

F. Coupe & Sons Ltd

**LILY  
WORKS**

LADIES' & CHILDREN'S  
UNDERWEAR MFRS.

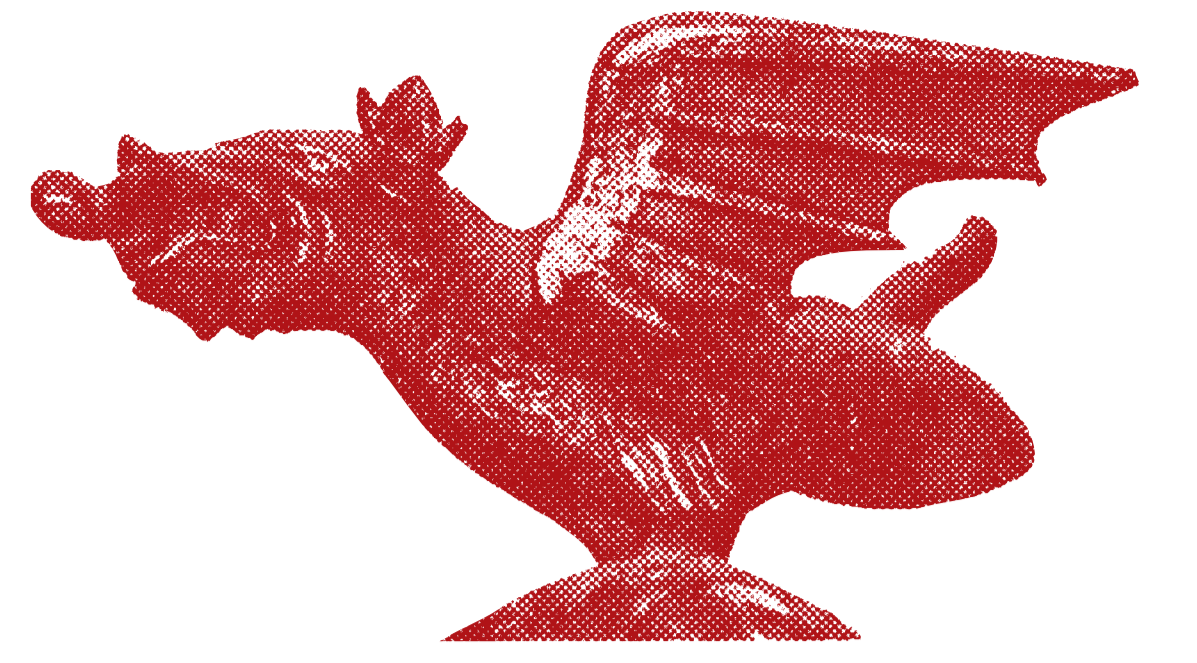
# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 14,362

1939-1945

One Penny



**BIRCHALL BROS. LTD**  
Builders & Contractors  
Darlington Street,  
Middlewich

## SAVINGS AND FUNDRAISERS

### THE FIRST SAVINGS WEEK

**T**HROUGHOUT the Second World War saving campaigns were launched to raise funds for the War effort. The first of these was the 'War Weapons Week' of March 1941.

From the Council School, Capt. France-Hayhurst read messages to a large crowd from the first Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer appealing to Middlewich residents to lend money. The U.D.C. Chairman and Lord Colum Crichton Stuart were present, as were the principal speakers, Commander Dickson and Lt. Col. Daniels V.C.

The three Mid-Cheshire towns of Middlewich, Northwich and Winsford decided to accept the challenge and attempted to raise the sum of £320,000 between them to buy a destroyer. The target was split between the three and divided by population as follows: Northwich £213,333-6s-8d, Winsford £64,000 and Middlewich £42,666-13s-4d.

The population could purchase 3% savings bonds, 3% defence bonds and 2½% national war bonds. The idea fired everyone's imagination and people entered the savings week with great determination.

On March 30th, Middlewich witnessed a very impressive parade. It commenced at the Town Bridge with the Chairman, Mr G Williamson, and the Town Clerk, Mr A Goulden leading the way in the mayoral car.

They were followed by the Cheshire Regiment Band, then the boy scouts with a banner proclaiming War Weapons Week, the Middlewich 'M' Company of the Home Guard, the Observer Corps, Middlewich ex-servicemen, the Red Cross and First Aid personnel, telephonists and messengers, Fire Brigade, A.F.S and their mechanical units.

The route was from the Town Bridge, Wheelock St, Newton Bank, St Ann's Road, Kitfield Avenue, Booth Lane, Lewin St and to the saluting base outside the Victoria Building. The salute was taken by Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, Sir William Bromley-Davenport.

### Fundraising Champions

**T**HE Civil Defence Services organised a display on the football ground off Webbs Lane on Wednesday 3rd April when RAF dive-bombers took part in the 'action'. They were provided with an excellent opportunity to put into practise all they had learned over the months and the vast crowd were treated to a thrilling spectacle.

The planes came over in four waves. With the first wave incendiaries and high explosives were dropped and wardens and stirrup pumps came into action with the starting of fires at various points. With the second wave were more incendiaries and H.E. with fires and casualties bringing in first aid and ambulance parties. Wave three brought gas bombs and the workers in respirations dealt with many 'casualties' whilst female wardens gave a demonstration with baby respirators.

A 'House' erected in the centre of the ground, was fired as the airmen made the last dive on the scene and the crowd saw the fire brigade in action.

Throughout the week, whist drives, dances and poster competitions, involving all the local schools, helped to raise the tremendous sum of £81,765, an investment per head of population (6,000) of £13-12s-6½d.

The total raised by the three towns was £642,602. Northwich £432,259, Winsford £128,578 and Middlewich £81,765. This was enough for two destroyers, or equipment for 33,000 infantry soldiers, or 130 fighter aircraft or 100 heavy ack-ack guns. The week was described as 'brilliant' and the lasting result was that a permanent chain of savings groups had been set up.

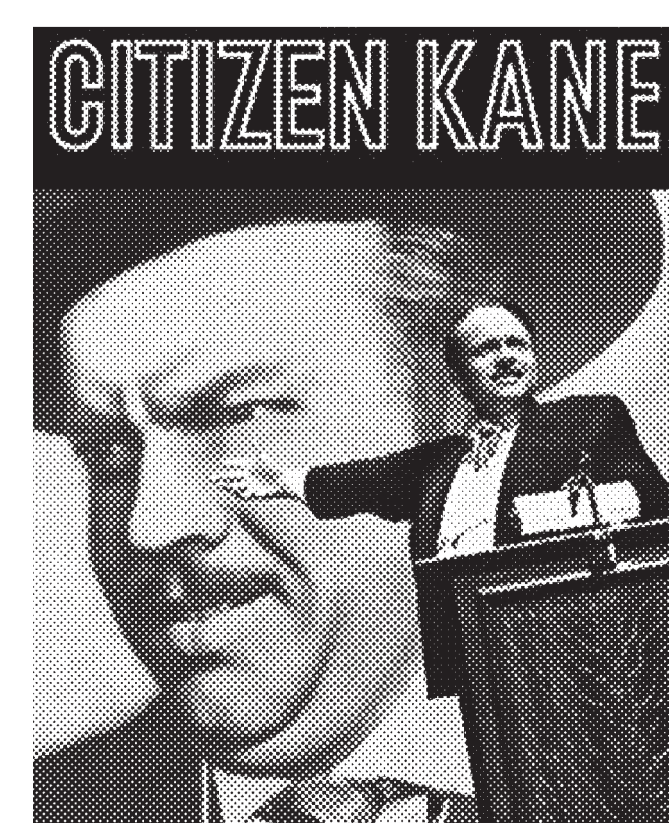
### WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SERVICE



PHOTO SUPPLIED BY ALLAN EARL

#### Ravenscroft Hall, First Aid Post

During the end of November 1939 and the beginning of December there was great activity by members of the Women's Voluntary Service, whilst on duty or at home, to knit comforters for troops at the front. There were also bridge and whist drives to raise funds for local hospital supplies and the First Aid post at Ravenscroft Hall. Supplies to the First Aid post were made all the more important after it sustained damage by a bomb.



#### ● FILMS AROUND TOWN

The fund organising committee had use of a touring cinema on the following Monday night, whilst each night of the week trailer films were shown at the Alhambra. During the day the cinema van had visited the council schools, Middlewich Salt Co. Works, St Mary's School and the Victoria Building. By Wednesday night Middlewich had reached a massive £48,000.

**DID YOU ENJOY YOUR BREAKFAST this morning?**



In this climate breakfast is a very important meal: you can make breakfast more enjoyable and be certain of a good appetite if the marmalade you use is Chivers "Olde English."

This is the marmalade with plenty of chunky peel, all beautifully tender and easy to digest. "Olde English" is famous also for its delightful touch and tonic bitterness—no appetite can resist it. Order a jar from your grocer to-day.

**CHIVERS  
Olde English  
MARMALADE**

1 lb. 8d. The Morning Tonic 2 lb. 1/2 3d

**After your Bath**



Enjoy the soothing and cooling comfort of an "all over" dusting with Cuticura Talcum. The purest of all talcum powders, it absorbs perspiration, prevents irritation, and keeps you delightfully fresh and fragrant all day.

**Cuticura  
TALCUM**

**THOMAS  
SUMMERFIELD**

AGRICULTURAL,  
BUILDERS'  
IRONMONGERS  
GUNS AND  
AMMUNITION  
HIGH TOWN

# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 15,928

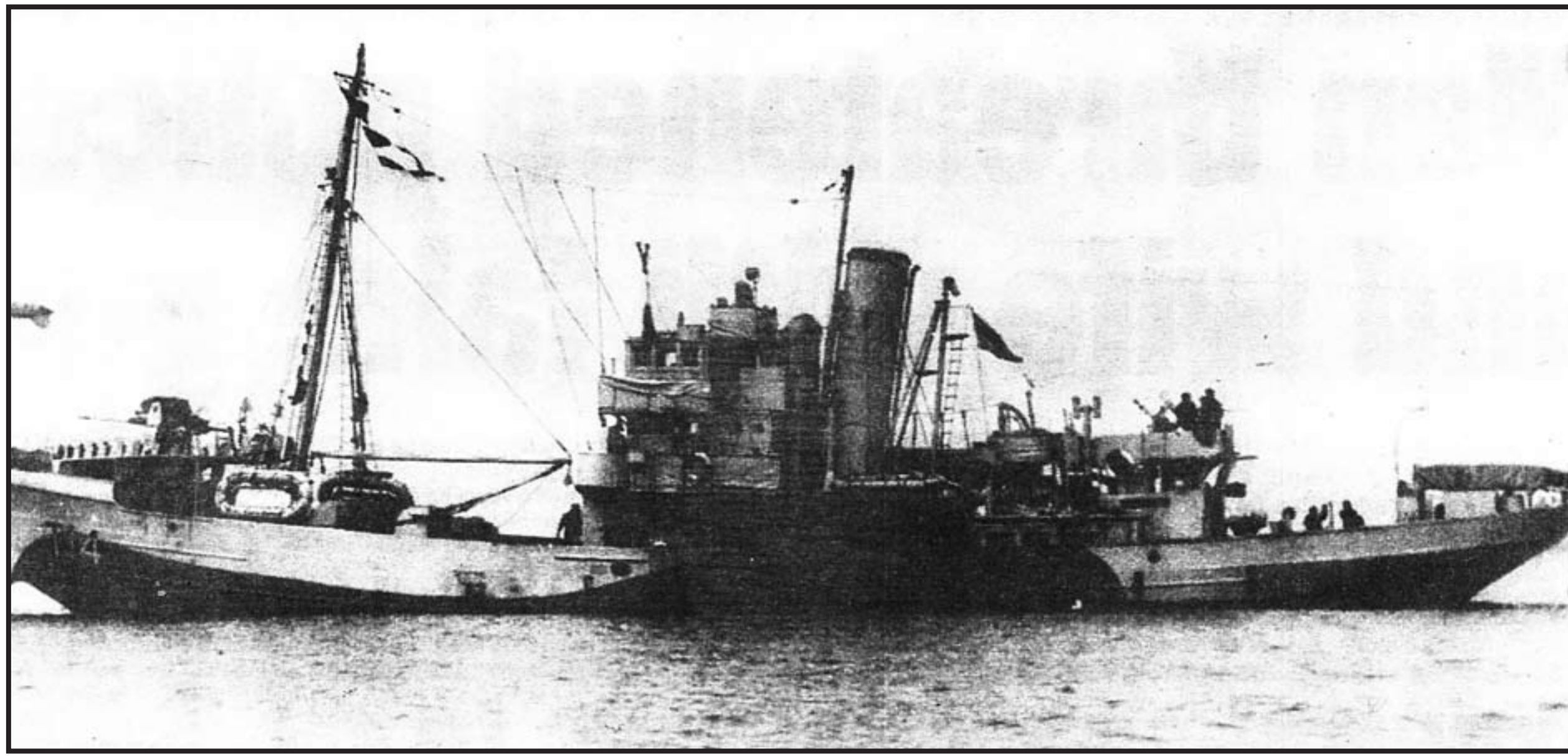
1939-1945

One Penny



**H. SWEATMAN**  
General Ironmonger  
Lewin Shoeing Forge  
MIDDLEWICH

## THE STORY OF HMS JASPER THE SHIP THAT MIDDLEWICH BUILT



● HMS Jasper at anchor and painted with wavy camouflage, which was used to give a false impression of movement and speed through the water.

### Lives lost in the English Channel

**H**MS Jasper had started life as a fishing vessel built in 1931/2 and like so many other ships at the time of war was taken over by the Royal Navy to be used as an anti-submarine trawler. Adaptations were made to the vessel including a wave camouflage paint job, giving the false impression of movement and speed in the water.

Middlewich had raised funds to adopt 'Jasper' but it went further than that. School children and others from the local communities wrote to some of the crew members and sent parcels to them.

On December 1st 1942, HMS Jasper was on patrol in the English Channel hunting German Submarines. Its job was to protect His Majesty's fleet and the coast from German E-boats and U-boats. But on this patrol the hunter became the hunted as the anti-submarine trawler was blown out of the water by an E-boat which had sneaked unseen into the English Channel

There were 38 crew members aboard HMS Jasper when it was hit and 11 crew members died as a result of the action.

### FIRE BRIGADE DO IT AGAIN

The Fire Brigade held a series of dances for the Urban District Council Chairman's Comforts Fund and their own fund for the forces.

They sent 10/- to every serving man in the forces in India and Egypt, and 120 cigarettes to those in France, whilst Home Forces received a 2/6d postal order and 50 cigarettes.

At the end of 1940 there were eight Middlewich men in Egypt, 26 in France with the British Expeditionary Forces and 77 on home soil. The comforts fund provided for every serving man to receive a parcel before Christmas, consisting of a knitted scarf, a pair of mittens, razor blades, one tin café au lait, a Christmas pudding, tin of sweets, bar of chocolate and a pack of playing cards.

### WARSHIP WEEK OUTSTANDING EXHIBITION

**T**he government launched the nationwide 'Warship Week' February 1942. On February 21st the army and navy exhibition was being assembled in the Town Hall having been arranged by the Gas Company (via the U.D.C.) and organised by Mr J H Booth and his staff.

The exhibition attracted hundreds of people every day. It was open from 10am until 3pm and the admission charge was 6d. In the entrance hall and on the first floor were dozens of items that generated discussion amongst young and old alike. There were hydrostatic and acoustic mines, naval guns, a range of shells, models of destroyers, freighters and various other naval craft. Aeronautical technical equipment, machine guns, the latest bomb-releasing equipment, landing lights, a search light, parachutes (some wrapped, some open) rubber dinghies, wireless transmitting and receiving equipment, camera guns and an aircraft engine. Posters and diagrams explained the function of the items on display. It was a huge success. Resident Alan Platt recalls 'I remember going down to the Town Hall, the old Town Hall that got knocked down when St. Michael's Way was done. There were all items off an aircraft that had come down, or got shot down or whatever, and it was all being displayed in the Town Hall which as a lad was quite interesting'.

During 'Warship week' Middlewich was a busy town; on the Wednesday the proceeds from the Alhambra cinema, both houses, were given to the savings week. There was a gala dance, cinema vans and on the Saturday the largest grand military and civilian parade took place with Admiral Sir Percy Noble taking the salute. Over 400 people took part, with the 30th Battalion South Lancashire Regiment at the head. Middlewich people lined the streets five or six deep, cheering and clapping.

A sum of £40,000 was required for this week for the hull of the minesweeper 'Jasper'. When the final amounts from the various events were added up, the amazing total of £72,055 was revealed, more than the cost of the complete minesweeper of £65,000.



● The ships company heard of the amount and decided to present the town with a plaque bearing the ship's crest.



● **FETE AT  
CRICKET FIELD**  
As autumn 1941 approached the Women's Voluntary Service had sent over 100 parcels since mid-April and now they organised a fete on the cricket ground. The opening ceremony was performed by

Mrs Seddon and concluded with the National Anthem played by the Centenary Band. Entertainment consisted of shooting at goal, coconut shy, fruit machines, rolling the penny, bran tub, knocking the hat off Mr Davies, skee ball and a fortune teller. £50 was raised and that meant that over 250 parcels would be sent to the soldiers, sailors or airmen. Each parcel contained a pair of socks, soap, towel, razor blades, handkerchiefs and gum.



**WILLIAM BOOSEY & SON**  
 Nurserymen, seedsmen,  
 landscape gardener,  
 florists & fruit growers  
 MIDDLEWICH

# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 12,598

1939-1945

One Penny



MIDDLEWICH GAS,  
 LIGHT & COKE Co.  
 Lower Street  
 Middlewich

## Middlewich town throws up its defences

### BEATING THE INVADER

The thoughts of the country were centred on whether Hitler would invade Britain or not. Many people thought that he had lost his chance at Dunkirk and was now concentrating his bombers on the cities, ports and industrial locations. To counteract this fear the government issued a leaflet entitled 'Beating the Invader'. It was distributed through the post office, (14 million leaflets) to the general public and the two pages of advice and exhortation can be summed up – "give all the help you can to our troops, do not tell the enemy anything, do not give him anything, do not help in any way. The Home Guard are supported by strong mobile columns, whenever enemy numbers require it, will inevitably come to grips with the invaders and there is little doubt we shall soon destroy them. The Prime Minister points out that if invasion comes everyone will be eager to play their part, but where the enemy lands or tries to land there will be the most violent fighting."



● Training to defend their country

### READY FOR INVASION

**I**N 1937 the chief constable of the county made an appeal for Air Raid Precaution and Anti Gas personnel during November. Middlewich had already been recruiting in this regard and issued their first Anti gas certificates of competence during December. They also asked the Chief Constable for the loan of a film dealing with air raid precautions and warnings, and the clerk of the county council was asked for a supply of handbooks on the subject.

Twelve people were appointed on to the Urban District Council Air Raid Precautions committee. Lectures were held at various public places throughout the town and were well attended. At each lecture the U.D.C. appealed for volunteers for duties as Air Raid Wardens. A feeling of apprehension was creeping into the local and national press concerning the direction in which the country seemed to be heading.

There were two things that brought home to the Middlewich people that war was a distinct possibility, firstly the Chief Air Raid Warden organised a practice blackout throughout Middlewich to be held on Monday September 26th and Tuesday September 27th from 11pm to 2am.

All windows were to be darkened and all street lamps extinguished. Vehicle owners were asked to keep their vehicles off the road during these hours. Secondly the school children arrived home one winter afternoon with a small square cardboard box carried over their shoulders on a piece of string, inside was a gas mask. The government announced that 400,000 Anderson Shelters had been manufactured for civilian use and that the first British National Register for war service had been prepared.

### PREPARING FOR AIR ATTACK

**B**y the end of January 1939, Middlewich Urban District Council was well on the way preparing its town for war. The town's Women's Guild and the women's branch of the British Legion were helping to prepare a local register for the scheme of evacuation. A good number of volunteers had come forward for the A.R.P. Fire fighting Service and 200 women volunteers for the various aspects of the civil defence work.

The houses that had bought stirrup pumps sought the permission of the U.D.C. and had a notice placed on the wall by the front door, or on the front gate which read 'Stirrup Pump Kept Here', in silver or white lettering on a red or maroon background. At these positions there were also one or two buckets of sand and one or two buckets of water which were always full and necessary for the extinguishing of incendiary bombs. Many homes had a first aid kit with jars of cream for burns, plus bandages and lint.

The ARP now held monthly exercises and they opened an office in the Victoria Building. Mr B Stanway was appointed as clerk and further volunteers were requested for the first aid parties. The monthly exercises took the form of mock air raids, gas attacks and the treatment of casualties and on each occasion there was also a trial blackout, from Midnight to 4am, when the wardens for each district patrolled their streets looking for chinks of light or lights left on. The Auxiliary Firemen also took part in the monthly exercises. They had just been issued with uniforms and badges and taken receipt of a new light trailer pump supplied by the home office.



● Home Guard on exercise, checking vehicles

PHOTO SUPPLIED BY ALLAN EARL

### DEFENCES IN PLACE

**R**ESIDENT Allan Earl remembers the defenses put in by the Middlewich U.D.C. "Rev. Harlow was at Arnhem, captured in the desert and badly treated, I remember him as a tall dark man, and he was Australian. I got to know this fellow quite well because I was in the church choir, and he volunteered at the beginning of the war.

Before he volunteered he was Chief Air Raid Warden of the town, and I remember slit trenches being dug at the end of St. Anne's Avenue. After that he went to war, but most streets by that time had blast shelters". Allan goes on to remember the shelters put in place, "they were brick with a concrete roof, whereby if you were caught outside and bombs were dropping, you could run inside these shelters out of the blast. Apart from that, one or two shops in the town had their cellars re-enforced as public air raid shelters. One was at the bottom of Southway, which is now an optician.

I used a blast shelter opposite Lawrence Avenue, when I was shopping on a Saturday morning. The air raid siren went and I knew I couldn't get home so I went in the shelter. There was also an observer post near Station Bridge, Holmes Chapel Rd, and just fifteen yards from it was a concrete pill box with slits in it and a door, the slits were facing Holmes Chapel Road.

● THE WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SERVICE held sewing meetings every Tuesday to make and prepare nursing equipment. Middlewich was the first to organise this work and after a short time the County Council heard about the ladies work and informed the Home Office. They both sent representatives to Middlewich to see what was being done. The work was congratulated and recommended to the Women's Voluntary Service nationally.

**DRINKWATER**  
*Horace Drinkwater*  
 PROPRIETOR

**BOOTS AND SHOES**

20 & 22  
 Wheelock Street  
 MIDDLEWICH

# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 13,751

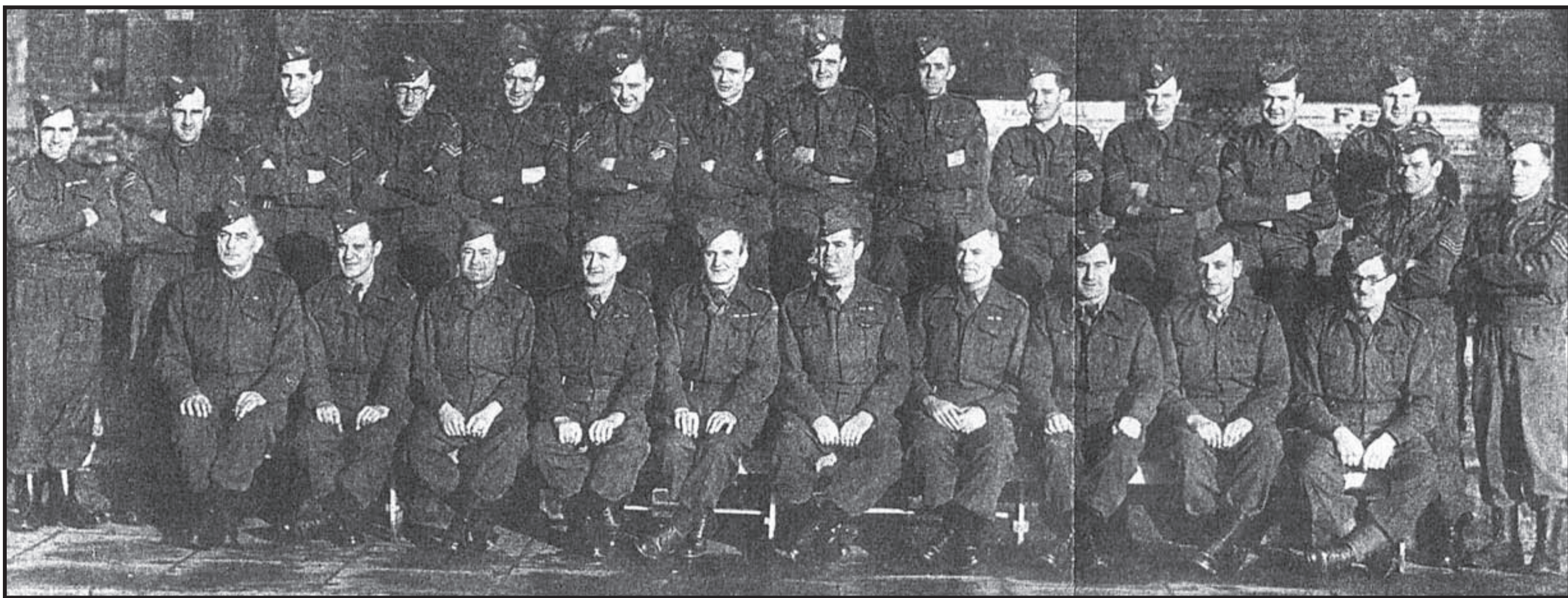
1939-1945

One Penny



Miss Mabel B. Sant  
**MILLINER**  
 11 Hightown  
 MIDDLEWICH

## MIDDLEWICH HOME GUARD ESTABLISHED



## VOLUNTEER FORCE OVER-SUBSCRIBED

**O**N May 14th 1940, after the 6 o'clock news, the Secretary of State for War, the Right Honourable Anthony Eden, made a broadcast appeal for ex-servicemen to report to the nearest police station, in order to form a new defence force to be called the 'Local Defence Volunteers'. At Middlewich the first man to report to the police station was Mr George Blades, of St Ann's Rd, and within a few hours the list was growing rapidly. Due to the immense interest the new force created, the local police station was unable to cope and the assistance of the Territorial Association was sought.

Two battalions were formed; the 1st Battalion was to cover the area south of a line drawn roughly from Winsford, including Middlewich, to Holmes Chapel and down to the Staffordshire border but omitting Crewe, some 120 square miles. These areas could not easily be controlled so the various towns and their surrounding districts were formed into companies; 'M' company was Middlewich. Capt. J Moody was its first Company Commander and one of his first instructions was that all men should provide themselves with a bicycle and a heavy staff. The men first wore civilian clothes with the addition of an armband with the letters L.D.V.

The first HQ for the Middlewich Company was in the Primrose League Building in Queen Street. In the beginning they had a limited number of rifles and a very small quantity of ammunition was provided. These were supplemented by shotguns and ex First World War revolvers, loaned by farmers and friends. The first duties for the company included selecting sites for road blocks, take note of the positions of vulnerable lines of communication and organise daily rosters. The company was divided into three platoons, the main daily tasks were manning of the observation posts and guarding of vulnerable sites, from dawn to dusk.

For the children of the town, the serious business of defence was often comical to them as the L.D.V. was practising with whatever they had at the time. James Gallagher recalls; "the best laugh we had was when the Home Guard started. They were at top of High Town, where the carpet shop is now, and we used to go to watch them because they were all old men, bar for people that were just waiting to be called up, seventeen, they were. But the old men - it was comical! When they first started they used to have brush staves - they didn't have guns!

We used to follow them when they were on what they called manoeuvres. And we went up Sutton Lane one day and they were practising down to the river. And they were going to where it was about seven or eight inches deep and paddling across as though they were attacking the enemy, like. Anyway, one old chap ran down and he jumped in and he must have mistaken where he was and he went straight under the water!"

## Bridges Secured

**T**HE Information gathered by the L.D.V Company Commander was now put into practice. Middlewich is entirely surrounded by water and this played a key part in defence. At the Station Bridge, in a field to the right, men began to build a concrete pill box. A door at the rear afforded access to the building 15'0 by 15'0 and 7'0 in height and on each concrete face there was a slit large enough for a soldier to discharge his rifle.

In addition to this and serving both as a road block and anti tank measure, there was series of holes dug into Station Bridge, through the road in a staggered pattern. About 3'0' deep and protected by a concrete lid, they formed the housing for steel posts, each about 7'0' long and placed in piles on the road side and on either side of the bridge. If the enemy were to attack, the posts would prevent vehicles and personnel carriers from proceeding. All the other bridges had circular concrete blocks stored at the side of the road.

## CIVILIAN PROTECTION

At the end of 1941 the UDC decided to commence with the erection of communal shelters throughout the town and 30 were put in immediately, the first 15 to be built at Seddon St, Leas Passage, Lower St, Newtonia, Park Rd, Lewin St, Hayhurst Ave, Sutton Lane, St Ann's Rd, Alexandra Rd, Kitfield Ave and Cross Lane. These shelters, of brick with a flat concrete roof, were not able to withstand a direct hit but were sufficient protection against bricks, flying glass and shrapnel. The shelters were split into several compartments off a long corridor that ran along the inside of the exterior wall. There were no windows or artificial lighting.

*Match abandoned... but downpour starts a Love Game!*

The rain can spoil a lot of things, but it needn't spoil your romance if you take the trouble to see that you are just as smart in the wet as you are in the sun.

That's the secret of the "C.M." Weathercoat—it ensures style, when other coats are just shapeless bundles.



**WEATHERCOATS**

Many stylish models for Men and Women from Outfitters and Stores

Raincoats from 21/- Waterproofs from 10/6

MADE BY CHAS. MACINTOSH & CO. LTD.,

ORIGINATORS OF THE WEATHERPROOF IN 1834

Write for Free Style Leaflet to Dept. 26, Chas. Macintosh & Co. Ltd., Bridport Road, Edmonton, London, N.18.

## ● Town Secrets

Resident Marjorie Hepburn spoke about a little known fact at the time, "certain people out of the town were chosen, and I did know one man who went and he was the manager of the Co-op drapery stores, and they went on bike to Sproston. Somebody was there all the time, and all these years later, because apparently it's only just stopped in recent years, to scan the skies and see if there's anything unusual. In the war it would be to look for German aeroplanes which, funnily enough, even the smallest child could tell if a plane in the sky was a German one or one of ours, because they droned, they had engines that went mwow, mwow, mwow. Nothing like the sound ours made. So if you heard that sound you didn't need a siren to tell you, cos you knew that was a German aeroplane. Apparently these men went in secret all over Britain, to certain parts of the country, hidden, and nobody knew what they were doing, or that they even went. I mean I was lucky that I knew this man so I knew that he went and did it, but to keep it on just shows you that we didn't trust anybody, even all these years after the end of the war".

**HENRY SEDDON & SONS**  
 SALT WORKS  
 - Pepper St.  
 CARRIAGE BLDERS  
 - Lewin St.  
 BRICK & PIPES WORKS  
 - Warmingham La.

# The Middlewich Times



SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 12,599

1939-1945

One Penny

John William Kinsey  
**GROCCERS**  
 1 Wheelock Street

## THE WAR AT HOME

### SHOE BOX WAR

**W**HEN the siren went off, you went into an air-raid shelter mostly, but we never went into an air-raid shelter, we used to go under our stairs, and that was considered to be a safe place.

You've got to remember we're going back to the time when nobody had anything. You lived by paying a shilling a week on a club and then you would either do that until you'd saved £5 or £10 or in some cases those that were a bit better off might go to £20, and then when you drew that money out then you'd go and buy something big or something for your house or your clothes.

So that was one of your most treasured possessions, the money that you were noting down that you'd paid this shilling. So into this shoebox you would put your ration books, everybody in the family had a ration book for the food - 2 oz of butter and 2 oz of sugar and 2 oz of cheese - makes you wonder how we lived but we did. But you'd put your ration books in, you'd put your Co-op Stores book in, and that was the book where you bought your goods throughout the week and then you paid the money for it on a Friday.

You used to have a book and they'd tear a little strip out when you'd done a transaction and then on a Friday - wages were always paid on Fridays then - you went and paid your Co-op up. So that book had to be kept safe. People didn't have bank books. It was many years after the war before many people had bank books because they never had any money to put in them. Also in this shoebox you'd put in your Death Policies and Birth Certificates. Everything important you could think of went into that shoebox. People didn't make Wills in those days, but those that were coming from larger houses or whatever who were fortunate enough to have anything to leave, they would obviously put their Will in it, and the Deeds from the houses, anything like that. You're whole life in a shoe box.

### HIDE THAT SPOT

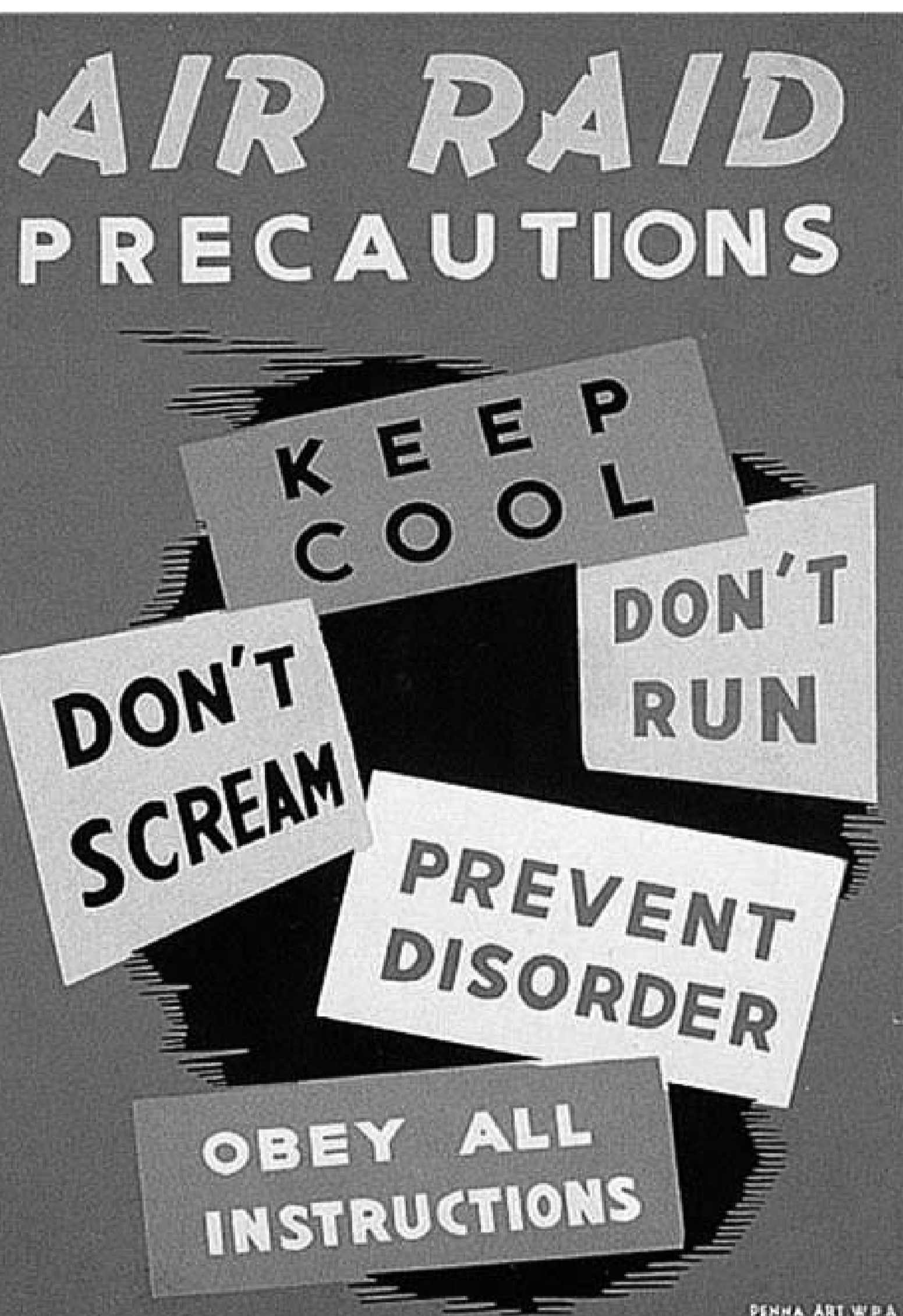
**in a second!**

A TOUCH with Spot-Stik instantly, safely and completely conceals pimples, moles, spots, black eyes, scars, small skin discolorations or blemishes. Waterproof—stays on all day. Three shades: light, medium and dark. At Boots, all chemists and smart toilet counters. In case of difficulty, write to: Splendor Ltd., (Dept. DM5), Nottingham. COVER MARK



STANDARD 2/6  
 DE LUXE - 4/6

**Spot-Stik** HIDES BLEMISHES INSTANTLY



### Action in the night sky

"When war was declared I was well aware as a young boy that there were RAF men knocking about with their families, stationed in Byley, which was the only N.W. fighter station. We had on several occasions I remember, coming home from school at the beginning of 1940, I heard the siren go and the instruction was to run home as fast as you possibly could. You'd then see small aircraft high up in the sky and you'd hear the drones of the German aircraft. They had a distinctive tone. Then in a few minutes, you'd see the fighter aircraft go up from Byley RAF station and there'd be fire and noise and stuff. By that time, I'd got home. And, of course, later you'd hear of planes crashed, men coming down in parachutes. I think from memory it was mostly night attacks. I think, looking back now, it was because there were air stations mainly on the east coast, so the aircraft coming from Norway would come across several areas we were defending with fighters stations, so I presume that they thought night flights were better options. From my back bedroom window in King Street looking over, you could see the fires at Manchester. You would hear the siren go, which was on the police station in Queen Street, the guns opening up from Crewe Works. They were big heavy guns and sometimes you'd hear the light attack battery from the bottom of King Street, on a patch of ground opposite Kings Crescent, a piece of raising ground, and we as boys were allowed to go and see the gun. It didn't stay long, it seemed to move, and that went off in a rapid fire bang, bang, bang, bang, from my home".

### Crusader's In The Streets

**I** was sewing when I left school and I always wanted to help with the war effort. I went to a factory in Sandbach. During the war I had to go into munitions and I ended up at Fodens and my brother was there as well and Reg. I never remember any air raids when I worked at Fodens and I worked nights but I never remember any air raids and having to go into the shelter.

I can't remember shelters at Fodens, because the road through the works used to turn down by the station and when you went back past springs on the left, the road then was closed off. It was a public road but during the war it was closed off because of people getting harmed.

Fodens motor works built Crusader tanks and they used to go past the houses on tests. I was glad I wasn't involved in that, I was in the back office booking the men on the work. We were so proud you know because we thought we were part of building the tanks. Of course there were other army vehicles they built.

Then of course we ended up at Fodens, we had concerts there, I used to love it when we were on nights. They used to give us concerts in the canteen, you missed that with regular days but that's the only part of our nights that we liked because of the concerts to start us off. We had some good shows really. But it was a grim time wasn't it really you had to be so careful with your blackouts you know, not even a little grain of light had to get through because the planes would see. One thing that you did notice very much was that in the war years Fodens made tanks, they made a few trucks, but in the main they made tanks, and the tanks would go down the road. They sort of did a run from Elworth to Middlewich to Holmes Chapel back to Sandbach and Elworth again, and these tanks were on the road. They had a very modest silencer and were very noisy and they made all these caterpillar marks, track marks, on the road. They weren't very easily manoeuvred and certainly one day one went straight through the railings outside the Cledford Chapel - something had gone wrong with the steering mechanism or something like that. But you saw those regularly on the road, these Crusader tanks".



● Crusader Tank's being made in their secret locations in Britain  
 PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED BY THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

"We used to do fire watching, you would do your 2 hours and then there was a big wooden hut, we used to go in there and have a sleep. Also in Middlewich there was a searchlight at Occleston. You go to Sutton lane down the bank, over the hill up a narrow pavement, when you get to the top, there used to be farm cottages at one time and the search-light was in the field. From the top of that pavement, turn right through the gate and the searchlight was on the left in the field".

Rd. Smith, Manager

**ALHAMBRA  
CINEMA**

WHEELOCK STREET  
MIDDLEWICH

# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 12,600

1939-1945

One Penny



**Powell & Sons Ltd**  
WHO. CLOTHING MFRS.  
48 & 50 Wheelock St.

# THE WAR AT HOME

## The Day Rolls Royce Was Bombed

**D**ECEMBER 29th 1940 - 17 people were killed. Many Residents remember the bombing of Rolls Royce in Crewe, here follows a few recollections of that fateful afternoon... "My father worked at Rolls Royce, and he should have been there that afternoon it was hit. We'd come out of Sunday school. Me and Pam and others were walking over the Railway Bridge to see my uncle, when the siren went. He was on duty at the observer post and he came running across the field, 'Get off home, get off home quick', and then there was this big bang and that's when we found out that Rolls Royce had been hit. It was a Sunday afternoon at 3pm, and my dad should have been in work, but, he'd swapped shifts with his friend who was going to a wedding or christening and unfortunately he was killed. My dad took it pretty bad, he was his mate. When you worked like that, it seemed to me that you worked in a team. They were washing cylinder blocks for airplane engines. It was really sad that Sunday".



ROLLS ROYCE WORKSHOP - PHOTO PERMISSION BY BENTLEY MOTORS LTD

"I always remember that where we lived we could see the barrage balloons going up over Crewe. As soon as they knew there was a raid they put the barrage balloons up, planes used to come to bomb Crewe works or Crewe Station. At Crewe Station you could get a train to anywhere; it would have crippled the country if they bombed that. Then of course there was Rolls Royce where they made the engines for the Spitfires. My father worked at Rolls Royce, he was a turner and setter of the plane engines. And he was working the Sunday - the Germans came over. The plane should have bombed the first workshop and the third, and return to bomb the second, and anything that was the other side of it. At any rate they missed the first workshop, they hit the third and the field outside, and the other bomb hit the fourth workshop. So, really, even though some of the workers were killed, he was lucky that they hadn't hit the lot. You just had to wait and hope he came home. Luckily he was in the workshop that was missed, in the middle".

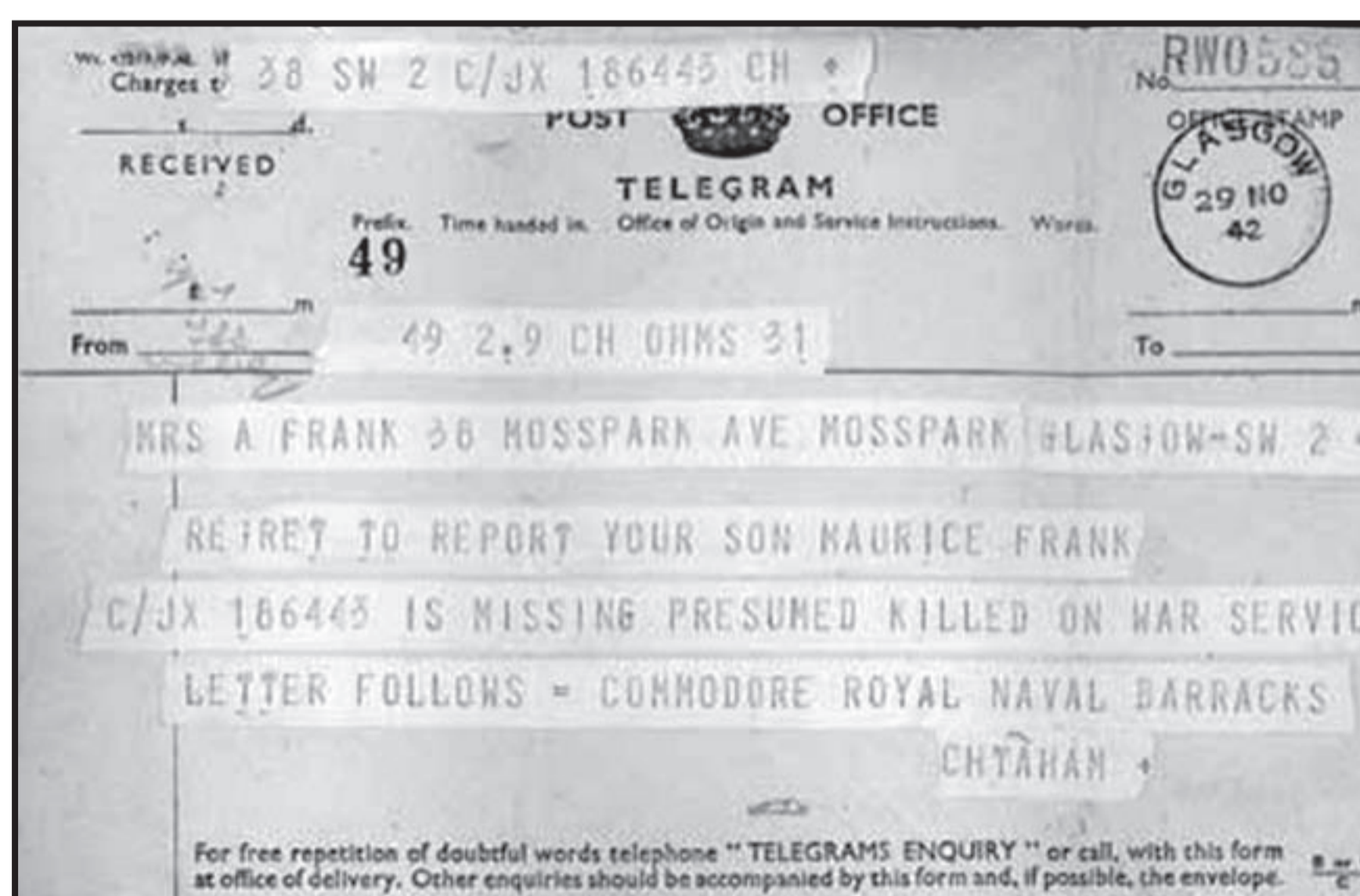
"I always remember this Sunday, we were playing pitch 'n' toss in the back garden and we heard this thud, thud, thud, and one of the chaps said "That's a Gerry!" and the other said "Don't talk silly! Sunday...a German!" He said "It is!" Then all of a sudden there was this screaming noise and this black thing came out of the sky, dove down, and then we saw it shoot up again and there was two almighty bangs. They'd bombed Rolls Royce at Crewe. And that night my dad always used to put Lord Haw-Haw on when he was speaking, he said "One of our aircraft has been and bombed Rolls Royce today at Crewe and has returned home." And it was true. It had gone straight through one of their workshops, I think, and there were quite a few people killed. About two minutes after it had gone the aeroplanes came from Byley Aerodrome but they were too late".



## Bad News On The Doorstep

"I started work in September 1939 and I had a job as a telegraph boy in Middlewich. There were very few telephones in those days. People were informed when somebody had been killed or missing by telegram and that was it. I was the bloke who had to take the telegram. I mean, I didn't know what was in the telegram but the counter staff took the message over the phone and wrote it down and they used to say 'Well, you better be careful with this one, somebody's been killed.' I used to have to knock on the door and give them the telegram and you had to wait in those days to see if they wanted to send a reply but I knew that they wouldn't want to send a reply to this kind of a message. I never saw anybody break down in tears there and then, but it could have been a son, it could have been a husband, I did that until about October '43 and then I went in the army".

Information on loved ones was sparse; communications weren't always reliable, as

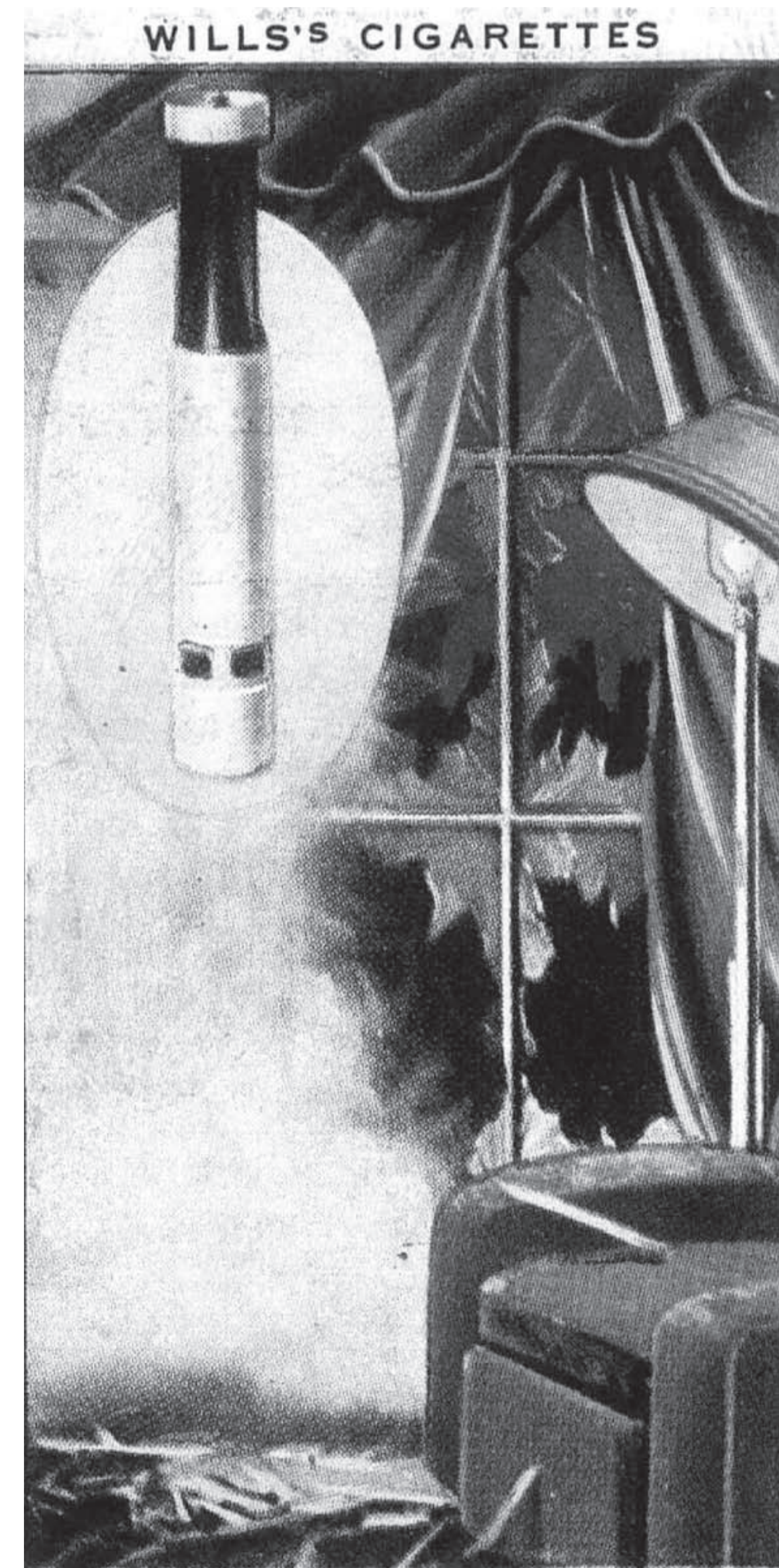


● Example of a war telegram in 1942; very little information is disclosed.

Marjorie Hepburn explains... "You see, when I was a kid, if you saw the telegram lad it put fear in you ... I can still picture how he was dressed with his round hat and his black uniform, a belt across here with a purse on. He always had a red bike and if it turned in your street you'd be thinking, "I wonder where he's going." And it might be that it said happy birthday to somebody that was 21, telegrams were occasionally sent for that. You're talking now of a town with only six phones, so you couldn't go anywhere and phone. Moss's at the top, that's Newton Hall now, my mum used to clean there, he had a phone and we could have access to that, but generally people wouldn't know that. You wouldn't know what number to ring, so you got a telegram".

## IMPACT!

The worst bomb I remember was at Kinderton Hall, which is Byley way, and it took the windows out of the east side of the church and also windows in the shops in High Town, which of course is completely altered from those days. We lived in 20 King Street we had a conservatory, and it was a long one going from the toilet, the coal house and the wash house was inside it and it took the complete roof, glass roof, right up to the bedroom window, ... and my mother and father were in that bedroom and it never touched the bedroom, it took the whole lot of the glass out".



INCENDIARY BOMB AND ITS EFFECT

**PEAGRAMS  
STORES  
LTD**

**GROCCERS**

16 & 18 Hightown  
Middlewich

# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 17,663

1939-1945

One Penny

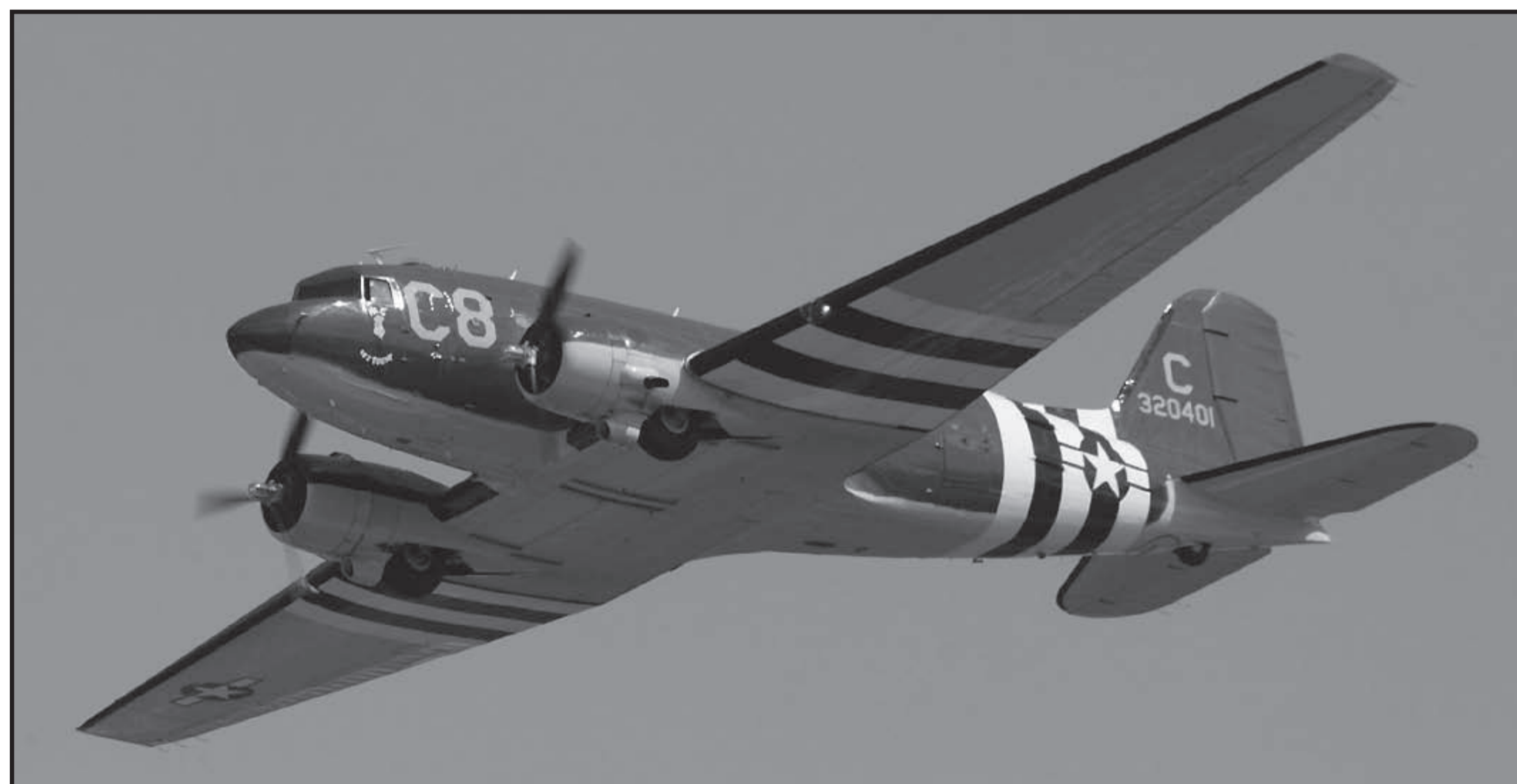


**PLUMBER**

**George Hamlett**

47 Lewin Street, Middlewich

## THE WAR AWAY FROM HOME



● C47 Dakota

### RESCUE AND SUPPLIES

I was on transport command, on Dakotas flying supplies out to the continent. We were an ambulance aircraft flying supplies out and bringing the wounded back. We were very busy, it was a long and heavy day. I was a wireless operator, I never did any gunning because there was no ammo on the aircraft. Anyway we picked up all sorts of people from the German displacement camps, with tattooed numbers on, they were in a very poor state. You couldn't give them a full meal because apparently the stomach shrinks if you are not eating anything. Give them a full meal and it would almost kill them. We used to take them to receiving centres. The aircraft were never named and all aircraft places were just numbers on our maps. We used to take these people to the centre, they would give them a light meal of dried fruit or something like that or a doughnut, that was about it. We used to come home at night; we were based at a place in Oxford, a place called Broadwell.

We used to fly out regular with loads of petrol. A little spark and we would just go bang. Awful smell. We had four rows of jerry cans right down the aircraft. I didn't like it at all but anyway we had to do it and of course we brought all the wounded back irrespective of nationality, they all came back.

We were coming back one night and we had a load of stretcher cases on board, at that time Germany had got garrisons in the French ports of Dunkirk, places along the French coast. We were flying supposedly in a safety lane and suddenly we saw tracer bullets coming up and as soon as we saw them we heard a hell of a bang and part of the starboard wing went off. Well it put the shits up us. The throttle wires on the engine control are like a little lead wire you can only go to that wire when you are in normal flying conditions but in emergency you would push them forward and break the wire so you had a bit extra speed. Our skipper, Flight Lieutenant Glen, banked over to port and got us back safely, when we got back and looked at the crack that happened, it was a large piece that had gone missing. We were lucky, another 2 or 3 feet and it would have been petrol tank; that would have been the end of us. I know when we got back many times we had to go into to a cubicle and they would put tubes down our clothes and spray us to de-lice us because there were lice you see on these people. Awful, it really was.

CYRIL BAILEY

### D-DAY ARRIVES

The Normandy Landings on D Day took place June 6th 1944. The news caused excitement and apprehension at the same time. A number of Middlewich men were landed on the beaches on D Day, including Pte. Phillip Joseph Atkin of the Pioneer Corps. On first day he was wounded in the left leg, above the ankle, and was back in England by midnight the same day. Mr Reg Taylor landed by means of the Mulberry Harbour, in Normandy on D Day and Mr G.F. Pugh who was a joiner and native of the town, had been one of the many hundreds of men helping to build the section of the harbour at one of the South Coast towns.



### Troop Evacuation

On May 29th 1941, came the evacuation of the British Forces from Dunkirk. 222 naval vessels and 665 civilian craft took part in the evacuation. Several Middlewich men were mentioned in the local press at this time, Stoker Wormauld of Croxton Lane, was killed in action aboard the destroyer 'Basilish', one of the many ships providing protection whilst the evacuation was taking place. Robert Pearce of the Military Police helped to carry wounded men to the numerous small boats, who in turn took the men to larger vessels waiting further off shore. In total the evacuation by the navy brought out 335,000 British and French troops.

### CHAPLIN IN AIRBOURNE DIVISION

**REV. W. H. Harlow was the Church of England Vicar in Middlewich; he was an Australian who had been wounded at Gallipoli in the First World War whilst in the Australian Infantry Regiment. Rvd. Harlow was the appointed Chief Air Raid Warden, he had 40 wardens enrolled and he was making arrangements for the distribution of gas masks to all the children. He was responsible for the various lectures in the town on Air Raid Precautions, advising the U.D.C. on position of trenches to be dug against air attack and the setting up of the A.R.P. posts throughout the town. Shortly after he joined Army.**

By 1944...the progress of the Allied Forces was followed with great interest as the lines of advance were announced over the wireless. News on September 17th announced that there had been an airborne assault at Arnhem, this fuelled speculation that the war would be coming to an end, and it wasn't until a few days later that it was known the attack had failed. Rev Harlow had taken part in the assault; the town did not know this until Pte. Roy Skerratt, broke the news. Pte. Skerratt had lost touch with his unit and was trying to find his way back when he came across a group of 'walking wounded' and an army Chaplin. It was the Rev Harlow, he made himself known with the words, 'Don't you remember me, I used to deliver bread to the vicarage'. Pte. Skerratt left the group and continued to make his way to his unit. As he reunited with his comrades and other groups of airborne troops, the breakout was ordered. He went through on his hands and knees with the Germans everywhere about them, they reached the river, but their craft overturned and they lost all the equipment. Fortunately he was picked up by another craft.

The Rev Harlow was the Senior Chaplain with the First Airborne division and was captured at Arnhem. He was treated roughly by the Germans who were very suspicious of a clergyman in army uniform and in a parachute regiment.



● Rev. Harlow FAR RIGHT  
PHOTO SUPPLIED BY ALLAN EARL

### ● THE BELLS RING

In 1942, the Training Corps marched in the civil defence Sunday parade with the other organisations of the town. The bells of the Parish Church rang a full peal to celebrate the victory of the Battle of Egypt. At the service, prayers were said for all the men and women of the armed forces, some 650 from the town, and particularly for the 14 men known to be prisoners of war, including the former vicar, the Rev W. H. Harlow who had been captured by the Italian army in the retreat from El Alamein in July. By April 1943 there were 669 service personnel from Middlewich.

James Smith, Manager

**Murgatroyd's Salt Works Ltd**

BROOKS LA. MIDDLEWICH

# The Middlewich Times



SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 12,601

1939-1945

One Penny

Powell & Sons Ltd  
WHO. CLOTHING MFRS.  
48 & 50 Wheelock St.

## THE WAR AWAY FROM HOME

### CPL. H. DALE RECEIVES MEDAL

SEVERAL Middlewich men were decorated for bravery, or mentioned in despatches during the war, and some of them are understandably reluctant to say anything about their ordeals. Reports in the local press were very brief for reasons of censorship. However, in the Northwich Chronicle of August 1945, Cpl. Alfred Dale was reported receiving his military Medal for gallantry and devotion to duty in Holland and Germany. Cpl. Dale, with the Gordon Highlanders, landed in Normandy and was twice wounded.

The N.C.O. was commanding a section in his company which had been ordered to capture Barcel. The Company in the middle of the night May 25th passed through Orel which had been captured against stiff opposition, and had taken their first objective when they were attacked in considerable strength from the front, side and rear. The ground was very open and had little cover. The situation was made worse when the right hand platoon being driven back, uncovering the remainder of the company. Very fierce fire was sweeping this flat open ground, but this NCO was magnificent in rallying his section and platoon and personally killed several Germans at close quarters, halting the most determined part of the counter attack. The company commander later ordered the platoon to close in to some cover, but at the same time a self propelled gun moved forward at close contact and made any movement more difficult. Cpl. Dale then moved forward to cover with fire the reorganisation of the company, and in spite of the fire from the self propelled gun and a withering hail of bullets made by his intensive fire and the encouragement he gave to his section any further move by the enemy was impossible. Not till he knew that the other platoons were reorganised and firm did he return from his exposed position. His exemplary bravery and example were superb and a great tonic to his comrades. He never gave a thought for himself and worked throughout this critical period in a praiseworthy manner. His determination, enthusiasm and devotion to duty and above all his own personal bravery over this long period are worthy of immediate recognition. His heroic actions undoubtedly saved what was a critical situation becoming worse'.

### THE FALLEN 1939-1945

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| BIRCHALL PHYLIS M. | PIMLOTT D.       |
| BAILEY R. K.       | PRESTON W. K.    |
| BAGNALL W.         | RATHBONE J.      |
| BEALE E.           | ROBINSON J. W.   |
| BIRCHALL C.E.N.    | RUSCOE J.A.      |
| BLACKBURN S.A.     | SALTER L.C.      |
| DAINTITH W.        | SANT R.T.        |
| DEAN C.H.          | SMALLWOOD D.     |
| DEAN W.            | SMALLWOOD H.H.   |
| DODD J.            | SMYTHE F.A.      |
| FARRINGTON C.      | SPROSTON B.C.    |
| FINNETT P.A.       | STARKEY T.W.     |
| GREENSILL F.R.     | STOCKALL A.      |
| HICKMOTT J.        | TAYLOR E.A.      |
| HICKSON T.         | THOMAS A.        |
| HOPE K.            | WALTON S.        |
| HOUGH W.           | WHITTAKER J.     |
| HUNT W.T.          | WHITTAKER J.A.S. |
| LITTLEMORE W.      | WORMALD S.       |
| LUNT W.H.          |                  |



### "DEVOTION TO DUTY"

**Ft. Sgt. R.M. Cooke**, Mentioned in despatches for services in North Africa.

**Cpl. H. Dale**, Military Medal for gallantry and devotion to duty in Holland and Germany.

**Sgt. H. Earl (R.A.F. Bomber Command)**, Mentioned in despatches Ft.Lt.P.A.Finnett, Distinguished Flying Cross.

**Rev. W.H. Harlow (Vicar of Middlewich), Lt. Col. (Senior Chaplain)**, Mentioned in despatches for devotion to duty in North Africa. Military Cross for devotion to duty at Arnhem.

**Capt. G. Seddon**, Mentioned in despatches.

**Major R.R. Seddon, M.B.E. (Military)**, Devotion to duty in North Africa.



● Captain George Seddon with his sister Nellie

### RESCUED FROM THE SEA

A Northwich Chronicle report dated April 26th stated that Roy Goodier was receiving attention in a Northern Hospital after spending seven days in an open boat with only water and hard biscuits. He was the steward on a ship lost by enemy action and he and some of his comrades were rescued by trawlers some 300 miles from land. Roy was accepted for training as a steward and this was his first ship when it was torpedoed. He wrote to his mother and father giving brief details of his ordeal, saying he was making good progress but was "still very thin".

### ● ACTION IN THE CHANNEL

From September 1944, it was estimated that 750 men and women were in the Armed Forces from the town, about 9% of the population. Ordinary Seaman Roland Kennerley, who was 19, served on the destroyer 'Ashanti'. This ship was with the others, including some Canadian Vessels and the new British carrier, Black Prince, in the English Channel. Black Prince fired star shells and illuminated three or four enemy cruisers and escorting destroyers. The British ships opened fire and sunk a German destroyer. Ordinary seaman Kennerley's job aboard the 'Ashanti' was to pass the shells to be hoisted to the guns. He had been in the navy a year when this action occurred.



**BAKER**  
**THOMAS CLEWES**  
 15 Wheelock St.  
 Middlewich

# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 13,752

1939-1945

One Penny



**Fred Cash**  
**MOTOR ENGINEER**  
 Lewin St.

## RATIONS AND DIG FOR VICTORY

### Allotments and Farmers Dig For Victory Together

**M**IDDLEWICH Allotment Holder's Association was formed in the spring of 1940, many people increasing the size of their vegetable plots, either to grow more produce, or to keep a few hens, or rabbits. It was estimated by the government that a plot, 30 yards x 10 yards, would supply a family of four with enough vegetables for 1 year.

On the civilian front the production of home-grown food was a top priority and the slogan 'Dig for Victory' was all around. All gardens had large vegetable patches, plus a portion for the chickens. Eggs, when plentiful were collected and laid down in a steel bucket containing 'water glass'. The bucket was covered with a loose fitting steel lid and the eggs would remain in this condition until required, possibly in the autumn and winter. Dried powdered egg was the main alternative of obtaining this particular food.

Many housewives made preserves such as jam, bottled fruit, chutney etc. as the seasons came around. Dried fruit and apple rings were ways of preserving fruit throughout the year.



Cheshire farmers were asked to plough up more acreage. By 1940 they had ploughed an additional 35,000 acres. Any surplus grass should be made into silage and all available bits of land ploughed.

The government fixed the price for poultry as follows: roasted chickens reared in the UK at 2/4d per lb retail, imported chickens from Eire at 2/2d per lb, boiling fowls in the UK 1/8d per lb, ducks in the U.K. 2/1d per lb, geese in the UK, 1/11d per lb. For many families during this period chicken was a luxury anyway, usually only eaten on a special occasion, or at Christmas. The housewife had to work wonders with the rations and were helped and guided by the Ministry of Food. Advice to house-wives were delivered through radio programmes, women's magazines, recipe sheets and practical demonstrations held in the town to ensure that the housewife could prepare nutritious and appetizing meals with weekly rations.

In Middlewich the Garden Fruit Committee were asked to take their surplus soft fruits to the cookery room at the Victoria Building where they would be paid the current regulated price.

Mr A Goulden (The Town Clerk) was the food executive officer. Eggs and fish were soon to be brought under control and as a first step the Ministry of food stated that anyone with 50 hens or under could sell their surplus eggs, provided they were licensed as retailers.



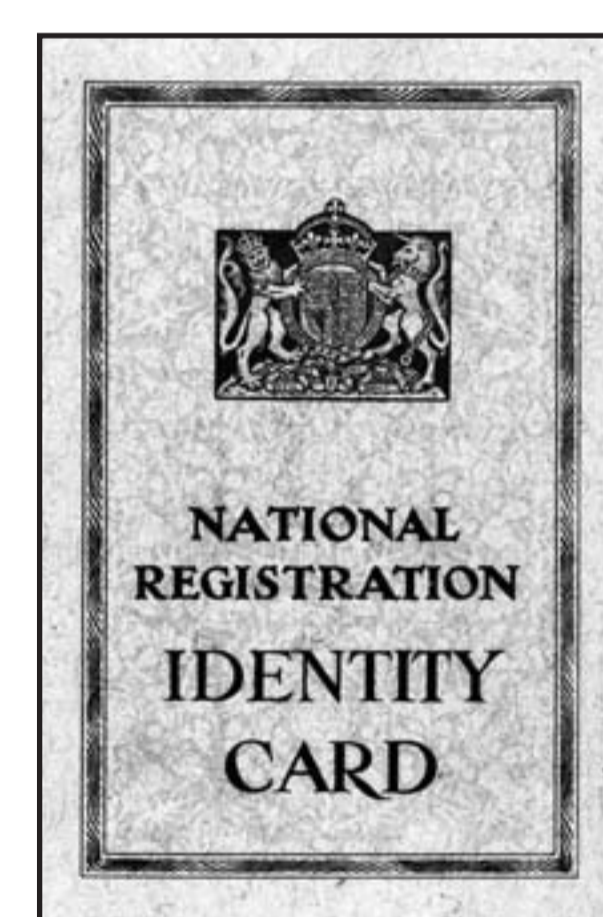
#### ● THE FIGHT TO MAINTAIN FOOD

The girls of the Women's Land Army were familiar figures, in green pullovers, trousers and boots, and more recruits were required for this essential work. A number came from Canada and other parts of the commonwealth to do their bit for the old country, helping to replace the 70,000 men who had left the land since the outbreak of War. The German U-boats were taking their toll of Merchant Ships in the Atlantic and every hand, to increase and maintain the food position, was needed. Agricultural and Horticultural workers were now in a reserved occupation.

#### Field Supplies

**A**T the time war was declared my Grandfather rented an allotment because we had no garden. Grandfather and I used to grow vegetables; we had 6 hens and a cockerel, and we grew everything we wanted really. For example, if someone gave us a rabbit, we'd swap them for eggs. We'd swap vegetables and potatoes and that continued all through the war to add to the miserable rations.

Things got really dire, about 1942/3, our supply boats were being attacked by U boats, and therefore food and materials became even more scarce. We didn't have hens as they are today laying eggs all year through. Ours laid in the spring and summer, and then stopped. When that happened I went out for birds' eggs, mostly water hens, I'm surprised we didn't wipe the population out. We had a long bamboo cane and tied a spoon on the end of it. We'd find the birds and go and scoop the eggs out of the nest and bring them home to eat. The other thing we did was catch fish in the Dane, and in particular under the railway bridge at Ravenscroft. Ravenscroft was my favourite place. Magnificent in the war, the farm labourers and game keepers all went to fight. It was great as a young lad. Under the bridge, there was a concrete platform which was a favourite place for catching water snigs, you know eels. You'd go early morning or late evening. You'd tie in your line to something secure and come back the next evening and at the right time of year you caught a snig.



#### THE RATION BOOK

Tracy Moss, who lived at Newton Hall, used to do all the identity cards. I worked with her when I worked for the food office. The food office was where the carpet place is on Hightown. When we got the ration books we had to go to Victoria Buildings, I think we had a room there with ration books. This is where people registered with our family shop. We had to cut and mark the coupons out, it was divided into four, and each one represented two ounces. When you got your butter, cheese and what have you, you had to mark that to say you'd had it that week.

You had to get permits for people that were registered; I wish I had a pound for every one of those coupons I counted. These were the sweets, so we used to cut these out. You had to cut the tea ones out as well. We had buff envelopes with writing on as to what they were and we had to count them and put in how many there was. That was one of my jobs later as a food officer, checking them. We'd make the permits out to the equivalent of what coupons were sent in, the shop owners then gave these to wholesalers for the quantity of food they wanted.

**T. W. Eykelbosch,**  
**Manager.**

**British  
 Crepe Ltd**

Silk Manufacturers

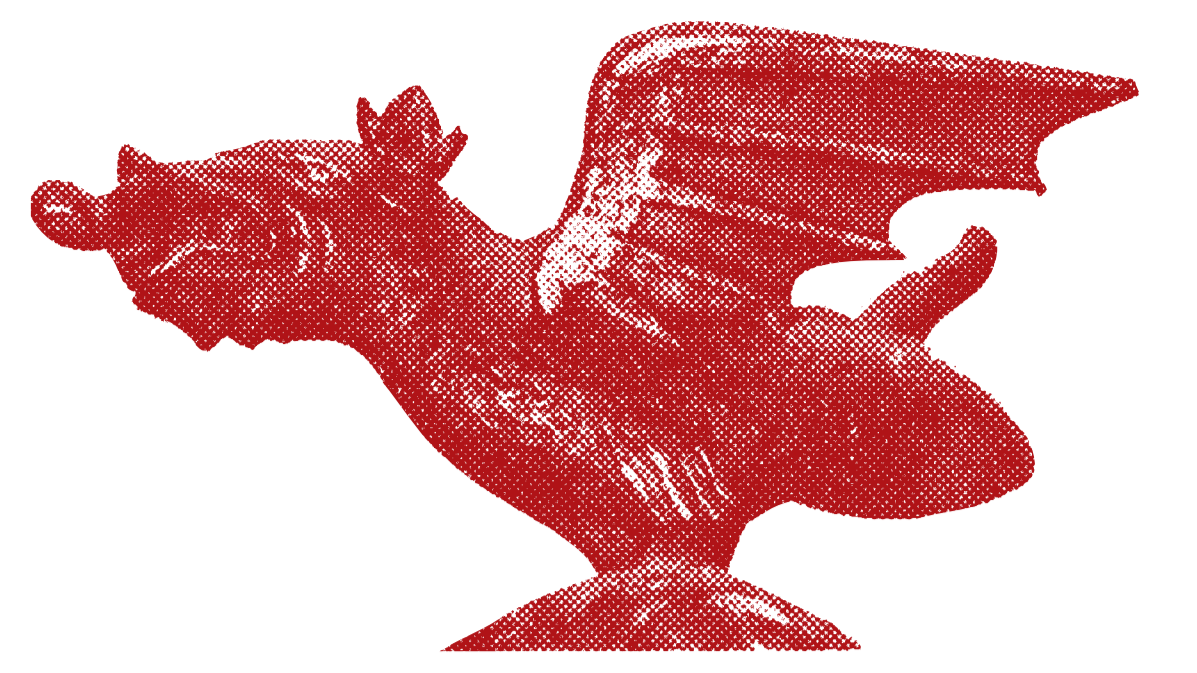
# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 12,602

1939-1945

One Penny



Robert Brown & Sons  
**WINE & SPIRIT  
 MERCHANTS**  
 Wheelock Street

## The Middlewich War Effort

### WORKING TOGETHER

**I was 17 when the war started and I was working in the offices of Cerebos. War had been anticipated for some considerable time and people were volunteering to join various concerns dealing with the after effects of bombing.**

Among these bodies of people were fire brigades, Red Cross, and St. John's ambulance, and Air Raid Precautions known to everybody as ARP. They formed various things like protection, demolition from bombing, decontamination in case of gas attacks, road clearance to allow vehicles to get about: electricity and gas companies formed their own corps but would need help from the municipal corps.

Among all these were telephonists to help maintain liaison between them, so we were trained to man the exchange in the police station. That was the old police station but still on the same site as the new one. When the siren went we went down to the police station. We were on a rota of course. There was a complete blackout, so we made our own way being very careful because the blackout really meant just that. No lights in the streets, no lights from any of the buildings. At the police station we would wait for any phone calls.

We were lucky in Middlewich because we were not a military target. We were on the way to Liverpool though, there were tremendous docks there at that time, and there was Manchester nearby. Crewe, with its marshalling yard and railway works, Rolls Royce making engines for aircraft were no distance away. Then there was Fodens in Sandbach making tanks for the army, all these places were vulnerable to air attacks. People working in such factories were on reserved occupations and would not be called up for military service; many people were called from retirement or from other jobs to work there. As the war extended to the East and Far East, the soldiers and forces people had to take salt tablets and Cerebos became the people manufacturing these salt tablets, so therefore I was in a reserved occupation even though I was a shorthand typist. Conscription had taken some of the male staff already and the retired staff had to be called back.

One organisation that was hush hush was the observer corps. These were observation posts situated all over the country and were manned permanently. The one in Middlewich was in a field by Station Bridge; very secret. The police knew all about it though. They were very important people up there but we knew they were there.

I can remember when I was on duty one night; we were on duty as soon as the sirens went. People who were in charge of the area, including the surveyor, the rating officer, they came on duty. They were in touch with various corps, and this particular night we had word that incendiary bombs had dropped. In Middlewich you know the Croco runs alongside the Canal, and you can imagine those can be easily visible from planes, and they probably thought they were somewhere else. However, we had to send out First Aiders and everyone to this man who got burned by one of the incendiary bombs.



● **The ARP PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT FODENS**  
 PHOTO SUPPLIED BY ALLAN EARL



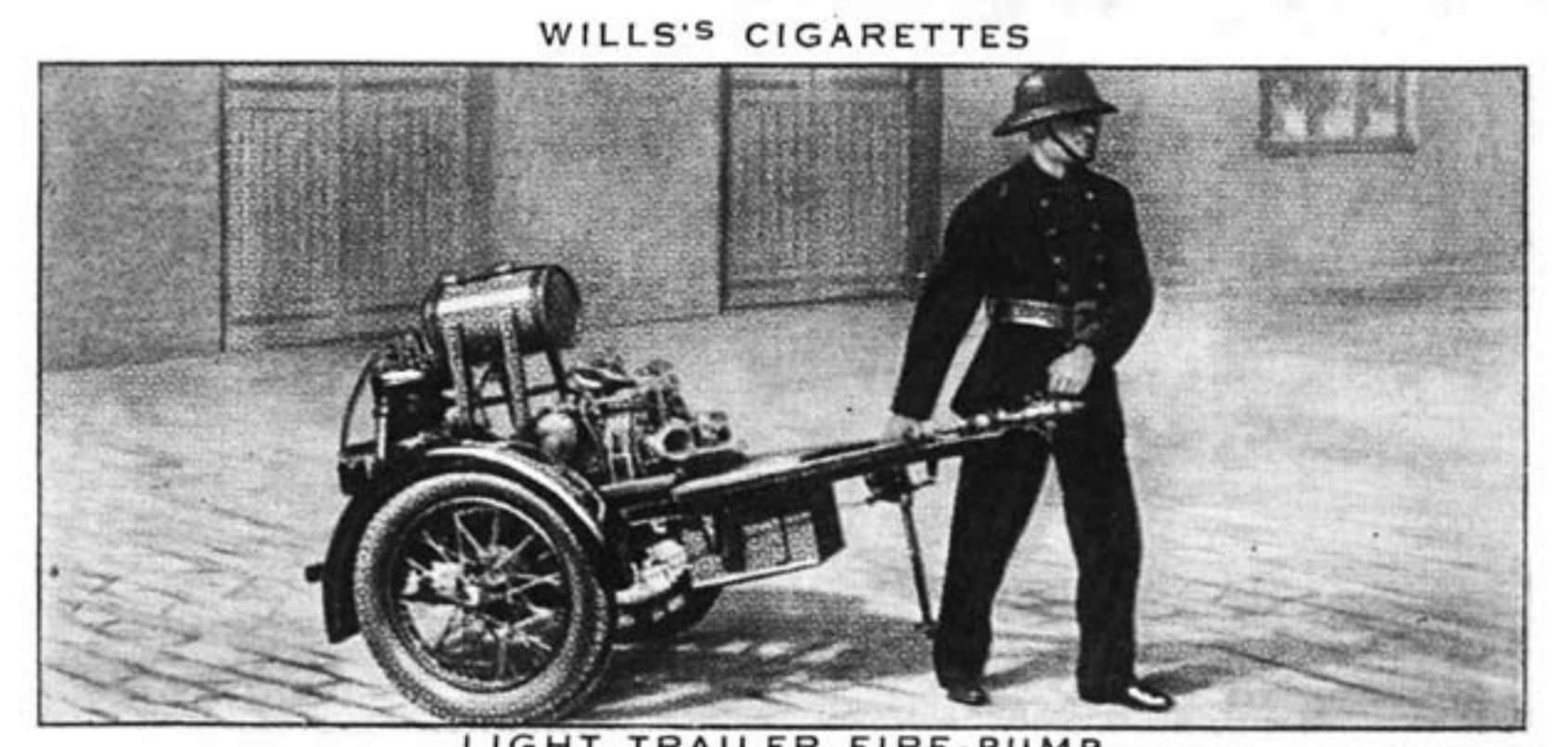
COURTESY OF MIDDLEWICH HERITAGE SOCIETY

### KNITTING TO VICTORY!

By 1940 the W.V.S. had sent 116 parcels to the men and women at home and overseas. They had also opened a citizen's advice bureau at The Limes, which was open each day from 9am to 5pm and from 2.30pm to 4.30pm on Wednesday.

Many women had now enrolled for the various sections of the Civil defence organisation as lady wardens, emergency canteen staff etc. In their quieter duty periods they also made eyeshades and dressings etc. for the local hospitals and army field hospitals, and of course they were still knitting.

The W.V.S and many private individuals, knitted a total of 1,866 garments, of which 1,066 had been done at 'The Limes', under the direction of Mrs Gandy. They included mittens, scarves, socks and helmets.



WILLS'S CIGARETTES

LIGHT TRAILER FIRE-PUMP

Regional schemes were organised for blood donors and Middlewich was asked to provide a minimum of 300 donors. Men and women, between the ages of 18 and 55, were required as volunteers and the owners of all works were asked to make staff available. Men and women in the forces stationed in Britain were instructed to each give one pint each.

### ● STOP PRESS!

**The newly-formed Girl's Training Corps, under their commander Miss A Woodbine, now had a complement of 59. The girls had to be trained in despatch, camping, first aid, hygiene, physical training and all would undergo a handy women's course. Their new uniforms were very smart and consisted of navy blue skirt, white blouse, blue tie and blue beret.**

## Lessons swapped for Spud Picking

In the school holidays during the war, I think we were given a fortnight's extra holiday for potato picking, and you used to go potato picking in the fields. The farmers were really glad of you because it was just the horse and the... I don't know what it was called... it used to throw the potatoes up out of the ground, and it was a horse drawing it. It was quite steady so you'd got time to pick a bucketful of potatoes and put them in a big skip type of thing. That was then towed away to the farm with the horses. But we liked potato picking, when you'd got your first two or three days over - it didn't half hurt your back. But afterwards it got to be fun, you know. We were taught how to... I can't think what it was called... it was a big hole that was dug in the ground, nice and oblong, straw was put in the bottom, then the potatoes, then straw, then

potatoes, and then it was all soiled up. We were shown how to do it; it was like a lesson as well. Then after the potatoes were finished, you'd got turnip topping. In the turnip fields the farmer would top the tops off the turnips, put them all on one side, and we would put the turnips into the horse-drawn lorry thing, and that was turnip topping. And that was a week of turnip topping. But in between you used to help with haymaking and corn harvest.

The way you were transferred was on a farm trailer. Everybody sat on it. Health and safety didn't come into it. You go and collect the potatoes and the wages I received from it was £1.10p. for a week's work. Believe me it was good. We thoroughly enjoyed it. That all came from school and it wasn't just our school that did it. They came from all over the place.

B. BOURNE, MNGR.

**BARCLAYS  
BANK LTD**

24 & 26  
WHEELOCK ST.

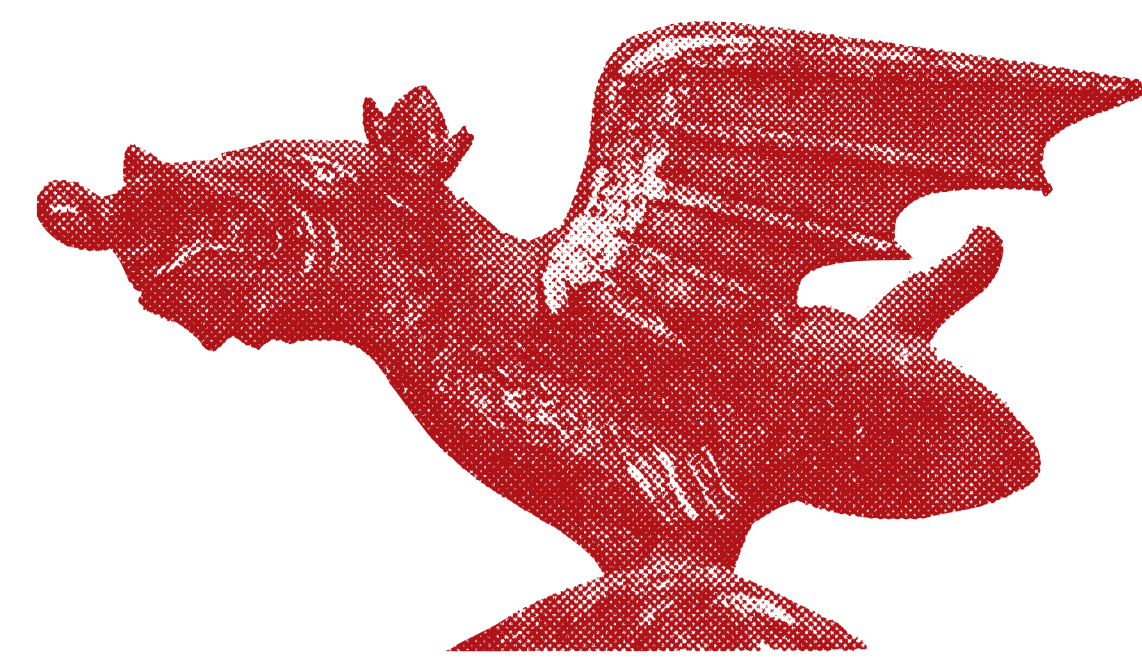
# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 12,603

1939-1945

One Penny



Carrie Brady  
**CONFECTIONER**  
69 Wheelock St.  
Middlewich

# CHILDREN OF THE WAR



● **Schools celebration of the King and Queens visit to Middlewich Church of England Primary School** PHOTO SUPPLIED BY ALLAN EARL

## WAR IS DECLARED FROM A CHILDS VIEW

In the year the war first started I was 11 years old, and I remember it in a clear way for some reason because it was on a Sunday morning when we found out. We'd gone to Sunday School as usual, we were coming up Queen Street and we knew there was something to do with the war but we didn't realise what that was going to be. But as we came up Queen Street the first difference we knew was, and in those days you used to cook your Sunday lunch, well, everything, on your fire, so our normal routine of coming out of Sunday School would be walking up Queen Street to the smell of roast beef cooking, cabbage boiling on the fire, all the usual smells that would go with a Sunday lunch.

But this particular Sunday, although we didn't realise it then, we had come out of Sunday School early because everyone wanted to be at home to hear the news on the radio. So we got home and whether it was an arrangement, I think it must have been,

at 11 o'clock the church bells started to ring and everybody knew, the grown-ups, who by this time were all standing at the gates and they knew then that we were at war. When somebody tells you you're at war and you're 11 years old, and my other brother and sister were only very tiny, you imagine a war that you've heard about at school and you think it's going to start there and then, people fighting.

Everywhere you went you had to take your gas mask with you. I think they were adhering to the First World War when so many men that even I knew at that small age had been gassed in the First World War. So I think in a way, in our minds we were imagining that we were going to be like they were, you know, not being able to breathe, we were going to be gassed. By that stage nobody dreamed they were going to be bombed because that hadn't happened before. So that's how we gradually slid into war.

### ● **Wooden Toys and Silk Knickers!**

**My grandad Buckley used to make toys for us out of wood, because we couldn't get toys then. So I used to have a wooden Spitfire and a wooden tank that I used to play with and there's a photo of me standing on the step at 48 Sutton Lane with those things. One of the things which I can still remember, is that on my mother's side there was Uncle John, Uncle Albert, and there was somebody else, it might have been my father, but they were on leave, and all three rifles, three 303s, were stacked up in the living room. They used to take the rifles with them everywhere, and I can remember them just being stacked up the living room. Being young you don't know much about why it is, and no-one explains to you.**

**Mother, by this time, was looking for work and there's no doubt you've found out by now, people worked at Cranage Aerodrome, she was actually covering the wings for Wellington Bombers that were being made there. She covered the wings with silk and then she put dubbing on them, or whatever it was to harden them off. And the story is that all the ladies in Middlewich had silk knickers, cos that's where they pinched the silk from!**

## EVACUEES ARRIVE

ON September 2nd 1939, at 1.15pm, a train arrived at Middlewich Station from Crewe, carrying 1,040 evacuees, 500 of them schoolchildren. The number also included teachers and helpers. Those under school age arrived with their mothers. The children each carried a small parcel or bag and had a cardboard box containing a gas mask over their shoulders, a label stating who they were, giving age, destination, where from and a telephone number. This was fastened to a lapel or hung round the neck and they assembled in rows in the Station Yard where they were met by members of the Women's Voluntary Service.

The children had come from Liverpool, Manchester and London. They walked to the Town Hall, or St Mary's School, King St., where they had light refreshments. Not all the children and adults were placed immediately and some were billeted in the Town Hall on camp beds. To begin with, the local children attended school in the morning and the evacuee children in the afternoon. This idea went down very well with the local children. The Urban District Council staff manned the telephones, 24 hours a day, until everything was sorted out and settled down. Mr T.W. Brown organised the evacuee billeting etc.

The Government thought that when war was declared Germany would immediately bomb London and other major cities and they had announced that 3 million people would be evacuated from all the densely populated areas, 1 ½ million being children. In fact the bombing did not happen for some months and by September 23rd, 119 evacuee children and adults had returned to their homes.

One of my aunties had an evacuee, a boy and he came in a filthy vest that had been his father's, and it had big safety pins holding up the shoulders, and he couldn't believe it really when he got some clothes that fitted him. And this was the way of life they must have lived in the Liverpool dock area and not even known what they were coming into. They'd never seen a cow, they didn't want to drink milk from a cow, and they wanted their milk from a shop, in a bottle. And they couldn't get their head round the fact that, yes, it was in a bottle in here, but it had come from a cow. In a way you can understand that because most of the children in Middlewich had never seen the sea.

## THE HOME COMING

My Dad was away from very early on in the war and didn't come back until 1946, because he was in the Eighth Army and was in Tunisia and Sicily, in Italy. They were having trouble with Tito because he wanted to take Trieste in Northern Italy on the Adriatic. It had belonged to Yugoslavia but Tito wanted it back and he was going to take it back until the Eighth Army said no you're not. The story about coming home is; I can remember playing out with the other children and apparently my sister and I were sitting at the top of the steps waiting for Dad to come home. We must have been told he was coming home that day, and this soldier walked past us and Kay said "That's him, that's him". And we followed him, and he went in our house, it was my Dad. He didn't know us.



● **Evacuees gather on the station platform in Liverpool, September 1939.**

MILLER

**FRANK  
HALL**KINDERTON ST.  
MIDDLEWICH

# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 13,753

1939-1945

One Penny

Mrs Olive Newall  
LADIES HAIRDRESSER  
The Bull Ring

## RAF Fighter & Navigation, Byley Airfield

**AFTER the Battle of Britain, the German Air Force turned its attention to ports and industrial targets. Manchester, Liverpool and Crewe fell into this category and many Middlewich people remember the raids on the two cities, and German bombers being chased by the defiant and Hurricane fighter aircraft, from Byley, dropping their load of incendiaries indiscriminately in an effort to get away from the fighters. This is thought to account for the bombs dropped on the outskirts of the town.**

Because of censorship, it was not until the end of March 1943 that the Cheshire County Emergency Committee published the report on enemy air action as it affected the county area. The first raid in the county was centred on Crewe on July 29th 1940, and the last raid in the county area occurred on January 10th, 1942. In between these dates 150 people were killed as a result of enemy action, plus a fair number of injured.

Research into the exact dates when the incendiaries dropped in Croxton Lane and on the Silk Works in Finney's Lane, and the date that a stick of bombs fell on the Eastern side of Middlewich, has been narrowed down as being between April 7th and May 7th, 1941. During the night of April 7th/8th, 1941, Crewe was the target, the rail system and Rolls Royce works. Several bombs landed in the surrounding areas. Commencing on May 1st, 1941, air raids occurred every night for six successive nights, the targets being Manchester and Liverpool. On one night in this period a considerable amount of incendiaries dropped in the Croxton lane and Finney's Lane area, some landing in the trees at Croxton Lane and others on the Silk Works roof which was set alight. Mr W Pugh was burnt on his hands and arms fighting this fire, he was on fire watch at the time in Croxton Lane. The stick of bombs that dropped on the eastern side of the town accrued a fair amount of damage. The first detonated in Mr Challinor's field, alongside the railwayline, about 200 yards from the station and immediately to the rear of Lichfield St. and Nos 4 to 12 Brookland Villas, New King St. The blast blew in glass and window frames and outer doors off their hinges in the Brookland Villas' houses

and damaged the houses in Dane St. It also blew in the glass in some of the shops in Hightown, but luckily the parochial Church Council had boarded up the majority of the stained glass windows in the church, so the east windows were undamaged. The second bomb on this stick dropped harmlessly in the River Dane, about 100 yards east of Ravenscroft Bridge, whilst the third dropped very near to Ravenscroft Hall, the blast bringing down the ground floor ceilings of the first aid rooms and W.V.S. rooms and smashing all the glass in the ground floor. None of the civil defence personnel on duty at the time were seriously hurt.

It was during the night of the 3rd May that a Junkers 88 crashed into oat fields near Lach Dennis, Lostock Green. Four men bailed out, two were captured and two were dead on the ground. One being an officer whose parachute had failed to open. The other German airman was found dead in a ditch. Of the two survivors, one was aged about 20 an air gunner who was captured by a sergeant in the Home Guard.

The fourth man was rounded up a short time later. It was a moonlit night and the members of the 12th Battalion (Northwich) Home Guard had seen the parachutes floating down and raced across the fields towards the scene. It was generally thought that anti-aircraft gunfire had hit the plane. However just before midnight on the same night, Flight Officer Verity, of 96 Squadron at Byley, was airborne in a Defiant fighter over Liverpool. He arrived to find the city burning and circling at 10,000ft he could see the German bombers against the glow of the fires. He chased a Henkel but lost it, telling his air gunner that the next target would have to be attacked from above against the background of fires, so he dived at a Junkers 88. Tracer bullets were seen to enter the top of the fuselage before the plane disappeared. A voice came over the intercom saying that an aircraft had crashed and it was later confirmed as the Lach Dennis Ju.88.

The two dead German airmen from the Ju.88 were buried in Byley Churchyard. In recent years the bodies were exhumed and removed to the military cemetery at Cannock.

**During the first months of 1944, rumour abounded about a possible invasion of Europe and speculation increased when American forces came to Byley. These were with U.S.A.A.F. 14th Liaison Squadron. The 'yanks', as everyone called them, soon made their presence felt and attended all the local dances and the cinemas. One of their regular ports of call was the Y.M.C.A. canteen at the old Lord Hood Inn, in Pepper St., run by the W.V.S.**



● Staff at Vickers Armstrong

### Wellingtons Built at Byley

**I got to about 18 and I went to work for Vickers Armstrong, cos there'd been a big factory built. They were making Wellington Bombers, so I went there. I worked with the joiners, the carpenters, like, and I got a good paying job. And for four years I worked hard. I went every day faithfully and I got good money. I used to climb on top of the aeroplanes. I worked on the fuselage. We used to put big strips of wood onto the fuselage, and I remember it was called C4 we worked in. And then, after we'd done our work it was moved into another big assembly hall and it carried on being worked with other people then. So I'd be about 22 when I became redundant in early 1945 and the war had just finished, so we were all laid off then, so I went back to a sewing job again.**

I worked where the fuselage, the jigs, were made. And it was, as I say, C4. When the plane was at skeleton stage the thing was moved up, after we'd put our certain types of wood on it, the men did the harder part. The girls did the lighter part. It was moved up into C6 then and other people worked electrical people, oxygen people used to come and they did all their part in it. They were all in different gangs, if you know what I mean. And I think the wings were assembled there, but I worked at one end, and they'd be done at the other end. And I can't quite remember, but I think they were assembled, and there used to come a big long trailer from Broughton. Broughton was the bigger factory just outside Chester, and they used to bring propellers on a great long lorry - the men used to call it The Queen Mary - and they used to bring the propellers ready to go on the Wellingtons. It was all very organised. It was what was called a shadow factory. You see, it was just in case that one was bombed, they could fall back on this one.

'When I worked at the aircraft factory at Byley my job was to put the oxygen economisers in the planes for each person that travelled in the plane on these bombing expeditions.

There were sections of us did that, but all doing different jobs; some doing piping to the economisers and so forth. We worked from 8 to 6 or half past six. Sometimes you had to do night shifts. We were right close to Byley Church and we used to walk down there one lunch time a week, praying for peace'. 'While I was working at the Wellington bomber factory we had a very sad experience one evening. It was just nearly time to finish work and we always had a test pilot to come and test the new Wellington bombers, His name was Ralph. And one of our inspectors, Teddy Booth - such a nice man he was - went up with him on this test flight and when they were coming in to land, the plane crashed and they were both killed. Some say Ralph came in too low and clipped a tree or a hedge and that's what caused the crash. We were in an awful state going home that night. It was just before we were leaving...'

● The RAF station at Byley was first built as a navigation school, and commenced in October 1940 with Avro Ansons. These aircraft were a familiar sight flying over Middlewich in the first year of the war. The grass airfield had never been intended as a fighter station, but was now the base where almost the entire night fighter defence of the North West was stationed. The station was mostly equipped with hurricanes but by March 1941 was beginning to convert to Defiants.

LESLIE B. SANT.  
**WATCH  
 AND CLOCK  
 REPAIR**  
 19 LOWER ST.  
 MIDDLEWICH

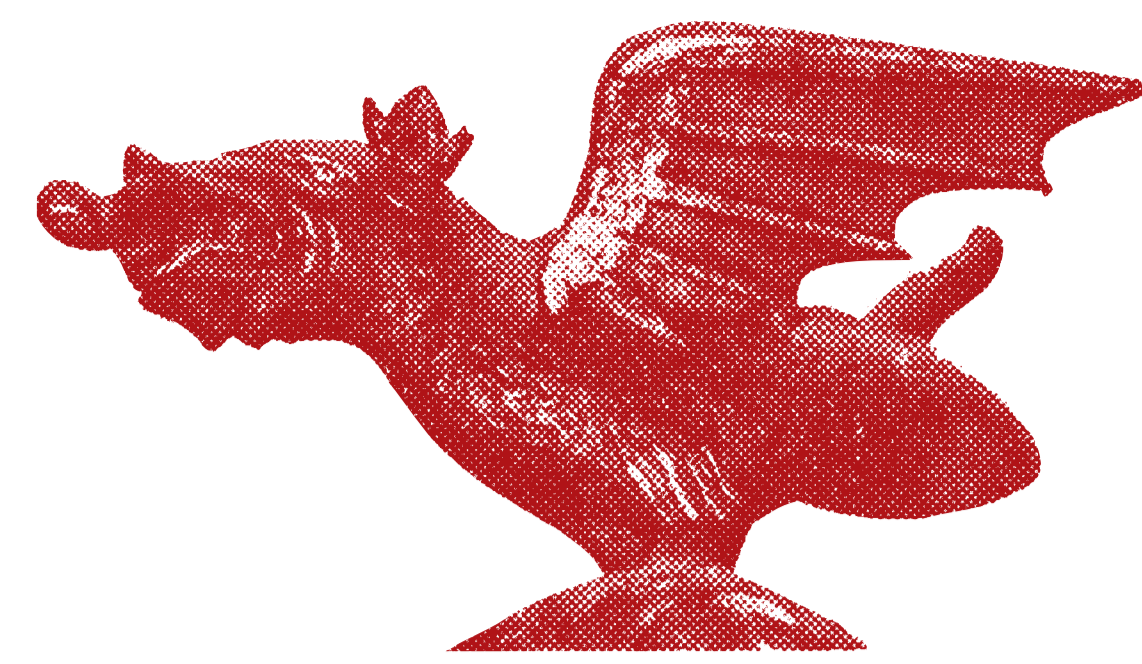
# The Middlewich Times

SUPPORTED BY MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

No. 18,834

1939-1945

One Penny



G. H. Heath & Co. Ltd  
 SILK MANUFACTURERS  
 Finney's La.

## VICTORY!

### The Royal Visit

**T**HE highlight of 1946 was a Royal visit on July 17th, the first to Middlewich since Queen Margaret in 1459. Their route would be over Wheelock Bridge, Chester Rd, Wheelock St, Lower St, Leadsmithy St, Hightown, Wheelock St (to Whiston's Garage) and Nantwich Rd. (to Wallange Bridge). Because of the expected crowds from the surrounding towns, footpath space was reserved for schoolchildren and elderly people and for ex-servicemen in front of the War Memorial. Before the day an arch was erected over the road from the Golden Lion in Chester Rd. to the cemetery railings. Across the top it said, "Loyal Greetings to their Majesties the King and Queen". Coloured light bulbs ran underneath the length of the arch. On the day of the visit approximately 1,200 children from the Sandbach area were brought to Middlewich in two special trains and given reservations on either side of Chester Rd., from Wheelock Bridge to Williamson's garage. The older citizens were given seating accommodation at Newton Bank and the Junction of St Anns Rd. and Nantwich Rd. and in Hightown, in the churchyard. In front of the war memorial stood several ranks of ex-serviceman, plus the chairman of the council (Mr Blease) along with other members of the UDC and officials. Sandbach U.D.C. members and Holmes Chapel and Byley parish councillors stood alongside.

One hundred and eighty Girl Guides and Brownies lined Leadsmithy St. and Lower St., together with all the Middlewich schoolchildren and teachers, plus children and teachers from Congleton, Hassel Green and Brereton private school. A special place had been reserved for the children from The Manor, which was now a residential school for the deaf. The parish Church bells had been ringing at intervals since mid-morning but about 15 minutes before the King and Queen were due to arrive they stopped. The bell ringers also wanted to see the royal visitors and so had posted a lookout at the top of the church tower so that when the Royal cars came into view, in Chester Rd., he could dash down to the ringing chamber and give the news. The bells rang out again as the Royal cars made the return journey through the town.



PHOTO SUPPLIED BY PHILLIP SHALES

### People Celebrate Victory at last

On May 5th 1945, all the German Forces in Holland and N.W. Germany and Denmark surrendered unconditionally.

The resultant celebrations on V.E. day, June 8th, were so numerous it had to be seen to be fully appreciated. Street parties took place throughout the town, flags and bunting in every direction, dancing in the streets and in the town hall. At night a huge V sign flashed from the top of the church tower and the cenotaph was floodlit. The west doors of the parish church were fully open and from each stone pillar hung the flags of the allied nations, the altar being adorned with the church's silver plate, glistening in the light of candles and chancel roof lights. The church bells rung at intervals throughout the day. Everyone was so thankful that the war was at an end. Impressive services with large congregations were held at every church and chapel and an open air thanksgiving service was organised on the cricket ground with hundreds of people present.

The baby daughter of Flt. Lt. Peter Arthur Fennet, whose wife was the former Miss Peggy Moreton, daughter of the well known Mid-Cheshire Farming family, made history as the youngest visitor to Buckingham Palace. The baby was 13 days old when she was taken by her mother to be present when her father received the D.F.C. from the King. Flt.Lt. Fennet was to join India Transport command.



● Bailey's Band at the Town Hall  
 PHOTO SUPPLIED BY ALLAN EARL

## VICTORY IN JAPAN

**A**T midnight on Wednesday August 15th, the Victory in Japan, announcement came over the wireless and it's as though someone had suddenly released a lot of energy, the town erupted with the noise of drums and trumpets. It was all unofficial and spontaneous. A crowd of residents showed their happiness by lighting a hastily collected bonfire at the corner of Newton Bank and Nantwich Rd. There was singing and dancing in the main streets until after 4am. The Chairman and members of the U.D.C. attended a thanksgiving service at the Parish Church where they listened with the large congregation. A torch-light procession was organised to start in the Bull Ring and many people marched under the flags and bunting stretched across Wheelock St.

People sang as they went to Coal Pit Lane where a large bonfire was set alight at 10pm. The following Sunday, August 19th, was acclaimed a day of thanksgiving and prayer and all the churches and chapels held well attended services through the day.

A grand Victory dance was held at the Council schools, organised by Mr Wm. Bailey, and over 1,000 people danced in the hall and in both yards which were floodlit for the occasion, the music being relayed outside by loudspeakers. A service preceded the dance, conducted by the Vicar, the Rev R. Dow, and the Rev B.H. Owen. The dancers joined in the prayers and the hymns led by the Parish Church choir and the choirs of the other churches and chapels. There followed a brief address by the Vicar. Balloons, streamers and garlands decorated the hall, whilst the dancing was to Percy Bailey's band and ended at 1am.

### ● RED & YELLOW JELLY

When the war was over and we finally had a celebration party, everybody had saved a jelly - it was a big fancy party to us then, it wouldn't be anything now - but everybody had jellies. And jellies in them days were nearly always red or yellow, and the red were the hardest to come by, probably children preferred a red jelly to a yellow one. So when the war was over every area in the town had their own street parties and every house had to contribute something towards the food for it. So, our area was King Edward Street, Beech Street and West Street and St Ann's Road. They'd gathered all

these things together, each house gave a different thing and in those days some houses, and we were one of them, had a copper kettle. So the tea was made in people's copper kettles and you all had to take your own cup and you all had to take your own plate.

I've never seen so many people packed into Middlewich and the church, St. Michael's church, was absolutely beautiful. As you walked down the aisle, every flag from every country or dominion must have been hanging from the rafters. It was a wonderful sight and there were fireworks, the bands all over the place, tea parties. It was a wonderful time.