

A few war stories remembered by Philip Cook, son of Major G.G. H. Cook, M.B.E.

Vokes was Grandmother Cook's maiden name. Written May 2019.

Dear Peter Jones,

Sorry it has taken so long for me to write up stories as you advised.

I hope you found good home for the photographs taken by my great Uncle Major Henry Victor Vokes during the 1st World War. I remember well Albert railway station, as we lived in Albert and I was at school there until the age of 9. My father Major G.G.H. Cook was area superintendent of the Albert group of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The Photos were of the railway station after a German bombardment and also of the straight road around Bapaume / Poziere where only stumps of trees at the side of the roads were left, also a German gun emplacement after a British bombardment. More photos were of the pilgrimages of relatives, grandfathers, grandsons, and wives visiting their husbands graves and being sold grave crosses and flowers etc. by the French. This was way before the CWGC or IWGC as it was then became involved. (I expect the museums in Albert would like copies, my father's secretary still lives there).

Also hope you managed to read all father's WW2 letters to mother from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Sudan etc. (Economic and political warfare). Prior to him being employed in 1946 by CWGC to build the Commonwealth cemeteries in Normandy. He was offered the rank of Colonel if he stayed to help in Palestine, but refused as he had only been married a few weeks before being sent for officer training and on to middle east. Also maybe you found out a bit more about the map of Swanage area, showing the "exercise" about a German attempted landing. I'll write his story shortly and send on.

CC. Gary Sheffield, who I met on a SAGA cruise, talk/lecture about Passchendaele, and who I promised to copy him when I eventually got round to write up and before I forgot it all.

The easiest ones first.

Jock Robertson

I worked with Jock Robertson for many years at STC in Southampton docks making Trans Atlantic, Med. and Pacific submarine telephone cable. He was in the Royal Navy as a boy prior to the war, was involved with the mutiny at the start of WW2, then in Destroyers. An officer asked several of them to go up the mast ladder during a severe storm, all the men in a row in front of him replied "No Sir", the Captain was called, who told the officer to get up there himself and if he could all the men would be on a charge. The officer froze half way up the ladder, and two men were sent up to "unclaw" him and bring him down. Nothing more was said about the incident. He was also present when HMS Victorious was in a storm and the flight deck was ripped upwards allowing hundreds or maybe thousands of tons of water into the ship, that then had to go stern first to the storm to ride it out.

On destroyers a shell went off inside the gun turret, and the remains of the men inside had to be washed out by fire hose. He was on HMS Bramham during operation pedestal, the Santa Maria convoy to save Malta, being on one of the two destroyers that straddled and pushed/dragged the USA oil tanker "Ohio" into Grand Harbour. Several of the crew of HMS Bramham were in straight jackets and most were deaf for weeks from the constant firing of guns. His Anti aircraft gun seized and had to have buckets of sea water thrown over it to cool it. (He told me he had to use a back up manual firing system as the normal firing mechanism had jammed with the heat.). The crew sharpened broom handles and any other wood into pointed sticks to hammer into hundreds of bullet holes to stop water getting into the ship.

Harry "Stargazer"

Not sure why he had that nickname, but he did always have a far away look in his eyes. I worked with Harry at STC in Southampton docks. He was in the merchant navy, and was first torpedoed close the home waters, where they were picked up after a few hours. Next torpedo was in mid Atlantic, where they spent 10 days or more in an open "Rowing" boat before being picked up by a USA ship. Third time was on an Arctic convoy, where they had one chance to jump onto a sliding by destroyer as no ship was allowed to stop to collect survivors. What annoyed him most was that his pay stopped the moment a torpedo hit, and after the war he was no longer welcome at the armed forces clubs in London, where during the war he was welcomed. On one ship a hole was sealed up by mixing cement bedding and engine room soot put in a box and jammed over the hole. Apparently soot made the cement dry rapidly.

"Lucky" Luxton

Harold Luxton was a first world war veteran, working with my father in Albert (Somme, France) for the CWGC as senior head gardener. He was known as Mr. Lucky, it was only much later that we discovered why, he had been caught by a German machine gun and had four bullets in his chest, two of which were removed and the other two were too deep and close to his heart to remove. So he lived until well over 90 with 2 bullets in his chest. It was only in his 80's that he had to have a leg removed as result of spending most of four years in knee high mud.

Australian machine gunner

I cannot remember his name, but he was first world war veteran and visited us in Albert, as he had a row with his two sons over his business growing citrus fruit in Perth, Australia. He was spending his money. He arrived at the CWGC offices in Albert and asked how to get to a certain place. My father said he would take him there the next day as he needed to make a visit soon anyway. We located the place and the Australian said yes this was it, and went off to the ditch at the side of a wood. He said "See that dug out area, that was my machine gun post, and the German lines were over there across the valley. We knew they planned an attack the day before and we had orders to hold fire until they were half way down the slope, spikes and chains were used so that the machine covered their field of fire. They opened fire and kept firing all day. At the end of the day, when the whistles blew they looked over the top and saw hundreds if not thousands of dead Germans".

The Tunneller

One visitor to Albert CWGC was a WW1 tunneller. He told me of underground hand to hand fighting in narrow tunnels, using bayonets, pistols and sometimes "Mills" bombs. (Grenades). Rifles were useless as they were too long to turn sideways. He mentioned the crosses that they had on their backs, it was only when I read "Birdsong" by Sebastian Faulks that I realised what he was talking about. Give Sebastian Faulks his due he did his homework as much of the book rang true with what the Tunneller told me.

Thiepval memorial

Not far from Albert was Thiepval, one visitor there asked my father how could he arrange to be buried with his mates in the cemetery. I cannot remember the answer but I think it was not allowed, however I believe that words were spoken to the effect that if some of his ashes were accidentally spilt by his relatives and raked into the earth close to the chosen headstones, no one would notice. Thiepval had a water problem, in that the bricks absorbed a lot of the damp foggy rain and became saturated, then when it froze the outer edges of the bricks would split off, the gardeners would spend hours collecting chippings of brick in a wheel barrow. No one knew the solution of stopping the water

getting in. It was the early days of silicone "Aquaseal" type products, and this was tried successfully, it was manufactured in Germany only in those days.

It was necessary to have lights for an evening Ceremony, but the power supply would not be enough for floodlights, so father asked about hiring generators from a local supplier in Albert, the man said he did not want payment but it was agreed he could advertise their use in the local paper. Several new Honda generators arrived next day, which were almost silent and did the job very well. The locals were very proud of their "Anglais" CWGC.

Albert in general

Father and I also attended many local Ceremonies and processions with the band walking around the town, not just for the CWGC, but of resistance leaders and other dignitaries who were shot etc... Names of those attending were listed in the next day's newspapers.

Henri Lequante

Henri Lequante was a teenager in WW2, sometimes driving contraband and guns around and later his wife owned a local shop, and was also my father's French gardeners shop steward as well as the CWGC lorry driver. During one national strike he asked my father if the Frenchmen could have permission to take the day off as part of the national strike, father agreed as it was not worth the trouble to refuse, but it was good of Henri to ask.

Henri said that he would cross the road rather than walk on the same side as some collaborators, feelings were still running high 25 years on. Needless to say some people were also refused entry to the shop, let alone allowed to buy anything there.

Basilica in Albert

The Golden Mary holding up Jesus on top of the Basilica was grey until about 1970, when it was repainted or replated in gold. In the WW1 It was heavily bombed as an observation post, and a local story was that when the Virgin fell down the war would end. She hung at a low angle for a long time, then eventually a stray shell (British) hit the Basilica and she fell. The war ended within a week. During the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, which was organised to a large extent by my father, (received an M.B.E. for his efforts, and a Medaille D'Honneur from Ville D'Albert). A South African soldier stole a gold crucifix from a local shop and my father being the obvious first contact for anyone speaking English was called. Eventually the soldier was found and his pay was docked. The shopkeeper was upset that an "Anglais" had stolen something like a crucifix, my father had to explain that although he spoke English, the soldier was not an "Anglais". No French police were involved as far as I know.

Scotty in Albert

Unlike when "Scotty", one of my father's UK gardeners, went on a regular bender. Scotty was a Glasgow Gorbals man, just over 5ft tall but hard as nails. Scotty was collected from the evacuation beaches at Dunkirk and reported as missing to his remaining family, he then became one the secret army along the South coast, whose job was to harass and sabotage the German forces after their landings. Orders were to shoot the German dogs first, because the dogs would find them, but not German soldiers. For this purpose they were armed with 0.22" calibre rifles, which were accurate and not so loud as the 0.303" Lee Henfield. Scotty would get drunk and take on anyone, the call would go out and van load of 6 ft tall French policemen would go and collect him, lock him up until sober. A phone call to my father to let him know, and released him the next day. Scotty had to pay for the

damage at the cafes, but was never charged with offenses. The French in Albert were grateful for the help received by the British in WW2.

Through my membership of the Civil Service Motoring Association (CSMA) I contacted an old soldier, who though he was one of the first to arrive in Albert. He and his mates drove to Albert and went into a local shop to find it busy with Germans buying goods. They looked at each other and the British soldiers backed out of the shop slowly and ran away up the street. Apparently the German soldiers had already surrendered to the French authorities on 1st September 1945 and were allowed to go about town unarmed, spending any money that they had before it became valueless, and before they were officially collected as P.O.Ws.

One CWGC gardener at the outbreak of WW2, had an Austin 7 car. Realising that it would be taken, he took it apart, giving parts to several of his French friends, one had the engine, another the wheels, seat to another etc.. This car was reassembled in father's own garage in about mid 1950's. I can remember the wheels only just fitted in the recess of the pit in the garage.

The Haynes familys

These were well known in the area, and there were three generation working for the CWGC. They left France at the outbreak of WW2, walking most of the way to Spain as refugees living off the land. They had to leave all their goods in their house, much of which was stolen by their neighbours, and after the war returned to see some of their property in other French people's house, but could not say anything. Things like British sewing machines and clocks.

The dog kennel's man in Albert

An employee of the CWGC and his wife kennelled their dog while on holiday. Father was the named contact. The dog died in the kennels and the owner asked to speak to father, I went with him. The dog had died for no apparent reason and he wanted to know what to do with the body. While in the man's room we saw letters pinned to the wall signed by General De Gaulle and many other dignitaries.

On asking what these were for, the man opened a drawer full of similar letters. It turned out that he was a French soldier who had dived on a grenade to save his mates and was blown up but survived. He was also a resistance organiser. As a result of this survival he decided to help others in any way he could, he had recently been to Switzerland to be injected with cancer cells and if they took then they would try to cure him. Another quiet hero.

The shell carrier

One day a man came into father's office carrying a three foot long shell and asking how to get it back to England. Father told him to get out and put it back where he found it, then call the French bomb disposal guys. There were always rusty guns and live bullets around the cemeteries, and many bucket loads of used 0.303" cartridges.

The empty house opposite

The CGWC office was at no. 25 Rue Jean Guyon, in the high street, opposite was an empty house. This house was not vandalised at all, or broken into at all. It was a substantial well built expensive town house. When it was eventually opened up in about 1970, there was still a car in the garage. I guess after 25 years of being empty and no claiming it, the town took it over. Maybe it belonged to a Jewish family that disappeared without trace.

The Albert Office archives

My bedroom was in the attic, there were six rooms in the attic. One of the rooms had a boardroom type table in the middle. Around the room on two walls were shelves full of books about 50cm high by 75cm deep by about 10cm wide. These books were the records of those killed in alphabetical order, and gave name, rank, cemetery and location within the cemetery. At week-ends when the CGWC office was shut I used to help relatives as much as possible. Sometimes the relatives had very little information, but sometimes they had letters with locations. The Welsh with names of Evans, Jones and Evans-Jones made locating their relatives very tricky as there were so many of them. Quite often we could only give a list with several options. This was in the days before computers, but if they had a name of a town we could look it up on the large area map and find a nearby cemetery, then cross reference back with the books.

Before about 1965 there were few visitors, when father visited cemeteries he would sign the visitors book to let the gardener know he had been on inspection (Often the gardener had several cemeteries to look after and may not have been at the one father was inspecting) and I would sign as well, quite often the smaller cemeteries only had our signatures year after year. It was sad to accompany the old soldiers to see the graves of their mates, as the old soldiers were about 65 to 70 years in 1960's and often we left them crying until they recovered composure. Quite moving for me as a teenager.

Tank Corp memorial Pozieres

This memorial is at the side of the main road. In the local newspapers it was reported that someone had tried to break one of the bronze tanks off its mount, presumably to sell on.

Albert to Pozieres off to La Boisselle. Lochnagar crater.

The local lads used to ride motorbikes up and down its sides until it was purchased as an attraction.

Frank Ray at Pozieres

Frank left the CWGC in 1956, after my father took over the Albert group. I still have Frank's clock that his mates bought him as a leaving present and he did not want it when he came back to England and offered it to father, who readily accepted it and offered to bring it to England for him, but he did not want it.

Frank lived with an elderly lady as a lodger. We used to go and visit as she made an excellent tarte au poireau, leak pie. When she died Frank got in touch with her three children, who came and searched the house for money as it was known she did not trust banks. Much was found, and the children called Frank into the dining room and they dealt out the money four ways like playing cards. Frank had a couple of plastic bags full. Father took him to the bank the next day and they were very lucky as much of it was going to be declared obsolete soon. Apparently the money originated from her "Madam" days of running a WW1 brothel for which ever army was around at the time. When Frank left the house for the last time with a small suitcase. Frank came to England to live with his sister. Frank left the front door of the house ajar, so that neighbours could go in and help themselves, as per the children's wish who were selling it as it stood.

Amiens gardener

One of the CWGC gardeners lived near the prison outside Amiens. Part of the walls had been rebuilt with new bricks, these were the walls that Operation Jericho blew down when bombed by Mosquito aircraft, to try to free resistance prisoners in the run up to D-Day, possibly also to reinforce the idea that the landings would take place in Calais area, as Amiens was in the north well away from Normandy.

The WW1 Crucified Canadian soldier

No one really believed this had happened but several old soldiers mentioned it. Also when father retired we lived next to a footpath going to the allotments and many stopped to admire father's garden. One man had been a P.O.W. of the Japanese in WW2 and used to have to go to Southampton hospital every few years to have his war wounds attended to, he had been used as bayonet practice and survived. Maybe this was what had happened to the Canadian soldier in WW1.

Newfoundland Park with Caribou

Originally the gardener lived in a log cabin, built by the Canadians. Eventually it rotted and the French built a brick house that looked well out of place. Father visited and suggested planting trees around the house to hide it. Sheep were used to keep the grass short in and around the trenches as there was no other way to cut it and it was dangerous with spikes, barbed wire etc.. Originally the gardener had to report to and from Belgium for all his requirements. Eventually Father organised a deal between the CWGC and the Canadian government representatives so that the CGWC supplied all his needs, instead of him having to go to Belgium for tools and petrol etc..

Ulster tower

This memorial was like a lighthouse, tall and slim. It must have been the site of an older battle as there were hundreds of old round musket ball everywhere in their garden. (Maybe a Napoleonic training ground). This was suitable for a couple, not the large family with young children, that were allocated to it by the CWGC. Ulster representative visited one day and were not impressed with their living conditions or escape down the stairs. A "Davey" escape system was installed that required a rope being thrown out the top window a harness put on and scaling down the outside of the tower, the rope lowered itself slowly to the ground via a ratchet bolted to the wall.

Eventually a mobile home was sent out from Northern Ireland, but the children preferred their little pitted indoors. A chicken hutch and run was offered as well, and the works department were given the job of costing and supplying it, they did not want to do the job, so priced it ridiculously high. The Ulster government agreed to the very high price but asked for details of the full costing first. The cost had to be revised downwards rapidly with apologies for making mistakes in the costings.

Alsace/Lorraine area

Part of father's area was in this disputed part of France. The German cemeteries were maintained by Germans, the British by the British. The gardeners knew each other quite well and sometimes borrowed each other's tools etc.. At the start of WW2 the German man offered to look after his British friend's cemeteries for the duration, and he did a good job. This cooperation continued well after WW2, the German used to subcontract work for both sides, due to politics all turned a blind eye to his ways. The German used to brew "Schnapps" and always gave us a few bottles to take away. The French government were concerned about the haphazard distillation process and poisoning from lead pipes, then realised it could not be stopped, so they had mobile distilleries on the back of vehicles going around the villages allowing locals to bring in their brews to be distilled. (20 litres distillate each person from memory, however a donation to the driver allowed them far more).

In the Champagne area, father arranged an inspection before Christmas, having first asked the office and others how many bottles they wanted. We found a very good small vineyard, often brought back a car boot full of champagne. The last time I went with father was just after the moon landing, we asked the French what they thought about it, silence descended and then "Patron" explained to us that we should not believe this American propaganda.

In the Normandy area, father was there from 1946 to 1952 to build the British cemeteries. The locals used to brew and distil cider, called "Calvados". The local farm outside Bayeux where NAFFI bartering took place brewed quite a lot, two elderly ladies ran the farm. The French police tried to stop it by road blocks, so the locals obtained wine labels to stick on the bottles to fool the Police. (Lots of different types of label for well known wines were in their cupboard). We have a clay Calvados bottle as we were told this was the best way to keep it, not in a glass bottle.

Mon St Quentin Australian Anzac memorial 1st WW

When the Germans came through at the start of WW2, they did not appreciate the memorial with an Australian soldier bayoneting a German eagle. The local story was that they blew it up. The foundry that cast the memorial had however been ahead of the game and buried the original cast in secret, and afterwards recast it and replaced it. Orders to German soldiers were to respect WW1 war memorial and cemeteries etc..

The Mosquito propeller in concrete in Switzerland or Austria

We used to go to Switzerland every couple of years, laden with scrubbing brushes and three types of weed killer to clean and scrub up the in the cemeteries where there were only a few graves, sometimes only one. Father and I used to do this to save the CWGC money as it would cost a fortune to send a CWGC cleaning crew to do it. (Mother and sister came as well, I was the weed killer specialist). One of the plots had three burials in a separate small area outside the main cemetery, with the bent propeller set up nearby. Story was that these three had stolen the mosquito to go and shoot up some Germans but got bounced and shot down. Because they were not on an official raid or maybe not even all in the RAF, they were not allowed to be buried in the main cemetery, the locals were not amused and built them their own plot outside, together with imitation Portland stone headstones as if they were official RAF crew. (Graves are looked after unofficially by the CWGC).

Not sure how they got three in a Mosquito, must have been really cramped. I'm not sure of the details of this one, it was long time ago, and I cannot find anything on web sites.

Crossing borders was no problem as CWGC cars had XG car number plates and CWGC private cars had diplomatic Green IT or Red TT, so were always waved through. (XG were Army plates).

Ian Bazalgette VC

At an old school boys reunion I met Derek Bazalgette, grandson of Sir Joseph Bazalgette of London sewers, bridges and embankment fame. The Bazalgette family moved to Canada, (believed to be after a row with UK gov.). Speaking to Derek it turned that every year via the British Legion, father used to lay a wreath on the grave of his brother Ian Bazalgette VC, Pathfinder in Lancaster's. We use to lay the wreath and photograph it, sending the photo to Ian and Derek's mother. We use a special German camera, (Rolleiflex, where you viewed looking down the top), and an attachment with a rechargeable battery that could take 20 flash photos before the bulb needed changing, the attachment had a lead about 10 ft long, so that the flash would cause a shadow on the lettering of the headstone and make it readable. We met the local vicar, who was an Irish priest and we were told the story of the crash landing at Senantes, France. The lead bomber was shot down, Ian Bazalgette took over the raid, but was bounced and some of the crew were too wounded to get out, so he tried to land in the dark, saw a village in front and tried to swerve to avoid it, unfortunately the Lancaster was shot up and he lost control cart wheeling into the ground, the tail gunner, wounded, was thrown out and survived long enough to tell the Irish priest what had happened, the result was the VC for Ian. Much about Ian on web sites.

Great uncle Gordon, Cecil Rhodes Gordon Vokes, of Vokes Filter company of Guilford

Grandmother's brother was uncle Gordon, we knew a little about him from newspaper cuttings, praising him for the filters fitted to British tanks and other vehicles so that their engines outlasted the German engines in the sands of North Africa by about 10 to 1. (Tank engines would only last 200 miles, but with Vokes sand filters lasted 4000 miles). As the air was sucked into the engines it was spun round centrifugally and the sand fell out of the bottom of the filter, the clean air going to the engine via the top. Instructions were given to tank crews to destroy the filters if they could if in danger of capture. Some tanks also had compressed air driven steering, which failed after a few hours, again cured by a Vokes filter. It was only on his son's death that I received a small suitcase full of war time paperwork, much would have been secret at the time. He was involved with oil and air filter manufacture for the 50 old and some mothballed USA destroyers that struggled across the Atlantic from the USA in exchange for 99 year leases on British territory. Many of them had serious engine problems, but with extra filtering were made useable.

After the fall of Tobruk, a huge amount of allied stores were captured by the Germans. The air ministry asked uncle to look at 64 British Halifax heavy bombers with a view to landing and taking off in very sandy conditions, 256 filters were required. Uncle modified filters to fit and to suit the heavy bombers within a few days, presumably for them to bomb Tobruk and destroy as much of the stores as possible. (Aircraft engines would normally need servicing every 20 hours, with Vokes filters it went up to 250 hours).

Rocket firing Typhoons in Normandy had the same problem with sand from the beaches, again cured within a few days by uncle's design and manufacture. Spitfire aircraft had no oil filters to save weight, and external filters were plugged in to the engines to clean the oil etc.. when servicing was required. Prior to the Sicily and Italian landings, several dozen USA landing ship, tank. LST tank carriers (4000 tons and carrying 64 tanks a piece), were sent over from the USA to the UK. Uncle had a call from the Navy asking for help. One of the ships had struggled into Scotland on only one of its four engines, the other three engines had failed as well as the rest of the L.S.T's convoy who were stranded stopped in mid Atlantic. Uncle went to Scotland, realised that the oil and air filters were useless and choked up with debris and were totally unfit for use at sea. He came back and redesigned filters overnight, went into production the next day and they were flown up to Scotland next day. Then the filters were flown out and parachuted down to the Royal Navy to be fitted to the stranded USA L.S.T. ships, which then successfully made it across and onwards. The Cabinet and Admiralty thanked him for helping to resolve "The biggest crisis the Navy had ever faced". Failure to have these L.S.T's would have meant postponing the Sicilian invasion plans.

The Nash Fraser R.A.F. gun turrets also had hydraulic problems after a while, making it erratic, again cured with a Vokes oil filter.

The Navy's Metropolitan-Vickers gas turbine gunboat also had Vokes filters. There was also medical filtration work to produce dust free clean operating rooms. (Protectometer). He was convinced that polluted air caused many illnesses and paid for a family to go to the Swiss mountains where the air was cleaner, they came back cured.

Father in his desert travels was also please to see in the desert the fuel and water supply pipelines all had Vokes pumping stations along their route, to keep the pressure and fuel moving along. Uncle Gordon also manufactured silent exhaust pipes for the Bristol Beaufort night fighters, as well as flame dampers so that the exhaust flames could not be seen at night. Father had the original prototype fitted to his 350cc velocette motorbike. The exhaust was a through pipe with many baffles, the

working was that as each puff of exhaust went down the pipe it created a partial vacuum behind it in the baffles, sound does not travel in a vacuum.

Vokes filters were fitted to the first jet engines / planes as well as during development of the engines with clean air.

Uncle had a farm in Alton, Upper Neatham Mill Farm, which was upriver to Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, they sometimes had boundary disputes, uncle had water control sluice gates on his land and would cut off Monty's river water until he saw sense. (Not everyone got on well with Monty, particularly not some senior officers, many of whom would have preferred General William Gott, (Appointed by Winston Churchill, then Prime Minister). General Gott was killed after his aircraft was shot down 7th Aug. 1942, so Monty was appointed instead).

General Montgomery used the Auchinleck and Dorman-Smith's concepts to conduct and win the defensive battle at the battle of Alam el Halfa a few weeks later in Aug 1942, prior to El Alamein six weeks later, Oct. 1942.

Uncle also set up the Lagonda owner car club, and also had an extensive gun collection mainly North American, all now in a museum. (Some belonging to Buffalo Bill). Uncle also gave St. Mary's, Sholing church its Bell, near the family home in Southampton.

Extra memories

Frank Smith (I worked with in 1970s)

He was in the Royal Navy and had to collect a USA built liberty ship, on sea trial the engine failed, and they all thought they would get a week or more ashore in the USA. They were towed back to harbour, large rings were welded to the deck, and welders cut a large round section off the deck, which was then lifted off by crane and placed on the quayside. The engine had hooks welded to it and it was lifted out of the ship and placed on a lorry, which drove off, shortly after another vehicle arrived with another engine, which was lowered into the ship, the deck was replaced and welded back into place. The crew were amazed that within 24 hours they were back at sea.

Jenkyn Hughes, Artillery Officer (Old Lancing School friend)

Jenks was a Barclays bank employee before WW2, he was appointed to manage the decommissioning of Prinz Eugen in Wilhelmshaven, he got on well with the Captain who gave him a signed book of the history of the ship. The US Navy took over the ship and it was used at Bikini Atoll and it later sank slowly in the Pacific after the tests.