



**Learn, Laugh,
Live**

March 2024

THEIR FINEST HOUR

PART II

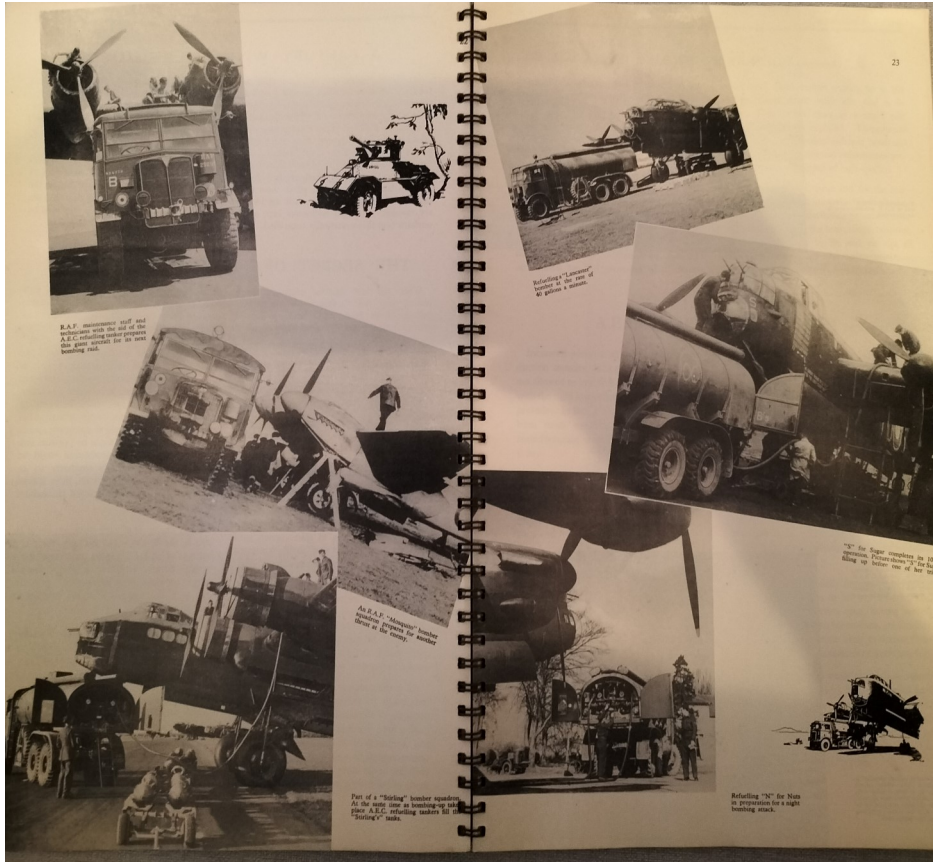
OR

THE FINAL STORY



In the previous Special Edition of Their Finest Hour we told you all about the work, which had gone into making our Digital Collection Day such a success. Until now we had no idea quite how successful it had been.

Since the 11th November 2023 we on the Planning Committee, with the help of some of our willing volunteers, have been busy gathering and processing the wonderful World War II stories and memorabilia of local people.



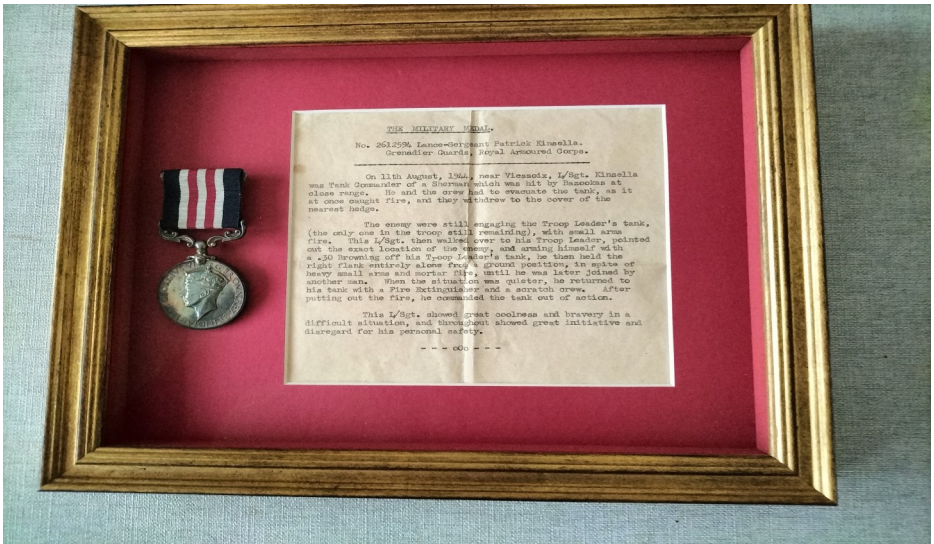
Contribution to Victory - Lancasters and Stirlings

The total number of contributors who had registered an interest in having their family's stories recorded on 11th November was 72. Of these stories 50 were recorded on the day. Owing to pressure of time (the hall was booked from 10.30 a.m - 5p.m., including preparation and clearing times) the remaining 22 registered visitors needed to

be interviewed after the event. This included 3 people who had already been interviewed, but whose stories were so wonderfully detailed we were only able to record a fraction of them on the day.

Later when we contacted these 22 visitors, 10 chose not to proceed with an interview or decided to upload their own stories. The remaining 12 interviews took place in people's homes between mid November and mid February, Christmas and 'life' generally getting in the way

Ten of our volunteers, quite rightly, wanted their own family stories recorded too. Some of them emailed typed copies of their stories and downloaded images to the Planning Committee for uploading to the project. Others had more complex stories, requiring imaging and interviews. These were completed on 11th March 2024 .



Military Medal with citation

The final number of stories recorded was 74 with 4285 images taken. An incredible amount of fascinating stories and information recorded for posterity, which would otherwise have been lost.



Uploading the 74 stories and 870 images (the best images distilled from a number taken of the same items) began on the 10th December 2023 and ended on 11th March 2024.

English Officer drawn by German POW in England

From our first expressions of interest in the project in June 2023 to the final emailing of all 74 visitors' and 30 volunteer consent forms on 11th March 2024, it has been an incredible journey into the past of so many .

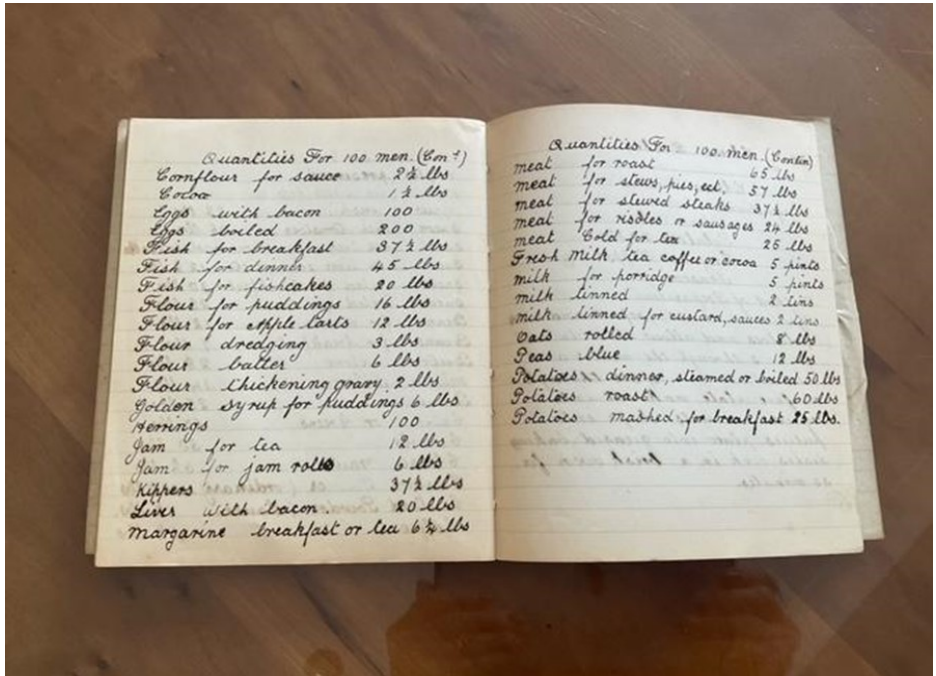
Some emotional, some humorous, some very ‘human’ stories which would never have come to light without this project.

There were times when all the work involved in organising the event, gathering and processing these incredible stories and images seemed never ending. But how could we fail to feel privileged to be helping to keep such memories alive?

During our journey with the ‘Their Finest Hour’ project we received monthly newsletter updates. This is an extract from the March edition:

Our online archive will go live on 6 June 2024, the 80th anniversary of D-Day. The searchable, free-to-use archive will allow anyone to view all the stories and artefacts that we recorded and digitised over the course of the project. Content will be available for you to reuse for educational, non-commercial and commercial purposes with a minimum of restrictions.....’

Please take a little time to browse these insightful stories, which impacted the lives of so many at the time and continue to do so.



Extract from Army Catering Corp Cookery Book

It just remains for us to thank all of the volunteers and contributors for helping us to preserve such valuable memories and images forever.

The Planning Team - Jane Weston, Iain Palôt, Valerie Henke, Trevor Pitt and Bill Page worked tirelessly to make our event such a success and to painstakingly process all the stories and information gathered before uploading them to the project.

Our special thanks goes to Valerie Henke and Trevor Pitt for the incredible amounts of time and energy they have both devoted to this project over the many months since we began this journey in June 2023. Especially for shouldering the responsibility for uploading all the images and stories to the project.



*131st Infantry Brigade Camp, Falmer,
Nr. Brighton, 1937*



Bognor Regis U3a Digital Collection Day 11th November 2023

'THEIR FINEST HOUR TEAM

MARCH 2024