

Interviewer:

This is Terry Ford on the 25th of July at Mowbray Road South Shields and interviewing Joanna Howard.

Joanna Howard:

Yes. My dad was evacuated to Cumbria with his two younger brothers, Alan and Davy. They originally came from Tyne Dock, and I remember him telling we stories about how horrible it was and that, I think it was his youngest brother, Davy, who'd possibly wet the bed and he'd been beaten by the man who owned the property. So my dad and his two brothers had legged it in the middle of the night and came, walked all the way home from Cumbria to Tyne Dock in South Shields. But there was some confusion that the farmer had some sort of boat on a lake, and my dad took it upon himself to sink it before they left. They came home and they found out that their mother had run off with another man, and they were looked after by family members and then my dad turned 14, not long afterwards, and took a job down the pit, unaware that his dad had been given leave to come home and sort out his family issues and his dad turned up with the pit in full uniform and dragged my dad out. He said he wasn't spending his life underground. My dad became a welder in the shipyards, and then he was very prominent in the unions in the sixties and seventies. He got the British Empire Medal off the Queen for services to industry in 1973 (1975).

He was an apprentice welder and he was coming home from work. He lived at Tyne Dock out and he was crossing the marketplace when the sirens went off and he decided that he wasn't going to go down in the shelter. He couldn't be bothered, he wanted his tea, he was hungry. So he just started to run, the bomb fell on the marketplace, killing most people. It sealed off the bomb shelter under the marketplace and my dad was thrown into St. Hilda's, churchyard, came to on a grave and got up and ran all the way home.

If he had gone into the bomb shelter, I would never have been born? Because it was before he met you. Yeah, it was about 1941, the marketplace, about 1941 the marketplace was bombed?

Interviewer:

Yeah, October 1941, so and what age, was he?

Joanna:

In 1941, what'd he be 15? 15, yeah.

Christina Elliott:

He tried to join the Army, but he was only still 17.

Joanna:

Well, he got home one day and his dad was home on leave, and his dad said, you know what these papers are? Oh, it's me call her papers me Call Up papers. No, he'd been caught drunk and disorderly, underage. And the policeman had said, right, you lot follow me to the station and about 12 of them just followed the one policeman to the station and my dad's friend, was it Louis Inskip wasn't with them and it was a good job. He wasn't, he ended being chief of police or something, and he would never have, he wouldn't have been able to join if he'd been with them and they were all drunk and disorderly and underage.