

## Cumbria At War 1939-1945 Working at Home to win the War

The war effort was greatly assisted by the endeavours of people working in local industries, both old and new. War work was hard and occasionally treacherous. Newspapers continued to relate accounts of mining accidents throughout the war years.

Many firms moved to Cumbria in the war such as Edgards, photographed here in 1945. This firm made military uniforms, so war was good for business. These people were making leather jackets to be worn by aircrew and tank crew. Edgards had been in London, but after suffering bomb damage, transferred to Whitehaven.



Known as the Bevin Boys, after Ernest Bevin, many young and inexperienced men were drafted into the mines. Coal mining was a very dangerous industry plagued by a lack of investment. During the war the accident rate went up. Cumbrians like John Hornsby lost their lives while they were doing their duty and helping Britain to win the war.

The hiring record, below, shows new recruits at one Whitehaven pit during the early years of the war, including J Thompson explicitly described as a *Bevin Boy*.

# The Cumberland Coal Company (Whitehaven) Ltd.

## CONTRACT OF SERVICE

## HAIG PIT

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, in consideration of being employed at the Whitehaven Colliery, HEREBY ACCEPT AND AGREE to the conditions set out in the Agreement dated 28th March, 1939, between the Owner and the Workmen's Representative, together with any other conditions or working arrangements mutually agreed upon and adopted by the Colliery Company and their representatives on the one side and the employees or their representatives on the other side.

I also further agree to the Company making deductions from my wages allowed by the Trade Acts (1927-1934) for the following - Long Unge and Regain, Coal Unge and Loss of work Expenses, House Rent, Food, Medical Attendance, Insurance and any other sums mutually agreed upon between the Company and its Employees.

I further agree that my tenure of any house held or owned by the Colliery Company shall cease and determine at the expiry of my contract of service. I have never suffered from Syphilis.

I have received a copy of the Coal Mines Regulation Act.

# The Cumberland Coal Company (Whitehaven) Ltd.

## CONTRACT OF SERVICE

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, in consideration of being employed at the Whitehaven Colliery, HEREBY ACCEPT AND AGREE to the conditions set out in the Agreement dated 28th March, 1939, between the Owner and the Workmen's Representative, together with any other conditions or working arrangements mutually agreed upon and adopted by the Colliery Company and their representatives on the one side and the employees or their representatives on the other side.

I also further agree to the Company making deductions from my wages allowed by the Trade Acts (1927-1934) for the following - Long Unge and Regain, Coal Unge and Loss of work Expenses, House Rent, Food, Medical Attendance, Insurance and any other sums mutually agreed upon between the Company and its Employees.

I further agree that my tenure of any house held or owned by the Colliery Company shall cease and determine at the expiry of my contract of service. I have never suffered from Syphilis.

I have received a copy of the Coal Mines Regulation Act.

Age	Workman's Name	Address	Last Employed at	Date of Birth	Position	Class of Work	Witness of Hiring	Age	Workman's Name	Address	Last Employed at	Date of Birth	Position	Class of Work	Witness of Hiring
24	W. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	42	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
1	W. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	40	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
23	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	39	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
33	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	31	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
19	W. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	37	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
27	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	30	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
17	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	19	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
13	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	14	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
24	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	20	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
34	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	18	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
51	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	43	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
47	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	30	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
36	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	16	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
14	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	20	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
15	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	31	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
25	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	31	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.
36	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.	22	J. H. H.	St. Peter's St.	12 Dec 1911	1911	Thames	Knifemaker	J. H. H.

### Caught Under Fall

#### Whitehaven Miner's Fortitude

A 33-year-old coal hewer, father of three children, Mr. John Hornsby, 29, The Ginns, Whitehaven, died in Whitehaven Hospital on Monday after being injured in an accident at Haig Pit.

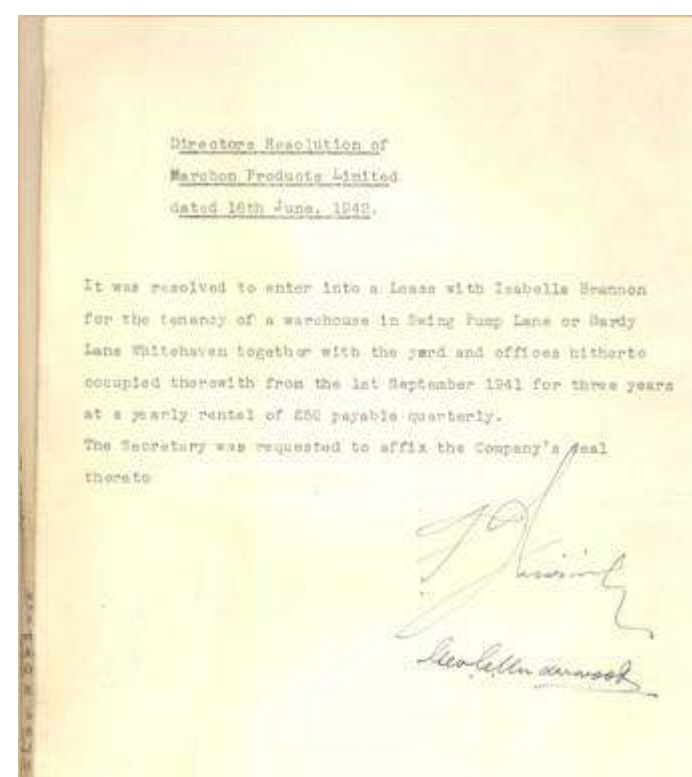
Deceased was one of a company working on the morning shift at No. 4 South Bank face. A huge slab of stone is reported to have fallen from the roof and pinned Hornsby by the lower part of the body. Whilst his workmates toiled to release him and assistance was given by the mine ambulance workers, Hornsby never lost consciousness and showed great fortitude.

At the hospital several fractures were discovered and Hornsby died five hours after admission.

An inquest was opened by Mr. R. W. Marley, Deputy Coroner, on Tuesday, and adjourned for a week.

Evidence of identification was given by William Hornsby, Loweswater Avenue, Woodhouse, who said he last saw his brother on Saturday night. Deceased, who had worked for 15 years in Ladysmith, Wellington, and Haig Pit, had no physical defects. He had worked as a hewer at Haig Pit for nine years.

The Coroner expressed his sympathy with the relatives.



Frederick Marzillier and Franz Schon started their chemicals business in 1939 in London, but moved to Whitehaven in 1941, to escape the bombing. Marzillier had been educated in Germany, but

came to London in 1934, shortly after the Nazis came to power. Schon was born in Austria, had lived in Czechoslovakia; his family was Jewish, so he came as a refugee to London in 1939. Their business did well. By 1945, they were employing 87 people.



Work at High Duty Alloys in Distington (right), which opened in 1940, was frenetic during the war years. The foundry, forge and extrusion presses produced parts for virtually all British aircraft engines and the work force reached a peak of almost 3000 men and women working around the clock, seven days a week.



It wasn't only school children who came to Cumbria during the war. Many people escaped from Nazi occupied Europe. One group who came to Cumbria for the duration of the war were trawlers from the Danish fishing fleet. They sailed to Whitehaven after Denmark was invaded in April 1940. For the rest of the war, they operated out of Whitehaven, to help in the defeat of the Nazis by feeding Britain.

You can see in this register (right) that the names of many of the masters of these ships are Danish. The ships are also shown as owned by the MOWT, which was the Ministry of War Transport, in London. The real owners were still in Denmark, under Nazi control.

Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre, Whitehaven: YDB 59, YDX 22/22, YSH 4/2/1, YDB 68.

© Images contained in this display may not be reproduced without the permission of Cumbria Archive Service.

Birth	Date of Arrival	Date of Sailing	Name of Vessel	Port of
	TIDAL PM 3 December 1943	AM 10 December 1943	N. E. Bergen	Den
	TIDAL PM 3 December 1943	AM 10 December 1943	Karon Marie	Den
	TIDAL PM 4 December 1943	AM 15 February 1944	Faithful	Den
	TIDAL PM 7 December 1943	AM 14 January 1944	Danish Betty	Den
	TIDAL PM 9 December 1943	AM 13 December 1943	Joni	Den
	TIDAL PM 9 December 1943	AM 14 February 1944	Anny	Den
	TIDAL PM 9 December 1943	AM 15 December 1943	Ani	Den



## Cumbria At War 1939-1945 War and Industry in Barrow

14th April, 1942.

### HOME GUARD.

Under the new regulations governing recruitment, those members of the Staff who are not members of the Works Firewatching organisation, and who work office hours, are informed that the Firm have no desire to hinder them volunteering for Home Guard service.

*Handwritten signature*

Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre, Barrow: ref. BDB 16/L/1897

Although much of Cumbria was rural in character, there were major concentrations of industry in West Cumberland and in Barrow-in-Furness.

### Shipbuilding in Barrow

Barrow was a major centre of shipbuilding. The photos below show two of the ships built for the Royal Navy during the War. *HMS Hurricane*, *HO6*, was a destroyer built in 1939 and was torpedoed by *U415* in December 1943. *HMS Hurricane* is also remembered for picking up survivors of the *City of Benares*, a ship transporting children to Canada, sunk in 1940. *HMS Indomitable* was an *Illustrious* class aircraft carrier and served in the Mediterranean and Pacific Fleets. In particular she took part in the Malta convoys and the invasions of Sicily, 1943, and Okinawa in 1945. *Indomitable* was scrapped in 1955.

### The Barrow Blitz

Barrow paid a heavy price as an industrial centre and was bombed in 1941. During the Barrow Blitz 80 people were killed and 330 were injured. However 10000 houses were damaged or destroyed, 25 per cent of the total. It has been suggested that Barrow was poorly prepared for air attack as there were public shelters for only 5 per cent of the total population of 75000.

The map below shows where, in Barrow, the bombs fell. Ref BA/S

GI/ms.

2nd June, 1944.

### TO CHIEFS OF DEPARTMENTS.

As a result of the recent wages advance to workmen it has been decided that the undermentioned advances to all male and female members of the weekly paid staff including draughtsmen, tracors, clerks, commercial staff, shop staff, foremen, ratofixers and corresponding ranks, shall take effect as from week commencing the 29th May, 1944.

#### Adult Males.

Age	Present war bonus	Increase	Now war bonus
21 plus	21/-	4/-	25/-

#### Adult Females.

21 plus	13/6	3/-	16/6
---------	------	-----	------

#### Non adult males.

14	3/6	1/-	4/6
15	4/6	1/-	5/6
16	5/3	1/3	6/6
17	7/-	1/6	8/6
18	8/9	2/-	10/9
19	10/6	2/6	13/6
20	12/6	3/-	15/6

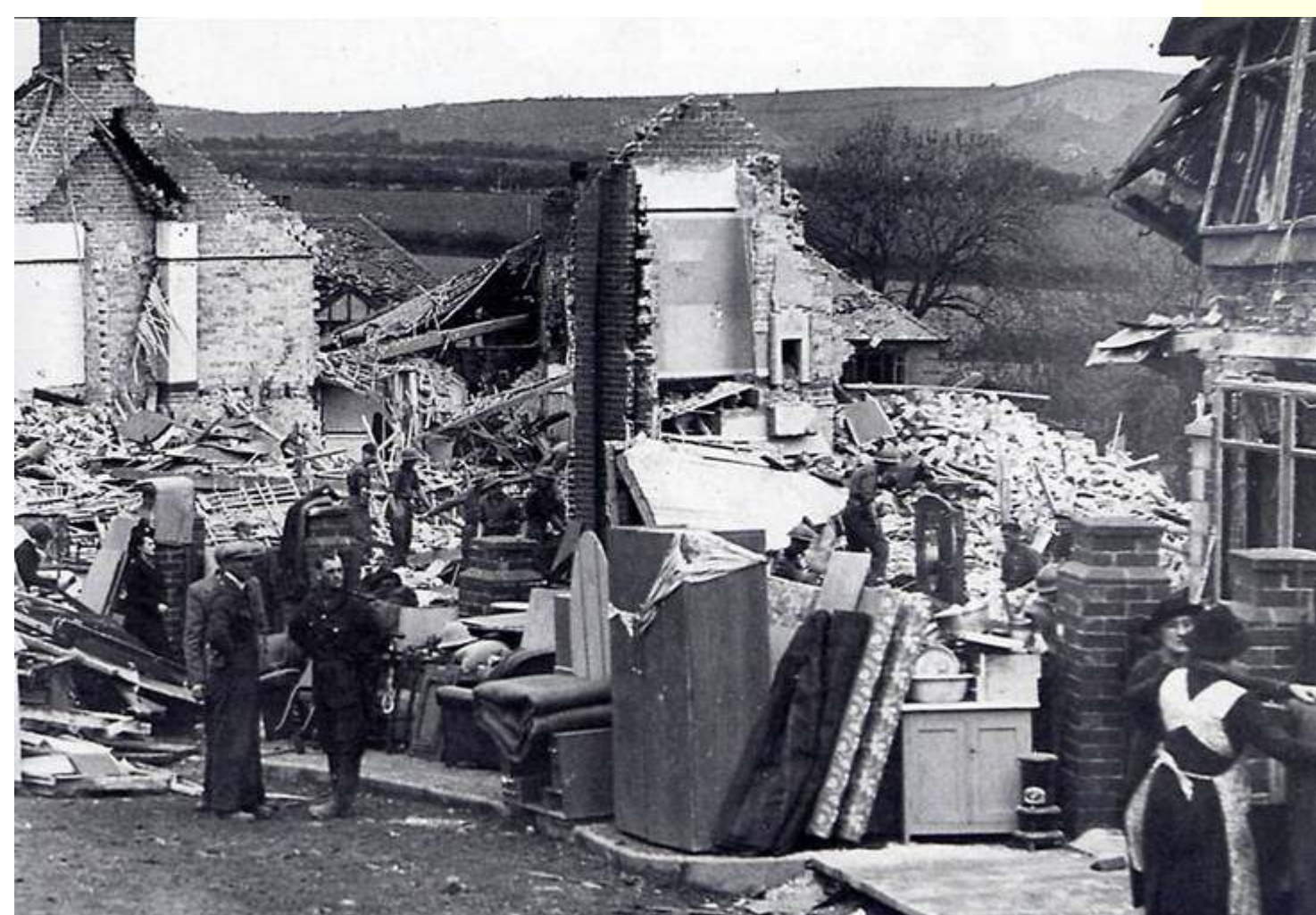
#### Non adult females.

14	2/2	1/-	3/2
15	4/6	1/-	5/6
16	5/7	1/3	6/6
17	6/6	1/6	8/6
18	8/3	2/-	10/3
19	10/3	2/3	12/6
20	12/6	2/6	15/2

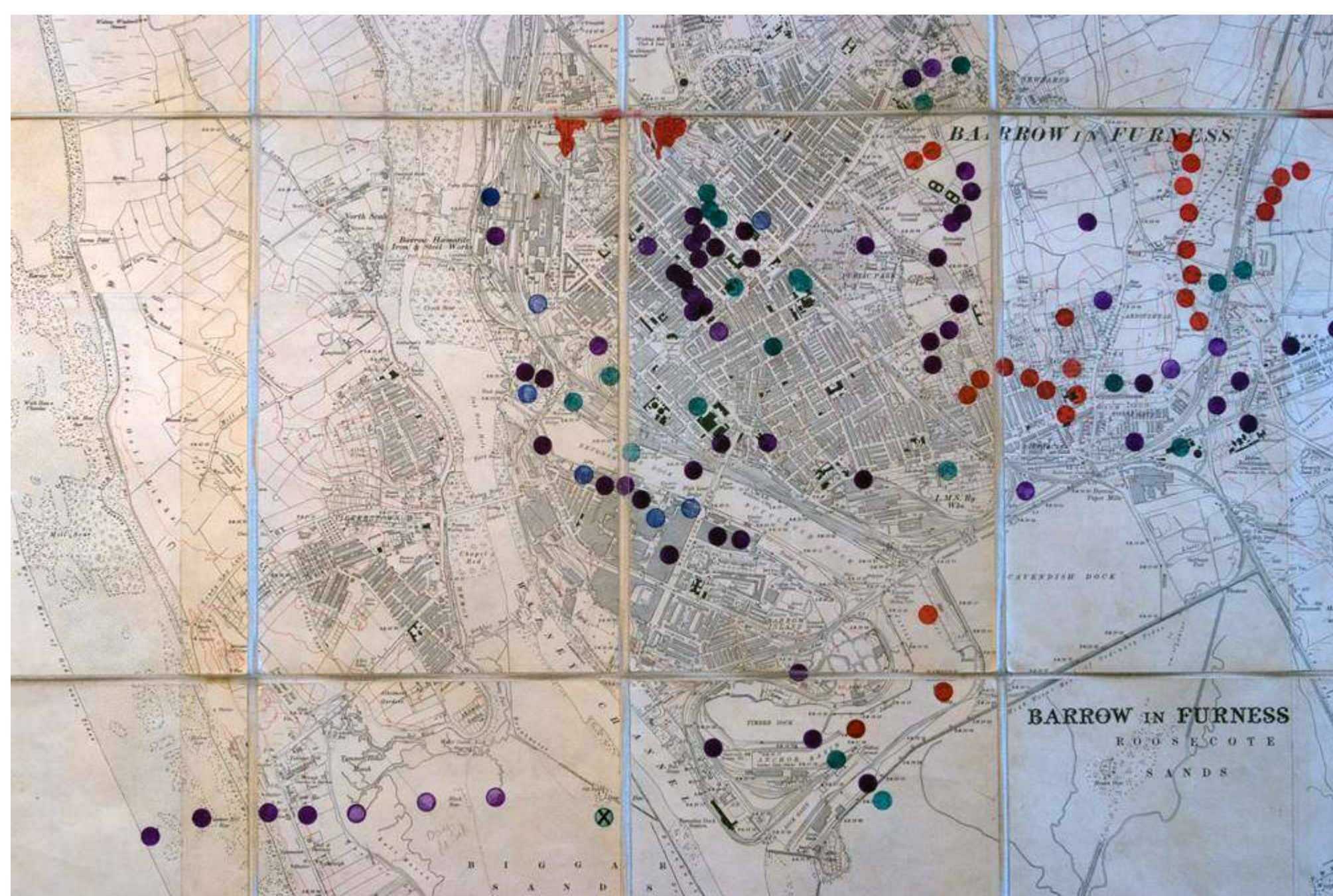
*Handwritten signature*

Schedule of rates of overtime pay at the Vickers shipyard, Barrow.

Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre, Barrow: ref. BDB 16/L/1897



Prospect Road, furniture salvaged from ruins. Memory Lane, Barrow



HMS Hurricane (above) and HMS Indomitable (below).

Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre, Barrow: ref. BDB 16



Photographs of the Barrow Blitz taken from Memory Lane, Barrow: published by

© Images contained in this display may not be reproduced without the permission of Cumbria Archive Service.



Rescue teams at work in Vernon Street. During hectic activity on 14 April a pair of ambulances were sent to Vernon Street at 3.32am. The siren for the all clear went 10 minutes later.



## Cumbria At War 1939-1945

## Evacuation

Air raids presented a serious danger to everyone in England, but Cumbria was one of England's safer regions. The counties of Cumberland and Westmorland were designated reception areas for evacuees from areas of industrial or military significance. This led to large numbers of children and schools being evacuated to these counties. The first wave of evacuation was in 1939, followed by a second wave when the air raids began in earnest in 1940.

Throughout the war the Lake District was also a popular place for unofficial evacuees and refugees. German artist Kurt Schwitters ended the war painting for a living in the Ambleside area, and a group of academics from Prague University stayed in Keswick. As 1945 passed, Cumbria acted as host to small groups of liberated allies, firstly some Dutch refugees who were suffering from the effects of the harsh winter, and then a group of Jewish children who had survived the concentration camps.

Aug. 24<sup>th</sup> Gas masks fitted and issued to the children during the afternoon.  
Aug. 30<sup>th</sup> Visit of A.R.P. Warden to test gas mask drill (9AM).  
Aug. 31<sup>st</sup> Order from Director of Education to cease work until further notice (receiving area for evacuated children).  
Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> School re-assembled.  
Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> 16 evacuated children from S. Shields admitted into the school, accompanied by a Teacher, Miss Bruce. Miss Dent took occupancy of 14 of them, while Miss Dent and I share the large room. The children for the most part comprise boys of 10, 11, 12 from S. Stephens Junior School.

The first evacuation of children from Newcastle and South Shields took place in the two days immediately preceding the declaration of war.

Their arrival is recorded in school and local authority records, as the new arrivals were admitted into schools and billeted to new homes.

Evacuation lists for Newcastle schools, relocated to Cockermouth

Whitehaven Archive and Local Studies Centre: ref. SUDC 1/3/202



Newcastle upon Tyne Education Committee. EVACUATION ROLL. Name of School: <u>Balmain School</u>									
Entraining at <u>Heaton</u> Station, on <u>5<sup>th</sup> July</u> 1940, at <u>12.10</u> o'clock. Detaining at <u>Cockermouth</u>									
Reception Area: County <u>CUMBERLAND</u> Authority <u>ROTHBURY</u> Village or Parish <u>Cockermouth</u>									
Party No. <u>4</u> Section <u>2</u> Group <u>2</u>									
Surname	Christian Name(s)	Sex	Age	Birth	Newcastle Address	Address of Billet	Special Medical Notes	Teacher or Vol. Escort	Remarks
Carter	John	M	1	5 27	45, Willow Av.	Mrs. Sewell - St. Helen's St.	A		
Bell	John Lawrence	F	20	12 28	"	"	B		his
Bell	Mary	F	26	2 31	"	"	AB		
Bell	Margaret	F	8	5 32	"	"	F		his
Biggerstaff	Jane	F	18	11 28	18, Cornhill Road	To Mrs. Rep. Lang Bellingham			
Biggerstaff	John	M	6	1 31	"	"	A		
Bowman	John	M	10	4 33	225, Ruby Street	6, Derwent Place	A		
Bryson	Arthur	M	12	8 28	43, Milton Avenue	"	A		foot gear, cloth
Bergen	Douglas	M	13	6 28	20, Till Street	St. Helen's St.	A		
Carter	Isabella	F	23	4 27	11, Monckhester Rd.	"	A		
Carter	John	M	28	5 31	"	"	A		
Carter	William	M	14	9 32	"	"	A		his
Coxon	Gladys	F	17	7 30	113, Aylton Street	Mrs. Watson - Market St.	A		
Coxon	Eileen	F	2	4 33	"	"	A		two large black gl
Christelow	Miriam	F	31	12 30	6, Bakenell Tce.	Mrs. Kirkbride, Amethyst Lodge	A		

Newcastle upon Tyne Education Committee. EVACUATION ROLL. Name of School: <u>WESTMORLAND R</u>									
Entraining at <u>Seatonwood</u> Station, on <u>SEPT 2<sup>nd</sup></u> 1939, at <u>10</u> o'clock. Detaining at <u>COCKERMOUTH</u>									
Reception Area: County <u>CUMBERLAND</u> Authority <u>U.D.</u> Village or Parish <u>COCKERMOUTH</u>									
Party or Company No. <u>350</u> Section <u>1</u> Group <u>1</u>									
Surname	Christian Name(s)	Sex	Age	Birth	Newcastle Address	Address of Billet	Special Medical Notes	Teacher or Vol. Escort	Remarks
MANSTON	JANE	F			107 BELL TERRACE				
MANSTON	MARLENE	F	15	5 35	"				
HUNTER	MARGARET	F			27 HANES STREET				
HUNTER	BARBARA	F			70 WARRINGTON RD				
SWEET	WILLIAM JOSEPH	M			"				
SOHN	FRANCES	F			44 GLOUCESTER ST	Mrs. J. McWay ORRIN STREET			
SOHN	RONALD	M			"	DO DO			
KEARDEN	LINDA	F			34 CAMBRIDGE ST	Mrs. TICKERS KIRKWHITE			
KEARDEN	DAVID	M			"	DO DO			
ROBINSON	AMY	F			53 TULLOCH ST	Mrs. PENNINGTON DO SULLART STREET			Returned Home
ROBINSON	GEORGE	M	9	8 38	"	DO DO			Returned Home
RYAN	CHRISTINA	F			106 PARK ROAD				
RYAN	AGNES	F	1	4 36	"				
RYAN	JOSEPH	M			"				

The arrival of inner-city children into rural communities sometimes caused difficulties for both the young people and local residents. However, for some children it was a positive and fondly

remembered experience, despite the worry of being away from home and family.

Many people were shocked at the poor state of health and hygiene of the new arrivals: in the evacuation roll (above left) for this Newcastle School head lice were the only recorded problem.

As well as busily preparing for the intake of evacuees, schools recorded their preparations to make all their pupils war-ready.



Upper right: Gosforth School log book 1939. Whitehaven Archive and Local Studies Centre: ref. YDS 15/1

Right: Murton School Log book, reference to making carriers for gas masks from old rain coats. Cumbria Archive Centre, Kendal: ref. WDS 99/4

Left: pupils arriving at Underbarrow School, c1940. Kendal Library

31 Sept. Re-opened this morning unofficially, - Gosforth children and Gosforth evacuees being present. Two evacuee teachers have also joined us, - Miss Gribble and Miss Henderson. The Hasdale children are not present, as details of transport have still to be settled. Gosforth children present: 35. Evacuees present: 41. Total 126. Today we are having a series of simple tests to enable us to group the children fairly accurately.

23: 8:39 Readmitted Sheila Howe, who intends to attend school, until she can attend Harth & School.  
30: 8:39 According to instructions received from the Director of Education, Gas Mask Drill was held this morning. Lessons were resumed about 10:30 a.m. Mr G. Idle, Air Raid Warden was present. Every mask had to be fitted (many were of incorrect size) before any drill could be performed.  
1: 9:39 School closed by order of the Education Committee, until further notice. Ladies gathered at the School to make suitable carriers, out of old raincoats etc, for the children's gas-masks, during the afternoon.

© Images contained in this display may not be reproduced without the permission of Cumbria Archive Service.



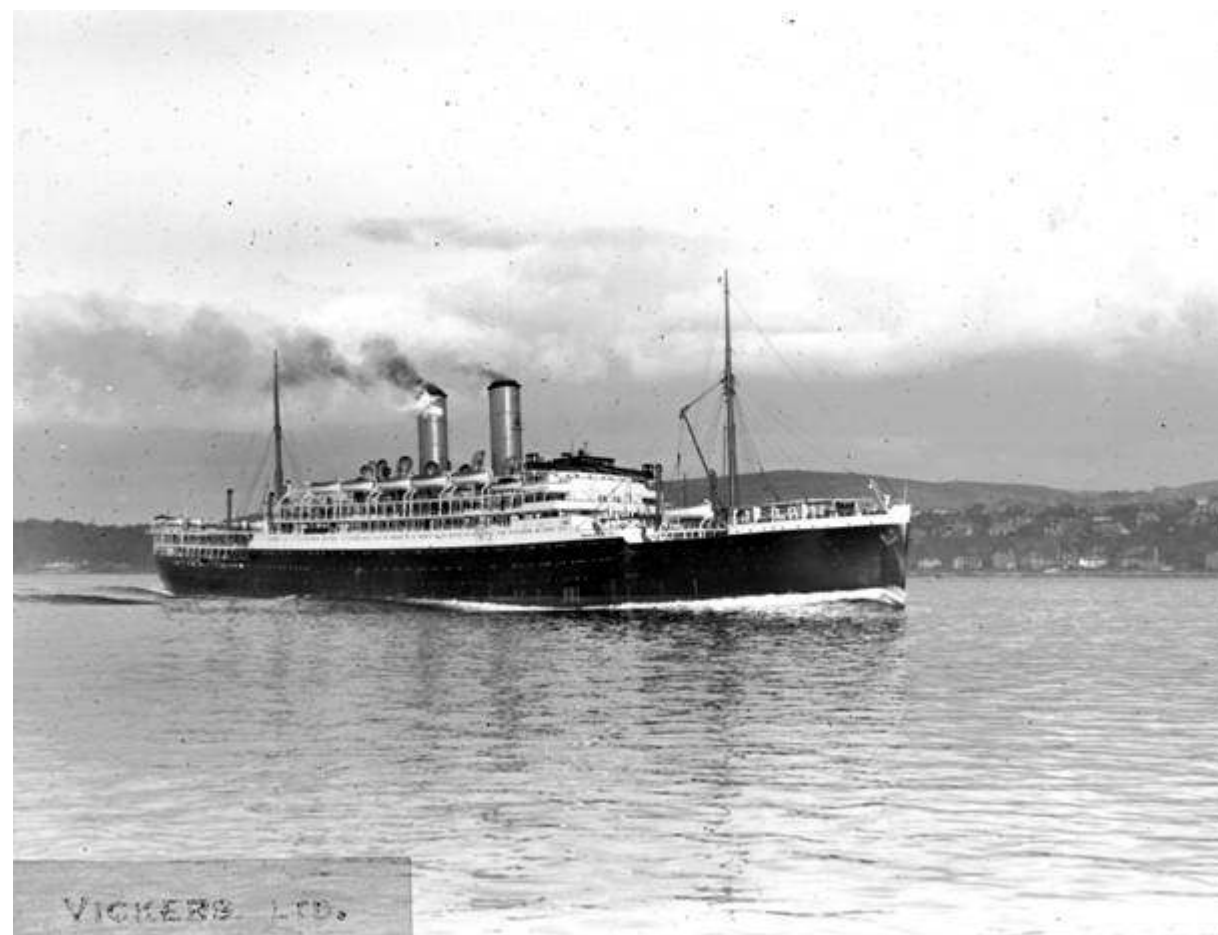
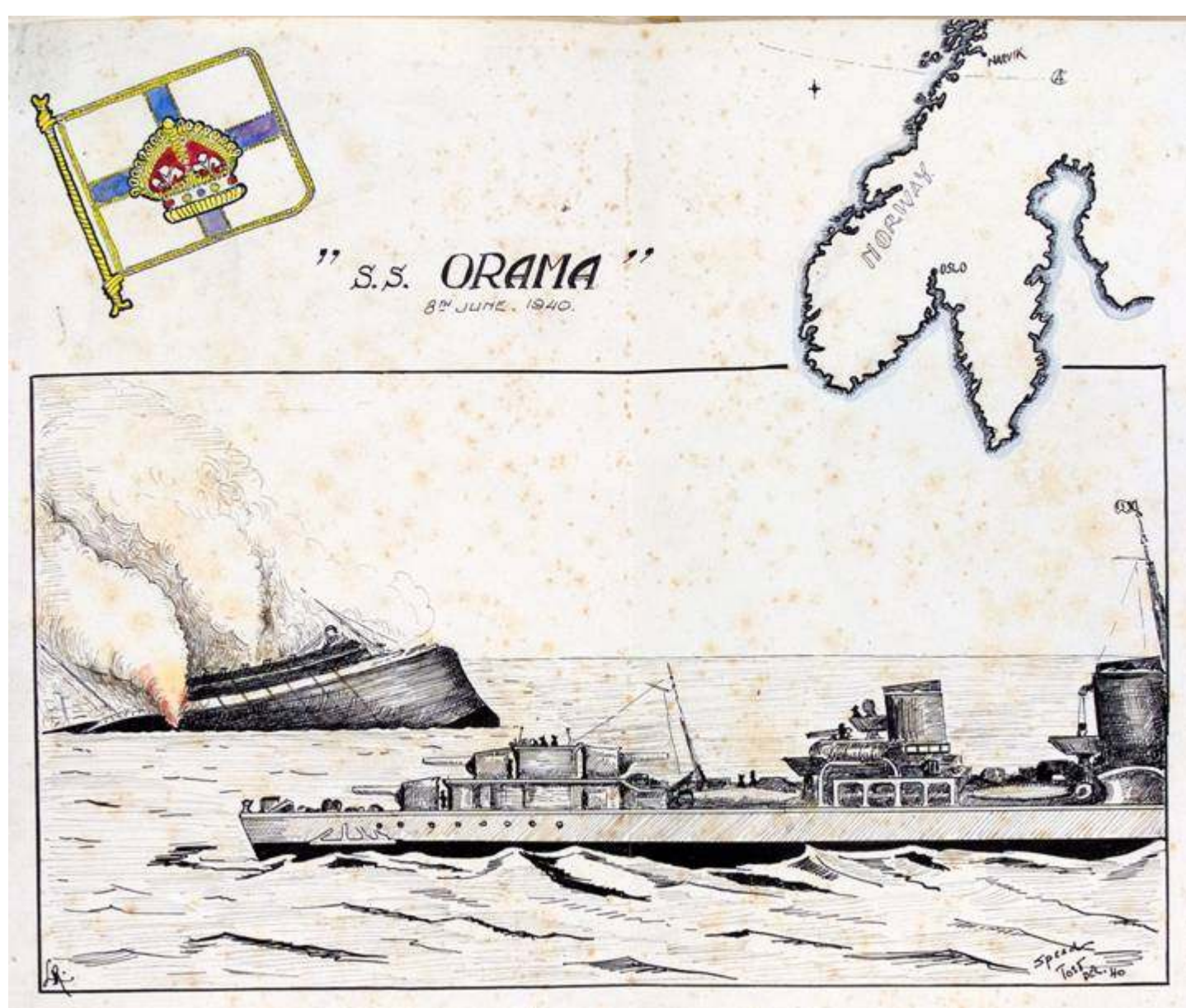
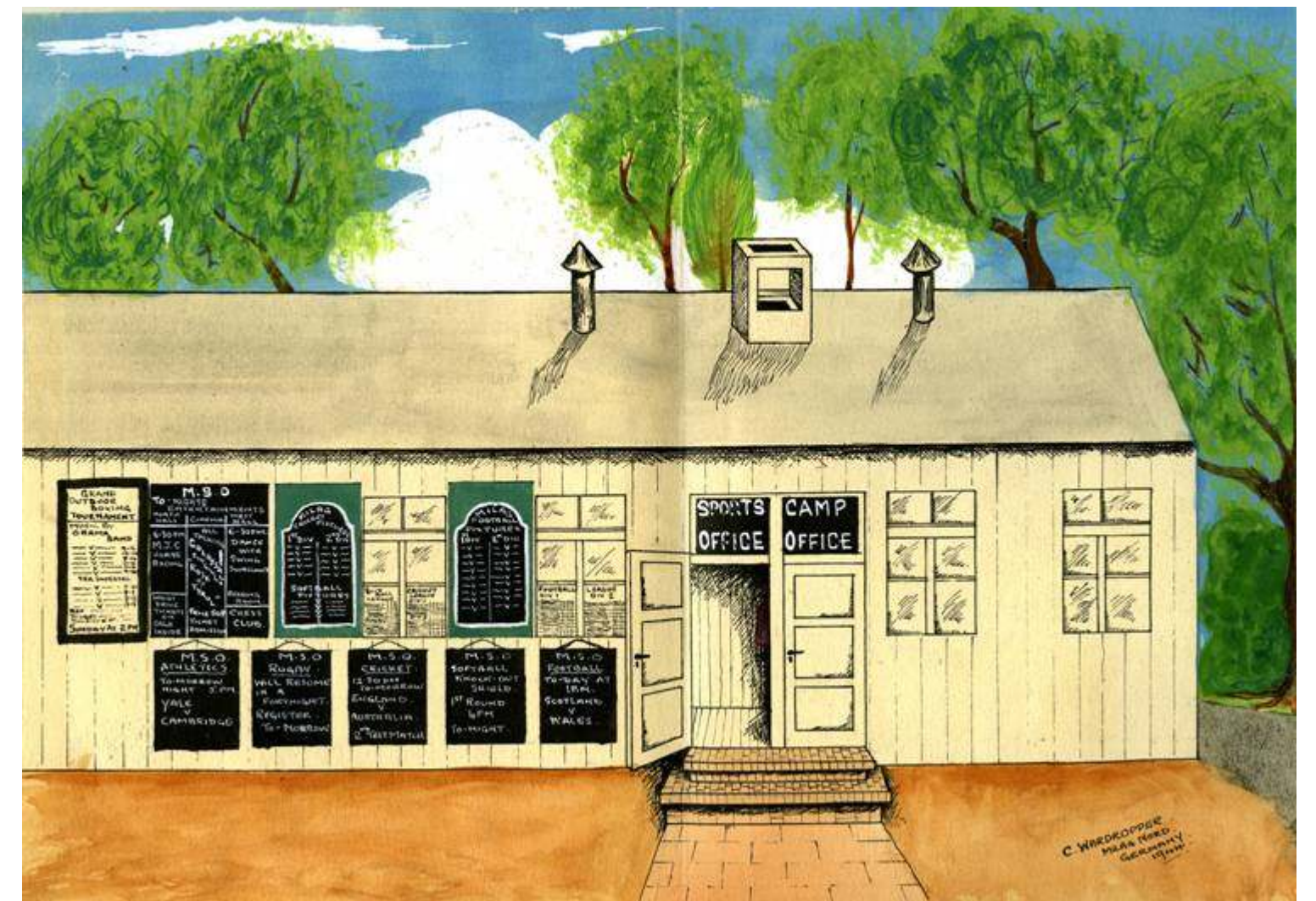
## Cumbria At War 1939-1945

## Missing Home: Prisoners of War

Cumbria played host to a number of Prisoner of War (POW) camps, perhaps the best known being at Shap Wells and Moota. Cumbrians also found themselves POWs in Germany and under Japanese control.

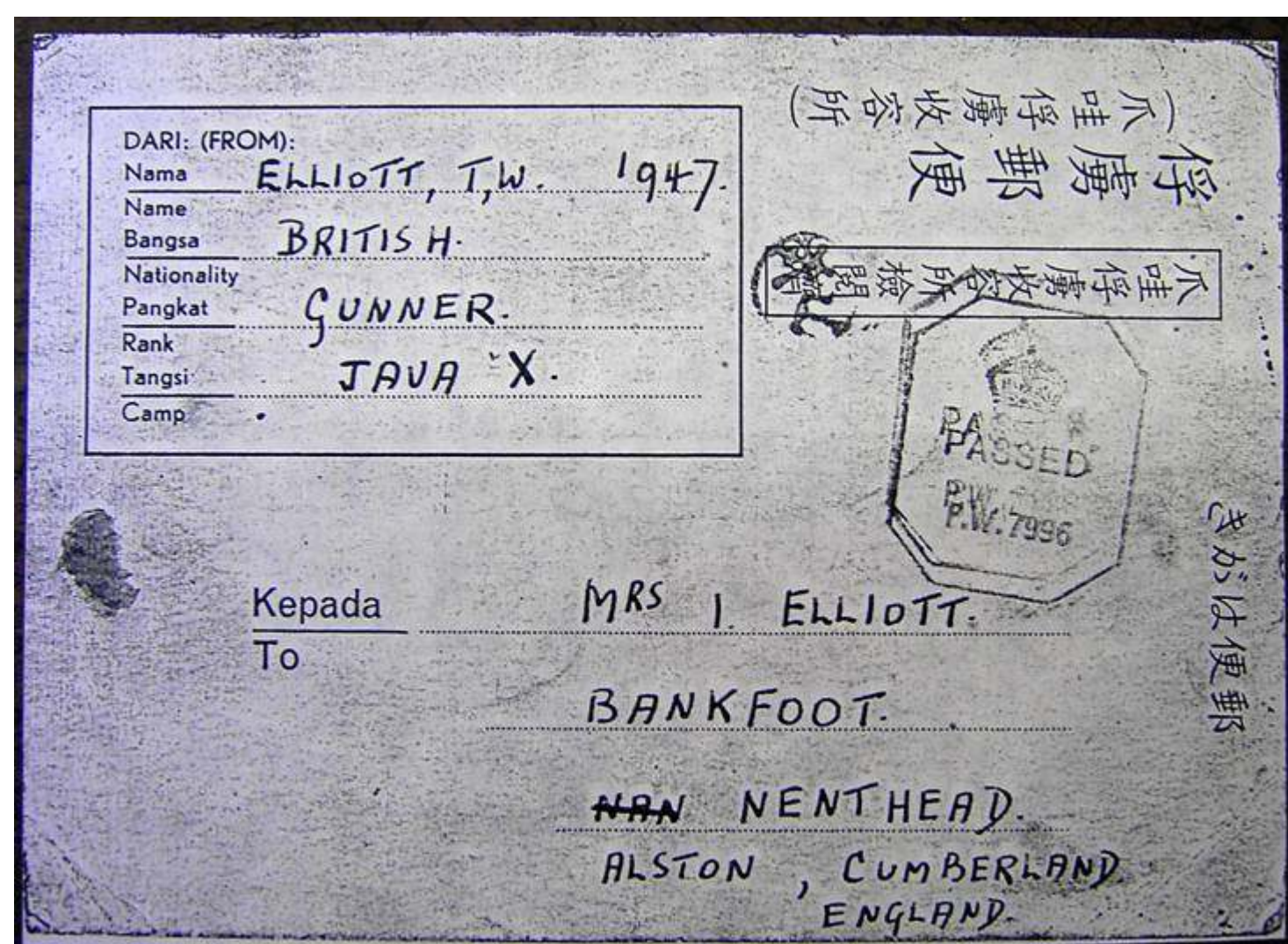
One Cumbrian POW kept a detailed sketch book: Clifford Wardropper was a merchant seaman, and ended up a prisoner when the Germans sank his ship, the *SS Orama*, and picked up the survivors. He spent the rest of the war as a POW in Germany and illustrations by him and his compatriots capture elements of camp life.

Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre, Barrow: ref. BDX 162



Wardropper was a merchant seaman: his ship, the *SS Orama*, was sunk by the Germans off the coast of Norway in June 1940 as captured by one of his sketches. The ship (photographed in peacetime) was built at the Vickers shipyard in Barrow.

Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre, Barrow: ref. BDX 162  
Photograph of the *SS Orama*, © Barrow Dock Museum



This is the only letter that Isabella Elliott received from her son, Thomas, while he was a POW in Japanese hands.

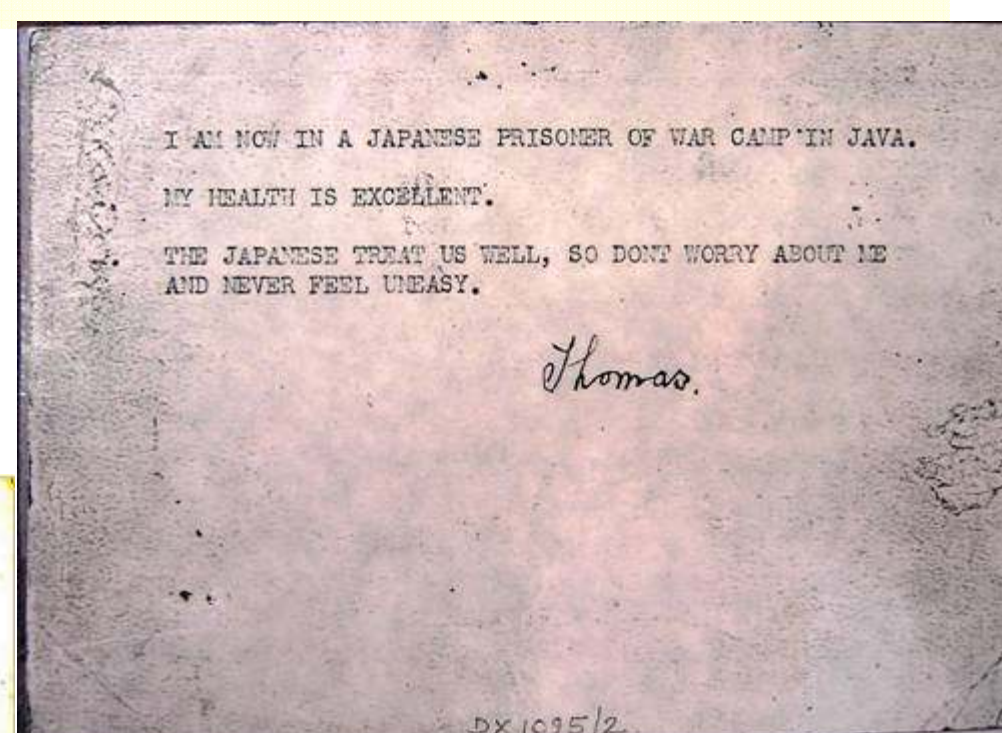
Some time after the war ended, she learnt that he had died in a POW camp in Java, in 1944.

Cumbria Archive Centre, Carlisle: ref. DX 1095/2



Lieutenant H Schnabel was a German officer, captured and held at the Prisoner of War camp at Shap in Westmorland. Schnabel was one of a number of POWs who attempted to escape from Shap.

Cumbria Archive Centre, Kendal: ref. WS CONS 6/6



Here is card written by a Cumbrian POW to a Belgian woman who had helped him. Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre, Whitehaven: ref. YDX 207/10

*My dear Wat, you will by now have received my last post card, so you no longer think I am lazy! I have received your very excellent and welcome parcel. The bed-jacket was especially useful as I have been in bed for a day or two and it helped to keep me warm. Really, my dear, there is nothing I need now and I wish you would not spend money on me that you must need yourself. Madden is still in hospital but should be going home soon now and we hope to go at the same time. Also Lieutenant Colonel & the others are not here now but I think are well. I am having letters from my wife regularly now and both she and Timothy seem to be thriving, thank heaven. Now do be good and take care of yourself and do not send things to me that I know must be expensive and difficult to get and knowing you I am sure that you will be going without yourself.*

*All my love and thanks John Heslop*



# Killed in Action: Flight Sergeant J S Sanderson



Photograph of a Halifax bomber, the type of aircraft JS Sanderson was shot down in.

Image from the Pathe Film Archive.

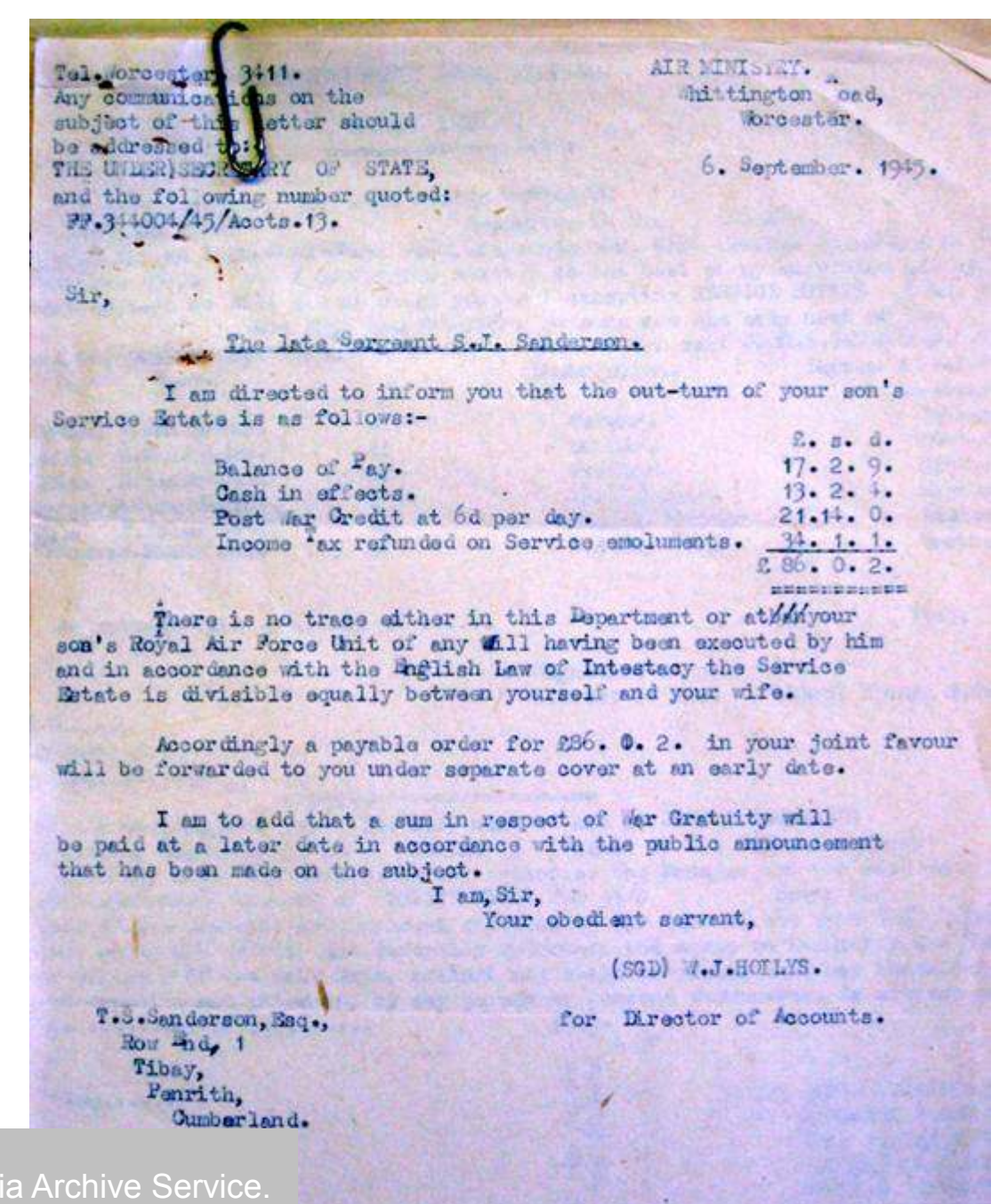
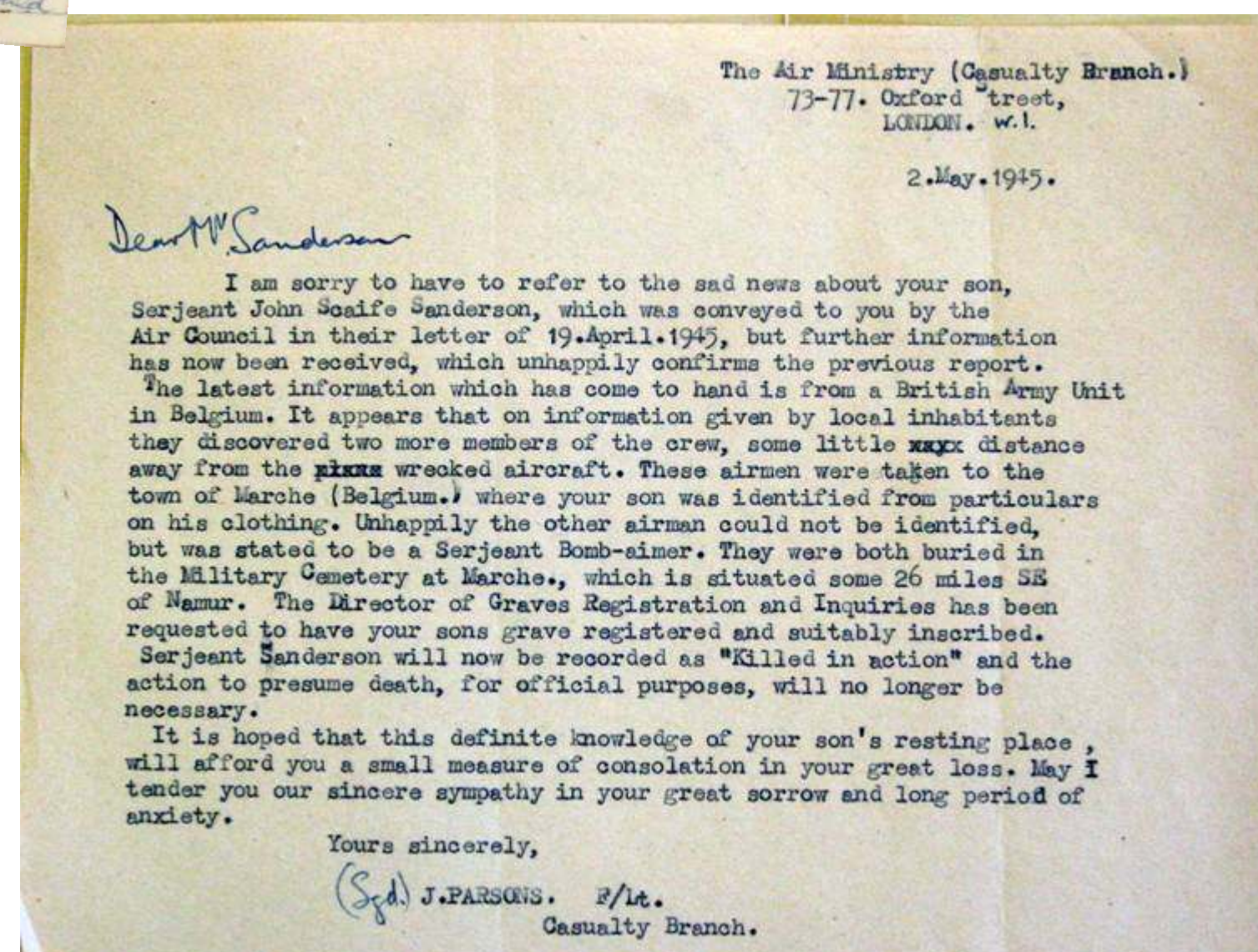
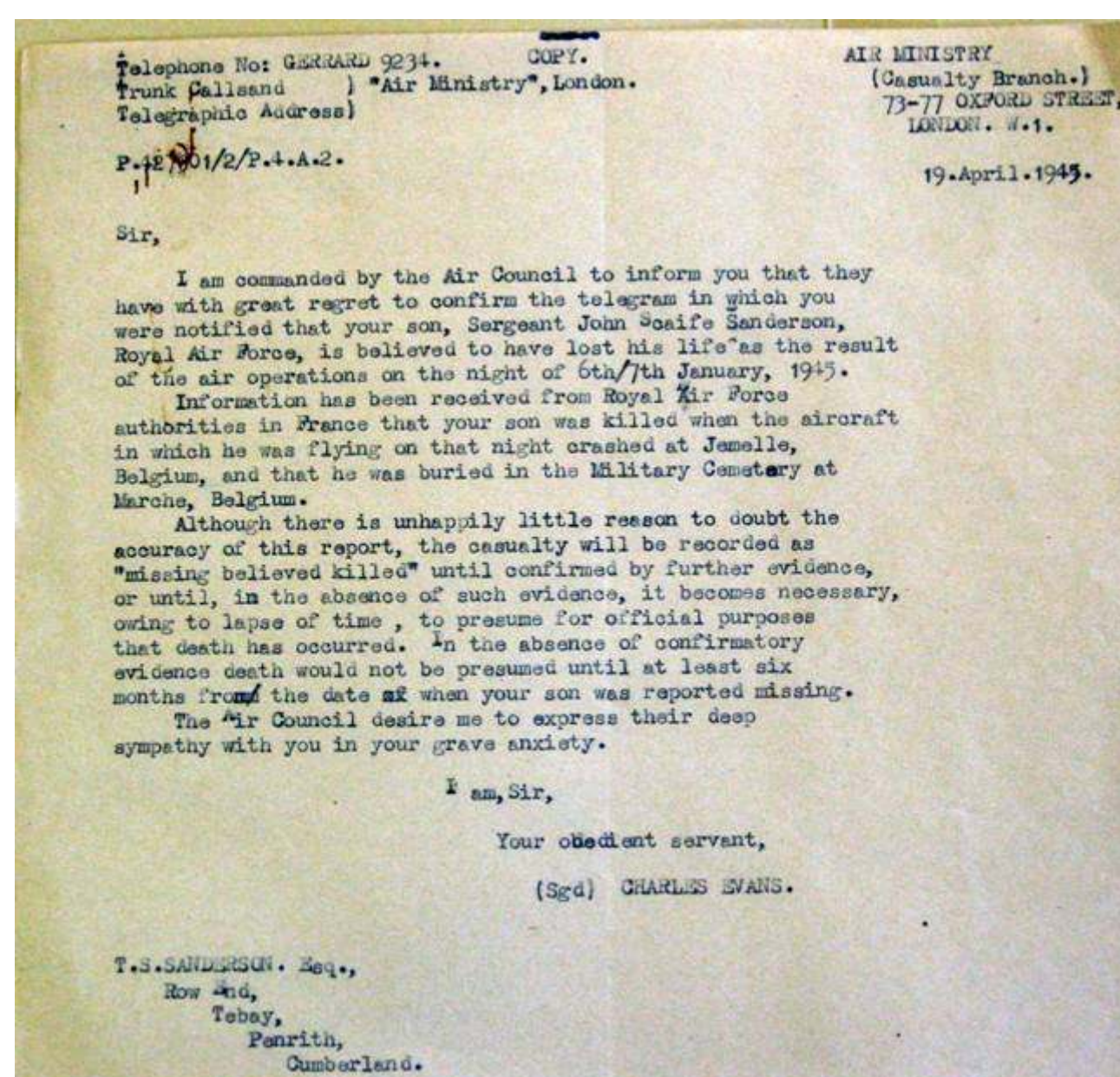
The sad events are poignantly captured in a collection of family papers. The airman's last letter home, from his RAF base in Norfolk, was to his brother. The full letter extends to 10 pages in which John mentioned comrades who had been lost. He described a dangerous operation over Germany, from which they were lucky to return safely. John described looking forward to being on leave in the following week. Tragically, that week never came.

The official letter from the Air Ministry, telling John's father that he was missing, presumed dead was received several months later. At the time of the plane's crash in Belgium in January, Belgium was in German hands. By the time of this letter, the crash site was in British hands, and the wreckage had been located but John's body had not been identified.

A few weeks later, another official letter told John's family that his body had been found "some little distance away from the wrecked aircraft." He had been buried in a Belgian Military Cemetery. "It is hoped that definite knowledge of your son's resting place will afford you a small measure of consolation in your great loss."

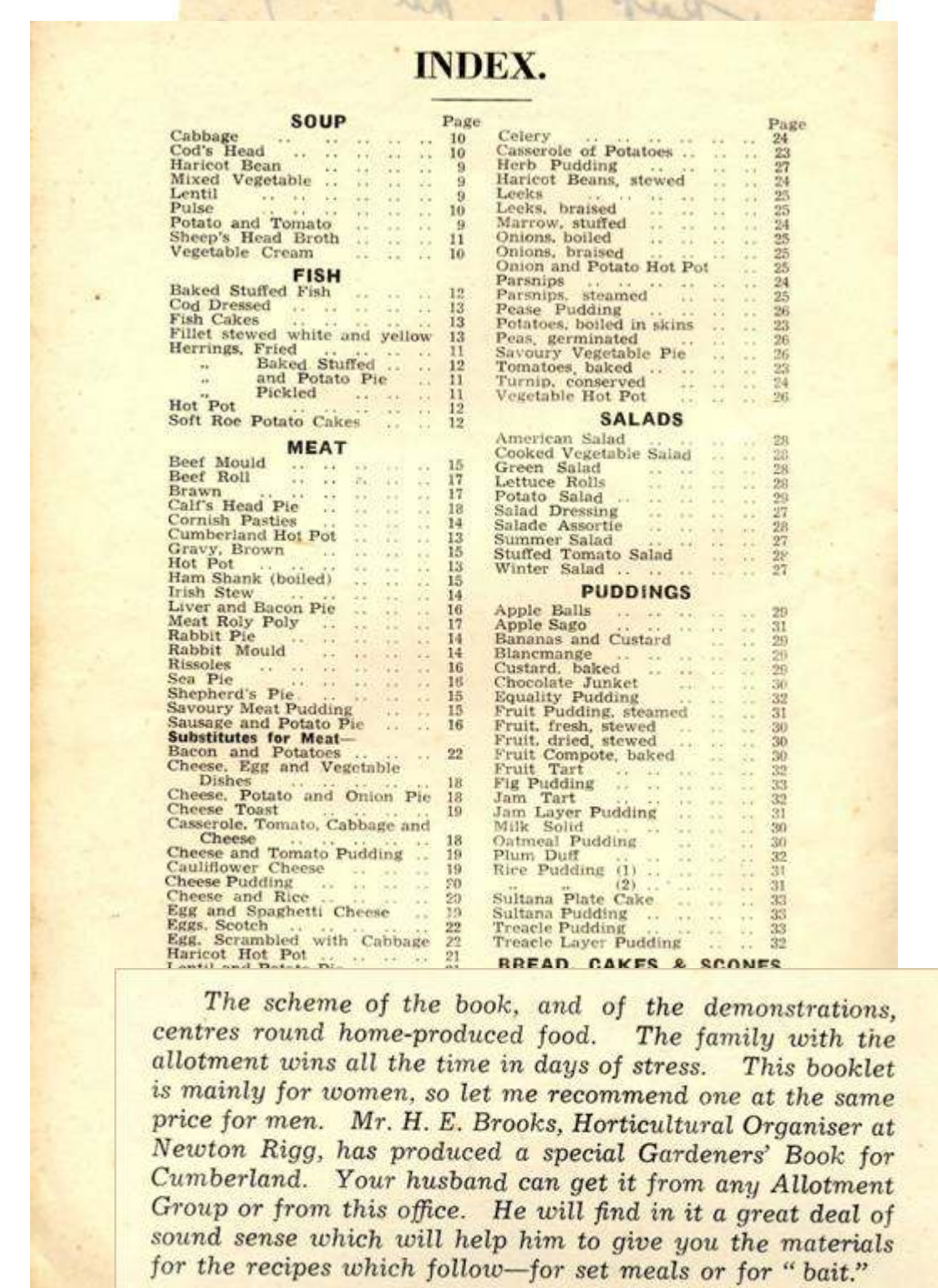
The last letter from the Ministry settled John's financial affairs. It told John's father how much pay John was owed when he died. He was also entitled to an income tax refund, because of his sudden death.

Cumbria Archive Centre, Kendal: ref. WDX 1484/3/1





# Life and propaganda on the Home Front

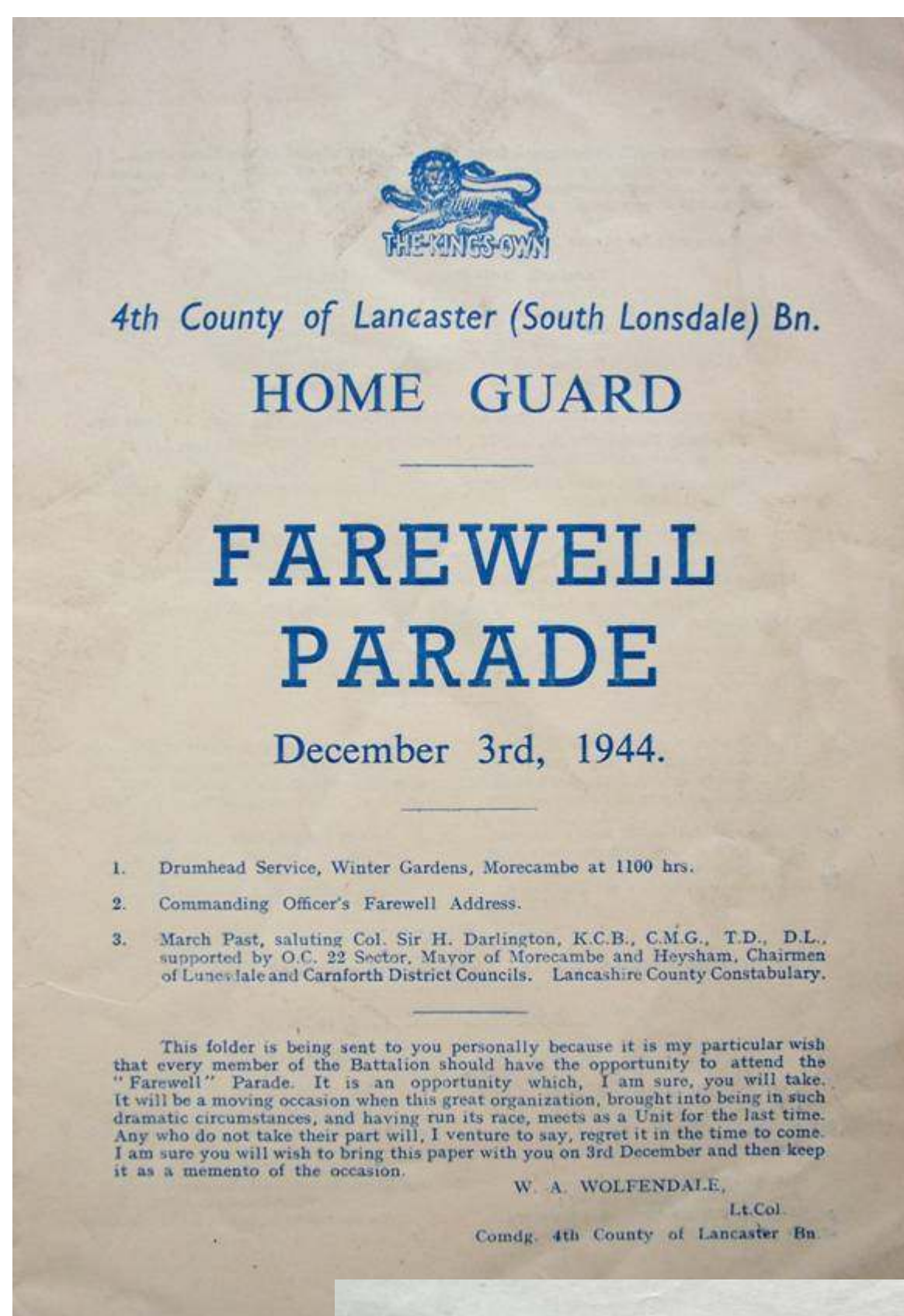


[www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/archives)



## Cumbria At War 1939-1945

## War in Cumbria: serving in uniform



The Home Guard was formed in 1940 to contribute to the defence of Britain in the event of a German invasion. As part time soldiers, members of the Home Guard carried on with their normal jobs as usual, but during the evenings and weekends they put on their uniforms to train and to guard important locations.

The Home Guard was wound up in December 1944, because by this stage of the war it was perceived that there was really no risk of a German attack.

Right: Girl Guides Rosehip picking.  
Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre, Barrow:  
ref. BDSO 61/43/6



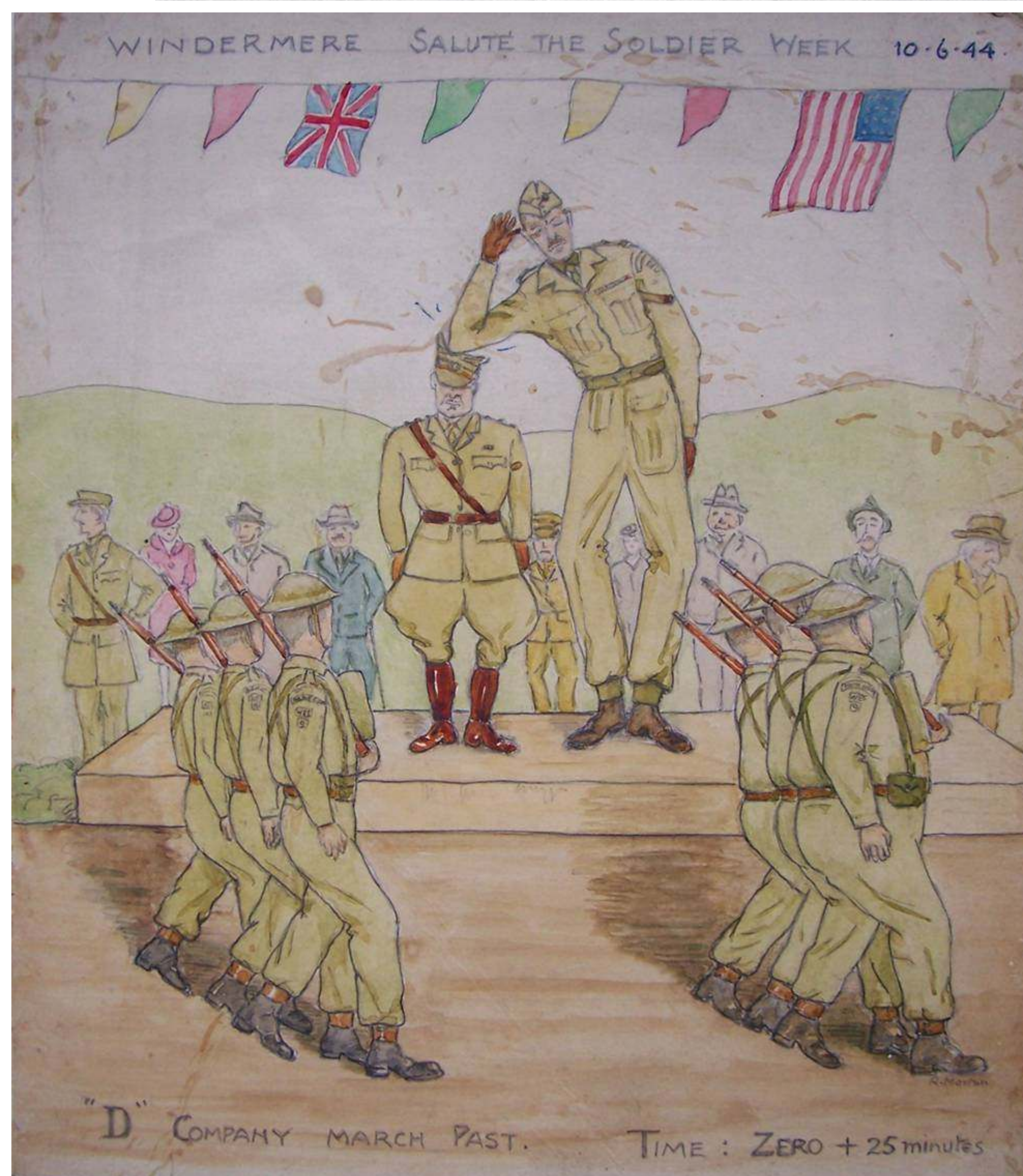
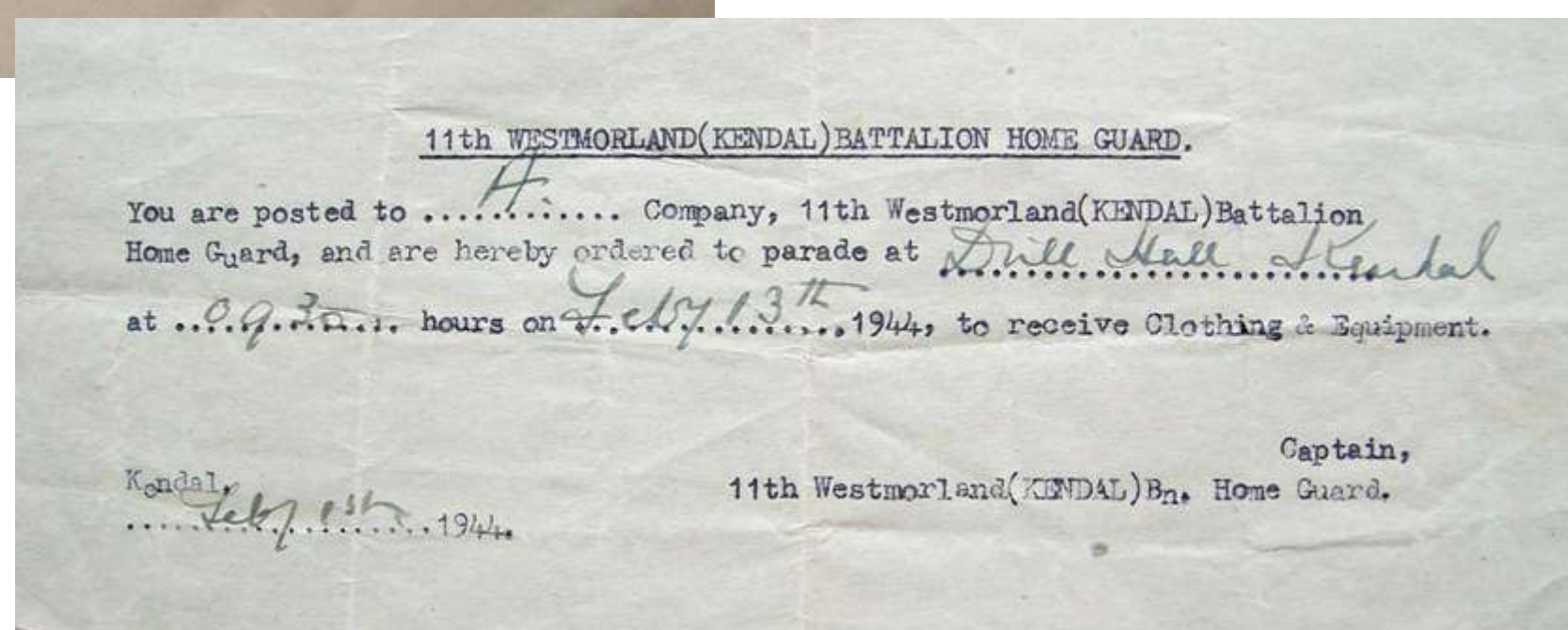
Cumbria Archive Centre, Kendal

Farewell Parade: ref. WDX 1389

Order to parade: ref. WDX 574

Salute the Soldier cartoon: ref. WDX 1193

Training photos: ref. WDX 1193





## Cumbria At War 1939-1945

## Celebrating VE Day and looking forward to the future



### Celebrating Victory in Europe 8th May 1945

Although the war against Japan was still going on, VE day was a very important milestone, so a public holiday was announced by the government. Parties were held all over Britain to celebrate. In Cumbria events ranged from organised events such as lighting up Kendal Town Hall and official dances, through to more spontaneous celebrations and street parties.

It is a moot point how much the lives of ordinary Cumbrians changed with the cessation of fighting in the West. For many Cumbrian soldiers fighting the Japanese, the war continued until August. The blazing lights of VE celebrations signified one way in which restrictions were dropped, but the food for these parties, and everyday life, continued to be rationed for many years after the war ended.

This panel looks at how Cumbrians responded to the end of the War in Europe and how the Second World War has left a lasting legacy in Cumbria. In particular the nuclear industry put Cumbria on the frontline of the Cold War and has been a corner stone of British defence policy and energy security since 1945.

8: May, - School closed today and tomorrow for Victory Celebrations  
10: May, - Reopened school this morning.  
11: May, - This afternoon we have had Victory Sports and tea, at school. Attendance for week: 91.46%.

Children shared in the joy of the war's end, as captured in school records showing a celebratory bonfire with a burning effigy of Hitler (Castle Street School), and general victory celebrations as well as a Victory Sports (Gosforth School).

Cumbria Archive Centre, Kendal: ref. WDS 8/45

Whitehaven Archive and Local Studies Centre: ref. YDS 15/1 Gosforth School log book

Below photographs of the Windscale piles which manufactured bomb grade plutonium, and Calder Hall Power Station, the world's first nuclear power station, opened in 1956.



### V.E.-DAY West Cumberland Celebrations

AFTER what was generally regarded as an unsteady ending to the war, with rumour and counter-rumour keeping people in a state of tense excitement all day on Monday, West Cumberland celebrated V.E.-Day on Tuesday in right royal fashion. From all the towns and villages came the same story of flags, of bonfires, of rejoicing, of thanksgiving for the overthrow of a tyranny, which, but for Britain's lone fight at one period, might have enslaved the whole world. Fully aware that the end of hostilities was very near, Whitehaven people set about the task of decorating on Monday, so that on Tuesday there was an impressive display of flags and bunting. There were flags of all descriptions—some of the vessels in the harbour were flaunting all their signal flags, even the "plague" and "no water" flags—and in some of the narrower streets householders had achieved results which were greatly admired.

Throughout Britain's history bonfires have been symbols of national rejoicing, and as darkness fell on Tuesday great beacons were lit all over the town and on the surrounding hills. Many of these were surmounted by ingenious effigies of Hitler. Sir shells and rockets also ascended high into the skies. In the town one of the biggest bonfires was that beside the hospital, which, from a distance, produced a delightful flood-lit effect on the trees in the park. It was at the hospital, too, that one of the most imposing victory signs in the town was to be found, for blazing from the roof was a brilliantly lighted red, white, and blue "V," with the word "Victory," and the victory sign stretched in between the two arms of the letter. In all the churches good congregations assembled to offer thanksgiving to God.

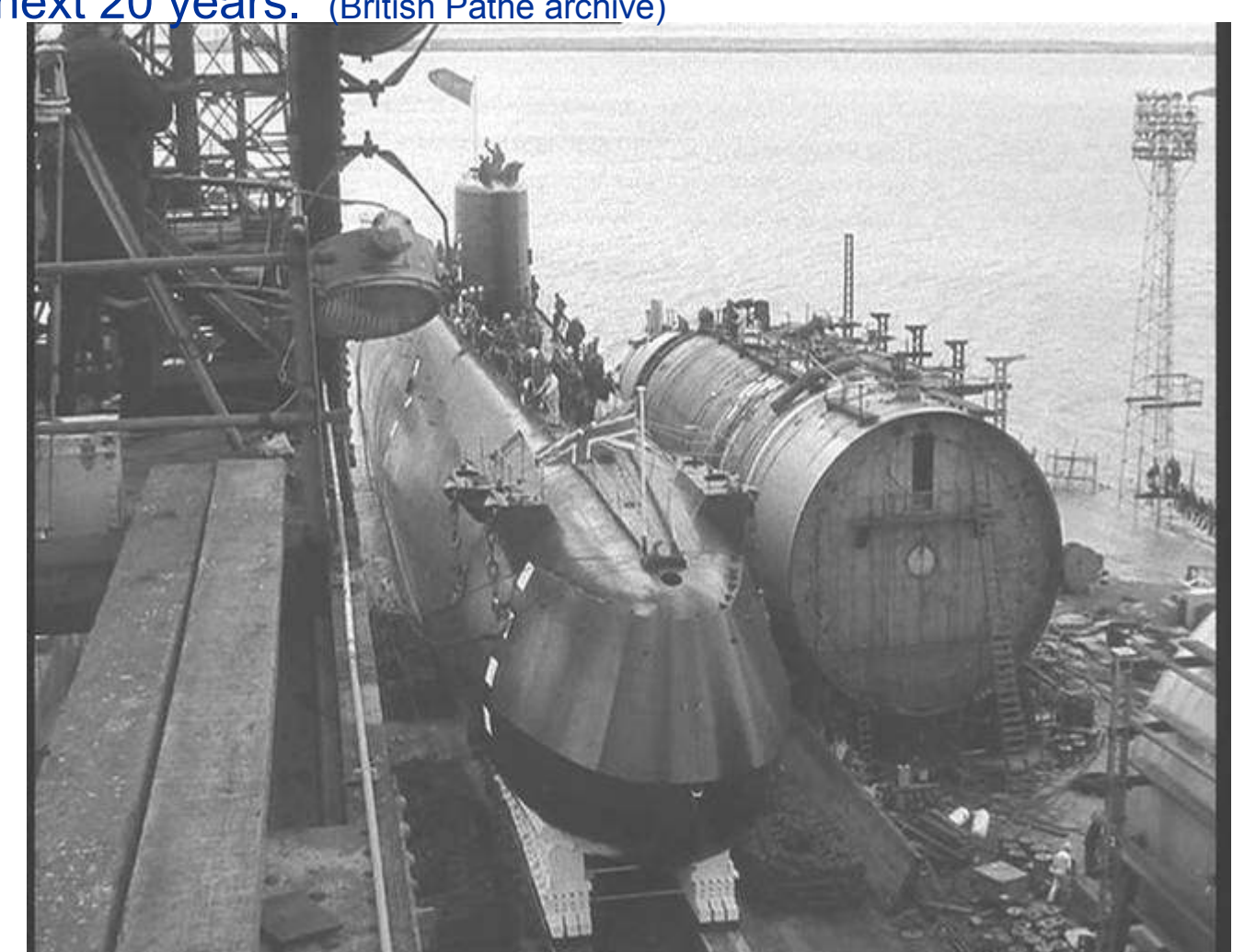


The photograph below shows the launch of HMS Resolution in 1967, the first British submarine to carry nuclear weapons.

Submarines have been built at Barrow for over 100 years. The legacy continues with the new Astute class submarines entering service in 2010 and a possible new generation of Trident ballistic missile submarines over the next 20 years. (British Pathe archive)



The war was to leave a lasting legacy in Cumbria as the County became part of the front line in the Cold War. Cumbria's comparative remoteness made it the ideal place to establish a new industry centred on atomic energy and the atom bomb.



© Images contained in this display may not be reproduced without the permission of Cumbria Archive Service.