

A Leeds man's remarkable story...



Born at the wrong time

The biography of Cyril James

by Dave Foxtan

War was chaos, mayhem. Yet ordinary people achieved extraordinary things.

“One of the most informative memoirs of working class life that I have read...This book is invaluable for the rich detail of army life as well as the graphic accounts of battle.”

Cyril's story is an important contribution to understanding the people's war. Dave Foxtan tells it wonderfully well, and everyone with an interest in Britain in the Second World War has cause to be grateful to them both.”

Professor Gary Sheffield, Chair of War Studies, University of Birmingham.



Cyril James was a young apprentice from the terraced streets of Leeds who would have qualified as a Burton's master tailor in September 1939. But war came, as his Jewish workmates had warned. Called up into a Scots regiment, he was barely trained before being pitched into the chaos of France in 1940. But family, work and trade union had taught him to think for himself, and do things right. He survived, became a sergeant and instructor, and turned ordinary men into soldiers who could take on the Nazis.

Then, in 1944, he leads his platoon into some of the worst fighting of the war, across Holland and into Germany. Cyril needs all his cunning and skill to keep his men safe and get the job done. In the face of bitter resistance from the enemy and arrogant incompetence from some of their own officers, they press on to final victory.

Dave Foxtan weaves Cyril's sharp memories into a compelling narrative, seasoned with acute observation, frank opinion and a dry Yorkshire humour.

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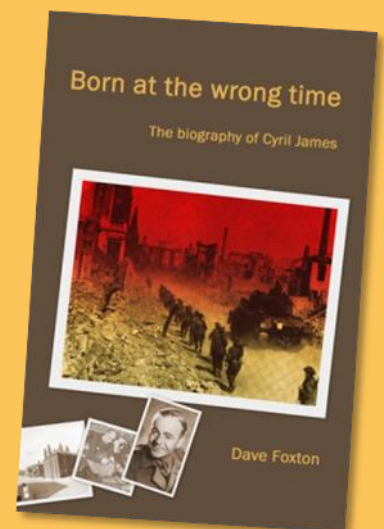
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