

Old Mr Jack Higgingbottom and his family came to live next door to us up Camp Hill Bugbrooke just after the Second World War, at the time he was still, working at Weedon Ordnance Store, if and when he was digging the garden next plot to ours, especially up the top end of it, where we had several sheds to keep bicycles and motorbikes in, along with swings etc to play about on, I had an air rifle that I was always shooting at targets of sorts, if and when doing so Mr Higgingbottom would take great interest, and would come and have a go himself, he was to show me how he was taught to fire a rifle in the army, along with several positions of doing so, be it laying prone on the ground, kneeling, to standing up, as well as lying on ones back with the rifle between ones crossed feet, by doing so one had greater accuracy, from doing forward rolls over logs finishing up into a firing position and firing the split second of coming to a stop, along with many other ways of learning to fire the thing with greater accuracy.

For him he was called up into the army from Bugbrooke at the start of the First World War into the Northamptonshire regiment of what he served right through this war without too many bad injuries or of being captured.

He said they had slept in pigsties to Chateaus, Barns, holes in the ground, to limestone caves, he said you name it we had slept or stayed in such places throughout the period of the war.

He told me that enjoyed the field craft he was taught, for this saved his life on many occasion, he said about the noises of war, like the noise some shells made, he said they called the ones that were going over very high, as moaning minis, for they made a moaning noise, he said that the ones that you had to get down quick from, were the whiz bangs , he said that they had a high pitched whistling noise with the pitch getting higher, as they were very close or coming in, as he would say.

He said when standing in the dugouts or trenches, on watch, he said the most terrifying times were when the enemy had got range of you, and hundreds of shells were being fired at your positions, he said a times just like a rapid popping as each gun fired off a split second from the next, he said some shells were to explode while going through the air just over the trenches, or some would only go off on impact.

The first salvo could travelling along spiting up all the earth in no man's land, turning over all the soil and dead personnel from either side that had been laying there, some for just days, others since the war started.

He said no man's land was full of dead or wounded from charging at one another trenches, As each side would do after a period of bombarding each other.

He said the second salvo could come along hitting the trenches you were in, along with the air bursting with shells, he said if and when on such occasions the shock from the bursting shells would knock the stuffing out of you, he said they gave us smoking pipes or cigarettes to put in our mouths, as this helped to keep the mouth open, so the shock waves from the bursting shells did not burst or hurt your ears so much, for it made equal pressure both sides of your ear drums, stopping most of the pain, he said that many men just went mad and uncontrollable at times, especially when there was a prolonged bombardment.

Jack himself was a very political motivated man from his experiences,

Stanley Joseph Clark.

