

New book to honour the heroism shown in conflict

THEIRS were stories of heroism, bravery or just downright survival, and now they have been immortalised in a book.

Veterans of World War Two and conflicts since stood together on the 11th hour of the 11th day to remember their fallen comrades.

It was also a special moment for many Deddington, Clifton and Hempton villagers, whose war stories have been published in a new book called *A Parish At War*.

Michael Allbrook and Robert Forsyth spent more than two years interviewing and carefully recording relatives and veterans's tales of survival, loss and bravery dating back to Waterloo.

The book features

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personal stories from 24 residents including former engine fitter with the RAF Len Plumbe, 90, who was posted to South East Asia to track lost planes in the jungles of Burma.

He said: "A lot of secret things were carried on the aircraft that they didn't want falling into the hands of the Japanese.

"If we found them we had to destroy them, but the trouble was there were no roads, no nothing. We didn't know if we were behind enemy lines."

He said a soldier's most important possession was his rifle, but

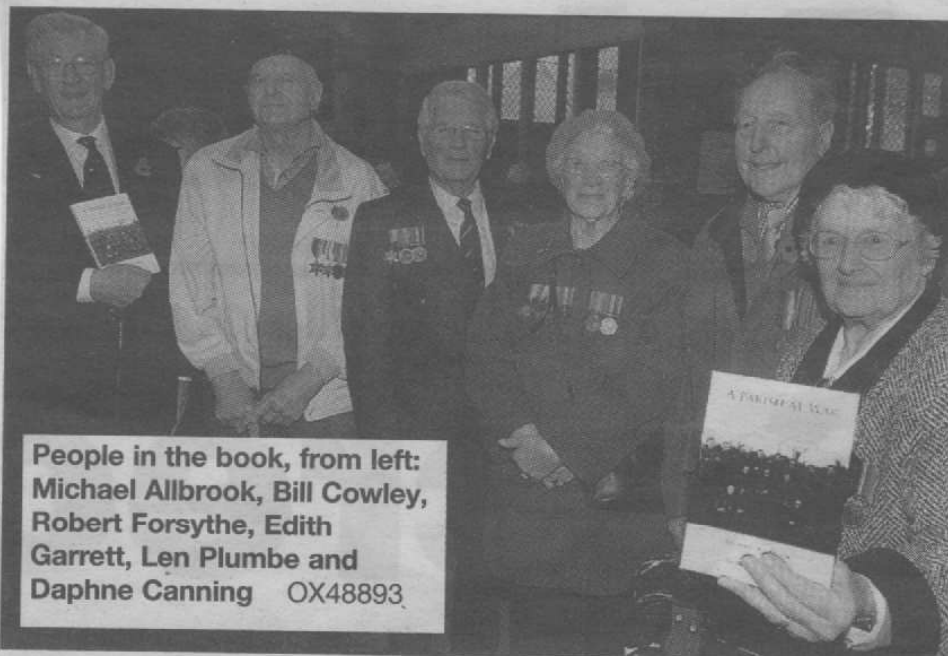
next was cigarettes which were used to bribe locals to tell them where planes landed.

Former D-Day commando Bill Cowley, 86, proudly wearing his green beret and four campaign medals, said the D-Day landings were absolutely "chaotic".

He spent three months in Normandy and was involved in much action as the allies pushed back the Germans.

But in August 1944 he was seriously injured by a shell and flew back to England for medical treatment. He spent almost a month in a coma and was eventually medically retired.

Ted Johnson, 89, a former prisoner of war who won the Military Cross for his bravery in a six-day battle to try to



People in the book, from left: Michael Allbrook, Bill Cowley, Robert Forsythe, Edith Garrett, Len Plumbe and Daphne Canning OX48893

defend the island of Leros, near Greece, is featured in the book.

He said: "I was doing what I was paid for, fighting to the best of my ability and defending the island we were on before we were taken as prisoners of war."

Co-author Mr Forsyth, 72, an ex-com-

mander of a nuclear submarine, said: "I just talked to people, and talked and talked. Two years later I have got about 200 new friends."

Year six children from Deddington Primary School, who have been studying both world wars, got a chance to chat to veterans and gain first-hand

accounts of life at war.

Proceeds from book sales will go to the Royal British Legion to help commemorate the Deddington men who died in WWI and whose names are not on the War Memorial.

Copies are available from the village library or email robert.s.forsyth@gmail.com