
Reserved Occupations

In 1938, in anticipation of war, a Schedule of Reserved Occupations was created. The aim was to exempt people with certain skills from being conscripted as soldiers. Reserved occupations included miners (Bevan Boys), dockers and railway men but those that most affected Gatehouse included:

Farming

In Britain's bid to be as self sufficient as possible with food supplies, increasing farm production was a priority. POW's and the Woman's Land Army also worked on farms, as did some school children during their holidays. Some conscientious Objectors could also be assigned farm work.

Bobby Carson, from Conchieton Farm near Twynholm, remained at home working on the family farm. He was one of the youngest members of the Twynholm Home Guard.

Forestry



Merchant Seamen

The movement of goods into Britain was crucial.

Captain **Hugh McMichael** was born and brought up in Gatehouse, being the son of the local butcher.

During World War I he served with the Mercantile Marine Service and continued in the Merchant Navy after the war, working his way up through the ranks.

In 1939 his ship, the 'British Influence', was one of the first to be sunk by a German U-boat. He and his crew had a very lucky escape when the U-boat commander allowed an allied rescue ship to collect the crew before he sunk the ship.



It was essential to keep the coal mines and other industries supplied with timber.

When **Jim Grieve** left school at 14 he became a firewood merchant working in Killiegowan Wood. He joined the T.A. and later enlisted with the 7th Battalion K.O.S.B. He was sent home from the army on occasions to help with timber operations around Gatehouse.

ENEMY CHEERS ENEMY

GERMAN U-BOAT FETCHES RESCUE SHIP

FALMOUTH CAPTAIN OF SUNK VESSEL

Another strange story of the sea was unfolded when Capt. Hugh McMichael, Falmouth captain of the "British Influence" and his crew were landed on Friday by lifeboat which had transferred them from the Norwegian vessel Ida Hakke.

The "British Influence" was sunk by a German U-boat on Thursday, but not before the commander of the latter had shown the utmost chivalry by seeing the crew safely aboard a Norwegian boat.

His action brought cheers from the British seamen, and the crew of the U-boat responded with cheers for their opponents.



Construction

Arthur Hunter owned a joinery business in Gatehouse. When war broke out he applied to join the Royal Navy but was rejected due to partial deafness. He was drafted into Essential Services where his joinery skills could be useful. He had to close down his business in Gatehouse for the duration of the war. In 1940 he was posted to work in the Liverpool Docks, refitting ships to be used as troop carriers. Later in the war he was involved in building aerodromes around Scotland: Heathhall, Dumfries; Balado near Kinross; and on Benbecula and Orkney.



Dr Alastair Christie



Rev. Andrew Easton



Dr James Russell

Doctors and Nurses

The local doctor in Gatehouse was **Alexander Craig**, who lived at Roseville in Ann Street.

The Forces also needed medical staff and Dr Alastair Christie, GP in Gatehouse 1951 to 1965, had served as a Surgeon Lieutenant in the Royal Navy during the war.

Ministers

Ministers and priests came into the category of exceptions, but like doctors some were also needed in the Forces. In 1939 Rev. Andrew Easton, Minister of Girthon, joined up as a Chaplain to the Forces, and in particular to the 7th K.O.S.B., which many local lads had joined.

Teachers

School teachers were expected to go with their pupils if they were evacuated from the city. Hence teachers from Hillhead High School in Glasgow came to Cally House School.

Dr James Russell was one of them, teaching English. After the war he taught briefly at Castle Douglas High School before becoming headmaster of Gatehouse School from 1951 to 1963.

A few teachers from Glasgow were drafted into Gatehouse School to help cover the class sizes swelled by evacuees.
