

Tribute – Kenneth Denyer Westwood

Born 3rd October 1924

Died 24th May 2020 of ‘old age’ at Elmhurst Care Home where he had lived since December 2017.

On the 10th June 1944 Gunner 14577089 Kenneth Westwood of the Royal Artillery boarded a Liberty boat at the Royal Dock and sailed down the River Thames with his Regiment (49th West Riding Division – the Polar Bears) to take part in Operation Overlord, the Normandy Invasion. They landed on Gold Beach the following day. His Army service took him to France, Belgium, Holland and Germany and, after the war in Europe ended he was posted to India as part of the Royal Army Service Corps before being demobbed in 1947.

His early years were spent growing up in Sawbridgeworth where he attended the Fawbert and Barnard School, was a choirboy at Great St. Marys Church and rang the church bells. On leaving school he was employed as a Maltster at the Maltings in Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, which is where he was working in April 1943 when he was called up for war service.

After he left the Army, Ken spent the whole of his working life and retirement in Bishop’s Stortford. He and his wife Olive nee Bayford, who passed away in 2017, were married at All Saints Church in 1945 and made their home in the town for the remainder of their lives. Ken found employment with Ernest Lake Ltd, a light engineering Company in 1947 and remained there until his retirement in 1989. He had no ambition to work elsewhere and turned down the opportunity of promotion in order to stay in a job that he enjoyed. Ken and Olive were both active members of St. Michaels Church and over a period of many years from the late 1960’s Ken was a member of the Church bell ringers. He held the positions of Tower Captain and Secretary, and District Secretary for many years and continued to take part long into old age, until he was physically unable to do so.

Ken and Olive had two sons, Colin (1949) and Andrew (1955). The wider family includes five Granddaughters and twelve Great Grandchildren.

The funeral took place on Wednesday 10th June. On its way to the Crematorium at Parndon Wood, the hearse containing Ken’s coffin paused outside St. Michaels Church whilst the half muffled tenor bell tolled in his memory. To reflect his Wartime service the coffin was draped by the Union Jack and his medals were displayed.

Ken’s ashes will be interred in the Bayford family grave in the Town cemetery on the 18th August. He will be reunited with Olive on what would have been their 75th wedding anniversary.

Donations can be made via www.drobinson.co.uk in favour of the St Michaels Church Society of Bell ringers for the Bell restoration fund.