

## The life's Journey of John Clarke

John came into this world at a time when world war one 1914/1918 had ended three years before he was born, his parents very poor only could afford to live in one room, at this time food stamps and welfare was the only way that John's family could survive, John remembers at a very young age being a patient in a hospital as he had contracted ring worm, two people in white coats visited him, who they were he did not know. They were his parents.

It was now 1926 and a general strike in London was in progress, John then five years old remembers living in a in a basement one room flat, where he noted large rats or mice running across the floor, soon after this the strike was over and we moved to a three room basement flat, the summer came and so did the rains, and we were flooded out, 1927 came and my dad's brother died, and so we moved again to my dad's mother's house, and lived there in two rooms till I was twelve years old. I remember my grandmother taken me every week to to visit her dead son's grave and placing flowers upon it.

I guess it was time to move again, as I was sleeping in the same room as my parents, we moved a few streets away, where we took up residence in a house where we rented three rooms, and this place had a bathroom; as before this we used a tin bath once a week for us to bathe in. I was now fourteen years old and had left school, I found a job as a errand boy for a Chemist shop, I earned ten shillings a week nine in the morning to seven in the evenings, six days a week, and a half day off on Thursdays, after a few months I left this job and tried other types of employment, my parents were now in a better position and could afford to rent a three bedroom house so once again we moved, by this time now sixteen years old I bought a motor-cycle, I had a friend named Len who I had from school days he too had discarded his bicycle for the thrill of owning a motor-cycle, and the open road.

1938 was soon upon us, and war drums were being heard from Germany, and so Len and John joined the reserve army, on Saturday evenings Len and John would parade in there uniforms hoping to attract the opposite sex, of which did happen for John Alma was her name and John stayed with her for three years till fate decided otherwise.

On the 24th of August 1939 John's company was mustered and send out to sites already prepared for anti air-craft defence, our sights were ringed around the Eastern side of London of where the attacking enemy bombers were expected to head for, and sure enough some of the night bombers managed to penetrate the night defences, many of these airmen never saw there country again., within a year England was fighting for its survival, at that time I was still attached to a anti-aircraft unit, London was in flames, from where we were stationed, fifty miles away we could see London burning from the bombing by the German aircraft.

Invasion was imminent, because arms were in short supply, we had a London Taxi cab a Lewis machine gun from world war one a few rifles for our defence. The invasion never came and so we lived to fight another day,

John's company in 1940 was split up and with a hundred or so others he was sent for training to a camp in Oswestery in northern Wales, John being wise took on a job as being a batman, this allowed John to train in his spare time for learning to drive all types of army vehicles, eventually a new company was formed and John to his delight got the job as driver to the medical officer, this was not to be for very long as John's skills were noted, so he was sent for a six months course to become a vehicle mechanic'

John was then sent to Nottingham to await a posting during this time thousands of soldiers there were being sent to the far east to counter the threat by the Japanese army who was now at war with us, most of these fellows never saw England again, John got a posting to an artillery company; it was here in August of 1942 that by chance he met his life's partner. John married her only after knowing her for four months. It was love at first sight John stayed happily married to Margery till she died of cancer in 2009.

In June of 1944 our company moved into the invasion camps in the south east of England, we were all well trained and ready for what was to come, we were held in reserves but, I was being posted overseas to a air-born company, during this time Margery gave birth to our first child Jean, a month later I found myself on a troopship heading for where I did not know, a month later we disembarked in Bombay in India, it was here that I trained for the intended invasion of the Japanese home land, our services were not needed as atom bombs ended the war and the Japanese surrendered,

I came home and was let to go back into civilian life, I met my wife for the first time after a year and noted how thin she had become, it did not take very long for us to pick up where we had left of a year before, as accommodation was hard to find due to the bombing John's mother allowed John with his wife Madge and their daughter two rooms to live in, it was 1946 and John tried very hard to settle down, he could not keep a job for very long he was very unsettled, he had to have treatment to clear some of his unpleasant memories of his seven years of service to his country, it worked some, but in 1957 John and Madge with three children immigrated to Canada for a fresh start in life

It was in 1956 that John had set his sights on immigrating to the United States, eventually Canada was decided to be our future home, as the years rolled on we saw our family take on partners and marry them, and have children,

Up until 1996 Nan and I travelled to many countries, we had also bought a cottage in Huntsville in 1979 enjoyed many summers there till 2007 when we found it too much of a burden, My working years lasted till I was seventy eight; I left the company of Duracell in 1986, but had started my own company after being retired from there

In 2002 the doctors decided that I needed heart surgery, during the testing procedures an aneurysm was discovered, I must have been blessed as I survived both these operations, 2009 came with Nan leaving us, since then I have been living on my own with care givers help, They say old soldiers never die, they just fade away, I haven't faded yet  
At the present time I'm in fair shape, and still feel that I will see a few more snowy winters, I am very proud of my family; and so happy to see them all together around Christmas week, and as of now my ninety years of living, life has been a challenge for me and each time I was faced with one, I met them with determination to succeed.