

Dunkirk Stories

In June 1940 the British government organised a military operation to withdraw their British and Allied troops from Northern France after a heavy defeat following the German breakthrough to the Channel Ports. The Germans tried to enter Dunkirk but failed, they used dive-bombers to attack the soldiers who were stood on the beaches waiting to be evacuated. The army of French, English and Belgian held back the Germans from entering Dunkirk long enough for the soldiers to evacuate. By June about 4,338,200 Soldiers (French, English and Belgian) were rescued and brought to England.

BACUP SOLDIER RESCUED FROM SEA - BACUP SOLDIER WHO SWAM ABOUT FOR TWO HOURS.

Typical of the experience of many has been that of a Bacup soldier Pte. George Stanworth. A driver in the R.A.O.C with the B.E.F in Flanders. He was taken off along with many others last Wednesday week. The ship was sunk in the channel with the result that Stanworth had to swim about for two hours before being rescued. Private Stanworth who is the son of Mr and Mrs J.W. Stanworth, of 15 Todmorden Road, Bacup, is married they a baby son, and his wife and parents have received a letter telling them what has happened. He mentioned that he has seen other local lads out there but does not know their present whereabouts. The letter states: " I am alright. Have had a rough time. I am feeling a bit shell shocked but we will be ok in a day or two. We had a hell of a time and we lost everything we had coming over. We are supposed to be getting leave in a couple of weeks. I am ready for it I can tell you. Pte Stanworth who has been in the army for six months is now in a military camp in the south of England. He was driving an Army waggon at the time of evacuation and the vehicle had to be dumped and left. Afterwards he took part in the fighting. His brother Jack a well known local swimmer and his father well known as a member of the firm of Stanworth Bros, motor coach proprietors and haulage contractor.

SURVIVED FIERCE FIGHTING AT LILLE.

Relatives have received news of the safe arrival in the South of England of Pte. David Watters 28, of 14 Greave Fold, Bacup a local postman. As an anti-tank gunner, Pte. Watters has been involved in some heavy fighting in the French cotton town of Lille. He was called up as a reservist at the outbreak of the war. Previously he had served with the forces in Egypt for seven years. His wife had not heard news of him until she received a postcard telling of his getting safely to this country.

LOST ALL HIS EQUIPMENT.

Another unwounded Bacup survivor of the evacuation is Pte. W. Clarke, son of Mrs and the late Mr William Clarke, of Market Street Bacup. He was landed at a Kent port and is at present in a military camp in the west country. A telegram received on Monday conveyed the glad news to his mother. Pte Clarke lost all his equipment in the evacuation. Pte Clarke worked at the Valley Supply Company Farholme Mill Stacksteads before joining the army.

STACKSTEADS SOLDIER WOUNDED.

A silence of five weeks was broken by the receipt of a letter by the parents of Lance Corporal Roland Aspinall, of the East Lancashire Regiment, telling them that he was suffering from a gunshot wound in the right arm. He is the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Alfred Aspinall, of Cutler Crescent, Stacksteads and had been taking part in the fighting in Flanders. The letter stated that Lance Corporal Aspinall was among other British soldiers landed in Kent. He has been taken to a military hospital in the South. Aspinall worked at Kilnholme Mill Stacksteads his father being employed there also.

STACKSTEADS FUSILIER IN HOSPITAL.

John James Quinn aged 24, Lancashire Fusiliers, whose home is at 16 Blackwood Road Stacksteads, is in a southern hospital with pneumonia following severe shrapnel wounds. He received his wounds in the fighting in Belgium, and was evacuated from Dunkirk, and entered the hospital on Monday on reaching England. His wife, they have two children received a telegram regarding his condition and she visited her husband on Tuesday. He told her that at the time he was wounded he was with other Bacup lads. Enemy planes appeared overhead and he was struck by shrapnel, his steel helmet being knocked over his face.

FAIRLY GONE THROUGH IT.

A Bacup soldier who was married a week after Easter, Gunner Richard Heaton Foster, of the Royal Artillery, whose home is at 480, Rochdale Road Britannia, has informed his wife of his safe arrival in this country with men of the B.E.F who have returned from France. In his letter Gunner Foster who joined the forces with his age group last Christmas stated that he was right, but added that he had fairly gone through it, having lost all his kit. His father lives at Weir.

Private Ernest Clegg 23 second son of Mrs J. R. Smith, of 487 Newchurch Road, Stacksteads, and the late Pte, George W. Clegg, of the Lancashire Fusiliers has informed his mother by letter that he is among B.E.F soldiers home from Flanders in a Southern rest camp. Clegg is serving in the same regiment as did his father who was killed in the Great War a month before the armistice. Up to joining the Territorial Army at Haslingden at the outbreak of war Clegg worked at Globe slipper works Waterfoot.

GREAT TO BE BACK IN DEAR OLD ENGLAND.

Another Bacup soldier who had returned safely is Private Joseph Aspinall R.A.S.C. 21-year-old son of Mr and Mrs Arthur Aspinall of 11 Gordon Street. In a letter to his parents, Aspinall states that he was safe and sound and quite happy adding it is great to be back in dear old England. His elder brother John is serving with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

WADED UP TO HIS NECK IN THE SEA HOW A BACUP SOLDIER GOT AWAY FROM DUNKIRK

Among the Bacup survivors of the B.E.F epic in Flanders who have this week been home on 48 hours leave is Sapper Eric Seddon, Royal Engineers. of 131 Newchurch Road, Lee Mill, and formerly of Sharneyford. Before he got away from Dunkirk he experienced terrible bombardments of bombs and shells. After wading out from the beach until up to his neck he was taken aboard a boat and brought back to England. He was particularly bitter about the merciless bombing by the Germans of fleeing refugees many of who he saw in dire need of food.

HIS STEEL HELMET SAVED HIM BACUP CRICKETER IN EVACUATION FROM DUNKIRK

A well known playing member of Bacup Cricket Club Corporal Harry Ellis 24 of the R.A.M.C second son of Mr and Mrs J.F.Ellis of 147 Newchurch Road, Bacup who has been attached to a field ambulance unit with the B.E.F in Flanders is at home on leave. He was among the last to be evacuated after having helped deal with the wounded in that operation. Corporal Ellis has seen some fierce fighting and on one occasion only his steel helmet saved him from being a casualty. He celebrated his 21st birthday while overseas and though he did not get the birthday presents sent out to him at the time he was given a packet of cigarettes by a thoughtful Sergeant. The latter was killed very shortly afterwards. Ellis who worked at New Hey Mills will return to his depot tonight.

FOUGHT AT ARRAS

Another Bacup soldier, Signaller Harry Elsworth is at present somewhere in the fighting at Arras. He was among soldiers evacuated from Boulogne and in a letter to his parents received on Tuesday he stated that he was on the way to his depot. He is not wounded. Elsworth who is the son of Mr and Mrs E Elsworth of 59 Pleasant View Bankside Bacup had been in the army for the past two years. His brother is in the R.A.F.