

VE DAY
75TH ANNIVERSARY

A VE Day interview with my Great Granny, Margaret Irons, Age 95
By Amélie Fairhurst



Introduction

My Great Grandpa, Cecil Irons was an RAF Glider Pilot in World War 2. He took part in the Battle of Arnhem, towards the end of the Second World War in September 1944.

This was the largest airborne operation in history, where gliders landed 14,589 troops and also brought in 1,736 vehicles and 263 artillery pieces. The aim of the mission was to push back German troops to enable the release of prisoners from prison camps.

Great Grandpa was shot down during this mission but eventually made it home safely and was put on medical leave to recover from his injuries. For VE Day, my Great Grandpa was therefore back at home with my Great Granny in Cardiff, Wales.

Question 1: Where did you celebrate VE Day?

I was in Weston Super Mare on holiday for a week because Great Grandpa had come home on leave because he had been wounded and was in hospital. We decided to go on a little holiday to help him get better.

On VE Day everyone was very very happy! All of the hotels on the seafront opened all of their windows and all of their doors and played music. There was

music everywhere and everyone was dancing all along the promenade. It was a good evening and I remember it was dry with no rain and it was very good fun.

We all had a lovely time and of course we didn't have to put the lights out when it got dark and we didn't have to draw the curtains that evening. It was lovely as we were allowed to have lights so that we could walk back in the dark and see where we were going as it was the end of the blackout.

Question 2: What food did was shared on VE Day?

Goodness, that is hard to remember but we were still rationed and if you went to stay somewhere like a boarding house, where we were for VE Day, you had to take your ration book so that they could take our your ration coupons for the week and they could go and buy your rations.

I can't remember anything specific but I do remember having normal food as much a possible such as cereal and milk and possibly toast and marmalade and maybe even a cooked breakfast. We were able to eat fairly normally but very small quantities and you had to choose in advance because of the rationing.

Question 3: What type of Air Raid Shelter did you have at home?

We had a Morrison shelter, which was like a cage really. It was the height of a dining room table and the size of a double bed and we had a mattress in it. Fortunately where we lived in Cardiff, we didn't have very many heavy raids at that time as the war was coming to the end.

If we had a raid in the night, as many of us as could fit would crawl in to the shelter and hunker down together. Its hard to remember though as we really didn't have many raids in Cardiff. We certainly didn't have to spend night after night in there like they did in London.

The Shelter was made of steel and it also acted as a dining table for the family. We were very lucky to not spend much time in there!

