

## WORMHOUDT: ESCAPE FROM HELL.

Jimmy and Alfie had been friends since middle school, growing up together in the small quiet town of Dodwell. There was nothing much to do or see in the sleepy town, but as Jimmy frequently remarked,

“A damn sight more ‘appened there, than as over ‘ere an’ no mistake”

Alfie had to agree. Longing for adventure, they had both joined up soon after war was declared. They were thrilled that they had been posted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Warwick’s Regiment together. However, for months they had been here at The Comines Canal, near the French border with Belgium, and so far, Jerry had been as quiet as a church mouse. Both of them were slowly going out of their minds with boredom. Alfie finished the rolled cigarette that he was enjoying, and turned in his shell scrape pulling the rough blanket over him.

“Go to sleep,” he advised. “It’ll most probably be yet another day trudging up and down that bloody canal tomorrow. No use whinging about it either, so just get some kip, eh?”

Jimmy grunted in agreement and snuggled down into his shell scrape that he had dug out earlier that week. Considering how uncomfortable it was, they both slept soundly.

They woke just before dawn, into a living hell of screeching, shouting and deafening explosions. Jimmy leapt out from the trench as the first wave of the wounded invaded his ears. The air was filled with the piercing wails of their birthing cry as they dropped their deadly bombs onto the makeshift shelters and trucks. The penetrating screams of the poor souls that were in them at the time echoed by anyone in the vicinity. The air was filled with acrid smoke and the stench of burning flesh. The screams of men writhing in agony vying against the death knell of the Stuka’s supernatural high pitched screech. Alfie thrust Jimmy’s Bren gun at him. Shoving him hard he yelled in his ear over the background roar.

“Shoot the fuckers! Bring them down!”

Jimmy stared, still half asleep, not quite comprehending.

“With a Bren gun? What?”

But Alfie was kneeling up against his shell scrape, aiming his Lee Enfield at the rear gunner who was firing from the Stuka. He in turn was shooting at the men running like ants from a disturbed nest. Jimmy shook himself awake and pointed his Bren, doing his best to bring them down. He concentrated on aiming