

9 May 2014

On the wall in our lounge we have the studio photograph when my parents, Rod and Dorothy Johns were married in 1940. Horace Callow was the best man and he is standing at the far right.

I would like to contribute my mother's story and her experience with Mrs Callow. I always wrote down her stories. My mother died 7 March 2013

Brothers, Horace and Douglas Callow were scouts – Horace joined in 1928 and Douglas in 1934. Their parents were William and Matilda Callow. The family lived at 15 Garfield Street, Brooklyn, Wellington, New Zealand.

The Evening Post published photographs showing scouts greeting the World's Chief Scout and Chief Guide, Lord and Lady Baden-Powell on Sunday 24 February 1935 at the Basin Reserve. One photograph shows BP shaking hands with Rod Johns. Waiting his turn is a young Horace Callow. This photograph was included in the book: Brooklyn Scouts 1009: A CENTENARY of the first scouts in Wellington (published 2009).

My father, Rod Johns (Roderick Reginald Albert Johns) joined the scouts in 1929 and was a leader with the Brooklyn Scout Group 1933-1943.

Horace went right through the Brooklyn Troop to become Assistant Scoutmaster, until he went overseas in 1942.

Horace studied at Victoria University, qualified as an accountant and worked at the Audit Department.

During the war Horace joined the Air Force and Douglas the navy.

In 1943 Dorothy Callow, who was married to Norman Callow, worked at the Post Office. Her job meant she knew when someone was going to get a telegram.

People looked after each other during the war. It was much better to receive the dreaded telegram when there was someone else present than being at home alone.

In March 1943 during the war, Dorothy Johns received a telephone call from Dorothy Callow to say Mrs Matilda Callow was going to receive a telegram and asked Dorothy Johns to go to Mrs Callow's home when she received a telegram notifying her that her son Douglas was posted missing.

Douglas, a Lieutenant on the ship HMS Lightning died 12 March 1943. The ship was torpedoed and sunk in the Strait of Sicily. He was aged 30.

Horace trained as a navigator in Canada and then went to England. Among our photographs of Horace there is a post card he wrote from Regina, Canada 22/5/1943:

Dear Dorothy and Rod,

I recently paid a short visit to Vancouver and Victoria as you may have heard. I enjoyed the trip very much and feel much better for it. Victoria is the best Canadian city I have been in – its climate is something like ours and it is a very clean place. It was good to see nice green fields, trees and the sea again after being on the prairie for several months.

I am not allowed to go overseas until about two months so it looks as if I will be baked alive in the prairie – its getting pretty hot here now.

Expect to write a note to you shortly but this will do in the meantime – I hope.

Hope you are all well.

H.

N.Z.4271185 p/o H Callow

RCAF Base Post office

Ottawa

Later Dorothy Johns was again asked to be present with Mrs Callow when she received a telegram notifying her that another son, Horace, was posted missing in July 1944. It was later reported by a survivor that five members of the bomber crew, including Flying Officer Callow, lost their lives when the plane was shot down 21 July 1944. He was aged 27.

Later Mrs Callow gave Dorothy the flying wings Horace had during the war.

Horace Callow is buried in Jonkersboss War Cementary near the city of Nijmegen in the Netherlands

A few years before this Dorothy had worked in the same office with Emily Burgess at R & E Tingey Co Ltd; (Painters and Decorators in Manners Street Wellington). She had a brother John who was in the same bomber as Horace. Emily was told that the men including Horace had bailed out of their plane and as they were parachuting down they were shot. (From your story Ria we now know this was not true – Warren Johns).

The end of the story by Dorothy Johns.

Note: At the 50th Jubilee (1959) of the Brooklyn Scout Group a photograph of the late Flying Officer Horace Callow, was unveiled. This was later placed in the Brooklyn Scout Den.

I would like to contact the Callow family.

Yours sincerely,

Warren Johns