

WHERE WERE THEY?

To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the war in Europe our Editorial Assistant, Ian Shein asked current members of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation to tell us in their own words what they did in the war. Some entries have been left over to the next edition and any ex-serviceman or ex-servicewoman who has not been contacted should tell Ian by 31st July 1995.

WILLIE CAPLAN



A member of the Territorial Army, he was called up at the outbreak of the war and enrolled in the Lothian and Borders Horse.

After a spell in this country, he was given embarkation leave, married, and after two days was sent abroad. It was 3½ years before he saw his bride again. Headed for Egypt, his unit disembarked at Durban, South Africa, where he spent Pesach with a Jewish family. On reaching Egypt he became part of a tank replacement crew and served as a tank driver with the 8th Army during the battle of El Alamein in 1942. Thereafter he was posted to Italy with the Durham Light Infantry as a Beach Commando, with responsibility for looking after mechanised transport. He saw active service in Salerno, Rome and Florence before being demobbed after six years service.

IAN SHEIN



On his call up, reported to the infantry training centre at Fort George in north Scotland. Posted to the Royal

Corps of Signals, he served as a radio operator before being attached to Special Operations Executive. Further training in Shropshire was followed by a posting to Bari in south Italy. His duties were to make radio contact with Allied agents operating behind the German lines in Yugoslavia. Transferred to Sienna, he remained

there during the last days of the war in Europe. Thereafter he was posted to India where he served as a radio operator in Calcutta. A family bereavement saw him being granted compassionate discharge after three years service.

NORMAN DORFMAN



Was called up in 1941 to the Royal Air Force and was stationed at various bases in Britain. He served as a leading aircraftsman with the

ground crew of a Mosquito Squadron in Norfolk. Nearby was a US bomber base of Flying Fortresses, very large four-engined bombers carrying a crew of about ten. The Commander invited any RAF personnel who wished to fly with them over Germany to get a first-hand view of the destruction caused by the Allied air forces. He took advantage of this and found it an experience never to be forgotten. The damage to cities such as Berlin, Cologne and Hamburg was indescribable. By now all were aware of the horrors of the concentration camps, and as such, he states that he found the above experience very moving. He was demobbed in 1946.

MICHAEL CAPLAN



Joined the army in 1941 and enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps. After initial training and service in this country, he was posted to the 78th or 'Battleaxe' Division attached to the

American 1st Army. In 1942 he was with the invading Allied Armies during the landing on enemy occupied North Africa known as 'Operation Torch'. He fought through the campaigns in Sicily and Italy and was badly wounded in the leg. He however remained with his unit into Austria. He was demobbed in 1945.

JOE RIFFKIN



Joining the Armed Forces in 1941, he was stationed in Yorkshire in the Royal Corps of Signals. Thereafter he was transferred to the 52nd Lowland Division and spent several months in Banffshire. He was selected for a Commission and after a period at an Officers' Training Unit, was posted south to a Transport Company in the Royal Army Service Corps. From there he went overseas to Belgium and ultimately to Germany where he was in charge of a petrol company. His good knowledge of German made him an ideal choice to liaise with civic dignitaries and order suitable billets for the troops. As a

result of family problems, he was demobilised in February 1946 with the rank of First Lieutenant.

DAVID GOLDBERG

(see a 'Profile' in 'Edinburgh Star' edition No.19)



At the age of 18 volunteered for the army and was posted to the Pioneer Corps. Initially stationed in Liverpool and thence to Penicuik, this gave him the opportunity to come into Edinburgh and attend the forces' dances held in the local Jewish community centre. In 1944, on D-day plus three, his unit was shipped to the Normandy beaches at Arromanches in France where heavy fighting took place. In 1945 he returned to England before his proficiency in German resulted in his being sent to translate documents at the Nuremberg Trials, set up to try Nazi War Criminals. Latterly he was posted to York as a corporal where he worked in the stores. He refused the opportunity of a commission and was demobilised in 1946.

ANDREW KAYE

Called up in 1940, served initially in the Field Artillery, being stationed near home in Longniddry. Posted to England he thereafter embarked on a troop ship for Capetown, subsequently ending up in Suez. Transferred to the Durham Light Infantry, he took part in the battle of El Alamein in 1942. The invasion of Italy in 1943 saw him in Naples



and Cassino. As a sergeant in charge of an anti-tank gun, he saw service in Austria and in the British Guard Zone of Vienna when Russian troops were in the city. His duties also included that of regimental tailor. After one year in Austria, he was demobbed in 1945.

BETTY GOLD



In November 1942, with other Edinburgh girls, including Babette Shulfine, embarked on the 'biggest adventure of their young lives' on reporting to a remote area near Brechin for a months training in the

Womens Timber Corps. She had to learn how to fell trees with the old cross cut saw, trim them and measure and load them on to lorries for dispatch. A three mile walk there and back from the base, an old hunting lodge, in heavy boots added to the adventure. She was posted twice doing the necessary work to replace the Canadian lumberjacks who previously were employed and releasing them for military service. Thereafter, after she found difficulty in settling in an ordinary job, she joined the Land Army and obtained a diploma in Horticulture. She remained there until 1950.



JOE LURIE

During the early days of the war served in the Royal Air Force in this country. Thereafter he was posted to the Far East and saw service in India, Burma, Thailand and Singapore. Whilst in Thailand, was Senior Flying Control Officer and was responsible for organising a Flying Control School for redundant air crew including officers in the Thai Royal Air Force. At the end of the war, he was offered a contract by the Thai Government to be Controller of the airfield in Bangkok. He had already met his future wife Sheva there and decided to return to Britain after almost five years in the Forces.