



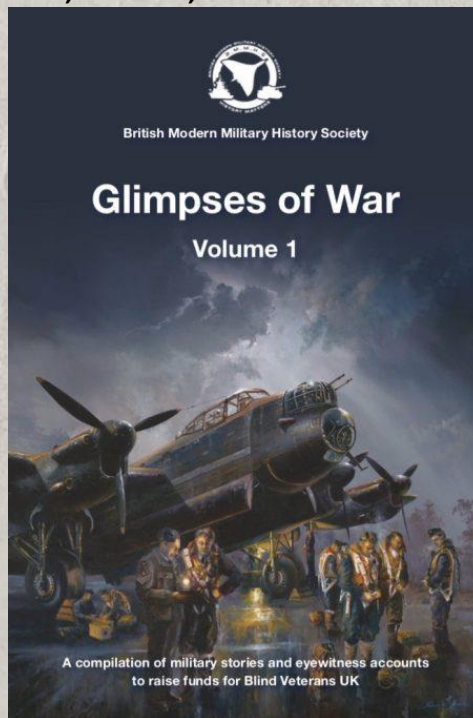
Glimpses of War – Volume 1

(A compilation of military stories and eyewitness accounts, raising funds for Blind Veterans UK)

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The BMMHS fully deserves to be congratulated for this inspirational book of history in the making, conceived under most unusual circumstances in 2020, nurtured carefully to gestation, and delivered healthy into the light of day well in time for the VE-Day commemorations and to raise funds for Blind Veterans UK. This is its story ...

The British Modern Military History Society, www.bmmhs.org was founded in early 2019 by two brothers, Andy and Jerry Cockeram, whose passion for military history had been ignited by their research into the life of a distant relative, Gunner James Willie Barker, killed by a German artillery shell on 22 March 1916 and now buried alongside a comrade from his battery who died that day, probably at the same time. Andy and Jerry were the first members of their family to ever visit James's grave in France. James Willie Barker was simply 'An ordinary man just 'doing his bit', but not forgotten, and this emotional story is but one of many compelling vignettes and inspirational eyewitness wartime accounts compiled over the last twelve months for this unique 'lockdown' book, the proceeds from which will support Blind Veterans UK (formerly St Dunstan's, at Ovingdean near Brighton).

The BMMHS came into being when Andy and Jerry began organising monthly talks for anyone interested in military history over the last 200 years. Their high-quality speakers included writers, academics, former military personnel, and experts in their field, and their meetings in Woodcote Village Hall (near





Wallingford) in South Oxfordshire regularly attracted up to 100 participants – until the coronavirus pandemic and the first national lockdown intervened and meetings had to cease in March 2020. Their determination to overcome this challenge led them to initiate instead a very popular series of twice-monthly Zoom talks (which has raised over £1,000 for military charities to date). Actual meetings in the Village Hall will hopefully resume in September 2021, while their Zoom talks will also continue, on a monthly basis, enabling a keen and growing audience to attend from far and wide.

The idea for 'Glimpses of War' was also born during the first COVID lockdown: BMMHS members and associates were asked to search their family archives for personal or family accounts of wartime experiences, military or civilian, any war, in any role, to raise funds for Blind Veterans UK. This touched a chord in a pent-up population under attack from an invisible enemy, and the floodgates were opened. The immediate result is 'Glimpses of War – Volume 1', with its striking front cover painting, 'No Moon Tonight' by Simon Attack, of a newly formed bomber aircrew's first operational flight over Occupied Europe.¹ Every one of the 74 separate accounts contained in Volume One delivers its own emotional impact. These accounts are broadly divided into three sections: The Great War and Conflicts pre 1939; the Second World War (covering maritime, land and air operations, with further vignettes from the war against Japan, the Home Front, Occupation and Resistance, and POWs, Escape and Evasion); and Post 1945 Conflicts. The latter includes a particularly moving Falklands War excerpt from 'White Ship – Red Crosses' by Senior Nursing Officer Nicci Pugh QARANNS (on SS Uganda) and Chief Petty Officer (and BVUK member) Terry Bullingham RN (blinded during the attack on HMS Antrim on 21 May 1982, and subsequently treated on board SS Uganda).²

So many other contributions have been received that Volumes Two and Three are already in preparation, all for the same excellent cause. Do buy Glimpses of War – Volume 1 now. I encourage you also to send in your own vignette or family record for publication, you are still in time to contribute as Friends of Millbank from your own wealth of personal or family military medical experiences from recent and not-so-recent conflicts.

This is our second Book of the Month, it is dedicated 'to all those who have experienced war and conflict', and it is the perfect one to commemorate the ending of the war in Europe in 1945.

David Vassallo
Chairman, Friends of Millbank
May 2021

¹ 'No Moon Tonight' ©Simon Attack, see <https://www.simonatack.com/shop/limited-edition-prints/no-moon-tonight/>

² Pugh, Nicci. *White Ship – Red Crosses. A Nursing Memoir of the Falklands War.*

