



George Freeman

Rank: W/Sgt.

Service No.: 853153

Enlisted: At Maidstone on the 14th February 1936

Regiment: Royal Artillery

Before Service:

George was born 27th May 1911 at 25, Sandown Road, Hastings. His parents were Charles Albert and Alice Louisa Freeman (late Le Brun, Robinson formerly). His father's occupation was Farm Labourer at the time, he later became a horseman.



George married Annie Harriet Barron on the 11th October 1938 at St. John's The Divine, Selsdon.

During Service:

George's Record of Service shows the following:

Trade on Enlistment – Drivers Mechanic
Height 5' 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Fresh Complexion, Hazel Eyes Brown Hair.
Royal Artillery 14th February 1936 – 11th January 1946
Home 14/2/36 to 24/9/39
BEF 25/9/39 to 31/5/40
Home 1/6/40 to 25/6/44

31st March 1944 George was at the Louise Margaret Hospital, Aldershot

N.W. Europe 26/6/44 (Note. This was D-day + 20) to 21/10/45

George's Soldiers Release Book shows that he handed back his Great Coat to the Civilian Clothing Depot, Guildford on 23/10/1945 and at this time was with the 46 RHS.

Home 22/10/45 to 11/1/46

Length of Service 9 years 332 days.
George was awarded the 39/45 Star

George's final assessment on the 3rd November 1945 states:

Military Conduct – Exemplary. Testimonial – A very reliable and satisfactory N.C.O. who has looked after his men excellently.

Transferred to the Army Reserve 13th February 1948 Rank – W/SGT

George's daughter, Barbara Athow, recalls some of her father's stories and photographs



1939/1940 - DISPATCH RIDER

Somewhere in Europe as part of the British Expeditionary Forces (BEF) . Dad recalled when, after a long difficult journey in the middle of freezing winter, he finally reached his destination. His leather gauntlets had frozen solid onto the handlebars of his motorbike. He leant the bike against a wall and dismounted, leaving the gauntlets behind, still frozen onto the handlebars.



1940 – DUNKIRK

All waded into the sea towards the boat, its gangplank reduced to mere shreds of timber. Some made it, some fell, others were picked off by snipers, like ducks in a shooting gallery. By straddling what was left and hooching along, Dad boarded.

The boat made it home. Whilst disembarking, a soldier's rifle broke loose, striking Dad on the temple, knocking him unconscious. In the mayhem of unloading sound, injured and dead troops, Dad was mistaken for one of the latter and was loaded into a railway truck with the fallen.

On regaining his senses Dad realised the train was coming to a halt, at Headcorn, where the troops were handed mugs of tea. Living at nearby Frittenden, Dad left the station and walked cross country to home.

Wartime jungle drums beat loud. Mum, a waitress at a local inn was summoned by the manager who said, 'George is home – go'. Running home, she found Dad in the scullery soaking his feet in a tin bath, boots, socks, the lot – they had grown into his feet and had to be soaked off like a label off a jam jar.



George Freeman, George C. Johnstone & Bruce Rolfe with their Royal Artillery 25 Pounder, last position somewhere in Holland 1945

1945 - ROYAL ARTILLARY- FIELD GUN Scant details – I don't think he wanted me to picture the whole scene. During fierce bombardment from the enemy, his next-door gunning placement suffered a direct hit. When the smoke cleared, the entire outfit had simply disappeared – no gun – no men – no nothing – just one huge crater.

After Service:



When George was demobbed from the army he worked at Appleton Farm, Frittenden as a stockman for Mr. George Osma. He also worked in the hop gardens. His daughter Barbara was born in 1950. In 1953 the family moved to South Lodge, Acrise, where George worked for Mr. Hubert Finn-Kelcey as shepherd/stockman. In 1962 the family moved to Mounts Court Farm, Acrise when George went to work for Mr. Bob Martin as shepherd/stockman, in whose employ he remained until his retirement.



Left to Right - George Freeman, Fred Boughton, ? Metcalfe, Unknown, Bill Benefield, Paddy Want (Bert Want's elder brother), Herbie Palmer, Dick Harmer, ? Cross, Bob Collard, Unknown and Unknown

George had little time for leisure, but he did enjoy attending the Rat & Sparrow Club, held in the Rose & Crown. His wife enjoyed the companionship of the other farm ladies who worked tirelessly in the fields planting and picking up potatoes, strawing and picking strawberries, picking up stones – the list is endless.

George's daughter "Pete" trained as a State Registered Nurse at the RVH Folkestone under Matron Crowther, progressing to Sister at St. Saviour's, Seabrook. George's son Bill joined the Elham Sea Cadets (in the old village hall) followed by the Prince of Wales Sea Training School at Dover. After qualifying as an AB he joined the merchant Navy and travelled the world over. George's son Rob briefly went to Elham School then on to the Harvey Grammar where he excelled at Sports and mathematics. He was a keen member of the Sibton Park cricket team. For many years he worked as a woodsman alongside Bill Morgan and Peter Jones. Barbara went to Elham School too, walking the "country mile" there and back daily (this was the old school on the site now occupied by Church Walk). For 11 years Barbara was fortunate enough to work as a week-end guide at Acrise Place, from the age of 11 until just after Dick Athow and Barbara married in 1971.