



The Monte Cassino Society

Furthering an interest in the Italian Campaign 1943–1945

NA15141

Spring/Summer 2013

Welcome

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Newsletter.

As you can see from the photo opposite, our Memorial site in the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas is now complete with three stone benches enclosing our area.



On Saturday 18th May over one hundred members attended our first Memorial Service followed by afternoon tea. We were again fortunate to have Rev. Tony Wood lead the service as he did last year for our Dedication Service. Reveille and the Last Post was played by our own Garth Wright and the Pipes and Drums of the Stoke on Trent Black Watch Association led us down to the Memorial, playing for the hymn and a selection of music after the service.

Paul Taylor and John Leach have been working very hard putting together a very interesting itinerary for our trip to Cassino in

May 2014—the 70th anniversary. They made a short visit to Italy, meeting with Flavio our friend of many years, who will once again be with us for the week.

Veterans will no doubt have heard that the Heroes Return 2 funding has been extended and is open to all, including those who have already received a grant under the scheme. In addition, it is now open to widows including those married after the end of the war. I will again be making a joint application on behalf of our members.

Judith Coote
Daughter of the late Gerald Soady
91st LAA, Royal Artillery,
4th British Infantry Division

News

Inside this issue:

Welcome	1
News	1
New Members	4
Letters	4
Articles	5
Books	7
In Memoriam	8

Memorial Service at the National Memorial Arboretum

Saturday May 18 –what a great day we had. The weather was (almost) kind to us, a bit windy and overcast but the sun shone on the righteous for the service, which once again was taken by the Rev. Tony Wood.

The turnout was just over one hundred members on the day. I hope all that attended had an enjoyable and convivial day. Can I just thank all who so generously donated towards the costs of the event?

Both Paul and John told us of the progress made towards the trip to Italy next year but

basically—put your name down and send in your deposit a.s.a.p.

Judith and I have been approached on two points:-

- 1 to have our own tie/scarf
- 2 our own standard.

On the first there is no problem. Basically this would be a picture of the Abbey in gold thread with Monte Cassino Society written underneath. The only question is what colour the background of the tie should be. Suggestions welcome.

On the second, a standard is also possible,

News (continued)

with the Abbey in the centre, wording (if any), colours and surrounding border. Suggestions and designs welcome.

Our ultimate goal would be to have our new standard presented to us, by a Royal, at Cassino next year.

Have a good summer.

Mike Anslow



SELECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY SUSAN DEADMAN , STAN PEARSON AND JOHN LEWIS



News (continued)

70th Anniversary Pilgrimage to Cassino

May 2014

Plans are now finalised for our visit to Cassino next May. Details of dates and itinerary can be found on the enclosed booking form and we would ask if you intend coming with us that you complete and return the booking form, together with deposit, to Paul as soon as possible. We will require the balance shortly after New Year.

Our base this time is in the Hotel Rocca a few miles from Cassino. You can check out the hotel on their website—www.hotelrocca.it or on most travel sites. The hotel has minibuses available to take guests into town should they wish to take a train to, for example Rome or Naples. Some of our members will be hiring cars and will gladly help with personal visits if required.

As a result of our letters to the Veterans Minister, he has asked our Embassy in Rome to organise a Commemorative Service and they are presently contacting embassies of the other nations involved. The Poles are having their own service at their War Cemetery on the 18th.

Land Dinner- Celebrating the Soldier—at the Joint Services Command and Staff College

In February four of our veterans were guests of honour at a dinner attended by 300 senior officers from the joint services. This year the dinner honoured soldiers who fought at Cassino. The Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Peter Wall KCB CBE ADC Gen was guest speaker and paid tribute to all those involved but spoke in particular of the service of our four veterans, Gordon Cruse, Theo Davies, Jim Knox and Henry McKenzie Johnston.

The very large foyer was transformed with a mock up of Monte Cassino and the Abbey and before dinner we were treated to a Khukuri display by the 1st Bn The Royal Gurkha Rifles, an hilarious display by members of the Royal Army Physical Training Corps and a Drums display by the Coldstream Guards Corps of Drums. The band of the Coldstream Guards played throughout the evening ably assisted by two Pipers. It was a wonderful evening, an evening those of us privileged to attend will never forget.



BRIGADIER C.J. THACKRAY, JIM KNOX, GORDON CRUSE, MIKE ANSLOW, GEN. SIR PETER WALL, JUDITH COOTE, HENRY MCKENZIE JOHNSTON, THEO DAVIES & LT COL H. CORMACK

The Big Lottery Fund

Heroes return 2

The Fund set up to help veterans commemorate the anniversaries of events that led to the end of the Second World War has been extended. The terms and conditions have been amended and now include carers for spouses as well as veterans; widows, including those married after the end of hostilities, who also can take a carer. It is a generous amount which is intended to cover the cost of insurance.

The grants for Italy are as follows:

One person—veteran or widow	£880
Two —veteran or widow & carer	£1570
Three—veteran, spouse & carer	£2420
Four—veteran & carer, spouse & carer	£3140

If you would like us to make application for you, please contact Judith Coote— contact details page 8.



JUDITH WITH OUR MAIN HOST FOR THE EVENING, LT.COL.JO CHESTNUTT

News (continued)

Buckingham Palace Garden Party

The Not Forgotten Association have invited eight of our members to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 2nd July. This is written in advance of the event but it is hoped that one of those attending will let us know all about it in a future newsletter.

Whether it is the onset of the 70th or for some other reason, to date this year we have had two invitations and this may very well increase as the 70th approaches.

We would very much like to hear from those members interested in accepting future invitations rather than having to approach members, or even put names into a hat!

If you would be interested, please inform Judith Coote, con-

Subscriptions/Donations

A reminder to those who have still to pay this year's subscription; £12 for family members and friends.

Apologies to those who have already paid and new members who have very recently paid.

Due to rising costs, particularly postage, in future we will not be sending receipts unless asked.

Please make cheques payable to The Monte Cassino Society and send to Judith Coote—address page 8

Letters

Dear Mr. Anslow

As a supporter of the British Legion I note that there is a Monte Cassino Society and that you are to hold your Memorial Day soon. I am one of a group of ten that makes an annual visit to wartime locations to remember and humbly respect the extraordinary bravery and awful sacrifice that was suffered so that we may live in freedom. Our trip this year centred on Monte Cassino and its surroundings including San Pietro Infine, Anzio and Salerno. We were fortunate to have a wonderful guide and visited many sites that are off the beaten track. We prepare and study for our visits but nothing could really prepare us for Monte Cassino itself. We now understand the terrible conditions and extraordinary challenges facing those that served there. I hope you will not regard this as an intrusion but I wanted your Society to know that we hold those who served there in the highest regard and we will do what we can to ensure that they are never forgotten.

New Members

Thomas Allett, Military Historian & Journalist
friend of Garth Wright, 153/51 LAA,RA

Jim Aston,
Royal Signals 51 Construction Unit

Benjamin Causer,
5th Northamptonshire Regiment

Mrs Green, widow of Ronald Green
2nd Independent Para Regiment

Mrs Ann Hamlet, Daughter of James Middleton,
39th LAA RA

Mrs Rae Halliday, Widow of Alastair Halliday,
Royal Tank Regiment

Maj. Richard Hargreaves MC,
4th Bn. The Parachute Regiment

Austin Heal, Son of Albert Heal,
The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Mrs Norma Lewis, Daughter of Thomas Wain MM
Royal Engineers

Richard O'Sullivan, Son of Edmund O'Sullivan,
2nd London Irish Rifles

Mrs. Patricia Rigg, Husband with Intelligence
Corps, 4th Indian Division

Mrs Josie Smith, Daughter of Ronald Green,
2nd Independent Para Regiment

Nigel Warwick, Father 5th Bn. Genadier Guards

With all good wishes
Max Taylor

Letters (continued)

The Hon. Richard Grosvenor e.mailed -

Hello

My father, Lord Ebury, awarded the DSO at Monte Cassino in June of 1944, was attached to a Brigade. Division 13, Unit L.A.A. Regt: RA, Rank T/Major (WS/Capt) 109130.

I believe he would be about 99 by now, but wondered if any veterans might still be around who would remember him?

Regards

Richard

Articles

Medal is just reward for war bravery

A NEATH war veteran has been rewarded for his tremendous bravery during the Second World War.

Aubrey Evans, who served with 132 (Welsh) Field Regiment of the Royal Artillery 78th Division 1st/8th Army, has been recognised with the Monte Cassino Medal of Honour by the Royal Order Kingdom of Poland.

The pensioner, who lives in Skewen, had the dangerous role of being an ammunition driver in the bloody battle of Monte Cassino, which saw in the region of 250,000 soldiers killed on the German mountaintop stronghold.

The Battle of Monte Cassino involved Allied soldiers, made up of Americans, Poles, Canadians, Indians, North African French, Kiwis and Gurkhas, as well as Brits as they fought towards Rome.

Mr Evans had the perilous task of transporting everything from mules to infantry and 25 pound shells to the frontline.

He said: "My truck was always loaded with 25 boxes of shells, four to

By Liz Perkins

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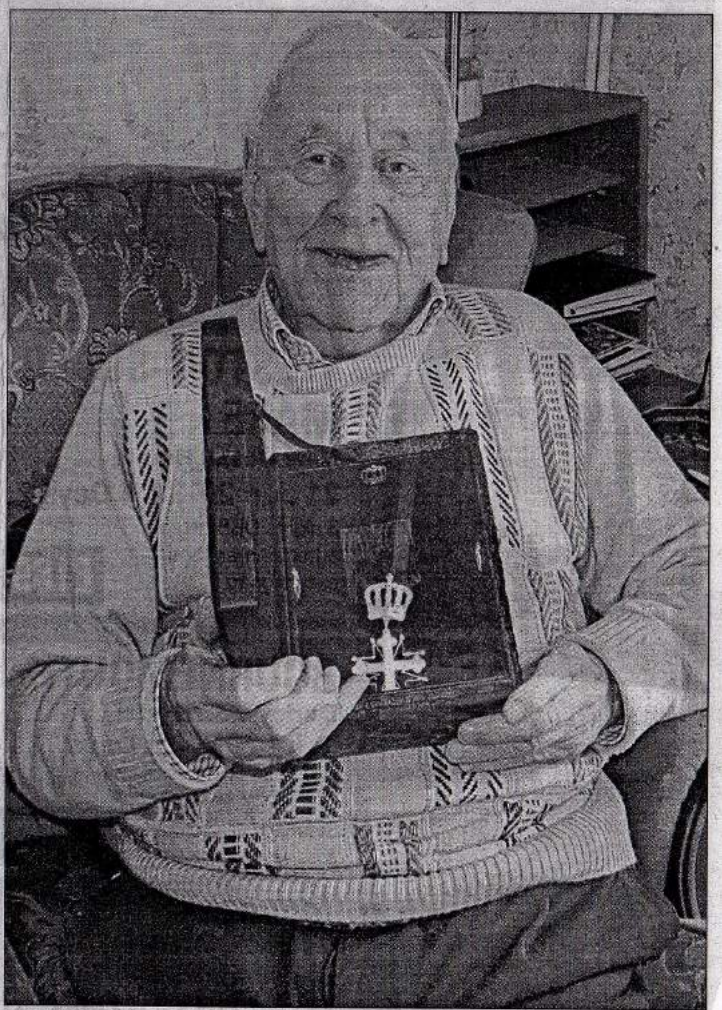
a box; we had to be ready for action at all times.

"Nearly every night, I would transport the ammunition, then mules and infantry to the guns at 9pm, and sometimes twice a night.

"We had to travel at night time because by day time the Germans could see us and shoot at us, although they did also shoot when it was dark, it was harder for them to see us."

The brave men and women who fought at Monte Cassino were never truly recognised or honoured for their actions by the Allied Forces following the conflict.

Now, the Royal Order Kingdom of Poland has created the Medal of Honour to help to recognise the sacrifice and service of these forgotten veterans. Any surviving veterans or their families may be able to apply for the medal free of charge in honour of their service.



GRATITUDE Aubrey Evans has been awarded the Monte Cassino Medal of Honour.

Article appeared in the South Wales Evening Post -
 May 21st 2013

I wrote to the Royal Order Kingdom of Poland asking for details and how to apply. I received the following reply:

Dear Judith Coote

We would need copies of any documents that will verify the veterans served at Monte Cassino. It is difficult at times for some veterans to still have discharge papers or other service documents. Any veteran that is lacking such documentation we would accept a notarised letter from any other documented veteran who served at Monte Cassino and can verify that veteran was present at the battle.

To start the award process you may submit by email the documentation for each proposed recipient, and then send the actual document copies or notarised letters to: The Royal Order Kingdom of Poland, PO Box 186, Forest City, NC28043, USA.

Articles (continued)

We would also like a current photo and any wartime pictures in uniform to add to the Monte Cassino website with the recipients personal testimony, (if still living and willing to give a brief or detailed account to be recorded for posterity.)

I have been wanting to go to England to meet the veterans and to present the medals in person. If my schedule will allow it we will make the trip to personally award the medals. With so few of these noble veterans still remaining we wish their memory and sacrifice to finally be honoured as it should have been so long ago.

With deep regard,
Diana Lenska
Princess and Grand Master

Note: I cannot vouch for the authenticity of this organisation, I am merely sharing the reply I have received

Judith

The Indian Army Memorial Room, Sandhurst Military Academy



This photo of a stained glass window in the Indian Army Memorial Room was taken (surreptitiously) on a recent visit to Sandhurst Military Academy!

This room was originally the chapel of the College until the number of Gentlemen Cadets rose following the abolition of the purchase system for commissions and it was no longer big enough to act as a chapel. It then became, in turn, a model room, a museum and later a cadet dining room.

After the break up of the British Indian Army

in 1948 the room became the Indian Army Museum and later the Indian Army Memorial Room.

The stained glass windows, the central chandelier, the crests hanging on the walls and the display of medals, portraits and other artefacts all commemorate the loyal service of the Gurkha Regiment and other regiments of the British Indian Army.

In comparison with the age of the chapel, consecrated in 1813, this window is relatively new, depicting as it does, the Abbey at Monte Cassino.

Thanks

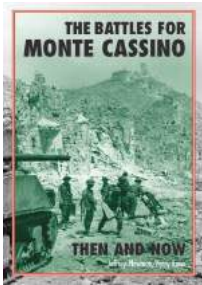
A big thank you to Rosemary Howard, daughter of John Hodgson (South African 6th Armoured Division) and Pat Kennedy, daughter of Thomas Wigley (3rd Battalion. The Grenadier Guards) for transcribing veterans' personal accounts for the website and supplements.

Due to the considerable cost of publishing personal accounts as a supplement and the fact that they are now available in the *Recollections* section of the website, we will in future print personal accounts as an insert to newsletters.

Without the help of all those listed on page 8 it would not have been possible to continue with the Society in its present form and would certainly not have been able to achieve what we have achieved over the past few years. I thank them all from the bottom of my heart.

Judith

Books



THE BATTLES FOR MONTE CASSINO THEN AND NOW

AfterTheBattle
ISBN: 9 781870 067737
Code: F063

Perry is a member of the Society and has joined us on all our visits to Italy

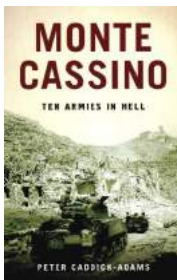
This new book with its comparison photographs is a fine example of the standard we now take for granted. I was pleased to see so many detailed maps and period colour photography included. The authors have done a wonderful piece of research in explaining the complexities of the campaign, and it certainly makes me want to take a holiday in Italy, taking this book of course.

WINDSCREEN MAGAZINE

The Battles for Cassino encompassed one of the few truly international conflicts of the Second World War. A strategic town on the road to Rome, the fighting lasted four months and cost the lives of more than 14,000 men from eight nations. Between January and May 1944, forces from Britain, Canada, France, India, New Zealand, Poland and the United States, fought a resolute German army in a series of battles in which the advantage swung back and forth, from one side to the other. From fire-fights in the mountains to tank attacks in the valley; from river crossings to street fighting, the four battles of Cassino encompass a series of individual operations unique in the history of the Second World War.

Authors Jeff Plowman and Perry Rowe have spent several years studying the conflict together and walking the battlefield to take the hundreds of comparison photographs which are the *raison d'être* of all After the Battle publications. Photographs have been selected from archives and private collections around the world to present a balanced view, combined with maps, orders of battle, citations and detailed captions.

The Cassino battles, epitomised by the controversial bombing of the monastery which towers menacingly over the battlefield, stand at the centre of the Italian campaign. The dogged defence by a 100,000 men of the German XIV. Panzerkorps under General Frido von Senger und Etterlin, facing a greater multi-national force, was only routed in the end by a gallant French flanking manoeuvre, with the Poles marking the final victory by hoisting their national flag over the ruins of the Monastery.



Monte Cassino: Ten Armies in Hell

By Robert Caddick-Adams
Price: \$29.95/ £25.00
Publication Date:
31 May 2012 (UK)

Description

A brilliant account of one of World War II's bloodiest battles.

The most horrific battles of World War II ring in the popular memory: Stalingrad, the Bulge, Iwo Jima, to name a few. Monte Cassino should stand among them. Waged deep in the Italian mountains beneath a medieval monastery, it was an astonishingly brutal encounter, grinding up ten armies in conditions as bad as the Eastern Front at its worst. With scholarly care, insightful analysis, and narrative verve, Caddick-Adams has crafted a monumental account of one of World War II's bloodiest battles.

Reviews

"A superb account of one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. There is no shortage of histories of the agonizingly drawn-out debacle at Monte Cassino, but this is certainly one of the best."

—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred)

"Peter Caddick-Adams has produced a thoughtful treatment of a crucial period of the Italian campaign. It should be read by anyone with an interest in the Second World War."

—*Military History Monthly*

"Caddick-Adams uses the events of the battle to tell the stories of the armies that bled out around Cassino. His particular strength is his treatment of combat dynamics on both sides of the fighting line, from division headquarters to foxholes. This book is a learning experience for anyone interested in World War II on any level."

—Dennis Showalter, former President of the American Society for Military History and author of *Tannenberg: Clash of Empires*

About the Author

Peter Caddick-Adams is a Lecturer in Military and Security Studies at the United Kingdom's Defence Academy and author of *Monty and Rommel: Parallel Lives*. He holds the rank of major in the British Territorial Army and has served with U.S. forces in Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Thank you to **Albert Darlington** (The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry) who brought copies of his book-
The D-Day Dodger to the Memorial Service at the Arboretum and donated the proceeds of copies sold to the Society.

In Memoriam

Mr. D.F. Hunt
North Irish Horse, Royal Armoured Corps

Mr. George Mills
1st Bn. East Surrey Regiment

Mr. William (Bill) Turk
51st Royal Tank Regiment



The Monte Cassino Society

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