

# *A Handful of Rice*

*William (Bill) Guy*  
1922-2015



IN MEMORY OF OUR BELOVED DAD AND GRANDAD

BY HIS DAUGHTER LILIAN TIGHE



OUR DAD

OUR GRANDAD

OUR HERO

OUR LEGEND

WILLIAM (BILL) GUY

1922-2015

Born 16<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 1922 – DIED 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015 (AGED 92 YEARS OLD)

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## Part One

### Billy from Liverpool

This story begins in Liverpool on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1922. It's the story of my Dad.

Dad was born at home on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1922 in Liverpool. He was the youngest of nine children: Jimmy, Margaret, Alf, Sadie, Anne, Lil, Beatrice, Bill. (One child miscarried)

**This is a picture of five members of the family with Grandma Elizabeth.**



### **The Extended Family was large:**

Elizabeth his mother was a hard grafting woman, she became known as midwife Guy around the area of Everton, Liverpool, because she was always called upon to deliver everybody's babies.

She was married to Thomas who worked hard in the Flour Mills across the River Mersey, in Wallasey and was therefore excused from going to war. He ran a tight ship at home giving his wife Elizabeth the bare minimum of money for food and upkeep of the house. Elizabeth would darn all the socks and was renowned for repairing the soles and heels of her children's shoes to make them last longer.

Elizabeth and Thomas first born child was sadly miscarried. Then, Jimmy was born, who also worked in the Flour Mills like his father. Margaret came next. She was the spitting image of her mother. She married Charles and had one daughter called Valerie, who eventually emigrated to New Zealand and

had 3 children; Christopher, Kathleen and Tim. Next was Alf, who fought in the Second World War. He was in the army and fought in Palestine in the Middle East and also in North Africa where he was injured. Thankfully on his return home he recovered and married Betty and later had 3 children; Ian, Brian and Elizabeth. Sadie was next and she loved sewing. She made everyone's clothes in the family. She married Tom, a lovely man who worked on the railways. They had twin boys- Guy and Lesley, then Muriel, Ronnie and Lionel. Anne followed. She worked hard for Littlewoods Pools. She remained a spinster all her life. Lil arrived next and she married Bill and lived in the Isle of Man for the rest of her life. She was unable to have children so she adopted a boy called Juan. Beatrice was born next and she too remained a spinster for the rest of her life. She worked in reprographics in an office in the city centre of Liverpool and was well respected in her job. She devoted her leisure time to the church and to the Guide Movement with her best friend Dorothy. Last but not least the baby of the family, William, was born; always called "our Billy" by the family.



This is my dad on the left as a young boy with his sister Lil, followed by their father Thomas taken in their back yard. His father's posture and frame was so similar to my father's when my dad became an adult.

Dad lived in several houses in and around Everton and Walton in Liverpool, during his childhood days, including one posh double fronted house on Walton Lane. Before that, it was not unusual for all the men in the family to share one bedroom and all the women in the family to share the second bedroom. Using a kermode under the bed was quite common too, because often they did not want to go to the outside loo in the backyard! Dad's job was to cut newspaper up into squares for toilet roll and hook it on the nail in the outside toilet. He also never had a seat at the table when the family ate their meals and he was always last to be served. Being the youngest in the family he had to stand at the table and he had to do the washing up and drying up between him and Beatrice his sister, which they always fought over.

The fact the Second World War was going on and bombings were frequent it must have been terrifying for the family. The posh house got bombed to the ground. Thankfully Anne had shouted to get everyone out from under the stairs so the family were lucky to be alive. They had to return to a 2 up and 2 down house again after that. Then another day dad was playing football in the street and a bomb blast hit a house in the street. A woman lay unconscious in the road so he and his mate grabbed the front door which had been blown off and laid the injured woman on the door using it like a stretcher and went to get help.



Dad attended what he called the 'Tin' school in Gladys Street. He worked hard and always got a glowing report. This is a copy of one of his reports which he was very proud of:

| Liverpool Education Committee.  |       |                             |        |
|---|-------|-----------------------------|--------|
| Boys'   | Dept. | Gladys St.                  | School |
| No. of years in this School   | 6     | Class on Leaving            | X7     |
| Any special aptitude or qualifications  |       |                             |        |
| School Captain.   |       |                             |        |
| <u>GENERAL REMARKS:</u>   |       |                             |        |
| William Guy is a lad of a sunny disposition, honest, straightforward and sensible. In both work and play he is well above the average, and I have great pleasure in recommending him to any employer who requires a cheerful and willing boy. |       |                             |        |
| Date 9.10.36  |       | F. J. Applebee Head Teacher |        |

NAME William Guy  
DATE OF BIRTH 16/8/22  
ADDRESS 83 Gladys St.

He loved his football. He was Captain of the school football team, but remembers well that he never ever owned a pair of football boots. He only ever played in the one pair of shoes which his mother had to constantly repair for him.

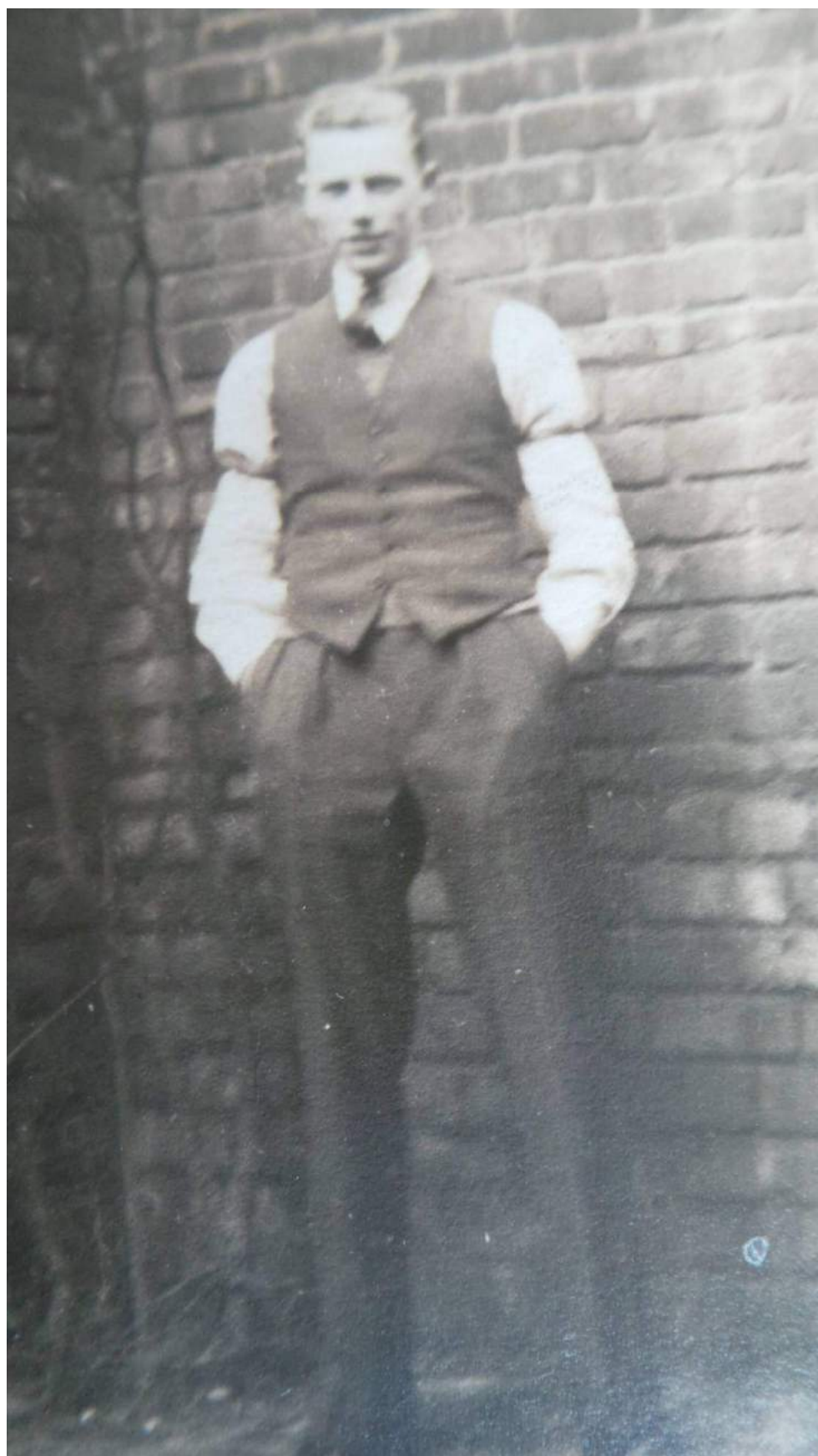
He supported both Everton and Liverpool football teams throughout his life. Living between Goodison Park and Anfield meant he was in a great location so he would alternate going to the match each time they were home and away, but his true heart lay with Everton.

He left school at the age of 11 and successfully won a scholarship to attend the Elementary School which he left at the age of 14. During his childhood, at the young age of 11, he was always given the task of jumping on a tram to go down to the pier head to catch a ferry across the Mersey in order to take a hot bowl of scouse (stew) to his father which his mother had prepared that day for his lunch. This was a regular occurrence! It cost him a penny at the time and he would sometimes jump off the tram earlier to save a halfpenny, and walk the rest of the way home.

His first job was as a messenger for the Corn Exchange in Liverpool City. He would run errands daily through the streets of Liverpool and over the years he knew all the street names in the city. The price of corn which often fluctuated was crucial to The Corn Exchange and his role of responsibility was to record the prices and keep the books up to date. Over time he learnt a great deal. He was good with figures and eventually got promoted to book keeper/ accountant.

At the tender age of 17 he decided to sign up to go to war along with several of his mates, having not told his mother.

Here is a picture of dad taken in his back yard, aged 17 years old, just before he left Liverpool to go to war.



## Part Two

### Signing up- Going to War

Certificate of Service of William Guy into the Royal Navy

Port Division -Devonport

Official No: D/JX 229762

Date of Birth: 16<sup>th</sup> August 1922

Born: Liverpool, Lancashire

Trade or occupation on entry: General Clerk

Nearest known relative: Mother

Name: Elizabeth Anne

Address: 333 Walton Lane, Liverpool 4

Date of actually volunteering: 26<sup>th</sup> November 1940

Commencement of time: 26<sup>th</sup> November 1940

Period volunteered for: until end of present emergency

Swimming Qualifications: None

S: 1075 Serial No: 437215

Description of Person: On entry as a boy-

Five foot seven and a quarter, chest 33 inches, hair- brown, eyes grey, Complexion –fresh

No marks, wounds or scars. Royal Navy assessment as 'Coder' was of Very Good Character.

Name of Ship-

Wellesley- Substantive rating- Ord Coder 26<sup>th</sup> November 1940 to 30<sup>th</sup> January 1941

Drake- ..... – Ord Coder 31<sup>st</sup> January 1941 to 10<sup>th</sup> March 1941

Exeter ..... –Ord Coder 11<sup>th</sup> March 1941 to 25<sup>th</sup> August 1941

Exeter ..... - \_ Coder 26<sup>th</sup> August 1941 to **1<sup>st</sup> March 1942 (MISSING!)**

Drake iv (missing personnel) – 1<sup>st</sup> MARCH 1942 TO 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 1942

Drake iv (Prisoner of War) – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1942 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 1946



Form S. 459, A.

Established January 1921  
(Revised October 1936)

Number on Ship's

Books.....  
(To be noted in pencil)

# SEAMAN, SIGNAL & W/T. BRANCHES

## COVER FOR CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE AND ENCLOSURES

| SURNAME<br>(IN BLOCK LETTERS) | CHRISTIAN NAMES |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| GUY.                          | William         |

Rating.....*Coder*.....  
(To be noted in pencil)

Port Division and  
Official Number.....*D/5x 22 9462*.....

### CONTENTS.

| DOCUMENT                                   | When first enclosed | Disposal to be shown in pencil whenever<br>a document is detached |
|--|---------------------|---|
| <i>V.A.T. Copy</i> Service Certificate ... | <i>4 - FEB 1944</i> |   |
| History Sheet ...                          |                     |   |
| Trade & V/T Cer'te                         |                     |   |
| Hurt Certificate ...                       |                     |   |
| Passing Certificates                       |                     |   |
| Educational ...                            |                     |   |
| E. T. I.                                   |                     |   |
| E. T. II.                                  |                     |   |
| H. E. T.                                   |                     |   |
| .....                                      |                     |   |
| .....                                      |                     |   |
| (To be enclosed on                         |                     |   |
| transfer from Ship                         |                     |   |
| to Ship)                                   |                     |   |
| Conduct Sheet ...                          |                     |   |
| Kit List ... ..                            |                     |   |
| Divisional Record Sheet                    |                     |   |
| T. S. 34 ... ..                            |                     |   |

### INSTRUCTIONS:—

This Form is to be used as a cover for every man's Certificate of Service and the other documents which are normally kept therewith. The date on which any Enclosure is first included is to be noted in ink and the contents of the cover are to be checked on each occasion of despatch and receipt in a Ship or Establishment. When it is necessary to extract the Service Certificate or any Enclosure a note as to reason and disposal is to be made in pencil as provided for. The date of the annual inspection of the Service Certificate is to be noted on the back of this cover.

The letters "S.V." are to be marked clearly just above the "Rating" space in the case of ratings who have been accepted as volunteers for service in Submarines since June, 1919.



Name William GUY Conduct.

Second Class for Conduct (inclusive dates)

| From | To |
|------|----|
|      |    |
|      |    |
|      |    |
|      |    |
|      |    |

Character and Efficiency on 31st December yearly, on final discharge, and other occasions prescribed by regulation. If qualified by service and recommended for Re-engagement or for Medal and Gratuity, "R.R." or "R.M.G." to be awarded on 31st December and final discharge, if not, a line to be drawn across column.

Character is assessed as follows:—V.G., Good, Fair, Indifferent, Bad.

Note as to method of assessing Efficiency.

Superior—above average efficiency.  
Satisfactory—average efficiency.  
Moderate—less than average efficiency.  
Inferior—inefficient.

Variations in efficiency are often explained by the fact that the man had recently been promoted—see pages 2 and 3—and had not gained sufficient experience in his new position to justify a higher award than that actually assessed.

in substantive rating, held at the time, without regard to fitness for advancement.

Good Conduct Badges and Medal

| Date      | 1st, 2nd, 3rd. | Granted, Deprived, Restored | Character | Efficiency in Rating, noting substantive rating in brackets | Whether R.R. R.M.G. or not. | Date      | Captain's Signature |
|-----------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------|---|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 26 Nov 40 | 1st            | Granted                     | V.G.      | 1/1 (Ord Boder)   |                             | 31 Dec 40 |                     |
|           |                |                             | V.G.      | 1/1 (Boder)   |                             | 31 Dec 41 |                     |
|           |                |                             | V.G.      | 1/1 (Boder)   |                             | 10 Feb 42 |                     |
|           |                |                             | V.G.      | N/A. (— — —)  |                             | 31 Dec 42 |                     |
|           |                |                             | V.G.      | N/A. (— — —)  |                             | 31 Dec 43 |                     |
|           |                |                             | V.G.      | N/A. (— — —)  |                             | 31 Dec 44 |                     |
|           |                |                             | V.G.      | N/A. (— — —)  |                             | 31 Dec 45 |                     |
|           |                |                             | V.G.      | N/A. (— — —)  | 6/3                         | 1 June 46 |                     |

AFD. 1185/44.

2

Name William GUY

| Name of Ship.<br>(Tenders to be inserted<br>in brackets) | Substantive<br>Rating | Non-Substantive<br>Rating | From             | To                 | Cause of Disch<br>and other notes<br>authorised by A<br>606, Clause 9,<br>and A.L. |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--|
| <u>Kelley</u>  | <u>Ord Boder</u>      |                           | <u>26 Oct 40</u> | <u>30 Jan 41</u>   |  |
| <u>Drake</u>   |                       |                           | <u>31 Jan 41</u> | <u>10 Feb 41</u>   |  |
| <u>Exeter</u>  |                       |                           | <u>11 Feb 41</u> | <u>25 Aug 41</u>   |  |
|  | <u>Boder</u>          |                           | <u>26 Aug 41</u> | <u>1 Feb 42</u>    | <u>Missing</u>   |
| <u>taken (missing personnel)</u>                         |                       |                           | <u>2 mch 42</u>  | <u>1 mch 42</u>    |  |
| <u>taken (prisoner of war)</u>                           |                       |                           | <u>2 mch 42</u>  | <u>28 Feb 46</u>   |  |
| <u>Drake</u>   |                       |                           | <u>29 Feb 46</u> | <u>1 June 1946</u> |  |



## GOING TO WAR!

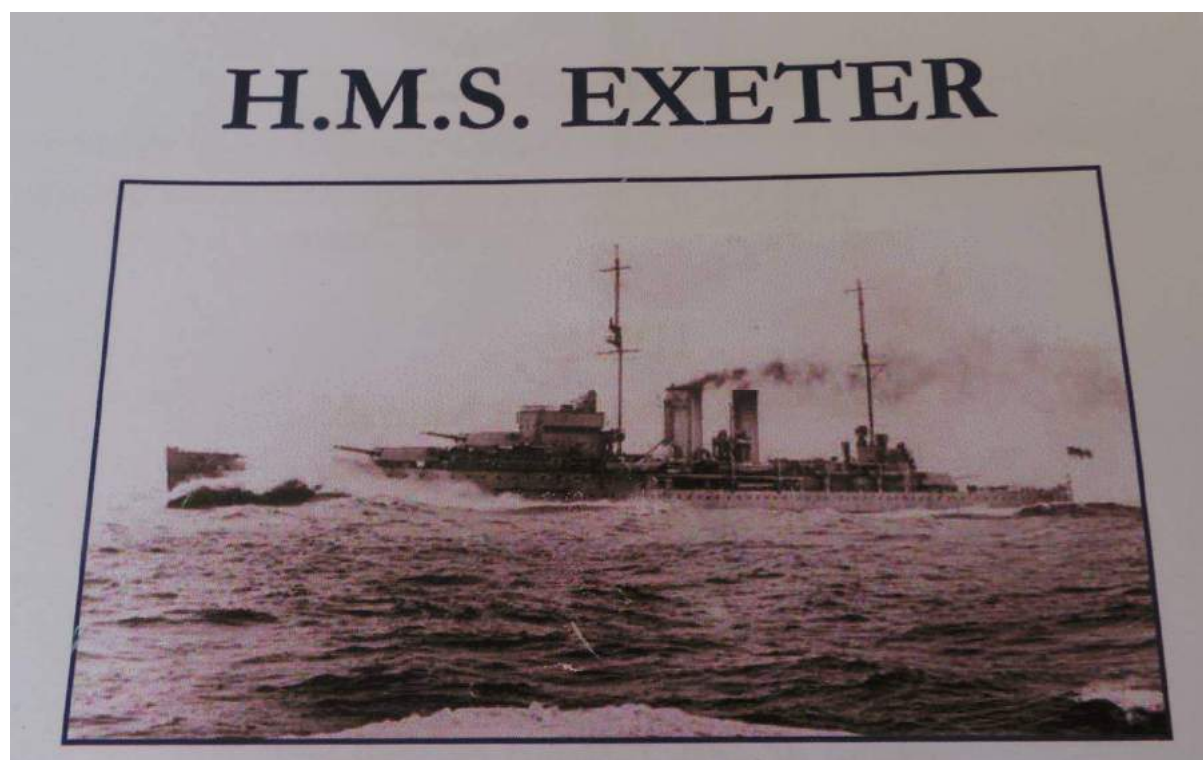
The Second World War had broken out between Britain and Germany in September 1939. By May 1940 Britain was staring defeat in the face with the defeat of her ally France and the evacuation of the BEF- the miracle of Dunkirk. Britain now stood alone and conscription was introduced.

Many young men just like my Dad were keen and enthusiastic to be involved in the war and dad and his mates were no exception.

Dad was aged 17 years old when he voluntarily signed up to join the Royal Navy to go to war, along with his mates. He did this without telling his mum.

He did his training in Dartmouth for 3 months and given his background of working in an office in the Corn Exchange in Liverpool with accounts, he was trained to be a 'Coder' on board ship. The opportunity to serve on board a ship in the Royal Navy came sooner than Dad expected. H.M.S. Exeter. a ship famous for its involvement in the sinking of the pocket battleship Graf Spee had been refitted in Devonport and a new captain and crew were installed on board –Dad was one of the crew as a coder in the Telegraphic room sending and receiving all the messages from ironically the Western Approaches war room situated in Liverpool-Dad never knew where this was until many years after the war – more about this later in his story.

Captain Oliver Gordon was instructed by Sir Winston Churchill to take command of H.M.S. Exeter in Devonport as her commanding officer; the previous Captain Beckett had died suddenly. Exeter was nearing completion of repairs and modernisation after her return from the Falkland Islands, where she had been patched up following the famous naval action of The Battle of The River Plate.



### **H.M.S. EXETER'S LAST COMMISSION. WAR IN THE EAST!**

The Exeter had been in the dockyard for approximately a year. The work on her had almost been completed and she had been commissioned with a new crew, some of who had only just joined the navy, including dad, and for the majority had never been to sea before, including Dad who was not a very good swimmer!!

Everyone was proud to serve in a ship with so fine a record as the Exeter's and were all keen to keep up her reputation. In the Battle of The River Plate in December 1939 she had shared in her consorts H.M.S. Achilles and H.M.S. Ajax in a famous victory when the three British cruisers out fought the German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee. The story of that battle went round the world. The enemy broke off the action and retired to the neutral port of Montevideo, emerging only for an ignominious suicide, scuttled by her crew. Her Captain, Langsdorff went down with his ship.

The Exeter had exchanged the first salvos with the enemy but she had not been able to see the entire action through. The very fact that she survived was miraculous. Severely damaged and practically crippled, she had to break off the action when flooding stopped the power supply; she was then directed to proceed to the Falkland Islands. The Battle of The River Plate was the last of the great naval actions fought before aircraft and radar completely changed sea warfare and put an end to tactics that Nelson and the Royal Navy had used for over a century.

H.M.S. Exeter returned from the Falklands and was repaired and modernised. The Exeter was an 8,390 ton cruiser armed with six 8 inch guns and eight 4 inch anti-aircraft guns. She had been launched at Devonport on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1929 with a crew of 600 under the command of Captain F.S. Bell. She could carry 1,900 tons of fuel oil and this gave her a range of only 10,000 miles at 11-14 knots not nearly enough for the task she was given. She was far from a satisfactory warship. Treaty limitations forced her to carry only six 8 inch guns instead of eight. Those taking a charitable view assumed Exeter was designed and built so that she could be sold to a potential enemy.



The work of repairing and refitting and modernising began in Devonport Dockyard early in 1940. Two new guns were fitted in the 8 inch armament as replacements and the single 4 inch guns were

replaced by twin 4 inch mountings with new directors and control. Two eight barrel pom-poms and twin 0.5 close ranges A/A guns were installed. The modernisation was not fully complete when because of heavy enemy air attack on Plymouth it was decided to get the ship clear of Devonport Dockyard and away to sea. There was great activity on board- cleaning, storing and provisioning; training; embarking ammunition, torpedoes and depth charges, these and many more other duties went ahead at pace.

Exeter joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Cruiser Squadron and for the next four weeks was occupied both in harbour and at sea with an intensive programme to bring the ship to a reasonably high state of efficiency. There was a temporary interruption when it sailed with the Home Fleet and took up patrol position to intercept the Tirpitz should she attempt a break through to the Atlantic. This alarm came to nothing and three days later Exeter was back at Scapa to complete 'working up'. For about a fortnight the Exeter took her turn patrolling the Denmark Strait north of Iceland when orders were received to proceed to the Clyde for convoy escort duty. On arrival the Exeter was to provide the ocean escort for an important troop convoy, bound for the Middle East by way of the Cape of Good Hope. There was to be an anti-submarine escort of eight destroyers, and an anti-aircraft cruiser.

The Exeter sailed from the Clyde on the evening of May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1941. Within twenty four hours as a coder on board the Exeter, Dad knew before anyone else where The Exeter was heading and why? He recalled the moment the Exeter received the message about the Bismarck-("bloody hell the Bismarck has got out!") Everyone on board the Exeter knew they were out gunned by a German pocket battleship and any battle would be very one sided. Dad recalled how sombre the mood was aboard the ship when the news was given to the crew. This was one of the most memorable sequences of events of the war at sea. It was one which held the country in suspense for several days, for it included tragedy, when H.M.S. Hood was lost, and triumph when the Bismarck was sunk.

At daylight on May 23<sup>rd</sup> when the Exeter was clear of The Mull of Kintyre, the convoy formed up. During the evening the first signals were intercepted from H.M.S. Suffolk stating that the German Battleship the Bismarck and the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen had been sighted at the western end of the Denmark Strait, which lies between Iceland and Greenland. At that particular time this strait was much narrowed and its navigable portion lay between the northern coast of Iceland and the icepack not so many miles further to the north. The crew knew the area well as very recently Exeter had been on patrol there-and an anxious time it had been along the edge of the ice-pack and with frequent fog.

The Suffolk was joined by her sister ship the Norfolk. They shadowed and reported the movements of the enemy ships in bad visibility and weather conditions until they lost touch with them the following night.

On the morning of May 24<sup>th</sup> The Hood was sunk with nearly all hands by a very lucky long range plunging hit from the Bismarck which entered a magazine and caused the ship to blow up. During the night, torpedo-carrying aircraft from H.M.S. Victorious succeeded in attacking the Bismarck but the damage they inflicted was small but significant. Her steering gear was damaged beyond repair. It was dead in the water.



All this was followed from hour to hour while movements of the Exeter were carefully plotted. What a moment of disappointment it was when news came through that the British cruisers had lost touch with the enemy.

Meanwhile the convoy continued on its ordered track without incident. By this time the dogs of war had well and truly been unleashed and the convoy were speeding from all directions towards the enemy. Hourly my dad as a telegrapher waited for orders to join the search but none came. The convoy was too important to leave to its own devices, and troops were badly needed in the Middle East!

On board speculation was rife. What would the enemy ships do? What was their most likely course of action? They must know that they would be hunted relentlessly. Their attempt to break out to the Atlantic unseen had failed and this must have hampered their plans. Fuel shortage was likely to affect their decision. The crew guessed they would probably try to make it to Brest, France.

In the early hours of the 26<sup>th</sup> May all destroyers were ordered to leave the convoy and proceed to join the Home Fleet. The two battleships H.M.S. George V with the battleship Rodney in company were getting into a suitable position for intercepting should the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen be sighted by aircraft or surface vessels.

At 11.00am on the 26<sup>th</sup> May news came that a Catalina aircraft of Coastal Command had sighted the Bismarck. From her reported position it became evident to the Exeter crew that they had crossed the track of the convoy, some forty or fifty miles astern at about 2.00 am that morning. Could the Bismarck be intercepted before reaching the safety of the French Coast? It seemed to be touch and go.

The King George V and Rodney were on their way along with Force H, comprising the Renown, Ark Royal (with its torpedo-bomber aircraft) and Sheffield, plus Captain Vian and his destroyers, attacked the Bismarck successfully by night and at about 10.30am on May 27<sup>th</sup> 1941 the Bismarck sank, first being battered by the heavy guns of the King George V and The Rodney and then torpedoed at close range by the Cruiser Dorsetshire. The Bismarck went down with colours flying and none can deny that she made a gallant fight. Courage can be admired whether it is friend or foe.

Dad as coder on board the Exeter intercepted the signal to the Admiralty reporting the sinking of the Bismarck and a great cheer went up as it was broadcast throughout the ship.

The convoy arrived safely at Freetown about a week later without any major incident. Two days were spent at Freetown before the convoy, still escorted by the Exeter, continued its passage by way of the Cape of Good Hope, arriving at Durban about 12 days later. It was believed the Exeter would join the Mediterranean Fleet, but on arrival in the safe waters of the Gulf of Aden the ship was put under the command of the Commander –in –Chief of the East Indies. For the next four months routine convoy work was a chore that the crew of the Exeter had to put up with in The Indian Ocean. During this period of duty Dad spent two or three days at Mombasa and then escorted troopships carrying Indian Troops from Bombay to the entrance of the Persian Gulf.

At the end of September Dad aboard the Exeter arrived at Colombo for a brief period of maintenance and some well earned relaxation. It was not to last long. The ship was being held in readiness to join a Far Eastern Fleet should the menacing Japan enter the war against us.



The Exeter visited a small Island Male and on leaving the Maldives Islands Dad and the crew spent a couple of days at Trincomalee, the naval base in Ceylon. In December Dad heard the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and of the threat to Malaya. That Sunday of December 7<sup>th</sup> 1941 was the day the Japanese unleashed their fury. At 8.00am their aircraft carriers launched bombing attacks on the United States Pacific Fleet at the advanced naval and air base of Pearl Harbour in Hawaii, causing destruction among the ships and the shore installations, with many fatal casualties among the American personnel. The damage was extensive. The Japanese High Command declared war on Britain and the United States and launched attacks on Hong Kong and the Philippines. That night the invasion of Malaya began.

During the night of December 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> the Exeter was ordered to proceed to join The H.M.S. Prince of Wales with the Far Eastern Fleet. To Dads delight and the rest of the crew Exeter abandoned her convoy duty and headed for the Malacca Strait and Singapore. Dad decoded the awful news that the Prince of Wales and the battle cruiser The Repulse had both been sunk after attacks by high level bombers and torpedo bombers. They had sailed to seek out the Japanese invasion forces but were sighted by enemy aircraft and sunk.

What a shattering blow this disaster was to the war effort and Britain's prestige in the Far East with these two heavy ships gone, the Exeter was now the only ship of any size remaining in this area. Arriving in Singapore everyone wondered what the future might hold in store. It was decided to evacuate all shipping from Singapore so the Exeter sailed again as escort for a convoy. If this convoy had used the more direct passage through the Malacca Strait it might have been exposed to enemy air attack, so the ship was ordered to proceed by the southern route, planning to go through the Banka Strait in the hours of darkness and then by way of the Sundra Strait between Sumatra and Java. Not long after they had sailed Dad decoded a report that a force of enemy surface ships had been sighted steering westward in the Java Sea. Fortunately on this occasion the ship reached Colombo without incident. Dad recalled how the subsequent fall of Singapore came as no surprise to the crew as everyone aboard including the captain knew that without air cover every ship was vulnerable to enemy attack

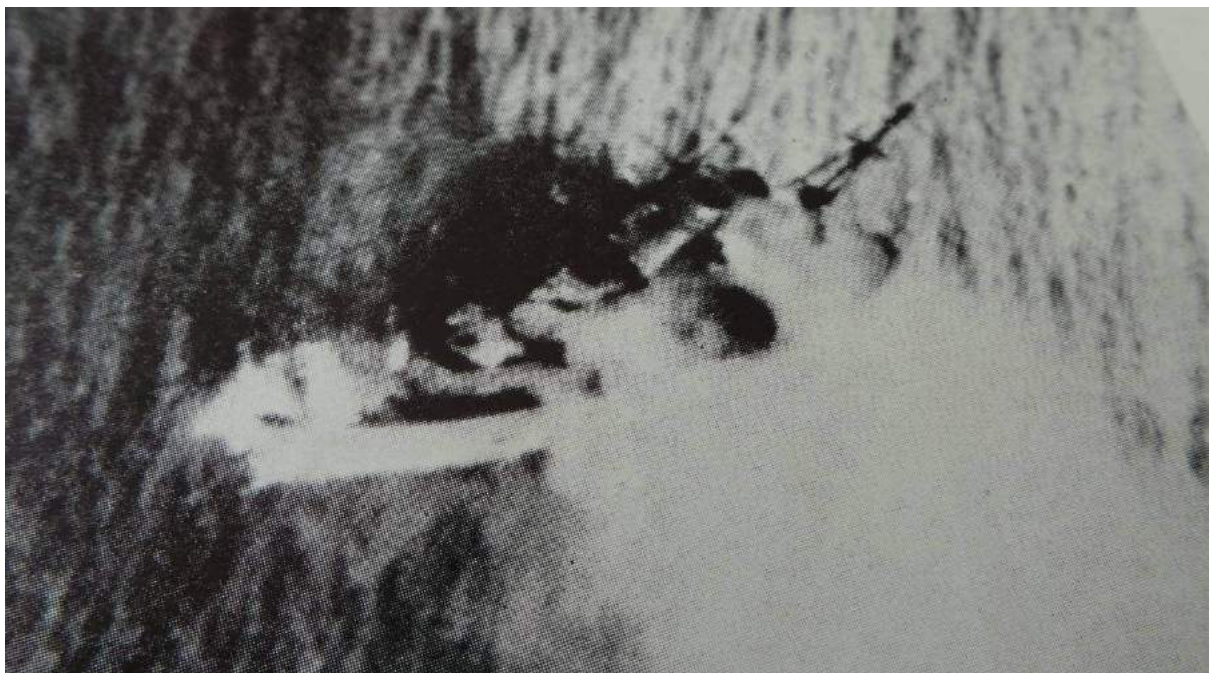


The Banka Strait was long and narrow. The Exeter had to escort convoys in single file which made them an easy target for Japanese aircraft overhead that regularly attacked at noon! By now it was February 1942. The Exeter had been almost continuously at sea since the beginning of the war in the Far East, with only an occasional day and night in harbour to refuel and replenish ammunition, provisions and stores. The crew were becoming weary in body and mind.

The situation in Java was increasingly grave. The total British sea going naval strength in these waters at the time consisted of the Exeter, three D class cruisers and a few destroyers. Then two Australian 6 inch cruisers Hobart and Perth arrived to join the Allied force. Thus there were ships of four nations working together as part of the ABDA Float (an abbreviation of the American, British, Dutch and Australian) where an area of operations extending from the Philippines to Java and from Singapore to the Northern and Western parts of Australia. If the Japanese chose to come down past the eastern side of Borneo, through the Makassar Strait, then the port of Surabaya could in theory be the place from which a force would sail to meet them and at the same time protect the long chain of Islands stretching away to Timor, but decisions were affected by increasing pressure of a fast moving numerically superior enemy. For most of the time Exeter was protecting the convoys, and bringing in troops and equipment from Ceylon.

On February 14<sup>TH</sup> 1942 the convoy sailed from the Sundra Strait for the area North and East of Banka Island. The weather was not favourable as they proceeded through the Gasper Trait and dad recalled they received air attack upon air attack from the enemy force. From 10 o'clock until 6pm on Sunday February 15<sup>th</sup> the Exeter was subjected to a series of heavy bombing attacks by waves of up to fifty four aircraft. It was estimated that the Exeter alone was bombed by nearly 200 machines during the day. It was a gruelling encounter but in spite of everything the ship suffered very little damage and miraculously very few casualties. The ship proceeded back to Tanjong Priok and troops landed on Sumatra the next day. Singapore capitulated the next day.

### **The Battle Of the Java Sea**



With the crushing of the defences of Singapore, the Japanese now had a clear passage into the Java Sea down past the western coast of Borneo. They already controlled the Makassar Strait, between eastern Borneo and the Celebes. Both routes led to Java, the richest Island of the Dutch East Indies, with its naval bases providing a cornerstone of the Allied opposition.

Dad remembered vividly the day when orders were given for the Exeter and the rest of the allied fleet to sail and intercept and destroy the Japanese invasion force heading towards Java. It was not long before the Exeter was in the thick of the action. The Japanese seemed to single the Exeter out believing her to be a capital ship because of the outline of her silhouette. Bombed, strafed and avoiding torpedo attacks Exeter gave as good as she received but the sheer weight of attacks meant that sooner or later something would get through and cause damage and injury.

The Exeter was hit in the boiler room killing 4 men, a second shell entered B boiler room where there was an explosion resulting in the deaths of all 10 men. It was soon reported that six of the ships eight boilers were out of action. Dad said they were ordered back to Surabaya. Sadly the Electra was lost in battle but 200 of its crew were picked up. The American destroyers made their getaway from Surabaya by the eastern entrance of the port, which was too shallow for bigger ships and managed to fight their way through the Bali Strait so getting clear away. Another ship the Jupiter was immobilised. She sank several hours later but a good many of her survivors reached Java on rafts or floats.

There was now only one destroyer the Encounter, accompanying the four Allied cruisers. One enemy shell hit De Ruyter, and on the evening of February 28<sup>th</sup> Houston and Perth were sunk, heading for the Sundra Strait and Indian Ocean. The loss of the cruisers De Ruyter and Java and of the destroyers Electra, Jupiter and Kortenaer was a crippling blow. The allied fleet was losing the battle and it was easy to put forward reasons for the lack of success. Improved communication and fire distribution could have been evolved if only time and circumstances had given the opportunity. Perhaps if the Dutch admiral had employed different tactics; if, as Dad always said they had had adequate air support for spotting and visibility had not been so perfect the allied fleet would have had more success and come nearer to breaking up the enemy's escorting forces and attacking the Japanese transports. On the morning of February 28<sup>th</sup> the Exeter's immediate job was to make itself ready for action at the earliest possible moment. To remain at Surabaya would mean they would be caught like a rat in a trap! Their only hope of getting clear was to go to sea. The afternoon was spent burying the dead in the European Cemetery, Kembang Koening and according them the customary naval honours.

### **The Exeter's Last Fight**

On return from the funeral the Exeter received orders to sail at dark and to proceed well eastward and northward of Bawean Island and then westward through the Sundra Strait to Colombo. On this order there were many aboard ship including Dad who had misgivings. First, the Dutch Admiral at Surabaya had advised the Exeter to leave on Sunday night as he said the Japanese would be re fuelling. How right he was. The ship might have got away if his advice had been taken, but the Exeter had orders from higher authority. George Cooper the Lieut.-Commander aboard the H.M.S. Exeter clearly stated in his book 'Ordeal in the Sun' that for some unaccountable reason it was considered at headquarters that the best means of escape lay through the Sundra Strait to the westward whereas the chances of doing this successfully were very remote in such enclosed waters. It would

have seem wiser to get away to the eastward towards Australia, as a chase in this direction would have drawn the enemy away from his fuelling bases, which he could not easily afford. The Japanese, in very considerable force, were in complete command of the Java Sea, both by sea and air. The decision was to prove fatal for the ship and crew.

The Exeter steamed out of Surabaya on the fatal Saturday night and not the Sunday evening as recommended by the Dutch Admiral at 15 knots with the Encounter and the American Destroyer the Pope. It would need every ounce of effort and good luck to get through. There was an unusually bright moon that night, my dad recalled.

At 4am on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1942 in the light of the setting moon, lookouts on the Exeter sighted what looked to be like 2 merchant ships escorted by a cruiser or a destroyer. The ship turned away to avoid being sighted to head west towards the Sundra Strait. For more than 3 hours there was no sign of an enemy ship or aircraft. At about 9.30am two large cruisers were sighted, then another large ship appeared dead ahead steaming directly for the Exeter. There was no way out. The Exeter, the Encounter and the Pope opened fire at long range. The route to Sundra was blocked and there was nothing to do but fight it out.

All four Japanese cruisers continued to close on the Exeter looking to sink and destroy the cruiser. At this crucial moment in the battle something happened which affected the ability of the Exeter's gunnery controls to accurately plot the range and fall of its main armament. As a result of this fault initial salvoes from the Exeter fell wide of their target.

The Japanese cruisers had twenty two 8 inch guns against the Exeter's six and they seemed in no hurry for close action. The Pope first, then The Encounter, made funnel smoke, a very effective move, enabling the Exeter to dodge in and out of the smoke screens , firing four or five salvoes. Five destroyers were now approaching the Exeter on the starboard quarter. The Exeter had about 20% of her main armament still firing, the Encounter had fired all her torpedoes during the action two days previously and the Pope still had her full complement of torpedoes.

There was no break in the action and both sides were firing intermittently as targets became available. The Japanese saw The Exeter as a capital ship, given its silhouette! The Exeter concentrated fire on the third destroyer, resulting in its stern being blown off killing 70 men.

At about 11.20 pm the Exeter was hit. The crew were so busy firing that at first very few people appreciated what had happened. An 8 inch shell had scored a hit in 'A' boiler room and started a fire so fierce the crew had to evacuate it immediately. None of them were killed but some were badly burnt. (Including dad's mate George Darley from Runcorn, Liverpool who thankfully survived to tell the tale). Gradually the loss of power led to a drop in the speed and soon everything on board lost power. Lights failed, all communications failed and no power to the guns meant the Exeter was defenceless. Everything had died. There was now no possibility of saving the ship, and to ensure that she should not fall into enemy hands the order was given to sink the ship.....



At 11.35am on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1942 Captain Oliver Gordon gave the order 'Abandon Ship'. Dad said there was no panic. Officers and men went through the drill they had so often rehearsed. Anything that could float was flung over the side all the rafts, carley floats, float nets and any available woodwork. As these went into the sea the ships company followed. Many jumped from the upper deck (including my dad who was close to the Bridge at the time and was unaware of the call to abandon ship. He jumped with a mate whom he sadly witnessed being caught up in the ships propeller and subsequently died.) Dad had always been told that if he had to abandon ship he was to take all the code books with him and throw them into the sea but as he often told us "bugger the bloody codebooks " and jumped overboard.

The abandonment was complete when the Exeter heeled further to port. Some ten minutes later there was a heavy explosion amidships on the starboard side and a great column of water rose higher than the masts, the result of a torpedo from an enemy destroyer. This was the mortal wound. The ship righted, drew herself up to her full height, rolled over to starboard and sank. The time was shortly before noon. She lies some 30 fathoms deep in the Java Sea. Her position as far as can be estimated, with no navigational records available was 04 degrees 38 minutes south 112 degrees 28 minutes east.





When the Exeter was hit her escort destroyers Encounter and Pope continued to engage the enemy and the course of action took them away to the eastward of Exeter's position. The Encounter turned back with the object of giving Exeter some assistance but was put out of action by the Japanese fire and was sunk and abandoned. The enemy then chased the Pope which was then subsequently bombed and put out of action too!

Lieutenant Commander George Cooper stated in his memoirs 'I shall never forget the sight of the Exeter going down. It did not seem real. We had lived in that ship for a year. We had our cabins and mess decks there, all our private belongings and treasures, mementos of home, books, and photographs. What a waste. Anyhow, I went over the side and the crew all gave their three cheers as she went down. I remember wondering was it worthwhile getting into the hands of the enemy, but there did not seem to be any likelihood of anything else coming along and the idea of swimming forever in shark infested waters was not exactly stimulating. It was either being picked up by them or letting the air out of the lifebelt. I was in the water for 2-3 hrs, some men as long as 24 hrs. The sun was beating down on us. A large destroyer came along eventually and although very weak and with burnt feet we managed to climb up the ladder onto the deck.'

My dad, who could barely swim was in the shark infested waters for 3-4 hours, holding onto a piece of wood along with other members of the crew, wondering what would become of them? Would they be picked up by the enemy? Would they survive? Would they die?





Captain Oliver Gordon seen here in the picture above with King George V , recorded his admiration for the officers and men whom he was privileged to command and said how much their unswerving loyalty during his brief and last commission on H.M.S. Exeter would never be forgotten. Many were young and untried men when he consumed command in March 1941 but they soon welded themselves into a keen and efficient ships company. The recollection of that year will always remain with him as will the wonderful spirit that pervaded the Ship. That spirit was not extinguished during the long and trying years as prisoners of war. He honours the memory of those of the Exeter's company who died in action or captivity and of those who came out of tribulation but now have passed on. To all those officers and men of the Exeter who still happily survive, he can only say 'Thank you for making my task a light one.'

The Japanese destroyer recovered approximately 250 crew from the shark infested waters but half of the Exeter's crew were still left behind in the water. Dad learnt later that all the survivors were picked up.

There were some very badly wounded men on board the Japanese destroyer including stoker George Darley( my dad's mate from Runcorn, Liverpool) He was in a terrible state, the whole of his face having been burnt by escaping steam in the boiler room. (Thankfully Darley recovered, survived captivity and arrived back in England safe and sound). Life on this tanker was pretty grim. No food, very little water. Little did Dad realise that this was but a foretaste of what was to come in the future. Altogether 714 officers and men of H.M.S. Exeter were saved and went into captivity.

Dad recalled that after 30 hours without food the crew got their first taste of the food they would eat for the next three and half years - a ball of unappetizing rice. Having slowly comes to terms with the sinking and the capture everyone was now assailed by the gnawing pains of hunger, and from that moment Dad said it never left them for the next three and a half years. The guards treated the crew with malice, sheer sadistic malice, every day from the dawn muster in the morning watch till late at night. In the eyes of the Japanese soldier the crew of the Exeter had disgraced themselves by not going down with the ship and so they treated the crew as dirt and with no respect or humanity and certainly with no reference to the Geneva Convention on how POWs should be treated.

From here on it is the story of that malice, of its intensity, its violence, of the diabolical things it inspired, and of how the crew reacted individually or as a group. Its evil purpose was to undermine their spirit to resist by constant starvation and humiliation, by maltreatment and overcrowding and then to let disease and despair take their toll. Many were to die like branches torn off a tree in a gale, but the trunk being of sturdy oak only bent and did not break. When at last the wind turned it became a typhoon of nemesis to destroy the Japanese themselves.

Eventually Dad and the rest of the crew were marched off the Tanker. It was degrading, this whole performance of eight hundred British officers and men being marched through the native quarter of an East Indian town by a handful of Japanese guards. This was most humiliating! They arrived at a military barracks. The whole place was unkempt and dirty, obviously untouched through the monsoon period. The mosquitoes that night were frightful. That torment with the discomfort of lying on the floor, the fatigue, the hunger, the trauma, made sleep impossible. Besides, the full realisation of their captivity was just beginning to dawn upon them. Little did Dad know then that he had three and a half years ahead of him as a Japanese Prisoner Of War or if he would be one of the lucky ones to survive the ordeal?

### Part Three

#### Far Eastern Prisoner of War (F.E.P.O.W.)

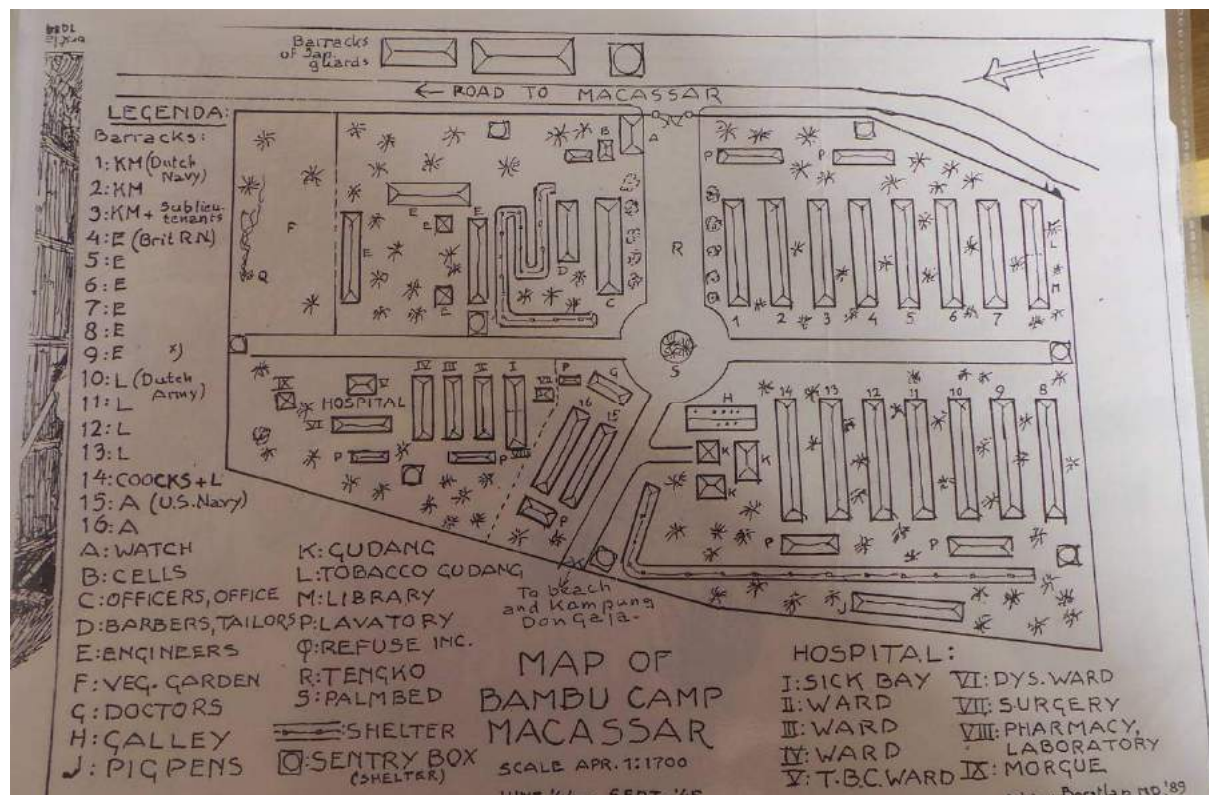
##### LIFE IN THE CAMP

This photograph shows a typical hut in the POW Camp



Dad described what it was like for him in the camp. Going to the toilet was squatting over a plank in a ditch; supper was a 'handful of rice'— there were no plates; bed was on the floor in an overcrowded hut, with no windows or walls so therefore open for the mosquitoes; the monsoon and the rats nibbling at your toes; no hats to keep off the searing heat of the sunlight; no clothes just a piece of linen round your waist; sickness, ill health, malnutrition, dysentery, malaria; torture and death. All the Jap's looked the same. Language was a big barrier. Day by day the men found out more. They realised that they did not call their own country Japan, but Nippon. Japan is the Chinese word for the characters depicting 'The Land of the rising sun'. They soon called them 'Nips'.

This picture is a sketch of the layout of the camp at Makassar where my dad was held captive. It was drawn by a POW. The British Royal Navy was placed in rows four to nine.



As Senior Officer George Cooper was also known by the Nips as 'English -u Number One'. This was of course quite appropriate as being First Lieutenant of Exeter he was already known as 'No. 1' and continued to be called so. My dad and his comrades called him 'Jimmy the 1'.

This is a picture of 'Jimmy the 1' whom all crew members respected.



The Nips despised Prisoners of War. They were always making frightful signs to officers to commit hara-kiri. The Jap's did no more than barely keep the men alive. They generally stood up to their worst displays of brutality. Anyone who took a beating bravely and uttered no sound usually got off lighter, while the man who fell down and cried for mercy suffered. The sight of cowardice always brought out the marked sadistic streak in the Japanese character. Infliction of pain came naturally to them, and they seldom knew when to stop.

It took the Nips six months to get the camp anything like organised. But they did not produce any nets against mosquitoes, and as a result malaria became the scourge of the camp. In less than two years 96% of the British prisoners still alive had recurring forms of it. Dad suffered many bouts of Malaria in the camp.

The Nips insisted on two musters a day. Curiously the captors themselves seemed incapable of being able to count. They organised a few working parties of the men which provided about a hundred in total every day. These were popular, as they enabled men to get outside the camp, where they usually managed to buy food or obtain some from the natives. Nickel, oil, rice, tin were in abundance on the islands. These were war priority materials but the Nips shipped out loot of quite useless value in war.

Dad said some people were confident they would be out in six months but "Jimmy the 1" always told men, not less than eight months, not more than eighteen. Anyone who talked of 1945 was shouted down as a pessimist. It was just as well. Wishful thinking gave them hope. They had precious else through those long and miserable years.

Dad remembers Jimmy on his 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday shaving his 3 month beard off and him saying what a wonderful feeling it was. It started the clean shaven fashion and it spread quickly throughout the camp. What a boost it was to morale. Some men were sent out to build an airstrip. It started with one hundred men but gradually worked up to four hundred. The conditions there were pretty poor but the men liked it being free from the confinements of the prison camp. Many men took ill with dysentery, beriberi, pellagra, dengue, leg ulcers. They had to work and sleep in one pair of shorts only. The men made sure the work was done slowly and to a very poor standard. They cited the airstrip relevant to the prevailing winds, so that most aircraft that landed there overshot and ended up in the coconut palms.

Dad witnessed some terrible beatings carried out in the camp by a savagely sadistic guard called Yoshida, who had also ordered that all men were to have their hair shaved off which did not go down well, because it made them all feel like convicts. One day my dad was out with a working party and whilst digging, he and few Dutch men discovered some treasure in the ground which was buried. Unfortunately the Japanese spotted their discovery. They were beaten hard and my dad had his teeth knocked out. On a later date three Dutch men managed to escape from the camp, but were quickly found and made an example of. They were sentenced to death and were ordered to be shot but instead they were taken to the sea and all 3 were beheaded.

## THE BEATINGS

Yoshida Tomanao that name to most men was an expression of evil- the evil of sadism, brutality, dishonesty, cunning and inhumane tyranny. He was known to the men as 'Goldtooth' and his nickname was abbreviated by some to 'Goldie' but to most he became just 'Yosh'. He controlled everything in the camp and ran the camp on a policy of fear. Then would come the beat up which first came the punching in the face, then always the flogging on the backside with the victim leaning at an angle of forty- five degrees against a wall or a tree. Sometimes the victim would be strung up by his wrists tied behind his back with his feet just touching the ground. He used a baseball bat, a wicked weapon, but he later devised one far worse which as a club of the same shape, but slightly lighter and about a yard long. Normally the number of strokes in a beating was between twenty and thirty.

One day Geordie (John) Wilkinson one of our 1<sup>st</sup> class stokers (whom later became my dad's brother-in law and my Uncle John) received the maximum of 207 lashings from Yosh with the wooden club for smuggling food into the camp from the natives in order to save a comrades life, known as Micky Dodds, who had been thrown naked into a pit of solitary confinement for a month. Geordie was beaten to a pulp for this crime in front of all his comrades in the camp but he refused to go down!!! He never uttered a sound and was still standing at the end. Even Yosh was defeated- he was too exhausted to continue. Geordie was on the sick list for a long time, but he was much respected by the nips for his courage. This was brutality of a sort none of us had ever seen before, or even imagined as that with any human being could inflict on another. The uncertainty of Yosh's temper meant that they lived on an emotional volcano that was constantly erupting with sudden and horrifying brutality; and to the men always hungry and in most cases debilitated by some form of sickness or ailment, ill clothed and herded in quarters like animals, this ordeal of terror caused a nervous tension from which no one was exempt.

(It must be noted that the comrade Geordie helped in the camp, called Micky Dodds, managed to survive captivity along with Geordie and they met for the first time in 1991 at a re-union in Devon. He came to thank Geordie personally and to introduce him to his wife who then informed him that Micky went on to have 11 children. This was a most memorable occasion which I witnessed.)

Altogether 186 British sailors died in captivity in the Celebes. Even the sick were not safe from Yoshida. My dad would witness them being beaten up in the sick barracks. The parade would last several hours while everybody stood in the hot sun. Yoshida remained the object and centre of hate for everyone and as the tide of the war turned my dad looked forward to the time when someone could bring him to justice. For if there was one thing the men were determined to do, it was to get even with this monster.

The barracks was 300 yards square with roads along the perimeter and down the centre. The barrack blocks lay between the offices, galleys and hospital. The whole place was rather like a park with Trees in which ugly barrack buildings had been placed. The men could not see the sea but they could hear it about 300 yards beyond. There was no view of the outside world. Dad and his mates smoked native tobacco and rolled their own in thick paper which tasted pretty foul and burnt their throat and palate. There was a variety of sport in the camp. The Dutch and my dad and his comrades played the odd football match in bare feet, and the Americans played baseball and all three contingents boxed. Actually the Nips encouraged boxing. Oddly enough Geordie Wilkinson who got the 207



stroke beating off Yoshida was the camps heavyweight. The 'crime' he committed in no sense deserved the punishment he got, which suggests that Yosh made a particular point of trying to bring him down, but he failed.

None of the thousands of Red Cross parcels sent ever reached Makassar. They received no mail in or out, no knowledge of their families. Dad did not even know if they were aware of his fate, which was a worry to them all. Life was devoid of practically everything which could have made it tolerable in their predicament- a reasonably satisfied stomach, elementary comfort in the way of a chair and a bed of sorts, a change of clothes, decent footwear, an adequate supply of medicines, soap, shaving gear, music, art and news. But alas none was to be had!

The working parties went out at 8.00 am and they worked except for one half hour break until 5.00pm every day. They got Sunday off and the only other day of rest was Christmas Day 1942! When it rained in Makassar it would bucket down at the rate of 10 inches a day, sometimes for 10 days at a stretch. The wet season lasted three months. Towards the end of the monsoon, late in February the fine days came more frequently. The wind had changed and probably until the following December there would be no rain at all. The camp actually was only five degrees south of the Equator.

Dad and his comrades often wondered whether their abortive efforts at sea to stem the Japanese advance to Australia had done any good at all. All Allied heavy units had been lost. The Australian cruiser the Hobart had escaped but otherwise it had seemed one disaster after another. It had appeared to them that they had achieved very little and at great sacrifice. The enemy had captured the whole of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies and the way was open for Australia. In the camp they felt at times that they had needlessly been thrown away.

However, later a very different picture emerged. The Japanese High Command had reckoned that if they destroyed The American Fleet in a surprise attack on Pearl Harbour, it would take the Americans 18 months to recover, during which they would consolidate what they called The 'Iron Ring,' stretching in a great arc from Burma through to Midway, and invade Australia.

The potential threat of the naval forces to their flank in a direct assault on Australia had forced their army into East Indian Archipelago, and they must have lost many thousands of men in the process. Having got them in by March 1942 they then had to get them out for their further advance to the south east and this took several months.

But the Americans recovered from Pearl Harbour, not in 18 months but in six months, and they mustered sufficient strength to ward off the enemy advance, first in the battle of the Coral Sea in May and in the next month at Midway, with the destruction of the main might of the Japanese aircraft carrier strength, proved one of the most decisive battles in World history. The Japanese advance was held at Rabaul and Guadalcanal and the invasion of Australia never took place.

Thus our naval operations had produced a strategically sound victory and our sacrifice had helped to save Australia.

Some of the men in the camp had managed to build a wireless and it was hidden in wooden clogs. The wireless was code named the ice-box. The men had heard on the ice-box about the atom bomb on Hiroshima, but none of them quite understood what it meant!

On the morning of August the 15<sup>th</sup> 1945, there were no musters called, which signalled to everyone that the war must be over. Curiously, my dad said 'there was no wild jubilation now that the war was at last over'. They had been through a Japanese hell and they had survived. They took it as it came. They had become institutionalized and apathetic through their imprisonment, and their poor state of health had sapped their vitality. For years while death had stood round the corner they had accepted the good with the bad without much emotion. They had lost their capacity for excessive joy or excitement, which was why there were no victory scenes.

It was against the Nips creed to announce a defeat; the word was not in their military vocabulary. Personally it was felt that the period between August 15<sup>th</sup> 1945 and their final departure from the East Indies was one of the most dangerous of the whole period of captivity. David Chubb reported the loss of a further 183 men in the Makassar camp. The third year had been the worst. There had been dysentery epidemics in early 1945 in which some 100 men had died. There was no doubt that this tragically high number of deaths was due almost entirely to the diabolical tyranny of Yoshida. David reported that the rest of the men left at Makassar were in an awful state- nearly all with beri-beri and malaria. There was a fear that Yoshida would walk the men into the hills, known to them as 'death marches'. Meanwhile there was nothing they could do but wait for their liberators to come.

The men marked and painted P.O.W. in white letters across camps and on suitable runways on fields. Dad recalled they did all this with relish, but unfortunately nothing came near them, not an aircraft, not a ship, not even a wireless message, for over a fortnight. Then the Camp Commandant gave orders to all Senior Officers to fall in at 10.30pm. This was going to be one of those moments in a lifetime you never forget-one for which they had waited and lived for three and a half years- the moment when those little yellow devils would have to admit to them they had lost the war. It read:

*To all Prisoners and Internees,*

*I have been ordered to inform you that there has been a cessation of arms. The hardships of a prisoner-of-war life during more than three and a half years must have been strenuous, and I must express my respects to you on account of that. After three years I have administered to you in the best way possible and with my best staff, but during war it is not always possible to give all that is necessary.*

*I understand that you have had hardships and had to live in small camps with limited food. I have tried to look after your health. Until my administration ceases and you take charge, I want you to carry on as before. I want you to look after your health. Let the behaviour as it has been up to now remain until our administration has ceased. I hope there will be no mistakes.*

*I pray for your health and happiness in the future.*

TAKADO

*Chief of Java Prisoner-of-War and Internee Camps.*

This was an unbelievable declaration! No mention of defeat! And they still had the guns!

This declaration was announced to all British P.O.W's the following morning on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1945 on parade at 9.00am. (My dad's 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday).

On September 12<sup>th</sup> 1945 H.M.S. Cumberland had left Colombo for Singapore and Java, to come to the POW's rescue. On arrival George Cooper explained there were 400 men in the Makassar camp and he took the Admiral straight there to meet them. Inside the Barracks they flew the White Ensign flag with pride! During the reunion with his men in Makassar they were informed that the H.M.S. Maidstone would be collecting them at 8.00am the next morning. George arranged the parade at 7.00am. It was their final release and a very emotional moment.

The Maidstone set sail to take all of the men to Fremantle in Western Australia. Three cheers were shouted along with nearly every sailor shouting 'mind you get Yosh!' 'Don't let Yosh getaway!' 'Don't forget Goldie.' At last they could say they were free, on board a ship flying the White Ensign. Dad sailed with his shipmates at 2pm for Fremantle. The rest of the day was a kind of daze. After years that seemed endless, years of privation, of humiliation and indignities to our race and uniform, without hope of retaliation, it was now all over. The spectre of death from hunger and disease had vanished.

Dad spent over four months recuperating in Australia. He, along with many of his comrades arrived in Fremantle less than 5 stone in weight and in very poor health.

The picture below shows 2 survivors!! This was not untypical of how all the prisoners; including dad looked physically after their ordeal, never mind the mental scars!



The enemy had sought to break their spirit by malice, but in fact had only made them prouder of their country and service than ever before.

Many of my dad's comrades had died, but undoubtedly there would have been many more but for the adaptability, the cheerfulness and indefatigable spirit of the British seaman in adversity.

But there was more to it than that. As Padre Fitzgerald so aptly quoted from the 124<sup>th</sup> Psalm, Nisi quia Dominus-

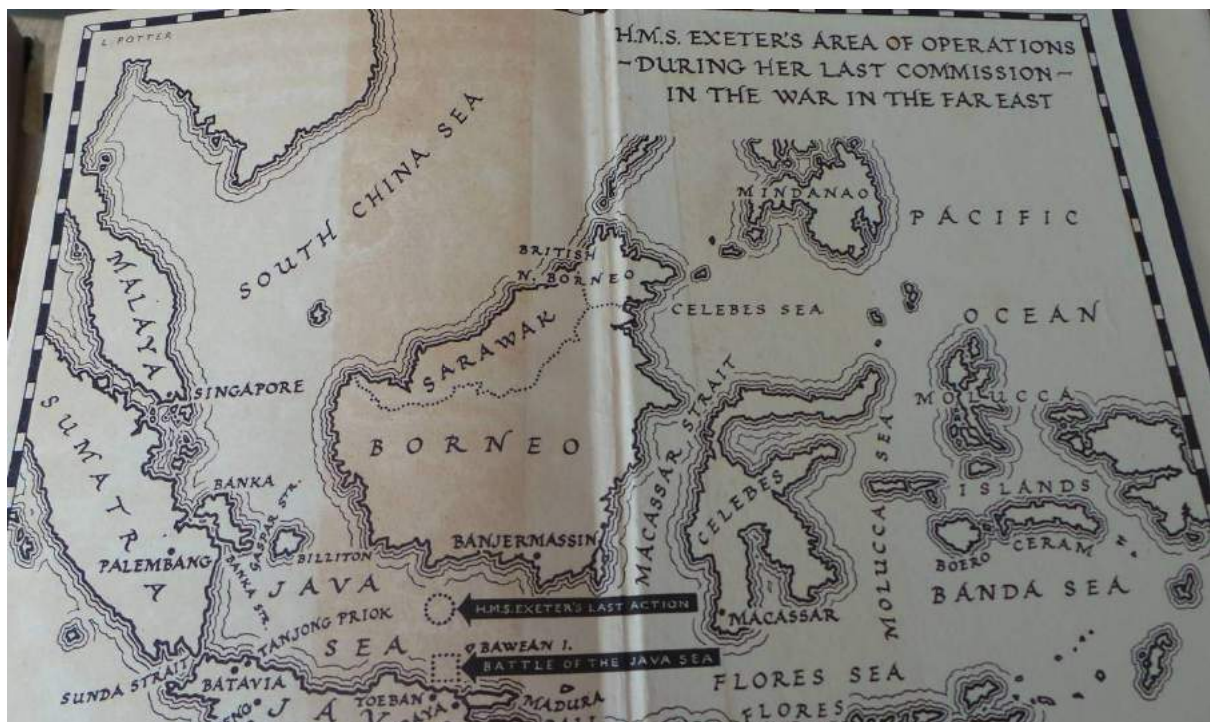
*\_ 'If the Lord Himself had not been on their side...'*

The date the Japanese had forecast for the invasion of Nippon was November 1<sup>st</sup> 1945. It was the deadline too for the massacre of all prisoners-of-war and internees in their hands. Thus would they show the world no holds were barred in the last desperate struggle for their homeland?

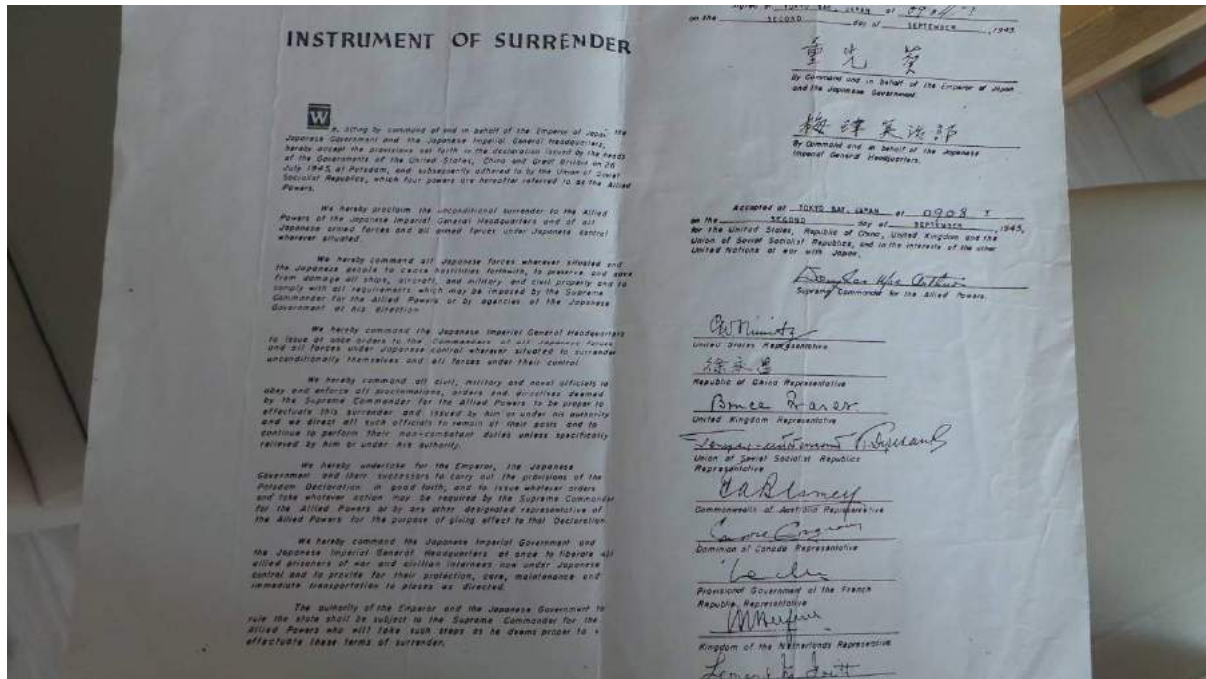
The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki averted that struggle. The bombs unfortunately caused the death of thousands of innocent civilians, but they saved many more lives that inevitably must have been lost in a protracted war. And they saved my dad and many, many others.

As for the guards, justice followed close on their heels. Yoshida was in due course arrested, and with his fellow tyrants brought to trial before A War Crimes Tribunal. They were condemned to death by hanging. (It was later found out that Yoshida had requested that he was shot, which I believed happened.)

This map shows the point at which The Battle of The Java Sea took place and the point at which the H.M.S. Exeter was sunk in the Java Sea.



## Copy of the Surrender Certificate



## Release from Japanese Prisoner of War Camp

### Victory in Japan 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945

### Victory in Europe 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945

## SHIPPED TO AUSTRALIA TO RECUPERATE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS ONCE RELEASED FROM THE POW CAMP BEFORE RETURNING HOME

INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER SIGNED – 2<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 1945 AT TOKYO BAY JAPAN BY THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN AND THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT.

ACCEPTED BY:-

USA

UK

CHINA

USSR

AUSTRALIA

CANADA

FRANCE

NETHERLANDS

NEW ZEALAND

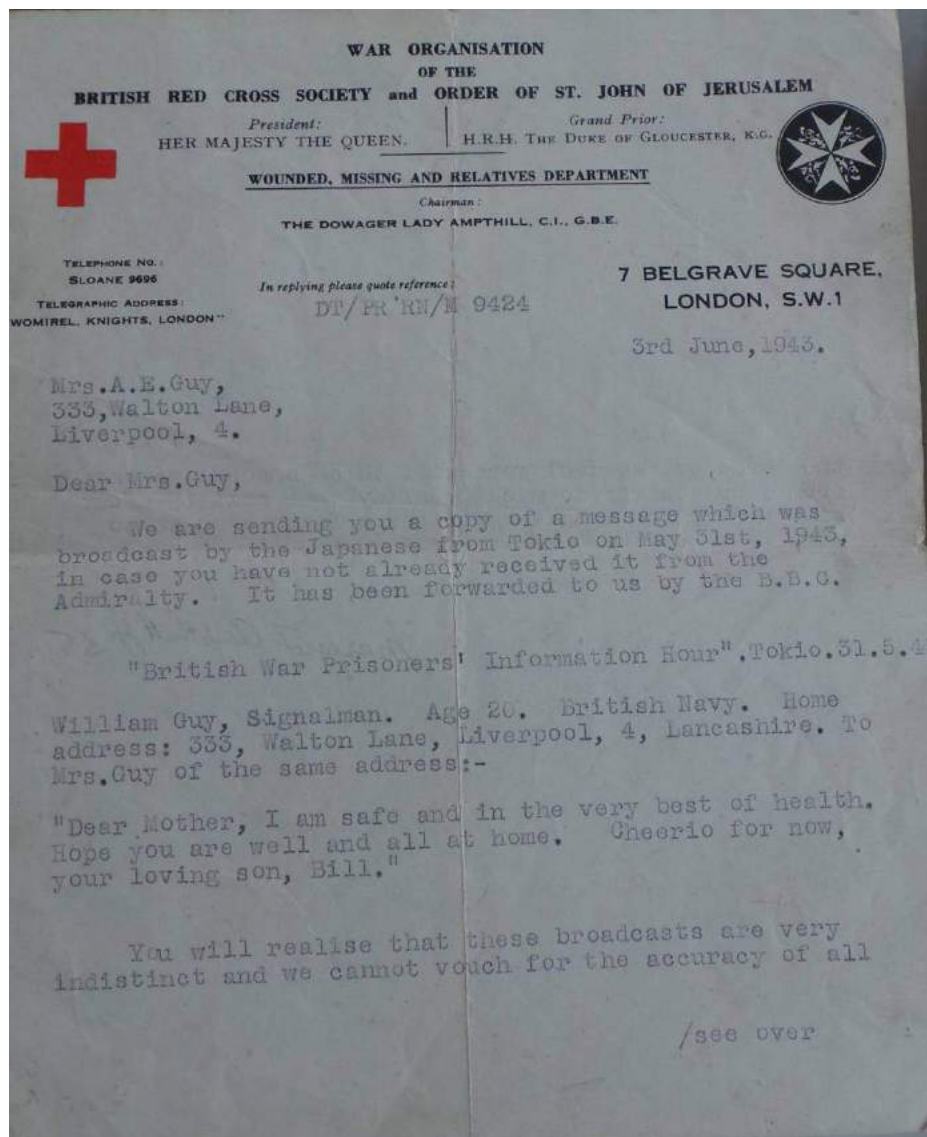


## Part Four

### Life after the War

When the war was over and Victory in Japan was announced to the men on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1945 (dad's birthday) dad like I said went to Australia to recuperate, having survived three and a half years captivity, before being taken home after the war was over.

Dad returned to Liverpool Lime Street station after the war, having spent 4 months in Fremantle, Australia, having been looked after really well. He returned with his comrades including his mate George Gaskell in thick fog. They had to bribe the taxi driver to take them home with South African cigarettes. On arrival in Walton Lane, Liverpool, he was unsure as to where exactly to find his family home. He met Mrs Cavannah, a neighbour he knew, she lived further down the road, who told him they were now living at 333 Walton Lane, because their other home, which was a four bedroom detached house had been bombed. Up to this point his mother and family had only received a telegram that stated he was 'missing', followed by a letter from the Red Cross which read as follows:



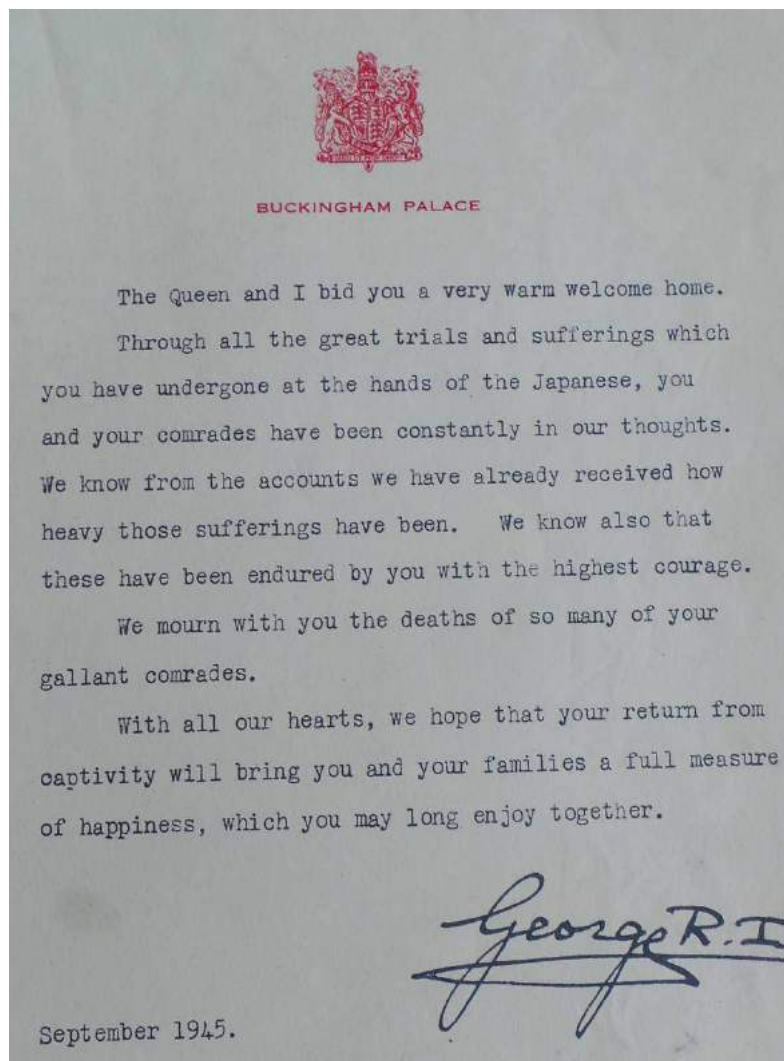


He had been missing for 18 months having missed his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and unbeknown to him his mother had bought him a bike, but thinking he had been killed after such a long time of waiting for news she sold it, much to my dad's dismay.

He knocked on the door and his brother Alf answered and shouted 'Mum it's our Billy, he is home' then Alf continued to walk out of the door to go to work. That was his first memory of his homecoming.

Within hours, George Gaskell was at the door; they were both desperate to get out of the four walls and went to the pub. The government had given the ex-prisoners of war a year's salary which had been saved for them whilst they were held prisoner. (Not nearly enough compensation for what they had been through.) The Liverpool lads as they became known as continued to stick together and meet up for a pint or two and play cards, dominoes and darts. They would often pay a busker to give them entertainment, frequently miss the last bus home and have to walk miles! They needed time to adjust and to have their own space. After almost four years away and most of that time was spent in a cramped wooden hut, often with no walls or flooring, to be back in four walls was very strange to say the least. They had been broken both physically and mentally.

A letter from King George V awaited dad on his return from War, which read as follows:-



Dad and his mates were invited to Geordie (John) Wilkinson's wedding up in Newcastle. He had been engaged to Elaine before the war and as soon as he returned safely he arranged to be married.

Dad first met mum on John (Geordie, his comrade from the prisoner of war camp) and Elaine's wedding day. Mum was Chief Bridesmaid for her brother John. How wonderful, that after three and half years in the Japanese Prisoner of War Camp where Bill first began his friendship with John, that one happy wedding occasion should lead to another.

My mum is pictured below second from left as Chief Bridesmaid at her Brother John's wedding.



My dad is pictured below top right in his naval uniform along with his fellow comrades.



Dad travelled up and down to Newcastle on that wonderful four and a half hour train journey (which remains almost the same today) and although mum was engaged to a window cleaner at the time it was love at first sight. But dad had a battle on his hands because his mate George wanted to go out with her too. No contest dad said. He travelled from Liverpool to Newcastle most weekends. Dad courted Kay (also known as Cathy or Catherine to her family) for five years. One day he brought Kay to meet his family. A day they both will never forget. When they arrived at the house to be introduced to his mother, his own father had taken his own life. He was aged 72 years. He had hung himself at the top of the stairs. It was such tragic circumstances, never to be forgotten.



During his courtship years dad succeeded in getting an office job working with figures and accountancy in Liverpool, but it wasn't too long before he realised being enclosed in four walls was proving very difficult indeed. So he embarked upon the building trade and trained as a skilled plasterer, much preferring to be in the fresh air and open spaces. He played football often in his dinner hour with his mates and worked on many a famous building such as the Liver Buildings in the city centre of Liverpool where he plastered many ceilings with the rose centres and egg and dart covings.

On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August 1950 they both said 'I do'. What a wonderful happy occasion that was!





Mum's best friend Muriel from Gloucester was her 'Lady in Waiting' and she still kept in touch 40 years on. The four 'M's' were her bridesmaids – Muriel, Muriel, Margaret and Maureen. Also there was Cathy and Alma her best friends. Protestant marrying a Catholic was not easy in those days, but 40 years of wedded bliss proves to anyone that love really does last forever! A wonderful honeymoon in Perth, Scotland followed.

The marriage finally culminated five years of commuting for dad on that monotonous four and half hour train journey from Liverpool to Newcastle during their courtship days.

Life in the 1950's also known as 'The Good Old Days' were tough to say the least! There were food rations, low wages, tough jobs and hard times.

My mum had been evacuated during the war to a farm in Frosterley, Durham. She recalled some happy memories of the wonderful countryside and farm life but was far away from her family and home which she missed dearly. From Frosterley she was moved to Bowness-in –Windermere, where she worked as a chambermaid in the Water's Edge Hotel, on The edge of Lake Windermere which is a beautiful setting and is still there to this day, before returning home, after the war was over, when she met Bill at her brother's wedding.

They married in St Aloysius Church, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear. Mum moved to Liverpool away from her family, which must have been really hard to do in order to share and start her new life with dad. As times were hard they were both grateful to move in with dad's sister Margaret and husband Charles for 2 years while they saved to buy their first new home together.

In 1953 mum and dad moved into their first new home at 31 Ionic Road, Stoneycroft, Liverpool 13. Tel. No. Stoneycroft 7838! (It was posh to have a black phone in those days, as well as to even to have a phone!)



Dad worked hard in the plastering trade and mum and him would get the bus from Anfield to the Old Swan after a full day's work and go and clean and decorate the house every evening, first having to light a coal fire because it was bitterly cold and use candles because they had no electricity until the house became legally theirs. It was tough to do but they did this graft over many weeks.

Four years after their marriage and now settled nicely into their new home, Pauline their beautiful daughter on the left here, was born, on August 25<sup>th</sup> 1954 It was not the easiest of births- 3 days in Labour and no husband to hold her hand or even visit in hospital. It wasn't allowed in those days.



Then three years later on March 26<sup>th</sup> 1957 their second lovely daughter Lilian on the right was born at Broadgreen hospital Liverpool.

Pauline was as good as gold but Lilian had to be nursed, often pacing the floor. She would only have a teat off the bottle; she did not speak for ages, always just pointing her finger to get what she wanted. She was renowned for always having her bum in the air when she was in her pram, whereas Pauline was always prim and proper. (Nothing's changed!)

Mum scrubbed and cleaned the house from top to bottom and dad decorated and plastered every wall in the house, it even had posh egg and dart coving (given that my dad was a skilled plasterer by trade.) There was lino on the floors and the most beautiful of colour schemes. The backyard had an outside 'loo' and the outhouse was where dad used to store his bike until mum gave it away to the window cleaner one day!!! There was also the famous dolly tub which Lilian decided to investigate one day at the age of 3 year old and accidentally fell into it head first and nearly drowned ! Thankfully Pauline came to her rescue and pulled her out.

This picture is of Dad and me outside their home 31, Ionic Road, Liverpool. I took him back there to reminisce old times when he was 90 years old.



They had good neighbours – Ethel and Fred with sons Keith and Brian. They were so chuffed to see dad in person after all these years, even though we had kept in touch by card and letter. We left the street in 1963. They were both coming up to 90 years old too.



There were some good tales to tell about the good old days! Such as Kitty Brannigan, whom Lilian will never forget because one day she appeared on the doorstep with her sleeves rolled up and fists flying with a mass of long black hair clenched in her hand. She was shouting angry threats about how naughty Lilian had cut off her daughter's hair, for which Lilian got a good hiding for, but the whole ordeal turned out to be a malicious lie.

We visited good old Dr Lee on the lane and mum booked her two lovely daughters' in for 'Plastic Surgery' no less! It was to have their ears put back. Large sticky out ears seemed to be a trait in the family. This was a good job done on the National Health Service. Pauline was aged 8yrs and Lilian aged 6yrs.

We had two budgies Joey 1 and Joey 2. One flew out the window and the other was found dead in the hearth.

Both girls attended Corinthanuavenue Primary school, where mum walked them to and from everyday with all her friendly neighbours.

Dad used to be the stoker in his spare time at the local church St. Paul's every Sunday and Lilian used to sing 'Away in A Manger' to the congregation. Dad was a member of the 'Young Men's Club' and mum was a member of 'The young Wives Club.' Dad enjoyed his time playing snooker, darts and cards with his mates and mum enjoyed a good gossip with friends- Flo, Elsie, Ethel, Sheila and Pat.

In May 1963 they moved up market to buy a new build home of their dreams in the posh area of Maghull and remained there for their rest of their lives together. They shared many happy and memorable moments together. To own their own 3 bedroom semi-detached home with a garage and a garden in 1963 then was really something! Obviously one constant worry was how they were going to keep paying the mortgage? It was the coldest winter on record that year in 1963 and dad was laid off work for six months! But through thick and thin, good and bad, hell and high water they both worked hard and managed to survive. They always took the rough with the smooth and supported each other throughout the highs and the lows. It was a very happy home, full of laughter.

When they moved in to 84 Eastway Pauline was 8 years old and Lilian was six years old. They used to trot off together to Northway Primary School in their red riding hood duffle coats, which they both did not like and even truanted from school one day, hiding in the field at the back of the house because they did not want to be seen in their coats together. They went back home when mum went out to work. Gran (my mum's mum) was living with us at the time and she just gave us money for sweets! Gran lived with us for the next nine years. Bless her!

Both girls went on to go to Deyes High School, then known as the local secondary school. Pauline was in Mr Friar's class and developed many good friendships with her class mates. She received an excellent reference from her favourite teacher Mr. Friar, which set her in good stead for her future career. Pauline was a talented ice skater, a skill she learnt on a Friday afternoon at Silver Blades ice rink in school time. Lilian had a difficult transition from Primary to Secondary school. She was placed in 'D' form and then moved from 'D' down to 'E' within a very short period of time, until mum went up to complain to the headmaster Mr Hall and gave him a good telling off because she had found out from Sefton Borough Council that Lilian had passed the 11+ but there were not enough places at the Grammar school at the time, so should never have been sent to Deyes High in the first place. Thankfully she was then moved up into the 'A' stream. All down to mum!

Sport played a big part in her school life. She captained many teams and played netball, basketball, hockey, athletics and rounder's for the school, area and county teams, along with several gymnastic and dance performances.

On leaving school Pauline got a very good job working for Plessey Telecommunications in Liverpool City Centre and was promoted quickly to a responsible position, having had many a Saturday job- on the freezing Ormskirk market stall where she lost her first wage (given in sweets!) on the train journey home; the hairdressers working for Lorna a good friend of mum's, THE Coach And Horses Pub, The Swan Hotel, Frost's Department store in children's clothes, Littlewoods and Vernon's Pools, Thorne EMI and Grade 1 seconds on Lord Street in Southport. On moving up to Durham she child minded the family, worked part time in the Cock of the North Pub, then worked her way up to a Managerial role in Abbey National Banking, where she stayed for several years.

Lilian worked in Standard Brands office with mum doing filing( watching the clock tick and asking for a break when it was only 9.05am); Ross Food factory, Schweppes, Vernon Pools, Walton Hospital , the Country Club and then eventually moved away from home to go to Teacher's Training College in Ponteland, Northumberland to become a P.E. teacher. She worked for 12 years at King George School in South Shields and was promoted to Head of Department after two years. Left to have family, then worked her way back into teaching through supply work in several schools, followed by

21 years at Durham Johnston School, fifteen years of which she had the responsibility as a Head of Year.

All four of our children eventually went to Durham Johnston School where they received an excellent education.

Strange that mum originated from the North East and moved to Liverpool where she lived for the next 40 years and that Lilian was born in Liverpool and returned to the North East to train to become a teacher and has remained there for the past 40 years.

Every Sunday the family would visit Grandma's (my dad's mum, Elizabeth), with Aunty Bee and Aunty Anne, the 'Golden Shot,' The 'Little Ho Bo', the salmon salads, followed by the Princess Sandwich Cake, Bill with the newspaper, the women non-stop talking and smoking and many a Saturday night was spent at Aunty Sadie's and Uncle Tom's. The extended family played a dominant role in family life in those days.

One can never forget Gran (Rose Anne) who lived with us for over 9 years. She was a real character to say the least. Often she would be found on the corner of the street having a good chat to the lollypop lady! She had a wonderful nature and would invite anyone in off the street for a 'cuppa'. She would be getting Bill's tea on at 9 o'clock in the morning. She would always be there with Candy the dog, using her walking stick to tap it on its nose if it did anything wrong. One day he chewed mum's best shoes and mum threatened to throw him in the canal!!

The daughter's boyfriends were an interesting time!

Pauline with Steve, Paddy, Alan and finally Pete, but my dad had a habit of calling everyone Steve when they knocked on the door! How embarrassing!

Lilian was with Alan, then Kev, to name but a few, until she went to college and met Shem. Always home late and incognito wearing Pauline's clothes, whilst Pauline was always on time!

We had some wonderful holidays in Wales- Cricketh, Pen mama, Llandudno, Rhyl, Trearda Bay, Anglesey, Porthcawl and The Isle of Man at Aunty Lil's house, (dad's sister), where we are pictured below:



Dad drove a black Prefect car and took us on holiday before he had passed his test. There were plenty kangaroo early morning jump starts from the milkman and plenty backward rolls down the hills in Wales when there was very little clutch control! Scary times but fun!

Dad once tried teaching mum to drive whilst we the kids were in the back of the car. Lilian mimicked dad and shouted straighten up to which mum obeyed and we nearly all landed in the ditch!

Dad first had a Standard 8, then the Prefect but with the help of John (Geordie), mums brother, the cars were gradually upgraded to a Ford Anglia, Zepher, Zodiac, Viva, Ford Cortina and finally a red Ford Escort, which was a 60<sup>th</sup> birthday gift.

Family holidays both home and abroad were enjoyed by all. We all had some brilliant times.

Our first family holiday abroad was to Callor Millor, Majorca where Pauline had a new hairstyle (a wonderful black wig!!)

Mum and dad spent many times visiting Malta with her other brother Eddie and his wife Kathy and family, Peter, Margaret and Maureen.



These are a few shots of our family holidays abroad. We shared some wonderful happy times together.

Other family holiday destinations included; Kos- with hurricane Charlie and oh! Those awful toilets Pauline! ; Lindos, Rhodes- with unforgettable Sue, Sue and Rhona; wonderful girls that we met when we were out there. A memorable birthday for Bill and buckets of sweat lost between Kay and Shem!; Malia, Crete with their first grandchild Kevin, lovely apartments but a long walk to the beach!; 'Playa de- las Americas, Tenerife, The Penthouse Suite no less with the armed security guards who knocked on the door one night because we were making too much noise whilst playing 'Trivia Pursuit.'; Ibiza- great food at Hilary's but one shouted "KILL THE CAT! KILL IT!"! ; Calla D'Or, Majorca where one bought lots of expensive ladroes which Bill had to carry on the plane; Santa Ponsa, Majorca for your Ruby Wedding treat –a very special time shared to celebrate 40 happy years together.



## Santa Ponsa 1990



On return from all those wonderful holidays there was always work to be done not only in their own home but the families homes too- painting, decorating, gardening, cleaning, plastering, patios, sheds, fences etc

1<sup>st</sup>- Ionic Road, Stoneycroft, Liverpool, the family home.

2<sup>nd</sup>- 84 Eastway, Maghull, Liverpool, the family home.

3<sup>rd</sup>- 14 Hartland Avenue, Crossens, Southport (with Aunty Anne's spotlessly clean floorboards!), Pauline and Pete's first home where Kevin was born.

4<sup>th</sup>-Lilian's flats- Mowbrary Road and Sphor Terrace, South Shields as a student.

5<sup>th</sup> – 29 Cavendish Court, Brandon, Durham (breaking and entering). Lilian and Shem's first new build home.

6<sup>th</sup>-47 Cavendish Court, Brandon, Durham, although Lilan and Shem's first detached home, what a pain that was. (Thank goodness dad was a plasterer) .Catherine was born here.

7<sup>th</sup>-2 Abram's Green, Banks, Southport - another detached, for Pauline and Pete and where Jennifer was born.

8<sup>th</sup>-11, St Cuthbert's Walk, Langley Moor, Durham – Lilan and Shem bought for Aunty Bee and Aunty Dorothy to live in, so Catherine could get into Durham Johnston School.

8<sup>th</sup>- 70 Brancepeth View, Brandon Durham – another move so Joanne could get into Durham Johnston School,Joanne was born.

9<sup>th</sup> Blackstitch Lane, Redditch – when Pete moved jobs from Giro Bank.

10<sup>th</sup> – 16 High Croft , Brandon, Durham, yet another move this time to secure a place for Joanne at Durham Johnston School, because the boundaries had changed again and had drawn a line right through the Brancepeth View estate, to our disgust.

11<sup>th</sup>- 3 Angus Square, Langley Moor Durham, where Pauline and family moved up to (and where dad moved in to live with her after 2 years having sadly lost mum).

12<sup>th</sup>- 4 ST. Lukes Mews, Ushaw Moor, Durham- a downsize! (Where sadly dad died)

13<sup>th</sup>- 31 Greenfinch Road, Houghton- le -Spring, Durham- a downsize too, for Shem and Lil to share their retirement together in! (And dad had his last Xmas with the family).

These are some memorable occasions the family shared over the years!

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August 1975- A joint celebration- Pauline's 21<sup>st</sup> and mum and dad's Silver Wedding Anniversary

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March 1978- Lilian's 21<sup>st</sup> in the Cricket Club 'Free!'

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July 1978- Pauline and Pete's wedding day. The bridesmaid dresses nightmare! All the dresses delivered were the wrong length! Aunty Sadie stayed up all night and unpicked and re-sewed all 3 dresses before the big day! The rest of the day thankfully went off without a hitch- well almost! Shem asked dad "How would you like to give your second daughter away in 2 years time?" And that was before he had proposed to Lil.

In fact Kay knew that it took three years later and if it wasn't for her and Pauline telephoning to suggest the 8<sup>th</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup> August when the church was free it may never have happened!

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August 1981- Lilian and Shem's Wedding Day. Shem's mum had a problem with her hat and his dad was told off by his wife Elsie for arriving back from the Everest pub late, when the cars were waiting! A pint had never passed his lips; it was Uncle John's fault.

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 1984- Kevin the first grandson was born

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July- Shem's birthday

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 1987- Dad's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July 1987 – Mum's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration

1987 was the year when they both qualified for their state pension. Retirement was something they could both look forward to but there was still plenty of work to be done!

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 1988- Catherine the first granddaughter was born

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> June 1990- Jennifer the second granddaughter was born and 3<sup>rd</sup> grandchild

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 1991- Joanne the third granddaughter was born and became the 4<sup>th</sup> grandchild

Mum worked hard all her life too. She was one of seven children: 5 boys and two girls. Two children miscarried, then there was Tot (Thomas), Eddie and then John. She also had a sister Margaret but she sadly drowned in a lake near Boldon Colliery at the young age of 11. A pub called the Lakeside Inn is now situated there in Hebburn, Newcastle.

This picture is taken outside South Shields fairground: from the left, Grandma Elizabeth Guy, Gran Rose Anne and Grandad Wilkinson, mum with her brother Tot and his 2 children Margaret and John.



Tot's 2 children John and Margaret were very close to my mum. She brought up like her own because Tot died when they were only young. Mum nursed his son John for 18 months in her own home in Liverpool when at 50yrs old he was diagnosed with terminal oesophagus cancer. John was married to Jean and had 3 children, John, Dominic and Maria. Margaret married Paddy and had 5 boys, Gary, Kevin, Dominic, Michael and Stephen. Her second brother Eddie married Kathy and they had two children Maureen and Peter. Maureen had no children but Peter and Margaret had one daughter Julie. John (Geordie) her other brother, as you know married Elaine and they had two children also called John and Elaine. Quite an extended family in all! And most of them went on and had a third generation of children!

Mum having brought up her own two young children in the North West of England away from her home town and her family in Hebburn in the North East must have been quite daunting for her away from her extended family but she too grafted hard and at the same time cared for her own mother Rose Anne for 9 years whilst going out to work and also cared for the rest of the family both in sickness and in health. She worked for the following companies over the years:

Jacobs; Lucas's; Securicor; Manweb; Forbuouys; Ross Food's; The Old People's home; Chadburns; and Securicor. (Mainly in office administration and wages.)

Mum would have 'chucked' the lot if she could have done but she worked so hard in order to give Pauline and Lilian a good upbringing and a good life.

Dad worked so very hard too, throughout all of his life. Never forgetting he had endured three and a half years as a prisoner in a Japanese Prisoner of War Camp during his prime years aged 18-23 years old. Dad went on to work for the Ace Plasterers, then the Adams family (his niece Muriel's brother in laws firm), Crabby's (a local building merchant in Lydiate near Maghull) and finally for Ronnie his nephew. His work days were long and hard, doing loads of 'foreigners' after a full working day, nearly every day of the week, including weekends. He would be up at 6am, home by 5pm and out by 6pm and not returning until after 9pm in order to give the family a better standard of living. He even made his own 'carrying out', his favourite of which was marmalade sandwiches! Dad plastered many a famous footballers' house in his time, which had moved to the posh Maghull and Lydiate area, such as Phil Thompson, Alan Ball and Stevie Highway. (Lilian used to babysit for Emilyn Hughes children along with her best friend June Ellis too.)

Having fought in the war and survived the appalling treatment of the Japanese Prisoner of War Camp, he got on with his life and grafted hard in order to give his 2 daughter's Pauline and Lilian a good start in their lives.

Previous to going to war Dad like I said, had a good job in an office doing accountancy but after the war he could no longer stand working in the enclosed office of four walls so he trained to become a skilled plasterer and worked extremely hard for the following companies:

The Adam's Family; The ACE Plasterers; The Famous Trio Gang 'Billy, Harry and George'; The Union; The Liver Building's; as well as for Ronnie (his nephew) and his gang.

Dad is pictured here with his mates working on top of the Liver Building's in Liverpool. Scary!



He also worked 'Foreigners' for Crabby's Builder's Merchants Company for years which he did after having done a full day's work 6am to return for 5pm, a quick wash and bite to eat, then out by 6pm and hopefully back by 9.30pm (working 12-15 hr shifts per day plus nearly every weekend) It was

gruelling! We will never forget the graft he put in and there was never a bad word spoken. He never moaned one bit! He just got on with it for the family.

Dad would answer the phone in such a posh voice "Hello Maghull 9853" then quickly change to his broad scouse accent "alright Bobby". He never had a pen or paper at hand to write down the address of his job but rely on his A-Z book. (No SATNAV in those days!)

As well as the good times there were also the bad:

Our first Xmas dinner out at The Nelson Hotel in Liverpool- not only to have our car stolen but also all our Xmas presents which were in the boot! ( included all my new ski gear from Auntie Bee, who went out and bought me a second lot- bless her!); Xmas dinner again and Shem called home and the candle set fire to the table decorations; Lilian telephoned home from college and the chip pan went on fire in the kitchen; Pauline got locked in Grandma's toilet and the taxi man had to axe the door down in order to catch the Isle of Man boat; Walton Hospital when mum was given the wrong blood and nearly lost her life!

But enough of the doom and gloom there were many happy social occasions to be enjoyed: All the Saturday nights out with George and Laurie at the La Fontana every New Year's Eve; The Saturday night's out with Lorna and George, when dad lost his false teeth down the toilet. He had had a few too many to drink!; Saturday quiz and games nights with Auntie Bee and Dorothy and family. We had many a good laugh with them, especially with Kay and Pauline who were a bit slow on learning the rules ha! Ha!; Mum and Pauline spent many a mini-weekend down in London together. On one trip to Petticoat Lane they got robbed and there was a bomb scare in the restaurant! They never went back again.

Being members of the Far Eastern Prisoner Of War Association (F.E.P.O.W.) enabled mum and dad and indeed ourselves to have many a good time at all the wonderful re-unions which took place over the years in Babbacombe, Blackpool, Plymouth, Torquay to name but a few! We all shared some memorable times together and one Saturday in every month mum would host a get together for the Liverpool lads and their wives when they would have a good chin wag and sing song. Even our dog Candy enjoyed their visits because one night he scoffed George Darley's fish supper which he placed on the floor having been distracted by a knock at the door!

Much of these facts and fond memories were presented to mum and dad in the form of 'This is your life' in a red folder just like Aamon Andrew's used to do on the T.V. by Shem on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1990, for my mum and dad's Ruby Wedding celebration and was shared with all the family

Shem asked Dad 3 things beginning with 'H' that irritated him most about mum and he said:

The HOUSEWORK! The HAIRDRESSERS! The HANDBAG (in which she could never find her lighter!)

Well it was Mum's turn next to which she responded:

His LOUD VOICE! All those MUCKY TROUSERS! And anything going wrong with the CAR!

Hilarious! But true!



Nevertheless their love blossomed throughout their wonderful, happy 40 years together as a married couple. We wished them both many, many more years of happiness ahead of them and what better way to say goodnight than-“Here’s your weatabix Bill”, and “Here’s your last cuppa Kay”

These being their infamous last words to each other over the past 40 years!



The family celebrated in style. We popped the champagne and presented them with these two sun loungers at their garden party, for them to both enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle together in the future.

Sadly mum died suddenly 3 months later. Just so pleased that we had shared all these wonderful memories with both her and dad together beforehand, which we will cherish forever! We were such a happy family, but our world fell apart on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1990.

A celebration poem was read out to them during their celebrations, which was written by their close friend Dorothy Hughes.

VICTORY BELLS ARE RINGING  
WITH A JOYFUL SOUND  
A WAR AT LAST IS OVER  
AND PEACE IS IN OUR LAND

A SAILOR BOY COMES HOMEWARD  
TO HIS FAMILY  
TO BE GREETED BY HIS MOTHER  
AND NOT FORGETTING BEE

ONE DAY HE GOES A JOURNEY  
TO SEE SOME FRIENDS HE'S FOUND  
AND THERE INSIDE TYNESIDE  
KAY IS WAITING CLOSE AT HAND

WEDDING BELLS ARE SINGING  
ON THEIR WEDDING DAY  
THAT LOVE AND EVERY BLESSING  
GOD WILL GIVE THEIR WAY

AT FIRST THEIR HOMES WITH MARGARET  
FOR A LITTLE WHILE  
THEN THEY MAKE A HOME TOGETHER  
IN TRUE IONIC ROAD STYLE

THEIR HOME IS VERY HAPPY  
ONE DAY IT IS COMPLETE  
WHEN PAULINE'S APPEARANCE  
MEANS THE SOUND OF BABY FEET

A FEW MORE YEARS ROLL ONWARDS  
AND LILIAN'S NOT FAR BEHIND  
SO NOW INSTEAD OF THREESOME  
A QUARTET CAN NOW BE FOUND

SO THE YEARS GO FORWARD  
A MOVE TO EASTWAY IS MADE  
THERE'S UPS AND DOWNS LIKE ALL HAVE  
BUT THEIR LOVE NEVER FAILS

AS THE GIRLS GROW OLDER LILIAN MOVES AWAY  
COLLEGE BOUND AS MANY  
WHERE SHEM APPEARS ONE DAY

PAULINE MEANWHILE STAYS HERE  
UNTIL PETE ARRIVES  
THEN WEDDING BELLS AGAIN RING  
IN TRUE ST. ANDREWS STYLE

SO THREE COUPLES NOW A FAMILY  
UNTIL KEVIN COMES ALONG  
AND CHRISTENING BELLS ARE PEALING  
AND A GRANDAD KEVIN THINKS IS GRAND

THERE ARE HOLIDAYS TOGETHER  
TRAVELLING ABROAD  
SPAIN, GREEK ISLES, OTHER PLACES  
THEY HAVE MEMORIES GALORE

ONE DAY A LITTLE CATHERINE  
APPEARS ON THE SCENE  
BLONDE HAIR AND BLUE EYES  
KEVIN THINKS SHE IS SUPREME

THERE IS UP AND DOWN TO DURHAM  
UP AND DOWN TO BANKS  
NOT FORGETTING WALTON  
TO WHICH BEE AND I GIVE THANKS

FOR BEING IN A FAMILY  
IS A BLESSED THING  
AND KAY AND BILL TOGETHER  
HAVE ACHIEVED THAT GIFT

ANOTHER BELL OF HAPPINESS  
COMES TO BILL AND KAY  
WHEN JENNIFER MYLETT  
COMES ALONG ONE DAY

RUBY BELLS ARE SOUNDING  
ON THIS HAPPY DAY  
AS 40 YEARS THEY CELEBRATE  
FOR BILL AND KAY

MAY THE COMING YEARS TOGETHER  
BE BLESSED BY GOD ABOVE  
AND MAY HE KEEP YOUR FAMILY  
PROTECTED IN HIS LOVE

## Part Five

### Grandad



Since losing the love of his life Kay after 40 happy year's together dad needed a purpose back in his life in order to give him the will to continue to live. That came in the significant role that he played not only as a supportive father to Pauline and Lilian but as granddad to Kevin, Catherine, Jennifer and Joanne.

When mum sadly died suddenly of a pulmonary embolism on November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1990, having been diagnosed with breast cancer two years previously, our lives fell apart! Pauline had uprooted and just moved to Redditch with Pete and her son Kevin who was 5 years old and her second child, Jennifer who was born in the June and was five months old when mum died. Lilian had Catherine who was two years old, having suffered five previous miscarriages. She was living and teaching in Durham with her husband Shem and had just announced she was expecting her second child. She was three months pregnant! Mum's death could not have happened at a worst time. The whole family had decorated and helped Pauline and Pete move into their new home, welcomed the birth of Jennifer and then 'bang' a few months later mum died. She was the rock of the family. No one knew how they were going to cope and go on living without her. We were such a close knit family.

We were all at very low ebb. Not only had we lost our mum, but Pauline's marriage came to an end and she filed for divorce. Understandably she struggled to cope with a new born baby in a strange place, but she met some wonderful neighbours and friends who helped her manage to get through the difficult times.

Dad returned home to an empty house in Eastway, Maghull but he felt very alone within the four walls. I am sure memories of the prison camp came flooding back. He commuted in a triangle between Redditch, Durham and Maghull to spend time with his family to enable him to try and cope with his grief. It was a really traumatic time for everyone, especially for dad seeing his world fall apart!

Lilian returned to her teaching job and eventually went on maternity leave in the March. There were lots of visits up and down the country to be with dad and to the solicitor with Pauline. Then in June 1991 Lilian gave birth to Joanne her second child. In May 1992, the following year Shem and Lilian took a gamble and put a deposit down on a house close by to them in Langley Moor, Durham. Pauline sold her house in Blackstitch Lane, Redditch within a day and moved up North to be with us in July 1992. Kevin settled into Langley Moor Primary school and Dad visited both of us on a regular basis. Then within two years dad sold his house in Liverpool and moved up to Durham to live with Pauline and her family in Angus Square, Langley Moor, Durham. All the family remained close and supported each other through the heartache.

Dad became a father figure for Kevin and Jennifer and played such an important role in their lives and in those of all the grandchildren. He had a purpose back in his life. The children adored him. He would take them to and from school over the years, play in the park, read them stories, show them card tricks, play games, make them lunch and often tea. He once said he was doing all those things he missed doing when Pauline and Lilian were little because he was busy working, so that was nice to hear and he was so good at it too.

Dad lived with Pauline for 22 years. He commuted between our two homes and played such an important role in all our lives throughout his time with us. He was such an important figure and role model in our family life. We did everything together and shared so many happy family holidays at the caravan in Northumberland and many a family celebration. He cared for all the grandchildren who absolutely adored him and always did everything with a lovely smile on his face. He was never any bother. In fact we don't know how we would have coped without him.

(I am convinced my mum played her part in keeping him alive in order for him to take good care of us all.) There is more about this later in the story.

Mum enjoyed five wonderful years with her grandson Kevin, two very happy years with her granddaughter Catherine but sadly only five months with her second granddaughter Jennifer. Unfortunately I was three months pregnant with Joanne when my mum died, so she never got the opportunity to meet her; however my dad was able to share many more years with the grandchildren and became a pivotal role in their upbringing.

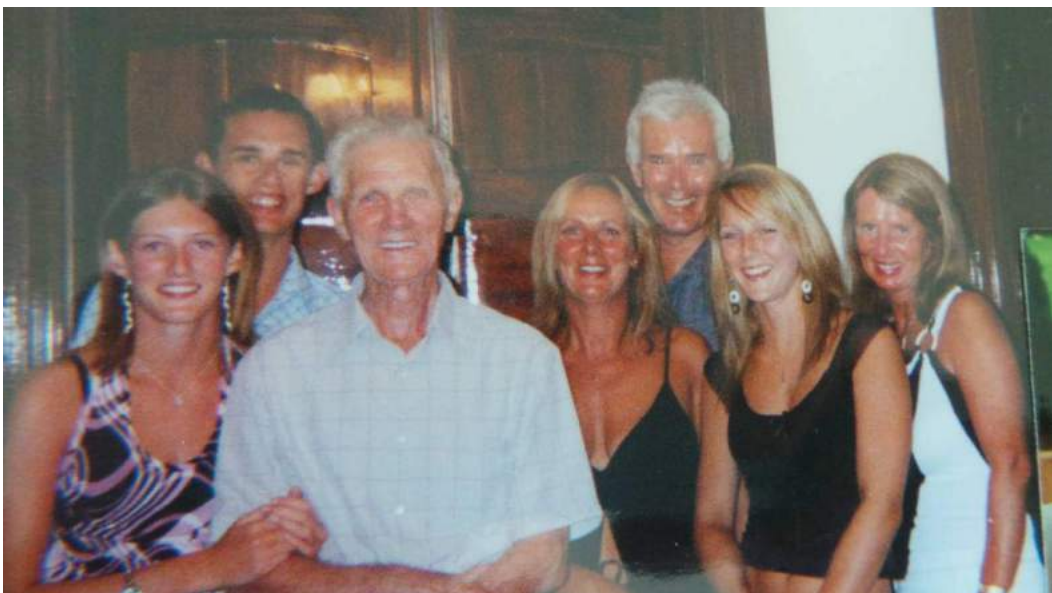
These are just a few memorable photographs of the family sharing many happy occasions and holidays together.













## **Family Times remembered by Pauline and Lilian**

August 16<sup>th</sup> 2013 was a time to remember and look back on 90 years of Dad's life. Plans were made for a special 90<sup>th</sup> celebration to be held in London with his family, to share with him all the happy times we had together. We presented dad with a photograph album and shared the following sweet memories we all had with him. This was our tribute to dad on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday:-

We recalled and remembered the Sunday teas at Grandma's with Aunty Anne and Aunty Bee. We always had fruit with evaporated milk! And watched the Golden Shot on TV; Eating Princess Victoria sandwich cake at grandma's and all dad's sisters and mum 'yapping' and smoking while he buried himself in the newspaper

Being taken to St Paul's church to sing "Away in a Manger"; Mum used to make all our lovely clothes matching!

How dad worked hard all day plastering then come home to put the tea on, leave the potatoes on boiling then go and pick mum up from 'Standard Brands', have tea then go out to work again on a 'foreigner'; All the 'foreigners' he did for 'Crabby' on evenings and weekends to give us a better life;

Candy the dog would be at the lounge window for hours waiting for dad to come home from work. He adored him and when he arrived he would go mental around the living room floor;

Celebrating your Silver Wedding Anniversary at Aughton Village hall and at the same time Pauline's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, then later your 2 daughter's weddings;

We recalled and remembered all those lovely holidays when we were growing up in the Isle of Man (staying at Mrs Crawley's); the first holiday abroad to Calla Millor, (Pauline with her wig on!) To afford a holiday in the 1970's was quite something. Driving us on holiday before you had passed your test. 'Kangarooing' the car and saying "it's alright, its good practice for me and at that point we would be rolling backwards down the hill;

The first car dad gave to Pauline was the blue Zephyr and then upgraded it to a white one; dad teaching mum to drive and Lilian would be in the back of the car shouting 'straighten up' and she did straight into the ditch. She never did pass her test!!

Pauline's boyfriends were all called Steve by dad; whenever they would knock on the door he would say "come in Steve!!!" to all our embarrassment!

Although dad worked such long hours, morning, noon and night he was always there to help with our homework, particularly maths, which he was very good at. Mum was always the one to help us with our spelling;

His red Ford Escort was stolen off the drive in Langley Moor and burnt out in Brandon by some thugs! A previous car was also stolen on Xmas Day outside The Lord Nelson Hotel in Liverpool whilst we were having Xmas Dinner, with all our Xmas presents in it!!!;



Saturday night sing along at 84 Eastway, Maghull with all the Far East Prisoner of War comrades from the Liverpool association, telling tales from the war and George Darley putting his bowl of fish down on the floor and candy the dog ate them all!!;

Walking down the aisle so proudly at ST. Andrew's church to give both your daughter's away;

All the houses you have decorated, painted, plastered, gardens, patios, fences.... dad did for both of us over the years;

When we were naughty and mum would shout "Bill come and sort them out will you?" and dad would come to the bottom of the stairs and quietly say "now, now girls be good for your mum. " He would never tell us off;

The holiday in Newquay at St. Robin's Hotel (posh!) we just arrived in time to see England win the World Cup in 1966; Gran lived with us for 9years, mum and dad were so kind to her and she was so kind to us.

There were many, many more happy times we shared with dad over the years and which we will cherish forever.

On dad's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday weekend in London, we all had a fabulous time, sailing down the River Thames, taking in the sites, and enjoying both a celebratory lunch and dinner, with Champagne, gifts and most significantly of all a photographic album of his past 90 years of life which we presented to him, along with these loving messages:

Pauline and Lilian presented dad with this letter on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*Dear Dad,*

*You were the youngest of nine. You experienced and thankfully survived the Second World War. (Aged 18 -23). You married a beautiful lady Kay (Catherine) and had two lovely daughter's Pauline and Lilian.*

*You worked hard all your life for your family and we have had some fantastic times and great laughs together. You have taught us so much, from how to change a plug, mix plaster, car mechanics; hang wallpaper- the list is endless.*

*You have brought us up so well and saved and worked so hard to give us some wonderful holidays both home and abroad. Sunday's at Grandma's brought us altogether with the Extended Family and you are such an important role model in our life, who has given so much to us all.*

*You are a wonderful father, a caring grandad and a loving husband. We are all so very proud to be part of you and to share with you your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations. (I am sure mum will also be looking down on you today too!)*

*Dad you have taught us so much. We look up to you and we are so proud to have you as our dad in our lives over all these years. We do not know how we would have managed without your kindness and support, help and generosity to us and all the family.*

*You are a Legend, Brave, Good Looking, Hard working, Considerate, Caring, Loyal, Kind, Understanding but above all a 'True Gentleman' of whom we are all so very proud to have as a father and grandfather in our lives. A true inspiration!*

*Lots of love*

*Pauline and Lilian*

xxxx

### **Happy times with your Grandson Kevin**

- Going to the park around the corner from 84 Eastway to play football and minigolf
- When I was little you and grandma would have an Irish Coffee when you were abroad and you would let me have some of your cream so I could make a funny moustache
- Taking me to fun land in Southport while mum was working and grandma was shopping
- Going for a short walk on the beach- 4 miles!! A picnic and a massive steep hill later, eventually returning to the car at aged 88!
- Going to a cafe inside a shopping arcade in Southport while mum was working. There was a pool of big goldfish and I would throw some of your 1p and 2p into it and you would let me eat the sugar cubes
- Going to Aunty Bee's with you and drinking lemonade out of a crocodile cup, then we would play tiddlywinks
- All the times you cleaned my football boots after football and cross country at school
- Playing pool and snooker in the garage. You beat me 7-0 once and I was in a right mood!
- Teaching me how to play chess, draughts, and cards and how to do card tricks!
- Watching football with you, especially the Liverpool versus AC Milan 2005 Champion's League Final. Liverpool came from 3-0 down and won on penalties.
- All the 10p mixes you used to buy us from the paper shop every day.

### **Happy times with your granddaughter Catherine**

- I always loved being the centre of your attention
- Grandma was my guardian angel
- Ever since I was a baby you have always looked out for me and everyone else in the family for that matter
- Bet you never thought you would be so lucky to have a granddaughter like me eh? He!he!
- I feel ridiculously lucky to have the best parent's in the entire world and to have such an incredible family!
- Your stories have always amazed me Grandad.... you should have wrote a book!!!
- I can't believe all the things you have experienced, it really is incredible!
- I feel so lucky to have you as my granddad who is such a legend and an inspiration
- All the wonderful times you have played with me and taken me to the park
- You watched so many of my gymnastic routines whilst practicing in the living room. I remember countless occasions asking you to watch me and you never failed to give me your full attention.
- It worked out pretty well though ending up as British Champion! I hope I did you proud.
- I definitely learned from the best Grandma and Mum, the two most beautiful and incredible women I ever had the privilege of knowing
- You always did spoil us rotten both you and grandma. I still have amazing memories of Grandma
- I remember singing lots of songs to you, especially your favourite ' somewhere over the rainbow'

### **Happy times with your granddaughter Jennifer**

- When I was born in Southport I was so glad I got to meet Grandma during the first 5 months of my life and even though I can't remember much about her I know she is always watching over me. All the stories and pictures you have shared with me show how much of a lovely grandma she really was
- You used to take me to nursery in Redditch with mum (to get rid of me and get some piece, because I did cry a lot!) but when you picked me up you would play with me all evening because I never slept!

- I remember when all four of us wanted something and if mum, Aunty Lil and Uncle Shem said 'No' we would always go to you and no matter what, you would say 'yes'
- Best granddad ever!
- All the times you would watch children's TV with me, whilst you ate your banana sandwiches and then read me stories
- Stopping at the park on our way home from Langley Moor school we had such fun
- Even when we thought we were old enough to walk home from school by ourselves, you still followed behind us
- Every morning you would come into the lounge at 8.35am but you would always say it was 8.40am, because you knew we always asked for another 5 minutes and you couldn't say 'no'
- There are so many memories of all the caravan trips- such as taking all four of us to play mini golf in Seahouses and always gave the winner a £1, except you would always end up giving me another £1 no matter what just to stop me crying
- You lived with me, Kevin and mum for nearly all my life. You brought us up as your own and were always there for us. I loved coming home to you every day from school. Walking through the gate and seeing you stood in the kitchen watching TV and as soon as you would see me you would flick the kettle on and make me a cup of tea with biscuits.
- You read me so many bedtime stories. I always remember pretending to be asleep just when you were nearly finished and then once you got up to leave I would pretend to wake up and you would read it all over again
- I loved how you helped me look after snuggles, we did everything together (except clean out his hutch.. you were always left on your own for that one)
- All the times we tried to get him to come in from the garden at the end of the day and we chased him around the garden, blocking him in a bush until we got him
- I loved how much you played games with me. The entire card tricks you taught me and I still don't know how you do that big card trick? You're just so good!
- I remember I used to spill makeup on the carpet and I would wait for mum to go out and I would run downstairs to tell you because I knew you would not tell me off and you would clean it up for me.
- I have to mention the time I was sitting on your knee and I got all excited playing with my toys and I hit you on the nose with the rattle! (Sorry!)

*Grandad,*

*I could go on forever with the amount of memories and joy you have brought into my life! I know that I would not be the girl I am today if you had not been there always looking after me.*

*I have never seen you unhappy, angry or fed up with anything in your life, even after you were held prisoner for three and a half years. You came home and got straight on with your life, working hard and carrying on. It is truly inspirational and I feel so lucky to have you as my granddad. I know everyone will always say they have the best granddad ever but I actually do! I have never met anyone like you, so hardworking, generous, loving and funny.*

*I want you to know you have been like a dad to me and I would not change that for the world! Wherever I have gone in life or whatever I have needed you have always been so positive and supportive.*

*You are and always will be one of the most important people in my life and you are so close to my heart.*

*I love you*

*Jen x*

#### **Happy times with your granddaughter Joanne**

- I spent so much time with you when I was really tiny and developed a funny mixed accent, part Geordie and part Scouse. Wouldn't have had it any other way!
- One of my earliest memories with you is the famous banana sandwich we would both have after nursery. You would always take me to the park which I loved and then afterwards we would munch on famous and very delicious banana sandwiches
- I remember practicing my gymnastic routines in the lounge every morning and night at 3 Angus Square at Auntie Pauline's where you lived before going to school
- We all performed so many Xmas plays for you and we made you pay to watch them. We practiced for hours and you were always so proud of us
- We watched so many children's TV programmes together Play day and Pippin... and stole sweets from your pocket and you never noticed? So naughty of us (he!he!)
- You were not only at every birthday party but pretty much everyone's Favourite there
- You never failed to get involved, not just at our parties but let's not forget the pets parties we used to have in the garage. You were so good with our pets, snuggles, Buggsy and Pepsi and took such good care of them buying them so many treats
- So many memories from the incredible caravan park- the millions and millions of crazy golf rounds you would play with us- giving the winner a £1 but we always knew you always gave



Jennifer a pound even when she lost because she would just cry and cry and cry!! you couldn't resist and just gave in!!! That is why we love you so, so much!

- The amusements in Seahouses were so much fun. The amount of money you would give us for those machines was insane! You were so kind and generous and still are, but we know you wouldn't have it any other way
- I remember the roller skate party at the sports centre. You held my hand throughout. I would not let you go! I could not be without you
- You were so handsome granddad. You would walk me to and from Langley Moor Primary school every day and at the end of each day I would look around the yard as fast as I could to spot you in the crowd and run over to you with a beaming smile to go home and eat you out of house and home!
- The amount of times you would play with us not just on holiday or the caravan but at home when we were bored. We would always come to you.
- Cards mainly were my favourite and yours too I think!
- Even when you were 'resting your eyes' you would still come and play with us! You could never turn us away.

*Grandad,*

*Words cannot describe how much you have impacted on my life. From a tiny baby to now 21 years old, you are still as healthy and involved as ever. Having you around so much throughout our entire upbringing has been so special and I don't think you realise how important you are to all of us children in the family. Not only have you provided support, comfort, humour and of course "LOTS OF MONEY" but you have been the rock in the family for so long. I have never met another man as fit and as handsome as you at the age of 90! It's AMAZING! I really hope when I reach 90 I am as fit as you because you look incredible.*

*You never fail to put a smile on my face and you always show how interested and thoughtful you are throughout all the important times in our lives.*

*To have a granddad like you is more than any granddaughter could ever wish for. I hope you know just how special you are and realise that having a granddad like you is what makes this family who we are today! Loving, caring, friendly, funny, cool, wild and of course ever so crazy!*

*So this is to you granddad, 90 years of age, looking and feeling great and being an absolute legend and hero to each and every one of us in this family!*

*I love you with all my heart,*

*Lots of Love*

*Joanne (the youngest!) x*

Dad was very touched by all these loving words. It was such a memorable occasion.

On our return from London to Durham we arranged a further 90<sup>th</sup> celebration weekend away to Liverpool where his roots belonged, to meet up with his old comrade George Gaskell and his daughter Christine. The highlight of this visit was taking both George and my dad to the Western Approaches Building, located underneath the Town Hall in Liverpool, where all Royal Naval Ships were controlled during the Second World War. Unknowing to dad all coded messages which he had received aboard the Exeter during the Second World War came from the place of his birth Liverpool –the Western Approaches – a fact dad did not know until he stood there in the operation room. This was a most memorable occasion.

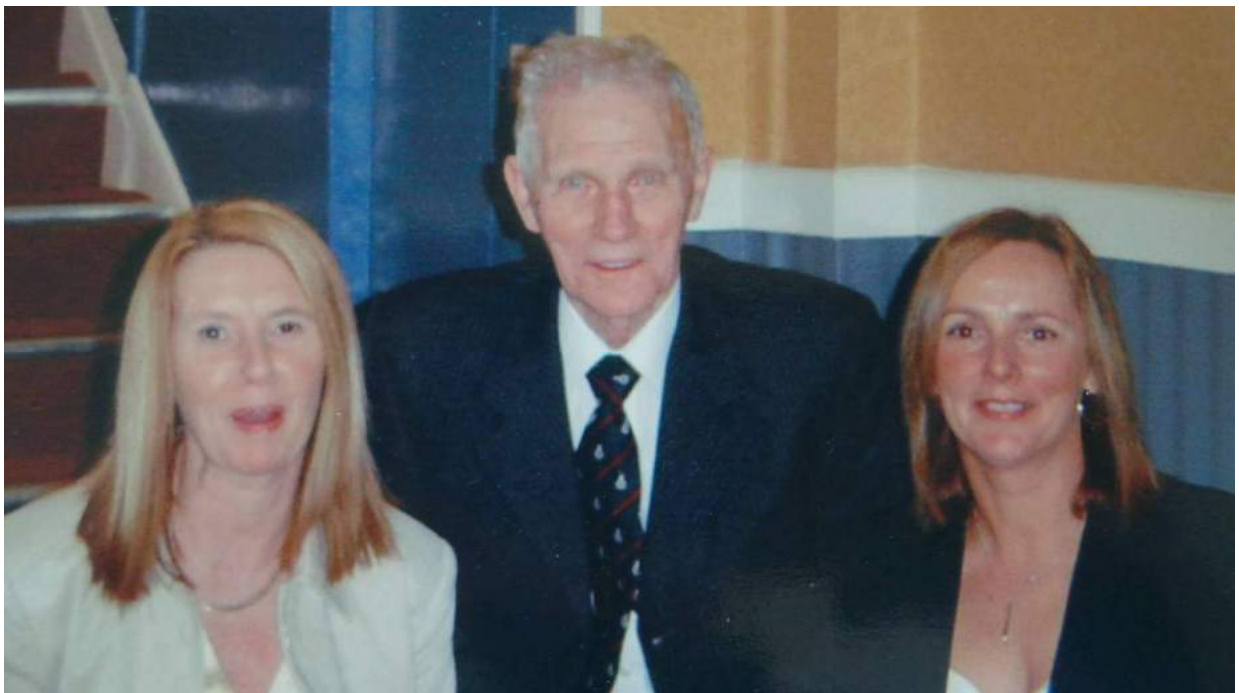
## Part Six

### HMS EXETER RE-UNIONS



For almost 40 years my mum and dad went to official re-unions held every year for The H.M.S. Exeter F.E.P.O.W (Far Eastern Prisoner of War Association) held in Liverpool, Blackpool, Plymouth, London, Exeter and Torquay. One Saturday in every month my mum hosted a re-union for the Liverpool lads and their wives in our home at 84 Eastway, Maghull, and Liverpool. They would have supper, sing songs and to reminisce wartime experiences. I have a vivid memory of this and have no doubt that this played a crucial part in their healing and recovery. They became friends for life as well as Pauline and Lilian's second extended family.

Sadly when my mum died In November 1990, Pauline, my sister and I continued to attend the re-unions with my dad for a further 23 years until our father's death.



Pauline and I along with dad shared some memorable moments at the re-unions over the years.

We met wonderful comrades and their families and listened to many a tale from the war. When my Uncle John met the man he had saved in the camp Micky Dodds, it was such an emotional re-union and to find out he had gone on to have 11 children was quite incredible. They had not seen each other for over 50 years. We had a close bond with Slinger (Charlie) Woods, who was one of the few survivors of The Encounter. He had a great sense of humour. We used to meet quite a few of the men on our travels down to the re-unions on the train each year from Durham to Torquay and share a drink or two on the way. Bill Dunlevey would teach us a variety of knot making for which he was renowned for, but after sharing a bottle of whiskey on the six hour journey I can't say we were very good at it! On one of our train journey's Bob Garrioch from Canada took ill. We had to stop the train at Birmingham and call emergency services. I asked if there was a doctor on board and would you believe 7 doctors came to our assistance. Bob had severe pneumonia but thankfully recovered after a 3 week hospital stay and was able to continue on his travels. Pauline and I received a beautiful bouquet of flowers to show how much he appreciated our help and support, which was a lovely gesture. They were all one large extended family which we were both very proud to be part of.

The man below is Bill John's who became responsible for organising all the annual re-unions for H.M.S. Exeter survivors and families.



W.E. Johns (Bill)

W.E. Johns (Bill) after being invalided from the Royal Navy was for many years a Technical Supervisor with the Ministry of Defence in the Weapons Department at Devonport Dockyard. He was Chairman

of the River Plate Veteran's Association and a founder member and Vice President of the Devon and Cornwall Far Eastern Prisoner of War Association. He was the 'Remembrancer' of the HMS Exeter-Makassar association, and like I said, who was responsible for many years for organising the annual re-unions, followed by Bob Berry and now Tom Jowett and Ian Mort, to whom we are all so very grateful to.

Bill Johns wrote a book 'No Surrender' of which was presented to my dad, sister and myself at the re-union in 1991 in memory of my mum who died suddenly in November 1990, when we took her place to support my dad attending the re-unions. The book was signed by all the survivors of HMS Exeter and The Encounter who were able to attend that evening and something we will cherish. On the book cover it read:

'In memory of our mum with all our love Bill, Pauline and Lilian x signed by Bill Johns, Uncle John Wilkinson (Geordie), Syd Jowett, George Gaskill, Fred Aindow, Bill Francis, Tom Adams, Gunner Toole, K. Rhodes, Alex Timpson, Alf Tropp, Alf Warner RM, Tom Owen, Bob Berry, Lofty, Reg Riggs, Bert Worthington (Canada) CPO Capt. FX, NL Everett Clay Jack Robbin, Johnny King, Dave Byle, Bert Reap, YES Mcall, Steve Cairns, George M Clark, Charlie (Slinger) Wood(The Encounter), Dunbar, Bill Dunlevey, Tom Quillam.

Bill Johns fought at the Battle of the River Plate. He was Chief Ordnance Artificer on board HMS Exeter in this battle and then two and a half years later at the Battle of the Java Sea, Bill was back on board the re-conditioned Exeter which was again crippled in the Battle of the Sunda Strait and sunk as she tried to get back to Colombo.

Johns and most of his fellow survivors were rescued by the Japanese and taken to a prison camp on Celebes where the conditions were appalling. Despite the lack of food, despite the disease, despite the fact that at one time only 8 out of 200 Englishmen were fit for work, the Japanese forced the prisoners to work the mines. Degrading though the circumstances were, Johns and his comrades managed to survive, and in their way win small victories over their captors. When Johns was in charge of a party undertaking engineering jobs, whenever possible he ensured that much of the work was faulty.

'No Surrender' is a remarkable account of one man's, war, which recalls a spirit and comradeship which could not be destroyed by danger or difficulty, by hardship or oppression, a spirit that still exists today. Not only does this book vividly recall many of the experiences of those who served in the Second World War, particularly those captured by the Japanese, but for a later generation this courageous story must prove an inspiration. It is a story of a gallant ship and her wartime crews, serving, fighting and dying in a theatre of war. He remembers with humility, but his heart thumps with pride for having been granted the privilege of serving with them.

My dad had great admiration for Bill John's and enjoyed his company and that of his many comrades in all the re-unions he attended over the years. He never missed one.

Admiral Sir Frank Twiss was invited to write the Foreword to the book 'No Surrender' and saw it as a great compliment, more so in the case of the narrator Bill Johns and his old shipmates and respected friends who were many of the characters in the book. The story tells of a fine ship and a fine spirit of the men who manned HMS Exeter. This was typical of the sailor of the Navy.



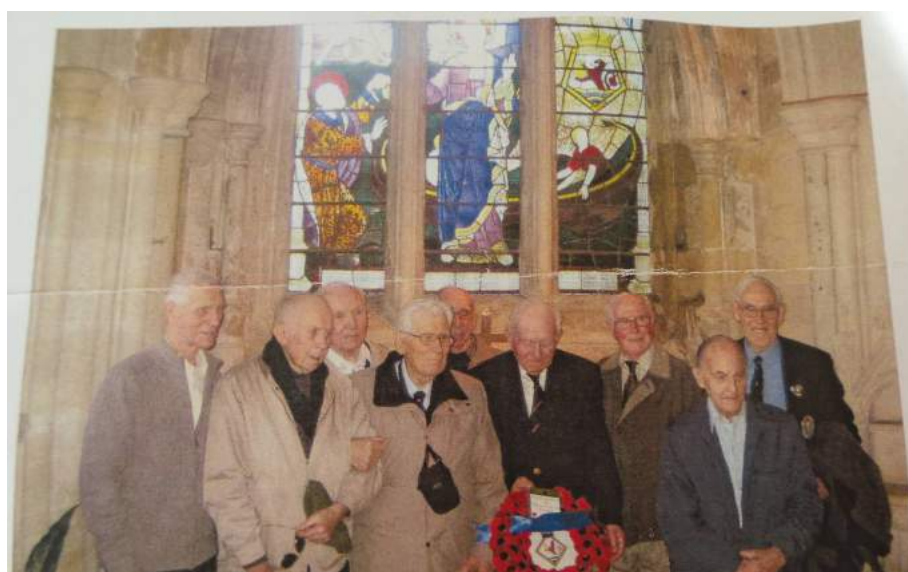
During many of the speeches at the re-unions over the years the going down of The HMS Exeter on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1942 was re-lived. In what would become their final assault the HMS Exeter endured over 37 hours of constant battle being bombed by the Japanese cruisers and planes, wave after wave? The Captain, 44 officers and 607 ratings were rescued by the Japanese. All survivors were taken prisoner and not released until September 1945.

The Admiralty board awarded HMS Exeter with the 6<sup>th</sup> Battle Honour. This was an exceptional case where outstanding efforts were made against overwhelming odds.



W.E. Johns receiving on behalf of the H.M.S. Exeter crew the 6th Battle Honour along with his comrades.

A commemorative stained glass window featuring St. Andrew exists in the Chapel of St. Andrew within Exeter Cathedral. The dedication reads as follows:



Dedicated in memory of the officers and men who gave their lives in the last two actions of HMS Exeter in the Java Sea on 27<sup>th</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> March 1942 and those of her company who died in Captivity. And thanks offering to Almighty God from those who surviving the dangers of the sea and violence of the enemy by His Good Grace returned to their Native Lands. My dad is pictured first left along with some of his fellow survivors.

Services are held every year at Exeter Cathedral and a wreath is laid in memory of all those who have died along with the FEPOW Remembrance Prayer:

*'And we that are left to grow old with the years-*

*Remembering the heartache, the pain and the tears.*

*Hoping and praying that never again*

*Man will sink to such sorrow and shame.*

*The price that was paid we will always remember-*

*Every day, every month, not just November'.*

The Mayor of Exeter gave all the survivors the honour of 'Freedom of the City'.

The Liverpool wartime naval veterans maintained their links with the past. In February 1982 they visited the destroyer H.M.S. Exeter, in Brocklebank dock, Liverpool. They had all served with the ship's predecessor, the famous Second World War cruiser of the same name. Among the group of veterans was Mr. Henry Earp, of Little Sutton who was aboard H.M.S. Exeter during the historic Battle of the River Plate in 1939. The battle ended with the scuttling of the German pocket battleship Graf Spee off Montevideo and proved a humiliating defeat for Hitler in the early stages of the war. Mr Earp was a chief engine room artificer in charge of a watch when the order came through 'Full speed ahead. Enemy battleship in sight'. The other nine 'Old Exeter's from Merseyside who made the sentimental journey to the new warship joined the wartime Exeter after the battle:-



HMS EXETER Liverpool Comrades: First on the left Henry Earp followed by George Gaskill (Ormskirk), George Darley (Runcorn), Johnny Shaw (Cantril Farm), Jack Keenan (Birkenhead), Henry Cavanah (Wallasey), Peter McKnee (Birkenhead), Bill Guy (Maghull), Harry Staunton (Croxteth), and Bob Gibson (West Derby).

They were mostly seaman and stokers and my dad Bill Guy was a coder on board the ship. They were all on board when the Exeter was sunk in the Java Sea by the Japanese in 1942.

More than 60 of their shipmates died in the battle and of those who survived a further 200 died in captivity in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. The H.M.S. Exeter had approximately 800 crewmen on board in total.

As I have said previously the Board of Admiralty awarded H.M.S. Exeter her sixth battle honour to commemorate the action and a re-union marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking took place the following month in March 1982. During the tour the veterans savoured the Navy's past, present and future of the Exeter.



One of the survivors, George Darley, a stoker whose face was badly burned during the battle on board the ship said 'We have very close links with this ship. We went to her launching in 1979 and were all went to sea in her last year. We are always treated like royalty.'

The launch of the fifth H.M.S Exeter took place from Swan Hunters Neptune Yard, Walker, at Newcastle which provided further opportunity for an additional re-union for survivors of the fourth H.M.S. Exeter, a cruiser, lost in the Battle of the Java Sea. About 30 survivors were present at the launch and among the Geordie contingent was John Wilkinson (known as Geordie to the lads and who my Uncle was).

The survivors of HMS Exeter continue to meet every year in Devon where she was commissioned. John Wilkinson pointed out that the launch of the latest ship to carry the name made a very pleasant unscheduled re-union. 'Alas the numbers are dwindling now', he said. Of the ship's complement 762 about only 60 were lost as the ship went down but only 200 survived the Japanese prison camps and of these only about a hundred are left alive to attend the re-union gatherings. John Wilkinson was in the engine room when the first Japanese 8 inch shell struck, killing 14 of the crew and severing the main steam pipe, leaving the ship virtually without power. 'We buried the dead that night' he recalls 'and spent the next twenty four hours making repairs. When we steamed out again we could manage only 14 knots and were low on ammunition. Battle was joined again with the Japanese fleet and after H.M.S. Exeter had used all her ammunition the order was given to open the seacock's and abandon ship. We fired everything at them, main armament, torpedoes even the anti-aircraft ammunition'.

What followed for him and his fellow survivors was a grim 27 hours in the shark infested waters, clinging to whatever they could before being picked up by the Japanese. 'They kept us at sea for a further 10 days, where they starved us feeding us only a handful of rice a day'. Finally, along with other survivors he spent the next three and a half years in a prison camp on the island of Celebes before being freed in September 1945.



This picture of some of the remaining survivors was taken at one of the many re-unions that took place at the White Ensign Club in Exeter, where they were always well looked after.

Given what these men had been through it was no wonder that they had such a strong bond for each other. The re-unions marked some very special times where they shared their memories with each other and remembered those comrades who were no longer sadly with them. The survivors were awarded 'Freedom of the City of Exeter' and a stained glass window in Exeter Cathedral was dedicated to all those men who had lost their lives having served on H.M.S. Exeter. Every year a Service of Remembrance is held at Exeter Cathedral in memory of those who lost their lives on H.M.S. Exeter 1<sup>st</sup> March 1942 and those who died as prisoners of war. Also to gather in the sight of god in the Cathedral Church of Exeter to give thanks for the safe return from battle and captivity of those who served on board H.M.S. Exeter during the Second World War and to remember before him those shipmates and comrades who gave their lives and did not return. May the memory of their sacrifice turn our sense of loss now into determination and our determination into deed that, as they died for peace, we may live for peace.

The White Ensign Flag is always brought to the alter on these commemorative occasions and rested at the stain glass window along with the placing of a memorial wreath in memory of all those who lost their lives.

#### **The Finding of the Wreck – NEWS- HMS EXETER WRECK FOUND!**

The BBC DOCUMENTARY 'Inside Out' by Kevin Denlay (which I have recorded on disc) explained how as a diver he discovered the wreckage of the HMS Exeter fifty miles from where it was sunk in the Java Sea and he managed to retrieve the original White Ensign Flag from the ship and return it to the surviving crew. Mr Kevin Denlay presented it to the survivors at the Cathedral Service on MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup> 2014, to remember those who died as she sank and those that didn't return from the subsequent internment.

My father, along with his comrades- Bill Francis, George Gaskell and Joe Asher were invited to go out to visit the spot where the ship was sunk in the Java Sea and lay wreaths in memory of all who had perished. Sadly my dad was unable to attend due to ill health but George, Bill and Joe with members of their family went along to do the honours. Their story is told in this documentary. It is a most moving tribute to all who had not only survived the years but to their comrades who had died.





**1985- THE 40<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary** – Thursday August 15<sup>th</sup> 1985

Mr Harold Payne, the National President of the Far East Prisoners of War Association helped to bed in a mountain ash planted in memory of those who died in battle against Japan or as a result of captivity in the Japanese prison camps. Nearly 2000 people- ex-Far East prisoners of war, widows, wives, children, friends, families and members of the armed forces packed Plymouth's St. Andrew's Church for an emotional thanksgiving service on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day. Royal Marines sounded the last post followed by two minutes silence in memory of lost comrades. The buglers then sounded Reveille, followed by 2000 voices singing 'Abide with Me'. The FEPOW prayer was read **'And we that are left grow old with the years'....** The epitaph read **'When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today.'**

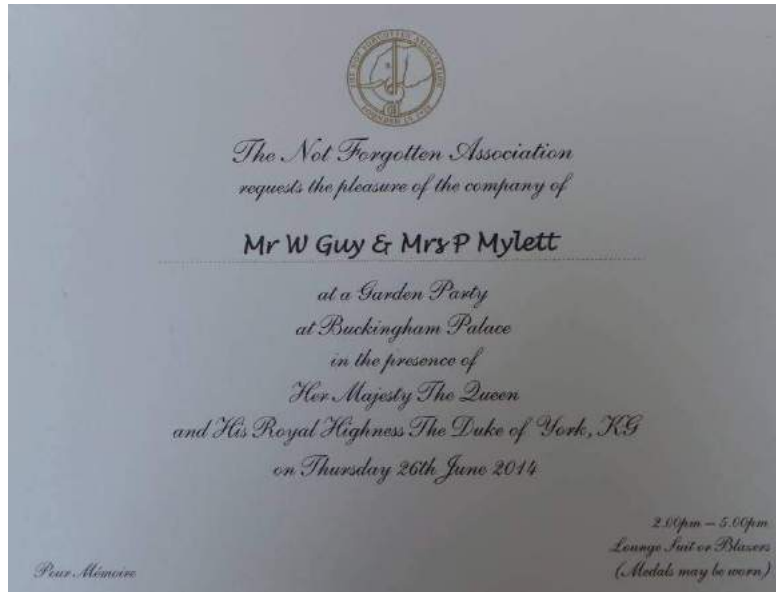
Mr Bill Johns who organised the Plymouth re-unions for years was present along with Admiral Sir Frank Twiss and Tom Quilliam.

**1995- the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the Second World War, took place at Buckingham Palace on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August 1995 at 3.00pm. Tribute and promise; a Service of Remembrance and Commitment.** The Nation gives thanks **to VE DAY AND VJ DAY!** In the gracious presence of the Queen and all members of Royalty. We all attended as a family and enjoyed the celebrations which included a fly past from the red arrows dropping thousands of poppies in memory of those who had given their lives to ensure peace in the world. It was a red hot day, 100 degrees heat but a memorable one never to be forgotten.

**2005- The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gathering at the Lord Mayor's Parlour, Guildhall, Exeter**

**2012- The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner at the Lord Mayor's Parlour, Guildhall, Exeter** and presentation to all survivors of an engraved glass memento, marking the 70<sup>th</sup> year since the sinking of the HMS Exeter Ship in the Java Sea on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1942.

**2014 – An invitation for dad to attend as a war veteran to meet H.R.H. Her Majesty the Queen, Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace for a Garden Party** with his surviving veterans and family members.







Bill Guy, George Gaskell, Bill Francis, Joe Asher. This was a most memorable occasion, celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary marking the end of the Second World War. This was a great achievement to them all having survived to this date. (Aged 91 years)

My dad recalled how proud he was that day to be invited to see the Queen but he made me laugh because when I asked what did she say to him and he said 'well she didn't pass comment to me, so I did not pass comment to her!' but I knew what a proud and most memorable occasion it was for him to share this celebration with his mates but at the same time always remembering those who were not as lucky as them to survive, in order to be recognised by the Queen of England.

Pauline and I cared for dad a great deal. He lived with Pauline for 23 years and visited our home on a regular basis for many a celebration, evening meal, Sunday dinner, BBQ's etc. We were both very proud of him.



Sadly on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 3.07pm my dad died at home peacefully with his family, which poignantly was the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, marking the end of the Second World War, aged 92 years old. .

May they all rest in peace forever?

His funeral took place at Durham Crematorium on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015 with full honours from the Royal British Legion.

His ashes were laid to rest with his beloved wife Kay in Southport Crematorium

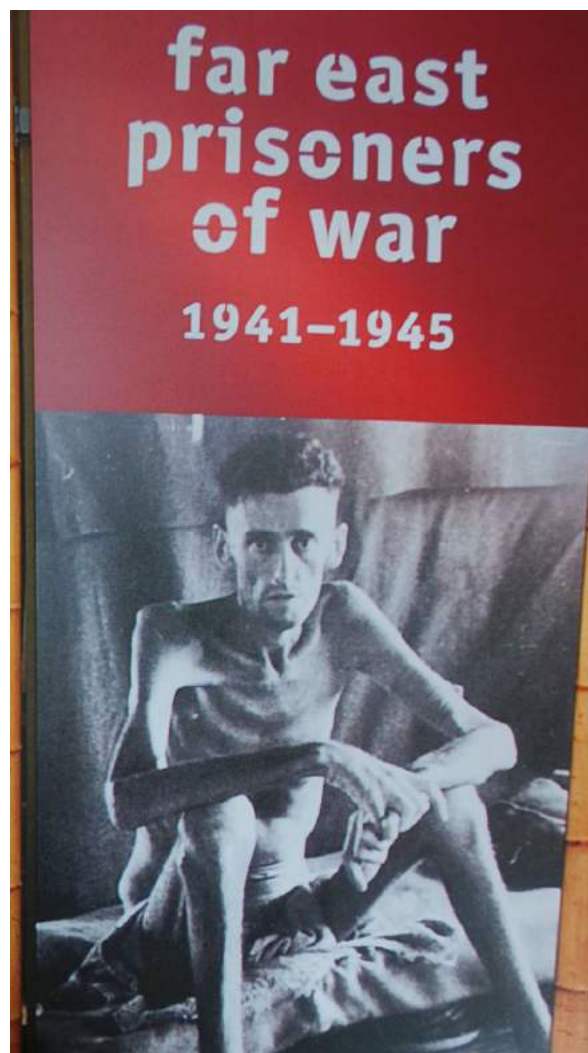
Dad had endured over 25 years of skin cancer operations as a direct result of being held captive in the Japanese camp and was diagnosed towards the end of his life with a tumour in his lung, possibly

lung cancer, and although he was offered surgery to confirm the diagnosis, my dad turned it down saying to the consultant that after 92 years and surviving the Japanese Prisoner of War camps, he felt he was the lucky one and that every day he had survived was a bonus, so he was happy with his lot. Such a gentleman right to the end! No doubt the tumour in his lung was due to the smoking of those awful cement bag cigarettes he smoked in the camps. He also suffered from being exposed for many years as a plasterer working with asbestos but he never once complained! He was a true hero to all of us!

### **The National Memorial Arboretum (Lichfield, Staffordshire DE13 7AR)**

#### **Where our Nation remembers:**

This extraordinary unique place is Britain's living and growing tribute to the service and sacrifice of so many for our freedom. It is a place of Remembrance and contemplation but also of celebration of those who gave and continue to give, so much so that we can enjoy our lives and the beauty that surrounds us. There are stories behind every memorial and monument, each of which tells a tale of heroism, of sadness, of a particular event or campaign or just of selfless devotion to duty.



Shem and I took my dad to this wonderful Memorial Garden in the heart of England and we visited The Far East Prisoner of War Memorial Building where he shared so many memories with us, sitting on one of his comrades wooden seats in memory of Algie Longworth, donated in his loving memory by his beloved family. Dad is pictured on the seat below, deep in thought of his fellow comrades, such as Geordie Wilkinson, Archie Mort, Elwyn Langford, George Darley to name but a few.

All the crew members of HMS Exeter were available on the computer and were projected on a large screen for any visitor to see in the memorial hut at the Arboretum. Well worth a visit!



Far East Prisoner of War Memorial Building

Dad (Bill Guy) pictured with his son-in-law Shem





### Part Seven

#### NAVAL PRAYER

O Eternal Lord God who alone spreadest out the heavens and rulest the raging of the sea; who hast compassed the water with bounds until day and night come to an end: Be pleased to receive into thy almighty and most gracious protection the persons of us thy servants and the Fleet in which we serve. Preserve us from the dangers of the sea and of the air and from the violence of the enemy that we may be a safeguard unto our most gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth, and her dominions, and a security for such a pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the Inhabitants of our island and commonwealth may in peace and quietness serve thee our god; and That we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land, with the fruits of our labours and With a thankful remembrance of thy mercies to praise and glorify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Far Eastern Prisoner of War Prayer (F.E.P.O.W.)**

*And we that are left to grow old with the years  
Remembering the heartache, the pain and the tears,  
Hoping and praying that never again  
Man will sink to such sorrow and shame.  
The price that was paid we will always remember  
Every day, every month, not just November*



**Part Eight**

**TREASURED MEMORIES**

**OF OUR DAD AND GRANDAD**



The youngest of nine, he was born in Liverpool  
Always had a glowing report at the old tin school  
From running around the streets playing kick the can  
To captain of the football team and an Everton fan

At such a young age, he was sent off to war  
On the H.M.S. Exeter the whole world he saw  
He finally came home with George his best mate  
And was re-united with his family after a long 4 year wait

He soon got on with his life and plastering became his thing  
He even worked on the famous Liver building  
It wasn't long before he met the love of his life  
In 1950, Bill and Kay became husband and wife

He has two beautiful daughters, Pauline and Lil  
They were his pride and joy, and of course they are still  
Lil met Shem and although his plastering skills were poor  
He still managed to become Bill's son-in-law

Like a dad he was to Kevin and Jen  
He and Kev would watch the football again and again  
Jen was always his little girl that's one thing for sure  
He brought so much happiness to their lives forevermore

Catherine would always sing songs at his request  
Somewhere over the rainbow was always the favourite and of course, her best  
Joanne the baby of the family, like him can do no wrong  
From bedtime stories to roller skate parties, he was always her plus one

Everything we did, we did as an eight  
We never needed an excuse to celebrate  
We all had a laugh that was no doubt  
So much so his teeth once even fell out

As a family we went to the caravan a lot  
He always gave us money for the arcade slots  
He would spoil us rotten and buy us all a 10p mix  
But never gave away the secrets of his amazing card tricks

As he got older he loved his routine  
Until one day he was requested to meet the Queen  
His life was amazing and no story compares  
He was honoured that day but the privilege was all theirs

A 'Legend', a 'Hero' and a 'Soldier' in all sense of the word  
His legacy will live on in memories told and heard  
A true gentleman with incredible pride  
And his loving family always close by his side

For 92 years he brought smiles everyday  
So from all of us here, we would just like to say  
Thank you for everything and have a well earned rest  
Goodbye for now, goodnight and god bless

January 30<sup>TH</sup> 2015 3.07pm

Pauline, Lilian, Shem, Kevin, Catherine, Jennifer and Joanne  
Xxxxxxx

### **Is there Life after Death? I have often asked myself this question.**

Following the shock and sudden death of our mother Catherine (Kay) Guy, aged 63yrs, on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1990, 1.50pm, four years later I felt the need to seek out a Medium which I had read about at the The Redhills Hotel , Nevilles Cross ,Durham. I needed answers.

#### **Clairvoyant Service - Lesley Topliss from Hornsea**

I chose Lesley who was waiting to share her unique gift with me and to bring me comfort and solace by putting me in touch with those currently in spirit.

I used a Dictaphone to record what she said to me and some of the findings which I have written below I shared with Dad and members of the family.

Lesley held my hand throughout the reading and came across very sincere and comforting. She said-

'I have a John for you. He is coming through strongly. Remember me to Gary. I want you to watch out for him, I am watching over him. I want a boy about 15- I said Stephen! (but we now believe this to be Vincent).He is in with the wrong group. There may be problems, be careful it does not get out of hand. Don't want any men in uniform knocking at the door!

I am caring in my job and workplace. It's the caring nature that they want to bring more of it out in me. I want people to understand what you are saying. You come across well and always give a part of yourself. Within the workplace a lot of upheaval, stick with it, you are standing back a little bit and it's the best thing to do, just observe. She doesn't want me to be in the firing line when the bullets are being fired!

'Little Boy Blue' I have a gentleman here. Take it on board with you for the moment. He wants me to blow my own trumpet. I can do it. I have sat back long enough. Blow your own trumpet and start applying yourself.

Julie here in the work situation, think on and take the name with you. I want to laugh! I have a bubbly bright person here. She lifts you, a good friend and a shoulder to cry on.

Why am I doing a lot of 'keep fit', watch your knees, keep an eye on them! You really do enjoy your job. Yes, somebody has been with you. I bring the children on to my level. They see me enjoying my teaching. I am expanding there's and my mind as well, building lots of friendships.

Studies/ degree, lots of paperwork around me. Revise all your old books that you have put away. A lot of these around my life, reading, taking bits of chapters out of each book, making a final folder, all your notes around the folder will come in handy. (is this about the book I have compiled since my dad's death I wonder?)

Concern around Bill, take things easier, slow down, take things in his stride, he is not going up there yet! Take one day at a time. I have hospital conditions around him, no serious health problems just slow down and he will live to a ripe old age.

I have a man in uniform, taking a deep breath, a broad guy and he wants to pin a medal on me. I have a Michael here. He likes the military band and music. He is marching.

Where are the tears? You or your sister?

She is singing 'Mary, Mary Quite Contrary', it's your mum! She is concerned the family is divided or is dividing and she wants to bring the family link back in together. People are losing touch. Real hurt. Keep a watch on it.

Pauline a family link. There is still quite a lot of soreness around her and a lot of grieving! Things happening 18 months ago, a big upheaval of possessions. She wants you to know that she was there with you in spirit, when we were sharing things out. Lists, lots of lists were made and she wants you to know they have all gone to the right people. (That would be the sale of mum and dad's house- 2 years after mum died).

You can't take the past with you, just the memories. Share the memories.

The wedding ring who has got it? The eldest child is to have it. No love lost between us. Love is shared there is no one special.

I have the strength, I am the link, I will find comfort in the spiritual world. She says I am very interested to find out more about it, I am an up minded person.

She wants to kick me up the backside, taking too long over a decision lately. 'T' set, where is the best 'T' set? I want a family celebration. Give it a dusting. She is fine, she is laughing. She has been with you all the way.

I flit between the two houses; a lot of dust is collecting under the bed. I am pushing a lot of thoughts under the carpet, I don't want to confront them at the moment but you must!

She is laughing and joking. She could not go on much longer. She knew she couldn't. She has left us in body but not in spirit. She has been in the house around you when you have been admiring photographs. She has been there when you have been moving them around. She admires me for what I have done. I think you must have done something major. The family would have fallen to pieces but she has admired me for keeping it going. She sends her love to your dad. Got to give him lots and lots of daffodils. Yellow flowers. She wants to give him them for strength. She has been with him when he has not been very well and she knows he misses her a lot, but to look forward and she will be there waiting for him at the 'Pearly Gates', but he has got a lot of living to do yet, just when the time is right, slow down but he has a bit more work to do yet. He has given up a bit. She keeps singing 'When I am 64' and the hymn 'The Old Rugged Cross'. She is trying hard to lift this and to remove the burden off us all. She wants to strengthen him. (Mum died when she was 63 yrs old.) Go out and enjoy yourself.

Sister Pauline, keep getting confused messages through, need to clarify them for me. She has made the right decision. Watch where a new relationship comes in. I want contentment and happiness, laughter and she will get that. Things will get better for her. Keep your chin up, be strong and keep strong for the family. She has been there and she is trying to help, if only she will let me through.

'I could throttle him!' she says and she is not a violent person, but this is what she is saying. Look forward, happiness is around the corner. Watch yourself and watch your dad. 'Tell the old beggar' to



slow down she says. She wants him to play green bowls as a hobby, a relaxing one. Watch his blood pressure. It will relax him and give him something to do.

Why has she put a poker in my hand? She has given me a poker- go back to when you were all little. Remember the good times and forget the rows. Ask him because we do not know the story and it will bring back a memory for him alone and it will bring them closer together.

We are the link. She wanted to come through to reassure the family that she is safe and well.

She has had a cough when she went over, but she also could not catch her breath. It is more proof to you that she has come through on the other side. Elizabeth- she is with Elizabeth.(Dad's mum our grandma) It is like the gathering of the Klan. They are all gathering around her. Watch out for a birth it is within the family. There are going to be big celebrations and they are all going to be there. The celebrations are what I am planning for. Give her a glass of sherry. She says she is safe and well on the other side. She will be there at the pearly gates. Why have I got a loose tooth? (Catherine had 2 loose teeth at dentist 2 days ago)

She wants to say happy birthday! Joanne I said but she has not seen her. I was 3 months pregnant when mum died. Oh but she has seen her. She is there. There is a little boy too. He has had problems with his spelling/writing. She has been helping him along the way. (Kevin went to Saturday school to help him improve his literacy skills and he did!).

Will you stop worrying she said? I am alright and she sends lots and lots of love. Love is shared throughout all the family and she flits from house to house. You know she even does some dusting for you, while you are out.

She has come through. She has filled out now and she has got her bottle back.

She is still swatting flies up here. She has never liked flies- laugh- well she is still swatting them!

Take with you a lot of love. She has come through on a lovely link for you. Give her love to Pauline and dad. Happiness is just around the corner for her. She should have done it years ago. Go forward and go on. She has to take down the barriers and let her in.

How is John I asked? (This was my mum's nephew who died, whom she nursed for 18 months before mum died).

Well she has done all the talking and won't let anyone else get a look in! They have thrown out two false legs, I don't know why? They do these things. They play daft tricks up there. John he is getting too bloody heavy to lift, she used to lift him and care for him, and well she is still doing a lot of caring up there. Don't worry they are all being looked after by her.

Any messages for Margaret I asked? (Who was still living at the time and was my mum's niece).

I have got a pond here with water. Well she has been there when Margaret has been there. She has been and stood next to her. I have got water trickling- mum has been there. Margaret often goes here when she is contemplating and asks for help when she is there. Mum is with her. (Lourdes!)

3 musketeers! Talk it round the family. Have there been 3 sisters who have passed on? Yes I said. (Dad's sisters Margaret, Anne and Sadie). Well she says they used to fight down there and they are all still fighting up here.

Margaret is at the 'Water Bath' (Lourdes) It gives her strength, mum is with her there.

I have got somebody who drives too fast.

Give your husband a hammer he needs to do some odd jobs around the house.

Call in if you are in the area of Hornsea.

Mum comes with lots of love and we will leave it there.

June 1995

I asked my dad about the red hot poker and after about three weeks he remembered the story. When we were both little, whilst in our first home dad was trying to bore a hole in the living room door to fix a new handle to it by using the red hot poker, but a knock came to the door and whilst he was answering the door one of us picked up the poker and copied what he was doing, much to my mum's horror!

Over 20 years later I found this reading from the medium most moving, as well as emotional, but it did give me and the rest of the family great satisfaction and comfort to know that my mum was watching over us all, and was safe and well.

### **Our present family events**

Pauline- is in a very happy relationship with Trevor for the past 3 years. Still working and supporting the family but enjoying breaks away with Trevor

Lilian – now retired from teaching P.E. after 36years and now able to write this book as a tribute to mum and dad

Shem- happily married to Lilian for 34 years (well I think so?) also retired and enjoying our new home together and outdoor pursuits!

Kevin- aged 31 years, set up his own computer business and helping working with Catherine's partner David in Surrey as a Graphic Designer!

Catherine -aged 27yrs, a qualified P.E. Teacher, now a Regional Development Manager for the Youth Sport Trust in London. Now sharing her first new home in Surrey with her partner David and their new Labrador dog Memphis!

Jennifer-aged 25 years, is presently in Dubai working as a Fashion Buyer and with her partner Andy of 10 years. (Child hood sweethearts)

Joanne-aged 24 years, is also a qualified P.E. teacher working in Epsom/Ewell Surrey and is in a happy relationship with Ed also a P.E. teacher. She will start a new teaching post at George Abbott School, Guildford in September 2016.



I dedicate this book in Loving Memory of both my Mother and Father on behalf of all our family:

Pauline, Shem, Kevin, Catherine, Jennifer, Joanne.

Lilian

March 1<sup>st</sup> 2016

**Part Nine**

**He Is Gone**

You can shed tears that he is gone  
Or you can smile because he has lived

You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back  
Or you can open your eyes and see all that he has left

Your heart can be empty because you can't see him  
Or you can be full of the love that you shared

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday  
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday

You can remember him and only that he is gone  
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back  
Or you can do what he would want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on



**Part Ten**

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