

Indelible Memories

by Marjorie Halligan

After searching for a title for these personal memories of the Second World War, “Indelible Pencil” seemed most apt because his letters reminded me of the only real link I had with my father.....

until 1922, as a clerk in the Pay Office of the 3rd Battalion of the regiment stationed at Plymouth. Later he sailed on HMS Northney 11, and assisted with the administration, which created the Royal Marine Landing Craft Organisation.



I can't remember him as he is described in his Certificate of Service as having “dark brown hair, of fresh complexion and being five feet six and a half inches in stature”. I do, however, remember my mother reading his letters, which were written in indelible pencil and always ended with a special message for me. Linked with these memories are recollections of Fry's Mint Bars, as he often enclosed his letters in parcels when he sent his sweet rations to us.

Other wartime memories are not so indelible. I do not remember my mother's cousins coming to stay with us when they left Belfast during the Blitz of 1941, nor do I recollect visiting London in July 1942, with my mother and Aunt Lily to see my father being awarded the B.E.M. at Buckingham Palace. Family tradition has it that I was accompanied by a favourite teddy bear and that we stayed with friends in Kent. The bear and the stubs of the green tickets that admitted us to the Palace were kept for a long time, however, they now are lost.

Lost too is the certificate which confirmed me as an Assistant to Field Marshal Alexander in the Book Drive, which was part of a wartime salvage effort. This loss sits lightly on my conscience as I am sure I took the credit for the efforts of my mother and aunt. I still

have a silver identity bracelet with my name and wartime identity number on it and a silver Royal Marine regimental brooch.

From a period when the memories for thousands of people were horrific, I was lucky to have such gentle memories and a father who returned home intact.