

## LES LEGERTON

*Wendy Legerton*



Les was one of two Deddington men (Len Plumbe was the other) to serve with the 14<sup>th</sup> Army in the Far East - the 'Forgotten Army' as it was known. He served in the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Worcestershire Regiment. His war experiences - including having only one pair of glasses for the whole of his time in India and Burma - were recorded in two articles.

***The Soldier:*** This extract is quoted from *The Soldier* magazine, May 2004, and is in Question and Answer style. It is reproduced here by courtesy of the magazine.

*How did you arrive in Burma?*

'After training in Bombay we arrived at Dimapur where we could see all of the parachutes that had been dropped to keep the Royal West Kents supplied.'

*Did you have any close shaves with the enemy?*

'On one occasion in the jungle I heard some chickens and I thought I'd have one and went towards the sound. It wasn't chickens at all, but Japanese soldiers. They nearly caught me - there was always the danger of Japanese snipers who would hide themselves up trees.'

*What was the food like?*

'We lived on ration packs, usually tins of beef or mutton, and bars of chocolate. We ate whatever we were given.'

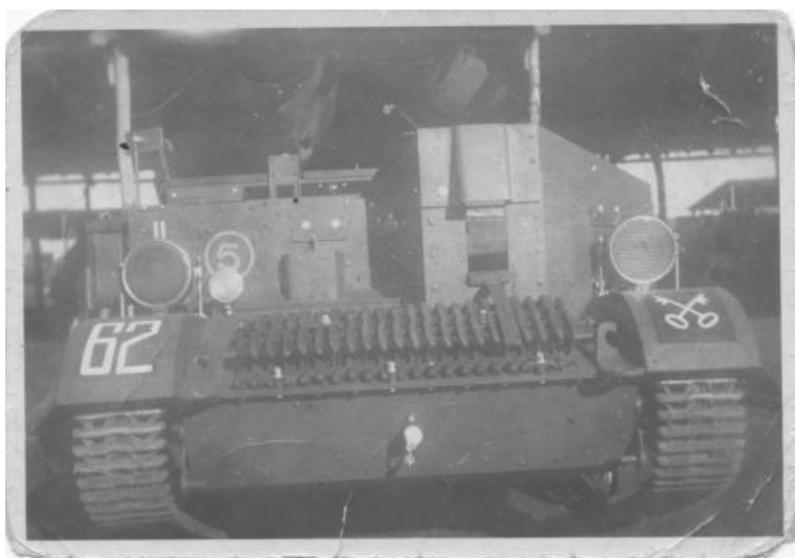
*Was the jungle tough?*

'It was hard. In a place nicknamed Death Valley there were huge mosquitoes and biting flies.'

**Banbury Guardian:** This second extract is quoted from an article dated 4 March 2004 'Heroes of Kohima recalled' and is reproduced courtesy of the *Banbury Guardian*.

'Leslie Legerton, 87, of Levenot Close in Banbury was a Private with The Regiment. He was told before Dunkirk that his eyesight was too bad for him to fight, but afterwards was called to go to India.

He said: 'I thought to myself: If I lose my glasses I've had it, because I couldn't see anything without them. Then when we went to Dimapur the first thing that we had to do was have a shower and I stepped on my spare pair of glasses and broke them. So all through the conflict I only had one pair of glasses.'



Les's machine gun carrier

Les left the Army in 1946 and moved to Steeple Aston and later to Banbury. He died in 2005.