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## Memories of War

Sunday 3rd Sept. 1939 war was declared on Germany. It was a hot summer's day, & the news was to change everyone's life.

All lights went out, no street lighting, car head lights were screened, curtains were lined with blackout material, windows were taped with masking tape. Street & town names signs were painted out, & railway station names went. Air Raid Wardens (A.R.W.) patrolled the streets after dark & if any light was visible through windows you could be fined.

Gas masks were issued to all, men, women, children & babies. They fitted into a cardboard box about 6" square, a tape was attached & worn like a shoulder bag, taken on all outings - long or short.

Air raid shelters were built in gardens, known as 'Anderson Shelters', made of corrugated iron & reinforced with concrete, in front of the door-way was a baffle wall for protection, inside a bunk bed at either side for sleeping or sitting on. Large community shelters were built on streets in built-up areas for pedestrians or local inhabitants.

Ration books were issued for meat, sugar, fats, bread, jam, cheese, sweets, bacon, tinned meat, dried fruit etc., offal was off the ration, so 150 was foul & game, but extremely scarce & kept under the counter for special customers, fish also was free of rationing, but scarce as trawlers were requisitioned by the Government for mine sweeping. Imported fruit & veg also disappeared. Coal & petrol was also rationed, large water tanks stood at ends of roads & in centre reservations together with storage

Written by Grace BLADLEY nee JACKSON b. 1904 20  
in Hve. Written about 1996.

pumps & bags of sand.

Everyone was issued with an Identity Card giving name, address, date of birth, religion & next of kin.

Dockets were issued for furniture, clothing & knitting wool could only be purchased by producing clothing coupons.

Children were evacuated away from Dock & industrial areas & billeted on families in the country, some even went to Australia & New Zealand.

Adults 17/45 years of age, male & female were conscripted into the Armed Forces, Army, Air Force, Navy & Womens Land Army. Those not medically fit were enrolled into War Effort work & Munitions, aircraft & ship building & repair etc. Some people were exempt such as farmers, DPs, Doctors, Miners, known as Boy in Boys & many others in key industries & Dock Docks.

Large balloons, known as "flying pigs" could be seen floating in the sky - these were to keep enemy aircraft flying below a certain height. There was a Bill on Trinity Rd. & others were dotted around the city.

They were manned by both men & women, could remember whether Army or Air Force.

Gun Sites were scattered around, a large one in this area being Bestello Playagh Fields.

When enemy aircraft were spotted flying across the Channel & making their way to the bomb some city or dock, air raid warnings were given - a loud wailing noise, whether it be night or

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written in 1996.

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day everyone rushed to the nearest shelter, when danger was over "wailing willy" sounded the "all clear" & it was either back to bed or work.

I vividly remember the blitz on Hull, at that time I was still a <sup>young</sup> employed in a Timber Improvements Office opposite Alexandra Dock. Most of that night was spent in our shelter with my parents & neighbours. Over the years we had Buzzer night's well organized - flasks of tea, sandwiches, biscuits etc, a pack of cards, cushions & blankets, oil stove & lamp. Plans were buzzing overhead, guns and anti aircraft blasting away, the ground vibrating as bombs contacted buildings & ground. It was frightening, when the final all clear blew none of us knew what was in store - fortunately our houses were still standing, Boothferry Road, Hull.

After a change of clothes, a cuppe & toast I made my way to the office. No public transport was running and the only alternative was to walk, the night along anarchy Road was devastating, fires, bombed buildings broken glass, rubble every where, fire engines, ambulances, nurses, wardens & police helping injured & directing pedestrians - all the lovely shops on the town centre were burning piles of rubble many hours later I arrived at the office which was badly damaged. Staff salvaged <sup>as much as possible</sup> in the way of books etc: & managers took them home. Within a few days we evacuated to a house in Bonista for a short while, until better ~~accommodation~~ accommodation was found.

written by Grace BEADLEY nee JACKSON Cir 1904-20  
written in 1996.

In 1942 I volunteered for the WAAF & in April of that year was posted to Gloucester for 6 weeks to be fitted out, do square basting (marching, P.E etc) on our feet did suffer with hard heavy shoes. We were billeted in wooden huts, ten or so beds each side, a shelf placed over the beds on which to put our mugs, hats (knives, forks & spoons) mirror, tooth brush & small items. A metal wardrobe, like a filing cabinet, was placed beside each bed for hanging our uniform, & at the foot of each bed was a heavy wooden box, (ex bomb boxes) these were for our personal possessions, underwear etc. The mattress was in 3 sections, known as bescuits, we had 3 rough dark blankets each plus 2 sheets, each morning the bescuits had to be piled on each other, the blankets & sheets folded & stacked on top, each bed space had to be polished, the floor shone like glass. Heating was a coke fired affair with a long pipe going out of the top, this had to be blackened. After breakfast in the canteen we had to stand by our beds at attention & a Cpl & officer would make an inspection, poking around at our bed making, checking on clean shoes & buttons, making sure our hair was clean of our collar. After 6 weeks of initial training we were posted to various stations & training courses. Penarth in Wales was my destination for a couple of months, a clerical course. What heaven, I along with others were housed in a large holiday guest house, glorious area, wonderful food. The course was far from easy, at the end of which Duffield was my next station, Bomber Command. It was a dream come true.

Written by Grace BRADLEY Re JACKSON Jan 1942

Driffild was a Bomber Station in the Group. - 2 Squadrons of Halifax & Lancasters - 466 & 462, many of the crew on ground crew were Australian. Aircraft were housed in Barrack Blocks on the Station & WAAF in Messin Huts in Driffild. The WAAF side was about 2 1/2 miles from the Station & we were issued with bicycles for travel. A cycle club was formed so we were able to enjoy visiting country villages, sometimes going to St Brid, ending up at a village pub to quench our thirst.

Entertainment was very good - plenty of dances on camp & the Town Hall, we also had exhibitions on occasions from the large country houses such as Sledmere Hall, when a Buffet & Santa was laid on. Our mode of travel used to be RAF lorries, tough but it can fun. Wakey-Wakey was 7am - a dash to the Bath Huts in dressing gowns - great coats in the winter, generally the water was cold - back to the hut - dress & stack beds in regulation fashion, rush to the Dining Hall for breakfast, tea, toast cereal, assembled eggs (dried egg of course). Then collect cycle & race to camp - to be late was a crime.

Mid morning we had a break & strolled to the NAAFI for a cuppa & maybe a sock run, a chat with friends then back to work until dinner. Food on the whole, being war time shortages, was good.

Farmers in the area were very generous giving fruit from orchards, also cut plus salad, tomatoes & lettuce. Being near Hafferton strawberries were sometimes on the menu.

At night we laid in bed hearing aircraft going on bombing raids, we uttered a silent prayer for a safe return. The next day sadly we heard of casualties - something we did not

Written by Grace BRADLEY nee JACKSON b. 1904  
Written in 1996.

get hardened to.

Monday was Domestic Night - all were confined to camp to clean living quarters, often there would be a lecture later in the evening, & suggestions made for improvement in camp life. The night would be rounded off in the HALL chatting to friends over tea & coffee, maybe a sandwich, & a sing song round the piano.

Leaves days leave was granted every 3 months & a free travel warrant was given.

Pay Parade took place every fortnight, had to queue of course & wait for your name to be called, a service number given - then you would march smartly to the desk & salute the officer. When your pay would be handed over,

at time came when it was obvious the war was coming to a close. We were kept in touch with the latest news from the Air Ministry, which was relayed over the Harvey footings were coming through thick & fast, daily we had to say our good byes to friends. I was lucky, my move being to Thornfield only a few miles away & in the same group. When peace was declared it was wonderful - dancing & singing, everyone in a joyful mood. Stand Down was announced for all Stations in the country & we were free for the next 24 hours.

After VJ Day things started to move slowly for Release into army Street

It was a long time before Release came through, some decided to sign on for 6 or 12 months more, but most of us wanted out

Written by Grace SHAPLEY nee JACKSON 6/1904.20  
W. H. H. W. 1946

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I try for a job. We were drafted to a Robair  
centre ~~for~~ for medicals etc, then "oh boy" Release.  
Before travelling home I stayed with a friend  
in Birmingham, it was great.

Happy times are remembered, sad & ~~that~~ had fade  
gradually away, but I shall never forget a  
very hard winter when at Driffelt, the runways  
were snowed & ice up, all had to clear the  
snow away & chip at the ice, it was awful.  
Never liked snow & ice since.

The comradeship during the war years ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup>  
unforgettable & discipline made us all better  
people.

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