

TWIGWORTH NEWS

D-Day Commemoration - Special Issue

The Sixth of June 2024 is the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy, France, an event which stands apart in our nation's history, where so many thousands paid the ultimate sacrifice fighting for the freedom we all share today.

The Normandy landings were the landing operations and associated airborne operations on Tuesday, 6 June 1944 of the Allied invasion of Normandy in Operation Overlord during World War II.

Codenamed Operation Neptune and often referred to as D-Day, it was the largest seaborne invasion in history

It is extremely important that we remember and pay tribute, particularly at a time when there is so much worry, strife and division around our world today.

The Nation will come together at 9am on 6th June to raise The D-Day 80 Flag of Peace and start a day of commemorations on this the 80th Anniversary of D-Day Worldwide.

Flags will fly across the Nation as we remember Operation Overlord which brought together the largest naval, air and land operation in history, and remember over 209,00 casualties.

Twigworth Pays Tribute!

On behalf of all Twigworth residents, the Parish Council will be joining in the national commemorations and will be hoisting our own D-Day 80 Flag of Peace at St Matthews Church at 09:00 hrs on 6th June 2024



1944 - What would it have been like living in Twigworth?

Food Rationing

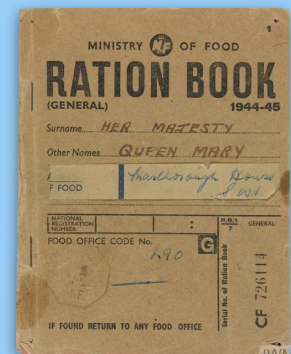
In January 1940, the British government introduced food rationing, the scheme was designed to ensure fair shares for all at a time of national shortage.

The Ministry of Food was responsible for overseeing rationing. Every man, woman and child was given a ration book with coupons. These were required before rationed goods could be purchased.



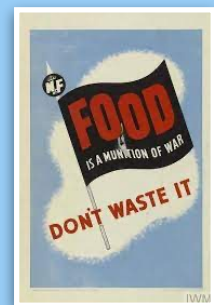
Basic foodstuffs such as sugar, meat, fats, bacon and cheese were directly rationed by an allowance of coupons. Housewives had to register with particular retailers.

A number of other items, such as tinned goods, dried fruit, cereals and biscuits, were rationed using a points system. The number of points allocated changed according to availability and consumer demand. Priority allowances of milk and eggs were given to those most in need, including children and expectant mothers.



As shortages increased, long queues became commonplace. It was common for someone to reach the front of a long queue, only to find out that the item they had been waiting for had just run out. Not all foods were rationed. Fruit and vegetables were never rationed but were often in short supply, especially tomatoes, onions and fruit shipped from overseas. The government encouraged people to grow vegetables in their own gardens and allotments. Many public parks were also used for this purpose. The scheme became better known as 'Dig For Victory'.

Bread, which was never rationed during wartime, was put on the ration in July 1946. It was not until the early 1950s that most commodities came 'off the ration'. Meat was the last item to be de-rationed and food rationing ended completely in 1954!



What things cost (pre-decimalisation)?

Oatmeal 3½d (1½p) per lb - Meat (average price) 1½ (6p) per lb - Potatoes 7d (3p) per ½ stone (7lb) - Sugar 4d (1½p) per lb - Milk 9d (3½p) per quart - Cheese 1/1 (5½p) per lb - Bacon 1/10½ (9p) per lb. - Eggs large 2/- (10p) per dozen and small 1/9 (8½p) per dozen - Bread 9d (3½p) per 4lb loaf.

How peoples lives changed

As the majority of men were conscripted for the armed services, women would have been supporting the war effort in some form such as in industry, munitions, public services, or land army.

Children may have been evacuated from their city homes and parents to the countryside, where there may not have been running water or electricity. Teachers, books, paper and equipment were all in short supply. When the war began in 1939, most children left school at 14. The 1944 Education Act changed this, introducing free secondary education for all children and a leaving age of 15, but it didn't take effect until after the war.

Mod Cons

There was little or no modern gadgets in the majority of households, such as, electric cookers, refrigerators, microwaves, electric kettles, central heating, washing machines, tumble dryers, televisions, telephones, computers, and even indoor toilets and bathrooms!

1944 - What would it have been like in Twigworth?



The British government mobilised civilians more effectively than any other combatant nation.

By 1944 a third of the civilian population were engaged in war work, including over 7,000,000 women.

Minister of Labour Ernest Bevin was responsible for Britain's manpower resources. He introduced the Essential Work Order (EWO) which became law in March 1941.

The EWO tied workers to jobs considered essential for the war effort and prevented employers from sacking workers without permission from the Ministry of Labour.

Bevin was also responsible for overhauling the reserved occupations scheme that gave groups of skilled workers in certain occupations exemption from military service.



From early 1941, it became compulsory for women aged between 18 and 60 to register for war work.



Conscription of women began in December, unmarried 'mobile' women between the ages of 20 and 30 were called up and given a choice between joining the services or working in industry.

Pregnant women, those who had a child under the age of 14 or women with heavy domestic responsibilities could not be made to do war work, but they could volunteer. 'Immobile' women, who had a husband at home or were married to a serviceman, were directed into local war work.

As well as men and women carrying out paid war work in Britain's factories, there were also thousands of part-time volunteer workers contributing to the war effort on top of their every day domestic responsibilities. Other vital war work was carried out on the land and on Britain's transport network.

For five years the British had to endure the bombing of their towns and cities in the Blitz, as well as attacks from flying bombs and rockets. In all 60,595 civilians were killed and 86,182 seriously injured.



Rationing of food began in January 1940 and clothes in June 1941. By 1943, virtually every household item was either in short supply and had to be queued for, or was unobtainable.

VE Day found Britain exhausted, drab and in poor shape, but justly proud of its unique role in gaining the Allied victory.

Photo Credits: Gloucestershire Archives Hub

1944 Local Industry - Rotol and Dowty

During the Second World War, George Dowty's inventive and creative engineer's mind was fully unleashed.

When war was declared on the 3rd September 1939, the company was ready with a team of designers, highly efficient production facilities and a vast network of subcontractors all over the country.

Dowty Equipment became the company's new name in 1940.

There were nearly 3000 employees working for Dowty and fifty per cent were women, backed up by many thousands more working at 250 sub-contractors dispersed all over England, Canada and USA

During the war, nearly all British aircraft that were built embodied Dowty products, which included hydraulic systems, undercarriage units, tail wheels, electrical instruments and warning devices .

The list of aircraft names include Hawker Hurricane, Beaufighter, Typhoon, Whirlwind, Manchester, Lancaster, Halifax, Stirling, Blenheim, Hampden, Henley, Sunderland, Skua, Anson, Dominie, Master, Lysander, Rapide.



Dowty equipment was also fitted to the allies' first jet aircraft the Gloster Whittle E28/39, which first flew on the 15th of May 1941, also, the first jet fighter to see action, the Gloster Meteor.

At the end of the hostilities in 1945, Dowty had built 87,786 landing gears and 984,388 hydraulic units. Plants were set up throughout Britain and in Canada and the USA.

Employees in War Service

During the Second World War it was considered essential that a male workforce was kept back from active military service to be employed in certain jobs as they were protected occupations (important skilled jobs needed for the survival of the country): Doctors, Miners, Farmers, Scientists, Merchant Seamen, School teachers, Railway and dock workers, Utility Workers - Water, Gas, Electricity, these jobs were also known as the reserved occupations in World War 2

In order to indicate that a person was engaged on important war-work, small metal lapel pin badges were worn by civilians. Several of these badges were officially produced and distributed nationally but many more were produced privately by employing companies to support their employees.



The photos show the badges worn by Dowty and Rotol employees.

1944 The Home Guard - Dads Army!

The Home Guard (initially Local Defence Volunteers or LDV) was a defence organisation of the British Army during WW2, set up in May 1940 as Britain's 'last line of defence' against German invasion. Members of this 'Dad's Army' were usually men above or below the age of conscription and those unfit or ineligible for front line military service. It was unpaid but gave a chance for older or inexperienced soldiers to support the war effort.

There were 19 battalions of Home Guard units in the Gloucestershire area in the Second World War and they wore the Glosters badge (27,000 men and women)



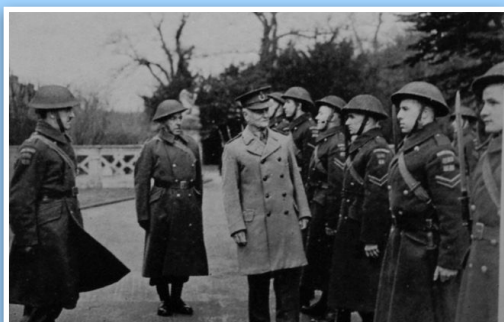
Dowty's Private Army

Dowty Equipment Ltd, Arle Court had its own Home Guard Company and belonged to the 1st Battalion (Cheltenham), HQ Lypiatt Terrace and were known as "K" Company - Dowty Equipment Ltd, Arle Court

Arle Court House - showing the original ornate main tower turret, apparently it proved a wonderful observation post for Arle Court's 'private army' as the local home guard was known, and even a Lewis gun was mounted there"



Rotol Airscrews, Staverton also had its own Home Guard Company and they belonged to 19th Battalion (Churchdown), HQ Churchdown and were known as "B" Company - Rotol Airscrews Ltd, Gloucester

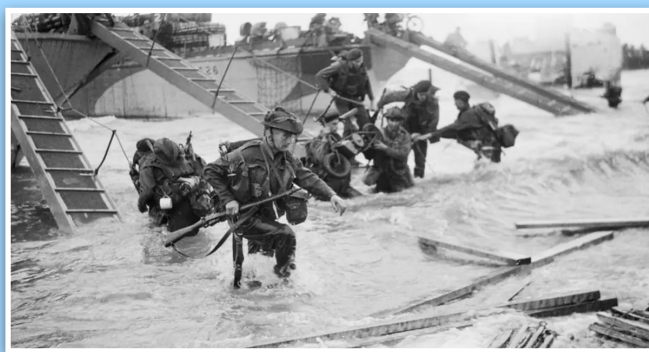


The Dowty Private Army - WW2 Home Guard Regiment Field Marshall Lord Marshall inspects the Dowty Home Guard.

Photo Credits: Gloucestershire Archives Hub

1944 D-Day - An Engineer from Churchdown - A very British hero!

The single black and white photograph of Emlyn John wading ashore on the Normandy beach on that fateful morning of June 6, 1944 D-Day – is one of the most iconic images of the Second World War.



D-Day 6th June 1944

Weighed down by his waterlogged kit, his tunic part unbuttoned, the bespectacled 22-year-old steps carefully on to the beach in a picture which came to symbolise the immense courage and dignity of the 156,000 Allied soldiers who landed in France on that single day, 65 years ago this year.

Calm, almost matter of fact, this shy craftsman, from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers was just one among the thousands of conscript soldiers from around the world who walked fearlessly into the carnage that lay on the beaches in front of them.

In the background, his comrades unload a despatch rider's motorbike, specially adapted for the coastal conditions.

Emlyn John, from Churchdown in Gloucestershire, was an engineer. His role was to support the men of 48 Royal Marine Commando, men who had already left the craft and were in front of him on the beach near St Aubin-Sur-Mer as he descended from the vessel – many of them already lying dead or wounded, butchered within seconds by German machine gun fire and artillery.

The forces landing on Juno also had to contend with machine-gun nests, pillboxes, concrete fortifications and a sea wall twice the height of the one at nearby Omaha Beach.

The first wave of men arriving on Juno suffered 50 per cent casualties, the second highest among the five D-Day beachheads. It's been estimated that 2,700 British soldiers were killed on the Normandy beaches that day.

But Emlyn was one of the survivors, fighting his way through France and Belgium in the two months that followed, until suffering a shrapnel wound in August and being shipped home.

Within weeks of being injured, however, he was back with his unit, once again supporting the Marines, and although he was allowed a brief compassionate leave to marry his wife Clare, he ended the war among the ruins of Berlin.

After the war, like so many other soldiers of his generation, Emlyn John simply went back to his home and picked up his life as a milling machinist at the engineering firm Dowty Rotol, in Gloucestershire. He stayed at the company for 37 years, cycling to work every day before retiring in the early Eighties.

The photograph does not reveal that Emlyn, the son of a coal miner, from Tonypany in south Wales, and whose family had moved to the English countryside when he was a boy, was a devout Christian.

The truth is that he struggled with his conscience and never wanted to kill – yet he went on to win the George Medal for valour.

Credits: Daily Mail 7th June 1944