

VE DAY

80

ANNIVERSARY

1945-2025





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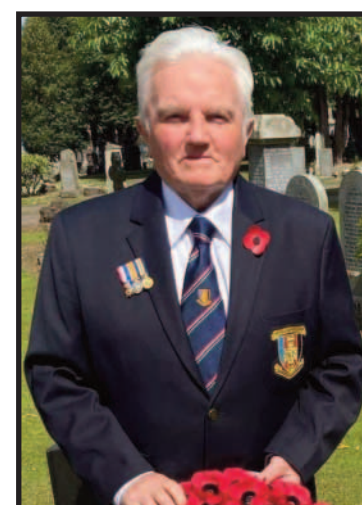
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WELCOME

from Ancre Somme Association Scotland



ASA Scotland President

It is an honour to Commemorate VE DAY 80th in the Regal Theatre, Bathgate. Tonight we will pay tribute to a local WW2 War Hero, W02 Walter Lumsden DCM, MM & Bar, we are humbled to have 35 members of his family present.

We are truly honoured to have the world-renowned Whitburn Brass Band supporting our event, along with "Sing West Lothian Choir", ASA Scotland Forces Sweetheart Georgina McKenzie, Guest Speaker Group Captain Bob Kemp CBE QVRM AE DL, Scots Singer/songwriter Alan Brydon and the Scots Guards.

2025 is the 10th Anniversary of the ASA Scotland charity, tonight you will witness "A Night to Remember".

Councillor Baillie William Buchanan



ASA Scotland Chairman

I am proud to be the Chairman of ASA Scotland charity, I am also a founding member, along with our Secretary Tommy Davidson. When we look back to 2015, and what has been achieved since, it is remarkable. Lt Col Gary Tait MBE (sadly missed) was our Patron, with his leadership, we set our aims and objectives and delivered every year. We support our Armed Forces, Military Families, Veterans, Tri-Cadet Forces, Communities and Schools across Scotland.

We believe it is important for every generation to understand the role of our Armed Forces, past, present and future. Freedom is not free; it is defended 365 days a year by the men and women within our British Armed Forces, both at home and abroad. We engage, inspire and share local, National, British, and Commonwealth Armed Forces history that is inclusive to all.

Tonight, we are gathered to learn about one of the bravest Warriors who served in the Scots Guards, we will remember Walter Lumsden and the generation who gave us a future and Victory in Europe 80 years ago.

Councillor Harry Cartmill



Honorary Chaplain
Phil Patterson



Ambassador
Major Donnie Harris



Ambassador
Alison Moodie
OBE QVRM AE RGN RM



Ambassador
Major Alan Cunningham

ASA Scotland Charity

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Secretary: Tommy Davidson **Treasurer:** Fiona Buchanan

Ambassadors: Alison Moodie OBE, Major Donnie Harris, Major Alan Cunningham 4 SCOTS

Trustees: James McAleese, Jackie McAleese

WHERE WERE YOU WHEN THE SPITFIRES FLEW?

Mr Peace was born and bred in Bathgate, and was 17 at the outbreak of War. He was already working in the office at the North British Steel Foundry in Whitburn Road, Bathgate before the War. After the War he returned there, and remained there until 1972. Then he left and took over the shop at the corner of Livery Street and Main Street, and had it for eight years or so. Then he took a job buying stores for the Wimpey Quarry at Ratho, and was there until he retired about 1987.

He remembers that War was declared on a Sunday. He and his parents lived in the High Street at that time. His father and a neighbour went for a walk in the Bathgate Hills every Sunday morning. They got up as far as the Knock Hill and could see a German attack taking place on the Forth Bridge.

Everyday items soon began to become scarce and his friends began to be called up into the services. He volunteered for the Air Force. He was called for his medical on 25 December 1941, and was called up early in 1942. He was sent for wireless training at Compton Basset, near Calne in Wiltshire. During this period, preparations were beginning to get underway for the Second Front. Everybody had to learn to drive, and he was sent on a two-week course as far north as Blackpool, to learn to drive.

After passing out from the wireless course, he was asked what he would like to do – but everything he suggested already had its full complement of wireless operators. He asked to be sent as Air Crew, or to serve on the high-speed rescue launches which picked up pilots etc. downed in the sea – but there were no vacancies for radio operators. So he was sent to Ricall (?) near Doncaster. It was a bomber conversion unit, training the pilots to convert from two to four engines

planes. He was a wireless operator there, and then later in the south of England with Fighter Command.

Then he started training for the Second Front, and was sent to a mobile signals unit, which could go wherever it was needed. His unit was sent to 401 ASP (Air Stores Park) – which dealt with air stores and equipment for fighter planes. During the run-up to D-Day, he expected to go into France with the ASP, but then at the last moment his signals unit was transferred to a Mobile Field Hospital. They landed in Normandy a couple of weeks after D-Day. He counts himself fortunate not to have landed with the first wave, but the Germans were still shelling the beachheads when he and his unit landed.

The men and women in the Services were protected from the worst shortages of rationing – the Forces fed them and provided their uniforms, so clothes and food shortages did not really affect them. If they were short of anything, they could generally get it from the Canadian troops. There was good co-operation with the Canadians: no ill-feeling, and the awareness that everyone was pulling in the same direction with the same aim of winning the War. Everybody was there for the same purpose.

So they were never short of food, or of clothing items. However, even in the Forces, they were subject to the same black-out restrictions. Vehicle headlights had to be dimmed – covered with adhesive paper, with just a small slit or hole to allow the light through. As long as you could see the vehicle in front, that was all you needed. Direction signs on the roads had been removed (to avoid giving aid to the Germans in case of invasion), so when travelling you had to use maps. Often you were not told the name of the town or place you were travelling to; all you were given was a map reference.

The pay was not very good! You

could opt to take it all, or have some of it sent home. As there was nothing to spend his money on, Mr Peace opted to have his money sent home. Especially when he was serving abroad, what mattered was that you got fed. It was all you cared about.

He was fortunate enough to avoid ever being under attack from the air, while posted in the South of England, but they were sometimes aware of the V2 rockets passing overhead, and wondered where they would land, and what would happen when they did. Like civilians, servicemen and women carried gas masks – at least during the earlier years of the War. He had to don his during exercises, but never during a real emergency.

Mr Peace had one period of leave in six years. At the end of the War, he was sent home for about six days, before being posted abroad again.

When he was first assigned to an active unit, his wireless was on for 24 hours a day. There was a day shift and a night shift, so when off duty, your time was pretty much your own. But then when he joined a Mobile Signals Unit, he was on duty pretty much 24 hours a day. When serving abroad with the Mobile Field Hospitals, the wireless operators would go out with them to help out during emergencies. You were as well doing that as sitting about when off duty.

In January 1945, Mr Peace was serving at Eindhoven, when the last big German air raid on an airfield took place. The Germans had held the airfield for many years, so knew all the blind approaches. They blitzed the airfield. The Mobile Field Hospital to which Mr Peace's signals unit was attached took over part of the St Joseph's (civilian) Hospital at Eindhoven. The weather broke, fighting came to a standstill, so they were there for a few weeks. During that time, the unit arranged a treat for the local children – a huge number of them. The Dutch population was nigh on starving by this time in the War. Many of the children had never tasted chocolate. The grateful population gave Mr Peace and his fellow servicemen a card of thanks, which he still treasures.

Later they were sent to the North of Denmark, to Aalborg, and had to drive right up through Denmark. The journey would normally have taken about a day, but took about two or three days, because in each town or village, the population was anxious to greet them and welcome them.

The worst thing he ever saw was Belsen. His unit was at Celle airport near Hanover, and was told to report to a certain map reference to repair telephone equipment. It was about eight miles away and it turned out to be the Belsen Concentration Camp. Even while still a few miles away, the smell would have knocked you down. They didn't know what it

was, but knew it was something terrible. The camp had just been liberated a few days before.

The men in the services had no idea of the extent and awfulness of the concentration camps. Mr Peace arrived on the third or fourth day after the liberation. Irma Griech a notorious female commandant was still in the camp. She was reputed to have made lampshades out of human skin. She was quickly taken away into captivity.

The ovens were still there, with bodies still clamped down, proving that bodies had been put into them alive. The army commander in charge rounded up everybody from the local villages several miles around, marched them to the camp and showed them what had been done there – the ditches, the corpses, the inmates in grey and black striped clothes like pajamas. All the local pleaded ignorance, but the smell for several miles around must have told them that something awful was going on. Many of them were screaming and crying and trying to look away, but they were made to look. Still they said they had had no idea of what was being done.

Mr Peace took photographs of what he saw, and had the photographs printed by the army X-Ray people, but when he saw the photographs, he burnt both the prints and the negatives.

He came back to England, got about six days leave to go back and see his

family in Bathgate for the first time since he joined up; then was sent out to Africa, to Khartoum. On the boat going from Marseilles to Alexandria, there was some atrocious weather, heavy storms, and most of the troops were seasick. Mr Peace was fortunate not to be seasick, and remembers one particular incident. In the canteen, a hand dumped a ladleful of potato on his plate, and a voice said 'You're a long way from Bathgate.' It was another Bathgate man, Frankie Aitken. He was in the

catering corps, and had been pressed into service as so many of the boat's crew were seasick.

After Europe, Khartoum was like a holiday camp. Their work was passing on radio messages from Africa and the East to Europe. It was hot, and there was no pressure of War. He got a few days leave and went to Italian Eritrea. You could get a plane to Eritrea, but the planes on the way back to Khartoum were filled with vegetables for the troops, so coming back involved a two or three day train journey across the desert – not so pleasant but interesting. He remembers being astonished that the Blue and the White Nile, seen from the air, were not just names, but actually described the very different colours of the two rivers.

Mr Peace was 24 when he came out of the Air Force. After being demobbed, he had about six weeks to re-adjust to civilian life, then went back to work at the North British Steel Foundry.

Looking back, Mr Peace feels that the War was in some ways a good thing to be part of – everybody helped one another, everybody had the same aim, and there was no animosity. The War itself was terrible, but he would still say that it had been a great experience to go through the War, and see things and places he would never otherwise have seen.

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VE DAY CELEBRATIONS

8th May 1945

Victory in Europe Day is the day celebrating the formal acceptance by the Allies of World War II of Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces on Tuesday, 8 May 1945; it marked the official end of World War II in Europe in the Eastern Front, with the last known shots fired on 11 May.



Russia and some former Soviet countries celebrate on 9 May, as Germany's unconditional surrender entered into force at 23:01 on 8 May Central European Summer Time; this corresponded with 00:01 on 9 May in Moscow Time.

Several countries observe public holidays on the day each year, also called Victory Over Fascism Day, Liberation Day, or Victory Day. In the UK it is often abbreviated to VE Day, a term which existed as early as September 1944, in anticipation of victory.



BATTLE OF BRITAIN

10th July 1940 – 31st October 1940

From July 10 through October 31, 1940, pilots and support crews on both sides took to the skies and battled for control of airspace over Great Britain, Germany and the English Channel. The powerful, combat-experienced Luftwaffe hoped to conquer Britain easily, but the RAF proved a formidable enemy.

For over 100 years the Royal Air Force has defended British skies. In 1940 it experienced its greatest test in the Battle of Britain.

Using science, ingenuity, and support from across the UK and overseas, the RAF defended the UK from Nazi Germany's air force, the Luftwaffe. It was the first major battle fought entirely in the air, and Nazi Germany's first major military defeat.

This victory was made possible by the hard work and determination of 'The Many', to the courage and sacrifice of 'The Few' – the 2,945 RAF aircrew who faced the Luftwaffe from July to October 1940.

By summer 1940, much of Europe had fallen to Nazi Germany. Backed by its allies overseas, the British Government refused to make peace with Hitler. In this

country's darkest hour, the British Armed Forces prepared to defend the United Kingdom.

Millions of ordinary men and women across the UK played vital roles, including Air Raid Wardens, firefighters and members of the Home Guard. Thousands across the UK worked in aircraft factories, building the aircraft that would defend the country. Between June and October 1940, around 2,000 Hurricanes and Spitfires were built.

By 1940, dozens of radar stations had been constructed along the British coastline. This system, called 'Chain Home', was the first early warning radar network ever built. Men and women in the radar stations could detect approaching German aircraft from up to 80 miles away.

Speed was crucial. Information gathered by radar and the Observer Corps went to RAF Fighter Command Headquarters at Bentley Priory in North London. They checked the information, and circulated this by phone to RAF Groups across the country. Each Group controlled the RAF aircraft, anti-aircraft guns, searchlights, and barrage balloons in their areas.

Every action was plotted on a large map. Known as the 'Dowding System', it was the world's most advanced air defence network.

The UK's air defence network – the 'Dowding System' – was critical to the RAF's victory in the Battle of Britain. It used the latest science and technology to detect hostile aircraft and coordinate how air defences would respond.

The primary role for the RAF to this day continues to be the protection of the skies of the UK, through the Quick Reaction Alert system.

The bravery and sacrifice of RAF aircrew was matched by the ceaseless effort and devotion of RAF ground crew. RAF engineers, mechanics, and armourers, as well as countless others on the ground, worked day and night to keep the RAF ready for battle.

RAF stations were often targets for bombing, so RAF ground crew often found themselves in the line of fire. 312 RAF personnel were killed on the ground during the Battle of Britain.

At the height of the Battle of Britain, the RAF had only 749 fighter aircraft available, against 2,550 Luftwaffe aircraft.



Consisting of 2,945 aircrew, the RAF was joined by volunteers from 13 different nations, some of whom had battle experience against the Luftwaffe in their own air forces. This international force became known as 'The Few'.

BRITAIN

THE ATLANTIC

3rd September 1939 – 8th May 1945

For the Allied powers, the battle had three objectives: blockade of the Axis powers in Europe, security of Allied sea movements, and freedom to project military power across the seas. The Axis, in turn, hoped to frustrate Allied use of the Atlantic to wage war. For British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the Battle of the Atlantic represented Germany's best chance to defeat the Western powers.

The first phase of the battle for the Atlantic lasted from the autumn of 1939 until the fall of France in June 1940. During that period the Anglo-French coalition drove German merchant shipping from the sea and established a fairly effective long-range blockade, while the German navy attempted to inflict some measure of damage on Allied forces at sea. The battle took a radically different turn in May–June 1940, following the Axis conquest of the Low Countries, the fall of France, and Italy's entry into the war on the Axis side. Britain lost French naval support just when its own sea power had been hurt by losses incurred in the retreat from Norway and the evacuation from Dunkirk and

stretched by Italian belligerency. Axis air power imperiled and eventually barred the direct route through the Mediterranean Sea to the Suez Canal, forcing British shipping to use the long alternative route around the Cape of Good Hope. That cut the total cargo-carrying capacity of the British merchant marine almost in half at the very moment when German acquisition of naval and air bases on the Atlantic coast foreshadowed more destructive attacks on shipping in northern waters.

From the German perspective, with the conquest of western Europe complete, knocking Britain out of the war by attacking its trade seemed a manageable objective. Beginning in the autumn of 1940, German U-boat (submarine) attacks were dramatically successful, and over the winter Germany also sent out its major surface warships and air power. However, the combined assault by air, surface, and submarine forces failed to force Britain to surrender. With help from burgeoning Canadian naval and air forces, a fully escorted transatlantic convoy system was in place by May 1941, the same month that the German

surface attacks on Allied trade routes collapsed with the loss of the battleship Bismarck.

At that critical juncture, the United States, though still technically a nonbelligerent, assumed a more active role in the Atlantic war. In 1940, through the Destroyers for Bases deal, the United States turned over 50 World War I destroyers to Great Britain, which helped to make good previous naval losses. In return, the United States received 99-year leases for bases in Newfoundland, in Bermuda, and at numerous points in the Caribbean. American units were also deployed in Iceland and Greenland. In addition, Canada built naval and air bases in Newfoundland. By the fall of 1941, the Americans were fully engaged in escorting shipping in the northwest Atlantic alongside the Canadians and British, and the U.S. Navy fought several battles with U-boats west of Iceland, where it had established advanced bases. The U-boats, meanwhile, were drawn off to the Mediterranean and the Arctic in support of Germany's new war with Russia while those attacking convoys on the Sierra Leone route suffered a tactical defeat by increasingly better-equipped British escort forces. By late 1941 the North Atlantic was comparatively quiet.

The United States' formal entry into the war in December 1941 opened a vast new area for U-boat operations in American waters just as U.S. forces were drawn off for the new war in the Pacific theatre. The German offensive off the U.S. East Coast in early 1942 found shipping entirely unguarded, and American efforts to protect it—anything short of adopting convoys—were utterly unsuccessful. As a result, Allied merchant shipping losses spiked between January and June 1942, when more tonnage was lost off the U.S. coast than the Allies had lost during the previous two and a half years. German U-boats also operated in considerable force along the South Atlantic ship lanes to Asia and the Middle East. The Allied campaign (1942–43) in the Mediterranean depended almost entirely upon seaborne supply shipped through submarine-infested waters. In addition, Allied convoys bound for the Russian

ports of Murmansk and Archangelsk had to battle their way through savage air and undersea attacks.

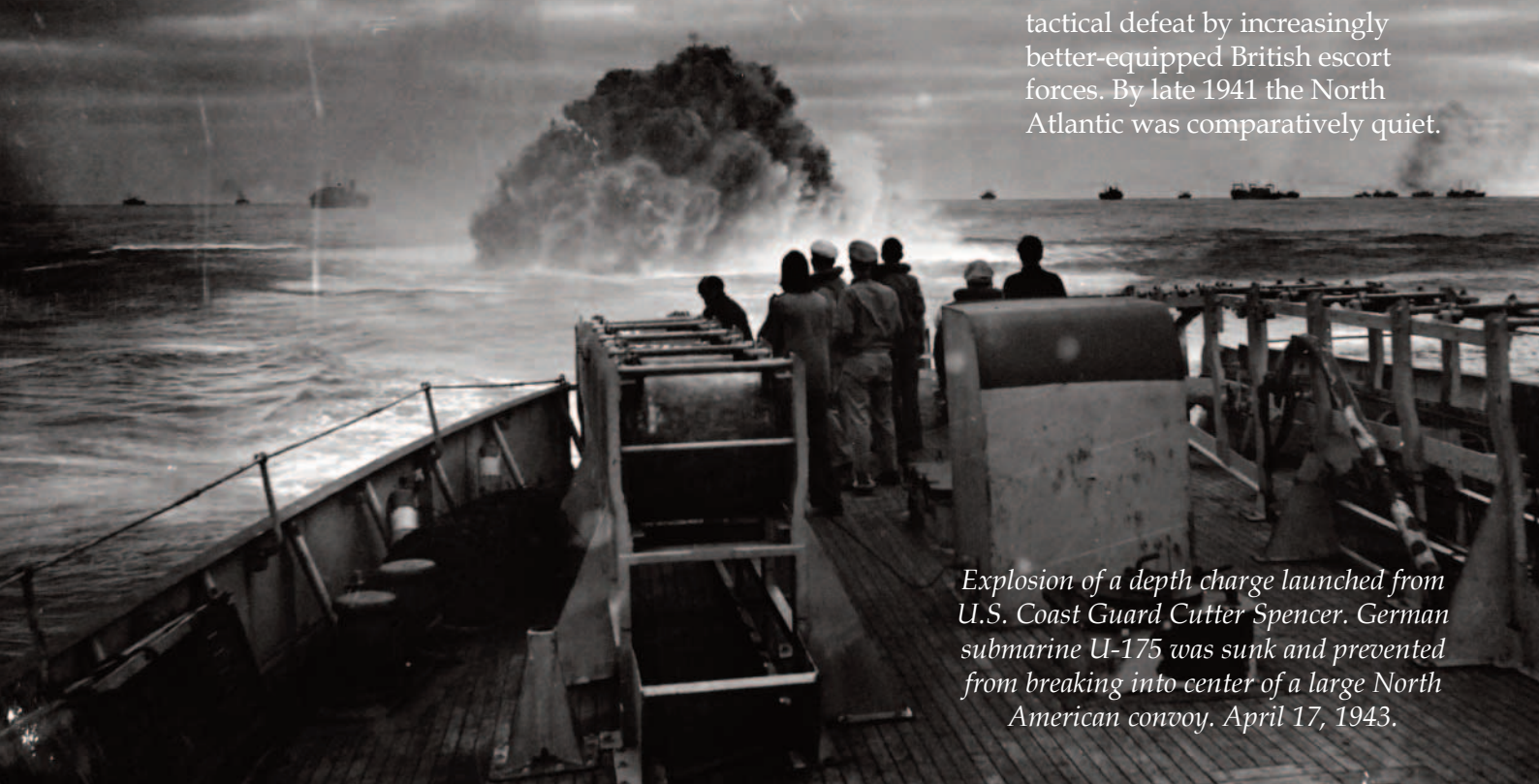
As in 1941, help from Canada's expanding military came in a timely fashion in 1942 as Canadian naval and air forces filled the void left in the North Atlantic by the departure of U.S. forces to the Caribbean and Pacific. Canadians established the first convoys in the American zone, and American convoys soon followed. When transatlantic convoys shifted their western terminus from Halifax to New York City in September 1942, they were escorted by the Royal Canadian Navy. With more and better equipment, the convoy system was strengthened and extended throughout 1942. Meanwhile, unprecedented merchant shipbuilding, especially in the United States, had caught up and begun to forge ahead of losses by autumn of that year.

But the battle was not yet over. The progressive expansion of the convoy system in the Western Hemisphere had forced the U-boats back into the mid-Atlantic by late 1942, where the battle climaxed over the next six months. The crisis peaked in March, when the Allies' top-secret Ultra program suffered a lapse in intercepting and decrypting German communications for mid-ocean U-boats. During that gap the Germans enjoyed their final major successes of the war: every Allied convoy was sighted, and over half were attacked. By then decisions reached by Allied leaders at the Casablanca Conference of January 1943 had begun to push major naval and air reinforcements into the North Atlantic. Improving spring weather by April, modern radar equipment, repenetration of the U-boat codes, new escort aircraft carriers, very-long-range patrol aircraft, and aggressive tactics had resulted in a major defeat of Germany's submarine fleet by May.

ATLANTIC

Ships as far as the eye can see; a typical convoy during the Battle of the Atlantic.

Explosion of a depth charge launched from U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Spencer. German submarine U-175 was sunk and prevented from breaking into center of a large North American convoy. April 17, 1943.



Attempts by the Germans to renew the assault on Allied shipping by using acoustic homing torpedoes failed in the autumn of 1943, and so the U-boats retreated inshore, where they waged a guerrilla campaign against shipping. Allied victory in the Atlantic in 1943, coupled with the opening of the Mediterranean to through traffic later that year, translated into significant reductions in shipping losses. For the balance of the war, the Allies exercised unchallenged control of Atlantic sea-lanes.

EVACUATION OF DUNKIRK

26th May – 4th June 1940

On May 10, 1940, the so-called 'phony war' ended decisively when Nazi Germany invaded the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium in a blitzkrieg (German for 'lightning war') attack.

In the face of such a coordinated strategy, superior air power and highly mobile ground forces supported by panzer tanks, all three countries would succumb quickly: The Germans occupied Luxembourg on May 10, the Netherlands on May 14 and Belgium by the end of the month.

Soon after the blitzkrieg began, German forces invaded France – not along the Maginot Line, which the Allies had expected, but through the Ardennes Forest, moving steadily along the Somme Valley toward the English Channel.

As they advanced, German forces cut off all communication and transport between the northern and southern branches of Allied forces, pushing several hundred thousand Allied troops in the north into an increasingly small sliver of the French coast.

By May 19, General John Gort, commander of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) had begun to weigh the possibility of evacuating his entire force by sea in order to save them from certain annihilation by the approaching Nazi troops.

On the evening of May 26, the British began the evacuation from Dunkirk, using the codename Operation Dynamo.

Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay directed the efforts, leading a team working out of a room deep inside the Dover cliffs that had once contained a generator known as a dynamo (giving the operation its name).

The Luftwaffe's relentless bombing attacks on the harbor slowed the evacuation process, even as Royal Air Force (RAF) planes tried to delay or stop the German planes from reaching the beaches, losing many aircraft in the process.

On the first full day, Operation Dynamo was only able to evacuate about 7,500 men from Dunkirk; around 10,000 got out the following day (May 28).

As Dunkirk had such a shallow beach, Royal Navy vessels couldn't reach it, and the Allies put out a call for smaller ships to carry troops from the shore to the larger ships further out in the North Sea. Some 800 to 1,200 boats, many of them leisure or fishing crafts, eventually aided in the evacuation from Dunkirk.

Some were requisitioned by the Navy and crewed by naval personnel, while others were manned by their civilian owners and crew. The first members of this small armada – which would become known as the "Little Ships" – began arriving on the beaches of Dunkirk on the morning of May 28, helping to speed up the evacuation.

At the outset, Churchill and the rest of British command expected that the evacuation from Dunkirk could rescue only around 45,000 men at most. But the success of Operation Dynamo exceeded all expectations. On May 29, more than 47,000 British troops were rescued; more than 53,000, including the first French troops, made it out on May 30.

By the time the evacuations ended, some 198,000 British and 140,000 French troops would manage to get off the beaches at Dunkirk – a total of some 338,000 men. An additional 90,000 Allied forces were left behind, along with the bulk of the BEF's heavy guns and tanks, when the resistance ended on the morning of June 4 and German troops occupied Dunkirk.

DUNKIRK

Troops crossing the mids of debris of the rubble-strewn streets in Dunkerque, France.

ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

7th December 1941

The attack on Pearl Harbor was a surprise military strike by the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii, the United States, just before 8:00 a.m. (local time) on Sunday, December 7, 1941. At the time, the United States was a neutral country in World War II. The attack on Hawaii and other U.S. territories led the United States to formally enter World War II on the side of the Allies the day following the attack, on December 8, 1941. The Japanese military leadership referred to the attack as the Hawaii Operation and Operation AI, and as Operation Z during its planning.

The Empire of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor was preceded by months of negotiations between the United States and Japan over the future of the Pacific. Japanese demands included that the United States end its sanctions against Japan, cease aiding China in the Second Sino-Japanese War, and allow Japan to access the resources of the Dutch East Indies.

Anticipating a negative response, Japan sent out its naval attack groups in November 1941 just prior to receiving the Hull note – which states the United States desire that Japan withdraw from China and French Indochina. Japan intended the attack as a preventive action. Its aim was to prevent the United States Pacific Fleet from interfering with its planned military actions in Southeast Asia against overseas territories of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the United States. Over the course of seven hours, Japan conducted coordinated attacks on the U.S.-held Philippines, Guam, and Wake Island; and on the British Empire in Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

The attack on Pearl Harbor started at 7:48 a.m. Hawaiian time (6:18

p.m. GMT). The base was attacked by 353 Imperial Japanese aircraft (including fighters, level and dive bombers, and torpedo bombers) in two waves, launched from six aircraft carriers. Of the eight United States Navy battleships present, all were damaged and four were sunk. All but USS Arizona were later raised, and six were returned to service and went on to fight in the war. The Japanese also sank or damaged three cruisers, three destroyers, an anti-aircraft training ship, and one minelayer. More than 180 US aircraft were destroyed. A total of 2,393 Americans were killed and 1,178 others were wounded, making it the deadliest event ever recorded in Hawaii. It was also the deadliest foreign attack against the United States in its history until the September 11 attacks of 2001. Important base

installations, such as the power station, dry dock, shipyard, maintenance, and fuel and torpedo storage facilities, as well as the submarine piers and headquarters building (also home of the intelligence section) were not attacked. Japanese losses were light: 29 aircraft and five midget submarines were lost, and 129 servicemen killed. Kazuo Sakamaki, the commanding officer of one of the submarines, was captured.

Japan declared war on the United States and the British Empire later that day (December 8 in Tokyo), but the declarations were not delivered until the following day. The British government declared war on Japan immediately after learning that their territory had

also been attacked, while the following day (December 8), the United States Congress declared war on Japan. On December 11, though they had no formal obligation to do so under the Tripartite Pact with Japan, Germany and Italy each declared war on the United States, which responded with a declaration of war against Germany and Italy.

While there were historical precedents for the unannounced military action by Japan, the lack of any formal warning, as required by the Hague Convention of 1907, and the perception that the attack had been unprovoked, led then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in the opening line of his speech to a joint session of Congress the following day, to famously label December 7, 1941, “a date which will live in infamy”.

Photograph taken from a Japanese plane during the torpedo attack on ships moored on both sides of Ford Island shortly after the beginning of the Pearl Harbor attack. View looks about east, with the supply depot, submarine base and fuel tank farm in the right center distance. A torpedo has just hit USS West Virginia on the far side of Ford Island (center). Other battleships moored nearby are (from left): Nevada, Arizona, Tennessee (inboard of West Virginia), Oklahoma (torpedoed and listing) alongside Maryland, and California. On the near side of Ford Island, to the left, are light cruisers Detroit and Raleigh, target and training ship Utah and seaplane tender Tangier. Raleigh and Utah have been torpedoed, and Utah is listing sharply to port. Japanese planes are visible in the right center (over Ford Island) and over the Navy Yard at right. U.S. Navy planes on the seaplane ramp are on fire. Japanese writing in the lower right states that the photograph was reproduced by authorization of the Navy Ministry.

Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. A small boat rescues a seaman from the 31,800 ton USS West Virginia, which is burning in the foreground. Smoke rolling out amidships shows where the most extensive damage occurred. Note the two men in the superstructure. The USS Tennessee is inboard.



THE TAKING OF ANZIO

September 1943

In September 1943 the British Eighth Army under General Bernard Montgomery invaded the Italian mainland from Sicily, landing at Reggio and Taranto in the extreme south of the country. Meanwhile, the US Fifth Army under General Mark Clark attacked further north at Salerno. The extension of the Mediterranean campaign onto the Italian mainland was intended to pin down German forces that might otherwise be deployed to the Russian front, or be sent to France to counter the cross-Channel invasion planned for the following year.

The British were more in favour of this strategy than the Americans, but the fall of Mussolini had emboldened Allied plans and the prospect of quickly capturing Rome, one of the three Axis capital cities, proved an alluring prospect. After the seaborne assaults, the two Allied armies successfully linked up and

continued to advance north, with the Americans on the left flank and the British on the right.

Italian geography is dominated by the Apennine Mountains, which form a rugged spine down the centre of the peninsula and where narrow hairpin roads are the only means of communication. Free movement is limited to the narrow coastal strip on either side and can be controlled by carefully positioned enemy defences in the mountains and foothills.

The Germans exploited this terrain advantage to the full, staging a fighting withdrawal northwards. Allied progress was eventually brought to a halt along the heavily fortified 'Gustav Line', which stretched along the River Garigliano to Cassino in the west and across the Apennines to Ortona on the Adriatic coast. Cassino lay in the US Fifth Army sector and was a key strategic objective. The town, and the mountain of Monte Cassino looming above it, controlled access

to the Liri valley and Highway 6 to Rome. Repeated attempts to push through failed and as the winter weather closed in Allied spirits sank.

To break the deadlock, the Allied High Command had been planning another amphibious operation, codenamed 'Shingle', which would take place alongside a renewed offensive on the US Fifth Army front.

The objective was to land further up the coast behind the Gustav Line, compel the Germans to pull troops back from Cassino, and open the way for an advance to the Italian capital. Its most enthusiastic supporter was Winston Churchill, no stranger to risky amphibious operations. Churchill saw it as the only way to re-invigorate the Italian campaign, but his military commanders feared a disaster without sufficient resources.

Much depended on the availability of landing ships and other invasion craft, but many of these had already been earmarked for the invasion of Normandy. The original plan anticipated landing only one division, but General Clark demanded the invasion force be doubled in strength. Churchill insisted that British forces be involved too. The location chosen was around the resort towns of Anzio and Nettuno, some 30 miles south of Rome on Italy's west coast.

The fears of Allied commanders persisted and in December the Anzio plan was shelved. But Churchill had not lost his enthusiasm and pushed successfully for it to be reinstated. By now, the aims of the operation had become confused. The 15th Army Group Commander, General Sir Harold Alexander, stressed the need to strike out from Anzio to capture the strategically important Alban Hills, which dominate Highway 6 and Highway 7 south of Rome.

These were the main German supply routes to Cassino and the western end of the Gustav Line.

But he gave too much latitude to Clark and his staff, who were more concerned with establishing a solid enough bridgehead to contain the inevitable German counterattacks. Memories of the US Fifth Army's experience at Salerno in September, when a furious German response had almost thrown the Americans back into the sea, were fresh in everyone's mind. Clark considered the Alban Hills too far away to be taken quickly by only two divisions.

The bleakest view was held by Major General John Lucas, the man entrusted with tactical command of the operation. He was in charge of US VI Corps, which was to form the invasion force and incorporated British troops. Lucas claimed his men were not sufficiently trained or prepared and advocated caution once ashore. The limited forces provided for the operation and the muddle over objectives would combine to produce a near disaster.

Operation 'Shingle' was finally launched on 22 January 1944, four days after a new US Fifth Army attack on the Garigliano and Rapido rivers near Cassino. British 1st Infantry Division under Major

General Ronald Penney, supported by 46th Royal Tank Regiment and commandos of 2nd Special Service Brigade, landed north of Anzio.

The US 3rd Infantry Division under Major General Lucian Truscott, supported by a tank battalion, three battalions of Rangers and an Airborne battalion, landed south of the port. Tactical surprise had been achieved and the landings were virtually unopposed. A handful of Luftwaffe aircraft got through the Allied fighter umbrella to strafe the ships, but the Allies lost only 13 men killed and 97 wounded. Anzio itself had been abandoned by the Germans and its civilian population moved out. Many German units had been deployed further south to counter US Fifth Army's attack on the Garigliano.

By the end of the day 36,000 troops and 3,200 vehicles had been delivered ashore. A US reconnaissance jeep patrol found the way open to Rome, and a bolder commander might well have taken advantage. But Lucas threw away the initiative, choosing instead to dig in and await the Germans.



A Sherman tank of 46th Royal Tank Regiment drives ashore from a landing craft during the landings of British 1st Infantry Division north of Anzio, 22 January 1944. The Anzio battlefield was ill-suited to armoured warfare, and tanks functioned more often as mobile artillery.

ANZIO

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BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN

23rd October 1942 – 4th November 1942

At 9.40pm on Friday 23 October 1942, the Battle of El Alamein began with a four-hour ground and air bombardment launched by Britain and its allies. As it subsided, the troops began their advance.

In the first phase of the battle, (24-25 October 1942), known as 'Break-In', British XXX Corps began its attack in the northern sector while XIII Corps mounted its subsidiary attack in the south. Divisions of both corps penetrated the deep enemy minefields, but X Corps' armoured divisions were unable to complete the breakthrough.

British General Bernard Montgomery was thus forced to revise his plans, and the second phase of the battle, 'Dogfight', had to be fought within – rather than beyond – the fortified positions.

This took place between 26 and 31 October, with Montgomery's tactic of 'crumbling' away at the enemy defence positions with a series of limited attacks. At the same time, the British fended off German counter-attacks ordered by German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel.

The third phase of the battle, 'Break-out', was fought between 1 and 4 November 1942, when Montgomery, judging Rommel's forces at breaking point, ordered the final blows against them. By 3 November it was obvious that Rommel was preparing to withdraw, and the next morning the 5th Indian Brigade attacked, driving a wedge through Rommel's front, thus enabling the 1st and 7th Armoured Divisions and the 2nd New Zealand Division to go in pursuit of enemy forces, now in full retreat.

In Britain, the church bells were rung for the first time since May 1940 to celebrate the Eighth Army's success which was, as Winston Churchill described it, "a glorious and decisive victory".



British infantry manning a sandbagged defensive position near El Alamein, 17 July 1942.

EL ALAMEIN

OPERATION 'MARKET GARDEN'

17th September 1944 – 25th September 1944

Operation Market Garden was the largest airborne landing in military history and is regarded as one of the most controversial episodes of the Second World War.

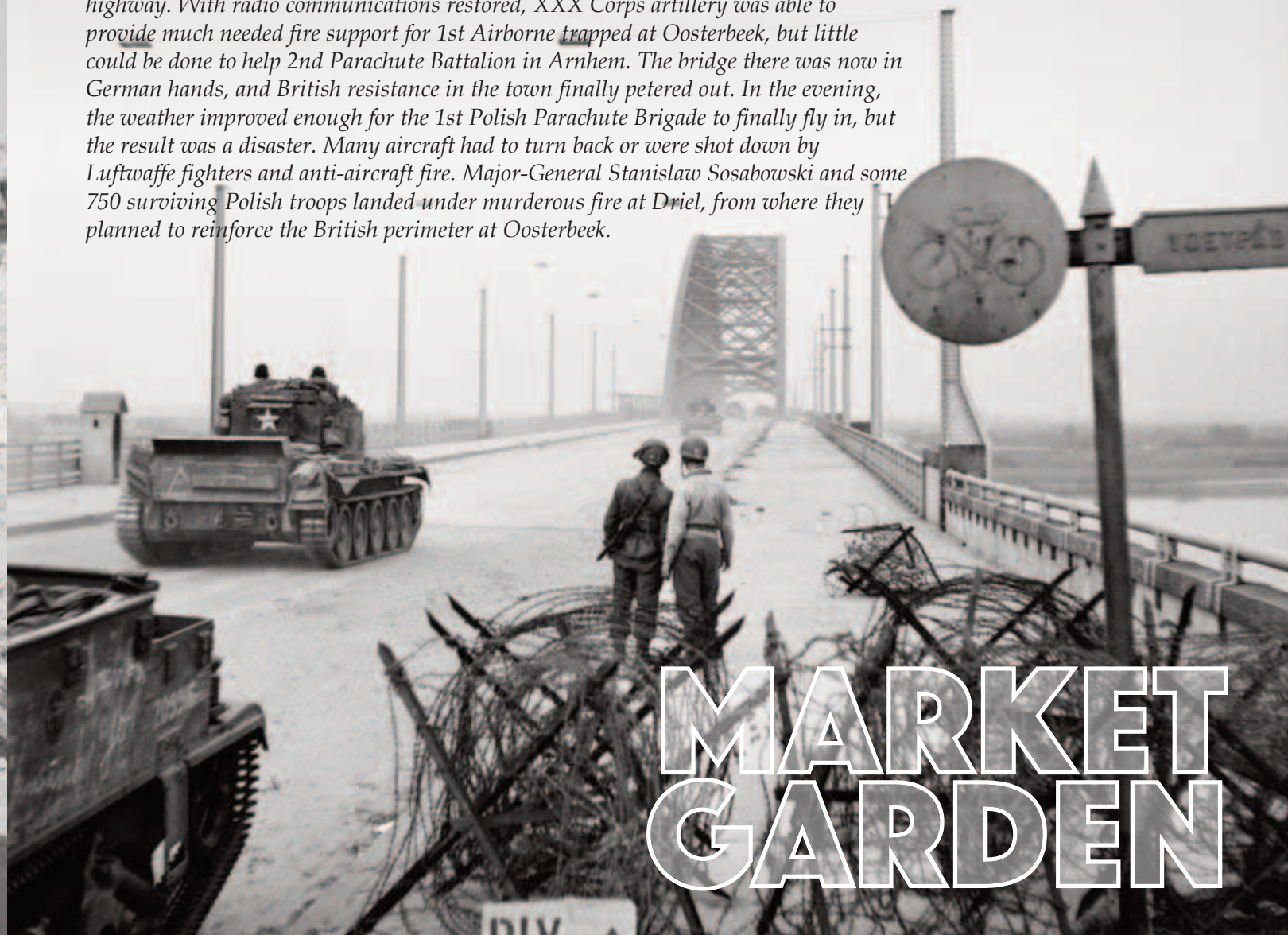
In the summer of 1944, the western Allies, having broken out from Normandy, Allied Supreme Commander General Eisenhower wanted to advance on Germany on a broad front. But logistical issues meant that the Allies couldn't supply multiple army Groups with the fuel, food and ammunition they needed simultaneously. However, one British general thought that he had the solution.

Field Marshal Montgomery believed that the Allies should employ one bold stroke to shorten the war. His plan, codenamed 'Operation Market Garden', would put the Allies across the Rhine on Germany's frontier in a few days and possibly end the war by Christmas 1944.



Civilians dancing in the square of Eindhoven, the first major town in Holland to be liberated.

A Cromwell tank of 2nd Welsh Guards crosses the bridge over the River Waal at Nijmegen, 21 September. The town was now in Allied hands, and XXX Corps pushed on as far as Elst, just south of Arnhem. Here it was blocked by Kampfgruppe 'Knaust'. Without support, the British tanks could get no further up the exposed, elevated highway. With radio communications restored, XXX Corps artillery was able to provide much needed fire support for 1st Airborne trapped at Oosterbeek, but little could be done to help 2nd Parachute Battalion in Arnhem. The bridge there was now in German hands, and British resistance in the town finally petered out. In the evening, the weather improved enough for the 1st Polish Parachute Brigade to finally fly in, but the result was a disaster. Many aircraft had to turn back or were shot down by Luftwaffe fighters and anti-aircraft fire. Major-General Stanislaw Sosabowski and some 750 surviving Polish troops landed under murderous fire at Driel, from where they planned to reinforce the British perimeter at Oosterbeek.



MARKET GARDEN

BATTLE OF THE TENNIS COURT

4th April 1944 – 22nd June 1944

The Battle of the Tennis Court was part of the wider Battle of Kohima that was fought in North East India from 4 April to 22 June 1944 during the Burma Campaign of the Second World War. The Japanese advance into India was halted at Kohima in April 1944 and Garrison Hill, on a long wooded ridge on a high ridge west of the village, was, according to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission the scene of “perhaps the most bitter fighting of the whole Burma campaign when a small Commonwealth force held out against repeated attacks by a Japanese Division”. During the siege of Kohima, heavy fighting, including hand-to-hand combat, occurred in the grounds surrounding the Deputy Commissioner’s bungalow, including the tennis court, beginning around 8 April and continuing until 13 May when the assaulting Japanese troops began withdrawing from the area.year.

Kohima Ridge was about a mile long and about 400 yards wide, with a series of hills and gullies that ran alongside the road from Imphal to Dimapur. The steep slopes along the road made the

ridge a formidable target for attackers, but it was a narrow space from which to repel an enemy attacking in strength. In March 1944, the Japanese launched Operation U-Go, a large-scale invasion of India. By 6 the British, Nepalese and Indian soldiers of Kohima Garrison had been surrounded on the Kohima ridge. As the siege began the Kohima Ridge was defended to the south (facing Imphal) by the 1st Assam Regiment on Jail Hill. The centre ground of the ridge was mainly defended by 4th Battalion, Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment. The North West of the Ridge, known as Hospital Spur, was defended by the 3rd Assam Rifles who were facing the road to Dimapur. The North East of the Ridge on a sharp corner in the road was where the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Charles Pawsey’s Bungalow and Tennis Court was situated. This was initially guarded by a composite group of soldiers, thought to be British and Gurkha troops from the local Reinforcement Depot.

The Japanese launched a series of attacks into the north-east region of the defences on 8 April, including

two attacks on the DC’s Bungalow area. The Japanese suffered massive losses, but poured in reinforcements to prepare for another attack. Some Allied soldiers manned a Bren gun to cover the withdrawal from the DC’s Bungalow to the other side of the asphalt tennis court 12m higher up the hill. They held on to the last round but were then overrun, bayoneted and shot. At this stage the Battle of the Tennis Court could be said to have begun with the area being rapidly reinforced by A Company of the 4th Battalion, Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment.

During 9 April and before dawn on 10 April the Japanese 58 Regiment attacked the Allied defenders of the Tennis Court area almost every 30 minutes. Major Tom Kenyon, officer commanding (OC) A Company of the 4th Royal West Kents, commanded the British, Indian and Gurkha defenders who had now dug weapon pits and trenches on the western edge of the tennis court. During 10 April these defences and the overhead cover saved many lives as artillery shells landed on the Allied positions. The forward trenches ran out of ammunition on several occasions but were repeatedly resupplied by Sergeant Williams, who was awarded a Military Medal for his bravery.

The decision was made on 12 April to relieve the defenders of the Tennis Court with B Company of the 4th Royal West Kents, commanded by Major John Winstanley. During B Company’s first night defending the Tennis Court, the Japanese forces attacked silently, wearing plimsoll shoes, instead of boots. They nearly overran the British forward positions with one of the platoon commanders, Lieutenant Tom Hogg, surviving a bayonet attack before firing all 25 rounds from his weapon (probably a Bren light machine gun), killing his assailant.

On 13 April, heavy Japanese artillery and mortar fire fell around the DC’s bungalow and the tennis court area. Several assaults were made by Japanese infantry, although these were repelled in what the British Ministry of Defence describes as “some of the hardest, closest and grimmest fighting, with grenades being hurled across the tennis court at point-blank range”. But on 14 April the Japanese did not launch an attack, and on 15 April the British and Indian troops on Kohima ridge heard that the British 2nd Infantry Division was attacking along the Dimapur–Kohima road and had broken through Japanese roadblocks to relieve troops of the 161st Indian Infantry Brigade around Jotsoma, about 2 miles (3.2 km) west of Kohima.

On 17 April, the Japanese tried one last time to take the ridge and captured Field Supply Depot (FSD) Hill and Kuki Piquet. On the morning of 18 April, British artillery opened up from the west against the Japanese positions, which stopped the Japanese attacks. Elements of the British 2nd Division, the 161st Indian Brigade and tanks from XXXIII Corps pushed into the area north-west of Garrison Hill and forced the Japanese from their positions. The road between Dimapur and Kohima had been opened and the siege was lifted.

Part of the Allied force relieving the siege was the 1/1st Punjab Regiment of the 161st Indian Brigade. By the evening of 18 April, D Company of 1/1st Punjab Regiment (Major Gavin Dunnett) were facing the Japanese forces in the Tennis Court area. They were attacked almost immediately by the 58th Infantry Regiment, a battle in which a South East Asia Command Public Relations officer later reported “a grenade match was played across the bungalow’s

tennis courts”. The 1/1st Punjab Regiment took 22 casualties and lost ground, only to retake it again the following day (19 April) during which Jemadar Mohammed Rafiq was awarded the Military Cross for leading his platoon against Japanese bunkers. The 1/1st Punjab Regiment seem to have moved rearwards on 21 April, having suffered 120 casualties, to be replaced by C Company of the 1st Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment, part of the 6th Brigade of the British 2nd Division, who were themselves relieved by D Company of the same battalion on 23 April.

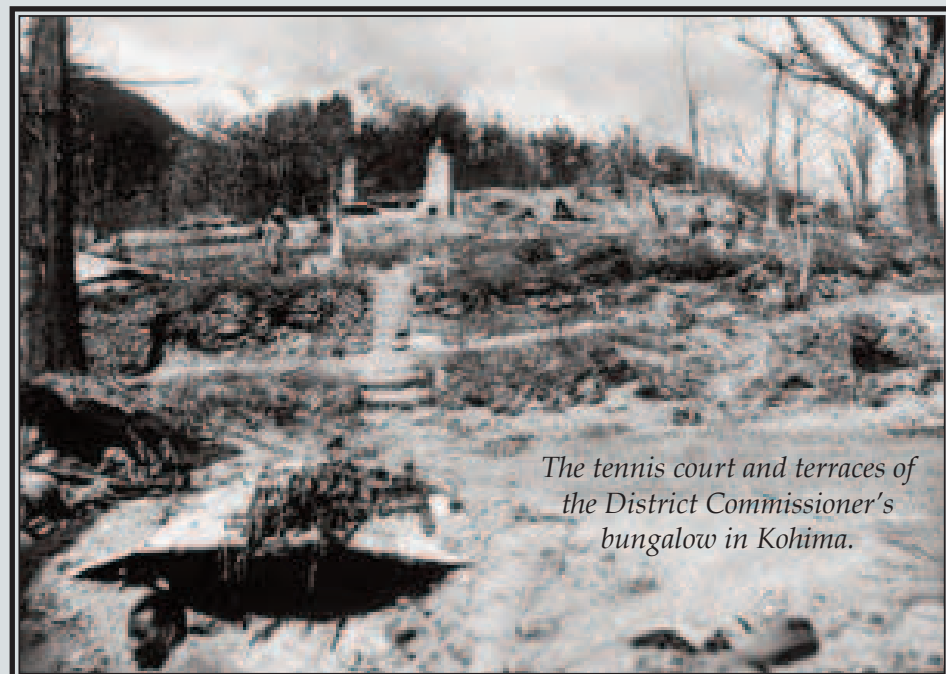
The Japanese who had been fighting to capture Kohima did not retreat at once. Many of them stayed in the positions which they had captured and fought tenaciously for several more weeks. It is not entirely clear when the battle for the Tennis Court was won, but tanks operating from the road supported an infantry attack that captured the Tennis Court area on 10 May 1944. By the morning of 13 May, most of the positions on the Kohima ridge had been re-taken by the British and Indian forces. On that day the DC’s bungalow was finally recaptured by the 2nd Battalion, Dorset Regiment supported by Grant tanks firing from the Tennis Court. The lead tank was driven by Sergeant Waterhouse of 149th Regiment Royal Armoured Corps (149th RAC), firing his 75 mm gun into Japanese bunkers at no more than 20 yd (18 m). This tank was supported by two platoons of the Dorsets commanded by Sergeants Given and Cook. The Allied breakthrough that ended the Battle of the Tennis Court is depicted in a 1982 painting by Terence Cuneo which is displayed in the Kohima Museum in Imphal Barracks, York.

The fighting within the 6th Brigade’s area was documented by

Major Boshell, who commanded 'B' Company of the 1st Royal Berkshires, in the 6th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Division:

To begin with I took over an area overlooking the Tennis Court . . . The lie of the land made impossible to move by day because of Japanese snipers. We were in Kohima for three weeks. We were attacked every single night . . . They came in waves, it was like a pigeon shoot. Most nights they overran part of the battalion position, so we had to mount counter-attacks . . . Water was short and restricted to about one pint per man per day. So we stopped shaving. Air supply was the key, but the steep terrain and narrow ridges meant that some of the drops went to the Japs. My company went into Kohima over 100 strong and came out at about 60.

Around 15 May the Japanese 31st Division began to withdraw and the fresh British and Indian troops from XXXIII Corps began to reinforce and relieve the British 2nd Division and the 33rd and 161st Indian Brigades. In the aftermath of the fighting around Kohima, the troops of the Fourteenth Army began an advance, with the relief of Imphal, which would continue until Burma had been recaptured. The battle was the turning point of the Battle of Kohima which was the watershed of the Burma Campaign. Earl Louis Mountbatten, the Supreme Allied Commander in the theatre, described Kohima as probably one of the greatest battles in history . . . in effect the Battle of Burma . . . naked unparalleled heroism . . . the British/Indian Thermopylae.



The tennis court and terraces of the District Commissioner’s bungalow in Kohima.

NORMANDY LANDINGS

6th June 1945

Juno Beach, the second beach from the east among the five landing areas of the Normandy Invasion of World War II. It was assaulted on June 6, 1944 (D-Day of the invasion), by units of the Canadian 3rd Infantry Division, who took heavy casualties in the first wave but by the end of the day succeeded in wresting control of the area from defending German troops.

The landing area code-named Juno Beach was approximately 10 km (6 miles) wide and stretched on either side of the small fishing port of Courseulles-sur-Mer. Two smaller villages, Bernières and Saint-Aubin, lay to the east of Courseulles. Smaller coastal villages lay behind the sand dunes and had been fortified by the occupying Germans with casemates and adjacent fighting positions.

The initial hazard for the invaders at Juno, however, was not the German obstacles but natural offshore reefs or shoals. These forced the assault waves to land later on D-Day morning than desired: H-Hour (the time that the first assault wave would hit the beach) was set for 0745 hours, so that the landing craft could clear

the reef on the rising tide. (It was later discovered that some of the "shoals" were actually seaweed.) Elements of the German 716th Infantry Division, particularly the 736th Regiment, were responsible for defense of the area, and the seafront houses offered them excellent observation and firing positions.

NORMANDY

*Troops of the Régiment de la Chaudière,
8th Brigade, pushing inland from Juno
Beach toward Bénvy-sur-Mer on D-Day,
June 6, 1944*



BORNEO CAMPAIGN

May – July 1945

Between May and July 1945, the Allies launched a three-pronged attack on Borneo, first at Tarakan and then six weeks later at Brunei Bay. These landings were conducted by the 9th Australian Division, which had

served at Tobruk and El Alamein in 1941 and 1942 and in New Guinea in 1943. Tarakan was to be captured in three weeks but Japanese held on for two months. There were nearly 900 Australian casualties, including 225 killed.

Thirty thousands Australians took part in landings at Brunei Bay on 10 and 16 June 1945. The town and airfield of Labuan were captured on the first day but strong Japanese resistance on the island continued until 21 June. In the meantime the

Australians were advancing in North Borneo and in Brunei and into Sarawak. There were about 350 Australian casualties, including 114 killed in the campaign.

The third Borneo operation was a major combined land air and sea

operation at Balikpapan on 1 July, the largest ever amphibious assault involving Australian forces. The troops for Balikpapan were the 7th Divisions, veterans of the Middle East and New Guinea. Balikpapan was one of the world's richest oil

centres and a major supplier of oil to the Japanese war machine. The Japanese had been pushed out off the coast area by 9 July and three weeks after the landing abandoned their positions and withdrew to the rugged hills of the island. Of the 850 Australian casualties, 229 men were killed.



BORNEO

Australian soldiers searching for mines shortly after landing at Balikpapan

VJ DAY CELEBRATIONS

15th August 1945

Whilst VE Day marked the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, many thousands of Armed Forces personnel were still involved in bitter fighting in the Far East.

Victory over Japan would come at a heavy price, and Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day) marks the day Japan surrendered on the 15 August 1945, which in effect ended the Second World War.

Fighting in the Asia-Pacific took place from Hawaii to North East India.

Britain and the Commonwealth's principal fighting force, the Fourteenth Army, was one of the most diverse in history – over 40 languages were spoken, and all the world's major religions represented. The descendants of

many of the Commonwealth veterans of that army are today part of multicultural communities up and down the country, a lasting legacy to the success and comradeship of those who fought in the Asia-Pacific.

This year we remembered the contribution of all Commonwealth

and Allied Forces, without whom victory and the freedoms and way of life we enjoy today would not have been possible.

When the Japanese surrendered in World War II, the historic news was all but eclipsed by the world-altering event that led up to it: the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, which happened 80 years ago this year.

“The greatest and most terrible of wars ended, this week, in the echoes of an enormous event – an event so much more enormous that, relative to it, the war itself shrank to minor significance,” read TIME magazine's first sentence of the first story that ran the first week after. “The knowledge of victory was as charged with sorrow and doubt as with joy and gratitude. More fearful responsibilities, more crucial liabilities rested on the victors even than on the vanquished.”

It was clear to all then that a great force had been unleashed, and those who had survived the awful war would be left to try to harness it.

In this Sept. 8, 1945 photo, an allied correspondent stands in front of a building that once was a movie theatre in Hiroshima, Japan, a month after the first atomic bomb ever used in warfare was dropped by the U.S. on Aug. 6, 1945.



WALTER LUMSDEN DCM, MM & BAR

1912-10th June, 1944

Taken from the West Lothian Courier on 23rd March, 1945.

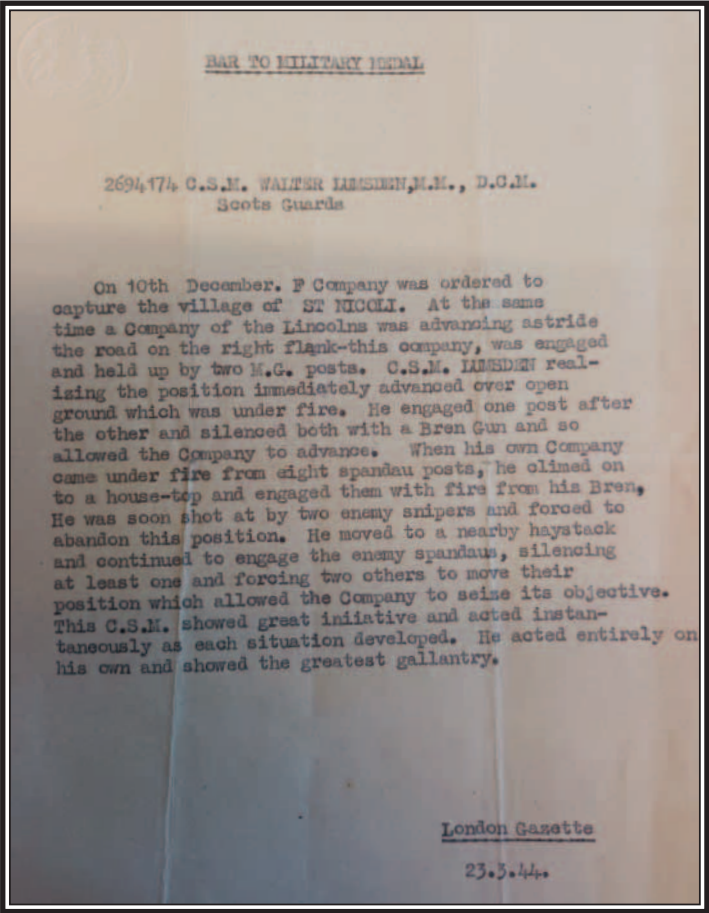
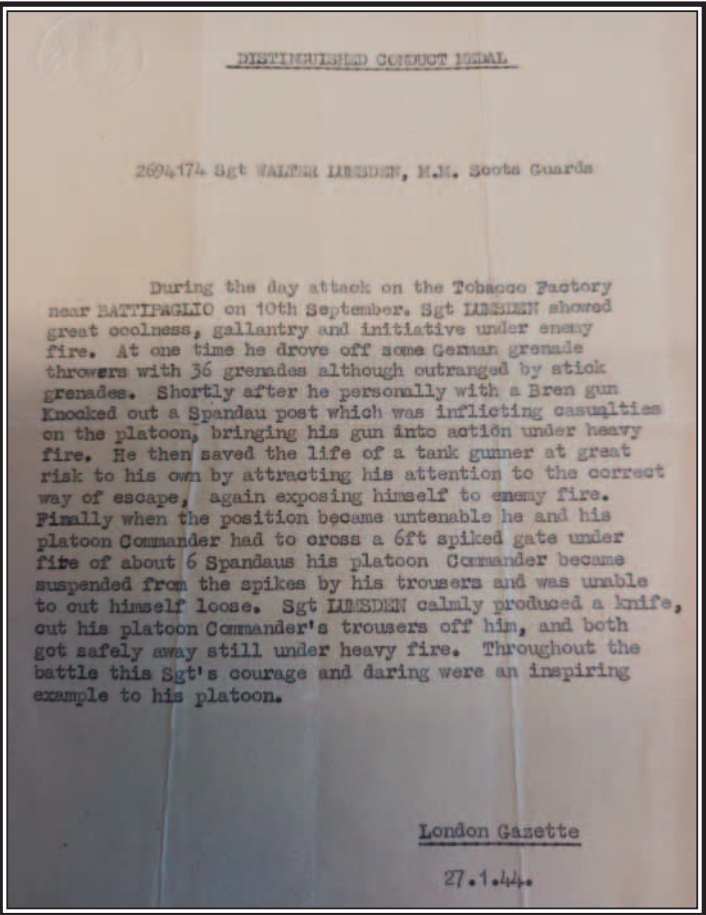
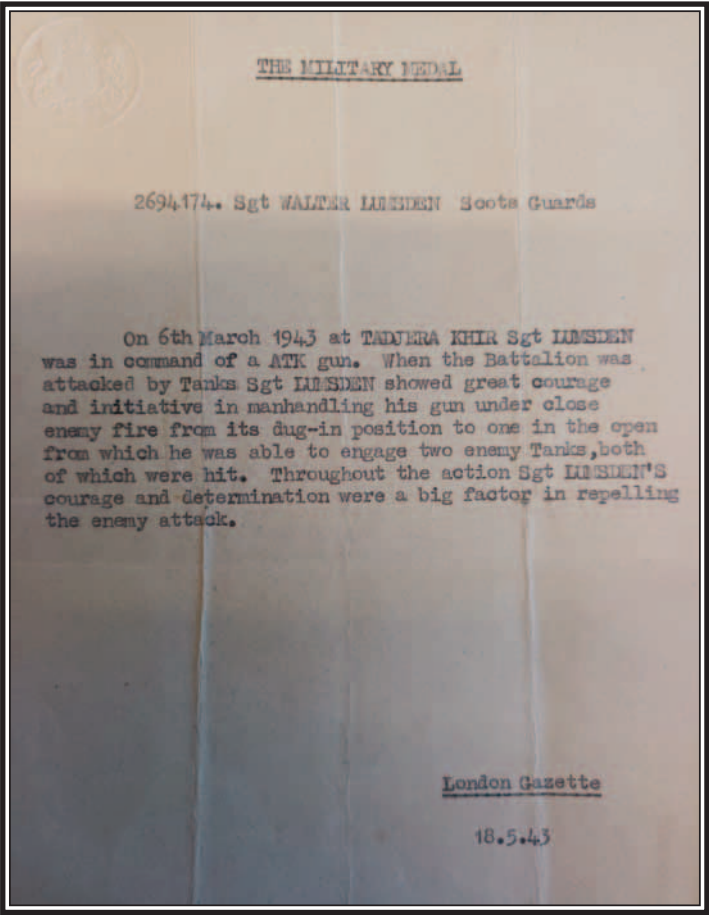
Official notification has been received by Mrs Walter Lumsden, who resides with her mother in law at 1 Haig Crescent, Bathgate, that her husband, Company Sgt Major Walter Lumsden, (32), DCM MM, Scots Guards has died of wounds in Western Europe. CSM Lumsden, who was a son of the late Mr Robert Lumsden and of Mrs Lumsden, was in the Army for three years previous to 1935 when he joined the Glasgow Police Force. He was called up three months after the outbreak of war and served with in the North African Campaign and in Italy, before proceeding to Western Europe. He won the Military medal and Bar and was later awarded the DCM for great coolness, gallantry, and initiative under heavy enemy fire during a day attack on the tobacco factory near Battipaglio on 10th September 1943. The citation stated:

“At one time he drove off some German grenade throwers with 36 stick grenades. Shortly after he personally with a Bren gun knocked out a Spandau post which was inflicting casualties on the platoon, bringing his gun into action under heavy fire. He then saved the life of a tank gunner at great risk to his own by directing his attention to the correct way of escape, again exposing himself to enemy fire. Finally, when the position became untenable, he and his platoon commander had to cross a 6 foot spike gate under the fire of about 6 Spandau’s – his platoon commander became suspended from the spikes by his trousers and was unable to cut himself loose, Sgt Lumsden calmly produced a knife and cut his platoon commander’s trousers off him, and both got safely away, still under heavy fire. Throughout the battle this Sgt’s courage and daring were an inspiring example to his platoon.”



While serving in the Glasgow Police Force, he was a prominent Scot’s amateur police boxer. His wife who came from Glasgow to reside in Bathgate after her husband was called up, is left with two children, a boy, and a girl.

The Lumsden Family are proud of Walter Lumsden and would like to thank ASA Scotland Charity for remembering a local hero.



THE SCOTS GUARDS DURING WWII

1939-1945

During the Second World War the principal centres of attention for the Scots Guards were North Africa, Italy and the moves through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany in 1944 and 1945 until the German surrender. The same arrangement for Battle Honours on the Colours was followed again.

In 1939 the 2nd Battalion was already stationed in Egypt. Early on the Italians were the only enemy, but when they were badly defeated and there was a risk of their being expelled from Libya the Germans intervened. In 1942 the Afrika Corps came into being, well equipped, trained and motivated and led by General Rommel. In one of the subsequent battles the 2nd Battalion, in the 201st Guards Brigade, held the Knightsbridge Box for two weeks under heavy attack, but because of other events nearby it was a severe British defeat. The Battalion's casualties were at a comparable level to a battle in the First World War and they won the Battle Honour

'Gazala'. The British withdrew to the Alamein position along the Egyptian border, which they held successfully ahead of the counterstroke at the Battle of Alamein. Revenge for Gazala came in March 1943 by which time the British were approaching the Tunisian border. General Rommel staged a major counterattack and, having just moved up to the most forward positions, the 201st Guards Brigade's anti tank guns destroyed the German tanks at point blank range in large numbers, resulting in the important Battle Honour **'Medenine'**. Apart from participation in the abortive campaign in Norway in 1940 the 1st Battalion was still in Britain. Late in February 1943 they embarked on board ship, destination unknown, but it was to North Africa. By this time British and American troops were well into Tunisia. The last German line of defence was in rough, rocky hills ('djebel' in Arabic) twenty five miles from Tunis itself. The 1st

Battalion, now in the 24th Guards Brigade, fought for two weeks here, suffering very heavy casualties, with thirst also a great strain. The Germans fought hard and the approaches to their positions were across the open, without any cover. The main objective of the 1st Battalion was a prominent outcrop dominating their area, nicknamed 'the Bou'. On 27 April the advance was obstructed by a German machine gun post and by an 88mm gun position close by on the flank of the Bou. Only Captain The Lord Lyell with four men were in the right place to do something about it. First they attacked the machine gun post which Lord Lyell demolished with a grenade. One of his men was then killed and the other three wounded, though two were still able to fire to support him. Lord Lyell dashed at the gun position across the open, killed most of its crew before being killed himself and was awarded a posthumous VC. The German positions at the Bou finally fell on 5 May. The Battle Honours **'Djebel Bou Aoukaz, 1943, I'** and **'North Africa, 1941-43'** were added to the Colours.

It was in North Africa that Colonel Archie Stirling of the Scots Guards formed and had the ideal conditions to carry out raiding operations behind the enemy lines with the Special Air Service Regiment.

The 2nd Battalion took part in the landings at Salerno on 9 September 1943. Initially, there was a disturbing lack of opposition, but why became apparent as the British and the Americans, further south, moved inland. The Germans had deployed small parties, well concealed in scrub and ditches, to snipe from behind the advancing troops. The 201st Guards Brigade then came across a large agricultural complex at Battipaglia, which, on the only German communication route behind their

positions, was of critical importance. The fighting was intense as both sides attacked and counterattacked and the casualties reflected it. The Allies just managed to hold onto what they had along the coast but it was a very close call before the enemy pulled back in the face of heavy bombing and shelling by the Royal Navy. A crewman on a landing craft said to a wounded Scots Guards officer he was looking after that he had heard that things were not going well ashore and asked him which Regiment he was in. On being told he said *"I reckon we'll be OK if the Guards are there."*

The British and American Armies advancing from the south of Italy joined up with those at Salerno and, as the autumn wore on and the conditions worsened, slowly and painfully moved on from each deep river valley across each mountain range beyond. The 2nd Battalion's next major battle began on 5 November and was finally concluded on 9 December, a grim and gruelling fight up steep rocky slopes on thoroughly prepared German positions. The main hill, with three high points and a monastery on the top, gave its name to the Battle Honour **'Monte Camino'**. Thereafter the struggle went on through the winter until the 2nd Battalion went home in March 1944.

In an attempt to speed matters up there was a plan to break into the German defences from behind by landing at Anzio just south of Rome. On 22 January 1944 the 1st Battalion was in this seaborne operation by both British and American troops. The problem at Anzio was that shortage of landing craft made it impossible to land a large enough force to give the American commander the confidence to land and advance rapidly to cut the main German supply route twelve miles inland. Instead he went for consolidation of the landings, so the Germans

had time to regroup and counterattacked in force over the coming weeks. There was nearly a disaster. Nothing but the most desperate fighting, with casualties comparable to a prolonged First World War battle, enabled the British and Americans to hang on. On 2 March the 1st Battalion was evacuated with a total strength of 238, having lost 666 all ranks, a third of them missing, mostly captured. The other two Battalions in the 24th Guards Brigade had suffered similarly. Scots Guardsmen should look at the Battle Honour **'Anzio'** with particular respect. The 1st Battalion fought in Italy till the end of the War by when half of all Scots Guardsmen who lost their lives had died there, the Battle Honour **'Italy, 1943-45'** being their memorial on the Colours.

Well ahead of the invasion of Normandy that began on D Day, 6 June 1944, the 6th Guards Tank Brigade formed in England and included the 3rd (Tank) Battalion Scots Guards, equipped with Churchill tanks. On 22 July they landed in France and would serve from then on mostly attached to the 15th (Scottish) Division. Their first battle in Normandy was the assault on a long ridge, known usually as the Battle of Caumont, but for which the Battle Honour **'Quarry Hill'**, part of the ridge, was awarded. The 3rd Battalion continued on into Belgium, Holland and finally Germany, the other Battle Honour attributable to them after the crossing of the frontier, but shared with others, being **'Rhineland'**. Since leaving Italy the 2nd Battalion had been reinforced, including with a large detachment of men transferred from the RAF, and trained for infantry operations in the Guards Armoured Division which it joined early in February 1944 and fought with to the end of the War, ending up near Bremen. Almost immediately after their arrival the



2nd Battalion in the Guards Armoured Division and the 3rd Battalion again with the 15th Division were in from the start in the Battle of the Rhineland. It was very cold, but that it was so wet was worse over terrain of large easily defensible woods, low lying farmland and fortified villages. The enemy had withdrawn across the Rhine by mid March. In the operations to cross the Rhine and subsequently the 6th Guards Tank Brigade were for a time working with the Americans following which the Brigade Commander received a message from General Matthew Ridgway, Commander of the US Airborne Corps, later the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe *"The period of our joint service has been brief but includes momentous days in a brilliant and now historic operation [the Rhine crossing and the advance to capture Münster]. The contribution of 6th Guards Armoured Brigade in the success of the whole operation has been conspicuously superior. On the occasions I have been privileged to mingle with elements of your command, I have felt at once that atmosphere, that intangible something almost physical, which only the finest troops create. I am deeply conscious of having had these incomparable troops in my Corps. I should like to express to you my appreciation of your unfailing and complete cooperation, and my high respect for your professional abilities and leadership."* Just after the German capitulation in May the 3rd Battalion had the unusual role of boarding and taking the surrender of a German submarine on the Baltic coast. The final Battle Honour was **'North West Europe, 1944-45'**.



Prime Minister Sir. Winston Churchill inspects the Scots Guards in Potsdam, 1945. This is one of Britain's oldest and most celebrated regiments, dating back to 1662. Plaque from St. David's Church

SCOTTISH REGIMENTS IN WW2



Royal Scots

The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment), once known as the Royal Regiment of Foot, was the oldest and most senior infantry regiment of the line of the British Army, having been raised in 1633 during the reign of Charles I. The regiment existed continuously until 2006, when it amalgamated with the King's Own Scottish Borderers to become the Royal Scots Borderers, which merged with the Royal Highland Fusiliers (Princess Margaret's Own Glasgow and Ayrshire Regiment), the Black Watch, the Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons) and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders to form the Royal Regiment of Scotland.



Highland Light Infantry

The Highland Light Infantry (HLI) was a light infantry regiment of the British Army formed in 1881. It took part in the First and Second World Wars, until it was amalgamated with the Royal Scots Fusiliers in 1959 to form the Royal Highland Fusiliers (Princess Margaret's Own Glasgow and Ayrshire Regiment) which later merged with the Royal Scots Borderers, the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment), the Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons) and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders to form the Royal Regiment of Scotland, becoming the 2nd Battalion of the new regiment.



Royal Scots Fusiliers

The Royal Scots Fusiliers was a line infantry regiment of the British Army that existed from 1678 until 1959 when it was amalgamated with the Highland Light Infantry (City of Glasgow Regiment) to form the Royal Highland Fusiliers (Princess Margaret's Own Glasgow and Ayrshire Regiment) which was later itself merged with the Royal Scots, King's Own Scottish Borderers, the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment), the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons) to form a new large regiment, the Royal Regiment of Scotland.



Royal Scots Dragoon Guards

The Royal Regiment of Scotland is formed from the existing six Scottish Infantry Regiments.

Post 2006: The Regiment has deployed worldwide in many areas of conflict and on peacekeeping duties.



Black Watch

The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland (3 SCOTS) is an infantry battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. The regiment was created as part of the Childers Reforms in 1881, when the 42nd (Royal Highland) Regiment of Foot (The Black Watch) was amalgamated with the 73rd (Perthshire) Regiment of Foot. It was known as The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) from 1881 to 1931 and The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) from 1931 to 2006. Part of the Scottish Division for administrative purposes from 1967, it was the senior Highland regiment. It has been part of the Scottish, Welsh and Irish Division for administrative purposes since 2017.



Gordon Highlanders

The Gordon Highlanders was a line infantry regiment of the British Army that existed for 113 years, from 1881 until 1994, when it was amalgamated with The Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons) to form The Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons). Although the 'Gordon Highlanders' had existed as the 92nd (Gordon Highlanders) Regiment of Foot since 1794, the actual 'Gordon Highlanders Regiment' was formed in 1881 by amalgamation of the 75th (Stirlingshire) Regiment of Foot and 92nd (Gordon Highlanders) Regiment of Foot.



Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders

The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's) is a light infantry company (designated as Balaklava Company, 5th Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland) and was a line infantry regiment of the British Army that existed from 1881 until amalgamation into the Royal Regiment of Scotland on 28 March 2006.

The regiment was created under the Childers Reforms in 1881, as the Princess Louise's (Sutherland and Argyll Highlanders), by the amalgamation of the 91st (Argyllshire Highlanders) Regiment of Foot and 93rd (Sutherland Highlanders) Regiment of Foot, amended the following year to reverse the order of the 'Argyll' and 'Sutherland' sub-titles. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders was expanded to fifteen battalions during the First World War (1914-1918) and nine during the Second World War (1939-1945). The 1st Battalion served in the 1st Commonwealth

Division in the Korean War and gained a high public profile for its role in Aden during 1967.

As part of the restructuring of the British Army's infantry in 2006, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were amalgamated with the Royal Scots, the King's Own Scottish Borderers, the Royal Highland Fusiliers (Princess Margaret's Own Glasgow and Ayrshire Regiment), the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) and the Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons) into the seven-battalion Royal Regiment of Scotland. Following a further round of defence cuts announced in July 2012, the 5th Battalion was reduced to a single light infantry company called Balaklava Company, 5th Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland, (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders).

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1939-1945*

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Sgt. John Richardson RAF

Sgt. Plt Hugh Smith RAF

Pte. Sydney Sutherland Smith RASC



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no man than this,
that a man lay
down his life for
his friends"**

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WWII CASUALTIES

World War II was the deadliest military conflict in history. An estimated total of 70–85 million deaths were caused by the conflict, representing about 3% of the estimated global population of 2.3 billion in 1940. Deaths directly caused by the war (including military and civilian fatalities) are estimated at 50–56 million, with an additional estimated 19–28 million deaths from war-related disease and famine. Civilian deaths totaled 50–55 million. Military deaths from all causes totaled 21–25 million, including deaths in captivity of about 5 million prisoners of war. More than half of the total number of casualties are accounted for by the dead of the Republic of China and of the Soviet Union. The following tables give a detailed country-by-country count of human losses. Statistics on the number of military wounded are included whenever available.

Recent historical scholarship has shed new light on the topic of Second World War casualties. Research in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union has caused a revision of estimates of Soviet World War II fatalities. According to Russian government figures, USSR losses within postwar borders now stand at 26.6 million, including 8 to 9 million due to famine and disease. In August 2009 the Polish Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) researchers estimated Poland's dead at between 5.6 and 5.8 million. Historian Rüdiger Overmans of the Military History

Research Office (Germany) published a study in 2000 estimating the German military dead and missing at 5.3 million, including 900,000 men conscripted from outside of Germany's 1937 borders, in Austria, and in east-central Europe. The Red Army claimed responsibility for the majority of Wehrmacht casualties during World War II. The People's Republic of China puts its war dead at 20 million, while the Japanese government puts its casualties due to the war at 3.1 million. An estimated 7–10 million people died in the Dutch, British, French and US colonies in South and Southeast Asia, mostly from war-related famine.

Compiling or estimating the numbers of deaths and wounded caused during wars and other violent conflicts is a controversial subject. Historians often put forward many different estimates of the numbers killed and wounded during World War II. The authors of the Oxford Companion to World War II maintain that 'casualty statistics are notoriously unreliable'. The table below gives data on the number of dead and military wounded for each country, along with population information to show the relative impact of losses. When scholarly sources differ on the number of deaths in a country, a range of war losses is given, in order to inform readers that the death toll is disputed. Since casualty statistics are sometimes disputed the footnotes to this article present the different estimates by official governmental

sources as well as historians. Military figures include battle deaths (KIA) and personnel missing in action (MIA), as well as fatalities due to accidents, disease and deaths of prisoners of war in captivity. Civilian casualties include deaths caused by strategic bombing, Holocaust victims, German war crimes, Japanese war crimes, population transfers in the Soviet Union, Allied war crimes, and deaths due to war-related famine and disease.

The sources for the casualties of the individual countries do not use the same methods, and civilian deaths due to starvation and disease make up a large proportion of the civilian deaths in China and the Soviet Union. The losses listed here are actual deaths; hypothetical losses due to a decline in births are not included with the total dead. The distinction between military and civilian casualties caused directly by warfare and collateral damage is not always clear-cut. For states that suffered huge losses such as the Soviet Union, China, Poland, Germany, and Yugoslavia, sources can give only the total estimated population loss caused by the war and a rough estimate of the breakdown of deaths caused by military activity, crimes against humanity and war-related famine. The casualties listed here include 19 to 25 million war-related famine deaths in the USSR, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and India that are often omitted from other compilations of World War II casualties.

Bodies on Juno Beach show the cost of the D-Day Landings

COMMONWEALTH NATIONS

VE & VJ DAY



When the United Kingdom declared war on Nazi Germany in September 1939 at the start of World War II, it controlled to varying degrees numerous crown colonies, protectorates, and India. It also maintained strong political ties to four of the five independent Dominions – Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand – as co-members (with the UK) of the British Commonwealth. In 1939 the British Empire and the Commonwealth together comprised a global power, with direct or *de facto* political and economic control of 25% of the world’s population,

and of 30% of its land mass. The contribution of the British Empire and Commonwealth in terms of manpower and material was critical to the Allied war-effort. From September 1939 to mid-1942, the UK led Allied efforts in multiple global military theatres. Commonwealth, Colonial and Imperial Indian forces, totalling close to 15 million serving men and women, fought the German, Italian, Japanese and other Axis armies, air-forces and navies across Europe, Africa, Asia, and in the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic, Indian, Pacific and Arctic Oceans. Commonwealth

forces based in Britain operated across Northwestern Europe in the effort to slow or stop Axis advances. Commonwealth Air Forces fought the Luftwaffe to a standstill over Britain, and Commonwealth armies defeated Italian forces in East Africa and North Africa and occupied several overseas colonies of German-occupied European nations. Following successful engagements against Axis forces, Commonwealth troops invaded and occupied Libya, Italian Somaliland, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Madagascar.

The Commonwealth defeated, held back or slowed the Axis powers for three years while mobilizing its globally-integrated economy, military, and industrial infrastructure to build what became, by 1942, the most extensive military apparatus of the war. These efforts came at the cost of 150,000 military deaths, 400,000 wounded, 100,000 prisoners, over 300,000 civilian deaths, and the loss of 70 major warships, 39 submarines, 3,500 aircraft, 1,100 tanks and 65,000 vehicles. During this period the Commonwealth built an enormous military and industrial capacity. Britain became the nucleus of the Allied war-effort in Western Europe, and hosted governments-in-exile in occupied Europe for the Allied cause. Canada delivered almost \$4 billion in direct financial aid to the United Kingdom, and Australia and New Zealand began shifting to domestic production to provide material aid to US forces in the Pacific.

Following the US entry into the war in December 1941, the Commonwealth and the United States coordinated their military efforts and resources globally. As the scale of the US military involvement and industrial production increased, the US undertook command in many theatres, relieving Commonwealth forces for duty elsewhere, and expanding the scope and intensity of Allied military efforts. Co-operation with the Soviet Union also developed. However, it proved difficult to co-ordinate the defence of far-flung colonies and Commonwealth countries from simultaneous attacks by the Axis powers. In part this difficulty was exacerbated by disagreements over priorities and objectives, as well as over the deployment and control of joint forces.

Although the British Empire emerged from the war as one of the primary victors, regaining all colonial territories that had been lost during the conflict, it had become financially, militarily and logistically exhausted. The British Empire’s position as a global superpower was supplanted by the United States, and Britain hitherto no longer played as great of a role in international as it had previously done so. Stoked by the war, rising nationalist sentiments in British colonies, in particular those in Africa and Asia, led to the gradual dissolution of the British Empire during the second half of the 20th century through decolonisation.



Naik (Cpl.) Yeshwant Ghadge VC

16th November 1921–10th July 1944
5th Mahratta Light Infantry Indian Army. Naik was awarded a Victoria Cross for actions at Upper Tiber Valley, Italy on 10 July 1944. Naik Ghadge was killed in the action, he was not recovered – he is commemorated on The Cassino Memorial, Italy.

Victory in Europe Day and Victory in Japan Day
The Soviet victory on the Eastern Front and the Normandy landings brought about the end of World War II in Europe. The Allies formally accepted the unconditional surrender of the armed forces of Nazi Germany and the end of Adolf Hitler’s Third Reich on 8 May 1945. The formal surrender of the occupying German forces in the Channel Islands was not until 9 May 1945. Hitler committed suicide on 30 April during the Battle of Berlin, and so the surrender of Germany was authorized by his replacement, President of Germany Karl Dönitz. The *act of military surrender* was signed on 7 May in Reims, France, and ratified on 8 May in Berlin, Germany.

The US-led victory over the Empire of Japan brought about the end of World War II in Asia. In the afternoon of 15 August 1945, the surrender of Japan occurred, effectively ending World War II. On this day the initial announcement of Japan’s surrender was made in Japan, and because of time zone differences it was announced in the United States, Western Europe, the Americas, the Pacific Islands, and Australia/New Zealand on 14 August 1945. The signing of the surrender document occurred on 2 September 1945.





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ROYAL FAMILY & CHURCHILL

King George VI died on 6 February 1952, and it fell to Edward Ford, the King's Assistant Private Secretary, to break the news to Winston Churchill at 10 Downing Street. "Bad news, the worst," he said, laying aside his papers and descending into considerable gloom. A few days later at the funeral, Churchill's wreath bore the simple words: "For Valour." By the time of his death, the King had earned the highest respect and admiration from his Prime Minister. On this the historians agree. Andrew Roberts, Churchill's latest biographer, wrote that during the war the King and Churchill formed a bond "that was eventually to become as strong as any Churchill enjoyed in public life." Sir John Wheeler-Bennett,

in the Abdication crisis. George VI and Elizabeth were appeasers by inclination. They were close friends of Lord Halifax, another contender for the post. None of this warmed them towards this rumbustious figure who took over the reins of power in wartime. Sir Alec Hardinge, then the King's Private Secretary, described Halifax as "always the court favourite," noting, "It took me a long time to get the King and Queen to look on the new Prime Minister with favour, but in the end the King at any rate made great friends with him."

A shared interest in the Royal Navy

and brother "for very many years" and wished him a reign "blessed by Providence" adding "new strength and lustre to our ancient Monarchy." By then Churchill had become somewhat disenchanted with the Duke of Windsor, the former King Edward VIII, who was causing trouble after the abdication. Churchill told his wife, Clementine: "I now realise that the other one wouldn't have done." King George VI's reply, written in his own hand, thanked Churchill for his "very nice letter," appreciated "how devoted" Churchill had been and still was to his "dear brother," and thanked him for his "sympathy and understanding in the very difficult problems that have arisen since he

when it became clear that Edward VIII was resolute on marrying Wallis Simpson and prepared to depart. George VI took on what Sir Alan Lascelles called "the most difficult job in the world" without the training and expectations of his elder brother. He and Queen Elizabeth were not at all sure that the British public would want them, though, as it soon transpired, the nation preferred the image of their quiet family life – Sunday lunch, a walk in the park, a cup of tea – to the brittle and unappealing cocktail-shaker and nightclub world of Edward and Mrs. Simpson. And George VI did indeed possess what the Duke of

Churchill, by contrast, was considered by many to be a warmongering figure. He had been, as Wheeler-Bennett put it, "uninhibited by slavish loyalty to any one party, unencumbered by over-long devotion to outworn political shibboleths." He had crossed the Chamber of the House of Commons.



George VI's official biographer, cited Churchill as "the man with whom he was to work in later years in such close accord for the salvation of their country."

It was not ever thus.

Churchill became the King's Prime Minister in 1940. At first the relationship was uneasy. The King and Queen Elizabeth were aware of the combative stand that Churchill had taken in regard to Edward VIII, urging him to fight his corner

created at least a superficial bond of interest. On this they were able to build. As Prince Albert, George VI had first met Churchill in 1912 when the latter, as First Lord of the Admiralty, came aboard the Royal Yacht *Victoria and Albert* to greet King George V.

At the time of George VI's Coronation in 1937, Churchill had made a stab at a loyal gesture, pointing out that he had served George VI's grandfather, father,

left us in December." The new King added that he fully realised "the great responsibilities and cares" that had now fallen upon him.

Different Men

Churchill and the King could hardly have been two more different men. George VI was a modest, shy, and retiring man, who had been propelled unexpectedly onto the throne in December 1936. He had had no idea that this was to be his fate until a few weeks before,

Windsor described as that "one matchless blessing, enjoyed by so many of you and not bestowed on me – a happy home with his wife and children." Queen Elizabeth was strong, with a moral backbone like a rod of iron. Though she would have strenuously denied being the power behind the throne, that is what she was. The new King only wanted to be a good constitutional monarch, and her support of him made this possible.

Was he a Liberal, a Constitutionalist, or a Conservative? He was full of oratory and bluster, a very different man from the King. He followed his instinct, often to his own advantage.

George VI had felt comfortable with Neville Chamberlain. He had been disappointed not to get Lord Halifax as the Prime Minister's successor. Wheeler-Bennett suggested that it was not

surprising if the King felt "somewhat overwhelmed by the very magnitude of Mr. Churchill's personality."

To Canadian Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King, George VI said that "He would never wish to appoint Churchill to any office unless it was absolutely necessary in time of war." By the time that Churchill entered the cabinet as First Lord of the Admiralty in September 1939, he was invariably

referring to George VI as “our noble King.” Nevertheless, His Majesty did not find Churchill easy to work with at first, noting: “Winston is difficult to talk to, but in time I shall get the right technique I hope.”

No Better Prime Minister

Churchill became Prime Minister in May 1940. It did not take the King long to appreciate his good fortune in having him as his wartime Prime Minister. George VI soon realised that Churchill was a man of stature as well as a certain charm, and such was the gravity of danger to Britain and the Commonwealth that the two were soon thrown together in mutual collaboration. In time this became one of friendship and mutual admiration. The King began to look forward to Churchill coming for an Audience. Each was able to unburden his mind.

As early as 10 September 1940, these formal audiences had been replaced by informal Tuesday luncheons at which no staff were present, the King and his Prime Minister serving themselves from a side-table and able to talk freely about state business. Occasionally the Queen joined them. There were times when these luncheons were interrupted by air raids. The



lunches continued for four and a half years, when both men were in London. Of these occasions Churchill later wrote: “I valued as a signal honour the gracious intimacy with which I, as first Minister, was treated, for which I suppose there has been no precedent since the days of Queen Anne and Marlborough during his years of power.”

A feature of the growing relationship was that the King at last felt that he was genuinely useful. He and the Queen paid innumerable visits to different parts of Britain and so he was able to give Churchill first-hand accounts of the mood in the country.

Buckingham Palace was bombed twice within three days in September 1940, and altogether in the war some nine times. Churchill commented in January 1941: “I have been greatly cheered by our weekly luncheons in poor old bomb-shattered Buckingham Palace & to feel that in Yr. Majesty and the Queen there flames the spirit that will never be daunted by peril, not wearied by unrelenting toil.” By February 1941, King George VI was confident enough to write: “I could not have a better Prime Minister.”

Troubled Waters

And so the relationship developed in a generally positive way. But it would be wrong to suggest that it was always harmonious. There were times when Churchill bulldozed his way through royal sensibilities. The King found that Churchill sometimes sent messages to the Nation that he felt should have come from him, while in 1942 Victor Cazalet noted “how Winston quite unconsciously has put [the King and Queen] in the background.”

Then in May 1944 the King and Churchill cooked up the idea that they would both like to sail in one of the bombarding warships on D-Day. It took the King’s Private Secretary, Sir Alan Lascelles, to point out the dangers to the King. He dissuaded him by asking him to brief eighteen-year-old Princess Elizabeth as to whom she should appoint to serve as Prime Minister in the event of the deaths of both the head of state and the head of government. The King took the point and furthermore realised that the captain of the warship in which they would travel would be inhibited from taking a full part in the action for fear of losing his distinguished passengers.

The King then set about trying to dissuade Churchill, describing the trip as a joy ride. Churchill was not pleased and brushed aside suggestions that he might be killed. The King was prepared to go down to Portsmouth to command Churchill in person not to sail. Churchill was finally persuaded to drop the idea by a sharp telephone call from Lascelles. But he was cross, complaining to the King about the unnecessary curbs placed on what he called “my freedom of movement when I judge it necessary to acquaint myself with conditions in the various theatres of war.” The King’s conclusion was: “I asked him as a friend not to endanger his life & so put me &

everybody else in a difficult position.”

Another area of disagreement involved the King’s wish to visit his troops in India in February 1945. Churchill felt that the political implications made this undesirable. This time the King was not pleased, though he suggested that the reason was entirely competitive. Had he gone, he would have been able to wear the Burma Star (medal), while Churchill would not.

Royal Friendship

Queen Elizabeth also helped the relationship. On one occasion she wrote out in her own hand a poem written in Napoleonic times and had it delivered to Downing Street, one line of which read, “the bad have finally earned a victory o’er the weak, the vacillating, inconsistent good.” This boosted Churchill’s morale.

The King held the Order of the Garter in the highest esteem and had negotiated with the Government that this would be in his personal gift, rather than a political appointment. He was so keen to bestow this on Churchill that he offered it to him three times. The first occasion was on 15 December 1944, whereupon Churchill became ‘all blubby,’ but declined because the war was not yet won. The second occasion was

on 23 May 1945 when Churchill resigned as Coalition Prime Minister. He declined on the grounds that there was a General Election pending. The third offer was made on 26 July 1945 when Churchill submitted his resignation after the Socialists won power. The King described this as “a very sad meeting” and told the outgoing Prime Minister that he thought the people “very ungrateful after the way they had been led in the war.” Queen Elizabeth II finally achieved her father’s wish by persuading Churchill to accept the Garter in 1953.

In September 1951, Churchill became deeply anxious about the King’s health and consulted his own doctor, Lord Moran, about the matter. Moran considered the various bulletins – the use of a bronchoscope implying cancer and the lack of reassurances. He explained this to Churchill. “The sense of history surrounding the throne of England and the mystery of death fanned the flame of his imagination,” wrote Moran. “The demise of the sovereign seemed to him like a revulsion of nature. He sat there, brooding darkly upon it.”

On 26 October 1951, Churchill was returned as the King’s Prime Minister. The King was not well, but was able to receive him, pleased to have Churchill back again. But this was to be a short

phase. On 6 February 1952, the King died in his sleep at Sandringham. On that day Churchill’s Private Secretary, Jock Colville, found Churchill with tears in his eyes: “I had not realized how much the King meant to him.”

The Prime Minister spoke eloquently to the Nation: “During these last months, the King walked with death, as if death were a companion, an acquaintance, whom he recognized and did not fear. In the end death came as a friend, and after a happy day of sunshine and sport, and after ‘good night’ to those who loved him best, he fell asleep as every man or woman who strives to fear God and nothing else in the world may hope to do.”

In the House of Commons he was more prosaic yet: “The late King lived through every minute of this struggle [World War II] with a heart that never quavered and a spirit undaunted; but I, who saw him so often, knew how keenly, with all his full knowledge and understanding of what was happening, he felt personally the ups and downs of this terrific struggle and how he longed to fight in it, arms in hand, himself.”

A relationship between King and first minister, which had begun somewhat indifferently, ended on the highest possible note.

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Enthusiastic Midnight Receptions

Enthusiastic scenes were witnessed in various towns and villages in West Lothian late on Friday night and into the early hours of Saturday morning, when men of the 14th (West Lothian) LAA Regiment Royal Artillery, returned home after four and a half years campaigning in the Egyptian, Libyan and Italian theatres of war. During its long period of service overseas the Regiment took part in the victorious operations in North Africa distinguishing itself particularly in the long siege and successful defence of Tobruk and latterly was engaged in the Italian campaign which led to the defeat and surrender of the German armies in that theatre.

The men to the number of 175, belonging to the 40th Bathgate Battery, 39th Linlithgow battery and the 57th South Queensferry battery arrived by train in Edinburgh about 11pm on Friday and were conveyed by special SMT buses to their respective destinations the numbers being made up as follows: – Bathgate 30, Linlithgow 23, South Queensferry 22, Broxburn and

Uphall 20, Winchburgh and Niddry 19, Whitburn 15, Kirkliston,12, Bo’ness 11, Armadale 5, Newbridge 6, Fauldhouse 5, Torphichen, Blackburn, Stoneyburn 5, and Livingston Station 2. The men who looked bronzed and fit stated that they were on a month’s leave. They said they had been given an official assurance that they would not be sent to Burma.



Former members of the Regiment and others travelled to Edinburgh and after greeting the men on their arrival directed them to the waiting buses but for these arrangements

made locally the men would have been compelled to spend the night in Edinburgh and as can be readily understood they were deeply appreciative of the facilities provided to enable them to reach home without delay.

Bathgate’s Rousing Welcome – Although the first expectations were that the Bathgate men were likely to arrive home about 7pm, it became known in the forenoon that the train bringing them from England was not due in Edinburgh until 11pm. This to some extent upset the preparations for their reception which were being made by Provost J Chapman and Councillor Hugh Ross, matters however were speedily adjusted and steps were taken to acquaint the public that the 40th Battery would probably reach Bathgate by midnight.

On their arrival in Edinburgh, the Bathgate and district men were met by former members of the 40th Battery in Major T Wolfe, Major A K Fleming and C/Lt A Davidson, who informed them of the arrangements made for their transport home, At Bathgate people began to collect in the vicinity of

George Place by eleven o’clock and an hour later the crowd must have numbered in the region of 5,000. Both sides of the street from the foot of Academy Street to George Place itself presented an animated scene. Seldom, if ever, has a larger assembly of people been seen at this focal point. Due to the enterprise of Councillor Ross, George Place was brilliantly illuminated from specially erected lamps at the top of his garage and this coupled with the loud speaker apparatus provided by Greig Bros., through which wireless programmes were heard, helped the crowd to while away the period of waiting. After midnight, Bailie Glen opened an impromptu programme by singing “Hail Caledonia” and then leading the crowd in community singing. Other members of the gathering also made their contributions to keep the assemblage in happy mood.

Among the official party who had collected to give the men a civic welcome were Provost Chap-man, Bailies Aitken and Glen, Ex Bailie Jeffrey, Councillors Wheelan and Ross, Major T Wolfe, Provost Drysdale, Whitburn and Capt L Brown, Fauldhouse.

Leaving the buses on their arrival at the foot of Academy Street at 12:40 am, the men, after many of them had been warmly greeted by their wives and other relatives, formed up, and headed by Torphichen Pipe Band under Pipe Major Forrest, marched along King Street to George Place, coming to a half in front of the Post Office. The scene was now one of exuberant enthusiasm and the returned warriors had difficulty in making their way through the dense crowd who rent the air with resounding

cheers. It was indeed an unforgettable spectacle and one that must have thrilled the men who, amid rather moving scenes, left their native town just before the outbreak of war in September 1939.

There was a stroke of genius in the choice of tune to which the pipers played in the returning warriors. It was Hyslop’s grand old song *Scotland the Brave* with its singularly appropriate beginning – “Let Italy boast of her bloom shaded waters.”

When the men halted at George Place, they were addressed by Provost Chapman. After intimating the arrangements made for conveying the men to the outlying district the provost said he thought they could have no doubt of the warmth of their reception when they looked at the crowd who had stood there for the last hour.

The fame of the regiment and their deeds had proceeded them but as they had travelled a long way and were more concerned about getting home to their loved ones than to listen to anything he might say, he would defer what he had to say to some future occasion. All he wished to do that night was to give them a very hearty welcome indeed to Bathgate and to say that they were exceedingly proud of them.

The Provost thereupon called for three hearty cheers, which were given in a rousing manner.

The men afterwards joined their relatives, although so dense was the crowd that contact in some cases was only made after directions had been broadcast through the loudspeaker.

The crowd, whose behaviour had been exemplary throughout thereafter quietly dispersed.

West Lothian Courier 18th May 1945

Welcome Home

To the 14th L.A.A. Regt R.A.
(to the West Lothian Royal Scots)
(BY A M BISSET)

After the surge of battle,
The crash and roar of the guns
Welcome! a thousand welcomes
West Lothian’s valiant sons
Our hearts were always with you
they followed you everywhere
And that God safe home would
bring you
Was the burden of many a prayer.

But ‘mid our cheers and rejoicing,
Our hearts are flooded o’er
As we mourn with proud-souled
sorrow,
Our lads who’ll return no more.

In the flush and the pride of
manhood,
They gave all they had to give
That we and all they held dearest
In freedom and peace might live.

At Tobruk, unflinching and
undaunted
You won undying fame
And bright on the scroll of glory
You inscribed West Lothian’s name

Surrounded and isolated
You held the foe at bay
And turned defeat into triumph
On that great and glorious day.

North Africa, Salerno,
Naples Cassino, Rome
The Gothic Line – you stormed
them
And blasted your passage home!

So brave, gallant lads we hail you
And welcome you home again
Proud, proud of your fame and
honour
West Lothian’ valorous men.



ASA SCOTLAND CHARITY 2015-2025

As a voluntary non-profit OSCR registered charity we do our absolute best to educate and inform young people across Scotland about our Armed Forces heritage from WW1, WW2 to the present day in Afghanistan. We remember all those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our Sovereign and Nation, we hold Remembrance events each year. We support and promote our Armed Forces heritage, our Armed Forces Charities events, and our own legacy projects. We engage with the Sea, Army and Navy Cadets across Scotland, the feedback from cadets has been tremendous. We work with schools and Councils across Scotland.



Our Patron was Lt. Colonel Gary Tait MBE QCVS CGSC MA who sadly passed away in June 2019, he lost his brave fight to cancer at the age of just 52, our charity will now carry on his legacy.

Gary Tait video message 2018
<https://youtu.be/tRAVMCy2c8>

Our charity was formed in Bathgate, Scotland in 2015 and in 2016 we visited the Battlefields in France and Belgium. We travel across Scotland, we receive no financial support from the Scottish Government or UK Government, we are teaching local, National,

UK, Commonwealth history.

We are bringing our Scottish and British heritage to the fore again so that we never forget and never repeat history. We reach out to everyone, our aim is to bring people, young and old together.

We have had fantastic success in West Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Perth, Glasgow, Edinburgh, East Lothian, Lanarkshire, Fife and now Cumbria.

In 2016 we engaged with schools across West Lothian to raise awareness around the Battle of the Somme. ASA Scotland were given a Civic Reception by West Lothian Council. We also held a Commemoration Service in St Michael's Church attended by young people, cadets, Veterans, Armed Forces, all political parties' representation and Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Mrs Isobel Brydie CVO MBE who congratulated our charity work on behalf of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

In 2017 Alexander Stewart MBE MSP joined the charity as an Ambassador, he raised motions in the Scottish Parliament promoting our charity. In 2017, we engaged with Uphall Primary School, we supported the young people's learning from WW1 and we Commemorated the Battle of Passchendaele, learning about a

local Hero Cpl Robert Beveridge MM, with the support of the Lowland Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and 6 SCOTS, we arranged a Commemoration Service in Uphall. Our Ambassador Singer Alan Brydon taught children his song 'The Road to Passchendaele', also 'Jimmy's Song' which all young people now watch as part of our learning of what happened during the Great War.

In spring 2018, we created our Ribbon of Poppies UK & Commonwealth Annual Campaign. The aim each year is to encourage young people to sow the Poppy seeds and for adults to explain the importance of remembrance and of the work of our Armed Forces, Past, Present and Future. Also teaching young people about the role of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Commander in Chief of our British Armed Forces. Example of our work: <https://www.forces.net/radio/scottish-primary-pupils-remember-passchendaele-heroesIn>.

We raised £4,000 through online raffles and donations donated £2,000 to Soldiers Off the Streets charity and £2,000 donated to Combat Stress – supporting Veterans.



May 2018, we held an RAF 100 event in Grangemouth in Partnership with Falkirk Council. Group Captain Bob Kemp CBE supported ASA Scotland to inform our school children, air cadets, veterans, community, and guests about the 100yr heritage of the RAF. We created a RAF learning booklet for schools, leaving a legacy for generations to come. In 2018 Alison Moodie OBE joined our charity.

In May 2018 we purchased a WW1 Tommy from the "There But Not There" charity, we toured Scotland and utilised social media to educate young and old of the brave Tommies who left the 4 corners of our Nation. We visited Hampden Park, Murrayfield the home of Scottish Rugby, various Football Clubs, St Andrews Golf Course, Freuchie Cricket Club, the Tommy was then gifted to the Scottish Parliament, leaving a legacy of Britain's Bravest. This campaign was fantastic as it gained maximum publicity on Scottish TV and within the Scottish Press.

In 2018 Rev Stephen Blakey became our Chaplain/Padre. His support has been fantastic, and he supports our ethos of bringing people together to Commemorate and to Celebrate our Armed Forces heritage.

In August 2018 we became a constituted charity, regulated by OSCR, charity number SC048597

In 2018, we agreed with Lt Col Gary Tait to Commission a D-Day 75th painting. This would be completed and revealed on the 5th May 2019.

In 2018, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust gifted us 10 Tommy silhouettes, which were used during our WW1 Commemoration Services.

In October 2018 we held a tri-Service Great War Commemoration Service inviting children, veterans, people from across Edinburgh and Scotland to



remember all those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation. The Service was held in the Kirk of the Canongate, Edinburgh, conducted by our Chaplain Stephen Blakey. We also created a Great War learning booklet which we now share with young people and cadets across Scotland.

In November 2018, from our Ribbon of Poppies UK & Commonwealth Campaign, we raised £1,918 for Poppyscotland to support our Veterans.

In 2018 we were awarded £9,800 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to support the project 'Whitburn Families of the Great War' this project was completed in September 2019. We created a website and booklet for schools leaving a legacy.

In November 2018 we worked with the Whitburn schools and community to ensure the Great War was commemorated at Whitburn South Parish Church conducted by Dr Rev Angus Kerr Ex-KOSB Padre. This was a huge community success.

On 5th May 2019, we invited young people, local families, Veterans to Whitburn South Parish Church Hall and Celebrated and Commemorated D-Day 75, we also unveiled our D-Day Commissioned painting, by Scots artist Helen Runciman. The evening was supported by Whitburn Brass Band and singer Amy Hawthorn as Vera Lynn and Singer Mia Lewington. Group Captain Bob Kemp CBE, gave an excellent overview of the events leading up to D-Day and the aftermath.

In May 2019 our charity created a Memorial Cairn at Whitburn War Memorial to 13 men missing from the town's War Memorial for 100yrs. We had great support from Meg Stenhouse local West Lothian Historian. We arranged a Commemoration Service inviting young people, cadets, veterans, Armed Forces, all political parties and our guest of honour was Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for West Lothian Ms Moira Niven MBE. This was supported by the Community and West Lothian Council. We left a legacy so that in 25yrs time, the next generation can pick up the torch.

In 2019 our Association worked with Crookston Castle Primary, Greater Pollock, Glasgow, to teach them about Fusilier Gordon Gentle who lost his life in the Iraq War, serving Queen and Country, sadly Gordon paid the ultimate sacrifice. Our charity worked with Gordon's old primary school, his mother Rose Gentle, the Royal Regiment of Scotland and we gifted a lovely LEST WE FORGET memorial bench, leaving a legacy of this brave young soldier, who died at the age of 19yrs old, we marked his death 15yrs to the day. Every generation coming through this school will now learn about Fusilier Gordon Gentle. The Daily Record and Scottish Sun Newspapers printed the wonderful story.

Our 2019 our 'Ribbon of Poppies UK & Commonwealth' Campaign donation will support the 'Veterans With Dogs' Charity, with a donation of £1,000 from the sale of Poppy Seeds.

In July 2019 we were invited and

honoured to attend Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Garden Party at Holyrood, Edinburgh.

On the 25th October 2019 our charity presented a D-Day 75th framed picture to the Kirk of the Canongate, leaving a lasting memory of Lt Col Gary Tait MBE, his legacy will live on through our education work and remembrance events each month and each year.

Monday 4th November 2019, we visited Kirkfieldbank Primary School, Lanark to present a 'Lest We Forget' Remembrance bench to recognise the work they have been doing in Partnership with our charity.

Thursday 7th November 2019, we visited Greenrigg Primary School, West Lothian to explain our WW1/WW2 and the role of our Armed Forces today. We gifted a 'LEST WE FORGET' Remembrance Bench to recognise the young people and the school for the the ongoing work they are doing to learn about their local Armed Forces heritage as well as the role of the Armed Forces today.

During the COVID 19 Pandemic 2020, we never stood still, we were resilient, we adapted and created online events and raised £20,000 creating auctions and raffles and donated this to the NHS U.K. Charities.

During 2020 we raised £520 online and donated this to BLESMA forces charity.

ASA Scotland also raised £30,000 via virtual online auctions and raffles, and created a fitting Memorial Bust in Partnership with Falkirk Council in memory of a British SAS Hero John (Mac) McAleese. This was unveiled by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Alan Simpson OBE. The support across the community and across the Nation was fantastic. The local and National Press shared this project with the UK public. A learning booklet was created and now used as a child's learning in local schools.



During 2020 we raised £4,000 online to create Memorial Benches for schools and Communities.

In 2021 we presented Memorial Benches to Portobello High School in Memorial of Lt Col Gary Tait; Prestonfield Primary School in memory of Mark Wright GC and another in memory of Sgt Sean Connor Binnie who died in Afghanistan. We also donated Memorial Benches to the Kirk of Canongate in memory of Lt Col Gary Tait MBE and one to the mother of Pte Daniel Wade from Cheshire in 2022.

During 2021 we engaged with Uphall Community and local schools to create the first Purple Poppy Memorial in Uphall, West Lothian to remember the Animals that have served our Nation – past, present, and future. We received a grant of £10,000 to create this fitting memorial. Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Ms Moira Niven MBE unveiled this memorial. We created a learning booklet for schools, leaving a legacy for future generations.

In October 2021 we started



engaging with schools across the Nation to prepare to Celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee 2022.

In November 2021 we met up with Colourful Heritage to discuss a Memorial to remember the sacrifice of the British Indian Army, this is to bring Muslims, Sikhs, Gurkhas, Christian's and people of no faith to remember those who have served – past, present and future.

In November 2021 we donated £1,000 to Bainsford War Memorial Association, we are assisting them to create a Memorial, a learning booklet for schools and to create an event in 2022

During 2022, we traveled to Kingussie Cemetery to pay our respects and honour the British Indian Army. We supported the Colourful Heritage charity.

In 2022, we laid a 'THANK YOU' stone, to the NHS, All Key Workers and our Armed Forces who served the Nation during COVID-19. This was unveiled by Cllr Ann Davidson and West Lothian's Lord Lieutenant Ms Moira Niven MBE.

In 2022 we unveiled the Jamie Ferguson Memorial Bench to Leuchars Primary School, Fife, special guests were the Lord Lieutenant of Fife and Fife's Lord Provost Jim Leishman.

In 2022 we unveiled the Mark Wright GC Memorial Bench at Prestonfield Primary school, Edinburgh, our special guest was the family, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh and guests from the Parachute Regiment.



In 2022 we gifted a Platinum Jubilee Bench to Bathgate Academy, Leuchars Primary School, Edinburgh Castle and Balmoral Estate in Aberdeenshire.

In May 2023 we supported the Girlguides in Bonnybridge with THE BIG HELP out, picking up litter, all part of the Kings Coronation. We also donated a tree which was planted by His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Alan Simpson OBE.

In May 2023, we Commemorated the Dambusters 80 as well as they 10th Anniversary of the Spitfire Memorial at Grangemouth. We also donated £500 to the Air Cadets in Falkirk.

Guests included: Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Edinburgh, Mr Lukasz Lutostanski, Depute Lord Lieutenant Sir Iain McMillan CBE DL, Squadron Leader Tom McMorro MBE, Projects Officer for Scotland and Northern Ireland Region RAF Air Cadets, Provost of Falkirk and Stirling, Depute Provost of West Lothian Council and many other guests.

1st August 2023 – ASA Scotland Gunner Willie Thornton 80th Commemoration. Guest included Depute Lord Lieutenant Rev John Povey, Thornton Family, Rangers FC Historian David Mason, Ex Rangers FC and Scotland Legend Willie Henderson, Scottish FA Jennifer Malone, Winchburgh Albion Youth Team's & Coaches and the general public. Our thanks to Rev Stephen A Blakey.

August 23rd 2023 – Annual Purple Poppy Day at Uphall, with a small service.

Major-General

Alastair Andrew Bernard Reibey Bruce of Crionaich CB OBE VR DL

August 26th 2023 – Annual Armed Forces Day at Laurieston, attended by Veterans, Royal British Legion, Grangemouth, His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Alan Simpson OBE.

November 10th 2023 – invited to attend the unveiling of a Memorial Bench gifted to RHQ, The Royal Regiment of Scotland Association, at Edinburgh Castle for the families of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. Major General Robert Bernard Bruce, CBE, DSO unveiled the memorial with Jan Binnie, a military mother who lost her son in Afghanistan 2009.

November 11th 2023 – ASA Scotland in Partnership with Falkirk Council gifted a Commemorative bench, a Memorial Stone and Remembrance flag to the Royal British Legion Scotland to mark 100th Anniversary of the RBL, this was delayed due to COVID years.

May 2024 we delivered a community DDay 80th Commemorative Event, held in Bathgate Regal Theatre with local schools taking part supported by Whitburn Brass Band. Our guest were the Depute Lord Lieutenant Caroline MacLachlan and Bob Kemp CBE. The event hosted by our Chairman Councillor Harry Cartmill.

August 2024 we delivered our first large full day, Purple Poppy & Armed Forces Day at Callendar Park, Falkirk. Approx 30 Stalls, Military displays, Police Scotland dog display, singers and dancers. Lots of dogs, some horses, and ponies. A fantastic community and family event. We gifted a Purple Poppy Memorial Bench to the people of Falkirk, it was unveiled by our Patron His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Alan Simpson CVO, OBE, FRSE.

August 23rd 2024 we held our Annual Purple Poppy Day at Uphall, with a small service. The guest was Depute Lord Lieutenant Ms Kennedy and guests from Uphall Community Council.

August 26th 2024 – Annual Armed Forces Day at Laurieston, attended by Veterans, Royal British Legion Grangemouth, Cadet Forces, and ASA Scotland Patron His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Alan Simpson CVO, OBE, FRSE

August 27th 2024 – we part funded the Major General Strudwick Memorial Bench and attended St John Scotland, West Lothian, unveiling ceremony at the Torphichen Preceptory.

October 2024 – our hill walking team, raised £1,030 for Veterans, walking 76 miles completing the Great Glen Challenge.

October 2024 – we held a community Military open day at Laurieston Pensioners Hall, engaging with the Veterans, cadets, local community and young people. We displayed all our military artefacts, creating interest for those in attendance.

November 2024 – we gifted the Willie Thornton Cup and Player of the Year Cups to Winchburgh Albion Youth Football Club.

November 2024 – with public and family support we purchased 2 Memorial Benches to remember Sergeant Jonathan Mathews, one was gifted to Catterick Garrison and the 2nd was gifted to the Royal British Legion Prestonpans Branch. We held 2 memorial services which were well attended. Johnathan was KIA in Afghanistan





in 2008, these benches and events gave the family comfort. A legacy educational booklet was produced by the charity.

November 2024 – our educational outreach work with schools – we received fantastic feedback from pupils and teachers. Young people and teachers really enjoy our presentations, handling artefacts and Q & A sessions. The engagement, learning and understanding of our Armed Forces heritage is beneficial.

December 2024 – £1,030 was raised by our Hill Walking Team, this was then donated back to Veterans to help them with food during winter.

2025 – we aim to achieve even more, volunteering more time to help assist and support Veterans.

All of the above would not be possible without the hard work from our Trustees, Ambassadors, Members and the public who have supported our charity over the past 10 years.

Nominated for Queen’s Award Voluntary Service 2020
 Awarded Armed Forces Covenant Trust Bronze Award 2022, Ms Moira Niven MBE – His Majesty’s Lord Lieutenant for West Lothian – a long supporter of the work of the charity since 2017

ASA Scotland Charity Patron His Majesty’s Lord Lieutenant for Stirling and Falkirk, Alan Simpson CVO, OBE, FRSE

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LORD LOVAT’S PIPER

Piper Bill Millin

Originally from Regina, Saskatchewan of Scottish descent, Bill Millin moved to Scotland just prior to WW2 and joined the pipe band of the 7th Battalion, HLI. He subsequently transferred to the Cameron Highlanders – then volunteered for the Lovat Scouts.

During his commando training, he was approached by Lord Lovat and accepted a post as his personal piper. At the time, Lovat’s father was the President of the Piobaireachd Society.

Despite a ban on ‘War Pipers’ (an easy target for the enemy), Brigadier General Lovat defied the rule – and 21 year old Millin turned out to be the only piper on Sword Beach for the D-Day landing on Normandy.

While still on the landing craft, Millin played *Road to the Isles*. The



skirl of his pipes were amplified through a loud hailer – over the din of gunfire and explosions. Wearing his fathers’ WW1 Cameron kilt, Millin was ordered by Lovat to play *Highland Laddie* as he disembarked and began to play on the the beach –

armed only with his pipes and a sgian-dubh in his hose-top. He later remarked “Wounded men were shocked to see me. They had been expecting to see a medic. Instead, they saw me in my kilt and playing the pipes. It was horrifying, as I felt so helpless”.



The movie **The Longest Day** features Leslie de Laspee (piper to the Queen Mother) as Millin piping at the Pegasus Bridge crossing. Following the war, Bill Millin worked on Lord Lovat’s estate for several years, travelled and did D-Day lectures in the USA. He was there to play *Lord Lovat’s Lament* at Lovat’s funeral in 1995. His pipes were donated to the National War Museum in Edinburgh on the 60th Anniversary of D-Day.

The D-Day pipes are located at the Dawlish Museum in England, along with his beret and a kilt in their permanent Bill Millin display. In 2003, Bill suffered a stroke and passed in 2010 at the age of 88. Both his son Bill and grandson Jacob have registered and will be playing at 3pm (GMT) on 8 May 2020 – please make sure you register as well!



BATHGATE WAR HERO

Bathgate war hero is awarded France’s highest honour for his bravery during World War II.

Malcolm McCuaig, who died aged 95 in March 2021, was awarded the Legion D’honneur by the French government for his part in overcoming Hitler’s army in the country during WWII.

Having volunteered to join the army as part of a bet in 1941, Malcolm went on to serve at home, in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and in the far east.

Story Credit: Daily Record



Malcolm with Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Ms Moira Niven MBE pictured in 2021.

SPONSORS



ASA Scotland would like to thank Bathgate Community Council and Bathgate Community Centre Management Committee for support our VE DAY 80th Commemoration.



The Board of Trustees would like to thank the families who have trusted our charity to commission memorials. We would also like to thank all schools, communities, businesses, organisations and individuals who have assisted and supported the charity over the past 10 years.

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