

D-DAY

800

A white silhouette of a soldier in profile, wearing a helmet and carrying a rifle, positioned between the '8' and '0' of the large '800' text.

ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF THE OAKS

Tribute to the heroes of the Normandy landings of June 6th, 1944
and Bucklebury Common's role in the liberation of Europe

Beaches of Normandy, June 6, 1944

UTAH: The most western beach, three miles long, was assigned to the US 1st Army, 7th Corps. Casualties were the lightest of all landings – out of 23,000 troops, 197 men were killed or wounded.

OMAHA: Six miles long, it was assigned to the US 1st Army, 5th Corps. Saving Private Ryan portrays some events here. The Americans suffered 2,400 casualties, but 34,000 Allied troops landed by nightfall.

GOLD: Five miles long, it included Arromanches, where the Mulberry Harbour was established. The British 2nd Army, 30th Corps suffered 400 casualties out of 25,000 troops who, by nightfall, had pushed the Germans back six miles.

JUNO: Six miles long, the beach spanned both sides of the port of Courseulles-sur-Mer from La Rivière to Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer. Out of the 21,400 men from the Canadian 3rd Infantry Division and British 2nd Army, 1st Corps who landed, 1,200 were injured.

SWORD: It stretched five miles from Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer to Ouistreham at the mouth of the River Orne. Nine miles north of Caen, it was a major route hub of Northern France. With help from French and British commandos, Britain landed 29,000 men from its 2nd Army, 1st Corps and suffered just 630 casualties.

Foreword

By **BARRY DICKENS**, Chairman, Bucklebury Parish Council

MORE than 80 years ago, Britain was fighting a war that tore the world apart. Millions died: on battlefields; at home or, more shamefully, in death camps across Germany and Eastern Europe simply because their race, colour, religion, sexuality or mental and physical attributes did not conform to the Nazis' perverted standards. In an age when we celebrate diversity, it is almost impossible for us to understand such evil.

Our enemies strived to starve us into submission by cutting off the sea routes from North America. Clothing, food and petrol were rationed and, like the rest of the country, in our corner of Berkshire people did their bit to help see us through our darkest months and years. And in the midst of it all, as you will read in these pages, ordinary people did extraordinary things.

Then, just as the future looked its bleakest, the tide of fortunes turned.

In 1943, with RAF Greenham Common (USAAF Station AAF-486 to give it its wartime designation) and satellite airfields at the vanguard of a plan to invade Normandy and gain a foothold in occupied France, Bucklebury was asked to play a leading role.

The Common was cleared, from The Three Crowns pub (now the Cottage Inn) to The Bladebone Inn, to build a vast Army camp that would prepare and repair vehicles to take part in the biggest sea invasion in history, Operation Overlord. American, Canadian and British troops poured into the area – quite a culture shock for a largely agricultural community. Chewing gum, donuts and film nights anyone?

The rest, as they say, is well-documented history and for the past 80 years we have honoured the people who took part on D-Day and especially those who gave their lives to free Europe.



Which brings us to 2024 and the event staged at Chapel Row on June 6th, when many local people stepped up to make sure we paid our respects to our forebears who gave so much. Bucklebury Parish Council is grateful to everyone who made the event a success.

The parish council's involvement goes back to September 2023 when we committed to taking part in the nationwide lighting of beacons to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

A forge was commissioned to build the beacon and we set to work organising the big night. The US Embassy, Canadian High Commission and Bucklebury's own history buffs all helped identify where troops who made the preparations, and many who took part in the invasion itself, were stationed and billeted.

With beacon construction under construction, the parish councillors decided to make lighting it an occasion to remember.

Initially we intended the event to take place on the Hockett Field so our beacon would be visible from far across the Kennet Valley. However the impracticalities of that venue soon became apparent so we decided on Chapel Row Green.

We also decided that reading the International Tribute and lighting the beacon should involve a cross-section of our community, from primary schoolchildren, through the generations to our guest of honour on June 6th, 103-year-old World War Two Mosquito pilot Jim Dearlove.

Earlier this year, a journalist recently retired from 'Fleet Street' came to the parish council with a proposal for a magazine to mark the occasion and provide a keepsake of the time. We said 'yes' and here we are.

We are lucky to have eyewitness accounts of life in Bucklebury during the war among many interesting articles about those times, as well as some great contemporary photographs and pictures from our 80th anniversary evening. I confess we were doubtful about how many people who would come along, but you turned up in your hundreds and helped raise more than £700 for Forces' charity SSAFA.

So many who have contributed to this magazine are owed our thanks but I would particularly like to thank Shane McGarvey, who has brought his Fleet Street nous and expertise to the role of editor.

'Sky was black with planes'

Graham Plank was only four-and-a-half in 1944 but remembers soldiers doing manoeuvres all round Severals Farm at Stanford Dingley.

'There used to be three big oak trees on the side of the road. I didn't realise it at the time but in later years I said to Dad, 'Why has that tree only got half a trunk?'. "Oh," he said, "when those boys were on manoeuvres they hit it with a tank and knocked the side off."

'On D-Day Mother came up



early and pulled the curtains back and then the blinds up and she said "Look, you'll never see this again". I looked out of the window (the house was on top of the hill and overlooked the Common out to Greenham Common) and the sky was black with planes and gliders, left to right. It was an unbelievable sight. And they were all disappearing going over to France. No end of planes came out of Greenham Common and Aldermaston and Harwell.'

Dunkirk to Dad's Army...

By **WILLIE HARTLEY RUSSELL MVO**
Deputy Lieutenant of Berkshire

EIGHTY years on it is difficult to imagine the American and Canadian troops, temporarily billeted on Bucklebury Common, heading to the south coast to cross to Normandy.

The Allies used more than 5,000 ships and landing craft to land more than 150,000 troops on five beaches.

The success of Operation Overlord created a bridgehead from which the Allies were able to go on and win the Second World War in less than a year.

My late father, Derek Hartley Russell (pictured below), who commanded a company



of the 4th Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment, had been evacuated four years earlier from Dunkirk on May 30th, 1940, having marched his troops from Louvain, east of Brussels, via Ypres to La Panne. Many of his men and fellow



officers had been killed in the withdrawal to the English Channel and the battalion was depleted to fewer than 40 soldiers as they made their way to the coast.

On D-Day my father was fighting the Japanese in Burma. However, my grandfather, Henry Hartley Russell, who was 60 at the outbreak of the war, was the officer commanding the Bucklebury Home Guard and would have met the assembled troops on Bucklebury Common.

It was a great honour to be present at the D-Day 80 celebrations on Chapel Row Green on June 6th. It was good to see the local community come together to mark this auspicious occasion, which was marked by the lighting of a beacon.

It is important to remember not only the men and women who headed to the Normandy beaches that day but also to recognise the importance of Operation Overlord, which was the largest amphibious invasion in the history of warfare. Remembrance Sunday has always been an important day in the Parish calendar.

June 6, 1944



Going underground with the USA



American officers weren't about to camp out in tents with their men. Which is how, it is believed, Kings Copse on the edge of the Common, came to be commandeered during the war. They even had their own underground bunker built, with phone lines back to the house so they could stay in touch during an air raid. On the right is a reconstruction of how the interior would have looked more than 80 years ago. The house, now owned by Caroline and John Wyatt, has a sad past. During the war it was owned by Major Norman Mackinnon. His daughter Janet married Pilot Officer Christopher Mackworth on March 21, 1940. Two months later, on May 15, he was killed in action.



Bringing home the beacon

Interview with Iain Brown, the man who built the torch to light up Bucklebury's tribute to our D-Day heroes 80 years on

IF YOU want a beacon for your 80th anniversary commemoration of D-Day, going to someone who had never built one would probably not be your first idea.

However, Bucklebury parish councillor Jason Allum had worked with Iain Brown before and last summer set in motion the events that would lead to our tribute on June 6th, 2024.

'When Jason asked me if I could make a fire basket-type beacon, I was interested but very busy and anyway it seemed a long way off, so I put it out of my mind,' says Iain, of Westcot Ltd.

'Jason gained the support of the parish council and an order duly arrived for a basket mounted on a pole inside a ground socket.

'However, I had downsized my workshops and had sold some equipment that was suddenly needed to roll the hoops. Happily a kind gent from Brize Norton lent me an old set of rollers his father had made many years ago. They only needed a handle to wind them... a big one as it happened.

'So big in fact that when winding fast one afternoon I

clonked the handle on my head and I nearly knocked myself unconscious!

'Having rolled the hoops and welded them into rings, I started to assemble 12 upright spars into the rings, which was the biggest challenge — lining up 48 rivet holes on four rings and getting the basket in the riveting press. I can only describe it as being like trying to nail jelly on a wall.

'The base plate, with apertures for air flow, lighting and cleaning out was laser cut out by a mate of mine in 6mm steel plate. Onto this baseplate was welded the socket to take the upright pole. The pole is 6.2metres, sticks in the ground by 1.8metres and weighs 120 kilos. It went off to Corby to get hot dip galvanised with the ground socket while I made the inner firing basket.

'Once back, the socket and pole were delivered to Bucklebury whilst Jason set about digging a hole on the green at Chapel Row. He came back the next day with his brother Marcus and me to fit the

ground socket and, to his dismay, found the hole was

only 1.4m deep for a 1.8m socket.

'Overnight the water table rose and pulled soil down from the sides but Marcus was not going to let a shallow hole defeat a long socket! Using brute strength and cunning, Marcus made the socket fit perfectly. I reckon Jason owes him a beer or two!

'Two days before the beacon lighting, we met Matt Price, the loader driver, on the green and placed the pole in the socket and then the fire basket onto the pole, and blow me down... it all fitted a treat!

The inner basket was then loaded with paper, card and rags and then with wood and logs gathered from Bucklebury Common.

'A very careful lifting operation finally put the fire basket in place. The final item to be made ready was a 4m lighting pole, so no one would have to light the beacon off a ladder,' added Iain (pictured left).

'It was an honour to see it burn in tribute to the people who fought for the freedoms we take for granted today. The beacon was a challenge to make and my company will be making many more of "The Bucklebury Beacon" in the years ahead, now I have done the hard learning on the prototype.

'As we say in the trade: 'Anyone can make the second one!'



Tall order: Fabricator Iain Brown climbs up to show just how big the basket is



Going up: Matthew Price drops the post into the ground



Tea break: The team have just tiime for a brew before...



Basket-weaving: Matthew Price prepares to drop the loaded basket into the beacon holder

How 'Little Tommy' figure raised more than £700 for SSAFA

The 'Little Tommy' which made a guest appearance at Chapel Row on June 6 was given in memory of a man who played a key role on D-Day without ever leaving England.

It was donated by Jack Swanborough, the Hurstbourne Forge owner, whose family live in Chapel Row. It raised more than £700 for Soldiers', Sailors' & Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA) but it would not have happened were it not for Stan Richardson (pictured right).

Stan's niece, Jack's mum Paula, explains: 'My uncle was the Lead Aircraft Engineer at HMS Daedalus during D-Day, sleeping with his team in the hangars and working round the clock for weeks. They were responsible for servicing the planes of the 175 pilots flying missions out of Solent Airport, (HMS Daedalus during the war). They repaired, fixed and improvised as the planes came back in to turn them round and get them back out again.'

Sadly Stan died this year, aged 103 and Paula says that it felt like a fitting tribute to her uncle's memory to donate 'Little Tommy' to raise funds for the SSAFA, as it was a charity dear to Stan's heart.

Berkshire branch chairman Barry Dickens said: 'It was a generous thing to do and the money raised is a huge help to our work.

'The SSAFA is the Armed Forces charity, formed in 1885. Our trained volunteers offer practical, emotional and financial support to serving personnel, veterans and their families.

'This can typically involve cases of financial hardship, issues with mental wellbeing and family breakdown. Here in SSAFA Berkshire we have 13 caseworkers together with fundraisers and helpers. A recent example serves to illustrate what we do. An Army veteran in Berkshire, a



father of two children, contacted SSAFA in a very distressed state. He had split up from his partner, left the family home and had sofa-surfed for a couple of months. These arrangements had come to an end and he was living in his car. He was distraught as he had not known where to turn.

'SSAFA immediately arranged a week's hotel accommodation for him. This relative stability in his life bolstered his self-esteem and led to him being offered employment as a chef at a gastropub with on-site accommodation, which was close to his two young children.

SSAFA is proud to provide life-long support to those who have served our country and who are in need.

'Our SSAFA caseworker was subsequently able to obtain grants for groceries, clothing and general living expenses.

●For more information on SSAFA, visit SSAFA.org.uk

Squatters' rights

After the war, dozens of Nissen huts abandoned by the Army were claimed as homes by squatters.

Many young couples started off married life on Bucklebury Common and squatters also appeared in Tilehurst, Theale, Upper Culham, Chaddleworth and Greenham.

Enemy action destroyed 218,000 homes and damaged a further 250,000 enough to

make them uninhabitable. The number of useable houses fell by 400,000 between 1939 and 1945.

By the end of 1946 more than 40,000 people has joined the squatters movement. In 1950 Bucklebury Common Camp was handed over to Bradfield Rural District Council and now a few concrete foundations and mounds of topsoil are the only reminders of the camp.

Let us remember those who gave their lives at home and abroad during the D-Day landings

AT 9.15pm on June 6th 2024, Bucklebury joined communities across the UK and France to read the International Tribute. Our representatives were (from top): Deputy Lieutenant of Berkshire Willie Hartley Russell MVO; Girl Guide Amelia; WW2 Mosquito pilot Jim Dearlove; Bucklebury CofE School captain James; Patricia Barclay; Peter Weedon and Bucklebury Parish Council chairman Barry Dickens. It was followed by a prayer offered by Rev Steve Newbold, Rector for Bucklebury, Bradfield and Stanford Dingley.

Let us remember those who gave their lives at home and abroad during the D-Day landings, whose sacrifice enables us all to enjoy the peace and freedom we have today.

Let us remember those who came home wounded, physically and mentally, and the friends and family who cared for them.

Let us remember those who returned to restore their relationships and rebuild their working lives after years of conflict and turmoil.

Let us remember the families that lost husbands, wives, sons, daughters and sweethearts.

Let us remember the servicemen and women and merchant seafarers of all nationalities — from all countries — who fought, suffered and died during the D-Day landings and six years of war.

Let us all remember those in the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force, Merchant Navy, and our Allies — the brave people who kept us safe on the home front and abroad and those in reserved occupations during the difficult time of war.

Let us remember the brave doctors and nurses who cared for the wounded, the men and women who toiled in the fields, the coal mines, the factories, and the air raid wardens, police officers, firemen, ambulance drivers and the young people of the Scouts and Guides who all played such a vital role in the war.



‘I was lucky, but I think I did what was asked of me’

Guest of honour at Bucklebury’s D-Day 80th anniversary evening, Mosquito pilot **JIM DEARLOVE**, flew 20 bombing missions from 1944-45, dropping 4,000lb ‘Cookie’ bombs on German industrial targets. Jim, now 103, fell short of a ‘tour’ of 30 operations in his wooden plane because the war ended. But, he says: ‘I would have done more, but I got married and they gave me a week off!’ Here he guides us through a raid he completed in 1945.

YEAR	AIROPLANE	PLANE, OR IN FILE	2ND PILOT, PORT. OR PASSENGER	DUTY
1945	Type	No.		(Including Bombing and Evacuation)
		No 571 Squadron		OAKINGTON
March 3	Mosquito	11.211	Sgt	Sgt. Jackson N.F.T. and Norman
				Oxford, Henley, 1 x 4000lb
		11.211		N.F.T. and Norman
		11.211		N.F.T.
		11.211		Oxford, Henley, 1 x 4000lb
		11.211		1 x Avro, 1 x Lancaster, 1 x T.12
		11.211		N.F.T.
		11.211		Oxford, Henley, 1 x 4000lb
		11.211		1 x Avro, 1 x Lancaster, 1 x T.12
		11.211		N.F.T. and Norman
		11.211		Oxford, Henley, 1 x 4000lb

A page from Jim’s logbook, showing his raids - and one crash landing. ‘Norman, my navigator couldn’t get the undercarriage down fully so we did a belly landing’, says Jim. ‘We got out of the plane and ran like hell.’

I WAS posted to 571 Squadron at RAF Oakington. Every morning your name would go up on the board and if you were on ops you went for pre-briefing about two hours before you were going to go on the op.

You would all go in the briefing room — it would be all Mosquito crews because an hour before that the briefing for the ‘Heavies’, the Lancasters, was all done and finished.

So we were in this room and then the CO would come in and there would be a map up on the wall and they would draw the cover off and say, ‘This is your target for tonight’ and you were designated a certain route. Then the Met officer would give the weather predictions and then the defence man would come on board and point out the hot spots on your route.

You tried to remove yourself from anywhere bad but if you were flying over a certain place he would tell you what sort of intensity the anti-aircraft fire was. We were lucky, we flew at about 20-21,000 feet but heavy bombers were more like 15,000. But even at 20,000 feet the flak could get you.

Before take-off you made sure you had your identity tags on but no other personal things at all, no family pictures or anything stupid like that, so if you did get shot down...yeah.

There was just a pilot and a navigator on a Mosquito, a very efficient unit, because on the Heavies there were seven or eight. My navigator, Norman, would make his details out and work out the timing, because, believe it or not, you were expected over the target within one minute, which those days I thought was fantastic; very particular. If you were running a bit fast he’d say we

need to do a bit of a dogleg to bring you back to normal time. Usually you’d go straight to the target but very often he’d say change course by 10 degrees and two minutes later we’d be back to normal. When we got to the target itself there would be a good reception — anti-aircraft stuff coming up but I didn’t actually get hit, although once I came back with a couple of holes in the bodywork at the back. You always knew when the ‘Cookie’ had gone because you suddenly shot 15 feet higher.

Then of course you turned for home. The Mosquito was the fastest aircraft of the time and coming back you could open the throttle a bit and put a bit of speed on. I was only jumped twice. Once we were toddling along and this tracer went all across the front of us, didn’t touch us of course, and from then on Norman was looking out. The second time he saw a fighter coming — dark shape on the right side, he said, so I did a bit of evasive action and we didn’t actually get fired on.

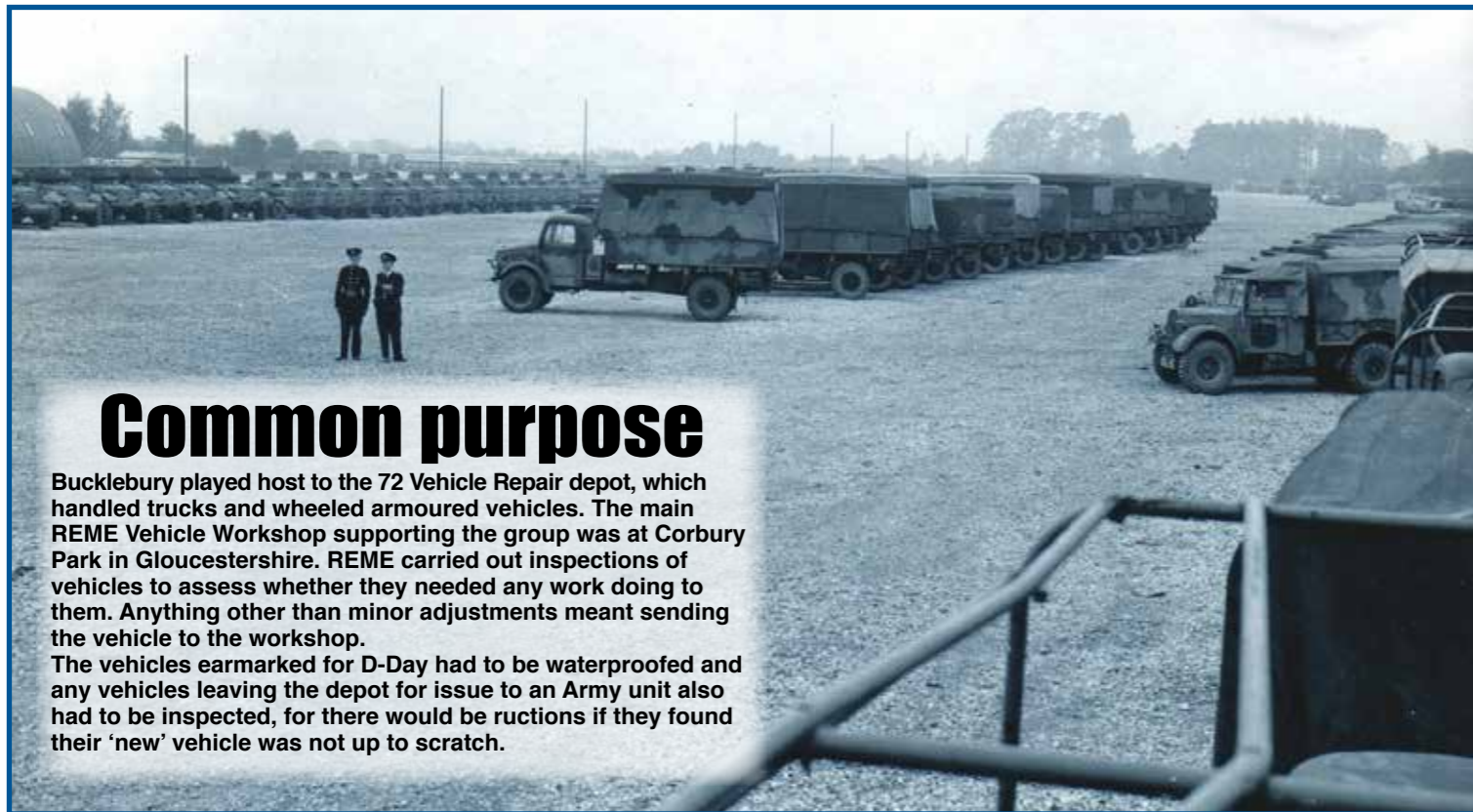
Hamburg was the hottest op we went on: the flak there was very heavy but being very fast the Mosquito was a relatively safe aircraft, in and out and gone.

The people I admired most were the markers — the Pathfinders. They were the guys who went in and dropped flares on the targets. Each time there would be different coloured flares and then you’d bomb on the flares. They stuck around but the head Pathfinder, the master bomber, he stayed all the time because he saw the Heavies in as well, who came in behind us.

The squadron was disbanded on September 20, 1945 and, says Jim: ‘In all I was very lucky, but I think I did what they asked of me.’

Nicknamed the Wooden Wonder, the Mosquito was among the fastest aircraft in the world when it was introduced in 1941, capable of flying at more than 400mph





Common purpose

Bucklebury played host to the 72 Vehicle Repair depot, which handled trucks and wheeled armoured vehicles. The main REME Vehicle Workshop supporting the group was at Corbury Park in Gloucestershire. REME carried out inspections of vehicles to assess whether they needed any work doing to them. Anything other than minor adjustments meant sending the vehicle to the workshop.

The vehicles earmarked for D-Day had to be waterproofed and any vehicles leaving the depot for issue to an Army unit also had to be inspected, for there would be ructions if they found their 'new' vehicle was not up to scratch.



Mercy missions

This Douglas C-47 Skytrain (Dakota) of US 71st Troop Carrier Squadron, 434th Troop Carrier Group is loaded with blood and medical supplies from a facility in Bucklebury, which may have been Bucklebury Place, to be delivered to the Normandy battlefield. It was nicknamed 'Butch' and was based at RAF Aldermaston.

Memories of apple-pip pie and chocolate semolina...

IN 2003, the BBC invited contributions to their WW2 People's War project and they received more than 47,000 in three years. Here are extracts from stories by people in Bucklebury who lived through the war years...

DOUG MARSDEN was sent to Bucklebury in 1943 to set up a cookhouse for 72 Vehicle Reserve Depot, which was based there. He recalls: 'I was dropped off by the army vehicle and all there was an empty space.'

'I went to the Three Crowns pub [now The Cottage Inn] where the landlord, Sid Haines, put me up for the night. The rest of the soldiers arrived the following morning, the tents were erected and I started up the cookhouse. The buildings followed about six months later.'

ANN TETLOW: 'You had to have a pass in order to

drive across the Bucklebury Straight and the American Military Police – 'Snowdrops' as they were called because of their white helmets – had a checkpoint and sentry box going out of Chapel Row.

'My father was teaching at Cheam School and went across the Common twice a day. He quite often forgot or lost his pass, so waved a piece of newspaper out the car window, and as his car was recognised as belonging he was never stopped. The Americans seemed under the impression that English children were starving so they presented us with slab cake and pieces of chocolate bars.'

SYLVIA HAYNES: 'We lived opposite the Common, so often there were American and English soldiers camping out there on manoeuvres. Sometimes you woke up in the morning and they would be asleep on your front lawn.'

DORCAS WARD: 'The Orchard Tea Rooms were closed at the start of the war and were then used

by Miss Eileen Stapleforth as a kindergarten for local children. On my first day I was taken by car but from then on I had to take the bus, which cost 2d, or cycle the two miles from our home near Bradfield War Memorial. As for school dinners, I remember with horror that they gave us chocolate semolina and apple pie, which was steamed suet with a little piece of peel and an apple pip!'

BOB WYATT: 'There was a searchlight in the field opposite Roselands

in The Avenue, manned by about nine or ten soldiers. The searchlights were on trailers but never moved as far as I know. Each searchlight had its own generator, which sometimes took three people to start it.

'There were also searchlights in The Slade – one on the lower green and one on the upper.'

'The Americans came with the bonus of weekly cinema and a doughnut van and there were Land Army girls at Hewin's Wood Farm and German and Italian prisoners of war who worked on local farms.'

JOE PAULIN: 'Americans lived in tents in The Avenue near Cripps Farm and grouped there prior to going overseas. The tents had slab floors with wooden pathways between them and when the Americans left, they took the tents but left the floors and paths. These disappeared very quickly, recycled by locals.'

IN 1939 SID and JEAN MEACHEN came to live in the schoolhouse in Bucklebury where Sid was headmaster. 'All the signposts had been removed, street lights switched off, station names obliterated, car headlights dimmed,' said Jean.

'Food ration books were issued and clothing coupons came next. An overcoat took most of a year's allocation. A teacher and twenty mystified evacuee children, carrying their gas masks, came to the village.'

'Sid's call up papers came to join the Royal Artillery in Southampton, so I had to put the furniture in store and return to my parents near Farnborough. When the war was over, Sid was issued with a demob three-piece suit, a trilby hat and underwear. We came back to Bucklebury to find the railings around the playground had gone to help make armaments.'

IF you fancy giving your family a taste of World War Two rationing cuisine, try this tasty Woolton Pie, named after Lord Woolton, who became Minister for Food in 1940. Or Mock Goose for Christmas, which (we are reliably informed) doesn't taste anything like goose!

WOOLTON PIE Serves 4

1lb diced potatoes
1lb cauliflower
1lb diced carrots
1lb diced swede
3 spring onions
1 teaspoon vegetable extract
1 tablespoon oatmeal
Chopped parsley

Cook everything together with just enough water to cover, stirring often to prevent it sticking to the pan. Let the mixture cool. Spoon into a pie dish, sprinkle with chopped parsley. Cover with a crust of potatoes or wholemeal pastry. Bake in a moderate oven until golden brown. Serve hot with gravy.

MOCK GOOSE Serves 2-4

1 cup dried split lentils
2 slices of wholemeal/wholewheat breadcrumbs (made from stale bread)
1 onion
Sage chopped (to taste)
A little butter
Stock made with an Oxo cube
Salt, pepper
Lemon (if available)
1 oz grated cheddar (if available)
Place 1 cup of rinsed dried lentils and 3 cups of hot water into a saucepan and cook for 15 mins, drain and squeeze some lemon juice, and sprinkle salt, and mix together.

Chop onion and place in a pan with a little butter and saute lightly, add a little Oxo stock (about 3 ozs) and continue to cook and reduce a little. Mix in breadcrumbs, salt, pepper, chopped sage and mix thoroughly. Spread half of lentils in a shallow dish and press down. spread the breadcrumbs/sage mixture over the lentils and press down a little. Cover with the remaining lentils. Cook in oven at about 350 f for 30 minutes or so until the top is lightly browned. Sprinkle grated cheese on top and pop back in the oven (or under the grill) for a minute until melted.

Meet Potato Pete and Doctor Carrot

During World War Two, just about every aspect of life was governed by rationing.

Ration books were distributed and every home had to register with a butcher, grocer and milkman, who received enough food for their registered customers. The first foods to be rationed were butter, sugar, bacon and ham.

From December 1941 everyone had 16 points per month to buy foods such as biscuits, tinned foods and dried fruit. This enabled the Government to allocate a higher point value to items when stocks were low. Children received additional foods essential for their growth and development – such as milk, orange juice and cod liver oil.

To make rationing seem more appealing, the Ministry of Food invented Doctor Carrot, who helped popularise the myth that eating carrots let you see in the dark during the black-outs, and Potato Pete, who even had his own recipe book.

Everyone was encouraged to 'Dig for Victory' and turn their gardens into allotments to grow vegetables. Even the Royal Family turned part of the gardens at Buckingham Palace into allotments.

The Dig for Victory campaign was the start of 'townies' wanting a piece of land where they could grow their own. That many people have allotments today is because of 'Digging for Victory'.

As for making food last longer in the days before refrigeration and freezing were common, housewives were experts in preserving food by canning and bottling.

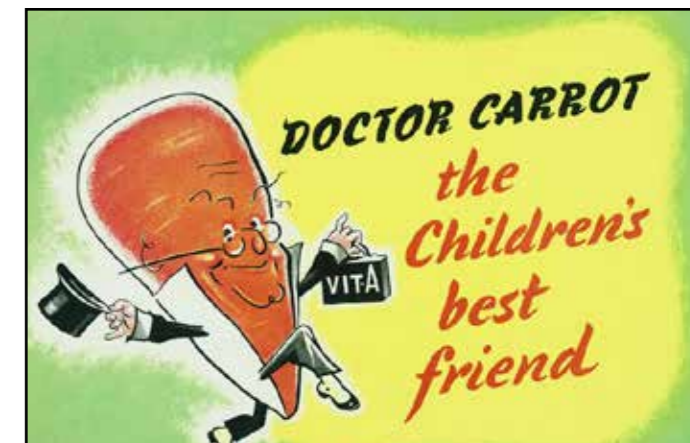
The Government also educated people with leaflets, radio programmes and demonstrations on food preserving techniques. For example, eggs could be kept fresher for a bit longer by rubbing them with lard to seal the pores or storing them in crocks under water with isinglass or waterglass mixed in, or by pickling them. Yummy!



School's out: Some of the children who attended the Orchard Kindergarten during World War Two

WAR RATIONS FOR AN ADULT

Butter: 2oz
Bacon or ham: 4oz
Margarine: 4oz
Cooking fat/lard: 4oz
Sugar: 8oz.
Meat: To the value of 1/2d and sometimes 1/10d – about 1lb to 12ozs
Milk: 3pts
Cheese: 2oz
Eggs: 1 fresh egg a week.
Tea: 2oz.
Jam: 1lb every two months.
Dried eggs: 1 packet (12 eggs) every four weeks.
Sweets & chocolate: 12oz every four weeks



Veggy might: Doctor Carrot tried to persuade children that some things were better than rationed sweets

A soldier's story

Some years ago, a Bucklebury villager discovered letters home from Stan Barton, an uncle she had never met. These extracts from them describe his war on the beaches and then as he fought his way through France with his tank crew.



July 14th

I wrote to Daisy a couple of days ago – how does she feel about Ray? In her last letter she gave the impression of still living in hope. Personally I think she should give up such dreams don't you? Dick Mulley told me about Ginger and Vic. It sure is tough and I do hope their wounds are not too serious.

August 5th

Now that it is more or less forgotten (officially) I can tell you of my dive bombing experiences.

Only once was I in any of it and believe me at the time it's horrible. We had just pulled into harbour and had supper, the time about 11.30 at night. I was standing on the back of an ammo lorry when suddenly the scene became as light as day. Needless to say we all dived to earth and then he started diving.

I don't think I was on my own getting a little "windy". He did no damage. The funny bit of the whole episode was that we have a German gun and eight of the chaps during the bombing were trying to make the damn thing go — of course it wouldn't till the plane had gone and then it decided to fire.

August 8th

Poor Mrs Raggett. How has she taken it about Alf. Mortar is one of the worst things that happen over here. You don't get a chance to hit back and you don't hear the first one. After the first one you are safe.

August 17th

I'm sorry not to have written but I've been up to my ears in work. The regt has at last got tanks back and we are busy putting them right. We gave our tanks to the Canadians about three weeks ago which accounts for the long rest we had. I think we were all a little disappointed because, at the time, there was bags of rumours that we might be coming home.

This is the last letter from Stan: three days later, on his 27th birthday, August 20th, 1944, he was killed when his tank was hit by an anti-tank bazooka.

Letters from the Front reveal the price that our heroes paid

STAN BARTON, known as Tim by his family and mates, joined up on, July 1, 1943. He was posted to the East Riding Yeomanry as tank crew. Before he joined up he worked for a company making fuel pumps for de Havilland aircraft, so maybe they thought that he'd come in handy if the tank broke down.

June 6th

My dear Mum, Just a couple of lines to let you know everything is ok. Tony and I left Aldershot by rail last Wednesday so I couldn't call in. We reached our new camp at about 11 at night only to be told all letter writing was out... At last permission has been granted but even now I find it difficult to write as everything is barred. Sorry nothing to write about. I am just going for a shower prior to doing guard.

June 11th

I'm in France, where I can't say. I have seen a few planes brought down by our ack ack fire but taking things all round things are no different than home. In the distance we can hear gunfire but the only planes that zoom about are ours and they definitely have mastered the Jerries in the air.

June 15th

Now to tell you more of my exciting journey across. We left England and for two days sailed up and down the English coast. Our navy certainly isn't afraid of the Jerries, it seems the boot is on the other foot with both navies and air forces cos throughout the crossing we never saw Jerry ships or planes.

Crossing the Channel was a wee bit rough although I didn't have to hang my head over the side. It was a sight worth seeing hundreds of ships all with their own Balloon Barrage slowly making their way to, at the time, unknown points of the coast.

And then we were off the coast. Still more ships anchored here till, in the words of a newspaper correspondent, imagine tree leaves floating on a lake and you will get the right impression. Our planes and warships had made a mess of the beach

and although D-Day boys had a bit of a struggle I have been given to understand it wasn't as tough going in as any expected. Whilst anchored off the coast at night, we were visited by the Luftwaffe. The damage done by them was nil. Thanks again to the RN, RAF, and US Navy. We landed without any trouble and even the organisation was wonderful. Just imagine boats running up to the beach, unloading the cargo – all bound for different points. As fast as one ship was unloaded another one came in and even then there was no beach hold-up

June 20th

Eddy Dance accidentally injured a sergeant the other day when he threw a grenade into what he thought was a safety area. It was quite accidental and I think the injured man is as well as can be expected.

July 2nd

Isn't it rotten about Ray. Poor old Dais [Stan's sister Daisy]. I bet she is cut up. Going by precautions taken on board however I wouldn't be at all surprised if he doesn't turn up. Every man has a life belt and there was boat drill whilst aboard so he may, I hope, be fortunate enough to have been picked up.

July 4th

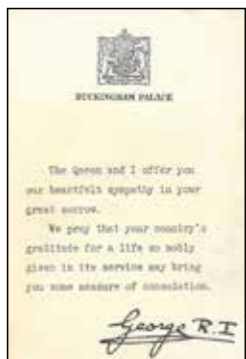
Our aircraft continue to keep the Hun planes on the ground – as a matter of fact I haven't seen a Jerry plane since I came in.

July 8th

I'm within two hundred yards of the Front Line scribbling these few lines. Yes an attack went in today and we are having a sweep on how long before we capture Caen. So far today's action has gone quite to plan and for 2 wounded infantry wallahs I saw 28 Jerries taken prisoner.

This action business is O.K. except that it is very tiring. I've been awake since four this morning. Last night we saw loads of our bombers come over and actually watched the bombs going down. It was a terrific sight and there were about 1000 bombers. By the behaviour of our R.A.F. Jerry should have given up a long time ago.

'We got the objective, because of men like your son'



On the day Stan was killed, his company was chasing the Germans through France and were attacking a strong position in wooded and hilly country 15 miles west of Lisieux.

Major H Philips wrote to Mrs Barton: 'The troop your son was in was leading and had pushed on extremely well taking the infantry along with them. There came a time when the Boche fire drove back our infantry and the tanks should have come back with them but this troop stayed and your son's tank in front of all. Eventually a Boche with an anti-tank bazooka gun crept through the bushes and got the tank with his first shot.'

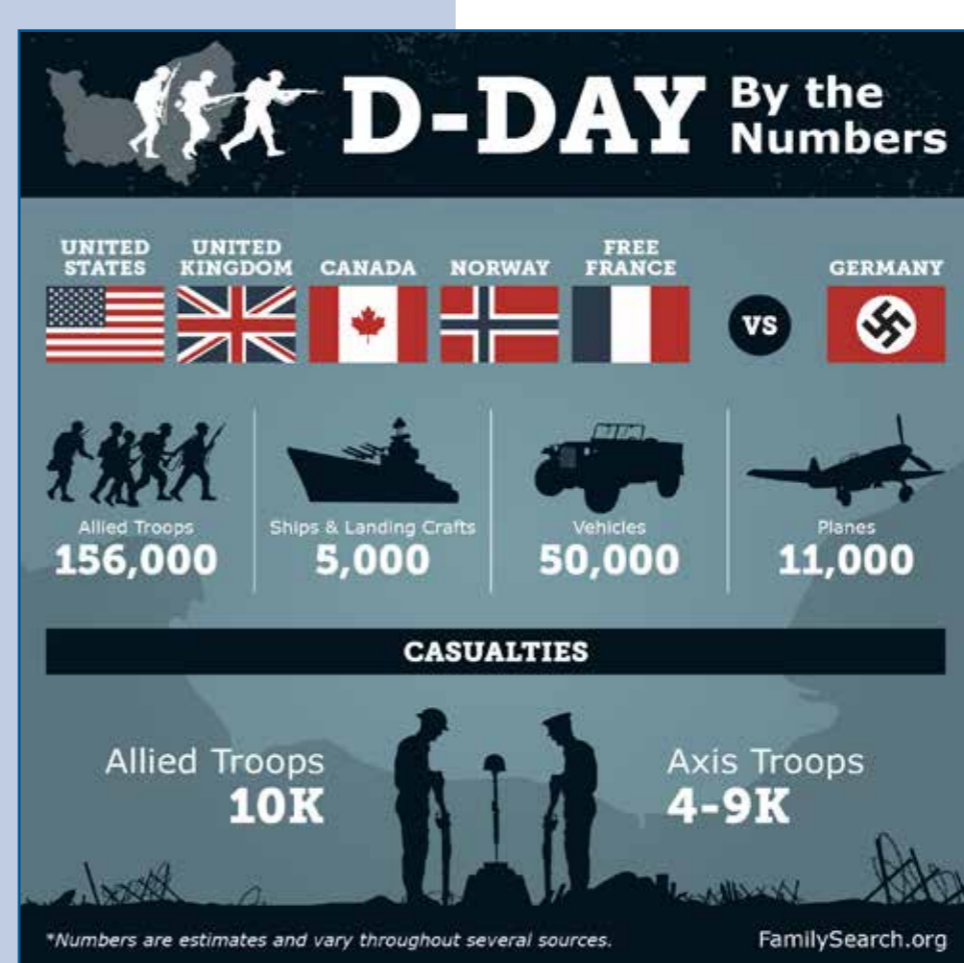
Lt Richard Praid also wrote to Stan's mum, recalling: 'Cpl Boughton's tank was completely burned out, it was the worst

brew I'd seen. The hull crew did not get out — Tompkinson and Cochrane. The turret three did. Of these, Boughton and Batty were evacuated; Barton was hit as he left the tank by MG [machine gun] fire. My tank silenced the MG. Barton died of his injuries very soon;

'I did not personally see him dead, as I went back to the tank to get to the objective. I returned to the scene in a few days.

'The padre and I buried all we could find of Tompkinson and Cochrane in a corner of the same field in which they'd died. Barton, since he was outside the tank when he died, was buried by the infantry. Barton was the man of all that crew with whom I got on best. We got the objective.

'We always will. Because of men like your son.'



- 156,115: Total of Allied troops who landed in Normandy.
- 23,400: Total Allied airborne troops (included in figure above).
- 73,000: American (Omaha and Utah beaches plus airborne).
- 61,715: British (Gold and Sword beaches plus airborne).
- 21,400: Canadian (Juno Beach).
- 11,590: Total Allied aircraft that supported landings.
- 1,213: Naval combat ships
- 4,126: Landing ships/craft.
- 736: Ancillary craft.
- 864: Merchant vessels.
- 6,939: Total naval vessels in Operation Neptune. Of the 6,939 ships involved on D-Day, 80 percent were British, USA 16.5 percent and the rest from France, Holland, Norway and Poland.

SOLDIERS' HOME NATIONS

United States, Britain, Canada, Belgium, Norway, Poland, Luxembourg, Greece, Czechoslovakia, New Zealand, Australia and France.

ALLIED ARMY DIVISIONS

- 3rd British Infantry (Sword)
- 3rd Canadian Infantry (Juno)
- 4th Infantry (Utah).
- 50th British Infantry (Gold).
- American: 1st & 29th Infantry (Omaha). 6th Airborne (dropped on east bank of the Orne River).
- 82nd & 101st Airborne: Night drop on Cotentin Peninsula behind Utah Beach.
- 2nd Ranger Regiment: Pointe du Hoc.

Reach for the sky

Contrary to popular myth, Douglas Bader did not lose his legs in a wartime dogfight (although he did lose an artificial leg in one).

The future Group Captain, who would spend the latter part of his life in Marlston with second wife Joan, lost his legs in 1931 attempting aerobatics at Reading Aero Club in a Bristol Bulldog, which he crashed.

He was a Battle of Britain ace, call-sign Dogbody in a nod to his initials, and was shot down in a dogfight over France in 1941. Bader was captured and after a couple of escape attempts, he was sent to Colditz, where he remained until it was liberated in 1945.

He died from a heart attack in 1982 on the way home from a dinner to honour Arthur 'Bomber' Harris. Joan, who had her own wartime career as a Red Cross nurse, devoted her time to local charities, including Guide Dogs and Riding for the Disabled.

Mrs Still and the lost German pilot

One-time Bucklebury housewife Mrs Elizabeth Still played a key role in preparations for D-Day, although her involvement in the war began years earlier.

She was born in Berlin in 1922, the daughter of two doctors, Stephen Kurt Westmann and Marianne Goldschmidt. The family moved to London when Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, and became naturalised Britons before war broke out.

Just 18 years old, in 1940 Elizabeth joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force and soon discovered that German-speakers were needed in the top secret Y-Service, intercepting radio transmissions of German bomber pilots and relaying their movements to Bletchley Park.

She was posted to Capel-le-Ferne, near Folkestone in 1942 and on a foggy night, Elizabeth discovered a German pilot lost over the Channel. She managed to talk him down to land at RAF Manston airfield in Kent, although his controllers on the other side of the Channel were urging him to disregard her instructions.

On another occasion, on the Norfolk coast when there were no aircraft flying, she tuned into a German naval frequency and heard the words 'good hunting' in German. She managed to persuade the naval authorities to investigate, and they took out a U-boat lurking in inshore waters.

In 1944, she met and married the composer Robert Still, who was serving in the army. They moved to Bucklebury in 1949 with their growing family, which consisted eventually of four daughters. The seeds of Elizabeth's later activities were planted when she volunteered for the Citizens



Advice Bureau in Newbury. Later, she was proud to become a Justice of the Peace and sat on the Newbury bench for many years.

By 1994 Elizabeth and a few others had become increasingly aware of the damage being done to rural green lanes by "mud-pluggers" in 4-wheel drive vehicles. This started a campaign to protect the green lanes of Berkshire

In 1995 she and a group of like-minded individuals, some from other parts of England, founded GLEAM, determined to have the laws changed to stop motorised vehicles ruining green lanes for walkers, riders, cyclists and carriage drivers. The movement spread nationally as they recruited members from both Houses of Parliament and were very influential in forming the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.



Thanks to

The Beacon

Putting it up: Iain Brown, Jason Allum, Marcus Allum, OJM Farm Contracting and Andrew Gray. John Munro-Ashman and Matthew Price. **Use of Chapel Row Green:** Willie Hartley Russell

The Event

The D-Day 80th anniversary event was made possible by a lot of effort and planning on the part of Bucklebury Parish Council: Barry Dickens (chairman), David Southgate (vice-chairman), Jason Allum, Michael Morgan, Phil Teal, Chris Willett, Lindy Clarke, Peter Spours, Graham Loader, Georgina Woods, Lesley Windmill and parish clerk Helen Pratt. Willys Jeeps: Steve Beeson & Woods family.

Piper: Simon Peters. **First Aid:** Rachel Greig. **Also:** Hurstbourne Forge; Newbury Tools for the generator; Bladebone Inn; Helen Relf & Bucklebury History Group; Greenham Common Control Tower; RAF Welford Historical Society; Jan McGarvey; Imperial War Museum.

The Magazine PHOTOGRAPHY

June 6th event and photo editing
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Centre-page beacon
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The eyes of the world are upon you

The paratrooper in the iconic photograph below, taken when General Dwight Eisenhower addressed the 101st Airborne Division at Greenham Common, is First Lieutenant Wallace Strobel (wearing 23). He recalled: 'He asked my name and which state I was from. I gave him my name and that I was from Michigan. He then said: "Oh yes, Michigan, great fishing there. Been there several times and like it."'



SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

'Now quit worrying General, we'll take care of this thing for you'

Shouted by an American soldier after Eisenhower's speech (above) at Greenham Common on June 5th, 1944