

A Memory of Paignton in Wartime

"I shall never forget June 6th, 1944"

The following are memories of Paignton lady, Rose A Jeffery.

I live on the main Totnes Road, just off Winner Street, and have a wonderful view of the Bay. I was also Living there in 1944. At the time my son was only 7 months old, and my husband was away in the army. My parents-in-law also lived in the same house.

I remember that the town was full of troops, but at the time I thought that everything seemed quiet but restless. At about 1 a.m. in the morning of the 6th , I heard a lot of traffic going down the road towards the seafront. I got up and looked out of the window – between the blackout curtains – and saw a convoy of tanks and army lorries. Oh! I thought, something must be going on.

At about 3 a.m. I woke up and looked out again. All was quiet this time. I looked out across the bay and saw a flotilla of boats. Thousands of them and I thought that you could probably walked from one to the other. It was a sight I shall always remember.

I could not sleep, so at about 4 a.m. I got up again to have another look. But the boats were all gone.

My father - in - law was working nights at the Royal Naval College , Dartmouth, so when he came through the door that morning, I told him what I had seen and asked what had been going on. He said: "Let us pray for our boys, the big push is on."



Clandestine photograph of warships at Dartmouth. Wartime photographs like this one are rare –
Credit: Torquay Museum