



# THE MONTE CASSINO SOCIETY

Furthering an interest in the Italian Campaign 1943–1945

NA15141

Spring/Summer 2012

## Aim

To remember and further an interest in the experiences of all who took part in the Italian Campaign.

## Welcome

On behalf of the Monte Cassino Society, welcome to our Spring/Summer 2012 newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who travelled to the National Arboretum on May 26th 2012.

The dedication and unveiling of the Monte Cassino Memorial has touched the hearts of everyone involved. Such an amazing and memorable day and wonderful to see so many of our magnificent veterans, families and members of the public who came to honour those who survived the Battles of Monte Cassino and preserve the memory of those who did not return from the War.

Thanks go to the members of the Black Watch Association Pipe Band, the standard bearers of the Medway Branch of the Royal Tank Regiment, to veteran Garth Wright our bugler.

As always, this was a team effort. However, a special thanks must go to Doreen and Mike for tirelessly ensuring this day was the success we all enjoyed.

Suzanne Turk

Daughter of Bill Turk,  
51st Royal Tank Regiment



Photo by Phil Soady

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## News

### Dedication of the Monte Cassino Memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas

On a beautiful, sunny day in late May—one of the very few warm, dry days of this soggy wet summer, over one hundred and seventy joined together to dedicate the Memorial, amazingly twenty five of whom were our veterans. We were also joined by members of the public who, hearing the band, came to stand with us and joined in the service.

We processed to the memorial headed by the Pipes & Drums of The Black Watch Association, Stoke on Trent Branch, led by Drum Major Mr. A.E. Simmonds (a Cassino Veteran himself) and the Standard of the Medway Branch of the Royal Tank Regiment.

The simple, but moving service was led by the Rev. Prebendary Tony Wood, the lesson was

read by Lyn Anslow and the exhortation by Peter Wain. Our own Garth Wright, a Dunkirk veteran as well as a veteran of Cassino, played the Last Post and Reveille.

Incidentally, Peter was instrumental in designing the memorial and Steve Cartwright submitted the architectural drawings required by the Trustees of the Arboretum. After much deliberation by the Trustees we were eventually given the go ahead and Wilf and Martin Burt, local stonemasons from Stoke on Trent started building the Cairn in the most atrocious weather, often working in inches of water. Up until two weeks prior to the dedication we were not sure whether we would be able to hold the service on the 26th but fortune smiled on us and we were able to enjoy a splendid day in good company.

(Continued over)

## News Continued

The site is not complete—we still have seating and a paved area to finish but hopefully it will be complete when we meet again next May in what we hope will be an annual Service of Remembrance. If the comments in our Guest Book on the day are anything to go by, this would appear to be the wish of most who attended the Dedication Service.

### Annual Remembrance Services Cenotaph Ceremony 2012

We know it sounds a long way off, but we have already had the customary letter from the British Legion regarding the Cenotaph Ceremony on Sunday, 11th November. We are always asked to point out that participants are likely to be standing in Whitehall for at least an hour and a half prior to the March Past and then marching for a distance of over a mile, possibly in inclement weather. However, as usual, we look forward to seeing as many hardy souls as feel able and also, as usual, we have plenty of help if veterans wish to join us on scooters, wheelchairs, or whatever.

If you would like tickets, please indicate on the enclosed pro forma.

### Field of Remembrance 2012

As in the past couple of years, admission to the Opening Service is by ticket only. The Field will be open to the general public following the service.

We have purchased a plot and a number of crosses for individual dedications. Will you please let us have your personal dedications on the enclosed pro forma.

(Apologies for early notice but the next newsletter may well be too late for dedications).

### Fourth Culture Films — *Monte Cassino* A new feature film

2014 sees the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino and with it comes a new feature film, focusing on the failed American crossing of the Rapido River, the bombardment of the abbey and its eventual seizure by the Allied troops on 18th May 1944.

Long fascinated by this untold story, British filmmaker John Irvin will direct this motion picture from a screenplay by American historian Collin Scott. Well-known for over 40 titles, Mr. Irvin has earned critical acclaim for his war films, which perhaps most notably include *The Dogs of War* and *Hamburger Hill*. Steffen Wild of Fourth Culture Films and BAFTA-winning Davina Belling of Film & General Productions will produce this new theatrical feature film.

The upcoming production (working title: *Monte Cassino*) looks to honour those soldiers who fought this harrowing battle whilst also commemorating the sad destruction of an iconic monument. Telling this story for the first time on the big screen, the film will be a faithful, though dramatic, interpretation of the events, viewing the battle from various perspectives of the different nationalities that saw action at

Monte Cassino and in the Italian Campaign.

Casting is already underway, headed by double Emmy-Award winner Suzanne Smith, whose previous credits in this genre include HBO's *Band of Brothers* and *The Pacific*. The production plans to film in Central Europe in 2013 ready for release in cinemas in 2014.

To raise awareness of the project, film production company, Fourth Culture Films has teamed up with a number of individuals and organisations, including the Monte Cassino Society, to offer a range of promotions. These range from history books and signed DVDs to exclusive dinner tickets but also include memorial donations, membership subscriptions to the Monte Cassino Society and guided battlefield tours. Many of these special offers are unique and only available online from Friday 3rd August at [indiegogo.com](http://indiegogo.com) under the name: 'The Battle for Monte Cassino—Support the Untold Story'. A percentage of all proceeds will go towards the British Red Cross who the production company is working to support.

The production team is also committed to raising awareness of the battle itself and has been linking interest groups and interested individuals together on social media platforms in a commemoration of Monte Cassino. They aim to create an online community resource for this purpose with articles, websites, videos and photos as well as bringing the battle and its complexities to a wider audience. In addition to this, all the historical articles posted on these sites will be available in English, Italian and Polish.

The team will also be sharing its own material with the online community, including exclusive interviews, unseen archive footage, new articles and special Q&A sessions.

Please show your support by contributing [www.indiegogo.com/BattleforMonteCassino](http://www.indiegogo.com/BattleforMonteCassino) from Friday 3rd August. Visit the online community at [www.facebook.com/monte.cassino.58](http://www.facebook.com/monte.cassino.58) and from Monday 6th August onwards at <http://fourthculturefilms.wordpress.com/>

### 70th Anniversary visit to Monte Cassino—May 2014

Having appeared to have volunteered myself to arrange the 70th anniversary visit to Monte Cassino I would like to make a start a little earlier than what occurred for 2011. I should be grateful therefore if interested members could complete the attached pro forma and return it to me. This only constitutes expressions of interest and not a booking. I had thought of staying in Cassino town rather than Gaeta as it would mean less travelling and open possible visits to places we haven't been to before; on the other hand it doesn't offer the attractions that Gaeta has. Apart from the Service at the British Cemetery and hopefully the Picinisco day, the itinerary is open to your views.

Paul Taylor



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## Letters

### From Lt. Col. Marcus Evans RTR

I am a member of the Directing Staff on the Advanced Command and Staff Course here at the new Staff College in Shrivenham.

As a large, Joint course (we have almost 300 students from the RN, RM, Army and RAF of Maj/Lt Col equivalent ranks), we hold four large Mess Dinners—Trafalgar Night, The Dambusters Dinner, the Commando Dinner, and the 'Land' Dinner (as we cannot celebrate a single Regiment's Battle-honour).

I am organising the next 'Land' dinner next February, 2013—and the theme chosen is 'Monte Cassino'. Why? Because lots of British Army units were present, it was fought in February, and as we have USAF, Poles, Canadians and Germans who celebrate their role at the battle—it fits nicely with our International contingent.

I was wondering whether there were any Monte Cassino veterans who would like to attend? free of charge of course; whether there is anyone from your Society who would like to attend, and any backdrop material you might have, or models, or memorabilia that we could temporarily display.

Lt. Col. Marcus Evans RTR

*We have replied accepting the invitation. The date for the dinner is Wednesday, February 13th. If you are interested in attending will you please contact Mike Anslow or Judith Coote—contact details on page 8.*



Photo by Lou Craske



Photo by Jeanette Davey

## Thanks

Thank you from all of us to everyone who telephoned, sent cards, e-mails and letters of thanks for the Dedication Service at the National Memorial Arboretum.



Photo by Steve Clarke



Standard Bearer from the Medway Branch of the Royal Tank Regiment and Garth Wright, Bugler



The plaque on the front of the Cairn reads -

**Dedicated to the memory of  
the ALLIED FORCES  
who fought for the capture  
of MONTE CASSINO  
during the Italian Campaign  
January to May 1944**

The ruined abbey is etched on the top of the  
plaque

On the reverse, a very small inlaid plaque reads

**Erected by  
The Monte Cassino  
Society**



Compilation of photographs taken by Lou Craske of veterans marching behind the Stoke-on-Trent B



Pipes and Drums of The Black Watch Association  
Stoke on Trent



Compilation of two photog





Taken from the Armed Forces Memorial in the Centre of the Arboretum, our Memorial can clearly be seen



Black Watch Association Pipe Band



Photographs taken by Stan Pearson



Jim Morgan and Bob Clarke  
Jim initially suggested the Memorial

Photo by John Lewis

## Letters

### Mary Tidy, National Chairman, Italy Star Association

Mrs Tidy writes -

Dedication of the Monte Cassino memorial 26th May 2012

It was a beautiful sunny day (very Italian blue sky!) as the pipes and drums led the parade towards the memorial. A lovely moving service which included the dedication led by the Reverend Prebendary Tony Wood. A wonderful point to mention that the last post and reveille were played by a 93 year old veteran of the campaign!! After laying of wreaths and naturally photos of the new addition to the "Italy site" afternoon tea was served in the marquee. That was an opportunity to meet and share some time with more proud heroes.

During the afternoon it was good to see several other Italy Star Association members in attendance, nice to see how the area dedicated to the Italian Campaign has matured.

As the veterans of both Society and Association become fewer, it is important that people of my generation, and those of our children's keep memories of the sacrifices made alive for future generations to ensure the reasons for the freedoms we enjoy today are never forgotten.

Maybe at some future point, there may be an opportunity or occasion when the Monte Cassino Society and the Italy Star Association could work together to continue furthering their efforts to bring about the respective aims of keeping the history and memories alive.

Mary Tidy

## New Members

Gaynor & John Clarke, Uncle Cecil Murray, 1/4 Essex Regt.

Jeanette Davey, Father Walter Cowland, 02E CMF, LAA Royal Artillery

Wilfred Gard, 861 Company, 60 Section, Royal Engineers

Morton Huxtable, 13 Corps Royal Signals (also detached duties with 8th Indian Div. and 10th Polish Corps)

Brenda Jeram, Brother Edward Jones, Royal Engineers

Zdzislaw Mularski, 11 Medium Artillery Regiment, 2nd Polish Corps

Kenneth Seager, 6th Btn. Royal West Kent Regt.

Cyril Stapleton, 2788 Sqdn. RAF Regt.

Neil Stapleton, Father Cyril Stapleton, 2788 Sqdn. RAF Regt.

Mary Wheatley, Uncle Ivor Gaskill, 2/4 The Hampshire Regt.

## Books

### THE MULES OF MONTE CASSINO by Jim DeFilippi

Published by Brown Fedora Books and, as an e.book, is available at the Amazon.com Kindle Store, the Barnes and Noble Nook Book Store, as well as most other e-book outlets.

Not a typical, dry, history book. It has been described as "A fiction-mixing bouillabaisse of facts and steam, voices and spit" as much emotion as a factual summary of the events.

Author

I receive regular e-mails as a result of the Contact Form on the website; some asking for a membership form, often someone needing help in tracing service records of loved ones or maybe interested in military history. This one is the strangest yet!! -

Dear Sirs

*Have a nice day. I am Zahaer managing Director of Orizaara in Bangladesh. We are doing business in textile and garments sectors successfully our companies mission is to introduce the latest technology of the world locally in Bangladesh. We want to see and help the society by introducing all facilities of a first world countries. Recently, we are working in tourism sectors. As you know there are many mind blowing place in Bangladesh for example Cox's Bazaar the largest sea beach in the world. The largest mangrove forest, Banradbone hill area, and kuakata form where we can see the sun rise and the sun sate standing the same place and many more. Many tourist form home and abroad are coming to see the natural beauty of Bangladesh. But, the fact is that recently we feeling that tourists are not getting all type of facilities. Even if there are lot of five stars hotel but there in no casino here to attract the tourism. We are now thinking to introduce to set up a casino here. For this regard we need a foreign help to setup a casino. Because it will be helpful for both of us if we start together. We have the land, even luxury hotels just need investment in casino. We have all the ability to manage the legal issue and other help from government. So, if you feel interest we can establish a casino here to enreach the tourism and make profite same time. Bangladesh is really a potential area to satart a casino. And you will also get the first mover advantage here. We would be very glad if you consider our issue and help us for further co-operation. Waiting for your quick reply. Best regards, Zاهر*

I replied thanks but no thanks.

Judith



## And finally

### THE TEAM



Mike Anslow



Doreen Belcher



Judith Coote



John Leach



Stan Pearson



Phil Soady



Suzanne Turk



Paul Taylor

You will have heard of all of us at some time or other and many will have met us on our trips to Italy, the London Remembrance Services in November and/or at the Arboretum for the Dedication of the Monte Cassino Memorial but for those who we have not met over the past few years, here we are!

What a remarkably intelligent, good looking group!

Seriously, we are all sons and daughters of veterans, anxious to keep the memory alive. 2014 marks the 70th anniversary of the battles—hopefully public interest will be heightened so if you have any suggestions on how we can go forward, or indeed just to make contact, our details are on page 8 and we will be delighted to hear from you.

## In Memoriam

Mr. W.H. (Bill) Adlington,  
6th Battalion The Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment

Capt. J.C. (Cliff) Atkinson,  
The Durham Light Infantry Seconded Provost Officer,  
Corps of Military Police

Mr. Eric Durban, 71st Field Regiment, Royal Artillery

Mr. Jack Preston, Royal Engineers

Mr. V.W. Uden, The Royal East Kent Regiment (The Buffs)



*The Monte Cassino Society*

### Contact Us

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