nearly in position and had established contact with 3 Troop, a Spandau opened fire on the left where the link between 1 and 2 Troops should have taken place and forced the Troop to take cover and for the rest of the action every movement in the Troop area drew Spandau fire or rifle grenades and a sniper was active for some time. The Troop was ordered to dig in and not open fire on anyone without orders.

At 0630hrs the RAF Kittyhawks arrived and proceed to dive bomb the town for 30 minutes with great accuracy and good results; one stick of bombs landed about 100yds to the left of the Troop, and covered everyone with dirt, but caused no casualties. At 0700hrs civilians began to leave the town and some passed through our positions and were fired on by a Spandau post. At 0715 a sniper and Spandau post was spotted and surrendered to 3 men from 3 Troop after some very effective fire from A Sub-Section's Bren gun. At 0730hrs fire was nearly opened on a party of American troops, whose steel helmets are very difficult to distinguish from the German.

At 0725 OC Troop gave the order to advance on the town, and the Troop began to advance at the fix, and on topping the first stone wall was fired on from a Spandau post on the left and Cpl CER Cox was hit in the abdomen and later died of wounds in hospital on the island of Vis. The whole of 1 Section was diverted to capture the post, one half under Lt Barton and the other under OC Troop. The post surrendered after being fired on and a bayonet charge completed the issue and six prisoners were taken. The Troop then proceeded to mop up the area and then proceeded to the central square and reported to Col Churchill.

At approx 0900hrs a drive was made through the town by the whole Commando. At 0945hrs Lt Barton was detailed to take 20 men and search for 4 Germans who had escaped; his search was unsuccessful and the Partisans eventually rounded them up. At 1015hrs OC Troop marched the remainder of the Troop back to the beach where they remained, guarding prisoners and helping with the wounded and resting until 1630hrs, when they re-embarked on LCI 133 and arrived back at Komiza at 2145hrs.

Michael Stilwell  
Capt – OC 1 Troop

## **THE MILITARY CROSS**

### **Captain (temporary) Michael William STILWELL (149513), Coldstream Guards.**

On 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> July 1944, at SPILJE BAY, ALBANIA, during operation HEALING II, Captain Stilwell was in command of a force consisting of two troops whose task was to assault enemy positions which were well placed on the top of high ground with steep approaches.

Captain Stilwell led the assault himself, and by his courage and leadership maintained a steady advance under heavy machine gun fire, until the positions were all over run. Near the top he was badly wounded in the buttock, but insisted in carrying on till the consolidation was complete. He then organised the exploitation of the ridge, but did not accompany the exploiting party as he could not move fast enough.

He refused to be carried back to the Regimental Aid Post as stretcher bearers were already busy with other casualties and, although in great pain, he insisted on attending to casualties near him and organising their evacuation.

After the end of the war in 1945 Michael rejoined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards and was very involved in the troubles in Palestine, which eventually led to the creation of the State of Israel in May 1948.

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### **LEWIS T. WATTY** **Deceased** **São Pedro do Estoril**

(Note: L. T. Watty was the Vice Chairman of the Los Banos Internment Camp outside Manila during World War II. His wife Teresa lived in São Pedro after his death and celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on January 5, 1994 at St Mary's Centre. She and the children had been evacuated to Australia before Manila fell to the Japanese. Mr. Watty kept a journal of his captivity and the following is only a small portion of it. A photocopy of the complete journal is deposited in the archives of the British Historical Society of Portugal.)

**SUMMARY OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE RESCUE OF LOS  
BANOS INTERNMENT CAMP  
ON  
23 FEBRUARY 1945**

Looking back upon the events leading up to the rescue of Los Banos Internment Camp, and upon the actual rescue itself, I find it difficult to arrive at a coherent story. I have notes of much that happened, but nothing is in chronological order, having been jotted down at odd moments in odd places whenever opportunity offered. Regarding the actual rescue I can tell of what I saw, and add to it a few details given me by internees who witnessed events in other areas of the Camp.

On 13<sup>th</sup> February, after a meeting with the Commandant, it was clearly evident that the Japanese would make no effort to improve the food of the Camp; on the contrary every prospect pointed to a further reduction in the already starvation rations. The Internee Committee at once made every effort to convey this information to the U.S. Forces already in Manila through the medium of the Filipino guerrillas with whom we were in touch.

A few days later word reached us through underground channels that a number of the Hunter's Guerrillas, whose headquarters were at Cabuyo, some fifteen or twenty miles across the lake from Los Banos, wished to contact a reputable member of the Camp. This was arranged and late one night Mr. George Gray, a member of the Internee Committee, at considerable risk stole through the boundary fence and had a conference with a Colonel of the Guerrillas at a private house about three kilometers from the Camp.

The Colonel advised Mr. Gray that the Guerrillas proposed to release the Camp at an early date. They intended to attack the Camp at night and dispose of the Guards with the assistance of the internees, and for this purpose arms were to be smuggled into the Camp. Mr. Gray returned to Camp and laid this proposal before the Internee Committee and it was agreed unanimously that as civilian internees the Camp under International Law, could not take part in actual hostilities. Furthermore it was felt that the Guerrillas were not in sufficient strength in the area, nor had they the equipment necessary to convey 2146 internees to safety. The weakened condition of most of the internees had to be considered. At best a three mile walk from the Camp to the Lake had to be faced and, for at least half of the Camp, this was a physical impossibility. As can be imagined the decision to refuse the help offered by the guerrillas was a difficult one for the Committee to make, particularly as at that time the Camp was averaging over a death a day due to starvation. But it was felt that the risks were too great, and if the attempted rescue were to fail then only wholesale massacre of the internees by the Japanese could be expected. Furthermore, with American forces in Manila our final release could not long be delayed.

Further contact was made with the Guerrillas and it was agreed that the rescue attempt would not be made until such time as the full support of the American Army could be arranged.

On February 20<sup>th</sup> I was called before a visiting Japanese Officer who I discovered later was regional commander of the Japanese forces in the surrounding area. He asked me various questions regarding the Camp, and upon my lodging a vigorous protest against the starvation diet imposed upon the Camp, he expressed doubts regarding the ability of the Japanese Authorities to provide any further food at all. Sufficient grain stocks were then in Camp to last about one week more, and upon my asking him what we were to do at the end of a week he stated we would have to make do with what we could produce in the Camp garden. I pointed out that the Camp garden was inadequate to supply the whole Camp, not even the entire Camp area would be sufficient, but could obtain no assurance of any kind that efforts would be made to assist us. It was indeed a grim prospect that faced the Camp.

But the morning of 23<sup>rd</sup> February was before us and events commenced early and moved with bewildering speed.

I was always an early riser in Camp, and, as usual had awakened at 6 a.m. bathed and thereafter had lit a fire and was cooking up a small pan of rice for breakfast – sixty grams or about three heaped tablespoons full which was half my days allowance. At 7 a.m. sharp I heard the roar of planes overhead, but, as that had been a daily occurrence for weeks past I did not attach particular importance to it. I did however stroll out of my quarters to have a look, and passing almost over the Camp to the East were nine large transport planes. They were unusually low and flying slowly, Even as I watched the first parachute dropped out and in a matter of what seemed to be seconds, the sky appeared to be full of parachutes. I discovered later that the actual number of troops dropped was 123, but that number of parachutes all in the air at once looks a great deal more. What a roar went up from the Camp. One could hear the cheers swelling in volume as more and more internees dashed out of their quarters to watch. The day of deliverance was with us at last. We had waited for it for over three years. At times we had almost despaired of it ever arriving, but here it was at last, and arriving in a form that no one had anticipated.

Then from the Western boundary of the Camp came the sound of rifle and machine gun fire. This I learned later was from the Filipino guerrillas who, during the previous few days had infiltrated into the area and were timed to operate against the Japanese guards on the Western boundary of the Camp simultaneously with the dropping of the paratroops on the Eastern boundary.

In a matter of minutes rifle and machine gun fire was general all around the Camp, and soon it was inside the Camp as the Japanese troops retreated into the Camp using our Barracks buildings as shelter.

Guerrilla troops were all over the place. They seemed to rise out of the ground and I can vouch for the fact that they showed no mercy. In addition to rifles they all carried bolos (long heavy knives) the beloved weapon of the Filipino, and any Japanese they shot they made sure with their bolos that he gone to meet his ancestors. I saw one Japanese bolt into one of the large drainage pipes that went through the Camp. Unfortunately for him he was spotted by a guerrilla who

with a grin dashed up to the pipe and threw a hand grenade in after him. I can understand the Filipinos hatred of the Japanese in view of the treatment the Japanese handed out while they were in full control of the Philippines.

At 7.10 a.m. I saw my first American soldier on the ground. He was a great big blonde boy and he came strolling – I can think of no better word – up to the boundary fence close to my quarters, calmly cut the barbed wire and walked into Camp. He came up between my quarters and Barracks 12. We were all taking what cover was available from flying bullets, but when we saw him we forgot bullets, danger and everything else and dashed out cheering. I never saw a man look so embarrassed. He was carrying a Tommy gun and he looked at us all with a sheepish grin as if he had been caught doing something wrong, and all he could say was “Good morning folks”. I had to laugh. It was just too wonderful a situation for words.

However he wasn't sheepish when he got down to business. I asked him if he needed help or information, and he asked me where was the Japanese Office. I pointed to Barracks 3 and 4 which lay adjacent to Barracks 11 and 12. He glanced around then said to the men from Barracks 11 and 12: “You folks have been here long enough, suppose you leave these quarters to me for a minute”. Then as an afterthought he added “maybe you better take cover there's liable to be some shootin' around here.” He was right. There was “some shootin',” and he did most of it. He whistled up about twenty guerrillas and they attacked Barracks 3 and 4 through Barracks 11 and 12. It was a pretty piece of work and lasted about fifteen minutes in which time the entire Commandants Staff, including the Commandant himself, were accounted for and the the Barracks set afire over them. No prisoners were taken, and I may say that remark applies to the whole operation against the Camp. The Filipino guerrillas don't take prisoners, not because the Japanese fight to the last man as Japanese propaganda would have us believe, but because they have a long score to settle with the Japanese.

Now I must go back slightly in my account of the rescue. Shortly after 7 a.m. the first tanks reached the Camp. They were amphibian troop carriers. There were forth seven in all. They knew exactly where to go. The first half dozen wheeled around to the Hospital and commenced evacuating the sick at once. The remainder lined up on the base-ball field adjoining the Camp after smashing their way through the boundary fence. I was sent for by the Commanding Officer and had to make a decidedly unpleasant journey from my quarters to the Hospital. The American soldier who came for me seemed to think nothing of it and all the way along was asking me questions about how the Japanese had treated us. We passed close to the Commandants Office right while the scrapping was at its worst. I ventured to remark that it was a bit dangerous but the soldier dismissed the whole affair by pointing out airily that the Japs were too busy take any notice of us. I hoped they were, and was exceedingly thankful when we reached the shelter of the Hospital.

The officer in charge of operations informed me that the Camp must be completely evacuated by nine o'clock. He anticipated heavy fighting in the area if he had to stay longer as there were considerable numbers of Japanese in the

near vicinity. Each tank was capable of carrying approximately sixty people and I had to instruct the whole camp to file along to the base-ball field and into the tanks and they would move off for the lake as they filled up. So, with a few helpers, I got the instructions to all the Barracks, and I must say I was agreeably surprised at the orderly way in which people turned out. There was not time to pack anything. People just grabbed one or two essentials and off they went. They did not bother ask questions. All they knew was that the tanks meant safety and liberty, and with bullets flying around the average person makes for safety with very little urging. Furthermore several of the Barracks were already on fire which helped to speed people's actions. I had had a small bag packed for just such an emergency for over a week, so when I made sure all the Barracks had been notified I streaked back to my quarters, grabbed my bag, and bolted for the tanks.

The entire Camp was completely evacuated by 8.45 a.m. and the long string of tanks was crashing along to the lake. We were fired on once en route to the lake by a few snipers in the trees on the road side. One internee was wounded but a burst from one of our machine guns and from a couple of tanks immediately ahead, seemed to deal with the situation. Anyway we had no further trouble. I did hear later that the leading tanks were fired on just as they reached the lake side but there were no casualties.

When we reached the lake side the tanks took the water in a long line and we churned our way across the lake for about fifteen miles to Cabuyo, the last tank reaching the shore at about 12.30. After dropping us on the shore a number of the tanks returned across the lake to pick up the paratroopers who had remained behind to do a bit of mopping up and to protect our retreat in case the Japanese managed to bring reinforcements.

From the beach at Cabuyo we were taken in ambulances and trucks to Muntinlupa, formerly a large prison now used as a base hospital by the American Army. As soon as we arrived we were given hot soup and a light meal. What a joy it was. Our troubles were at an end.

## **Gilbert Leo Wells**

### **Colares**

T/5 Gilbert Leo Wells, born in Baltimore 31 August 1926, served as an Army Specialized Training Program cadet at the Virginia Military Institute from May 1944 to October 1944 until he was called to active duty to undergo Infantry Basic Training at Camp Blanding, Florida. He volunteered for parachute training and was transferred to Fort Benning, Georgia where he completed parachute and demolition school training. After VE Day Gilbert was sent to Manila, PI to join the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division but was delayed for 3 months in Manila guarding Japanese Prisoners of War. Eventually he flew to Japan on a C 46 cargo plane where he joined the 511 Parachute Infantry on occupation duty in Morioka for Christmas 1945. Gilbert had the best job in the Army – Chaplain Assistant and spent his year of occupation duty working with French Canadian Dominican Missionaries.

The paratroopers of Gilbert's 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division were the ones who rescued Lewis T. Watty from Los Banos Camp on February 23, 1945 and he celebrates Los Banos Day every year in commemoration of this famous rescue. He met Teresa Watty here in Portugal and she attended until her death.

His awards include the parachute badge, the Asiatic Pacific Campaign medal, the Good Conduct medal, WW II Victory medal and Army Occupation medal (Japan).

His most memorable experience was the construction of a novitiate for Japanese Dominican Nuns in Morioka as part of his duties. Gilbert stayed in the reserves and after graduation from engineering school in 1950 was commissioned in the US Naval Reserve. He remained in the Naval Reserve until 1970 and at age 60 received all the benefits of being retired military.

Gilbert served as Secretary to The Royal British Legion Portuguese Branch for a number of years.