

Sergeant Jack Shaw Royal Artillery

Thanks to Jack's son Tom Shaw for the information below.

John Shaw was born in Catherine Street, Gatehouse in 1916. His parents were Thomas Shaw and Georgina Duff.

Jack, as he was known, was in the local T.A. before he was called up to the 315 Battery (Kirkcudbright).

This battery along with the 316 Battery (Kilmarnock) and the 494 Battery made up the 130th Field Regiment of the Royal Artillery (T.A.) - later known as the 130th (Lowland) Field Regiment.

The regiment sailed for India in January 1942 where it joined the 14th Indian Infantry Division to become the 36th Indian Division which served in the Burma Campaign.



These soldiers are often referred to as the 'Forgotten Army' as reports of their progress received little press coverage back home. In 1943 Lord Louis Mountbatten, Far East Commander, addressing men in Burma said: *'I understand you believe you're the forgotten army. That's not true ... The truth is nobody's ever bloody well heard of you!'*

The trip out to Burma via India, was not pleasant. The men were packed like sardines below deck in hot sticky conditions and many chose to sleep up on deck. After the war Jack always tried to avoid any sea journey including family trips on the Clyde.

Part of his duties as Chief Inspector in the Police Force after the war was to inspect the explosives store on Ailsa Craig, an island in the Firth of Clyde. Jack always managed to delegate this work to one of his sergeants and avoid a trip in a boat. His wife Helen explained to the children that this fear was 'because of his trip to Burma'

Jack's unit were in charge of a 25 pound gun, known as the '9 mile sniper'. Below is a photo of Jack's crew (with Jack being in the centre at the back).



Jack never talked about his experiences. When asked about the war by his children his answer was 'I could hear the tigers.'

Jack was injured and is known to have been in hospital in 1942. He never allowed anyone, except his wife, to see him without a vest which covered his scars.

After his return from Burma, he married Helen Telfer Sharpe Dent in 1945 in Kilmarnock and he joined the Ayrshire Police Force.

A Shaw family saying was :

'Five Shaws went to war and five Shaws came home again'

Jack, and his siblings Tommy, Craig, Madge (Marjorie) and Norah all served in the forces and all returned home again.

The eldest daughter in the family (Jessie Ina, known as Tot) was not in the Forces. She married Archibald Pickthall in 1940 and had 2 children during the war years - Beryll and John Neil (Jack), so she was not eligible to be called up. However her husband Archie did serve in the Forces. (See War babies photo)



Jack is again in the centre of the back row.