

Albert Edgar Bower (1894 – 1970)

Albert Bower was born in Keighley, into a military family.

Moving to Farnhill in 1911, to a house near the canal, he and his family were involved in rescuing a number of children who had fallen into the water.

Serving with the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment he married, whilst on leave, in 1915. Involved in the Battle of the Somme, Albert was wounded and hospitalised on more than one occasion.



Photograph from Farnhill & Kildwick History Group archive

After the war he and his wife lived in Farnhill and had seven children. Later they moved to Silsden and Albert was employed as a stonemason and bricklayer. He and his wife celebrated their Golden Wedding and Albert died four years later when he was 75 years of age.

Pre-war life

Albert Bower appears to have been born into a military family. His mother Louisa, known as Lucy, was born in India and it seems likely that both her father, Michael Crane, and her grandfather were in the army, and stationed there. The 1851 census records a Michael Crane, the son of a serving soldier, as resident in The Royal Military Asylum for Children of Soldiers Serving in the Regular Army.

Note: This was not an asylum in the modern sense of the word. It was a school, originally established in Chelsea, in 1801, for children and orphans of serving or dead soldiers.

Albert was born in Keighley, his father's home town, on 12th September 1894. He was the fifth of six children.

It seems the family went through some difficult times, as the 1901 census showed the family living in a caravan in the grounds of St. Andrew's Rectory, Keighley, with Albert's father recorded as being a licensed hawker.

Civil Parish	Ecclesiastical Parish	County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District	Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District	Sanct. District	Parliamentary Borough or Division	Town									
of <i>Keighley</i>	of <i>Keighley & Andrews</i>	of <i>Keighley</i>	of <i>Keighley</i> <i>York</i>	of	of <i>Keighley</i>	of									
5	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	Inhabited	ROOKS		Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Condition as to Marriage	Age last Birthday	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN				
		Uninhabited	Partial Rook												
		On the Year	On the Year				Males	Females							
<i>Caravan</i>				<i>Albert Bower</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>Licensed Hawker</i>	<i>do</i>		<i>do do</i>				
<i>(Rectory grounds)</i>				<i>Lucy do</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>34</i>				<i>Sindia do</i>				
				<i>Amos do</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Model Machine Maker</i>	<i>Worker</i>		<i>York do</i>				
				<i>Annie do</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>Apprentice</i>			<i>do do</i>				
				<i>Ethel do</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>12</i>				<i>do do</i>				
				<i>Fanny do</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>10</i>				<i>do do</i>				
				<i>Albert do</i>	<i>Son</i>		<i>6</i>				<i>do do</i>				
				<i>Elsie do</i>	<i>Daughter</i>						<i>do do</i>				

Extract from the 1901 census return for Sladen Street, Keighley – the Bower family living in a caravan

Used under licence from the National Archive

Some time prior to 1911 the Bower family must have moved to Farnhill, as the 1911 census recorded them living at 1 Main Street. This house, close to Redman Bridge, led to members of the family being involved in the rescues of a number of children who had fallen into the canal. Here is a report of one such rescue in which Albert was involved, from the Keighley News (7/9/1912).

NARROW ESCAPE FROM DROWNING

About half-past 6 on Tuesday evening last a five-year-old boy named Frank Atkinson, son of James Atkinson, a railway employee, of Main Street, Farnhill, had a narrow escape from drowning. Atkinson and another little boy were playing near the wooden bridge over the canal when the former slipped and fell into deep water. The other boy ran screaming to his home near, and attracted the attention of his brother, a youth named Albert Bower, aged seventeen, who rushed to the spot, pluckily plunged into the canal and lifted Atkinson out. The child when rescued was in a very exhausted condition, and was suffering from a nasty cut on the face, and bruises on the arms and body.

With kind permission of Keighley News

Another, from 13th June 1914, details the full extent of the Bower family's rescue efforts.

FARNHILL.

PLUCKY RESCUE.

About 1 o'clock on Saturday afternoon last a girl named Dorothy Simpson, aged 6, was playing on the canal bridge at Farnhill, when she fell into the water, and was sinking for the second time when she was pluckily rescued by Mr. Albert Bower, who resides in the vicinity. The water was 6ft. deep, and the child was under the bridge when Bower effected the rescue. This was the second time he had saved a life; and the Bower family have been instrumental in saving four or five lives altogether.

With kind permission of Keighley News

WW1 service

Albert Bower's WW1 service records have not survived (70% of the records were destroyed during WW2, in the London blitz of 1940) but other sources suggest that he volunteered to serve early in the war and was a member of 1/6th battalion the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment.

The battalion embarked for France on 14th April 1915, and Albert Bower's name is among the list of men who were members of the battalion recorded in the book "Craven's Part in the Great War", published after the war.

FIRST 6th DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S WEST RIDING REGIMENT.			
NOMINAL ROLL of Warrant Officers, N.C.O.'s and Men who embarked with the 1/6th Battalion Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment at Folkestone on 14th April, 1915.			
Pte. C. Ackroyd.	Pte. J. Bailey.	Pte. P. Barton.	Pte. S. Bishop.
Pte. W. Addyman.	Pte. G. C. Bailey.	Sgt. F. Barwick.	Pte. W. G. Blackwell.
Pte. E. V. Ainsworth.	Pte. F. Baldwin.	Pte. R. Bass.	Pte. P. N. Blenkarn.
Pte. J. Ainsworth.	Pte. P. Baldwin.	Cpl. J. Bateson.	Pte. W. H. Bolton.
Pte. O. Ainsworth.	Pte. H. Balmforth.	Pte. W. Bateson.	Pte. T. Bonnick.
Pte. E. Alderson.	Pte. J. Balmforth.	Pte. M. Baxter.	Cpl. A. M. Booth.
Pte. H. Aldous.	Pte. J. H. Bamford.	Pte. S. Beard.	Pte. J. Booth.
Pte. W. Alison.	Pte. A. Bamford.	Pte. F. Beckett.	Pte. S. Booth.
Pte. S. E. Allen.	Pte. J. Bamforth.	Pte. J. Beckwith.	Pte. C. P. Boothman.
Pte. J. Allison.	Pte. F. Bancroft.	Pte. J. E. Beecroft.	Pte. P. Boothman.
Sgt. G. Allsopp.	Pte. J. G. Bancroft.	Pte. A. C. Bell.	Pte. R. Borrissow.
Pte. T. Allsopp.	Pte. S. Bancroft.	L./Cpl. E. Bell.	Pte. C. Bottomley.
Pte. W. Allsopp.	Pte. A. Banks.	Pte. F. Bell.	Pte. W. Bottomley.
Act./Cpl. T. Ambler.	Pte. J. Banks.	Pte. G. H. Bell.	Pte. C. Bolton.
Pte. A. Anderson.	Pte. C. J. Barker.	Sgt. J. W. Bell.	Pte. A. Bower.
Pte. R. Andrews.	Pte. E. Barker.	Pte. J. W. Bell.	Pte. S. Bower.
Pte. J. Appleby.	Pte. H. Barker.	Pte. S. H. Bell.	Pte. A. Bowker.
Act./Sgt. H. Armitage.	Pte. J. W. Barnes.	Pte. A. Benson.	Pte. W. Bowker.
Pte. J. Armitage.	Sgt. W. Barnes.	Pte. E. Benson.	Pte. F. Bracewell.
Pte. W. R. Armstrong.	Pte. H. Barraclough.	Pte. J. Bentley.	Pte. J. R. W. Bracewell.
Pte. E. Askew.	Pte. A. Barrett.	Pte. W. H. Best.	Pte. H. Bradbury.
Pte. F. Askey.	Pte. F. Barrett.	Pte. R. Bibby.	Pte. J. E. Bradbury.
Pte. J. Asquith.	L./Cpl. G. H. Barrett.	Pte. E. Billows.	Pte. J. T. Bradley.
Dr. A. Atkinson.	Pte. J. Barrett.	Cpl. C. T. Binns.	Pte. W. G. Bradley.
Pte. M. W. Atkinson.	Pte. A. Barron.	Pte. A. Binns.	Pte. J. E. Bradley.
Pte. H. Atkinson.	Pte. W. P. Barry.	Pte. E. Binns.	Pte. A. Bradwell.
Pte. B. Ayres.	Pte. R. Barson.	Pte. U. Binns.	Pte. F. Brady.
Pte. A. Bailey.		Pte. W. Binns.	Pte. W. H. Brassington.
			Pte. N. R. Brown.
			Sgt. J. Brennand.
			Pte. H. Brentley.
			Pte. E. Briggs.
			Pte. J. Briggs.
			Pte. W. G. Briggs.
			Sgt. T. P. Brighthouse.
			Pte. W. Broadfoot.
			Pte. A. Brook.
			Pte. T. Brook.
			Pte. C. Brooks.
			Pte. G. Brooks.
			Pte. H. Brooks.
			Pte. J. Brooks.
			Pte. R. B. Broster.
			Pte. W. Broster.
			Dr. A. Brown.
			Pte. A. Brown.
			Coy. Sgt.-Major
			A. H. Brown.
			Pte. E. H. Brown.
			Pte. C. Brown.
			Pte. E. Brown.
			Pte. F. Brown.
			Pte. H. Brown.
			Pte. J. Brown.
			Pte. J. J. Brown.
			Pte. J. W. Brown.

A page from "Craven's Part in the Great War" listing men of 1/6th battalion Duke of Wellington's Regiment

A WW1 medal card for Pte. Albert Bower (service no. 2509, later 265589) confirms that he entered service in France in April 1915.

33

Name.	Corps.	Rank	Regtl. No.
BOWER Albert	WRid R 1/6	Pte	2509 265589

Medal.	Roll	Page.	Remarks
VICTORY	0/2/01 222	3078	Dis emb. 2/4/19 (265589)
BRITISH	do	20	
15 STAR	0/2/3 B	45	
Theatre of War first served in	1) France		
Date of entry therein	14-4-15		

K 1380.

Albert Bower's WW1 Medal Card – showing when he arrived in France and his entitlement to a 1915 Star

Before his departure from France however, in November 1914, Elizabeth Frobisher gave birth to the first of her and Albert's children, a daughter called Annie.

On 13th November 1915 an evening's entertainment was put on in Kildwick and Farnhill Institute "to provide winter comforts for the lads serving with the Colours". Albert's name was included in the list of the "lads to be remembered".

It is likely that Albert was at home around this time, as on the 17th he was a guest at Kildwick school.

" 17. Nurse Stoddart (W.R.C.C) visited the school & inspected a number of children.
Private A Bower (Duke of Wellington's W.R. Regt) who has returned from Ypres visited the school to day.

Kildwick school log book entry – 17th November 1915
Reproduced by kind permission of Kildwick school

Note: The second battle of Ypres was fought between 22nd April and 25th May 1915. It included the first mass use of poison gas on the Western Front by German forces.

A couple of days later, on 20th November 1915, Albert Bower married Elizabeth Ann Frobisher at St. Andrew's Church, Keighley. She was the only surviving child (out of eight live births) of the deceased Albert and Fanny Rose Frobisher. On the marriage certificate Albert gave his occupation as Soldier.

In January 1916 Albert sustained what was referred to on his hospital admission form as a "Debility slight" injury or wound which, nevertheless, kept him in hospital for over a month.

In July 1916, the Duke of Wellington's Regiment were involved in the Battle of the Somme. They were positioned near Thiepval in northern France. The Regimental War Diary of 1/6th battalion for 14th July 1916 recorded:

Our artillery very active from 2am to 3am. Enemy did not retaliate on the BLUFF. Some rain during the morning, but fine after 10am.

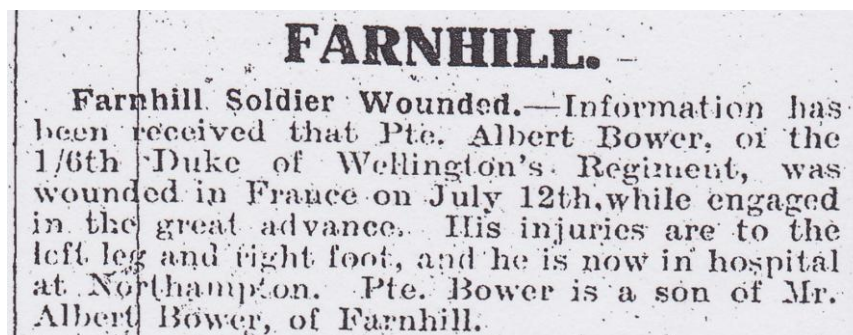
CASUALTIES:

No. 2223 Pte. THOMPSON J. B Coy wounded in calf **No. 2509 Pte BOWER A. B Coy wounded**

No. 4164 Pte. GARLICK J. A Coy wounded in head

No. 2112 Pte. HARTLEY R. A Coy wounded in head

This wounding required Albert to be brought back to England for hospital treatment, as was reported in the Craven Herald (28/7/1916).



Report of Albert Bower's hospitalisation
By kind permission of Craven Herald

Note: The newspaper report has the date of the wounding incorrect.

Albert was still in hospital in Northampton in January 1917, when the local newspapers reported the awarding of a Military Medal to his brother, Ambrose.

However, despite the apparent seriousness of this wound it appears that it did not mark the end of Albert's military career. A WW1 medal roll entry for Pte. Albert Bower (service no. 265589) indicates that at some point he was transferred to 2/4 battalion – which was stationed in France from January 1917.

265589 ✓ Pte	BOWER Albert	265589. Pte.	X
		1/6. W.Rid.R.	
		2/4. W.Rid.R.	

WW1 Medal Roll entry for Pte. Albert Bower – showing service in both 1/6 and 2/4 WRR
Used under licence from the National Archive

Although Albert returned to active service, his wounds clearly continued to be an issue and, by November 1917 he was back in hospital – as was reported in the West Yorkshire Pioneer (23/11/1917):

[Pte. Bower] one of the first lads to enlist from Farnhill is in hospital suffering from abscesses. He was wounded over a year ago, and recently returned to France.

Albert was finally discharged from the army on 2nd April 1919.

There is evidence that he applied for a war pension.

Form No. S.B. 36

Surname *BOWER* (in block letters) Christian Names *Albert* Regional No. *4/M B/ 9007*

Unit and Regiment or Corps *WRiding* Regt. No. *265589* Rank

Date of Discharge Year of Birth Marital Status { S. = Single, W. = Widower, M. = Married }

Address *50 Starkey Lane, Farnhill* Date of commencement of Pension

Disabilities:— State whether attributable to or aggravated by Service or non-attributable:—

1 3 1 3

2 4 2 4

Particulars of Awards for previous Service (if any)

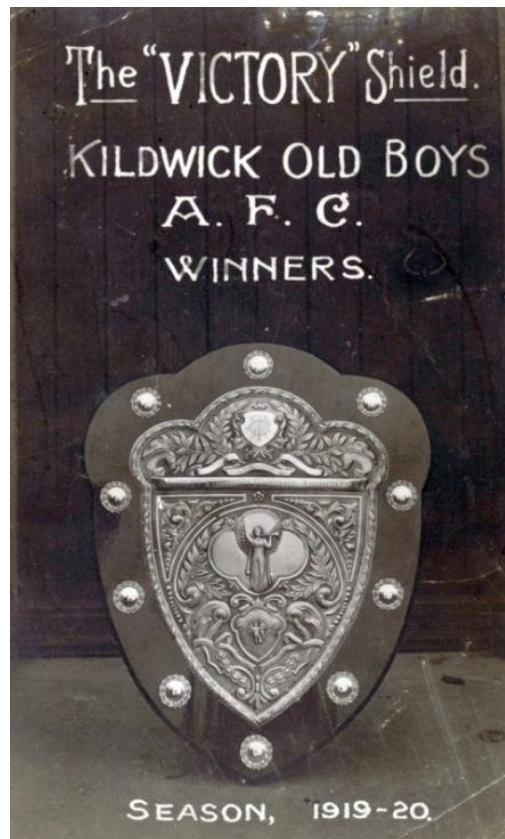
Extract from Albert Bower's WW1 pension ledger (SB 36)
Used under licence from the National Archive

The top part of the official ledger entry is shown above. The rest indicates that there was correspondence with Albert until at least 1930 but, sadly, no details are given and there is no indication of what payments were made or what injuries were being compensated.

Post-war life

Sometime during the war the rest of the Bower family left Farnhill and returned to Keighley. However, on his discharge from the army Albert and Elizabeth Ann set up home at 50 Starkey Lane, Farnhill. It was there that their daughter Lucy was born, on 17th January 1920 (she was baptised at St. Andrew's Church, Kildwick, a few weeks later).

As post-war life resumed in the village, Albert became a playing member of the newly reformed Kildwick Old Boys' football club and was in the team that won the Keighley and District second division championship in the 1919-1920 season. (His name appears in a report of the club's success published by the Keighley News.)



The Kildwick Old Boys' Football Club, 1920; including Albert Bower - back row, wearing a cap
From the Farnhill and Kildwick History Group archive.

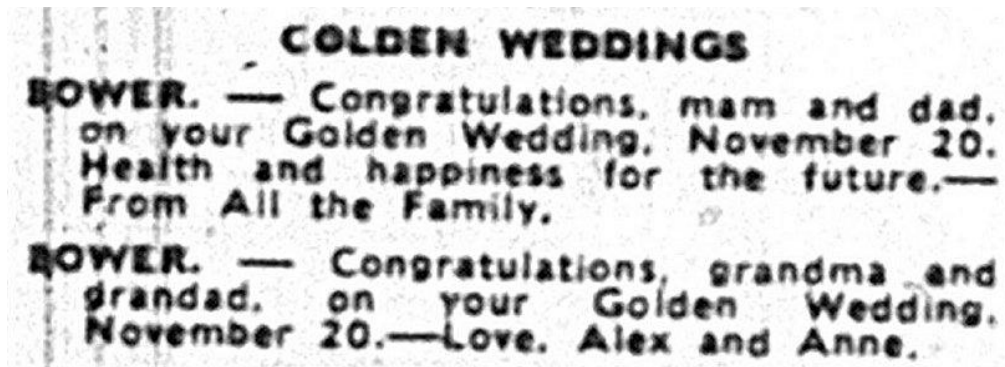
The 1921 census records the Bower family: Albert, Elizabeth Ann, their two daughters, and Elizabeth's mother, as living in a caravan at The Croft, Highfield Lane, Silsden. Albert was recorded as working as a stonemason for Barritt's of Station Road, Crosshills.

By 1922 the family had moved to Bridge Street, Silsden. They moved from there to 33 Bolton Road in 1935.

On the 1939 register, created when ration cards were being distributed at the start of WW2, Albert and the family were still living at 33 Bolton Road, Silsden, and he gave his occupation as stonemason/brick-layer.

In the mid-1950s, Albert, Elizabeth Ann, and those of their children who were still living at home, moved to 5 Chapel Street, Silsden. This would be Albert's home until he died.

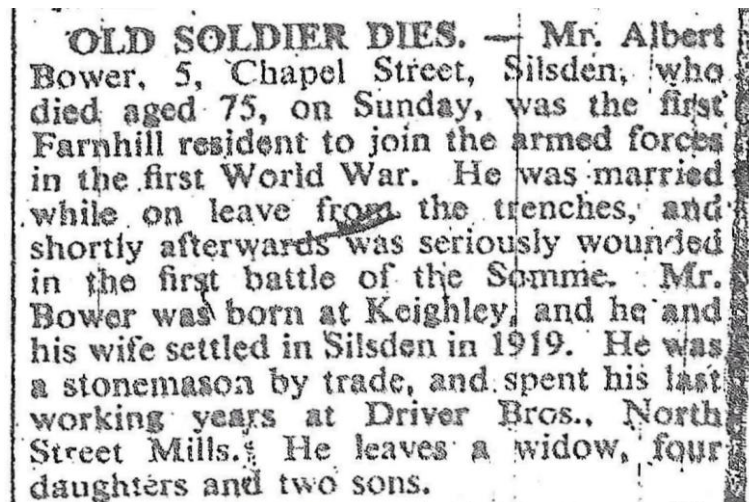
On 20th November 1965, Albert and Elizabeth Ann celebrated their Golden Wedding.



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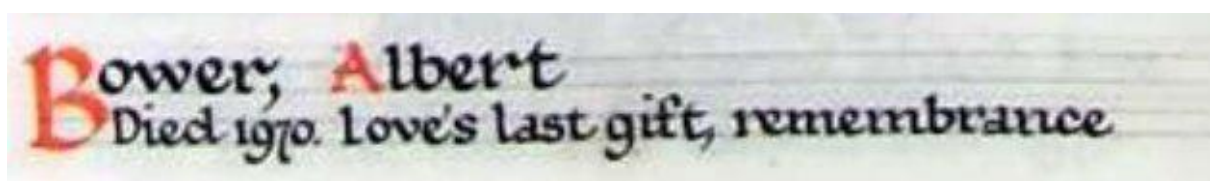
Albert Edgar Bower died of pneumonia in Victoria Hospital Keighley on 11th January 1970. He was aged 75.

The following obituary was published in the Craven Herald a few days after his death.



Albert Edgar Bower's obituary
By kind permission of Craven Herald

He is commemorated in the Skipton crematorium Book of Remembrance.



Postscript

Albert's wife, Elizabeth Ann, left 5 Chapel Street, Silsden, shortly after he died. She died somewhere in the Keighley area in 1980.

A number of Albert and Elizabeth's children married and their descendants are known to be still living in the local area.

Albert Bower – a life in summary

Born: 12/9/1894, Keighley

Died: 11/1/1970, Victoria Hospital, Keighley **Aged:** 75

Home address: 5 Chapel St., Silsden

Parents

Father: Albert; b. 1865, Keighley; buried 19/11/1940, Utley

Mother: Louisa (Lucy) (nee Crane); b. 1867, India;
buried 21/11/1918, Utley

Married: 1885, Keighley (Registration district)

Siblings

Ambrose; b. 5/7/1885, Keighley; m. Hannah Louisa Davis, 25/6/1910, St. Mary's, Eastwood, Keighley;
d. 26/10/1917, Flanders

Annie; b. 1886, Keighley; m. Fred Clegg, 1907, Keighley (Registration district)

Ethel; b. 1888, Keighley; m. John William Archer, 5/11/1910, Skipton (Registration district)

Fanny; b. 1890, Keighley; m. Clifford Bottomley, 19/1/1917, Kildwick;
d. January 1962; buried 8/1/1962, Utley

Elsie; b. 10/1/1900, Keighley; m. John Walsh, 1919, Keighley (Registration district);
d. August 1994, Keighley

plus three others who died prior to the 1911 census

Relationship to other volunteers

Ambrose Bower – brother

WW1 service

Service period: prior to 14/4/1915 – 2/4/1919

Regt./Unit: 1/6th Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regt. (Private. no. 2509, later 265589)
2/4th Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regt. (Private. no. 265589)

Medals: 1915 Star, Victory Medal, British War Medal

Home address: 50 Starkey Lane, Farnhill

Marriage

Wife: Elizabeth Ann Frobisher; b. 6/9/1895, Keighley; d. 1980, Keighley (Registration district)

Date: 20/11/1915, at St. Andrew's Church, Keighley

Children

Annie, b. 17/11/1914, Keighley (Registration district);

m. John Shand, 1936, Skipton (Registration district); d. 2002, Keighley (Registration district)

Lucy, b. 17/1/1920, Farnhill

Lily, b. 24/8/1922, Silsden; m. Granville Ramsden, 1947, Bradford (Registration district)

Vera, b. 17/7/1926, Silsden; m. Reginald. H. Marchant, 1947, Staincliffe (Registration district);

d. 1949, Keighley (Registration district)

Ambrose, b. 2/3/1928, Silsden; m. Hilda Graves, 1950, Sleaford (Registration district)

Selwyn, b. 1/12/1930, Silsden; m. Georgina Patterson; d. 2001, Keighley (Registration district)

Alvis, b. 12/2/1936, Silsden; m. Frederick A. Ayling, 1957, Staincliffe (Registration district)

