

DOP/01/030

Syd Carroll (born 1893)
Westlands
Olney

(Friend of Hawtin Mundy)

006 Day war broke out. Old pal of his went into public house Cuba and his (Syd's) father was there I said Wars started Dad Yes he said, I'm glad (sad?) it has. I'm sick hearing about it. well I hardly know what to do he said, Come on Gadget (that was the nickname for my old pal that was with me Gadget Henson.

017 His friend had been in the army before – he got £5 when he joined up SC not having been in before got sweet fairy Anne.

027 Father was a strong Conservative – “our country right or wrong” – “a stiff old Tory”. Used to live in 39 Thomson Street – formerly called Stantonbury – the Wylies got it called “New Bradwell” – should still be Stantonbury.

049 Went to join up on 6th August three went together, Hawtin Mundy, and Len Powell, Syd wounded first, then Hawtin and Len Powell was killed. He had premonition. There you are the three of us came up together, Syd Carroll he's been wounded, Hawtin Mundy's been wounded, I expect I expect I shall be killed. And he was killed. Nice kid he was too.

069 Joined up Aylesbury. Went to join Bucks Battalion (compare with Hawtin) Our biggest moan was we should never go to war. After had been in Aylesbury a fortnight marched to Chelmsford. When they drew their money on a Friday they was broke at night time. Had a younger brother who joined up, but not allowed to go out as he was only 16. Syd was 19 (or was he 20? – RK) He wasn't broke as he didn't smoke or drink.

100 At Chelmsford till they went abroad. Fatty Odell and Joe Scragg joined up at the same time. Odell should have had the V.C. Sent home to girlfriend telling her where he was, sentenced to 80 days field punishment. for his courage tenacity, that was wiped out, but what ought to have been done to him and he's entitled to it even now. They could get it for him – or for his people. Odell was a brave soldier, there was no doubt about that. He was afraid of nothing. It didn't matter what it was, Odell, call for him, stretcher bearing anything he was wanted for, Odell was ready to do it. Never fail anything.

138 Girlfriend went to Newport; spoke to the R.E.'s there and said, I know where my boyfriend is. He wrote and told me. The officer was told and it goes back. Fatty a gambler (laughs). I think we all were more or less.

144 Fatty a very good card player – knew how to palm cards. Once played in three Cups in Chelmsford – he knew a card pack felt them, counted them, eleven short, all stood up, one man had them on his seat.

169 He and H.M. in same company. Used to box together.

177 Before went to France, remembers walking about St. Martin's Camp at Folkestone, all night because it was so cold. Seasick – remembers saying to one of crew any trouble about me going back, I'll swim it. Came back in ambulance boat, never felt anything, except at Southampton when they dropped anchor, thought it was an explosion. Had two torpedoes fired at them on the way (in hospital ship) but captain of German Submarine had surfaced and apologised for mistake.

207 Before went into line were at Armentieres – didn't think much of it. First time under fire you were laughing – till one got hit. Lines from Newport Pagnell – last on the books and the first killed. As soon as this chap got killed, that done it. That made us look up a bit. Feelings when he died? This is War. That's the thought that went through my mind. Ain't what we thought it was. Course, there were several after that.

242 Getting wounded. Young officer "Pinky" Brown had had a wash; Syd said I wonder who's going to be next? And that was that. If it hadn't have been me it would have been someone else. Had been told before if he starts firing here lad you needn't worry, he's too near his own trench to have a go. He had a go. He hit it all land I remember going down. The force of the explosion. I remember the explosion and I remember falling. It were almost a direct hit. And the fortunate piece about it was the fact that I was stripped, having a wash. A benefit when went to hospital, able to deal with him more easily. Happened in Plugstreet Wood.

274 Unconscious – over 50 wounds they said at the time I had one all to meself". I was hit on the Friday; I woke up on the Sunday in Duchess of Westminster's hospital at the Le Touquet. In hospital seven months in France.

316 Eventually invalided out in 1915, about October or November. Glad to be out? No. I can't say that because my pals were all gone. No. I can't say I was glad. In fact, I tried to join up again but they wouldn't have me. The doctor said "I daren't pass you". I tried to join as a first starter, hadn't been in before but the doctor examined me and said "I daren't pass you".

348 Why so keen to get back? 'Cos I hadn't got my pals. They'd all gone I wanted to be with them. Oh I was keen to get back, just because I'd lost all me pals. Fatty Odell "that's the man what ought to have the top gong. He wasn't afraid of anything.

373 What happening in New Bradwell – all pals gone, couldn't make fresh pals. Butchering before war, lost use of left arm. Applied for job in Works. Having been on active service with the first Bucks Battalion and having received wound in action which has rendered me unfit for further service, can you offer me employment in any capacity that does not need the use of my injured limb – Application. Offered job, after exam in January 1916 doing clerical work.

426 Can't really remember Armistice Day.

486 Can remember Captain saying You're taking too many prisoners and the more you take, the less food they'll have at home. And I remember the comedian of our mob saying "Bugger 'em they don't think nothing about us. They're overfed as it is." (A.E. Baxter) They think nothing of us. Let 'em go hungry. Do 'em good.

480 People at home had no idea what it was like at the front. Went into pub and chap said, Their Territorials are not in the trenches. I remember saying to him, I remember him saying

that and old Arthur Toogoody the Landlord heard it. He told him to get out the pub and not go in it again. And his won son was in it. Joe Willis, was in the same mob.

508 Thinks there was very little difference between Territorials and Regular Soldiers – as good as them. Remembers when in hospital meeting chap from Somerset Light Infantry. said I remember when you came round the corner at Armentieres we wouldn't believe you was Territorials. We thought you was regular soldiers.

534 At end of war I know what my dad's feelings was it was feeling of relief because my mother used to get on to him so. She blamed him for me being wounded; because I'd said to her, Dad said if I don't join up you're no son of mine. She blamed him for me joining up. Of course that was ridiculous because he wouldn't have stopped them. Other brother came through ok.

580 War made no difference to life in Wolverton and Bradwell.

592 He accepted war, made no difference to his attitudes. After war no difference believes had a better time then, Why? We accepted these changes. Kind of manner of what is to be will be.

667 First time in trenches Jerry called across, how do the Buck Battalion like the trenches? They shouted back the usual reply.

681 Letter never said anything much as they were censored.

693 He wasn't there when Joe Scragg rescued Capt. Birchall – knowing size of Joe and size of Capt. B. seems ridiculous to thing he carried him. Thinks he just propped him up.

709 His army number was 1918. In hospital bloke said, Is it your regimental number? I said Yeh that's when the bloody wars going to finish. And that was years before it did.

723 V.A.D nurses were "topping", "champion" couldn't be "beaten". Mostly actresses. Remember one promised to write but I never did. Father was Vicar of Bath. Promises were like pie crusts made to be broken.

Side 2

003 Can't say as I had a really bad time of it, looking back.

008 In trenches rotten conditions – up to waist in water. Only 50-60 yards from Jerry. Saw man from Somerset's put up empty jam tin to see where Jerry was firing from had him through his hand. Another chap said he'd be court-martialled.

026 Hawtin? – happy go lucky (laughs). Yeh I think that best describes him.- I don't know. No different to what I am today. Trust to luck. He respected other people's views on religion. Didn't drink or smoke much. Last smoked in a trench he thinks.

062 Did war change his friends? – No. He used to do athletics and boxing before war. Talks of importance of Park.

094 Officers? – Simply took them for granted. I don't think the troops should have stood for some of it. Capt. Birchall, was a millionaire and the majority of them moneyed people those that had got commissions. If it had been on today I don't think the chaps would have stood for it. They was too big-headed over it. Thought we were the riff-raff of the country that's what they thought of us. More respect for troops in end? They had to have it they thought more of punishment than anything else for trivial things. Ate different food? I should say so my goodness yes, I remember one chap, Hurst, the officer's batman, he came down the trench. I knew what he'd got. I heard Capt. Birchall shout out. Hurst where's those eggs? He said Scramble just the right thing Yeh scrambled on the floor of the trench. I knew what he'd got, I nudged him. He dropped ;the whole 16 eggs. He never blowed the gaffe, but there you are.

143 Politics didn't change – doesn't know whether he's got any. Voted Conservative, because hasn't had good Labour man.

152 Father Guest "Rough old diamond remembers them trying to unfrock him. Came to his house, mother was there what/ unfrock him, and old gal Savage she's signed it? And he's given his Sunday dinner down to them for them to have. And she wants him unfrocked. (His mother was a midwife. Never let her send for me, she can send for someone else. One windy winter night Syd answered door the Mrs. Savage's husband, asked for his mother to come to deliver the baby. Syd gave excuse that she'd gone to bed with headache. Went up to mother It's old Tommy Savage, mum you're not going are you? Course I'm going you go back to bed. Somebody's got to look after the poor thing. She'd forgiven, forgotten.