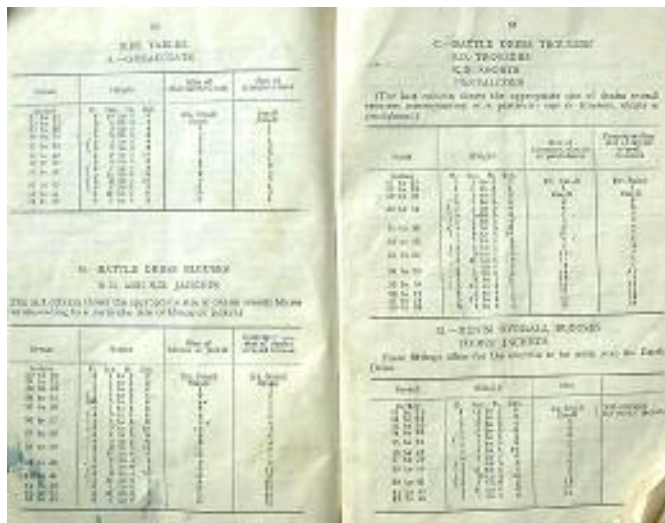




George James No 3599882

area if needed, should the enemy attacks get back to the beaches.

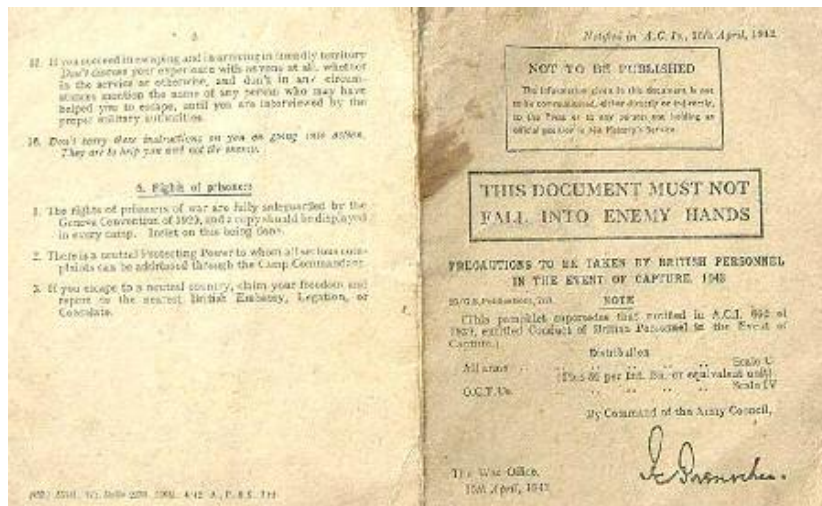


Mulberry Harbour took over after a couple of months and Monty decided to use the Battalion as reinforcements, hence my arrival in the 9th Cameronians.

We were fortunate. On D-Day we were dropped about half an hour after the first assault went in. The dead were lined up after they'd gone forward about two hundred yards. I lost friends on D-Day. One was killed at Bayeux. Blasted to bits. Another friend from Kendal, John



Swan, came past me on a stretcher, hit by a shell or something. We thought it was only his arm and we thought he'd be alright. But he'd been hit in the back as well. He was in my platoon, a dispatch rider. The song we used to sing every night was "Love and Marriage".



In my time on the beaches I had a 'phone line to Bayeux to look after, using a motorbike for the eight mile journey. I had some anxious moments when I met 20 tanks or more on the narrow roads – life was cheap! – and made for the ditch on the roadside. The line often went dead due to shelling or tank movements.

Once I was on a line failure at three in the morning, pitch black, walking along with the line between my finger and thumb and a queer feeling hit me. I by-passed it and carried on, mending the line after I found the break. Coming back, I found there was a dead Jerry on the ground with the line in his hand. I had shaken his hand!

In Holland you dig a slit trench about three foot down and in the morning it's full of water, like at Swineshead. In Belgium you couldn't dig in, it was solid rock, no good at all. The first thing you do is dig in. You'd throw your rifle away rather than your shovel. A trench is usually four foot. Depends on your frame. My friend who was bigger than me said: "You, you devil, you get down two foot, then ease up." You live in it. The longest I was in a trench was three weeks.

You're as green as grass. You expect what you get. It's only by watching other people you know what to do. You see what the other blokes are doing. You hear a whistle and it's a shell coming over, so you drop down. You get used to it. You get a stiff neck. More often than not you were on a river's edge with Jerry the other side of it. You crept out at night. The only time we were out for any time was when we were laying a line. Having laid a line you got a break. Christmas '44 we drew lots to see who went on leave. The whole Army drew lots. I drew for 23rd of March so I went home and got the wife pregnant.



NCO's 9th Bn Cameronians 1945

We were on the Siegfried line in February '45. At the end of Feb we came out and went back to Belgium. We crossed the Rhine on the 23rd of March.



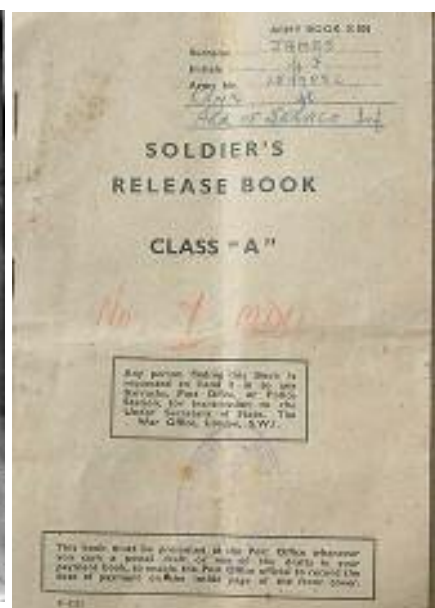
Promotion to RSM for one of the lads



Victory perks



Victory perks



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