

Gibraltar: Challenge, Change & Continuity

The Friends of Gibraltar Oral History Project (1930 to 1970)

McGeever, Frank (Ser 215 / IWM 024617R03)

British private served with Black Watch Depot in GB, 1939; served with 4th Bn Black Watch in GB, France, Gibraltar and Morocco, 1939-1943; private and NCO served with 6th Bn Black Watch in North Africa and Italy, 1943-1944

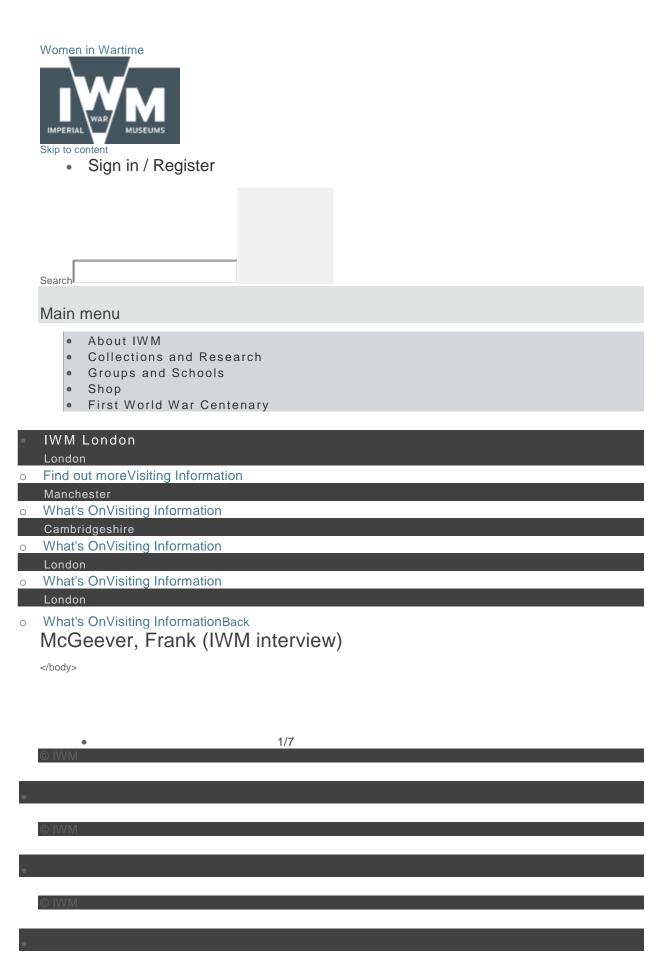
Content description

REEL 1 Background in Blantyre and Cowdenbeath, GB, 1918-1939: family; civilian work including thoughts about joining navy; call-up to militia and joining of Black Watch; train journey to Perth. Aspects of period as private with Black Watch Depot in GB, 7/1939-10/1939: arrival and journey to Queen's Barracks; first night in army including background of recruits; memories of Private Archie Heggie; memories of NCOs; arguments over cleaning teeth; drill; weapons training; rations; leisure activities; route marches; troops unable to settle into army; discipline including story of Private McCale boxing; NCOs in squad; story of guard duty on tunnel; knowledge of approaching war; reactions of parents to service; details of pay. Aspects of period as private with 4th Bn Black Watch in GB, 7/1939-1/1940: posting and journey to Gillyman Barracks in Cove; changes in battalion; relationship with Territorial troops. REEL 2 Continues: details of NCO course undertaken with Scots Guards; heating at Salamanca Barracks in Aldershot; activities of unit including exercises; field craft training; opinion of training; embarkation leave; knowledge of posting abroad; journey to Southampton and voyage to Le Havre. Aspects of period as private with 4th Bn Black Watch in France, 1/1940-6/1940: journey to Yvetot; memories of Captain Howe; march to Caudebec; reception from civilians; latrines; rations including accommodation and sleeping arrangements; story of church parade in Hinges; hospitalisation with hernia; marches to Le Mans and reunion with regiment; fate of battalion; story of crossing bridge at Caen; details of journey to Cherbourg. REEL 3 Continues: scenes in harbour; attempt to board HMT Lancastria; boarding of ship; air raids during disembarkation; arrival in Poole; journey to Bournemouth; accommodation; relationship with civilians; knowledge of Allied evacuation; background to reunion with battalion; help given to colleague; discipline; issue of tropical kit at Southampton; details of

voyage to Gibraltar. Aspects of period as private with 4th Bn Black Watch in Gibraltar and Morocco, 1940-1943: accommodation; duties of battalion; details of military presence; building of airfield; roads; opinion of posting; unloading ships; relationship with navy; leisure activities including story of reunion; details and opinion of posting; news of posting to Tangiers; equipment issued; relationship with Charles Maguito from British Legation. operations as private with 6th Bn Black Watch in Italy and NCO, 1944: journey to frontline; from patrol; use of mortars; river crossing exercises; activity at Inferno; scenes in Cassino soldier; inability to collect wounded soldier. REEL 6 Continues: description of withdrawal subsequent advance up Liri Valley including opposition faced and supply situation; Tommy cookers; supply of rations; memories of Charlie Skee; contact with and opinion of US troops; opinion of Polish troops; settling into civilian life; comradeship in army.

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details of Headquarters in crypt; rest period; details of subsequent advance up Liri Valley including opposition faced and supply situation; advance on Rome; rest period; opinion of mistake made by US Army; visit to Rome including reception from civilians and meeting with Pope Pius XII; problems from noise during advance to Monte Scalari; advance with tanks; NCO course undertaken; promotion to lance corporal; story of wounding at Coriander Ridge; details of wounds; evacuation and medical treatment received; details of voyage to Liverpool aboard HMHS Atlantis. Aspects of hospitalisation in GB, 1944-1945: details of hospital; visit from mother; length of stay; Scottish hospitals stayed in; medical treatment received. REEL 7 Continues: pain relief; final operation; demobilisation from Redford Barracks. Aspects of period as civilian in GB from 1945: course undertaken; civilian work; religion during service and contact with padre; further details of withdrawal to Cherbourg; rations gained from land in Italy; details of Tommy cookers; supply of rations; memories of Charlie Skee; contact with and opinion of US troops; opinion of Polish troops; settling into civilian life; comradeship in army.