

## FROM THE ARCHIVES 2015

Last year I changed the format of my report to use archival material about two young Frodsham people's war time experiences in 1914-18 - Nurse Elsie Davies and George Hutchison of the Lusitania..

This year, to mark the ending of WW2 in 1945, I am able to publish the following two items from the archives, with permission from the families. One is a letter from a soldier written to his family in Frodsham describing the advance through Belgium towards Germany in 1944.

The other is a Frodsham soldier's vivid recollections of his war time service in 1944/45 in the same theatre of the war.

*14672434. THOMAS. J. SGMN. H.*

*TROOP.*

*H.Q. RA.*

*GUARD'S ARMOURED DIV.*

*B. L. A.*

*Thursday 7 Sept.*

*Dear all,*

*First let me apologise for not writing for so long, but perhaps by the time you have read this letter, you will understand why.*

*The security ban, has been relaxed a bit, and now we are able to tell you something about the big advance we made.*

*Well, it more or less began on the East side of the Seine, & in the general direction of Belgium. As soon as it was light we were off, & we travelled till it was nearly dark each night. We just pushed on & on, liberating place after place, over the Somme, & past Vimy ridge, & Arrass, which probably my Dad will have seen in the last war.*

*Then on the 3rd we crossed the Belgium border & on the 4th we did the liberation north into Brussels. If you get the chance to see it on the news at the pictures, you go, as no one will ever be able to describe the tremendous welcome we got, & besides it is quite probable you may see me riding in the front of a 3 ton lorry. You will see all our trucks going up the streets in a double line.*

*It was a marvellous affair, with hundreds of trucks, tanks, bren carriers & everything. Each & every one, got a separate welcome. It was fatal to stop, as they just pulled us out of the truck, & kissed*

*us & shook hands with [us], made us drink the wine they had stored up ready for the occasion, & altogether show us how they felt to be rid of the Germans again.*

*We camped in a big park, & were allowed to go out to have a look round the town. What surprised me most, was the number of people who were either English or American, or who could speak really good English. They all turned out to show us the sights & take us home to supper.*

*We were with some American people who came from Texas & they were really well-to-do people too. They took us for a walk round & showed us all the best sights, including the cafes, restaurants etc, that the Germans had used, & had been owned by collaborators which have since been wrecked, by these joy-crazy people.*

*They also showed us the German H.Q.s & the Gestapo place, which had also been wrecked. Then they took us home to their big house and gave us a lovely supper. It was the finest house I have ever been in, with all glass tables & the biggest side-board, which included cocktail-bar, glass cupboard etc, I have ever seen. Then to spoil it all, when I got back to camp, they told me I had to go on guard.*

*Well, now, I am all for getting off after Jerry again & doing the march into Berlin, so that the war will be over & I can get back home. I got the parcel with the cake & stuff in today. Thank you very much for all you put in it, it was a lovely change when we had coffee & cake today. They had all kept well, & were not a bit crushed.*

*Well, I think that is all for now, so look after yourselves, & God bless you all.*

*Cheerio for now,*

*Jack.*