

## CARLTON NEWS

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A group of our older readers have been looking back to.....

#### **Memories of Wartime Carlton.**

*Growing up in Carlton during the 1939 -1945 war years presented some exciting moments for its youngsters as they watched the German bombers flying overhead on their way to drop their loads on Coventry or Birmingham. Their attention was particularly focussed, however, on the military camp that was established in the fields at the west end of the village between what was then the rectory and the railway line.*

*The camp comprised a series of wooden huts, one for stores, one was a cookhouse and the rest were where the 40 or so soldiers were billeted. The purpose of the camp was to "spot" the German bombers on their missions to the large industrial cities in the Midlands. Three giant searchlights were deployed in the camp. As there was no mains electricity available then, they were powered by three generators housed in a wagon hovel, which is still in use to this day. When the searchlights were in use the night sky in Carlton was lit up like daylight, so bright that you could "stand in the street and read a newspaper."The only mains water supply was at the council houses at the other end of the village so it had to be transported to the camp by lorry.*

*Several slit trenches were dug around the camp where sentries with rifles were placed on duty. There was one Lewis machine gun which was placed at the bottom of the field near the brook. Its purpose was for defence only; soldiers were not allowed to take pot shots at the passing aircraft. However, on one occasion, the sergeant major on duty gave permission for a soldier named Cunningham to open fire, which he did, without effect. Cunningham was severely reprimanded by the Commanding Officer and confined to barracks for some time!*

*The soldiers made friends with the children in the village , giving them items for their collections such as spent shells and buttons from their uniforms. During the summer months they also went swimming with them in the nearby canal. How exciting it must have been for the children to have soldiers camped on their doorstep when the war they were fighting seemed so far away!*

*(Our thanks to Dennis Bream, John Lowe, Norman Oldacre and David Price for sharing their boyhood memories with us.)*