

Reminiscence and Memories of the lives of Late RCH Jones and Mrs EJ Bascombe

Ron

Sgt Ronald Claude Hamilton Jones 646212 – Flight Engineer of 61 Squadron
sadly Killed in Action on 25th Apr 1944

Married January 1944 - Miss Elizabeth Joyce Jones (maiden name - Evans) – widowed
April 1944 Remarried again in 1948 to Herbert Claudius John Bascombe but sadly
widowed in 1984.

Ron was born in Canton, Cardiff, in South Wales, on 12th December 1920 to parents, Tom
& Emma Jones. He had one sister who died at a young age and two half brothers and two
half sisters, all older than him.

Ron joined the RAF on 1st June 1939 and whilst at 3 WING COSFORD in 1940 with 502
Squadron, he was ferrying aeroplanes to England from Canada. He was on a flight to
Canada when it came down in the Atlantic Ocean, many of the airmen lost their lives. The
few who survived with Ron, were rescued in a dinghy and taken to Hollywood Military
Hospital.

Once recovered from his injuries, Ron was transferred from COSFORD to 51 AIRBASE then
61 SQUADRON, SKELLINGTHORPE which was the last airbase that they flew their last
mission from, on 24th April 1944, to attack Munich.

How we met, my marriage to Ron and my loss

I met Ron in 1940, at his parent's home, when visiting with my friend, Winnie who was
courting Sydney, (Ron's half-brother). Winnie married Sydney so Ron and I, were often in
the same company. On one occasion, whilst Ron was on leave, he invited me to
accompany him to a party and this blossomed into a lovely romance. We spent every
moment we could together and had a wonderful time – being together and planning our
future was everything. We tried to forget the war when Ron was at home. We wrote
regularly to each other when Ron was at 'camp' – he was very caring and had a great
sense of humour and we both looked forward to his next leave.

We had planned to wed, once the war had ended but like many young people in those days, we decided to take a chance and marry, hoping that Ron would be one of the lucky heroes and return safely home to me and his parents.

We married on 26th January 1944 and lived with Ron's parents, in Roath, Cardiff. During the war, the Government gave couples, extra food coupons towards their 'Wedding Breakfast' and together with coupons issued to parents and friends, we managed to enjoy a lovely meal with all our guests, on our Special Day. We felt our happiness would last forever, but life or fate can be very cruel sometimes and sadly, it was for us.

We married on the second of a 4day leave, afterwards we were together for only one weekend and 10days leave. Ron was hoping to return home for my birthday on 30th April, but instead, I received a telegram on 25th April 1944 advising me that 'RON WAS MISSING'. Only those few precious days, with so many plans and dreams unfulfilled but the few we had, are my treasured memories that will continue throughout my life.

It was January 1945 before I received the official letter from the Air Ministry, declaring that 'RON WAS PRESUMED DEAD'. I kept in touch with the Red Cross Organisation in Cardiff who had made enquiries on my behalf, for many months but it was the Geneva Red Cross that first gave me the news, that Ron's Lancaster had crashed in France. I notified the Air Ministry of my latest news and they confirmed my tragic loss. We all prayed that Ron had survived and was in a 'Safe House' in France, waiting his opportunity to return home. I couldn't believe that Ron was never coming home to all of us. Oh how I hated Hitler!

In 1940, we experienced very heavy air-raids most nights and many streets of houses were reduced to a pile of rubble. A German Landmine had been dropped, injuring many people and burying some in their garden shelters. The Wardens and Police were endeavouring to rescue survivors, whilst the Firefighters were tackling the fires. Nearby Llandaff Cathedral was badly damaged in the attacks, as were many parts of Cardiff, with many fatalities but Swansea, Liverpool, London and many other cities suffered much more.

Betty

I was born on 30th April 1922, in Canton, Cardiff in South Wales – Elizabeth Joyce Evans, a daughter to my parents Job Henry and Emily Evans (nee Richards). I was the eldest child of four children - a sister and two brothers, both brothers sadly died very young. We were a very united, loving and caring family, living in No. 13 Turberville Place (unlucky for some) but miraculously we were never bombed. The fear of Hitler troops from U-boats, landing on remote beaches around our Island and torpedoing our ships, carrying our food supplies, of which there was always a shortage during the war and afterwards.

For a while, I worked in a bakery, after which I worked in the Royal Ordnance Factory, where I trained in Engineering, on 'Breach Blocks' to be fitted on the six-pounder guns that were used by our forces.

I shall never forget the INVASION of 5th JUNE 1944 – there were lots of terrible things to remember but the night before the invasion, aeroplanes flew over Cardiff from early evening till 7am the following morning, when we were beginning our journeys to work. The planes were like big dark shapes against the night sky, our windows shook with the vibrations and the drone of the engines were deafening. I sat on my bedroom window sill, all night long, watching and listening, thoughts of Ron running through the mind, wondering where he was.

The next day, the newspapers reported that 11,000 planes and 4,000 ships took part in the invasion, besides small boats which transported the Army across the Channel, to the Northern shores of France.

Devastating reports that many of our soldiers had been trapped on the beaches and thousands killed. We felt helpless and hoped that help would come from the land, to prevent the Germans using their machine guns, sited on the Cliffs and firing onto our troops. It was terrible!

We had fresh hope when news filtered through that Paris had been liberated and the Germans were retreating, but the war was far from over.

I received a letter from a Commanding Officer, Eddie Davidson, in late 1944, who wrote to relatives of the Lancaster crew, who sadly had been killed in action. An airman named Cyril Rattner was part of the crew and managed to parachute out at the time of the crash. He was captured but with his injuries, was taken to hospital. He was due to be transferred to Germany as POW when news filtered through that the Allies were advancing and the Germans left. The Resistance manned the hospital until the Allied troops arrived when he returned home, he was able to report that the plane had crashed in France but had no news regarding the rest of the crew.

When Peace was declared on 8th May 1945, everybody dancing and singing in jubilation. I started to walk from my parents to my parent-in-law's home because the bus service had been stopped for the evening – I felt so alone amongst the excited crowds. I was happy for them but I was also relieved when I reached home. With his parents, we sat and talked of what might have been, although we were all relieved that war had ended. It was good to see friends and neighbours returning home safely but it was difficult not to be upset, with our loss. Later, I moved back to my parents' home so that Winnie & Sydney could live with Ron's parents.

Days later, still feeling very low, I saw an advertisement asking for volunteers and joined the Army Territorial Service in October 1945. I trained in England with the Royal Army Pay Corps and was later posted to Germany. I hoped to be posted to France but there were no English Army Bases for ATS Personnel.

Unfortunately, my official letter and telegram informing me of Ron's absence and all my letters were lost whilst I was in the ATS. I was demobbed in December 1947 and returned home to my parents.

In August 1948, I remarried, and my new husband was Herbert Claudius John Bascombe (known as Bert).

He was a soldier in the Cheshire Borders and landed on Gold Beach in Normandy, France and with only a few of their regiment surviving, they continued through Belgium with the '15 Argyles'. We had four children, three daughters and one son, who sadly died in a car accident in 1970, just before his 19th Birthday. I still visited Ron's parents whenever we travelled to Cardiff, to see family and they made my second family very welcome. I went to live in Cheshire after I remarried and after 36 years of marriage, Bert sadly died in May 1984, after a long illness. My three daughters have been very supportive throughout my life.....