

War's Nomads is an evocative account of one man's experience of life in a mobile radar unit after the battle of El Alamein as Rommel's AfrikaKorps was relentlessly pursued across the desert through Egypt, Libya and Tunisia by the Eighth Army. It is the only known detailed account in existence of the small radar units who played a key part in the Western Desert Campaign. A budding professional writer and grammar school master, Fred Grice had a keen eye for detail and ear for language, which he assiduously employed after he was called up in 1941, keeping two journals of his experiences. The first, 'On Draft' deals with waiting to embark after initial training, with the journey to the battle zone, and the privations of a low-ranking AC. Daily life on board ship is vividly brought to life with details of routine, the cramped conditions, the banter and pastimes used to pass the time by the troops, and the by contrast luxurious existence of the officers. The second, 'Erk in the Desert' gives a detailed account of the activities of Unit 606, a radar crew that follows just behind the battlefield. 606 provides radio-detection for the advanced landing grounds being used by RAF fighter-bomber squadrons, because these landing strips, in turn, are the target of the German Luftwaffe and the Italian Air Force attacks. 606 was a tiny unit, never more than 10 men, often operating for protracted periods in complete isolation. Fred's account vividly and lyrically evokes the landscape and the often tense and dangerous environment they operated in, pitching the reader into the experience of travelling with the unit in a 3-ton lorry, finding ingenious solutions to lack of rations and living space, even commandeering an abandoned boat to relax in the sea, whilst constantly needing to be alert to dodge air attacks. An authoritative introduction explains the background to the military events of the Western Desert campaign, and the purpose of 606's mission, which Fred for security reasons cannot talk about: to get to a selection of the 200 or so landing grounds in the desert with all speed; and then to defend them against air attack by using a light warning set (radar) developed to go operational within an hour. War's Nomads sheds light on a key but little known aspect of the Eighth Army's Western Desert Campaign, the first in British military history in which the RAF and the army collaborated so closely. But much more than that it is a human story by a gifted writer that recreates a lost time and landscapes.

REVIEWS ...if you are interested in what it was like to be an enlisted man in the western desert during that time, this book should definitely be in your must read list.

Armor Modeling and Preservation Society Wars Nomads is an evocative: account of one mans experience of life in a mobile radar unit after the battle of El Alamein as Rommels AfrikaKorps was relentlessly pursued across the desert through Egypt, Libya and Tunisia by the Eighth Army. It is the only known detailed account in existence of the small radar units who played a key part in the Western Desert Campaign. A budding professional writer and grammar school master, Fred Grice had a keen eye for detail and ear for language, which he assiduously employed after he was called up in 1941, keeping two journals of his experiences...a good story and adds a different dimension to a well-known aspect of World War II. Highly recommended

Military Modelcraft Like other books this is one of the footnotes we get now the big stuff is done. But the value offered here is profound. This is real war. The eloquence and beauty of the prose is disarming but the effect is like a late evening cup of tea. Other beverages are available. This one won't take you long to read but you will find something different from the usual desert sagas. The shipboard stuff just made me angry but tales out of the blue made me proud. Thankfully someone realised before it was too late what Frederick Grice should have been employed to do and he became an educator in the RAF. Lovely stuff

War in History The book's great strength is the superb writing of Frederick Grice, a grammar school master and aspiring author from the north of England. ... this is a charming book and well worth publishing.- Society for Libyan Studies

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