

Excerpt

(Optional music – Glenn Miller playing “Moonlight Serenade” - (Parish-Miller). The music fades. Enter JIM carrying a tankard of beer.)

JIM: Tip of the spear? The barman told you I was in the war. And I was the very tip of the blade of the spear. And you want to know all about it? What else did he tell you? Bloody barmen and their big mouths.

Thanks for the beer. Good drop. Nearly as good as the stuff before the war.

What was it like... being the tip? What did I think as I hit the ground? Not so much at Normandy, as on Normandy. They all want to know... what made me so special. The first to land on enemy territory.

Simple. I wasn't special. Absolutely, definitely not.

I wasn't an officer. Screaming “charge” or “follow me” and leading from the front. There were some very hard men, no more than thirty seconds behind me. But they weren't following me. They were just... sort of... going in the same direction!

So when you ask: “what was it like?” I have to tell you I was bloody petrified.

What was I thinking? Not “Hurrah, there's a hundred thousand men landing here today.” A million by the end of the week. Didn't know anything about them 'till later. Reading the papers. No. When I crashed down in those brambles... as far as I can remember... I was thinking: “this ain't supposed to happen”.

(Long pause to gather thoughts. He takes a gulp of his drink.)

Become a glider pilot they said. It'll be glamorous they said. You get to put wings on your uniform. Above all the medals you might get. The girls will love you. Just like real pilots who fly Spitfires or Mossies or Lancs.