

Interviewer:

This is Terry Ford at the Cleadon Park Library. It's the 4th of August, 2023. I'm interviewing Lynn Wilson about her father, uncle who was in the Second World War. So Lynn, what can you tell me about the exhibits that you brought today, please?

Speaker 3:

These exhibits that I've brought today are letters written by my uncle from a prisoner of war camp in Germany. He was captured early in the war, and from what I've been told by my father, he was in a tank which was blown up and he broke his leg and he couldn't run away and got captured. That's all I know about how he came to being in prisoner of war camp, which I think was early on in the war. And the letters are all dated. So you can tell by the letters, the dates, and that's it really. My uncle took out, never spoke about it, but from what I gather from my dad when he come home, he was very unsettled. He couldn't stay in one job. He couldn't settle into a job or a life. He got married quickly to a relative's sister-in-law. The marriage didn't last. He went to Canada to try and find work. He wasn't there long. He'd come back. He couldn't settle down into anything, but eventually he did. He moved to Hastings and worked in Hastings and stayed there and married again and settled down there and that was it. He never once spoke about the war, ever.

Interviewer:

Thank you. Do you know he never mentioned, he never talked to anyone about that. So what do you think the reason was for that?

Lynn:

Well, my father did say that when he come back from the war, he was very, very thin and sort of more quiet in himself than he remembered. My dad was just a boy when he went away and he was only, I think he was 12 when my uncle come back. And at the same time, my grandmother, their mother was very ill and died in the October of that same year, 1945. So I think there was a lot happening within the family, stressful to sort of do with all the memories and the upset and the stress of it all, I suppose, traumatic for the family, I think.

Interviewer:

Yes. Thank you, Lynn. Is it okay if I asked you a couple more additional questions? Just five quick questions about, you may not be able to answer, but just we'll see if you answer. So first question, why do you think it was important to share your story and the objects which you've kindly brought with us today?

Lynn:

Well, it's so that it's part of history and people should remember what went on, and it's a good thing to remember what happened to men and women in the war and their experiences so that you hopefully learn from it.

Interviewer:

Excellent. So this object here, what do you think about you feel or think about this object? Does it remind you of them or you?

Lynn:

No, I have no clue what it is.

Lynn:

No idea about it, I'm assuming it's some kind of badge that maybe's had to work when they were within the prisoner of war camp? I don't know. I have no clue.

Interviewer:

So when did you become aware of those objects? When did you become

Lynn:

I've known about the letters since I was quite young, since my grandfather died. My dad acquired the letters, but it wasn't until my dad died that I saw that badge and the letter from the lady sending a letter to me, grandmother from the regiment, I wasn't aware of that one.

Interviewer:

So what three words or phrases come to mind when you think about the wartime generation? How would you describe those? That generation?

Lynn:

Well, as we've already said, I think brave, resilient, that's the one. And I think they were frightened a word. I think a lot of them lived in fear, you know what I mean?

Interviewer:

So the last question is the Second World War is often used in public discussions in many different ways. What do you think about this?

Lynn:

I think it's a good thing. It keeps the memories alive and hopefully the lessons it's been learned from having been in the war. I think it's a good thing to give. And I think it's a good thing that the younger generations learn about the experiences of their forefathers and their families.

Interviewer:

Thank you very much, Lynn. That's been really helpful.