

# **H**ISTORY of WATERLOOVILLE, HAMPSHIRE in WORLD WAR II

By Steve Jones, October 2015

The hot summer of 1939 was, as one historian noted, “the last to be enjoyed for some years, and for some, the last ever.” As the world was plunged into the SECOND WORLD WAR, Waterlooville became a hive of activity.

The Village again would do its bit for the war effort as it did in the First World War, with troops garrisoned in and around the village but this time the war would come closer to home with bombs landing and causing damage around the village and district, though not as severe as damage to its neighbours such as **Havant**, and especially **Portsmouth** which suffered terribly. **Waterlooville** to this extent escaped quite lightly.

**Static Water Tanks**, used in emergencies for fire-fighting, were a common site in the Village and it was even suggested that old wells were investigated for a source of emergency water. In the Village itself **VICTORIA HALL** was used as a canteen for soldiers and **ST GEORGE’S HALL** and **WATERLOO HALL** were used as a place of entertainment for soldiers and civilians alike.

A **BRITISH RESTAURANT** was opened in Havant to help feed the local population and discussions by Havant & Waterlooville Urban District Council suggested that the **CURZON CINEMA** be also used as a restaurant. This never came into being but the **VICTORIA HALL**, in Stakes Hill Road, opened as a canteen.

**BRITISH RESTAURANTS** were communal kitchens created in 1940 during the Second World War to help people who had been bombed out of their homes, had run out of ration coupons or otherwise needed help. In 1943, 2,160 British Restaurants served 600,000 very inexpensive meals a day. They were disbanded in 1947. There was a political dimension as well, as the Labour Party saw them as a permanent solution to equalizing consumption across the class line and guaranteeing a nourishing diet to all.

The rear of the Cinema premises was used by the **Waterlooville Fire Brigade** for wartime purposes. The new fire station was so successful that it was used in tandem with the London Road Station until 1958. The cinema showed many Government propaganda films produced during this period. It also did its bit for the morale of the local people.

Many people escaping the bombs and damage of Portsmouth were put up in Waterlooville by friends and relatives and even complete strangers, some never going back to Portsmouth.



**Patrons at a BRITISH RESTAURANT in the 1940s during World War II**

Note the man smoking at the table by the window; smoking was normal and ubiquitous in those days, particularly on buses and trains. The awareness of cancer from nicotine was still decades away.

The larger houses such as OAKLANDS and STAKES HILL LODGE took in many refugees. Gas masks were carried everywhere by adults and children and rationing, especially of food and clothes, made life that little bit more challenging. Along with this many a Waterlooville house lost their garden gates and railings which were removed for the war effort.



Oaklands



Stakes Hill Lodge

War work was carried on locally at **WADHAM'S Bros., Cycle and Motor Engineers**, even after so many employees were conscripted into the Armed Forces. Approximately 150 of these being on the **Reserve of the Armed Forces**, but this figure was probably from all of Wadham's Showrooms and Works elsewhere, as well as Waterlooville.

At Waterlooville, workshop space devoted to **sheet metal-work, wood- milling and plywood components** was **7,500 sq. ft. (697 sq. metres)** by **January 1940**. **WADHAM'S** produced **55,000,000 machined details for aircraft, 2,700 reserve fuel tanks for Spitfires, tail planes, elevators, rudders, engine cowls, cockpit canopies and heating installations from the start to finish of the war**. They also carried out work for the Admiralty at HMS Vernon. In 1943 they were awarded a '**Certificate of Honour**' for their savings during the '**Wings for Victory**' campaign.



In **June 1944** their wartime efforts were recognized by an official visit from **Sir Stafford Cripps**, the **Minister of Aircraft Production**. The company suffered from blast damage from air-raids at their premises at Waterlooville, Southsea and Southampton.

As already recorded, Waterlooville and district suffered from bomb damage during the entirety of the war. The Baptist church in London Road had an INCENDIARY BOMB (IB) drop on to it in 1939 but thanks to the prompt action of Mr J. Suter no lasting damage was caused.

In the Village itself there was no loss of life, with only minimal damage to properties as the following extracts from the ARP (AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS) records for the HAVANT area testify:

#### **AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS (ARP) RECORDS of BOMBING in HAVANT AREA.**

**1941**

**November 18, 1941.**

At 05.45 two **HIGH EXPLOSIVE (HE)** bombs and one oil incendiary bomb dropped at **Morelands Camp, Purbrook** causing damage to buildings.

**1942**

**January 17, 1942.**

At 23.18 **three HE bombs** and **one UNEXPLODED BOMB (UXB)** fell at **Park Lane, Cowplain** breaking water, gas and sewer mains and telephone wires.

**March 2, 1942.**

At 21.00 **six HE bombs** dropped at **PURBROOK HEATH** damaging some windows, but no casualties.

**March 11 and 12, 1942.**

At 22.40 several **IBS (INCENDIARY BOMBS)**, many of the **HE HIGH EXPLOSIVE** type, were dropped at the **anti-aircraft gun-site, Crookhorn Lane, Purbrook,**

**April 17, 1942.**

Several **INCENDIARY BOMBS (IBs)** dropped on **Westbrook Farm, Cowplain.** No damage, fires quickly put out.



This INCENDIARY BOMB is one of many thousands dropped on the City of PORTSMOUTH by the German air force between 1940 and 1944.

It was intended to burn whatever building it fell on, killing anyone trapped inside and causing great destruction. These bombs contained thermite, which burned at a very high temperature, with a casing of magnesium. (In the picture above, there are still traces of the sand fused to the metal, that was used to extinguish the fire.)

Incendiary bombs were used by all nations involved in World War II.

The firestorms the British and American air forces created with incendiaries in Dresden, Hamburg, Tokyo and Kobe, killed thousands. Across Europe and Japan the bombs destroyed acres of buildings; more than any other single weapon they changed the face of cities worldwide, suddenly and dramatically. In Portsmouth alone some 6,600 buildings, nearly a tenth of the city, were destroyed.

**April 17, 1942.**

**HIGH EXPLOSIVE (HE) bombs in Alameda Road off Fir Copse Road, Purbrook.** 15-houses demolished, one or two slight casualties. **Damage to water, gas and electric mains.** One woman [Lily May Mould, 27] died at **43, Privett Road** from shock of explosion. **MAGNETIC MINE** dropped in copse 50 yards south of **Stakes Road, Waterloo** towards rear of **Purbrook Boys Industrial School.** Damage to houses, but no casualties. **UNEXPLODED (UX) MAGNETIC MINE** located at **Oaklands, Stakes Hill Road, Waterloo.** Houses within 400 yards evacuated. Road closed.

**April 17, 1942**

At 22.05, **MAGNETIC MINE** in **Queens Enclosure, London Road, Cowplain** on soft surface. Damage to properties in **Park Lane and London Road.** No casualties.

At 22.30 **MAGNETIC MINE** at **Lovedean Lane.** Seven houses demolished and one part demolished. **One man killed and one woman seriously injured. One man, two women and one boy slightly injured,** road closed to traffic.

**April 18, 1942.**

At 05.30 suspected **UNEXPLODED BOMB (UXB)** on lawn of **18 Park Road, Purbrook,** three yards from house.

**April 18, 1941**

At 02.30 **MAGNETIC MINE** fell in a field at **Brambles Farm, Hambledon Road.** Damage to houses and property but no casualties.

At 07.30, a suspected **UNEXPLODED BOMB (UXB)** fell in the garden of 74, **The Brow.** Also an **UNEXPLODED UX MAGNETIC MINE** fell in field at rear of **Ardingley, Hambledon Road.** Houses were evacuated and the road closed.

Also a number of **INCENDIARY BOMBS (IBs)** fell in centre of **shopping area of Waterloo.**

**APRIL 17th - 18th, 1940**

**DURING THE NIGHT,** five German Luftwaffe aircraft were destroyed during an attack on the **PORTSMOUTH DISTRICT** with parachute mines, **HIGH EXPLOSIVE bombs** and **INCENDIARY BOMBS.**

Incidents occurred at **Emsworth, East Denvilles, East Leigh Park, Portsdown Hill, Bedhampton, Purbrook, Stakes, Waterloo, Lovedean, Stoke** and several points in south **Hayling Island** causing considerable damage including houses demolished and a few casualties at most incidents, some being fatal.

72 - **PARACHUTE MINES** were dropped in 11 different parts of the District, the heaviest attacks being at the **southern end of Waterlooville** and **south Hayling Island**. More than 30 - **LAND MINES**, 96 - **HIGH EXPLOSIVE BOMBS** and **thousands** of **INCENDIARY BOMBS (IBs)** fell on **Hayling Island**.

**April 19, 1942.** Three **HIGH EXPLOSIVE BOMBS** and one **UNEXPLODED BOMB** dropped in **Hulbert Road, Waterlooville** causing bad damage to two houses but no casualties.



**BOMB SQUAD  
Removing  
German UXB**

**April 29, 1942.** At 23.20 reports of a large **UNEXPLODED BOMB** having fallen were received from Waterlooville, Havant and Emsworth all indicating a location north of Havant but although a search has been made over a wide area nothing has so far been found.

**June 7, 1942.** The first **Air Raid Warning** was received in this district at 00.53 on June 7, 1940. (**One Year later**, at this hour on June 7, 1941 the total time spent under warnings in that 12-month period was **1,137 hours 27 minutes - an average of some 100 hours per month**).

**1943**

**March 7, 1943.** Heard a lot of gunfire for about an hour. Bombs at **Bedhampton** and **Cowplain**.

**August 17, 1943.** Ban imposed on entry into the area by anyone who did not live or work here, this applied to most of the South Coast. You had to show your identity card when asked to do so by the civil or military police. **Havant** and **Emsworth** was steadily becoming a military camp in preparation for the invasion of Europe – and the Germans knew that.

**1944**

**January 13, 1944.** American troops begin to appear in the district. [A most welcome sight as they brought American chewing gum (Wrigley's) with them, which we could not get. Every American we saw was greeted with the request: '**Got any gum chum?**']

**February 24, 1944.** One container of parachute flares failed to operate and landed in Bell's Copse, Cowplain.

**June 6, 1944.** Heard at 08.00 on the wireless (radio) that new phase in air war had begun and that Germans were reporting attempted landings on **French Channel coast**. Opening of Allied invasion of France later confirmed.

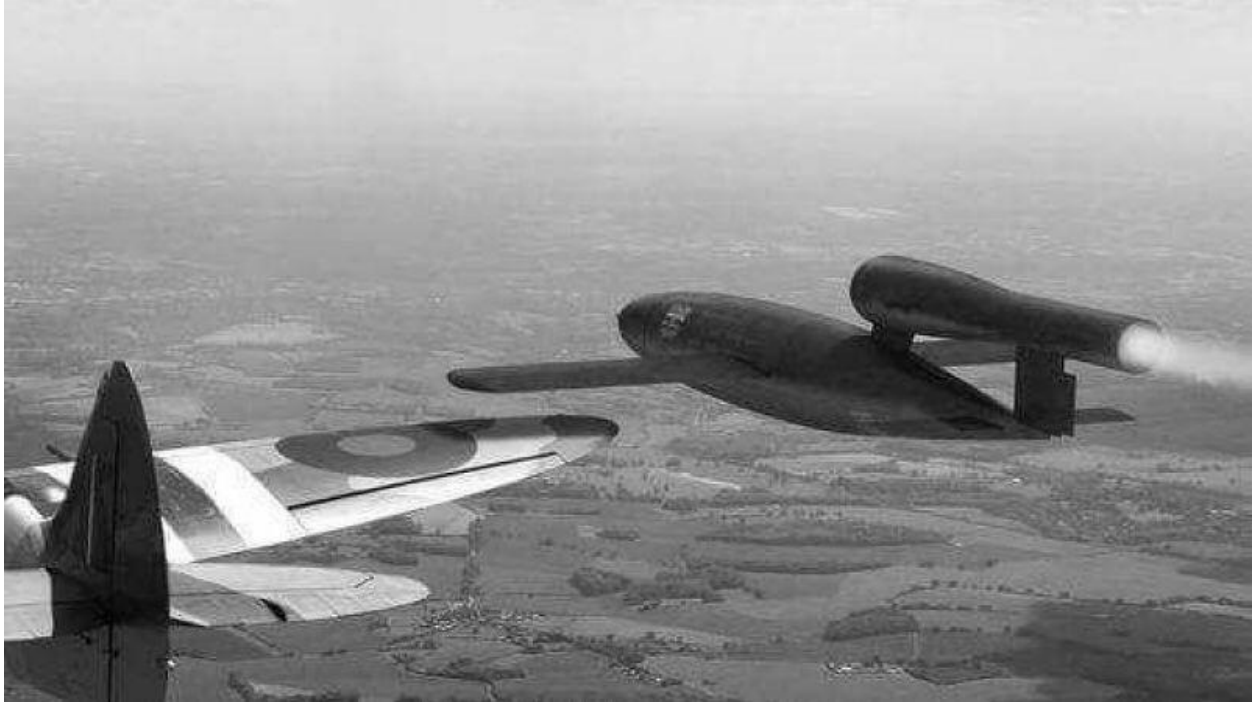
**At 20.30 June 6, 1944 about 100 to 200 gliders towed by bombers over low flying East South East direction.** Bombers returning 1.5 hours later.

**July 3, 1944. First alert at 00.45** and I saw a **V-1 FLYING BOMB** going over house at a low height and I saw it explode about four miles away. At 00.50 a flying bomb passed over the district at a height of about 600 metres and crashed in a wheat field 1.5 miles west of Waterlooville cross roads causing some damage to property, but no casualties.

**Alert lasts one hour.** Second alert at 02.45 which lasts until 06.00 but only distant bumps heard.

The **V-1 flying bomb** - also known to the Allies as the **buzz bomb**, or **doodlebug** was an early cruise missile and the only production aircraft to use a **PULSEJET** for power.

The V-1 was the first of the so-called "**Vengeance weapons**" series deployed for the terror bombing of London. It was developed at **Peenemunde Army Research Centre** in 1939 by the Nazi German Luftwaffe at the beginning of the Second World War, and during initial development was known by the codename "Cherry Stone". Because of its limited range, the thousands of V-1 missiles launched into England were fired from launch facilities along the French (Pas-de-Calais) and Dutch coasts.



### **Spitfires used to “tip” V-1 rockets off-course**

**The Wehrmacht first launched the V-1s against London on 13 June 1944, one week after (and prompted by) the successful Allied landings in France. At peak, more than one hundred V-1s a day were fired at southeast England, 9,521 in total, decreasing in number as sites were overrun until October 1944, when the last V-1 site in range of Britain was overrun by Allied forces. After this, the Germans directed V-1s at the port of Antwerp and at other targets in Belgium, launching a further 2,448 V-1s.**

**The attacks stopped only a month before the war in Europe ended, when the last launch site in the Low Countries were overrun on 29 March 1945. As part of operations against the V-1, the British operated an arrangement of air defences, including anti-aircraft guns, barrage balloons, and fighter aircraft, to intercept the bombs before they reached their targets, while the launch sites and underground storage depots became targets for Allied attacks including strategic bombing.**

**May 8, 1945.**

**VE (Victory in Europe) day. Germany surrenders.**

**August 15, 1945. VJ (Victory in Japan) day (following 2-Atom Bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Japan.**

**Six civilians, people with Waterlooville connections, were killed during the war, most killed in Portsmouth during the terrible bombing the city had to endure.**

Two brothers, **Bertie Charles Parfoot** and **Frederick Parfoot** died together on the dredger “**London**” which hit a mine in **Langstone Harbour on 8 May 1941**. Bertie Charles Parfoot was aged 43 and the husband of Blanche Parfoot of 17, Rowlands Avenue, Waterlooville. Frederick Parfoot was aged 41 and the husband of Florence Parfoot of Waterlooville. Sadly Bertie’s body was never recovered but Frederick is buried in Waterlooville Cemetery.

**Prior to D-Day, the 6 June 1944, the whole area was awash with troops and vehicles; the Queen’s Enclosure, Camp A5 and A6 (D-Day Area Marshalling Camps) was used by the 2nd Army Reserve Tank Brigade and held 1,500 troops and 215 vehicles. As we have seen before Stakes Hill Lodge (Camp A70 held 5,000 troops and 250 vehicles prior to D-Day.**

**Army trucks were parked along the main London Road from Waterlooville to Horndean. One night shortly before D-Day all the troops and their vehicles left, no one of course realizing where they had gone. On the road they had chalked ‘Thank you Cowplain, Thank you Waterlooville’.**

Also at this time all the officers of every regiment had to have new identity photographs taken and this was carried out by the Waterlooville photographer **Herbert Marshall** and his daughter **Alison**.

On 24 May 1945 a heart-warming article appeared in the **Yorkshire Post** regarding the **East Yorkshire Regiment**, who were awaiting D-Day from their quarters in **Waterlooville** prior to going to the Normandy beaches. After the success of D-Day and the following victories a letter was addressed to the ‘Ladies of Waterlooville’ recording the kindness they received at Waterlooville before travelling across the Channel. The letter recalls flags made by the women which were carried all the way to Germany:

**Yorkshiremen’s Flags Never Knew Defeat ‘Dear Ladies of Waterlooville’ Can be Proud of Them. A battalion of the East Yorkshire Regiment awaiting D-Day was quartered at Waterlooville, near Havant, Hampshire. A striking narrative of the magnificent fighting record of these Yorkshire soldiers, all the way from the Normandy beaches to Bremen, in Northern Germany has been written by a Military Observer with the 2nd Army and addressed to ‘The Ladies of Waterlooville’.**

The observer is **CAPTAIN HUGH GUNNING** and the narrative which begins '**Dear Ladies of Waterlooville**' recalls how the Yorkshire soldiers had their last taste of an English home before they sailed across the Channel to land on a beach in Normandy.

*'The trees were singing with bloom and the first roses were coming out in your gardens' he writes. 'For many of those Yorkshire lads those were the last days in England. You helped to fill those days with kindness and you gave them as a parting gift a set of small battle flags which they carried one with each company, across the sea and into action.'*

*'You remember those flags? They were small black triangles with the white rose of York embroidered in the centre. The flags were neat pieces of needlework. The officers of the battalion sacrificed their clothing coupons in order to provide the material, and you did the rest, bless you!'*

The narrative goes on to record the journey of the flags and regiment through France from the beaches of Normandy to Germany itself and later records:

*'It went to the Seine later, and in September, fluttering proudly from a Bren gun carrier it saluted near Brussels that famous field of Waterloo from which your village takes its name. And so to Holland and the battles of the Maas at Overloon and Venray, and during those dreary winter months the flag gave a flutter of animation on the frozen flats of the Maas and on its windswept spongy sodden fields, soft as watercress beds.*

*'Your flag made its first appearance in Germany, in the Goch sector, in the bloodstained battles west of the Rhine. You may have heard how the East Yorkshire's held the bridge on the Udem-Wesse road? Your flag was near them in that difficult hour.*

*'And so your flag, in triumph crossed the Rhine, turned into Holland for a few days to wave a liberating greeting to the good Dutch, and then east again to Lingen in Germany. With 'Monty's' men of the British 2nd Army it went cracking across the plains of North Germany, and the last time I saw it in battle it was flying outside a house in Bremen, a little the worse for wear, like the brave men who went with it, but still every inch a flag.*

*'Ladies you can be proud of the flags and of the men to whom you gave them to carry. By your parting gift you gave these men of the county of the White Rose a sure fillip to their already high morale., for you gave to the White Rose that little extra fragrance of the Hampshire Rose, and the East Yorkshire's will not forget.'*

**Yorkshire Post, 24 May 1945**

It was not only the Army who were stationed in or close to Waterlooville. The Admiralty took over the **Queen's Hotel**, probably connected to the work at **HMS Vernon at Leigh Park and West Leigh**. Two prefabricated buildings, which still stand in the grounds of the telephone exchange at **Forest End**, were also used and later used as the **Waterlooville Library**.

The people of Waterlooville gave their best when asked to donate to the various wartime schemes for raising money with various fêtes a common sight in the village. One fête was held in aid the British Red Cross in August 1941, which was advertised as follows:

### **Red Cross Fête at Waterlooville**

**Lorna, Countess Howe will open a fête at the Waterlooville Recreation Ground in aid of the British Red Cross funds at three o'clock tomorrow. There is no charge for admission and the attractions include a garden produce exhibition, a baby show, children's sports, fancy dress and ankle competitions, tennis tournament, tug of war, sideshows and treasure island.**

**A RAF band has been engaged and there will be dancing on the green.**

**Representatives of the many organizations in the Waterlooville district are co-operating to ensure success for the Red Cross.**

**Portsmouth Evening News, 6 August 1941**

Along with other districts of the neighbourhood Waterlooville formed its own Civil Defence Unit, attached to the Havant head quarters and Cowplain and Denmead formed **Home Guard Units**. Looking at a photograph of **Waterlooville's Civil Defence Unit**, photographed in 1943, most of the unit are female with Dr Lennox Stephenson, the Waterlooville physician, as their Commander.

What is strange for a Village, and later a Town, of the size of **WATERLOOVILLE** is that there is no War Memorial to honour those who lost their lives in the Second World War, as there is for those who lost their lives in the First World War. Smaller villages such as **PURBROOK** commemorate those who died as does **COWPLAIN** who recently have honoured their dead.

**There were at least 28 men who died while on military service with Waterlooville connections.**