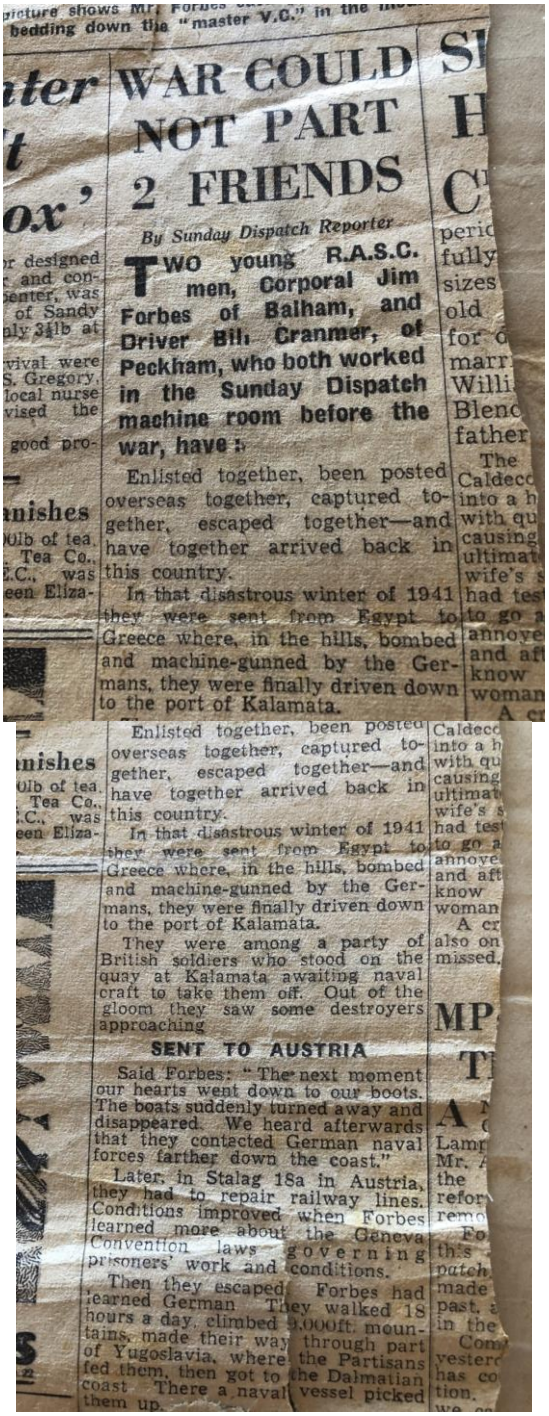
FOREWORD

Driver W C T "Bill" Cranmer, RASC

Pre-War

Bill enlisted on 16th May 1940, giving his trade as 'newspaper printer'. He was living in Peckham, South London, at the time - working in Fleet Street for the Sunday Dispatch along with his good friend Jim Forbes. He later worked on the Daily Express and Daily Mail and was a member of the NATSOPA printing trades union.

1940-1945 in a Nutshell



WAR COULD NOT PART 2 FRIENDS

By Sunday Dispatch Reporter

TWO young R.A.S.C. men, Corporal Jim Forbes of Balham, and Driver Bill Cranmer, of Peckham, who both worked in the Sunday Dispatch machine room before the war, have:

Enlisted together, been posted overseas together, captured together, escaped together—and have together arrived back in this country.

In that disastrous winter of 1941 they were sent from Egypt to Greece where, in the hills, bombed and machine-gunned by the Germans, they were finally driven down to the port of Kalamata.

They were among a party of British soldiers who stood on the quay at Kalamata awaiting naval craft to take them off. Out of the gloom they saw some destroyers approaching

SENT TO AUSTRIA

Said Forbes: "The next moment our hearts went down to our boots. The boats suddenly turned away and disappeared. We heard afterwards that they contacted German naval forces farther down the coast."

Later, in Stalag 18a in Austria, they had to repair railway lines. Conditions improved when Forbes learned more about the Geneva Convention laws governing prisoners' work and conditions.

Then they escaped. Forbes had learned German. They walked 18 hours a day, climbed 9,000ft. mountains, made their way through part of Yugoslavia, where the Partisans fed them, then got to the Dalmatian coast. There a naval vessel picked them up.

Sunday Dispatch, sometime in 1945