

Reference code: GB165-0566

Title: Gordon Ewers Collection

Name of creator: Ewers, Gordon Etrick (1924-2000) Palestine Policeman

Dates of creation of material: 1944-1945

Level of description: Fonds

Extent: 2 files

Biographical history: Ewers, Gordon (1924-2000) Palestine Policeman

Born 25th January 1924 in Brislington, Bristol. Siblings: Leonard, Charles, Alwyn & Jean. Left school aged 14 and signed on to work on a merchant ship (SS Boston City), but he found the working conditions of a deck boy too hard. The ship travelled between Swansea and Montreal/New York throughout the year, and as he suffered constant sea-sickness, he did not also want to be scrubbing decks when it was 20 below. By the beginning of World War II he had left the sea for a job in the food industry at Smith's Crisps. As soon as he was old enough, he tried to follow his two older brothers into the armed forces but was considered to be in a protected occupation. Eventually in late 1943 he managed to sign up for the Palestine Police and left England on 19 Oct 1943. The ship he travelled out on was torpedoed in the Mediterranean; and an American destroyer came to the rescue. All of those rescued were landed at Naples where they waited another couple of weeks for another ship. He arrived in Jerusalem 13 Dec 1943 and took his initial police exam on 31 Jan 1943. After basic training in Jerusalem, he was sent on his first posting to Haifa on 14 Mar 1944, where he stayed until 15 Apr 1945. Gordon spent much of his time based at Haifa. He received a gunshot wound to the lower leg. He also lost a couple of police mates. After Haifa he was then stationed at Latrun until 24 Nov 1945. After returning to the UK in 1946, he trained for the Fire Service based in Salisbury. He was a fireman for a relatively short time. Eventually he got a job in a timber yard in Newton Abbot, Devon. He married and set up home in her village of Kingsteignton. He rose to yard foreman before moving into sales at the time of the introduction of DIY shops. He spent the rest of his working life promoting new products to the DIY sector. He tripped over in early January 2000, and was taken to Torbay Hospital where they found he had broken an arm, unfortunately whilst in hospital he contracted flu and died.

Scope and content: Army pass, diary, press cuttings scrap book, Red Cross certificate, photographs and certificate of discharge relating to Gordon Ewers service in the Palestine

Police, including time at the training school in Palestine and his first posting to Haifa. The diary documents the new recruits' training and study regime, how their free time was spent and how life in Palestine differed from life at home in England. The press cuttings scrap book, created by Ewers holds cuttings of news stories and articles relating to the Palestine police, sabotage, assassinations, to plague outbreaks, snow in Jerusalem and escaped prisoners. The photographs depict the life of the new trainees, including their living quarters and practice exercises.

System of arrangement:

1. Army Pass
2. Diary
3. Press Cuttings
4. Red Cross Certificate
5. Photographs
6. Certificate of Discharge

Access conditions: Open

Language of material: English

Conditions governing reproduction: No restrictions on copying or quotation other than statutory regulations and preservation concerns

Custodial history: In the possession of Gordon Ewers and then his son David Leigh-Ewers.

Immediate source of acquisition: Received as a gift from David Leigh-Ewers on 8 Jun 2012 and 8 Jan 2013.

Related Units of Description:

In MEC Archive

For other Palestine Police papers and photographs please see the Guide to collections relating to the Palestine Police

Finding aids: In Guide; Handlist

Archivist's note: Fonds, file and item level description created by Kate Rose, 1 Aug 2012 and revised by Debbie Usher 17 Feb 2023. Biographical history provided by David Leigh-Ewers and supplemented with from information written in the back of Gordon Ewers diary.

**SERIES AND ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE GORDON EWERS
COLLECTION**

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|---|------------------------------|---|---------|
| 1 | <u>Army Pass</u> | 10 Dec 1943 | 1 sheet |
| <p>Army pass permitting Gordon Ewers to travel to Alexandria</p> | | | |
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| 2 | <u>Diary</u> | 1 Jan 1944 –
31 Dec 1944,
5 May 1945 –
22 May 1945 | 1 vol. |
| <p>Diary written by Gordon Ewers while in Jerusalem at the Palestine Police Depot and Training school. The diary documents his first year of training in 703 Y Squad. Within the diary are accounts of day-to-day living, how free time is spent and the wait for correspondence from friends and family back home. Also documented are the training routines including P.T training, route marches, rifle training, law lessons, fake accident scenes and exams. Ewer also writes of his first posting to Haifa, how the new recruits had to escort Romanian refugees to camp and go out to perform road checks. The month of May is used for the year 1945 where Ewer documents German Surrender, V-day and the escape and capture of prisoner Jules Von Rottrick while on his watch.</p> | | | |
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| 3 | <u>Press Cuttings</u> | 1944 -1945 | 1 vol. |
| <p>Scrap book of newspaper press cuttings created by Ewers during his first year at the Palestine Police training school in 1944 and cuttings during his first year on duty 1945. Examples of the press cuttings included are the unsuccessful assassination attempt on of Sir Harold MacMichael, the assassination of Lord Moyne, raids of police stations, the start of 24hr police radio in cars and a cutting on Ewers own escaped prisoner Jules Von Rottrick. There are also cuttings on cases of plague and typhoid, the sabotage of Palestine railways and liberated refugees arriving in Haifa.</p> | | | |

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| 4 | <u>Red Cross Certificate</u> | 10 Mar 1944 | 1 sheet |
| | Certificate from the War Organisation of the British Red Cross Society and Order of St John of Jerusalem Middle East Commission, Cairo confirming that Gordon Ewers had attended a course of lectures in first aid. | | |
| 5 | <u>Photographs</u> | 1944 | 15 items |
| | Printed copies of photos from scanned images documenting training exercises, living quarters, men that served with Ewers, recruits free time and photographs of Gordon Ewers. | | |
| 5/1 | 'Paddy Corr' | | |
| 5/2 | 'Tom Everet' | | |
| 5/3 | Gordon Ewers originally labelled 'myself' | | |
| 5/4 | 'Boozing Party' men standing outside a building smoking | | |
| 5/5 | 'When are we going home?' men sitting at a table smoking and drinking. | | |
| 5/6 | Trainee in living quarters showing a man sleeping on a bed. | | |
| 5/7 | Group of 5 men sitting on a beach labelled 'G.E. Ewers Top left, others unknown. A note says, on the beach with some soldiers, Haifa 1944'. | | |
| 5/8 | Photograph showing living quarters labelled 'Jock Soutter's bed'. | | |
| 5/9 | Photograph of a man laying in a bed labelled 'Harry Baker'. | | |
| 5/10 | Photograph of two men standing by a camel labelled 'Hunter and Barlow'. | | |
| 5/11 | Photograph of a man standing by a camel labelled 'Jock Cromer'. | | |
| 5/12 | Photograph of a man standing by a camel labelled 'Jeff Hayes'. | | |
| 5/13 | Photograph of a dog with puppies labelled 'Feeding time'. | | |
| 5/14 | Photograph of 4 men apprehending one man labelled 'Practice exercise'. | | |
| 5/15 | Photograph of two Palestine Policeman labelled 'G.E. Ewers on right'. | | |

- 6 **Palestine Police Certificate of Discharge** 15 Oct 1945 1 booklet
Certificate of discharge from the British Section of the
Palestine Police for Gordon Ewers.