

BOLTON REMEMBERS THE WAR

Transcript of interview with Leila Parker (LP) • War Worker

Interviewed by Ken Beevers (K) 08.06.2005

LP: My name is Leila Parker.

K: And when were you born?

LP: I was born on the 10th September 1919.

K: And, do you mind if I ask what your parents did?

LP: My Father was an engineer at Dobson and Barlow's and my Mother was a housewife, they didn't go out to work much in those days, they looked after their... I was an only child, and I was born and brought up in Salisbury Street, off Deane Road and I went to St Edmund's School in the town centre of Bolton. And then when I was twelve I went to Mount St Joseph's Grammar School. I'm still in touch with friends from both schools. When I left school I went to work at Tillotson's, which would be about 1934, 35, which was lovely. Tillotson's was a good family firm, and we were like a happy family there. When the War broke out we knew that we were going to have to move from Tillotson's, it wasn't a... we had to have an occupation for the War. So six of us one day (laughs) in 1940, decided to go to Burton's, on Halliwell Road, where they were making uniforms for the Forces. I don't know why I went because I couldn't sew at all (laughs) but we went, and to put it mildly, it was the worst time of my life (laughs) the months that I was working at Burtons! I worked on trousers and I had to make a pocket, and put a size label on, all in a minute. It was a conveyor belt coming down and it only stopped five minutes every hour, and I never had a break, because I was always behind, and the lady in front of me was behind, but it was an experience, in that I'd never worked anywhere only in a family firm and this was a very, very big firm. And it was certainly an experience, but I was very unhappy. And when I used to go home, I was an only one and my auntie lived next door and I used to cry, and she used to say 'You're not going tomorrow!' but I had to go because you couldn't stay away.

Anyway, they came to Burton's to call people up and funnily enough, I was the very first person to be called up from Burton's... and because I had clerical experience I was sent to De Havilland, in the office in De Havilland. I was in the office at Lostock for a short time being trained and then, they opened four satellites: one in Mule Street off Bury Road, one at Mill Hill off Bury Road, one at Croasdale Street near Kay Street and one in Little Lever. Now I was sent to Mule Street. I would imagine it was a mill originally, and the office was in the centre of the ground floor. I did go to Mill Hill for a short time and I did go to Croasdale Street, but the main job was at Mule Street. I met some really nice people and my best friend, who I met in 1941, only died a few months ago in Bournemouth. But we kept in touch all this time. It was difficult, we had to work nights as well as days, we started at seven thirty in the morning and it was usually 'til seven at night, and then the night shift came on - nine o'clock 'til seven thirty. So for only two hours in that twenty four was free from work.

We had a few air raids and things while I was working there... and I remember two air raids on Bolton. One was at the corner of Crook Street, where a man was killed, and I think it was a small café, that was hit. And then, another one, on Wigan Road at Deane, near the Rumworth Hotel, it was a house, the people were called Dootson, and funnily enough the boy that was injured, the young man that was injured, became my brother-in-law. But they thought they were going for the De Havilland works when that was hit. So altogether, I never, ever, thought that we would lose the War. I always... When we listened to Winston Churchill on Sunday night, he spoke so great and wonderful that it never dawned on us that we could lose.

I never thought we would lose, even though things were very bad at times, especially food wise, but we managed. I often wonder how we did it, we had one shilling a week, it was, for meat and I think one egg about once every three or four weeks. But we got dried egg from America, (laughs) and we got Spam! (laughs) which I remember... It was good, it was good.

So altogether, my sister-in-law she went to work at the Ebonite works at Little Lever and she hated it there. She was always getting burned by it, it was like a plastic thing. But you couldn't change jobs - you had to stay. And the one job we were all afraid of was to be sent to Euxton, where they had the gunpowder place and they always said that the people turn yellow by this thing. And we were terrified of going there, so I felt that I was very fortunate to get the job that I did, because during that time my Father became ill, and we had to look after him. He was quite ill, but he did survive the War. He didn't die until 1950.

But I was married on the 28th September 1940, and my husband Joe, lived at number 7, Moor Lane, right opposite St Paul's Church. We were married at St Edmund's and we had quite a nice wedding, because he wasn't called up until the 17th October. He worked at Harry Mason's and if he had been a little bit older they could have kept him back, because they were storage for the Ministry of Food, but he was 24 and he had to go. So eventually he went to Nottingham and he was stationed for quite a while at Didcot near Oxford. But he used to come home on leave, and then in 1942, he went to Malta, so we didn't see him 'til the end of the War. But I used to write and he wrote back, but it was very, very sad for him to be away so long. But, anyway we got through it. (laughs)

K: What do you remember about the day War broke out?

LP: On the 3rd of September, I knew exactly where I was, at eleven o'clock. I was in St Edmund's Church in Bolton with my Father, and the priest came into the pulpit and announced it had just been announced that we were at War with Germany. Well everyone in the church was absolutely... We knew it was coming but when it was actually told us, it was very, very upsetting really. Because, actually I thought it would be over in a few months, I never thought it was going to last so many years. But, anyway, now, I often think how on earth did we get through it, but we did.

K: What were your feelings in the church that day?

LP: I was very upset, yes, and most people were, you know, because, well, we were going into the unknown weren't we? We didn't know just what was going to happen. Anyway, we survived, and...

The worst thing of all, I think was the blackout. When we got home we had to start putting black curtains up at the windows and we hadn't to show a light at all. All the lights were out, it was very difficult, but you weren't afraid to go out, like we are today. I never know anyone being attacked or anything like that during the blackout. No, we were safe. In fact people all got together in the War - much better than they do today. You used to help one another, for instance, my husband's family, they used to give their cheese ration to someone lower down the road who gave them sugar instead. You know, things like that... People would exchange what they didn't use. Yeah. He had two sisters and two brothers but he was the only one that went in the Forces. His elder brother, was an optician, had his own shop, but he went in the fire service. And his other brother, worked for Robert Watson's and he was ferrying the propellers made at De Havilland down south to their other works, that was his job. Yeah, I was in... it was called the blade shop where they made the propellers. And that's where... I was attached to that, where we worked.

K: Could I just ask you, was your Father in the First World War?

LP: No, he was an engineer then, and he worked, so he never went into the War. No, but my Mother's two brothers were in the First World War, one of them had a bullet inside him for as long as he lived (laughs) but he lived to be eighty! (laughs)

K: So, did your Father re-assure you, you know that..?

LP: Oh yes, yes, but one thing they didn't say - they didn't say how things would have gone more expensive after the War. Luckily, when I thought the War was going to finish, in 1944, I decided to buy a house, which, looking back, was the best thing I ever, ever did. It was in Kermoor Avenue at Deane, which is a lovely avenue, made of Accrington brick with bay windows - and it cost me the princely sum of £630! But the people next door, being in from being built, thought I'd been robbed. But I got two hundred... my Dad gave me a hundred and I'd saved up and I put £230 down and got a mortgage for £400 (laughs) so, that was brilliant, because it was a nice house and when Joe came back we had our own home.

K: So right... So you were in De Havilland which, you were attached to the blade shop.

LP: The blade shop, well the workmen had to come to our office to clock on... they clocked on when they came in and clocked out when they went. We had to do the ways, you know, and pay the wages and sort the wage cards out and reckon them up and... but the money came from Lostock, but we did all the clerical work.

K: Which place was it that you were at?

LP: Mule Street, off Bury Road. I've never, ever, been back. It must still be there... It was very near to that paint works - W & J Leigh's Paintworks. In fact, because we used to see they had some prisoners of War working there, Italians, and they had a round ring on their back. We knew they were the prisoners when they were knocking about, you know. It was a very varied job, because we'd lots of different things to do. With us working nights, we were on shifts, you see, all the girls

were friendly together and we'd two men bosses. It was quite a happy time really. I can't say that we were... we had one or two air raids where we had to go in the shelters, nothing...

K: So, there were plenty of women working there?

LP: Yes, not... Mostly men, but there were women who were the inspectors, inspecting the work. I remember the lady who was over the canteen, had come from the Channel Islands. Now when they were evacuated to Bolton in 1940, my Mother was at Watermillock on Crompton Way, where they received all the people... come there, and they were then sent to different houses and things like that. And my Mother worked there - voluntary, with other women - for quite a time, while they sorted all these people out. And in fact, Joe went to help once with Father Cronell who was at the... St Edmund's Church. He had Joe helping him once, going round to see that these people were all right and the accommodation they'd been given. That's before he went in the Forces. But my Mum did a lot of voluntary work.

K: So, was that the WVS then or the..?

LP: Yes.

K: They did all the cars and driving from there didn't they? Women...

LP: Well, there weren't a lot of cars you know, petrol was rationed.

K: No, no. But they did driving, didn't they, the women?

LP: Yes, yes, they did. In fact they had two lady drivers at De Havilland at Lostock, who used to come down if they brought down any work that we had to do, they would bring it down in their cars, or if we needed to go up to Lostock, they would pick us up and take us. But I don't think there's anybody that's left that I remember really now, that were there, when I was. They've all ... I'm lucky, I'm the one that's been left (laughs) I don't know why!

K: So you Mother was with evacuees?

LP: She was. My Mother was a person that was involved with a lot of things, through St Edmund's Church, like the Catholic Women's League and all these sort of things she was involved, and some of the ladies involved in that did all this voluntary work. Because she was at home you see, I was an only one, but when me dad became ill... He was ill for nine years before he died, but I was there, so she could still go and do what she wanted if I was there (laughs)

K: So, did you do clerical work all the time in De Havilland?

LP: Yes, yes.

K: But, it was important...

LP: Well, yeah, there were these two men that did this time study, and I think these jobs were allocated, so many minutes, or an hour or so and they had to come to tell us at the office when they were starting this job and we had to book it down, and then they'd to come when they'd finished... and of course, if they'd taken too long, they were pulled up over the coals, I think, by the time and study men. And there were quite a lot worked there, a lot of different machines, yeah. I think there were one or two of the footballers who worked there. I can't remember all their names now, but I know there were some footballers who worked at De Havilland in the War.

K: Did you have entertainment there at all? Did ENSA come or anything?

LP: No... We did have some music, well at Burton's they had Music While You Work, but really, the machinery... you couldn't really have anything there. But I think they would have things maybe in the canteen at Lostock, but we didn't really have any.

K: Were they always trying to keep production going?

LP: Oh yes, they used to say to them, you know 'These blades/propellers' - blades they'd call them - 'have got to be down in...' - where De Havilland was down south - 'by such a time', and they had a bonus scheme too. They got paid a bonus if they worked, some of them did very well, because I used to complain, because my husband was fighting for his country on a (laughs) ...a few shillings a week, and they were coming out with £14 which, you know, was a lot then - the ones that were really good at it. But, anyway, we survived.

K: A lady told me that the yellow stuff, they called it parrot's tail, or something like that, this was a lady I interviewed who worked on munitions, and she said they called it parrots tail, because it was yellow .. I know it was cordite...

LP: Well I know they actually did go yellow, and there was two places one was Euxton and I don't know where the other one... Euxton was at Chorley and the other one wasn't very far away and we dreaded having to go there because of that.

K: Well, this lady worked in Westhoughton, I think somewhere, I don't know where it was.

LP: Well I never knew there was one in Westhoughton, but there was certainly this one at Euxton, because I knew Vera, who used to go to school with me, she worked there, but I don't think she was in that part. It depended what... it was when they were filling things, with gunpowder or whatever it was.

K: So, your wedding, right, where did that take place?

LP: We were married at St Edmund's Church, and we had... Luckily, we were very fortunate, because you couldn't really get, a café or anything, but we were fortunate that we had a reception in the Co-op in Bridge Street, in Bolton (laughs) and quite a lot of people came. And my Mother's friend managed to make me a wedding cake, because you couldn't get wedding cakes, a lot of them were cardboard. They just had a cardboard with some sort of a cake underneath. But she managed to get this small wedding cake. I think she made it, and so we had that. I was 21 on the 10th of September that we were married on the 28th. Joe was 24.

K: Did you have a honeymoon?

LP: Yes, we went... oh, a wonderful honeymoon - four days in Morecambe! (laughs) And we wouldn't have got that, except my Aunt and Uncle used to go to Morecambe every year, they thought it was absolute paradise, and we never really went to Morecambe, and the boarding house that they knew - they wrote to them and the two ladies did us a real favour by taking us in. So, yes, four days in Morecambe! (laughs) A bit different from today.

K: Oh, certainly, yes. Your wedding wouldn't have cost anything like today.

LP: Oh no, I've no idea how much it cost.

K: Did you have to pool rations to have food at the reception?

LP: Well, we had... as far as I know, the Co-op did it. So they must have had some sort of thing that they could use, do a little bit. But it wasn't a posh affair! (laughs) It was in Bridge Street, upstairs, in the Co-op, but at least it was nice. And I had two bridesmaids. My cousin and Joe's sister were bridesmaids, and a friend of Joe's and his brother were groomsmen. Yes, so it was... considering it was Wartime, it wasn't bad! (laughs)

K: Did you have to carry a gas mask to work?

LP: Yes. We had a cardboard box with them in, with a strap on, yes, yes. Never, ever had to wear it though. That never happened, no.

K: What about air raid shelters did you use those?

LP: Well, at first we did, and then we didn't really go in them. We used to go under the stairs. But a friend of mine, I must tell you this... Marjorie died last year, she was a very old friend and she lived in Manchester, and Manchester was very badly bombed. One Christmas is was dreadful what happened to it, and that particular Christmas, she'd gone to a friend's house and the sirens went, you know they had to go in the shelter, and she was left with the old man - the Granddad - to take to the shelter. Anyway she managed to get him down there and they were in all night, and when they came up the following morning, the whole row of terraced houses where they lived was flattened. The whole row. And the only thing standing, which she never got over, was a Christmas tree, with artificial... they were still on, the balls... They were still on the tree! And she said she never, ever, got over that, because the houses were flat and this tree was stood... the Christmas tree (laughs) But they had a rough time in Manchester, very bad. We could see it from Bolton. We could see the fires in Manchester, when it was on, the Blitz. But my brother-in-law who went into the Fire Service, he had an opticians shop on Deansgate, and he went in the Fire Service and he was in the Blitz on Liverpool and on Manchester. It was very, very bad, yeah, but he survived. Because he'd never been a Fireman, I mean, he knew nothing about it, but you just had to go.

K: Did you grow any food, or grow any vegetables?

LP: No we didn't but Joe's father had some chickens (laughs) at the back of the house, and he grew them thinking they would have the eggs and then they would have the chickens, but it turned out a disaster really, because... they'd got very fond of these chickens and they all had their own names, sort of Lucy and Mabel and all these sort of names, and when they killed the first one, none of them could eat it because they were so upset that he (laughs) killed this chicken that they'd looked after! (laughs) But no, we didn't grow any, but a lot of people did. But we hadn't a garden, you see then, we hadn't a garden. But, yeah, he had chickens, yeah.

K: Did you do anything special for the War effort, like, I don't know, recycling or War Savings or anything like that?

LP: Yes, I would think that my Mum did, I probably didn't, because you know, but my Mum would probably do that, yes, yeah.

K: Well she did voluntary work didn't she?

LP: Yes, she did. She was very much into it. And they had these places, you know, in Bolton, where it was, what was the old library... they had a dining place you could go and have these meals. I never went in, but the Government sort of ran these places, and people used to go in there to have a cheap meal. British Restaurant, and that was where the old library was. You know, where it's now near the Octagon, you know, there, it was on that side.

K: Oh that corner there - yes it was wasn't it?

LP: Yes, the old library. I went in the library a lot. I used to read. I still read a lot and I used to go in on the way home from Tillotson's. Going home I would call. We went to the cinema a lot. We used to go to the cinema and they had concerts. I remember going to a really good concert in the Lido, on Bradshawgate, where they had, orchestras came, and things like that. I can't remember what it was called, but it was a really nice... really nice concert in there. They had a few, you know, in the Grand Theatre. People still went. At the beginning, people didn't go out as much, but when it had been on for a couple of years or so, they just didn't bother and they started to go out.

K: What was your favourite cinema?

LP: The Odeon, I think. The Odeon. (laughs) Yes, I'm sad to see that go. I just hope they do something with it, and they don't take it down.

K: It would be nice if they did, wouldn't it?

LP: Yeah, Bolton has changed, quite a lot in the last few years, and in my opinion, not for the better.

K: Did it change much in Wartime do you think?

LP: No, not as much as it has done. I mean I was very upset at them taking down the old fire station, I thought that was a wonderful building and I'd seen that every day of my life going to and from school, and I thought that was really sad, and I still don't think they should alter the Market Hall. But, this age, we have to change with the times! (laughs)

K: What about Christmas and birthdays, do you remember those particularly well?

LP: Well Christmas... birthdays sort of came and went, and you couldn't buy a lot of things you see. But I remember a man that used to work with my Dad, at Dobson and Barlow's, he used to visit him when he was ill and one Christmas he got us a goose. Now, where he got it from, we never asked (laughs) but he brought this goose and when it came it was full of feathers - we thought it was going to come round! Well, I couldn't touch it and my Mum ... but my Aunt came up and she did... she cleaned it all up and we had a goose for Christmas (laughs) which was very unusual.

K: So, obviously, your husband then... What was he in?

LP: He was in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. Because he'd been attached to this warehousing thing, with Masons, doing that, he was sent into there, to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

K: And he was sent to Malta?

LP: Yes, eventually.

K: Eventually, and was there a siege and he had to stay there or was he based there anyway?

LP: Well it was very, very funny. When the War ended... the War ended on the 8th, well Europe ended on the 8th of May and by June, he came back, they were bringing them back from Malta, and he came back. And he was stationed, believe it or not, on Beaumont Road! Beaumont Road in the War was completely closed from end to end and it was a storage depot, the whole of Beaumont Road, from Chorley New Road to Deane.

K: What did they store?

LP: Army equipment, I don't know, but... so he was sent there, it was the Ordnance Corps, so he could come home at night. But we was only there for maybe a couple of months, and he was then sent, I mean the War had ended then, but he was sent to Manchester, and he was at Clifton's Chocolate Factory at Manchester, that had been used for something, and he was there and he was billeted with a family there, but he did used to come home and he was then demobbed in 1946. Probably about June or July 1946 and he went back to Harry Mason's and he was there 'til he retired. I think it was 45 years service he done, plus his being away in the Army, you know. But, you did stay. You did do that.

K: So, when he was in Malta, he must have suffered a bit really from the...

LP: Malnutrition. He was in hospital once with some skin trouble or other and it was because of, I think it was scurvy or something like that, because of malnutrition. He told me, he once paid ten shillings, which was a lot of money, for one egg in Malta. He managed to get an egg. But he said it was very, very sad, they'd no food. It's a very rocky island. There's not a lot of soil on the island. What they have is what they brought in. And there wasn't a lot they could grow there, and when they got a leave they went to Gozo which is that little island just off Malta. He was very friendly with a man called Charlie Goodacre. While Joe was about twenty five he was forty five and he worked at the Bank of England, and he lived in Surrey, and we were friends when they came back for a long, long time. And when they came to see us and we went to see them but, of course, he died a long time ago. But he sort of, looked after Joe as his son. (laughs) Yeah. Yes he made some good friends.

K: Yes, so when he went to Malta, he obviously, didn't expect to be there all that time, did he?

LP: Well, no. Actually, they didn't know they were going to Malta. Oh no, they thought they were going to Africa, North Africa, especially when they went into the Mediterranean, as well. They didn't tell them where they were going. Anyway, eventually they got there and that's where they stayed. They love the English people in Malta, they're really fond of the English people. We had a lovely holiday. We went there, must have been twenty five years ago if not more, and we got to our hotel in Sliema, and Joe looked in the phone book, because he was very friendly with this young man called Bertram Padovani and he used to go to their house and he went to his sister's wedding and things like that. And they were only two Padovani's in the book and one was B and Joe rang - we'd only been there half an hour, he came on the phone and he just said 'Is that Bert?' and he said 'Yes' and he said 'well this is Joe Parker' he said 'where are you?' he said 'I'm at the Tigne Court in Sliema.' He said 'I'll be there in ten minutes' and he was. And we met his... he had five children by then, so I'm hoping when I go in September to meet up with him. Because last year I had a friend going to Malta, and I said 'Would you do something for me Vera?' and she said 'I will if I can' I gave her his address, I said, 'Will you go and see if he's still alive' and when she went the lady said he'd moved, but she did give her the address, and she went and found him, and he was so thrilled... but he was so upset when he knew Joe has died. But he was so thrilled that she went, and she had two lovely days when she went to see them. So hopefully, fingers crossed, he's still alive when I go. Yes, because, I'm being paid for by the Maltese Government. It should be Joe who's going, but because he can't go, I've to take his medals. He has five medals. He has the Malta medal, you see and I've to take them, and there's two people been in contact with me. One is an ex Squadron Leader, in the south of England. He rings me up, and the other one is a man who wrote this letter, who is in Malta. He's an Englishman, and he's living now in Malta and he's doing the Malta end of it and this Squadron Leader is doing this end of it. And from what I can gather, there's about 300 going.

K: Did your job end after the War? When the War finished did your job...

LP: When the War finished I had these two children then.

K: So the job at De Havilland, it wasn't the War that finished it. It because you'd had a family?

LP: No, no, when the War ended I decided I wanted to leave.

K: You were still working at the end of the War?

LP: Oh yes I was there 'til the War ended.

K: So, you had a choice, you could leave?

LP: Yes, we stayed on for a few weeks and when Joe was coming back, I still worked for a bit and then when he came to Beaumont Road, I decided I would leave then and because my Dad was still ill, you know, and so I left then. But we stayed on just after the War... But they were closing these small satellites and I would have had to have gone back to Lostock if I've stayed. Well I didn't want to have to do that. So, we decided that I would leave so that was it. But it was a good experience, I mean... and I met some nice people, with a lot of laughs. Yes, it wasn't miserable really when I think about it.

K: Did any RAF people ever visit the factory?

LP: No, not that I know, not... they would visit Lostock. Oh yes, Lostock was massive, massive place. It was nice at Lostock, but it wasn't as homely as where we were. It was a much smaller place and we were all very friendly, you know.

K: Is there anything we've not covered, that you'd like to say about the War? VE Day?

LP: Oh, VE Day, yes. Well we heard it on the radio, well it was the wireless then, we called it the wireless, that the War was over, and I remember it was in the evening, and people didn't know whether they should go to work the following day or what. But we didn't go, to work, but we didn't have a party on that particular day, because we couldn't organise it so quickly. But we did have a party - only in the street, in Kermoor Avenue, yeah, yeah. We had another one when it was the Coronation. (laughs)

K: Did you have one on VJ Day? Or did...

LP: No. Now VJ Day was, that was the 15th August and I often think about that. It was very quiet. It wasn't like... They didn't sort of do it, it was sad really, because they'd been still fighting out in Burma and things and it was just fairly quiet that... Yeah.

K: And you said about going to the cinema, and...

LP: Yeah, we went to the cinema. I remember going to see Gone With The Wind, that was at the Capitol. (laughs) Yeah, that was a wonderful film, yeah.

K: Was it difficult to adjust to life when War finished? Or was it easy?

LP: Well, it was a little bit at first. It was with Joe. The first thing he did when he came back, was have a shower installed in our bathroom, which no-one ever had showers, but... He'd had a shower every day of his life in Malta, you see. So that was the very first, his first priority to have a shower installed.

K: Well, you see, foreign travel, (laughs) broadens the mind!

LP: So we had a shower. (laughs) Yes, it was, it was difficult at first, but we got used to it. I remember when he came back and we, you know, went on holiday, it took a bit of used to getting used to one another again.

K: Yes, I bet it would wouldn't it? It was along time...

LP: Yes, after a few years, you know. They've had a completely different life than we'd had, yes.

K: You'd more or less stayed the same, hadn't you? Apart from you learned to be independent, for all that time.

LP: Mm... and my cousin, he was in the War. He was younger than me and when they came back after the War, Joe and he had an idea of us emigrating to Canada. (laughs) But anyway, it sort of, it fell through. But he was attached to the... they caught Lord Haw Haw. I remember that, the Intelligence Corps. He was a driver for them and he had quite an interesting War, very interesting. Actually at the end he was badly injured in an accident, and almost lost his eye and he was flown back to England, but he was in Liverpool, but he was stationed in Admiral Dönitz's house. He was another one... they don't talk about it. In fact my brother-in-law who is now in a home... It's a pity - he would have been interesting to talk to, but he's going a bit... He's in a home in Bolton. And it wasn't until we were in America, about five years ago, and he came with me, and Jane started to ask him about the War, and he'd never, ever told us anything of what happened - but he was in the D Day landings. And he was in a tank. There was an officer, and four of them, he said in the tank, and the officer, he had his head taken off by a bomb. They were all killed... only him, he was the only survivor in the tank. And he'd never, ever, told anybody this 'til he told my granddaughter, and I was amazed and he said 'Well I just, I don't want to talk about it'. But when I saw that film Saving Private Ryan... I saw that in America, and I said to him 'You want to go and see that film' and he went, and he said it was exactly how's it was.

I've been twice... Two things I must tell you... We went to Normandy when it was the 40th anniversary of the War, and Mrs Thatcher was going, and Ronald Reagan was going, and the week before, we went, we knew it would all be ready for them coming and it was the most upsetting, but wonderful experience to go. We went, you know, the British cemetery, and I went to this man and I said to him 'I think there's a VC here, a young boy in here' and he said 'Yes, you're right'. He was only sixteen, but he said he was eighteen, and he took me to his grave. And there were some Germans buried there as well, he took me to them. And then we went to the American cemetery, and that is absolutely something to see. It's on the top of the cliffs where they scaled, and there are thousands buried in that and they're all, all the graves are looking towards America. And there's this big statue that says 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord' and there's a lot of them which says 'Known only to God' and some of them have Jewish, you know, Jewish symbol. Very, very touching.

ENDS