



THE MONTE CASSINO SOCIETY

Furthering an interest in the Italian Campaign 1943–1945

Welcome

Summer2018

Aim

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

Welcome to the Summer 2018 newsletter. Once again it was wonderful to see so many old friends— and some new—at our Memorial Service at the Arboretum in May. It is a reminder of how far we have come since our early beginnings—a few names and addresses and no money—more in hope than expectation as we were not veterans, merely sons and daughters anxious to remember our Fathers and their comrades and hoping to further an interest in the battles for Cassino. I hope we have come some way to achieving this.



It is therefore with much heart searching and reluctance that I have taken the decision to step down as Secretary. I will, of course, continue until the completion of the 75th commemorations but I feel after 14 years it is time to hand over the reins to new blood, new ideas. We have a fantastic, hard working team who have their own responsibilities but we will need a replacement secretary.

This Society was formed as a result of the disbanding of the Monte Cassino Veterans Association in 2004 when John Clarke asked if there was anyone prepared to carry on their good work. We responded and it is my fervent hope that one of our members will volunteer as we need someone to coordinate all the hard work done by your committee and to keep lines of communication with our members, otherwise it is difficult to see how the society can proceed in future in its present form.

If you are interested and would like more information do please ring me (my contact details are on page 12). I am more than happy to help in any way I can and certainly will help with the transition period. It is my intention to continue with the Society but not as Honorary Secretary.

Judith Coote

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

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News

IMPORTANT INFORMATION—CENOTAPH SERVICE AND MARCH– SUNDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2018

Participants accreditation information details have to be with the British Legion by Monday 20th August. In order for me to complete the form, if you wish to join our contingent, please complete the enclosed pro forma and return to me by 13th August latest. Full details overleaf

News (continued)

CENOTAPH SERVICE & PARADE

Entrance to Horse Guards Parade for the Cenotaph Service & Parade on Sunday 11th November 2018 is by named ticket only.

If you wish to join our contingent please return the enclosed pro forma to Judith (contact details on page 12) giving name and address, date of birth and city of birth no later than 13th August. Tickets and joining instructions will be sent to Judith in October for distribution. We cannot guarantee any application received later than 13th August as the British Legion are uncompromising. Last year, when one of our veteran members realized very late on that he could make it to London and the Cenotaph Parade, the RBL refused point blank to permit him entrance to Horse Guards and it was only with the help of a Daily Mail correspondent that he was able to attend, albeit not with the Monte Cassino group.

FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE, WESTMINSTER

We will again have a plot at the Field of Remembrance in Westminster. We have not yet received details of the Opening Service and will be asking for dedications for crosses in the next newsletter due out in October.

75th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIONS

There are two services to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Battles for Cassino, one in the UK and one in Cassino.

On Saturday 11th May 2019 the Royal British Legion are holding a Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire. We know no more than that at present but will keep you updated. Mr Blakey Nixon, one of RBL's Events Team organising the service joined us at our Memorial Service in May to get an idea of what we do but to date we haven't had any feedback.

Pilgrimage to Italy

We are still at the planning stage but can confirm that it will be the week Wednesday 15th to Wednesday 22nd May 2019. Our rooms have been booked at the Edra Palace Hotel for more than a year but the airlines have only just released their timetables. We have seats on hold with British Airways from Gatwick to Naples. Matching the timing exactly there is a Jet2 flight from Birmingham to Naples but Jet2 do not guarantee block bookings. If you prefer to fly from Birmingham, please inform Paul Taylor when you return the booking form. You will appreciate that we cannot guarantee a flight from Birmingham but we will do our best to accommodate everyone, even if it means individuals booking their own flight, reducing the overall cost accordingly. It is worth mentioning that if you do book your own flights you do not have the benefit of ABTA cover and in the case of cancellation would need to claim from your travel insurance.

A booking form is enclosed and must be returned to Paul Taylor together with £300 per person deposit by 20th August.

The British Embassy in Rome have not yet confirmed the date of the service in Cassino War Cemetery so the provisional itinerary below will probably change in order but not in content.

COST: £790 per person for a double room : £890 for a single room

This covers flights, half board accommodation at the Edra Palace Hotel, Cassino, all transfers and transport for the week, entrance fees where applicable.

Check out the Edra Palace website—www.edrapalacehotel.it -or any travel booking site)

FLIGHT TIMES: Outward departing 0645 arriving 1025
Homeward departing 11.00 arriving 12.55

ITINERARY

- 15th Flight to Naples and transfer to Edra Palace
- 16th Ceremony at Cassino War Cemetery followed by Reception
- 17th Tour of Rocca Janula (Castle) and Liri Valley
- 18th Visit Sangro River Cemetery on the east coast
- 19th Visit to seaside town (to be announced)
- 20th Our day at Picinisco, courtesy of the Capocci family

The following letter by Diane Preston daughter of the late Sgt Jack Preston, Royal Engineers, has been published in several publications, notably *The Lady*

Dear Sirs

This is a special year, commemorating the 100 years since the end of World War One. We should remember those brave men who went through what could only be described as a living hell. Most are now just names on war memorials, but each one was special to some one at home. They were so incredibly brave to face the enemy in those vile conditions in the trenches.

In my younger day I was privileged to meet some of these heroes and listen to their stories of the horrors they went through. Not only the conditions, but the lice and rats they were infested with.

But there was another battle from another war, which seems to be forgotten. During the next year is the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino. It has been described as the bloodiest battle of the war, almost 220,000 were killed.

My beloved father was in the thick of that. We watched it on television and as a plane went over it dropped a bomb which shattered more of the monastery and in an emotional voice my Father said, "I was there then" and closed up into his memories. Veterans will tell you where they were, but never go into the gory details. When you mention their bravery their answer will always be the same "we just did what we had to"

I visited the Monastery which has been wonderfully rebuilt and with the association with my Father I found it very emotional. As I went through the gate to the war graves the first stone I saw was Sgt Jack Preston, I just stood in tears. This Jack Preston was from the Coldstream Guards, my Sgt Jack Preston was Royal Engineers, came through it and came home and produced ME! I frequently think of that other Jack Preston who gave his life for us.

On the 60th Anniversary of the Battle my Father returned—what must he and the other veterans on parade have felt? Dad was able to visit the grave of the other Jack Preston, to lay a wreath and salute a fallen comrade. On that parade Dad was one of four chosen to be presented with his veteran's badge by the Duke of Kent. On his return home he must have worn out those photographs showing them around time and time again!

Now when I look back armed with the knowledge of what happened in that carnage, I just cannot put into words how proud I am of my Dad to return home from that horror and be the fantastic Dad he was. I lost him six years ago but he is never far from my heart and I take great pride in keeping his bravery alive by wearing his medals and cap with the badge given to him in 1938 when he joined up, at every possible opportunity. Particularly on Remembrance Sunday when I march with the Monte Cassino Society at the Cenotaph in London.

I had wonderful parents and I often use the old saying, "occasionally equaled, never excelled" - that was my parents.

Yours sincerely (signed Diane Preston, Miss)

Accounts

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE, NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM, ALREWAS

On Saturday, 19th May, in glorious weather we gathered at the Memorial for our Annual Memorial Service. Once again we were fortunate to have the Stoke on Trent Black Watch Association Pipes and Drums to lead us down to the Memorial, followed by our Standard Bearer Mike Anslow. As usual we met in the marquee for tea and coffee prior to the service but due to extensive building work on site, the marquee had been removed a considerable distance from the Memorial and we hired buggies to transport those unable to walk so far in the heat. Many more walked in their own time but we all arrived in time for the service taken by the Reverend Victor M Van Den Bergh.



We met, as we do every year, to remember all who fought, and to the memory of those who died, in the capture of Monte Cassino. Among the group of nearly seventy were nine veterans for whom the service must have been particularly poignant. The Rev Van Den Bergh who is a serving padre, had recently returned from Cassino and his superb address reflected his own experiences on the battlefield and his undoubted knowledge of the battles for Cassino.

The lesson was read by Doreen Belcher and a list of our veteran members who have passed away since the last Memorial Service was read by Phil Soady.

The Society wreath was laid by Albert Darlington followed by the laying of tributes by individual members. Lyn Anslow read a poem written by a First World War soldier and the Exhortation and Kohima Epitaph were given by Jim Morgan and Theo Davies.

High tea followed in the marquee and I am sure everyone considered it a very worthwhile and enjoyable afternoon among old friends in a magnificent setting.



Following the service the band played a short selection of tunes before parading back to the marquee for refreshments.





Ken Seager, Frank Gent, Jim Morgan, Albert Darlington, Theo Davies, Jim Ashton, Ray Lawton, Gordon Cruse

Also attending, Peter Cox
laying his tribute



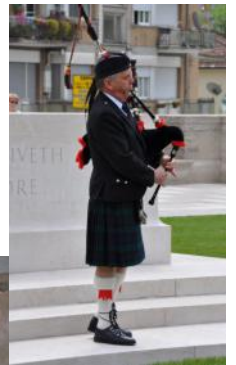
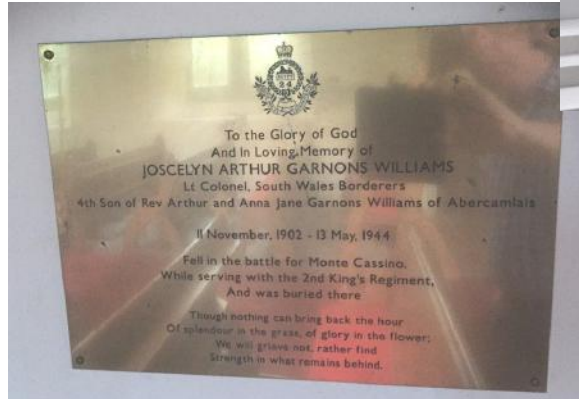
As a postscript, Pipe Major Steven Beattie –many will remember he was in the party in Italy to celebrate the 70th) - had to leave tea early to travel to Wales to meet with his wife—Steve writes

Incidentally, you know I shot off to meet up with my wife and friends in South Wales after the service at the Arboretum. Well, we stayed at Penpont House near Brecon. In the evening we took a walk and stumbled on a small church, in the grounds, which was open. We had a look inside and amongst other things, saw a brass plaque on the wall in memory of Lt. Colonel Joscelyn Arthur Garnons Williams who died at Cassino (photo attached)

We all thought how fitting it was given that the Society had just had their service earlier that day.

Regards

Steven



FRANK DE PLANTA'S STUDY TOUR MAY 2019

Judith.

For 2019 and the 75th Anniversary of the Battles of Monte Cassino, I will be running a study on **11 -14 May 19**.

The dates have been set to coincide with the critical moment in battle when 4 British Infantry Division get a bridge across the River Rapido at 0500 on 13 May 44. The bridge allows armour to link up with infantry on the other side and, together, the Germans are unable to stop the forward momentum that this creates in the Liri Valley. To celebrate this incredible achievement, part of the tour will include going to the 'Amazon' bridge crossing site at 0500 on 13 May 19 and paying our respects to those who achieved this feat of military engineering and those who did not survive the ordeal.

If you, or any of the Society's members, would like to join this trip, do get in touch.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Frank

New Members

Mrs Gillian Davey, daughter of the late Frederick Dorrington, the Middlesex Regiment

Randy Fitzgerald, son of the late Paul E Fitzgerald, 1st Sgt. US Army Artillery

Nigel Kerridge, son of the late James (Ben) Kerridge, 16th/5th Lancers and 1st Army

Andrew Pegler, Friend

(Andrew writes—"I've been lucky enough to visit Cassino 10 times while leading school trips, so have a great deal of respect and interest in those who served there and I'm a keen enthusiast who is very grateful for all the stories and knowledge that the society possesses. As a New Zealander living in Europe I am particularly interested in the experiences of my countrymen who travelled so far to what in any other circumstances would have been such a beautiful place to them")

BEFORE PARIS, THERE WAS ROME: THE FORGOTTEN FRONT

Shared by George Winston, War History on Line

"The New York Times Army correspondent in North Africa and Italy during the Second World War was a man named Herbert Mitgang.

On 5th June 1944, he reported back to his section editor that American Infantryman had captured Rome, officially making it the first Axis capital of WWII.

As far as victories go it was significant, and it was vastly overshadowed by the events of the next day, when on 6th June, 1944 the D-Day landings brought the first battles of the invasion of France.

The banner of the American Army newspaper "Stars and Stripes" pronounced "WE'RE IN ROME" on the day the city fell. Correspondents raced to "Il Messaggero," a newspaper plant on the Via del Tritone, to get the paper out. The next day, however, it ran with a one-word headline which referenced Normandy, rather than Italy: "INVASION."

The "og-face" troops who faced heavy resistance on the beachheads of Sicily, Salerno and Anzio for nearly a year and were now riding high on the rush of victory. They were expecting the accolades of a war well down to rain down for months to come, but were sorely disappointed when they found that their day of glory lasted literally a day!

The greater and more portentous victories on the beaches of Normandy relegated their conquest to that of a smaller stature. Rome became an afterthought when it became clear that Berlin was the objective.

The Allied strategy of the war put a much greater premium on the Nazis rather than Mussolini's fascists, and both fractions, the Anglo-Americans and the Russians, were on point in their pursuit. The ugly winter and spring war in the Mediterranean theatre was not glamorous, despite, and despite the obvious gruelling sacrifice suffered by the American 5th Army and the British Eighth Army, it still ultimately acquired the callous and undeserved moniker "the forgotten front."

According to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Italy and the Balkans were the soft underbelly of the Axis. Yet, the common soldier, enduring heavy shelling in his foxhole with his head down, all along the forgotten hills after the Salerno landings, would argue about how "soft" it was. However, he would fight on, marching into the centre of the resurgent fascist empire to replace fear and tyranny of the occupying German troops with a sense of relief, freedom and a second chance for democracy.

Sgt. J.A. Vita, a 27-year-old Italian-American soldier from Port Chester, New York stood on Mussolini's balcony in the Palazzo Venezia and mocked Mussolini's salute, shouting to his adoring crowds lingering below - "Vincere! Vincere! Vincine!" After which he was thoughtful enough to provide a translation "Conquer! Conquer! Conquer! - For the Allies!" It was the fulfilment of a promise made to his mother originally from Reggio, Calabria, that he would make a speech from Mussolini's balcony in Rome. He would later show up amongst the overjoyed Romans, kissing Madelaine Carscallen who had married an Italian in 1935 and survived the occupation.

Now the Jews could come out of hiding. And so they did, exiting from monasteries and forests, convents and hospitals. They began the long arduous tasks of finding their children and reconnecting with their families. Soon the walls of the great synagogue in the Piazza della Scuola bore paper scrolls bearing the names of the Jewish missing with the hope that a train of communication from word of mouth would eventually serve to reunite them with their loved ones.

The above is just a glimpse, a sketch of the countless faces and stories and names of human consequences of those who fought and suffered and died in what historians have called THE FORGOTTEN FRONT."

Submitted by Ann Hamlet, daughter of the late James Middleton, 39th LAA, Royal Artillery

We constantly ask those who took part in the Italian Campaign, particularly Cassino, to write their personal accounts which are then available under the Recollections section of the website (www.montecassinosociety.co.uk). This account is unusual in that this is an account of a soldier killed in action written by his son -

Lance Corporal Harold Leslie Leach
8th Platoon, D Company,
2nd Battalion Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry
28th October 1921, killed in action 16th May 1944

My Dad Harold Leslie Leach was born 28th October 1921, he was brought up in the Acocks Green area of Birmingham and spent some of his youth in Broseley, Shropshire. He attended Hartfield Crescent Senior Boys School and left at the age of 14 in October 1935. From then until the 1st May 1939 he did several jobs, one being a trainee mechanic. He then enlisted into the Royal Army Medical Corps, Territorial Army and was posted to 145 Field Ambulance. He was discharged on 23 August 1939 having re-enlisted into the Regular Army, the Durham Light Infantry, on 24th August and posted to depot on 27th August.

On the 15th January 1940 he was posted to 12th holding unit on the Isle of Wight, from there into the Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry. He was on defence duty around the coast of Cornwall early in 1940. When stationed at the Nare Hotel on the Roseland peninsula he regularly did defence duty at Portloe, this is where he met my Mum.

When on duty in the village, by night Dad and other soldiers used the fishermen's cellars to sleep among the nets. In the morning they were given cooked breakfast by my Grandmother and two other ladies. Another lady wanted to help out with the cooked breakfast; this all went well until she met the Platoon Captain one day and told him she was one of a group of four ladies who gave his soldiers cooked breakfast every morning. He gave her hell and told her they were training to go to war. That was the end of their cooked breakfast. Mum and Dad were married at the end of 1941. Late in 1941 or early 1942 Dad was selected with other soldiers who were in the same company to go for special training with Naval personnel in an area close to Falmouth, Carclew Estate. A part of this was taken over by the Navy and was used at the time for special secret operations. They were training to raid the port of Brest in France where the pocket battle ships Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen were in port. However the raid never took place as the ships left port one night and steamed right up through the English Channel. They were attacked further up the coast but managed to continue their return to Germany with little damage. During the next two years he was posted to many coastal locations in Cornwall.



MY MUM & DAD, MY SISTER JOYCE AND MY AUNTIE, MUM'S SISTER TAKEN AT PORTLOE

In September 1942 my sister Joyce was born. Records show that in August 1943 Dad attended a sniper course at Command Weapon Training School, this training lasted a couple of weeks. At the end of October 1943 he boarded a ship in Liverpool and went to Algiers in North Africa. Here he joined the 2nd Battalion Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry. They embarked on the Libyan Castle and on December 23rd 1943 and arrived in Kabrit on the Suez Canal. At this time he was in D company and his Commanding Officer was Major Gill who lived only 8 miles away from my Dad's home here in Portloe. From training on the Suez they moved during the first half of February to a transit camp near Alexandria and on the 14th of the month embarked on the Letitia and a week later arrived in Naples and disembarked across the bottom of an upturned Italian naval ship.

This was done with great speed as Letitia was due to sail on a convoy to Iran and the convoy could not be kept waiting, in fact half the battalion's baggage went on with her and only arrived back in Naples some weeks later.

The 2nd Dukes were in the 4th division; their first task on arrival in this new theatre of war was to relieve the 46th division on the 24th February who were holding a mountainous bridgehead across the river Garigliano which was crossed by Skipton Bridge, about half way between the mouth of the river near Minturno and the main tributaries Rapido from the mountains near Cassino. Not only were the 4th division relieving the 46th division but they were taking over all the arms and equipment as well and so units went in to the line with weapons that had already seen the wear and tear of much hard fighting over the roughest country.

They relieved the 2nd battalion the Hampshire Regiment who were firmly established on Monte Ornito. It was a very difficult task to relieve them as once across the Garigliano it took 2 days, only moving by night, shelling the track was frequent and the area was steep and strewn with boulders. They spent 10 days and led a goat like existence among the rocks and scree of the mountainside; digging was impossible, shelling and mortaring was frequent and so protection from the enemy and elements was found by building up stone walls and covering with gas capes or ground sheets. After 10 days the battalion was relieved by the 6th Black Watch. They moved to the left flank of the ridge into positions covering Sujo; this area was still very rough and broken up by ravines. There was little contact with the enemy, their nearest enemy post in this sector was Castelforte about 2 miles away. A and B companies carried out a lot of patrols aimed at capturing prisoners for identification purposes. The battalion were relieved on March 18th and moved back to Mugnano north of Naples, a very welcome period of rest. While they were here they witnessed from close quarters a violent eruption of Mount Vesuvius. After a few days they moved northwards to Baia e Latina in the Volturno Valley as part of a re grouping which placed the 4th division in the eighth army commanded by General Sir Oliver Leese.

The first task of the 4th division under their new command was the relief of the 3rd Algerian division in the mountains north of Cassino. On March 28th they arrived at Acquafondata, from here they had a toilsome march through twisting lanes and over tracks. They came to the Rapido at the foot of Monte Cairo. Much of the area was under enemy observation but long screens of camouflage netting concealed the most vulnerable parts. There was not much time, the night was growing late, it was an uphill scramble in the dark, they only just reached Colle Belvedere their destination by dawn of the 29th. The lower ridges of the Monte Cairo massif had been seized by French Algerian troops but they had not succeeded in capturing all of their objectives. They were therefore installed in precariously placed Sangars in many positions within a grenade throw of the enemy's forward posts. It was firmly impressed on the relieving companies that every precaution must be taken to conceal from the enemy that relief was taking place and with enemy at such close quarters this meant complete silence during the relief and after. What actually happened was from D company's point of view hair raising. The Germans were very close. No sooner did the French see D company coming up the mountain side that they left their Sangars, simply hurtled down the slopes towards them kicking empty cans all over the place, leaving the position virtually unprotected for some time. The forward platoon commander of the company was much relieved when they were settled in.

The Algerians had not been anti-litter minded and the litter included the corpses of men and animals. Companies did what they could to improve their living conditions but general tidying up was forbidden by the Commanding Officer as they did not want the enemy to know the Algerians had been relieved. This was an unpopular order. But justification was proven when a few days later the forward posts were showered with propaganda leaflets telling the French Algerians that their womenfolk were carrying on in the villages of Algeria with visiting troops.

The company found the Germans were more active in this position than in Garigliano bridgehead. They infiltrated deep into the British positions often laying mines and booby traps on tracks and bridle paths. The battalion remained on Colle Belvedere for more than a week, while there they witnessed two bombing raids on the Monastery. They spent a few days in the Inferno valley as reserve to 12th brigade until April 12th. They then moved to Barracone on the Volturno river where they carried out river crossing-

Lance Corporal Haarold Leslie Leach—Continued



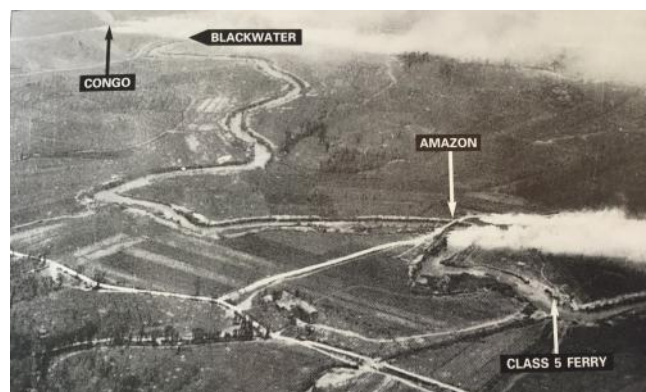
If you have the book the Battles for Monte Cassino Then and Now, by Jeffrey Plowman & Perry Rowe, I provided Perry with photos and battle maps given to me by my Dad's Company Commander. Major Gill. On page 296 of this book you will see an aerial photo that was written on at the time by Major Gill of D company, you will see the positions of the platoons leading up to the 11th May. The notes on this page refer to C company, this is incorrect, it should read D Company. If Steve Gill was alive now and saw this he would go ballistic!

My dad was in 8th Platoon D company and had the roll of crossing the river and taking the ground within the u bend of the river known as Orinoco. To the right of this area and within 300yds the engineers planned to put across the Amazon bridge.

The night before the 11th support company from the battalion went across the river in canvas boats, their job was to drive iron bars into the bank so that the boats could be pulled to and fro to get personnel across the river as quickly as possible. A local man I know was the person who told me about this, he said it was terrifying, Jerry was just a short distance away. They used large rubber mallets to drive the posts into the bank as there was constant shellfire, this helped to disguised the sound. At 2300 hrs on the 11th the barrage started from the Adriatic coast to Gaeta Bay on the Mediterranean Coast. The start of 4th and what was to be the final battle for Cassino, I was told by some of my Dad's pals it was deafening. D company moved down to the river bank and were ferried across by 16th platoon. Once across they dug in, their positions are shown on the photo, they were drawing heavy shelling and mortar from an area of raised ground known as Square Wood, but the company held their objective.

Attempts to get the Amazon bridge across were not going as well as hoped, it was not until the early hours of the 13th that the Amazon was completed and tanks were able to get across.

D company were still pinned down, however with the Bridge now in place tanks were sent across to assist them, they then fixed bayonets and moved forward to Square Wood. Around 25 Germans surrendered to them; D company then moved to an area closer to the town in reserve. This area today has a large factory close by. The area they refer to in



the book as point 63 has the university sitting right on top of it today. While D company was in reserve they carried out Patrols. On the night of the 16th of May, my dad went out on patrol which one of his pals Johnny O'Dell told me he did often. He told me some 50 years later, he remembers it as if it was yesterday. He told Dad to stay there that night, "You do far more than your share of patrols, you have a wife and two young children back home leave it to others" but Johnny said my Dad would never listen and he went on the patrol. They went to the area known as point 55 on the battle map, they came under very heavy mortar fire, it was a real open area with no protection at all. As the patrol had passed through the Surreys line they were told to go back to their Unit. Johnny said this is when they found my Dad was missing. He said the Surreys found his body next morning. He also said with the amount of Mortars that came in on them that night it was a wonder they were not all killed. Point 55 today is the site of the Commonwealth War Cemetery.

At the time my Dad was killed I was only 4 months old and my sister was one and a half. My mother was very ill for a very long time when she received the news but we had the world's best Grandparents to help her through. She re-married seven years later, and in 1952 my Step Brother Freddie was born.

Mum had another great loss in her life when in 1998 Freddie died at the age of 45. Mum died in March this year aged 94.

I have been to Cassino many times and found out a great deal about my Dad's war time in Italy from Major Gill, and two other old soldiers from D Company who knew him and his very good friend Johnny O' Dell who was with him from the time they both joined the DCLI in 1940. Another close friend of my dad's was Eddie Faulkner, he was also killed in Italy in June of that year. Another friend Charlie Gardener came and saw my Mum in late 1947, this was after the battalion came home from Greece. He stayed with my grandparents, although I was only about three and half at the time I can remember it. I have tried in the past to find Charlie with no success, he may well have passed on now.

My Dad has always been in my heart. I know I never met him but people who did have all said he was a really lovely, quiet man and he would help anyone if he could. A photo I have of Dad was taken on the cliff above Portloe. The photo shows my Dad, Mum, Sister and my Auntie. In this area of the cliff there used to be an abundance of Sea Pinks growing. When we first went to Cassino in 1995 I intended to take a Sea Pink plant with me to plant beside his headstone but I did not do it. However when we got there Sea Pinks were already growing there by his headstone.

John Leach, son of L/Cpl Harold Leslie Leach

(The soldiers referred to are Major Steve Gill in my Dad's time, later to be Col. Gill, Sargent Johnny O'Dell, Eddie Faulkner & Charlie Gardener (rank unknown). A few others from D Company knew him but none as well as those included)

In Memoriam

James (Ben) Kerridge, 16th/5th Lancers and 1st Army

AEW Moore, 88th (City of London) Regiment, Royal Artillery

Maj D Ospalak, Polish Forces

George Rhodes, 277 Battery, 70th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery

Frederick Dorrington, The Middlesex Regiment (My apologies to Mr Dorrington's family for incorrectly calling him Frank in the last issue)

And Finally

As a postscript to my Welcome letter, my colleagues have asked me to add -

Just because our Committee are sons and daughters of veterans, this should not preclude someone younger volunteering

If we do not get help the Society will most likely have to disband.

Bi annual newsletters to replace quarterly ones.

There is no reason why the job should not be shared.

So please, if anyone feels they can help, please contact me and I can explain what responsibilities the other committee members have and what in particular is needed to keep the Society viable.

Judith



THE MONTE CASSINO SOCIETY

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