

DOP/01/033

Hawtin Mundy
Born February 1894
16 King Edward Street
New Bradwell

Wrote message for Sgt. Rollo Price – taken to Menin Gate and released into the wind whilst the last post played. “Sleep well comrades. You held your heads high with pride, but now they would bow in shame, as all that is left are memories”. Why put this?

047 “What’s this country today? When they held their heads high with pride Great Britain ruled the world, then sun never set on the British Empire. They was days of pride, that’s what you fought for. Today its all been given away. What’s left? Nothing. Even the Isle of Wight doesn’t belong to us hardly. That’s what’s left today, and don’t you think them chaps that lived in those days would look around and say, “Cor blimey what did we fight for?” That’s the meaning. My attitude is like the very old soldiers or old people. They used to look back with pride on those days”. War broke out Tuesday 4th August, 1914. On Sunday night decided with Syd Carroll they’d join. Joined on Monday 10th August 1914. Billeted in Aylesbury for three weeks approximately. Moved to Chelmsford. 29th March 1915 went to France. Stayed at Boulogne a couple of days. Marched to Armetieres. Went on to Plugstreet took over from Regulars – week to two weeks after arriving in France. Syd Carroll got wounded end of April – time when RM ran out of the cottage. RM got wounded at Plugstreet approximately 9th May. White feather incident early June 1915. Rejoined Territorials at High Wycombe approximately end of June 1915. Recruiting August – September 1915. Went back to France from Burnham-on-Sea 7th February 1916 (his birthday). Second wound 19th March 1916 at Eberton on Somme. Returned to France approximately February 1917. Captured May 3rd 1917 – 2nd battle of Arras. Worked at Donai for 2 weeks Ta Lille for 10 days. Taken from Lille fort to first POW camp at Dolman in Westphalia. There for 1 month. Moved to East Prussia (Domnav). There until approx. 18th November 1918. Moved to Heilsburg. Went to join hospital ship at Danzig. Sailed on 6th December 1918. Arrived at Leith in Scotland. Went to large dispersal camp Ripon in Yorks. At Ripon for only two days. Back home by 10-11th Dec. 1918. got married 12th July 1919 at Newport Register Office – same office he’d used for recruiting base.

378 It was bitter cold, winter and we had to wait at the docks while they loaded this old boat, it was an old cattle boat. They loaded it up with horses and waiting on the docks there I see a bloke and I said Will you go and get me a bottle of whisky? and he went and fetched me a bottle whisky out of the town, that were 3/6d and when we got on the boat they come along and said “Everybody down below”, see, well, I was a stranger. I got me old bottle of whisky and I stopped on top till they cleared and then I got under tarpaulin, laid there with me bottle. I thought well, I can help meself, and I opened the bottle and lay there and had some whisky and I fell asleep. Well when I woke up and shook the top of the tarpaulin and all covered with snow. I was shaking that off when a bloke, one of the deckhands, came along, he said what the hell are you doing here. Ooh I said, having a drink. Do you want a drink? Yes he said, so I give him me bottle and I said are we there: he said there No. He said what’s happened, he says we got sell out the Solent he says and then the U boats was about. So we had to turn round, he says were back now where you started from, back in the Solent he says, but we’re waiting for a naval escort to take us over. I says I’m froze with cold. He says come with me he

says I'll fix you up. Well, he took me down, in the sip, along a sort of a corridor along the side if I remember right, opened a door and it was a kitchen, you know, I dare say it were the crew's cooking place. And in there was a stove and the stove was out but it were warm. And I sat on that stove and I went fast asleep. Then next thing I knew he come in the kitchen, was shaking me he says, Come on et up he says we're at Le Havre.

450 Well Captain bowyer he put up as the Tory you see, and he got in easy enough. I mean, in those days Labour had only just started then, hadn't been on long as you must know. That was the first time a Labour man put up here. They used to come and speak to you outside the Works of a dinner time, see at Wolverton, cos there was a hell of a mob, about 5000 employed at Wolverton in those days. Well, he used to come up there of a dinner time and speak. Another day a Labour man would come up there and speak. But whenever old Bowyer came, old Fatty he used to shout at Bowyer Oh you bloody well give me... You know, he used to heckle old Bowyer. It was laughable, you can't heckle a politician. He used to give old Fatty more than he asked for. We used to laugh like hell at it. Yeh, poor old Fatty, he never forgive him, no.

480 Fatty cold say what he like then, but if you said "Boo" without saying "Sir" in the Army, you were for it in them days. In civilian life you never met anyone in the street that you knew or worked with or for, or a man and his wife, you never passed them in the street without raising your hat.

537 When I were back in England, blimey, everybody as they came back wounded used to try and get out of the army, I mean, which they did and which I could have done if I'd had any blooming sense with me wound.

I used to do a lot of boxing. Well I got in tow there at Wycombe, you see, with this boxing team and I trained with them. Well there was me training with them and knocking about and then on the police and recruiting. I was getting fit while them in the tent you see our Expeditionary Force tent as we called it, there were three parts of them got the ticket, discharged, see. But I wasn't fly enough for that.

564 How would you describe yourself at that time? Very patriotic and quite a passable all round athlete. Personality? Happy-go-lucky, put it that way.

610 He was one of the boys trained by Bill Elliott – went with Bill Trodd – tells story of his training.

644 What would you like to be if you had your life again? If I had my life all over again I'd have it the same. I wouldn't wish for anything different because I had rough times, tough times and happy times. Well, the experience of the good times and bad times they're well worth it when you get old and think through life.