


| Project: Pennylands Camp 22 - WW2 POW Camp.<br>Respondent: Anne Griffiths.<br>Year of Birth: 1938.<br>Age: 79.<br>Connection to project: Parents provided hospitality to troops resident at Pennylands.<br>Date of Interview: 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2017.<br>Interviewer: Susan Christie.<br>Recording Agreement: Yes.<br>Information & Content: Yes.<br>Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 3).<br>Length of Interview: 15:40.<br>Location of Interview: Ayr, Ayrshire.<br>Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n Pro. |   |  |
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| Time (from: mins/secs)   | Time Coded Full Transcript  | Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)  |
| 0.00   | <b>Introduction, welcome and information about respondent.</b>  | 0:00-0:46  |
|  | <b>Q1. Can you describe for me where exactly the camp was situated and tell me something about the soldiers who were based there?</b>   |  |
|  | A1. I never ever visited Pennylands Camp because I was too young but the soldiers came to our home where it was open house and they had hospitality from my parents.  | 0:58-1:11  |
|  | <b>Q2. Can you describe for me how did your family come to know the soldiers there and who were your brothers and sisters, perhaps tell me how old they were?</b>   |  |
|  | A2. My older siblings were teenagers and they met the military in various ways; one was at dancing at Cumnock Town Hall where the mothers would sit up in the balcony watching and looking after their daughters and they would bring them home afterwards and friendships would start up. There were also times when my brothers would meet a soldier who had been driving for many days, I recall an American in particular and he was invited home to have a bath so he could get his boots off. So, there were many ways of meeting the soldiers. I also remember seeing the soldiers up the Woodroad (local park), my sister who is 13 years my senior took me up and I can recall the tracked vehicles, the track vehicles who tore up the sand pit and the play area near the swimming pool. | 1:22-2:36  |
|  | <b>Q3. What were the nationalities of the soldiers who came to visit your house and what kind of hospitality did they enjoy, for example what kind of food did they like to eat?</b>  |  |

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|  | <p>A3. We had all the nationalities we had Irish lads, Scots lads, English lads, Canadian and Free French. The favourite food of the Irish lads were pigs' feet, some people call them pigs' trotters and my mother would go to the local pork butcher at Raikem's Green and treat them to this.</p>   | <p>02:50-03:22</p> |
|  | <p><b>Q4. How often did they come over to your house and can you remember what colours were the uniforms that they wore?</b></p>   |                    |
|  | <p>A4. I remember there always being soldiers at home and to my knowledge they were always in khaki sometimes they even brought guns. I remember one particular soldier who my father was very fond of and at the time he seemed much older than the other lads. Sadly, he was killed in North Africa and during research I discovered where he was killed and he is on the war memorial there. [Len Thoroughgood age 30] I have a record of this. His younger brother, he was actually a half-brother, lived in London and my brother who is 9 years older than me in the 1950/60s visited him in London and then they lost touch. These lads were part of the London Irish, the Inniskilling Fusiliers and the Royal Irish Fusiliers.</p>  | <p>03:31-04:37</p> |
|  | <p><b>Q5. Did you keep in contact with them after the war ended?</b></p>   |                    |
|  | <p>A5. The only contact we had was of Harry Thoroughgood who I already mentioned but we lost touch but in 1957 my parents and my younger brother Gib, went over to Ireland to try and visit the families my mother communicated with. Because of censorship the soldiers were not allowed to write certain things home so they would communicate with my mother who would then be able to let the families know in Ireland what was happening. Sadly, when they went over to Belfast they knocked on a door in Shankhill and were warned off. It was the time of the troubles. We had many letters in shoeboxes and when my mother moved she never said anything but I think she must have destroyed them at that time. It was the time when no one was interested in the history and I think she was saddened by the fact that she couldn't contact the people.</p> | <p>04:42-05:75</p> |
|  | <p><b>Q6. Do you have any photos left?</b></p>   |                    |
|  | <p>A6. I only have one photograph and that is of Freddy. Freddy was a close friend of my sister, Freddy was a free French paratrooper. I have one photograph of him but I think we have discovered another photograph through Bobby (CHG Chair) being in touch with the French. We had many things belonging to Freddy because he expected to come back and in, 1951/1952 I was wearing a silver medallion that had been left by Freddy. It was a little disc with a cross of Lorraine, on an enamel background of red, white and blue. The gym mistress told me I wasn't allowed to wear it at gym so I took it off, sadly that was the last time I saw it. Other things that were left were badges, Hackles, I have a photograph of a little camera that we would call a little spy camera, it's a Coronet midget</p>  | <p>06:00-07:28</p> |

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|  | camera which to us was quite exciting to think this was actually a spy thing.  |             |
|  | <b>Q7. Do you remember special occasions such as Christmas, Easter or birthdays regarding some of the soldiers?</b>  |             |
|  | A7. One of the occasions I remember was July, the Irish soldiers were here and it must have been July 1941 or 42, probably 42 and Granny McGee, as we called her, who lived next door had a garden with orange lilies. The Irish lads went and spoke to Granny McGee and asked because the glorious 12 <sup>th</sup> the Orange Walk season was coming up could they have some lilies and Granny McGee said help yourselves lads so off they went with a bunch of orange lilies. When they got to Pennylands Camp the guard stopped them and asked them where they thought they were going. They said they were going back to their billets and he replied, not with these orange lilies are you coming in, we've got a conflict in Europe and we don't want a conflict in Pennylands. So, they were each allowed to take a blossom or a bloom and put it in their cap along with their hackle.  | 07:40-9:03  |
|  | <b>Q8. Did anyone in your family or perhaps yourself ever receive any small gifts from the soldiers and if so what were they?</b>  |             |
|  | A8. I have already mentioned the little necklace. There were a lot of other little bits and pieces but quite honestly, I can't remember. The only other thing, it was mostly my parents giving the boys but when the Canadians left that must have been about 1944, the Canadians I remember the Canadians being based in Greenholm, in what was the old model lodging house and when we cut through, the cookhouse window would be open and the cook would give us cookies. So, one of the Canadians we were friendly with was either a Ted or a Ken Baker so anyhow so we started to talk about the gifts. When the Canadian soldiers were leaving, the Canadian soldiers had beautiful, beautiful blankets and they gave them as gifts to various people. One of the neighbours was jealous that they had not got and they put out the rumour the police were going to come and look for the same said blankets, quickly many blankets were cut up or burned. It had only been someone being nasty. A neighbour who was a bit of a tailoress and who had 3 sons and I remember her taking blankets and actually shaving them and making clothes for the boys from them. | 09:10-10:51 |
|  | <b>Q9. What was your personal feelings towards the soldiers?</b>   |             |
|  | A9. I was just a little girl and I thought they were absolutely wonderful and they were just part of our family.   | 10:54-11:05 |
|  | <b>Q10. Do you have any other memories you would like to share with us?</b>  |             |
|  | A10. Got to think if I've covered everything. I would like to say that my parents were not wealthy people, my father was a stripper at   | 11:09-12:09 |

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|  | <p>the Barony colliery and after he had finished his shift he would come home and become a member of the ARP, Air Raid service he was a first aider and exercises were carried out in the old church manse in the Glebe. The local doctors, local GP's were in charge and a girl called Elsie Hill later to become Elsie Menzies MBE was one of the team. Elsie was involved in all sorts of things in the community and was a great asset all through her life, sadly she died at 70.</p>  |                         |
|  | <p><b>Q11. Have I missed anything? Would like to add anything?</b></p>  |                         |
|  | <p>A11. One thing I would like to say is about 2 photographs that were in the house. Two photographs in the house were, one was of General Montgomery and the other one was of General Charles De Gaulle. These were looked on reverently but you would have thought that the Prime Minister would have been displayed but there were long memories of how Winston Churchill treated the miners and he didn't get recognition in the home.</p>  | <p>12:15-<br/>12:58</p> |
|  | <p><b>Q12. Do you have any additional memories for us?</b></p>  |                         |
|  | <p>A12. One thing I think should be mentioned, my sister had to do her service and the soldier said don't join up and become an officer's bed blanket, that was their description. So, she chose to work at Ballochmyle Hospital where the badly burned lads were being treated. One of the men to come and visit was from Glasgow, he was called Matt Brown and he was a paratrooper who had lost half his face. I can see Matt to this day. Other injuries were to both Matt and other men who came involved having their teeth wired together and my mother used to make liquid drinks for them. Used to use a sieve or a liquidiser. The other thing I remember, the only sailor that I can remember was called Albert Weir and he came from Haltwhistle. He was another person who came from Ballochmyle and we kept in touch with Albert for very, very many years he kept coming back but after he got married and settled down that relationship stopped. Some of the names I remember from the Irish lads I have already mentioned Harry and Len Thoroughgood who were half-brothers, there was a Bobby Prentice there was also a Savage and I also have mentioned a Ted or Ken Baker who was a Canadian. I spoke to a friend who worked in Clarks garage at that time and he recalled the Free French jeeps being kept up at Clarks garage in Barrhill Road. Previous to that he said there were old lorries that were used for parts but the Free French used Clarks garage for storing their vehicles. I think I have covered everything that I think I can remember.</p> | <p>13:01-<br/>15:34</p> |
|  | <p><b>Closing statement and end of interview.</b></p>   | <p>15:40</p>            |



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