

A-3914-F/1/10Tidworth Tales

Summary

Arthur talks about getting injured during his army service and how he went on to become a dispatch rider. However, whilst he was riding he got into an accident where he damaged his lungs, which resulted in him being bed bound for a fortnight. He received no hospital treatment, instead he slowly got better with the help of his friends. Eventually, he managed to ride in a convoy with his friends down to just below Bath and back again.

Transcription

AB: Anyway from then we eh [bang sound] were sent down to eh to Tidworth, and eh [background noises] they eh ... I was still the doctors orderly and in barracks and eh they decided that they were all going under canvas to try you know give 'um camp experience and we all went into this field, we were all to go into this field under canvas, and they give me some eh supplies and he said eh "You go with them and eh if there's anything you that you don't understand." He says, "Send them down to barracks with me." Well luckily there were nothing cropped up. And eh when eh I happen to go to toilet there under canvas and they all sat on a right long row on toilet seats and this horrible Sergeant came in he made, made one of them stand to attention who doing his business. I says, "Eh he wouldn't have done that if it had been me mate," when he'd gone. Anyway when, when he came that eh officers, eh oh I-I decided then to, to leave the eh doctor and, and go on eh... 'cause I'd the, the eh... they sai-they said to me have you got right licence I said "yeah", "driving licence" I said "yes", so eh he said, "Well we need an extra eh dispatch riders." I think they'd already got seven, so I said eh... eh would you like to come as a dispatch rider, so I said yeah.

Oh went out with two of them without, without a map. We went over what they call climb the nail behind barracks [speech unclear] and as we were riding along, we come... we, we finished up on to RAF eh range, for a firing from planes you know great big target there. And when this-this plane were coming and when it saw us just swooped away, and we te- realised then to turn [speaking in background] round and went back.

When we-we got half way back, the-the ground were very soft so we had to speed up, so I must have been doing about between 40 and 50 eh to get over this soft ground, and eh oh I dropped unlucky because they must have dug this area up like it- it were like a, a track, just like eh a track made you know with-with track with the tanks and that, and then dug it out. And eh what the- what-what the grass being right long, I started thought it was 2 flat land and I kept going. Well I jumped off one end on one side and hit other side head on. And bike eh handle bars must have hit me in chest, and send me straight up in air. I must have gone about as high as this house and going up and going down all I saw was a blur of mixed colour and eh when I landed luckily I dropped on the back on soft ground, but I- I'd 'cause with the bike handlebars hitting me in the chest it caused a swelling in, in me chest that were holding me lungs in, and instead of me lungs expanding and

contracting, they were just sort of fluttering. That were horrible that. And eh this, this other lad he went back to barracks and next thing doctor came with him, and they eh instead of him taking me to hospital, they took me on a stretcher, oh he-he fastened me up like and put me on the stretcher, and eh instead of taking me to hospital they took me back to me own barrack room. Well they laid me in the bed and eh next day I thought oh eh I think I ought to get them to try and lift me up. So I said to me mates like "will you try and lift me up and sit me side of bed", and they lifted me about that much and they both went white, lied down again. An eh I waited then a couple of days and I says, "Try again and if I pass out sit me at side of bed." They sat me side of bed and I were in agony-agony in me chest, and I eh when it come to laying down I couldn't lay down, they had to lay me down and from then on I-I told them to keep lifting me and sitting me at side of bed, laying me back down again. And then eh when I got er a bit better I says, "Take me to, to toilet which were from here to that door," I said, "Bring me back and put me laying back down again".

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Anyway, when it got to about a fortnight after eh I was still, still really bad, and eh where I could manage to get up and I said eh they said, "We hav- We having to go today, went to trip off today, we don't know where we are going," so I said, "Well me bike's sat outside with yours," I said that, "If yer help me to get up- if you help me onto bike and kick it me up," I said, "I'll go with you." That's what I did. Huh. I got about half way obviously couldn't do it, stop convoy said, "Eh do you want to get in ambulance?" I said, "No I'll stick it out," went rest of way we finished up just below Bath somewhere, but luckily we didn't stop but eh because I couldn't get off bike and eh we-we set off back, and they stopped convoy half way again and says, "Are you sure you don't wanna get in ambulance?" I said no. I says keep going and I-I managed to keep going, and then when I got back they'd to lift me off the bike [laughs] and lay me down again, I'm in a right tackin', but being, being young I got over that very quick and eh that's when eh that's when I-I got better.

[00:06:27]