

● 'I'm no hero' says WWII veteran Cyril, 94

● Book reveals Armley man's frontline story

# Insights on the people's war from a tailor's tale

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HE RISKED his life many times over for his country, but he still doesn't think he is a hero.

Now a new book about Armley war veteran Cyril James recounts the extraordinary story of an ordinary working man from Leeds – and how he refused to let the ravages of war change his deeply held beliefs and strong work ethic.

Cyril spent much of his working life as a tailor, but he never thought his own life story would sew up such a rich literary tapestry.

The book, *Born At The Wrong Time*, is a 12-year labour of love for debutante novelist Dave Foxton, who is friends with Cyril's son. He said his overall aim was to capture a sense of the lives of ordinary people caught up in the war effort, and an attempt to balance their stories with the mountains of military literature dedicated to generals and officers.

The biography is a no-holds barred, unromanticised account of war, dealing realistically with the chaos young men like Cyril found themselves pitched into – and how they lived to tell the tale.

Speaking of finding himself the subject of a biography, Cyril said: "When I saw the book I thought 'that can't be me'.

"It's very good, and every part of it is true. I was reliving eve-

rything as I was talking to Dave and I was sick of it in the end! "I don't think I have achieved that much. I am quite contented."

Cyril was born in 1918, at the end of the First World War. Growing up on the streets of Burmantofts, he went on to become a young apprentice tailor with Burton's, where his Jewish workmates had warned him that war was coming.

He was just weeks from qualifying as a Master Tailor in 1939

## YEP SAYS

+ CYRIL'S MEMOIRS SERVE TO UNDERLINE THE DEBT OF GRATITUDE WE OWE TO HIM AND THOSE HE FOUGHT ALONGSIDE.

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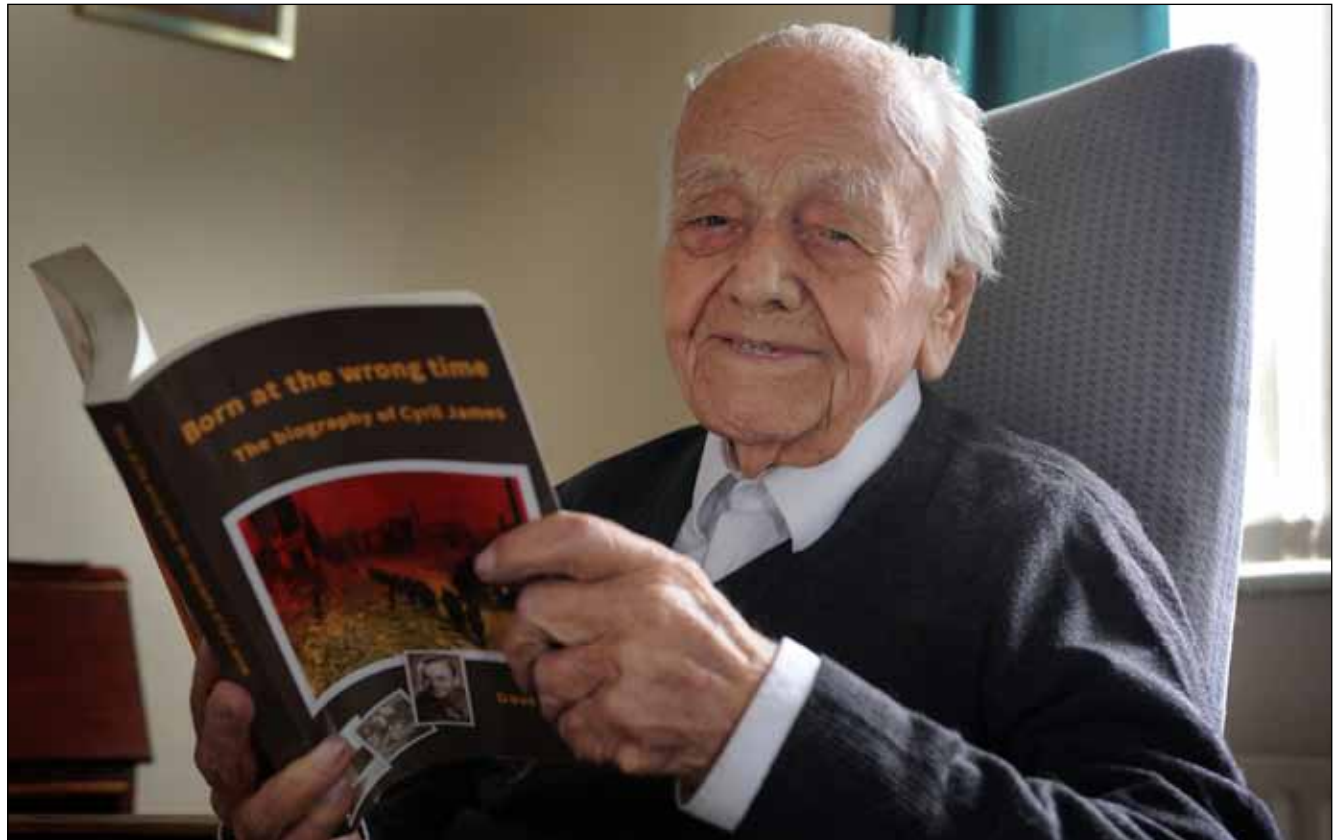
when he was called up to military duty.

He went on to become a sergeant who led his men through some of the worst fighting on the front line.

Called up to a Scots regiment with only basic training, Cyril survived a shambolic expedition to France after Dunkirk. His division then spent years in training.

As sergeant and instructor, he turned ordinary men into soldiers who could take on the Nazis.

They proved themselves as Cyril led his platoon across Holland and into Germany, through



## PROUD PAST:

War veteran Cyril James, of Armley, who has a biography written by Dave Foxton, right. Left, Cyril in his army days.  
+PICTURE: TONY JOHNSON



some of the worst fighting of the war.

Mr Foxton said Cyril's story was one he felt he "needed to capture".

"Heroism is a term we don't all use," he said. "Cyril just wanted to be good at his job, not to be a hero.

"He admits he didn't want to be there, he hated the army. But he knew he had to be there to do a job, and he was good at it. It was also about looking after himself and his men while reaching his objective.

"He is fabulous, a strong personality."

*Born at the Wrong Time - The Biography of Cyril James* is available now from Amazon.

## WWII FACTFILE

BRITAIN AND France declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, after Hitler's forces had invaded Poland two days earlier.

June 6, 1944 was D-Day, when the first of nearly three million Allied soldiers arrived in Normandy, France.

There were 403,000 British military casualties during WWII, and 92,700 civilian.

## School's young filmmakers invited to awards night

PUPILS FROM Leeds's Carr Manor Community School have been invited to attend the prestigious Leeds Young Filmmakers Golden Owl Awards later this month after impressing with their own movie efforts.

The group of six year 9 pupils and three year 11 pupils won praise for their films, *The Sweet Sound of Silence* in the Schools and Community Groups (age 11-14) category and *Roll Tape* in the Schools and Colleges (age 14-19) category.

## Police hunt for third suspect in £150,000 school run robbery called off after arrest

POLICE HAVE arrested a third man in connection with the robbery of a mum on the school run.

Thieves stole almost £150,000 worth of jewellery from Jane Williams as she waited for her children at the gates of Moorlands School, on Foxhill Drive in Weetwood, Leeds, on October 7 2011.

They then stole a car being driven by off-duty police Thomas Powell, but crashed moments later.

Anthony Clarke, of Hemingway Garth, Hunslet, Leeds, was jailed for eight years in January last year after admitting robbery and blackmail.

Daniel Inamder, 30, of Albion Street, was found not guilty of two charges of robbery after a trial at Leeds Crown Court last month.

Now police have arrested a third man, believed to be 33-year-old Dean Carden.

A West Yorkshire Police spokesman said: "The man was

arrested from a central location in Leeds on Wednesday afternoon at around 5pm."

Detectives were continuing to question him yesterday.

The arrest comes two months after police said they were trying to trace Dean Carden in connection with the robbery.

The spokesman said: "Police can confirm they are no longer looking for Dean Carden, or Dean Gilmour as he is also known."



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