

National Service Remembered



Same but
Different

Supported by:



‘National Service remembered’ is a heritage project which uses photography and oral history narratives to bring to life a little remembered time in our history: the National Service years, which spanned from 1947 to 1963.

This project seeks to preserve and share the living history of the men who were conscripted.

Same but Different is a non-profit arts organisation that uses visual story-telling to bring unheard voices to new audiences.





What was National Service?

The National Service years spanned from 1947 until 1963, and in that time more than two million men were conscripted into the British Army, Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force.

National service was mandatory, and generally all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 30 were called up. However, it was possible to defer if working as an apprentice or studying, or even be exempted altogether if working in an essential service.

National Service conscripts were expected to serve 18 months, although this was extended up to 2 years during the Korean War (1950-53).

What was National Service?

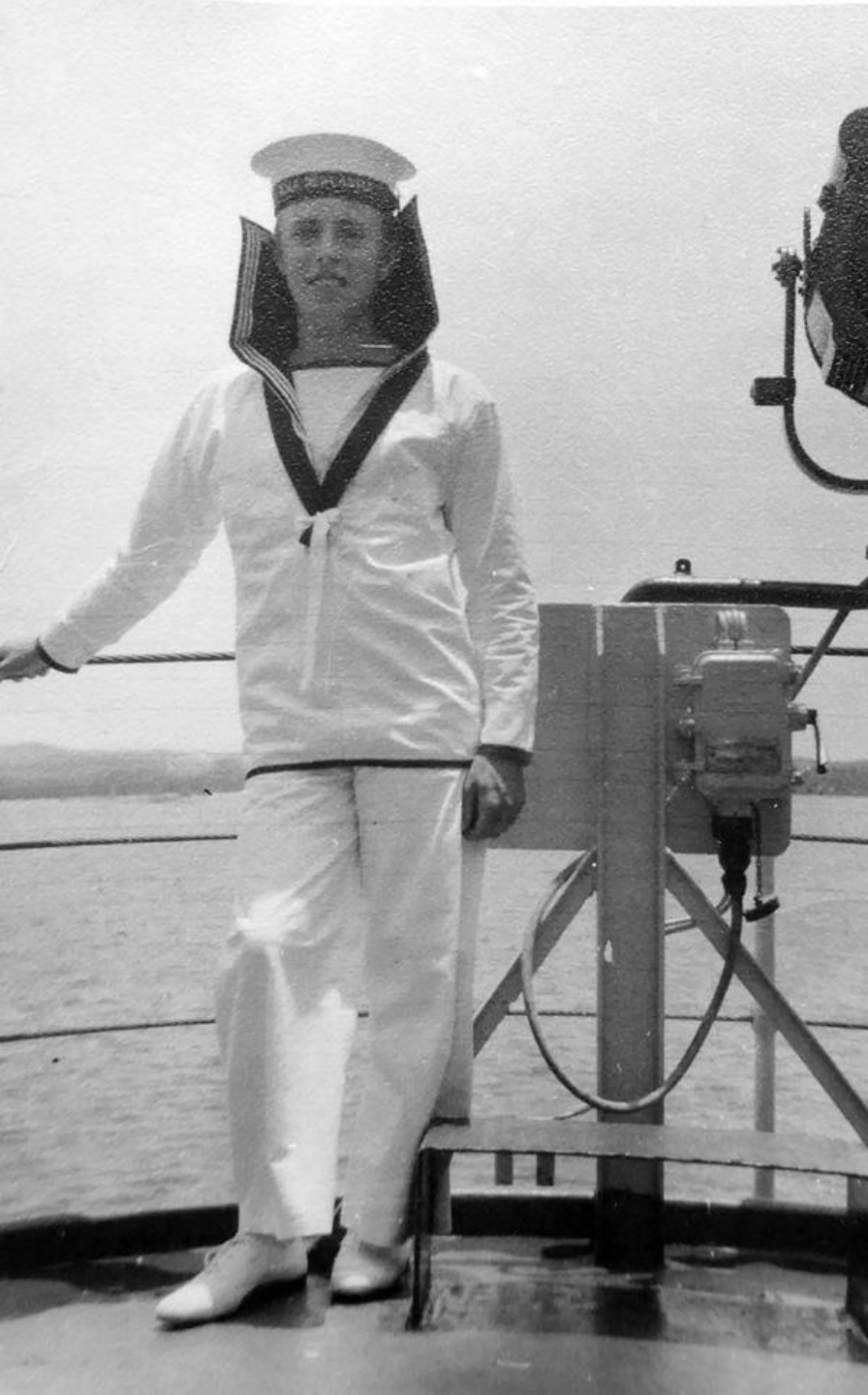
All National Service conscripts were asked to attend medical assessments, after which they were sent for six weeks of basic training in the British Army. Once the conscripts arrived at their training base, they were issued with their uniform and equipment, and training could begin.

After basic training, National Service conscripts served in a variety of roles across the Armed Forces. As well as serving at home, Servicemen were also posted to one of Britain's many garrisons around the world. An overseas posting often meant that the conscripts saw active service.



National Service Remembered Trailer





Discussion

1) Did National Service impact your life?

Perhaps you served, or one of your loved ones did? Although only men were conscripted, their service directly influenced the lives of their girlfriends, wives, sisters, mothers and friends.

2) Did taking part in National Service influence the course of your life, or the path of a loved one?

Ivan Russ

“I knew I had to do my service unless I was physically unfit. It was a pity because I’d completed my apprenticeship and being deprived a man's wage, but in retrospect it was the best thing because I was a country boy down in Devonshire and I was then thrown into the British mix of people my own age, and that was eye opening. When you hear about lads that grew up in Glasgow and the room was separated by a curtain stapled to the ceiling to separate one family from the other, it makes you think a bit.

I got the train up to London, then to Cardington in Bedfordshire, just for a few days to get my uniform and then I went up to Wilmslow in Cheshire for square-bashing.

It’s all shouting and swearing, trying to reduce you mentally, change your attitude. I think our generation knew we had to do things and the easiest way was to just accept it and get on with it, but we knew that trade training was going to be easier.

After square-bashing I was sent down Yatesbury to train as a radar operator (I knew nothing about radar) and sadly, that meant that I was stuck in the UK. I ended up in Portland, which was a very nice posting. The billets were nice, relatively new, plenty of bathroom facilities. The camaraderie was great, we used to leg pull and it was always fun, a much more relaxed atmosphere.”



John Harvey



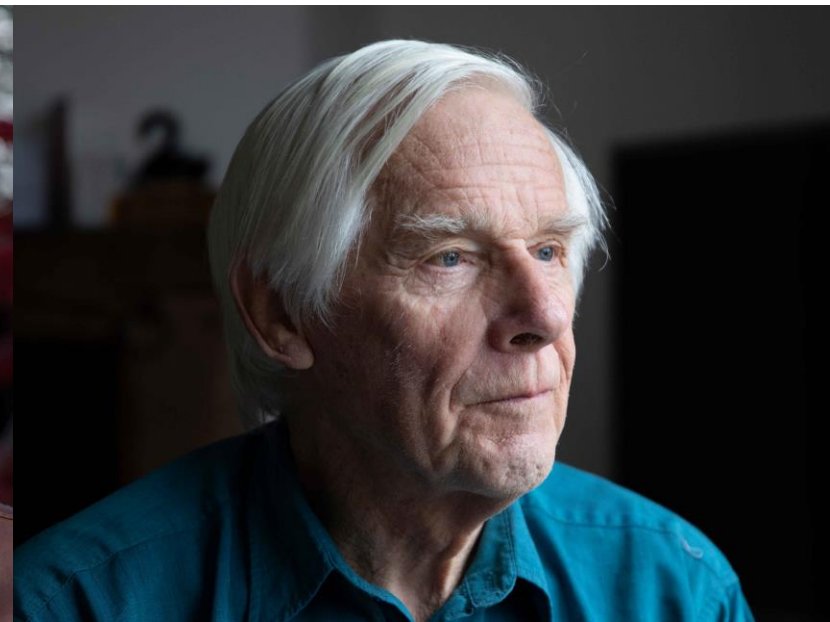
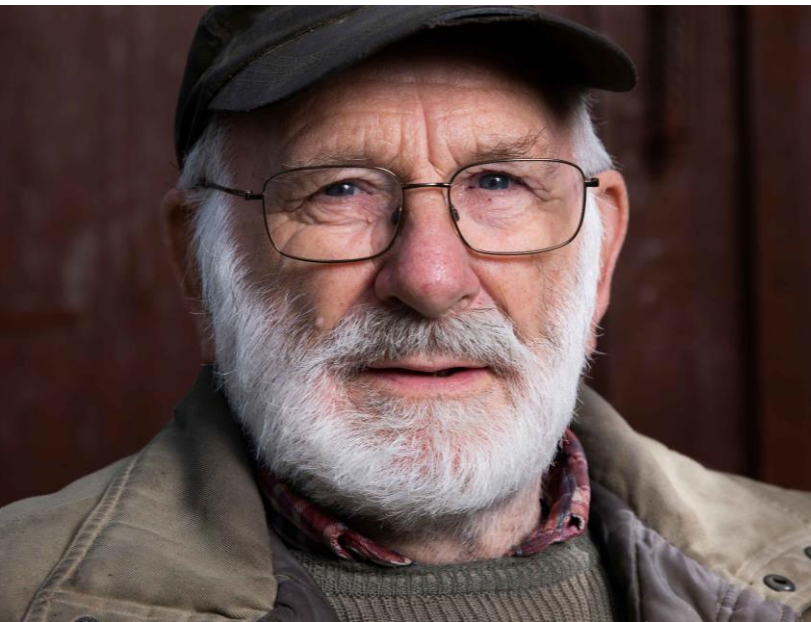
Geoff Clayton



Online Exhibition

The link below will take you to the online exhibition we have curated, featuring striking portrait photographs taken by visual storyteller Ceridwen Hughes, alongside personal photographs from the National Service veteran's own collections, video interviews and written narratives.

www.national-service.co.uk

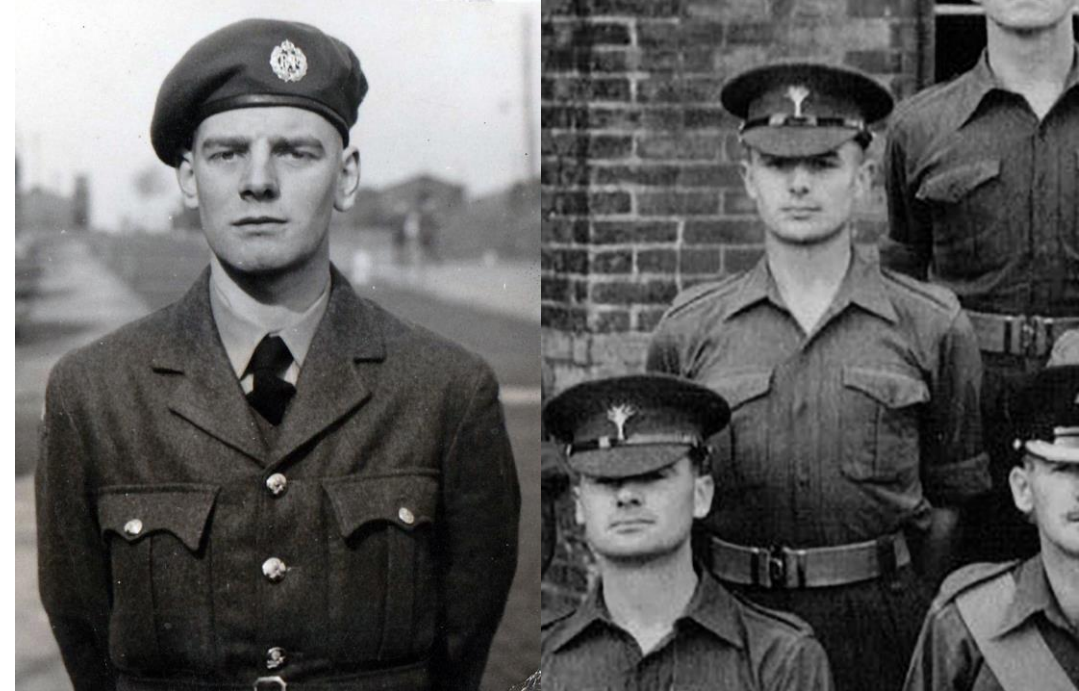


The sounds of National Service

This Is The Army, Mr. Jones
- Irving Berlin



If I Give My Heart to You -
Doris Day with the
Mellomen



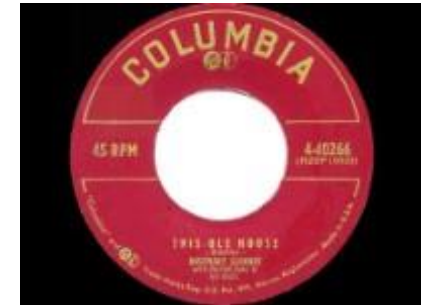
Oh Mein Papa
- Eddie Calvert



Oh! My Papa
- Version by Eddie Fisher



This Ole House
Billie Anthony &
Rosemary Clooney



**Manana (is soon
enough for me)**
- Peggy Lee



We'll Meet Again
- Vera Lynn



**Yours (Quierem
Muchas)**
- Vera Lynn



They Stand Ready

- National Archives UK



Thank you for journeying with
us through National Service
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