



THE MONTE CASSINO SOCIETY

Furthering an interest in the Italian Campaign 1943–1945

Welcome

Spring 2019

Aim

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

Welcome to our Spring newsletter.

Although I have known for some time that this is to be my last newsletter, it is still a little surreal. I have been publishing the newsletter four times a year for many years and although on occasions reduced to eight pages, mostly I have had sufficient copy to fill twelve or even sixteen pages—and this one is no exception!

This year, the 75th anniversary of the end of the Battles for Cassino was always going to be special but were it not for the Monte Cassino Society it may very well have passed unnoticed. Small though we are, with very little money but a lot of goodwill, we have kept the faith and strived to keep to our original statement of intent—***To remember and further an interest in the experiences of all who took part in the Italian Campaign.***



In the Recollections Section of our website –www.montecassinossociety.co.uk—are nearly forty personal accounts, each one has been read by well over a thousand, and in some cases two thousand people. We have regular contributors to our facebook page and following the Cenotaph Services upwards of fifty queries, some wishing to join us but most wishing to learn more, regretting they had not asked questions of their Fathers when they had the opportunity.

Our plot in the Field of Remembrance in Westminster is used by many people unknown to us. There are many more crosses at the end of the week when the plot is dismantled than placed there by us.

Our annual Remembrance Services at the National Memorial Arboretum have been attended by hundreds in the years since we dedicated our memorial there. The Monte Cassino Society family coming together to remember lost loved ones and to enjoy the company of friends old and new. Every time we meet by the Memorial, passers by stop and join in the Service.

Over the years I have been blessed and privileged to have known and lost so many veterans. Looking through my master list of members I was shocked to see one hundred and twelve had passed away, many of whom had become very good friends.

From Mike, Doreen, John, Stan, Phil, Paul and me –to all those who have supported us over the years —the Marchers at the Cenotaph, a steadily growing number; those who have steadfastly attended the Opening of the Field of Remembrance; the many veterans and families who have attended our Remembrance Services at the Arboretum; the hundreds who have joined us on our Pilgrimages to Italy and those all over the country who represent us at local Cenotaphs laying MCS wreaths. Our sincere thanks.

Finally, Stan (who has been our Treasurer from the very beginning) and Mike, our Standard Bearer are giving up those responsibilities but, like me, remain very much involved with the Society. We have a small group of volunteers willing to carry on what we started. It may well not follow the present form but I know they feel strongly that the veterans of the Italian Campaign, Monte Cassino in particular, should never be forgotten.

Inside this issue:

Welcome	1
News	2
In Memoriam	2
Accounts	4
Contacts	12

Judith

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

News

75th Anniversary Commemorations

The two Services of Remembrance are taking place on the 11th and 16th May 2019.

MONTE CASSINO 75—at the National Memorial Arboretum, Saturday, 11 May 2019

For this year only the Royal British Legion are organising the Remembrance Service at the Arboretum. All are welcome to the service which starts at 11.30 a.m. An invitation to Veterans is printed on page 11 and we very much hope as many as are able will attend.

As we understand it, the service will not be at the Memorial and there will be no laying of wreaths during the service but for anyone with tributes we will be grateful if you will lay them at our Memorial following the service.

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE—Cassino War Cemetery, Thursday, 16th May 2019

The International Service to remember all allied forces who fought in the Italian Campaign will take place in Cassino War Cemetery at 12.30 p.m. followed by a Reception at the Hotel Ristorante Al Boschetto.

The service is being organized for HM Government by the Defence Section at the British Embassy in Rome .

On Friday 17th the New Zealanders are holding a Dawn Service at the Railway Station and at 10.30 a.m. an International Service will be held in Monte Cassino Abbey.

On Saturday 18th—Service at the Polish Cemetery.

One of our members, Michael Leahy writes -

Hi Judith

I have booked over two weeks leave from work, and hope to make it down to Monte Cassino in May carrying a wreath to lay on behalf of my local Royal British Legion branch. I will be riding my 1943 ex-British Army BSA M20 Motorcycle. I will be leaving the UK on 8th May, and hope to be in Monte Cassino for the ceremony on Thurs 16th. It will be a very slow trip!

If there is no room for me at the ceremony I'll quietly lay our wreath somewhere beautiful, then make my way back.

I have launched a Just Giving Page in aid of the Royal British Legion.

I hope that this is acceptable to you. It would be wonderful to meet up with folks from the society, but if this is problematic am happy to explore the area on my own.

Regards

Mike

I replied wishing him Godspeed and said I hoped to see him—and his motorcycle—at either the Edra Palace or Cassino War Cemetery on the 16th. If he meets us at the Edra Palace maybe he could be our outrider!

For the several people who will be in Cassino for the service but not travelling with us, it is worth noting that parking at the Cemetery is very limited and it might be better to meet us at the Edra Palace Hotel.

In Memoriam

George Lucas, aged 102—HQ 78th Infantry Division

Garth Wright, aged 99—53/51st LAA, Royal Artillery

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

We received the following from the CWGC. It is an amazing organisation and I hope we can help. I have visited CWGC cemeteries all over the world, all lovingly tended and beautifully kept.

2019 marks 75 years since some of the most dramatic, defining moments of the Second World War, including the Battle of Cassino.

Hundreds of thousands of Commonwealth servicemen and women fought during the Second World War for the liberty we enjoy today. But that liberty came at a huge cost – more than 600,000 gave their lives and are commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

Today CWGC's iconic cemeteries and memorials remain places of pilgrimage for veterans and descendants, tended by our gardeners and treasured by local communities.

To mark these anniversaries, CWGC is launching its first online sound archive called Voices of Liberation. This will create an online archive of memories and connections to our sites to preserve for future generations.

We are therefore appealing to members of the Monte Cassino Society with the hope of capturing your connection to the Italian campaign to include in the sound archive.

Whether you served in the operation or know someone who did, or have simply visited one of our Second World War cemeteries and memorials in Italy, we would love your input for the sound archive to help us create a lasting legacy to those who gave their lives for liberation.

For more information and to get involved please email voicesofliberation@cwgc.org or call +44 1628 507249.

BUDAPEST WAR CEMETERY



In early November, Geoff and I were in Budapest and took time out to visit the grave of his cousin Denys, a rear gunner in a Lancaster bomber, shot down over Hungary on 21st September 1944. Budapest War Cemetery contains 173 Commonwealth burials, all of them airmen whose graves were brought in from sites all over Hungary after the war. The cemetery also contains 1 French and 37 Polish war graves.

The cemetery, 15 kilometres north of Budapest, is in beautiful countryside and surrounded by mature trees. Silent except for birdsong, it was an emotional visit.

Accounts

Geoffrey Winter (Yorks & Lancaster Regiment, 5th Infantry Division) interviewed by Alana Roberts for his Sheffield local paper, *The Star*.

(Corrections by Geoffrey, not Judith !!)

Abandoned farm buildings became Christmas venue as bullets flew

By Alana Roberts
Multimedia reporter
alana.roberts@pimedia.co.uk

Follow me: @AlanaRoberts_

It was a Christmas unlike any other for a soldier from Sheffield, stationed in Italy during World War Two seventy five years ago.

Geoffrey Winter, aged 96, of Ecclesall, stepped ashore onto a beach north of Reggio di Calabria, on the west coast of Italy on September 3, 1943 - leading a platoon in the fight against the Germans.

Then, aged 20 and a lieutenant in the 1st battalion the Yorkshire and Lancaster regiment fifth infantry division, he had previously commanded 12th platoon in 'B' company through Sicily.

However, their numbers had depleted as many had been hospitalised after contracting malaria in Sicily, where it was rife.

Geoffrey said: "To begin with we met very little opposition from the Germans, but my platoon had become under strength. I led the platoon in a bayonet charge to capture a German machine gun position, and at the end about eight men were wounded.

"We later moved into mountainous country, the weather was dreadful. It was freezing cold and raining and



Geoffrey in February 1943.

we had no shelter, lying on the wet grass with only the clothes on our backs."

As December grew closer, the battalion were on the move again, all the while with heavy German artillery whirring over their heads, but still no contact had been made.

"The German positions were still not close and things were very quiet indeed," Geoffrey added. "So, it was decided that over Christmas one company at a time should move behind the front line, some distance, some shelter.

"It was a few miles away on foot where there were a group of deserted farm buildings, they were all under cover and that was the great thing. Unusually for the army they issued bottles or cans of beer, it was the only time ever I knew of it happening.

"They were also very generous to the five officers, of

'We had 300 casualties in a day or so, and 60 were killed. For many men, that Christmas had been their last'

which there were only three left including myself, they gave us a bottle of whisky, a bottle of gin and a bottle of sherry.

"We had lots of food, as the quarter masters department would usually supply food based on the amount of men who should have been there. At the time there should have been around 33, but because we were do depleted we only had about 20.

"Another treat was bread which we didn't usually get, as we normally had to make do with hard biscuits.

"We didn't have anything to do but enjoy ourselves as much as we could."

Shortly after Christmas 1943, Geoffrey was transferred to 'S' company, to take command of the newly formed Assault Pioneer platoon, ready to launch an attack across the River Garigliano.

"We had 300 casualties in a day or so, and 60 were killed," he said. "For many men, that Christmas had been their last."



GEOFFREY WINTER AT HOME IN SHEFFIELD



MAP TAKEN FROM www.thecrazytourist.com TRAVEL GUIDES OF ITALY

Good afternoon Montecassino Society
My name is Mike O'Reilly, a long term Friend of Mr George Cowie, who runs website www.shiny7.uk of whom I think you are acquainted with.

As the subject indicates, a coin has been struck to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the crossing of the river Rapido.

Details of the coin are attached, should any of your members or other groups you are in contact with, would like to purchase these coins, please do not hesitate to follow the ordering instructions on the notice. An address is essential to enable me to give an accurate postage cost for outside the UK

Should you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the email address.



This is a genuine offer and not a scam, the notice has been published on the REA Facebook Home Page.

Assuring you of my best intentions,
Mike O'Reilly

[Michael O'Reilly <oreilly.4925@gmail.com>](mailto:oreilly.4925@gmail.com)

**2019 will see the 75th anniversary of
"The Amazon Bridge"
built by 7, 59 and 225 Field Companies R.E.
(1730hrs 12th May - 0500hrs 13th May 1944)**

To mark this occasion a commemorative coin has been struck.
This is a limited edition of 1000 coins, each numbered and accompanied with a certificate of authenticity.
Actual size: 45mm diameter.

Inscribed around the edge:
"A BRIDGE TO BE BUILT AT ALL COSTS"

This coin is now available to purchase at a price of £10
or £15 including postage and packaging.
(Orders outside the UK may require extra postage)

£1 per coin is to be donated to The Army Benevolent Fund
£1 per coin is to be donated to The Royal Engineers Benevolent Fund

Orders through oreilly.4925@gmail.com
To avoid disappointment, **Specific Coins May Not Be Asked For**
Please include in your name and address with your order.
Instructions for payment will be given on receipt of an order.
No order will be dispatched without prior payment.



Accounts (Cont)

The following is an extract from Albert Dickinson's *ALBERT & FRANK OUR CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD WAR TWO*. The whole article can be found under the 'Recollections' section on our website www.montecassinociety.co.uk. This extract follows Albert from Naples to Rome.

..... In March we packed up camp and were taken by trucks to Port Said again where we embarked on H.M transport 'Hampshire', we were not told our destination but after a rough and stormy voyage we passed through the Straits of Messina and eventually we docked at Naples.

What a sight, the Germans had demolished the quay's and the harbour was littered with sunken ships, we tied up to a sunken Italian passenger liner that was lying on its side, we went down the gangplank and walked along the length of this ships side to a gangplank at the far end that led onto the quayside, we were burdened down with all our gear and weapons.

We were taken by trucks to the village of Roccamafina which was a few miles behind the front line, we were put in 'pup' tents, two men to a tent six feet long three feet wide by eighteen inches high all scattered around the place, there was a few inches of snow on the ground and was cold, the cooks set up a cook-house but after we'd been served a meal we were still hungry, but there was not much food available at that time. The area all around was littered with knocked out vehicles where the fighting had passed by. After a couple of days we were put in the front line, we had been assigned to the 4th British Infantry Division and we were part of the American 5th Army, as the weeks passed and the fighting was static we were moved about to different sectors of the front line and different rest area's at the rear.

We would do 7 to 10 days in the line and then a couple of weeks in a rest area a few miles back, some of the front positions were among groups of rocks on the mountain sides which the army called 'sangers' from the Hindustani word meaning snipers hiding hole, as the battle zone was under constant observation from the German positions we would have to move under cover of darkness, the trucks would take us to a village name Aquafondata, this was as close as they could get and then we would march down a ravine like track to where it entered the flat ground before Cassino, we would have to stop there until darkness fell, then we would march a few miles to the foot of the mountain and as it would be almost dawn we concealed ourselves among the rocks until the next night, we would then climb the mountain using goat tracks and in places steps cut in the mountainside by previous parties, we went up these on all fours, it would take us most of the night to get to the positions, we had to get into position before dawn otherwise we would be under fire, each platoon would split up into groups, we would man a position for one night, the next night we would descend the mountain and meet other parties bringing food and ammunition, these would be transferred to us but we would have to stay at the foot of the mountain all the next day and as darkness fell we would porter the supplies up the mountain, we had special platform harness, rucksack style for this job.

As the weeks progressed the weather was getting warmer especially during the day and as all movement had to be carried out during the hours of darkness it was almost impossible to recover the bodies of the men who had been killed, many had lain rotting for weeks and the stench was awful. This was a time of patrol activity for both sides and sometimes the patrols would clash with a bit of shooting and men from both sides would be killed and wounded.



There were four major battles for Cassino and the Gustav Line, The first three were hurled back with heavy losses, it was not until the fourth and final battle that we broke through.

During the day of May 11th 1944 we made our way forward as far as we could, as did all the troops in the line, but keeping out of sight so as not to alert the Germans and as dusk fell the artillery opened up with a massive barrage along the whole front right across the width of Italy and every known German gun position was targeted, this was the start of the fourth battle for the Gustav Line.

Our brigade had to advance to and then cross the river Rapido and advance and take machine gun positions on the far bank and beyond, we crossed the river in canvas boats that had been brought up for the occasion, but even as we approached the river we came under heavy fire, the first casualty was the medical officer who was killed when a shell landed beside his jeep, the medical sergeant then took his place, he was awarded the military medal later for evacuating wounded men by swimming across the river with them on his back. Many of the boats used in the crossing were riddled with gun fire and the occupants had to swim for it, even before reaching the river and beyond we lost a lot of men on the mines, a lot of these were from 'D' company, the commander major Humphrey Platt lost a leg about this time, his brother the battalion C.O LT. Col. John Platt was badly wounded leading the men, he was later awarded the military cross, the second in command major (crack) Chetwynd Stapleton then took command.

The 2nd battalion 'The King's Own regiment' were the first across the river, after three days of fighting during which the line moved backwards and forwards we were withdrawn to a rear area and a fresh brigade went in.



ALBERT AS A YOUNG SOLDIER

At one point during the fighting we had a lot of badly wounded men and we could not evacuate them so the medical orderly who spoke fluent German put up the red cross flag on a pole and went over to the German lines and arranged for them to be taken into German first aid bunker for treatment, after a couple of days we took this bunker and retrieved our wounded and the German medical lads went back along with their wounded to their own lines. When we went back to a rear area, we sent burial parties up to the battle area to bury the dead, much later these were all exhumed and buried in the Commonwealth Graves Cemetery at Cassino, in this cemetery are eight huge marble columns on which are the names and regiments of the men with no known graves, most of these were blown to pieces on mines or with shell fire. The total allied casualties for the fighting for the Gustav Line was twenty thousand dead and one hundred thousand wounded many of which were disabled for life.

After a couple of weeks in a rest area (near Piedmonte D'Alife) during which time we received reinforcements mostly from a battalion of "The Royal west Kent's" (The Buffs) we were taken back into the line, by this time Cassino had fallen and we were advancing on the Lombardy Plain towards Rome. The advance rolled steadily on with the Germans contesting village after village and town after town, farmhouses and outbuilding were booby trapped even fruit trees had anti-personnel mines planted around them, one of our sergeants lost a leg and later died taking a peach off a tree, besides this all bridges had been demolished and any obvious detour route was sown with anti-vehicle mines (Tellermines).

Our dear friend Garth Wright passed away on 19th January, aged 99. Garth had been determined to live to celebrate his 100th birthday but sadly it was not to be. The following appeared in his local paper The Western Morning News—

Dunkirk veteran Garth dies, aged 99

STUART ABEL

stuart.abel@reachplc.com

ONE of the last surviving Dunkirk veterans has died in a Plymouth nursing home at the age of 99.

Garth Wright, a Royal Artillery gunner, was among the troops evacuated from the beaches of northern France in 1940.

He went on to serve at Monte Cassino in Italy in 1944 – one of the bloodiest battles fought by British troops during the Second World War.

Mr Wright remained active until up to the last few months of his life, when he left his house in Crownhill, Plymouth, to move into a nursing home.

He passed away there on Saturday.

Mr Wright is survived by his son, two daughters, as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mr Wright played the bugle and carried his standard at services in Plymouth and across Europe. He often went back to Monte Cassino – the Italian mountain-top monastery where the Germans held up the Allied advance through Italy.

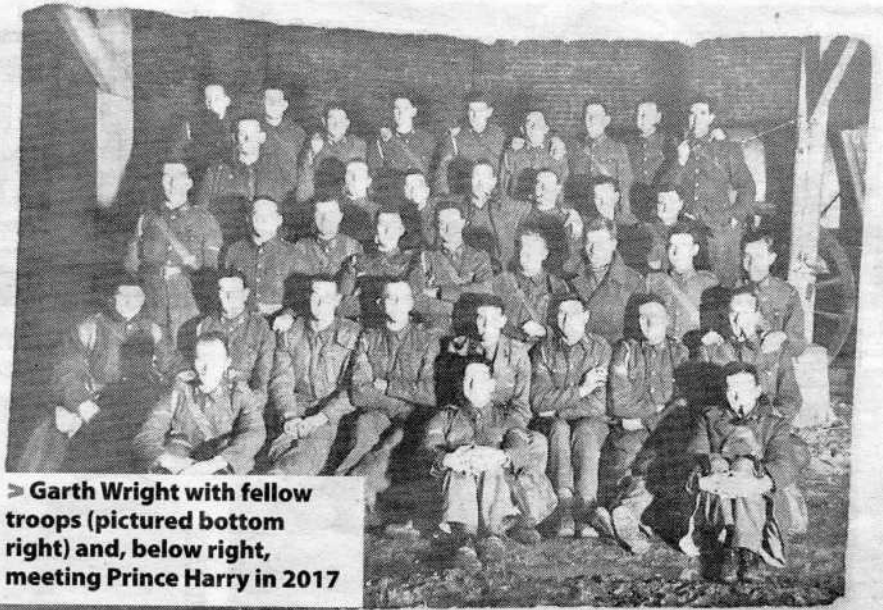
He also returned to Dunkirk for the 75th anniversary of the evacuation, where he had the chance to don goggles and ride an old Norton motorbike.

Mr Wright, who worked on the buses after the war, was an ardent Plymouth Argyle fan who played the bugle on the pitch, and pinned on his medals for Armed Forces Day.

Mr Wright was still active into his 90s, and was even invited to the world premiere of the epic film Dunkirk in 2017.

As well as rubbing shoulders with stars such as Harry Styles at Leicester Square, he met Prince Harry at an earlier reception in Kensington Palace.

And he was on Plymouth Hoe only



> Garth Wright with fellow troops (pictured bottom right) and, below right, meeting Prince Harry in 2017

He always had many a story to tell. I always left plenty of time at the end of meetings for 'any other business'

**BASIL
DOWNING-WAITE**

last year to visit a one-day memorial saying simply thank you to veterans.

Mr Wright was just 20 when he was sent to northern France within weeks of war being declared in 1939. He was serving with the Royal Artillery in Lille, as part of the British Expeditionary Force, when they were pushed back to Dunkirk.

More than 300,000 Allied troops were evacuated from the beaches as they fled the German advance from late May to early June 1940.

Speaking in 2017, he described the battle as "hell on earth".

"There were times during those attacks I buried my face in the bless-



ed sand and almost prayed the next one would be mine.

"I went up into the dunes and dug myself a little trench with my tin hat, just scooped out the sand.

"It was so unnerving, them damn things used to come over every half-hour machine gunning and ... you could see the sand beside you spurt-ing up with the machine gun bullets and bombs, you know, just yards away from yourself.

"Stuck like that for damn near 48 hours I suppose it must have been, I don't know."

David Carnell, branch chairman of the Royal British Legion in Crownhill, said: "He was an outstanding ambassador, he belonged to the Legion for many years.

"He was a remarkable man, he was always at parades and services until fairly recently. He was always playing the bugle."

Mr Wright performed at ceremonies in France and Belgium, including playing The Last Post at the Somme, the First World War battle-field.



> Dunkirk veteran Garth Wright sits on a World War II 1940 500cc Norton motorcycle in Dunkirk, France, during the 75th anniversary commemorations of Operation Dynamo



> A bugle sits atop Dunkirk veteran Garth Wright's coffin
Penny Cross

Dunkirk bugler is laid to rest

THERE were tears, but as anyone who knew him would expect at the funeral of Dunkirk veteran and bugler Garth Wright, there was much more laughter and smiles.

The Minster Church of St Andrew in Plymouth was packed out as family, friends, colleagues, veterans, serving soldiers and even a clutch of Morrison's workers paid their respects to the ever-joyful 99-year-old.

Garth, one of the last survivors of the British Expeditionary Force

evacuation, passed away on January 19 in a care home.

Flanked by members of the Plymouth and District Federation of Ex-Services Association, bearing standards pertaining to their associations, the funeral procession arrived at 2pm. Inside the Soundhouse Brass band played a medley of Garth's favourite songs. His coffin, was covered with a Union flag and on top was his bugle, his Plymouth Argyle scarf, his collection of medals and his beret.

As the above cutting says, the service to celebrate Garth's life was attended by hundreds of people, many representing the Associations he was affiliated to but also his many friends and acquaintances. Garth was a well known and well loved character in his home town of Plymouth.

Mike was in attendance with our Standard, one of twenty five standards from many different military associations. However, only three standards accompanied the coffin—led by Mike with the Monte Cassino Society Standard and the Royal Artillery and Dunkirk Veterans Association Standards to the rear. It was a very emotional moment for me.

Tom Allett, one of our members gave one of four eulogies. Many will remember Tom as he always joined Garth at the Arboretum and on our Italian pilgrimages.

My sincere thanks to Mike who did a splendid job —Garth would have said 'He played a blinder'.



GARTH AS WE REMEMBER HIM PLAYING HIS BUGLE FOR US AT A REMEMBRANCE SERVICE AT THE ARBORETUM

From Blakeley Nixon, Commemorative Events Coordinator

Hi Judith

We have set the deadline to the 7th of April so please do include the letter and the link in your newsletter. The event is veteran focused and they will have priority so someone registers after the deadline we can still make room.

Thanks,

Blakeley



The commemoration of Monte Cassino 75

Background: Monte Cassino – The Battles

With the surrender of Axis forces in North Africa and the allied invasion of Sicily, allied troops were landed in Italy in September 1943. The allies armies pushed north with many predicting that Italy would prove to be the 'soft underbelly' of Axis occupied Europe and Rome would quickly be in allied hands.

The allied forces commanded by General Sir Harold Alexander were a mix of British, American, French, New Zealand, Indian, Gurkha, South African, Canadian, Australian, Italian and Polish troops. As these allied forces pushed north through Italy German resistance and mountainous Italian terrain slowed their advance until by the winter of 1943 they had been held at the Winter Line, also known as the Gustav Line, which formed part of a series of lines of defensive lines constructed by the German army. The town of Cassino sat at the western end of the line protecting Route 6 one of the main roads that led to Rome. The German army led by Field Marshal Kesselring had fortified the town of Cassino before which flowed the Gari and Rapido rivers and beyond which rose Monte Cassino upon which sat the famous Benedictine monastery. One of the strongest natural defensive positions in military history it takes about two hours to reach Monte Cassino's summit.

The natural strength of the German position mitigated the air superiority that the Allies had resulting in what was to become a battle much like the battles of attrition of the First World War. The first attempt to take Cassino in January by US forces and by North African troops of the French Expeditionary Corp were repulsed in a battle lasting until mid-February. In an attempt to outflank the German position US forces had launched amphibious landings at Anzio and Nettuno in late January but there was to be no breakout for Rome as these troops were pinned down on their beachheads by German forces.

On the 15 February what was the second battle for Cassino began, during which the Benedictine Monastery on Monte Cassino was bombed and destroyed by Allied aircraft. On the ground British and Indian troops attacked the high ground while New Zealanders fought their way into the town of Cassino. Although gaining some territory the German position was still intact. On the 15 March the third battle began but despite the best efforts of the British, Indian and New Zealand troops the Germans were still to retain hold of the town and the high ground.

In May the Allies using brute force of numbers were able to breakthrough the German positions as the Polish Corp took Monte Cassino and the French Corps made progress through the Aurunci Mountains further east. On the 4 June the Allies captured Rome. However the cost had been heavy with the four battles of Monte Cassino resulting in 55,000 Allied casualties while the German's suffered around 20,000.

The battles of Monte Cassino while costing the Allies dearly but it had prevented the German Army from transferring more fighting men to France and two days after Rome was captured Allied divisions were ashore in France as part of Operation Overlord to free France. For the Free Italian forces who fought alongside the Allies they were able to assuage the fears of many of the Allies that they would not fight and displayed courage and determination as they suffered heavy casualties. The battle also continues to play a part in the national histories of many countries. Immediately after the battle the Polish government in exile in London created a Monte Cassino campaign cross and the Polish song writer, Feliks Konarski, who fought in the battle produced his anthem 'The Red Poppies on Monte Cassino'. A Polish war cemetery was also laid out which remains prominent to anyone visiting the area still.

At the outskirts of Cassino is a CWGC cemetery that highlights the multi-national nature of the Allied army with graves dedicated to British, New Zealand, Canadian, Indian, Gurkha, Australian and South African soldiers who fell during the battles of Monte Cassino. French and Italian graves can be found in a cemetery along Route 6, Americans in a cemetery and memorial in Nettuno and the Germans in a cemetery in the Rapido Valley north of Cassino.

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen



Dear Veteran

It is with great honour that I invite you, as a Veteran of the Italy Campaign of the Second World War, to The Royal British Legion's event commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino at the National Memorial Arboretum on **Saturday 11th May 2019**.

We will be remembering the heroism, courage and collaboration of the over 200,000 Allied and Commonwealth forces, who came from all corners of the earth, to fight in the Italy campaign and the battles of Monte Cassino. Your service and sacrifice secured freedom and democracy in Italy and played a central role in the final allied victory in Europe.

There will be a tea and coffee reception which will begin at **10:30** to be followed by a commemorative ceremony at **11:30**. After the ceremony we ask that you join us as a guest of honour at a Lunch Reception at the NMA's new Aspects event space. We expect that proceedings will conclude at around **14:00**.

You can RSVP for both yourself and a **family member, friend or carer**, by filling out our online registration form: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/remembrance/monte-cassino-75/Veterans-Registration>.

You can also phone my colleague Blakeley Nixon on **020 3053 7015** or by email: commemorative.events@britishlegion.org.uk.

We hope that you can respond by **Sunday 7th of April 2019**.

Veteran Tours, Travel and Accommodation

Remembrance Travel, the travel arm of The Royal British Legion, and their travel partner, Arena Travel, have organised a Remembrance Tour commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Italy Campaign which includes travel and accommodation to the National Memorial Arboretum for Monte Cassino 75. Under the LIBOR fines funding scheme, they are free for veterans, who may be accompanied by up to two family members or carers.

You can find out more on the by phoning **01473 660 800** or on the Arena Travel website - <https://www.arenatravel.com/our-holidays/remembrance-travel>

I do hope that you can join us for this special occasion.

Yours aye

Lieutenant Colonel (Rtd) Bob Gamble OBE
Assistant Director of Commemorative Events
Royal British Legion

LIVE ON





Entrance to Cassino War Cemetery



THE MONTE CASSINO SOCIETY

Contact us:

Michael Anslow

anslow9@hotmail.com

Doreen Belcher

dorbel36@hotmail.com

Judith Coote, Secretary tel. 01503 263 229

jude@whlooe.eclipse.co.uk

White Horses, Meadway, East Looe, Cornwall. UK PL13 1JT

johnleachportloe@gmail.com

Stan Pearson, Treasurer

stanley.pearson@talktalk.net

Philip Soady Web Administrator

phil.soady@gmail.com

paul_taylor17@yahoo.co.uk