

PETER AND PAULINE FRANKLYN

Rob Forsyth



25 March 1944 on the occasion of their engagement

At the outbreak of war, Pauline Savill was a 13-year-old at Campbell School in Beacontree, Essex. Pauline and her 10-year-old brother Terry, together with a large number of pupils, were evacuated to Deddington in 1939. Her parents had impressed on Pauline that she should ask for both of them to be billeted together. She tried her best to convey this to the billeting officer, Helen Loveday, in the evacuee reception room on the top floor of the British Legion building, but Terry was still sent to live with Mr and Mrs Finch near the library while she was sent to stay with Mr and Mrs Course; it was thought that Pauline could help them with their three children. They lived at the Nook on Victoria Terrace. Alan Course was the brother of 'Doughie' Course whose bakery was at the corner of The Stile and New Street - and was where Sid Berry worked before the war. Within a short while Alan moved to Oxford so the billeting officer had to find another home for Pauline. In the event she thinks this was one of the best things that happened to her as she went to live with Mr and Mrs Shirley in Philcote Street. They had no children but clearly loved having Pauline as a surrogate daughter for the next few years. Uncle Harry and Aunty Carrie's house became her second home for the rest of her life.

Pauline went to school first in the village and then walked or cycled to the College for Further Education which had been evacuated to North Aston Hall. The College lent pupils a cycle which they could keep after two years; sadly the College went back to London three months short of Pauline's two years!

She was not short of friends because so many others from Campbell School were in the neighbourhood - some in Deddington and others in outlying villages - but she developed new friends through a club for young people that was run at Forester's Hall in The Tchure and the Holly Tree Club owned by Mrs Collins, where she met a young Hempton lad called Peter Franklyn who was 16 and working as a butcher's boy at Boltons opposite the British Legion building. They clearly hit it off from the start and quickly became sweethearts. In July 1942 Peter was old enough to enlist. Pauline, accompanied by her visiting father, walked with Peter to Aynho Halt to wave him off to join the Royal Armoured Corps. For the next two years they met only when he came home on leave. Pauline's parents got to know him quite well because her mother had come down from London with her other younger daughter, Diane, and they lived with the Shirleys as well for 18 months.

Peter went to France with his tank regiment after D-Day and moved with it through Europe into Germany with the advancing Allied Forces as they liberated Europe.



Peter 'somewhere' in France or Belgium

This carefully posed photograph shows him with his tank crew and some very relieved (literally) locals - including children on top of the tank. Peter is third from the right, kneeling. He obviously could not write in detail or very often but did send regular messages on Army Field Service postcards ...

... which told Pauline that he was alive and well, but not a lot more.

NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the writer of this card.]

~~I am quite well.~~

~~I have been admitted into hospital~~

~~{ sick } and am going on well.~~

~~{ wounded } and hope to be discharged soon~~

~~I am being sent down to the base.~~

I have received your { letter dated 25/3

{ telegram " _____

{ parcel " _____

Letter follows at first opportunity.

~~I have received no letter from you~~

~~{ lately~~

~~{ for a long time.~~

Signature } P. Faulkner

only }

Date 24/4/44

Form/A 2042 (7) 51-6437.

After she left the College, Pauline went to work in the Fire Guard office in Banbury. This office had the responsibility of managing the fire watchers who were on duty every night in case of air raids. Terry went back to London in 1944 aged 14 to get a job; most evacuee boys did the same thing because 14 was the normal school-leaving age as their parents generally needed the money. Terry then worked for the same company - Mercantile General Insurance - for the next 44 years.

Three weeks before the end of the war Pauline went home and immediately got a job in the Treasury in Whitehall working in the office that awarded honours and medals - many of them (too many) posthumously. Because of where she worked she was able to witness the Victory Day parades from Earl Mountbatten's offices looking on to Whitehall which was an enormously exciting place to be. She lived at home for the next two years until Peter was demobbed in early 1947. They were married on 22 March 1947 and came back to Deddington to live with Uncle Harry and Auntie Carrie again. Peter got a job in Tucker's grocery store (now Otters Restaurant) and their married life continued happily with he and Pauline running Mr Bolton's newspaper business from New Street. Peter went back to butchering after a while but Pauline kept the newspaper business going for 16 years. Mr Bolton owned the Post Office which was subsequently bought by Ken and Edith Garrett.

After some years they moved to Aynho then again to Banbury where Pauline now lives; however, Peter's family are still represented in Deddington by his niece, Mary Tompkin, and her family who continue to be a great help to Pauline to this day.