



Welcome to our Winter newsletter 2024.

Readers will have noticed that the newsletters now have a change of design for the front page, featuring our new MCS Logo.

While we are all familiar with the iconic image of the ruined abbey of Monte Cassino, the design brief for the new logo was to represent the fact that despite our name and an inevitable focus on the Battles for Monte Cassino, the Society exists to remember, and further an interest in the whole of the Italian Campaign of 1943 to 45. With this in mind, the design features the outline of Italy and Sicily, with around the edge the names of the principle eight battles of the Italian Campaign, coloured in red to reflect the poppy wreaths with which we mark Remembrance. The pale blue of the background also relates to the colour chosen by the Society for our Standard, and the ties and scarves worn by members.

Having our own logo has already proved useful in different ways, and will help to define a more forward-looking image for the Society in this 80th Commemoration year. The new design featured on the wreaths recently laid by Society members at this year's Remembrance events and has also been adapted for a new pin badge which is available for members to purchase, details for which are given on page 4.

In this issue we report recent Remembrance events supported by our members throughout the country, and as this significant 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year draws to a close, the article on page 21 by Eddie O'Sullivan gives food for thought on the future nature of Remembrance. Details are also given of Remembrance events for 2025, on 3rd May in Edinburgh when we will be commemorating the end of the war in Italy, and 17th May at the NMA, for the 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the battles for Cassino. Please join us at one or both of these events if you can.

On page 3 you will find an exciting new proposal for our next battlefield tour in 2025.

Thank you to those members who have provided more recollections of relatives involved in the Italian campaign, and for your continued support of the Monte Cassino Society,

With all good wishes for 2025,

Helen James,

Editor

### **Membership Renewal**

Annual membership fees are due in January. Thank you for your continued support which enables us to maintain the Society's aim of *furthering an interest in the Italian Campaign*.

Membership of the Society is £15 per household payable to our Treasurer, Diane Soady - see Contacts at the end of the newsletter.

If you can pay by Bank Transfer, this will save the Society the charges incurred by paying in cheques (please contact Diane for our Bank details). If you do, have you considered making this an annual Standing Order?

Thank you,

Lesley Teasdale, Hon. Secretary

### **New Committee member**

We are delighted to announce that following our successful battlefield tour with Frank de Planta in May this year, he has agreed to join the Monte Cassino Society committee. Frank, to whom I am personally grateful for his help with verifying the military minutiae in the newsletter, also lends his support by including an MCS flyer in his tour information packs, and brings to the Society the benefit of a wealth of expertise and experience:

Frank de Planta is a battlefield tour guide specialising in the Italian Campaign. He guides at Salerno, Cassino, Anzio, the Sangro, the Gothic Line at Rimini and the Final Offensive in the Po Valley. He read Modern History at King's College London before attending the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. He was commissioned into the Royal Anglian Regiment in 1984 and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 2009. When not guiding battlefield tours, Frank drives the boat on The Great Lake at Castle Howard and advises TV and Film Production Companies on military issues.



Frank explaining the 2 Canadian Infantry Brigade's attack on the Hitler Line - six miles north of Cassino.

### Gothic Line tour October 2025

*The Society is running a four day battlefield tour to the Gothic Line on 4-7 October 2025 inclusive. The tour will look at Operation OLIVE - the massive Eighth Army assault on the Adriatic end of the Gothic Line in the Rimini area during August-September 1944.*

*The cost will be £496.00 for single rooms and £772.00 for twins - £386 per person. The charge includes transport whilst in Italy, motorway tolls, three nights B&B in a Rimini hotel, a 90 page Information Pack of maps, diagrams and photographs and the guide, Frank de Planta.*

*Not included are lunch and evening meal each day and flights. The transport pick up and drop off airport in Italy is Bologna. If this interests you, please email that interest to Helen*

*at [helenconrad@btconnect.com](mailto:helenconrad@btconnect.com)*

*An expression of interest email to Helen is not a commitment to attend the tour.*

Operation OLIVE – the Eighth Army assault on the Adriatic side of the mighty Gothic Line, came about after Leese persuaded Alexander to change the 15 Army Group plan. Alexander had originally intended to attack in the centre of the Gothic Line above Florence in the High Apennines, with Fifth and Eighth Armies fighting alongside each other. Under the new plan, Fifth Army would continue as intended through the mountain range of the High Apennines whilst Eighth Army would shift itself to the somewhat flatter ground on the Adriatic and attack at Rimini.

During the tour, we will look in detail at how Oliver Leese deployed his forces from 31 Aug-25 Sep 44 and how the Germans responded. Many of the troops from Cassino were deployed in the massive assault – 4 Indian Division, 56 Infantry Division, 46 Infantry Division, 1 Canadian Infantry Division, 5 Canadian Armoured Division, 3 Polish Infantry Division and 5 Polish Infantry Division. To these formations were added the Greek Brigade and 1 Armoured Division. The one thing that they all had in common was that they were exhausted and their ranks were thin. Almost a year of constant fighting had taken its toll as had the departure of seasoned American and French Divisions for use in Aug 44 in Operation DRAGOON – the landings in Southern France. Fifth Army was a shadow of its former self and so Eighth Army had to make most of the running.

The tour will look at the Eighth Army's lunge towards nirvana – the Po valley, in a story that is full of brilliance, confusion, unbelievable courage and utter stupidity. The fog of war was thick. Enduring hardship and heartache, participants will quickly realise why the troops in the Italian Campaign – of every nationality, resented being called the D Day Dodgers.



**May 2025 Commemorations.**

To mark not just the 81<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino but also the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of the War in Italy, there will be two separate events in May.

**On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**, there will be a Service at Blackhall St Columba's Church, Edinburgh, (home of the Monte Cassino Cross) to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of the War in Italy on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1945.

The service will start (subject to final confirmation) at 16:00. This Service will also be live-streamed on the Blackhall St Columba's webpage –

<https://www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk/live-stream-services-and-info/>.

**On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May**, we will mark the 81<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino at the Society's Memorial Stone in the National Memorial Arboretum, Lichfield. We will gather at 13:45 at the Memorial for a 14:00 start, and invite members and visitors to meet in the café after the service for an informal get-together.

As stated on the NMA's website, "entry to the Arboretum is free, however they recommend booking your visit in advance to guarantee entry and save on parking."

Could members please let Lesley know if they are intending to attend either (or both) of the Services so that she can keep a tally of the expected numbers – her contact details are at the end of the Newsletter.

**Monte Cassino Society Pin badges.**

We now have our own Monte Cassino Society pin badges featuring the new society logo, available for purchase.

Measuring 1 inch (2.5 cms) in diameter, the badges are available from Lesley Teasdale ([lesleytea.lt@gmail.com](mailto:lesleytea.lt@gmail.com)) at £5 each, including postage and packing.

MCS ties and scarves are also available. Ties are £13 and scarves £20, both include postage and packing.





### **Remembrance commemorations, November 2024**

*We thank MCS member Robert Deakin, who has ably represented the Society by parading our Standard on two occasions in 2024. First at the Commemoration service in Aldershot in the summer, and more recently at the annual Festival of Remembrance in the Albert Hall, the night before Remembrance Day. To show the MCS Standard at this prestigious annual event was the first invitation of its kind to the Society by the RBL, and one we were delighted to accept.*

*Robert served in the Royal Navy and is connected to the MCS through his mother Elizabeth Longman, and his great uncle L/Sgt William (Billy) Donaldson, 17 platoon, H Company. 2nd Battalion, London Irish Rifles, who lost his life at 21 at Sinagoga on 16th May 1944 and is buried in Cassino CWGC cemetery.*



L/Sgt William (Billy) Donaldson



Robert, Liz and Lesley at the Albert Hall

### **Representing the Monte Cassino Society at the Albert Hall**

by Robert Deakin

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024 I was honoured and privileged to represent the Society by carrying our standard at the Festival of Remembrance, before the King and a nationwide audience.

It all started at the Albert Hall at 3pm on Friday 7<sup>th</sup>, where we practised marching, descending steps, and inserting the standard into a sash – all while not looking down, and not an easy task.

Back at the Albert Hall for breakfast at 0630 the next morning, we underwent a briefing, more training and a full event run-through before lunch and two full dress-rehearsals. After changing into smart

uniform, it was back to the Albert Hall for the afternoon matinee in front of a full audience and my nerves were jangling, trying to remember everything we had been taught, and not trip down the stairs. But when 2pm arrived and we were moving at last, I felt proud to represent the Society, and relieved that it had gone well. Matinee over, it was back to the holding room for refreshments while we waited to be called for 'the big one', the 7pm show attended by the King, Queen, Prince William and Kate.

Meanwhile, the news from Lesley (Teasdale) and my mother Liz Longman that they would be seated near to where I would be descending the steps, along with the discovery that two men I served with would also be in the audience, added to the nervous feeling of marching before the King, but I can say that in the event I marched straight and was so proud to march for the fallen and survivors of Monte Cassino. I would happily march again and bear the standard if asked, and would like to give a massive thank you to the Society for asking me to represent them at such an important occasion.

### **Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey**

As I come into Parliament Square with the Houses of Parliament to my left and Westminster Abbey in front of me, I always reflect on its historic significance. Not least in the service I am about to attend in the churchyard of St Margaret's Church. 2024 is the 96<sup>th</sup> Field of Remembrance at the Abbey and this annual event marks the start of the Nation's Remembrance Commemorations.

When you arrive in the Abbey's grounds, you see before you a veritable sea of scarlet poppies, which is a very humbling experience. Our plot was laid out by Maureen Stringer and Susan Deadman on the day before the service, and Maureen, Susan, Sharon Shaw and I were present at the Plot for the official opening.

HRH The Duchess of Gloucester attended the service and toured the poppy fields, stopping at the MCS plot to talk to us about this year's 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Lesley Teasdale





## **Remembrance Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

In addition to the annual Service of Remembrance held at Blackhall St Columba's Church in Edinburgh, it was great to see 42 MCS members, including several who marched with us for the first time, representing the Society at the annual Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November. Most of the group met after the march for the convivial lunch organised by Lesley at a nearby Italian restaurant, which of recent years has become an annual and enjoyable conclusion to our Remembrance Day gathering.

This year there seemed to be more people than ever (officially 10,000) attending the service and marching past the Cenotaph, and despite hours of standing around beforehand, and the constant threat of rain it was a privilege to be there to march in memory of those who served in the Italian campaign. Due to the timely delivery of information to the BBC and other media channels by Sue Hughes, the Monte Cassino Society, the Italian campaign, and 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battles for Cassino were all mentioned in the commentary by David Dimbleby, and a live interview with Forces Radio by Jessica Hayward, one of our younger members was broadcast immediately after the march.

As ever, we thank Liz Longman for organising the Cenotaph group on behalf of the MCS, and Susan and Maureen for their work preparing the MCS plot in the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey.

Helen James



### Monte Cassino Society Memorial cards

Acknowledging that it is not possible for every MCS member who attends their local service of Remembrance to lay a wreath on behalf of the Society, this year we introduced a simple MCS card of Remembrance for the Italian campaign. This can be used either as a grave marker, as we did for the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Cassino cemetery, or instead of a wreath or cross at a memorial. The cards will be updated according to the year and can be printed off individually and laminated at home. *Please contact Helen James if you would like to receive the PDF, contact address at the end of this newsletter.*



Why do we lay wreaths? This was sent in by MCS member Helen Prescott who has laid an MCS wreath for many years on Remembrance Day at Douglas, Isle of Man.

Lay it with pride, these were special men and women.



Once again, it was with incredible pride that I was able to pay my respects at the Douglas War Memorial, on behalf of the Monte Cassino Society, whilst also paying tribute to my late father William Frank Sweetman, Gunner 1534047, 8th Army, also members of our family lost in the First World War, and to the friends and comrades Dad served with in what has been termed "one of the bloodiest battles of the Second World War".

My father, who died in June 2014 aged 94 years, never forgot his experiences whilst serving the full duration of the Second World War, but most vividly those at Monte Cassino. Dad was born and grew up on the Island, one of fourteen children and, upon being called up for war service, was on the first ship of men leaving his beloved Isle of Man (and the first time in his life) - nothing could have prepared him for the 6 years he would spend away from his home. As with many of the men returning from a world war, they didn't want to speak about



their experiences, however, after much persuasion from his devoted family (having been told on leaving the Army to "forget and get on with your life"), Dad finally, in his 80s, wrote his war memoirs "Fire When You Like, Sir" (as a Gunner, his orders were to "fire on the light", but as Dad had become deaf from the noise of the guns, he thought the order was "fire when you like" - and he did!). His memories of those years were so vivid (although, with having daughters and granddaughters, we suspect his memoirs do not fully contain the horrors he experienced and witnessed) and along with his war medals, his memoirs are held with the greatest pride and respect by our family. He was able to recall with total clarity, the names of the ships he sailed on, the ports he landed at and the countries he travelled through. Right up until his death, he spoke almost daily about Monte Cassino and "the friends he lost there" - what images and memories had remained with him for all those years?

In 2015, my daughters and I visited Cassino and were overwhelmed by the beautiful and dignified serenity of the British Cemetery. We laid Manx crosses on the graves/memorials of eight Manxmen who lost their lives there, some of whom Dad had gone to school with (an experience we will never forget). We will never be able to imagine what they and their generation experienced and suffered; it is our duty to ensure that their sacrifice is never forgotten. We will remember them and never forget.

By Helen Prescott



Douglas War Memorial, Isle of Man, November 2024

*This was received from Dave Mann,  
Assistant Director, Meridian Chapter Harley Owners Group*

As we approach the end of our 20<sup>th</sup> year it was another proud day to remember those who gave in past conflicts at our new memorial venue situated just outside Greenwich Park on Blackheath. Meridian Members met at "The Pavilion" for coffee, breakfast and a 'natter' prior to taking the short ride out of the park to the memorial at the top of Maze Hill. There we joined around 100 local people including a well-turned-out Cub Scout group.

As in previous years, wreaths were laid on behalf of both Meridian Chapter Harley Owners Group and "The Monte Cassino Society".

In all, it was a sombre and dignified occasion that also provided a good opportunity to network with the local community, who were both welcoming and looking forward to our presence next year.

Many thanks to all who turned out and of course to our nominated Chapter members who laid the wreaths...Until next year,

We Will Remember Them





## Remembrance Day in the Lakeland Fells

*By Vincent Jones, who laid a wreath on behalf of MCS at Keswick Memorial, 2024.*

The members of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, the earliest Lake District walking organisation, wanted to remember the seventeen club members who didn't return from the First World War. As a memorial, the club purchased all the land over 1750 feet around Great Gable to enable free access, in perpetuity, to those hills (this was a time when many landowners restricted access). The land was subsequently gifted to the National Trust.



A plaque commemorating the seventeen was placed on the summit of Great Gable in 1924, and on Remembrance Sunday each year the club holds a short ceremony: a short speech by a member of the club followed by a two minutes' silence. The club is kind enough to allow non-members to attend, and many do.

I've been there most years since the mid-1990s. There are several approaches to Great Gable. Other ascents are available, but I tend to go up from the Honister Pass and up from Green Gable across Windy Gap, which can live up to its name. Some years there has been snow or really heavy rain, but on other days it has been cold and clear, with views all around: the Carsphairn and Scaur Hills in the Scottish Southern Uplands in the north; as far as the Yorkshire Dales to the east; the Isle of Man to the west; and even once a glimpse of Yr Wyddfa, the mountain formerly known as Snowdon, to the south.

I have met many interesting people on the ascent, some of whom I see year after year, like Paul and Oscar from Blackburn. This is one of the best parts of the walk, that and the long soak in the bath when I'm back indoors. A few years ago, my wonderful constant companion Jim, a Cumbrian Trail hound, found the last part of the ascent too much at thirteen, so we turned back to Honister early. On Green Gable we met Paul and Oscar, and Paul was kind enough to take a picture of us with Gable in the background. That was Jim's last year, and people who'd seen us on previous ascents have asked about him - it seems that I'm not the only person missing him.

On top of Castle Crag, whose ascent is a lot easier, there is a plaque commemorating the fallen from Borrowdale and there is a more conventional ceremony at 11am, which I attended last year. Despite attending with a leg injury, I made it down for the church service in Grange. I'm hoping, given that my legs hold up, to take my grandson one year, as I once took his mum.







Perhaps he'll even shoulder my backpack.  
 It's a small way that I can thank my late father, a Monte Cassino veteran, and his comrades, in scrubbing out the far right in Europe. It goes without saying that without them there would be no freedom for us to roam these beautiful fells, and each November, as I load up my flask and put on my walking boots, I have only gratitude. Jim, now walking on other fells with my dad, would perhaps want me to mention the post-walk pork pies we would share back in Keswick.



Keswick War Memorial, November 2024

*Jessica Hayward, veteran John Hodgson's granddaughter, visited Cassino in June this year. Spending time at Monte Cassino made a huge and lasting impression on her. John Hodgson, was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Natal Carbineers, 6<sup>th</sup> South African Armoured Division, part of the allied forces who fought in the battles at Monte Cassino. Jessica writes as follows:*



“My Grandad was extremely fortunate to return from Italy at the end of the war, unlike so many. I am extremely proud of my grandfather who was a wise and dedicated man. I believe that his achievements were driven in part by the memory of the many friends that he lost at Monte Cassino. He signed up to join the South African army when he was only 16 years old as many of his friends were volunteering. He initially sailed to Egypt for training before going to Italy. Only in my grandfather's latter years, not long before he died in 2017 at the age of 92, was he able to speak about his war years in Italy, and his tales evoked in me the need to visit Monte Cassino and to see for myself the places he spoke about. This year, not only because of the 80th anniversary of the battle, but also because I believed it was the right time, I visited Cassino with my parents.

I was astounded by how high and steep the road was up to Point 593. My father and I walked up to the monument where we could look across to the monastery. I found the steep climb difficult. I thought about the soldiers who crawled up the mountain, few trees for shelter and under fire. We spent a few peaceful moments at Point 593 remembering my Grandad but also all the soldiers that fought in the mountains around us and those who had lost their lives. As we walked slowly down the mountain singing filtered up to us from the Polish cemetery below. It was eerie and I felt that I had been transported back in time. A group of Polish people had gathered in the cemetery and were singing their national anthem. My Grandad always said that he owed his life to the Polish people due to their courage and determination to reach the top of the mountain and defeat the Germans.

We spent a few hours in the monastery. The reconstruction of the monastery is amazing. We then visited the Commonwealth war graves which are situated in the shadow of the monastery. When I first walked up the steps into the cemetery the sight in front of me took my breath away. How beautiful, peaceful and respectful the graves were. We spent some time walking amongst the South African soldier gravestones and one of the first gravestones that I saw was that of my grandfather's friend. Sadly,



Jessica at Point 593

on his first night at Cassino he walked into a booby trap that had been set to warn them of any approaching Germans, but it killed him!

We also visited the banks of the Rapido river and walked across the bridge, marvelling at the engineering that would have been required in order for the army to cross the river.

Before leaving Cassino, we visited the German war graves. So many German soldiers had lost their lives following orders with no choice other than to obey. The difference between the two cemeteries was enormous and made a huge impression on me.

This year I will be marching in the Remembrance parade on Horse Guards in memory of my Grandad. I will also be marching in memory of his best friend who died on the first night in the mountains of Monte Cassino and also all the soldiers that died in these battles 80 years ago. The soldiers fighting in Italy were wrongfully known as the D-Day dodgers, but without their sacrifices WWII may have had a very different outcome and the world today would be very different.

It has always been very important to me to participate in the Remembrance Day parade on Horse Guards. Everyone marching has their own story as well as the hundreds of people who line the route of the parade. This has always been a special time to remember my grandfather and also the thousands of people who have given their lives in so many battles over the years so that we could have the life we live today.

We will remember them!!!

*Jessica gave an interview to Tim Humphries*

*of Forces Radio BFBS immediately after the march at the Cenotaph, which was broadcast live. The interview can be accessed via the Monte Cassino Society Facebook page, and the Monte Cassino Society Website: [montecassinociety.co.uk](http://montecassinociety.co.uk)*



Jessica and her parents on Remembrance Day. 2024

### **Polish Veterans' Memorial Association, Scotland and the story of Ludwik Jaszczur**

Ewa Klyszewska Daly, who is setting up a Polish Veterans' Memorial Association in Scotland, attended the Blackhall St Columba's annual service of remembrance held on behalf of the Monte Cassino Society in May, one of the three main events which marked the 80th anniversary.

Having worked as an interpreter with Polish veterans, their families and friends for more than 20 years in Scotland, Ewa has a great interest in veterans from all countries, but particularly Poland. One of those was Ludwik Jaszczur, a veteran of the 2nd Polish Corps, who died aged 95 in 2023. He told her his remarkable story – and tasked her with sharing it with others.



Post-war Ludwik settled in Edinburgh, where Ewa met him. Here she recalls the story he told her during a traditional Polish Christmas Eve dinner in 2022, two months before he died:

“Ludwik was taken from his home in Blizne, Poland, by the Germans around October 1940 when he was 13 years old, also taken with him at the same time was a neighbour’s son, Leon Werek, who was around 20. They were being taken to Treblinka camp and Leon told Ludwik to say he was Ukrainian. Ludwik reckons this saved his life.



Statue of Wojtek the Bear, Prince’s Gardens, Edinburgh

Ludwik was sent to undertake forced labour at German farms near Treblinka and constantly asked to join the Ukrainian forces, which were working with the Germans at that time. Facing severe pressure and threats to kill him, he joined this Ukrainian force and delivered arms and equipment to forces (I think part of the time they were in the Czech Republic).

Sometime in 1943 they were captured by the Allies and taken to a camp at Rimini called Barletta. Polish General Wladyslaw Anders came to this camp late in 1943 or early 1944 and addressed these young men, saying he understood some were Polish and asking if they would like to join him in the battle for Monte Cassino. Ludwik volunteered, aged 16, but due to his age he worked as a supplier/helper, like Wojtek the bear, not fighting but taking ammunition and suchlike to soldiers.

When the war ceased in Italy Ludwik was de-mobbed, however he asked his commanding officer if he could keep his uniform, and worked helping injured soldiers near Rimini, to earn money to send to his mother. In late 1946 he was given a choice of countries to go to and picked the UK. He was sent to Dover, then on to Camp MacMerry near Edinburgh. He worked in a nearby hospital in the Padarewski Ward, and I understand this hospital was training Polish doctors.

Ludwik became proficient at making artificial limbs and later, when he applied for a job with Remington Rand, which was opening factories in Scotland, his bosses asked Remington if they could keep him until he trained other members of staff, because they were reluctant to lose him. He worked for Remington Rand for more than 40 years as a service engineer based in Edinburgh, but travelling all over the UK. He was a valuable member of Remington and once was given the task of repairing the special typewriter used by the late Duke of Edinburgh at Holyrood.

When Remington closed its operation Ludwik was made redundant, but used the money he received to open a leather shop in Edinburgh where he worked with his partner until about 2020-21. This led to his second royal connection, the late Queen Elizabeth had one of her handbags sent to Ludwik for strap repair

– I understand he did a great job and he told me the bag was delicate with a light that came on upon opening.

Ludwik was a great character, a very patriotic man and well liked in Edinburgh, where he could be seen carrying his Polish standard down to Princes Gardens where you will find the statue of Wojtek the Bear. He told stories to people who stopped to speak with him and have their photo taken. I managed to get tickets for the last night of the Edinburgh Tattoo in 2022 – we got a front row seat and it was amazing how many people greeted him.

Incidentally Ludwik went back to Poland in the late 1970s and I understand met Leon Werek, who survived Treblinka.”

Before he died Ludwik said he wished to be buried in Poland, but changed his mind as more people learned about his story. Ewa told him he ‘belonged to Edinburgh’ and he now rests in Mount Vernon Cemetery.

Ewa would like to hear from relatives of Polish veterans who can share stories such as Ludwik’s, because the Polish Veterans’ Memorial Association will collate recollections in a similar manner to the MCS archive.

She can be contacted at [ewadaly.pps@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ewadaly.pps@hotmail.co.uk)




---

*Maureen Rutledge contacted me from New Zealand in July 2024, having been made aware of the Monte Cassino Society by the grave cards we placed in Cassino Cemetery during our 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service there. It was heartening to discover that our simple message was received on the other side of the world, and Maureen now shares her family’s tragic story with us:*

In early July I left a message on the Monte Cassino Society’s website because of a photo I received of my father’s gravesite in the Cassino cemetery. This photo was taken last month by an old New Zealand friend of mine and forwarded to me here in Auckland, New Zealand. Beside the gravesite of my father, there was a message from your society which recorded your recent remembrance service at the cemetery, held to mark the 80th anniversary of the battle at Cassino. Most importantly, that those present had each selected a gravesite to stand by. I was very moved. And as a result of your reply and then your request I am glad to send you some information about the impact of the war on my English father and his London-based family.

I visited Cassino in July 1998 and stood for the first time at my father’s gravesite in that sombre but stunning setting. My elder brother, Nicholas, from Sydney Australia was there before me in 1997. The two of us were born in England in 1941 and 1942, respectively, and therefore had no memory of our



Maureen's parents, Joan and Peter Dudman

father, killed in 1943. After the war my mother Joan remarried and we, as a family, moved permanently to Auckland. Perhaps unsurprisingly, our mother did not talk to us about our father, but we kept his name which, in time, became an ever-present reminder. However, my brother and I knew almost nothing of our father or of his ill-fated family till 1969 after our mother's untimely death that year.

Following my mother's death, several very special items were passed on to me. Among them were 14 small blue aerogrammes written from the war front to my mother from Peter, and they included two from the week in which he was killed at Camino. Several of the letters contain exquisitely drawn pen and ink sketches (my father, an artist, had earlier qualified at the Chelsea School of Art). However, both the letters and drawings are unbearably grim given that the subject matter is, in Peter's own words, "the abject futility of war". Two other items I received were photograph albums of

my father's spanning the years from 1918 to 1941. They begin with the four Dudman brothers as small babies and end with the four young men in service uniform. Amongst the most poignant items was a signet ring given to my father by my mother when they married in September 1939. This ring was sent to my mother after my father's body was exhumed at the end of the war.

From the items I received I was able to learn just a little more about my father's family and their incredible loss. However, for personal reasons, it was not till 1997 that I began to consider again the gaps in my family knowledge. A motivating force at that time was the awareness that I was the sole possessor of the special family records I had been given. These, it seemed to me, rightfully belonged to both the children and the four grandchildren (all grandsons) of my father. And so began my long, often deeply emotional but ultimately fruitful search. To start with I contacted the Ministry of Defence and the Royal Air Force in England seeking the war records for my father Peter and his two brothers, Jim and Tony. By April 1998 I had my first answers. Shortly thereafter my husband Stewart and I left for England where he was to spend his sabbatical leave at Oxford University. Knowing this, the English authorities advised me to seek further information from the Family Records Centre in London and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in Maidenhead. And so I did.

From the sources I unearthed while in England, I learnt how devastatingly my family had been struck. One by one. In September 1940, my grandparents, William and Nora Dudman, (both teachers in Ealing, London, and William, a Headmaster), along with Dorigen, the wife of their surviving son George, were killed when their house suffered a direct hit in the Blitz. Two years later, Tony (Richard Anthony), their youngest son, serving, like my father, in the 7<sup>th</sup> Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, was killed in 1942 at the age of 20 during the battle of El Alamein. My father, Peter, who had fought beside his brother Tony in Egypt, was killed in 1943 during the closing stages of the First Battle of Camino, when 7 Ox & Bucks were sent up the hill to allow the remnants of 201 Guards Brigade to be extracted after their

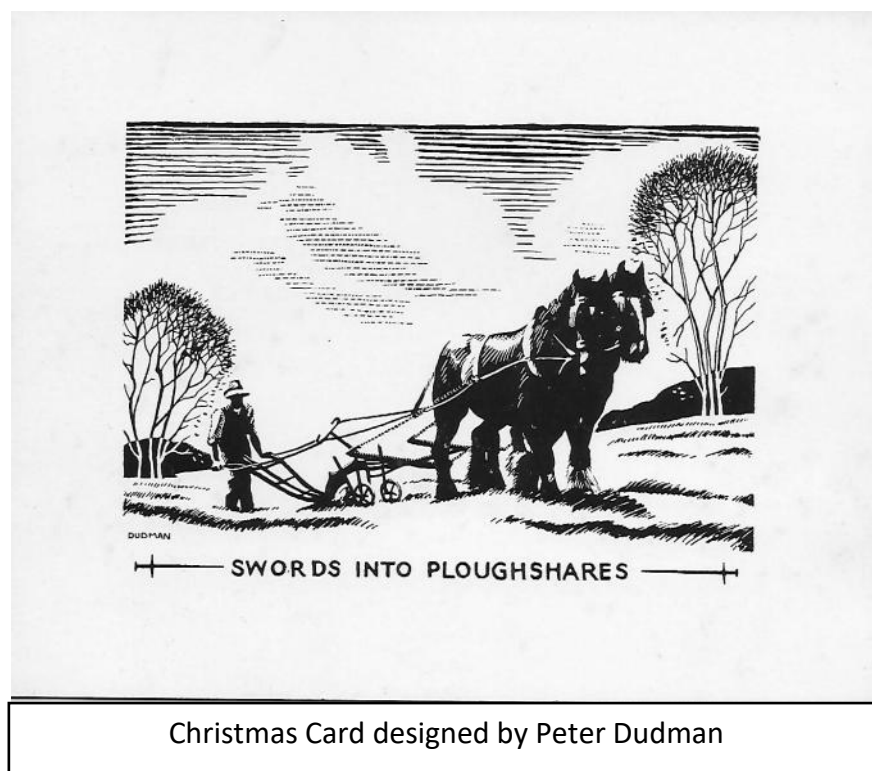


tortuous time trying to secure Monte Camino and the tiny monastery on top of it. He was 25. Finally, his twin brother Jim, who served in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, was shot down over Paris in his Lancaster bomber, on June 11<sup>th</sup> 1944, at the age of 26.

As a result of my searches in 1998 I was able to stand at the gravesites of my father in Cassino and his twin brother Jim, in Clichy, Paris. To visit El Alamein was not possible, and of my grandparents and my aunt Dorigen, all I discovered was that they were cremated at Wandsworth (Putney Vale) Crematorium. But at least I had the answers I had sought.

In this intense search of mine both in England and before, I encountered many aspects I felt to be worthy of recording. In addition I had received many special items and had a number of sobering encounters with English family members I did not realise still existed. Therefore, in the year following our return to Auckland, I gathered together much of this material and had printed and bound a book of over 70 pages. The book included photos from the two family albums, the few pieces of Peter's artwork I held, the 14 letters of my father's which, because of their age and their tiny writing I also transcribed. The book I titled *Peter John Dudman and his family. A Personal Collection*. I had it bound for permanency and six copies were printed for our father's two children and his four grandsons, Peter and Thomas Rutledge, and Peter and Michael Dudman.

Besides this record, every year for more than four decades I have attended an annual war memorial service on Anzac day (April 25<sup>th</sup>) in Auckland with my husband, sometimes my sons, and this year my eleven year old granddaughter Lucie. And so, as the years pass, I continue to reflect, remember and acknowledge the great sacrifice of these six members of my family whom I never knew.



### 3062409 War/Bombadier Robert Beaston Robertson

by his grandson, 24392601 Bombadier Bob Thomas



This is a brief record of Robert's time in the Second World War. The information gathered is from his Service Record and from a publication of the Honourable Artillery Company, "Regimental Fire" which was written by Brigadier R.F Johnson.

Paw Paw, as he was known to all the family, first joined the ITC The Royal Scots, enlisting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1940 as a volunteer to join 12 Regiment Royal Horse Artillery (Honourable Artillery Company). Robert was with F Battery which was, until August 1943, equipped with the 25-pounder gun. The Regiment had three batteries – C, D & F, spread out over the front, giving support to the units that came under fire from enemy positions.

12 Regiment RHA was formed in May 1939, and existed just for the duration of the war. Robert, having spent some years training joined the Regiment, and it was not long before he found himself being shipped out from mainland Europe on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1942, sailing across the Bay of Biscay to land in North Africa on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1942 at Algiers – the capital of French Algeria. They were one of three Artillery Regiments supporting 6 Armoured Division. He saw heavy action in the North African campaign in the areas of the Kasserine Pass and Thala.

From May 1943 to April 1944, the Regiment were out of the line in North Africa, changing from 25-pounder guns to the new M7 105mm American Self-Propelled Priest, which they were due to take to Italy. This weapon used American ammunition.

#### The Italian Campaign

12 Regiment RHA started the Italian Campaign by disembarking in southern Italy at Naples, and from there the Regiment took up gun positions at Cassino in the area behind Mount Trocchio. The battle started just before midnight on 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> May 1944 supported by 1,089 pieces of artillery.

On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1944, the Regiment crossed over the 'Amazon' bridge in support of tanks that were supporting the infantry's own advance into the Liri Valley. 12 Regiment RHA were the first big guns over the bridge, taking up new gun positions beyond the River Rapido.

By noon on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1944, the news came in that Monte Cassino had been taken, and from then on it was constant moving and firing in support of the forward infantry and tanks as they moved north up the east side of the Liri Valley, heading for Rome.

Swinging round to the east of Rome, they now headed northeast towards Lake Trasimeno and then Arezzo. With hard fighting all the way, the Regiment continued the move north. At Arezzo, F Battery moved into gun positions into the town centre and fired at the enemy with 210 rounds in 12 minutes.

In December 1944, the Regiment, for a second time, had to change guns. This time they were issued with the Self-Propelled Sexton which mounted a 25-pounder gun and used British ammunition, The first of the

new guns arrived on Christmas Eve 1944. The Regiment completed the change in Montelupone, on the Adriatic coast, south of Ancona.

On 9<sup>th</sup> April 1945, the Regiment began their last battle, the Battle of the Senio and Santerno, which was fiercely fought. For eight hours they fired incessantly, until some guns started to have faults and the Light Aid Detachment had a task keeping the guns in action. By noon on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1945, all was ready to move forward to the banks of the Senio. On 15<sup>th</sup> April 1945, the 2nd New Zealand Division took up the advance and 12 Regiment RHA went with them in support.

It was announced on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1945 that German forces in Italy had surrendered, and five days later the Regiment were on the move to Austria '*In the summer paradise of Carinthia.on the banks of the Worther See*'.

On 24th October 1945,12 Regiment RHA went into suspended animation and its soldiers were re-absorbed into the Honourable Artillery Company. They brought with them new battle honours well worthy of their place on silken scrolls.

Paw Paw was released from service on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1946 and went into the Reserve on 8<sup>th</sup> September the same year. On his record, he is described as:

*'Exemplary...W/Bdr Robertson has always proved to be very conscientious, hardworking and reliable. A very honest and sober man with a likeable personality, who can be relied upon to take on any task without supervision.'*





*This article was first published in The Tablet, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024.*

### **The Band of the Royal Irish Regiment at the Vatican, 1944 and 2024**

Written by Edmund O’Sullivan

On a sunny morning in Rome on 12 June 2024, the band of the Royal Irish Regiment marched into St Peter’s Square to mark the eightieth anniversary of when 150 men of 38 (Irish) Brigade – including my father Colour Sergeant Ted O’Sullivan – met Pope Pius XII in the Vatican.

It was the first papal audience granted to Allied troops following the liberation of Rome eight days earlier. It was an unforgettable moment for my father and he often spoke about it. We still have the blessing document he received from the Pope.

After the general audience this year, Pope Francis greeted the delegation I was with from the Royal Irish and 38 (Irish) Brigade and enjoyed the band playing Killaloe, the Irish marching tune.

The end of the Nazi occupation of Rome 80 years ago was a double liberation. It freed Italy’s capital and marked the start of the country’s slow and painful economic and political reconstruction. And the Vatican, under blockade for almost eight months, was once again free to resume its mission to Italy and to the world.

It was a turning point in Italian history that was to be followed by the end of the war in Europe 11 months later and the start of a new era.

For the Allies, the liberation of Rome was evidence that victory was in sight. The previous week, the landings in Normandy had taken place. Hitler’s defeat was to be inescapable.

The audience for the Irish Brigade in June 1944 was an exceptional expression of Irish unity in the middle of history’s most terrible conflict. Men who were there came from what is now the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Irish communities across Britain.

The brigade’s commander Pat Scott had insisted that there should be no sectarian divisions in the men selected to meet the pope. My father was a faithful Catholic born to a large and impecunious London Irish family in Peckham. Among his companions in 1944 was a sergeant major from Sion Mills in Tyrone who proudly wore the sash of the Orange Order.

Pope Pius spoke to them simply but powerfully.

“Dearly beloved sons, we bid you welcome,” he said. “You belong to the nation which has ever belonged to God’s church since St Patrick. We are well aware of the good which the Irish have done in spreading the faith from the shores of their green isle...into many nations. We greet you and bless you with all our hearts’ affection and your dear ones at home. God be with you always...”



*The massed bands of the Irish Brigade parade in St Peter's Square on 12 June 1944.*

The event in Rome this year was part of a series marking pivotal events in the Second World War. On 6 June, heads of government had gathered to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of D-Day. In September, there were commemorations for the Battle of Arnhem. Next year the end of the war in Europe will be memorialised on 8 May, and Victory in Japan Day will be on 15 August.

There have been other commemorations. On 18 May 2024, Poland's President Andrzej Duda visited the cemetery at Monte Cassino to mark the capture of the abbey by Polish soldiers. The following day the Duchess of Edinburgh was in Cassino for an event for British and Commonwealth soldiers.

On 15 June, the Bishop of the Armed Forces Paul Mason led a thanksgiving service to mark the liberation of Rome in the Cathedral Church of St Michael and St George in Aldershot, which was addressed by Archbishop Miguel Buendia, the apostolic nuncio to Great Britain.

But as moving as these events may be, more and more questions will be asked about their future. Most eyewitnesses of the events between 1939 and 1945 like my father have now gone. It won't be long before their children will fade away too.

How relevant is the martial nature of war remembrance to younger generations for whom the Second World War is dusty history?

There is, nevertheless, a persisting resonance. On 14 May, I accompanied Alan Mayo on his first visit to the grave of his grandfather Sergeant Edward Mayo of the London Irish Rifles, who was killed 80 years ago and is buried at the Cassino war cemetery. He was my father's closest war-time friend, and he never forgot him. We shall continue to work to ensure their story of courage and resilience is preserved and honoured.

But there is a wider purpose. The eightieth anniversary next year of the end of the Second World War is an opportunity to refresh our approach to remembrance to make it relevant to the times and the future.

In hindsight, we can see that May 1945 was not the end, but the beginning; the start of an era of peace that those we remember paid for.

Perhaps Victory in Europe Day should henceforth be known as Peace in Europe Day, a moment to be celebrated by all with joy.

*Edmund O'Sullivan is a London-based author and writer. He is vice chairman of the Freedom for Italy network, an international initiative developing new ways to commemorate events in Italy in 1943-45.*

[https://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/1/2823/from-d-day-to-peace-in-europe-a-new-approach-to-remembering-the-second-world-war?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR2jEbcqH2HB-3QKWqBJs1UJGBKEwcyiPDe9YHJ2ownnAVcv6u5ChtRPR6k\\_aem\\_ab6X5bgCjnzY8esXLONS1w#google\\_vignette](https://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/1/2823/from-d-day-to-peace-in-europe-a-new-approach-to-remembering-the-second-world-war?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR2jEbcqH2HB-3QKWqBJs1UJGBKEwcyiPDe9YHJ2ownnAVcv6u5ChtRPR6k_aem_ab6X5bgCjnzY8esXLONS1w#google_vignette)

## **SNIPPETS**

*A message received from George Cowie:*

I will be going out to Cassino in May 2025 as usual with our small gang. When out there, Paul Hooton and I will be helping Cassino Adventureland set up a River battlefield tour which they are keen to do but need some help with. We are also in the process of writing a booklet on the 4th Division's assault on the Gustav Line up until the last units of the Division were withdrawn on 19/20 May 44. We will present the manuscript to Cassino Adventureland, and they can have it printed to sell on their site. Cassino Adventureland has been a tremendous help to us with the construction and maintenance of the memorials and we feel greatly indebted to them. Hopefully, this will be a deserved reward. I will let you know how this all develops.



## **'Crater love hath no man...'**

Seeking an article from the 1950s, Dominic Allen wrote to Times' archive editor Rose Wild, asking if she could locate a story from January 1959 written by his father, Mark Echalez Allen, about a dawn trip up Mount Etna.

It reported:

"Dominic's father was with Montgomery's 8th Army for the invasion of Sicily in 1943. As the Germans retreated, he and friends Ewart and Bingo decided to climb to the top of Mount Etna, ostensibly to see if any German stragglers were up there, but also for the chance to see dawn from the crater. The Germans had blown up most of the roads and the party had to ditch their Jeep and continue on foot, arriving eventually at a hotel where they were greeted as liberators.

"When I asked the way to the top, and added that we wanted to see the dawn from there, two emotions visibly clashed in the manager's features: horror at the insanity of the British and relief at the revival of the tourist trade.

At 10pm they started climbing 'with revolvers and rifles, some chocolate and peaches, and a bottle of Italian champagne to drink at the top...' Bingo, to our alarm, suddenly had an attack of mountain sickness and could go no farther. We explained that this was the result of the Sicilian vino and left him to make his way back to the Jeep.



The last bit of the climb was steep and slippery. We crawled up, using the rifles and the champagne bottle as extra grips, but finally, 'looked out, lords of the morning, over Italy and Sicily... drank our champagne with proper toasts and left the bottle on the crater's lip in an arrangement of white stones forming 8<sup>th</sup> Army.' And down we went in an hour and a half to the Jeep, where Bingo was sitting fully recovered."

*British diplomat Mark Echalaz Allen, CMG, CVO born in 1917, served as the Alternate Delegate and Deputy Leader of the United Kingdom Delegation to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva. Educated at Charterhouse and Christ Church College, Oxford, he joined the Dominions Office in 1939 and served in locations including Dublin, Bombay, New York, Madras, Delhi and London. From 1971-74, he held the position of British Ambassador to Zaire. He served with the Intelligence Corps in Italy during WW2.*

*MCS member Eddie O'Sullivan has sent this notice for the conference he is organising in London on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2025. If any MCS members would like to attend, please contact Eddie, who has offered 10 free tickets to MCS members, for details of the programme and speakers:*

### **The Peace in Europe Conference**

***The 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe and its contemporary resonance***

**London Scottish Museum, 95 Horseferry Rd, London SW1P 2QS**

**0900-1700, Saturday 10 May 2025**

The Peace in Europe Conference organised by the Second World War History Association will assess the contemporary resonance of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war in Europe in May 1944 and the challenge of preserving its memory for present and future generations.

This one-day event held in the historic London Scottish Museum in central London will hear more than 20 speakers explore the legacy of a pivotal moment in British and world history.

The Peace in Europe Conference is the launch event for the new Second World War History Association, an inclusive and non-profit initiative involving institutions and individuals working on the story of the conflict.

Admission is free for registered delegates.

**For more information, contact:** Edmund O'Sullivan, the Second World War Association  
edmundosullivan1@gmail.com

Edmund O'Sullivan

**Vice-Chairman**

edmundosullivan1@gmail.com; www.irishbrigade.co.uk

@irishbrigadeww; @ThisWeekintheItalianCampaign

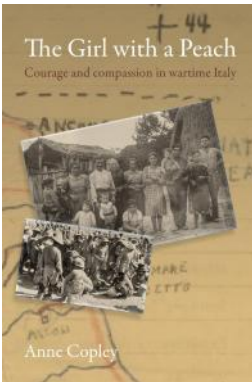
00 44 (0) 207 700 5300; 00 44 (0) 7766 871765 WhatsApp



## **Books and Reviews**

*Ed. Note: The books which are featured in this section are added to the 'Books' section of the Monte Cassino Society website. If you have a book to recommend, either fiction or non-fiction, relating to any aspect of the Italian campaign, please let us know.*

### **'The Girl with a Peach, Courage and Compassion in Wartime Italy' by Anne Copley**



Anne Copley's recently published 'The Girl with a Peach. Courage and compassion in wartime Italy' brilliantly captures the experiences of Allied prisoners of war who, from September 1943, were living amongst the Germans and Italian Fascists in that part of Italy between the Allies advancing from the south and the Alps in the north. They were utterly dependent on the affection, loyalty and generosity of Italians for their survival.

These Allied prisoners of war endured months of dodging German patrols, Italian informants and Fascist sweeps, living on their wits and surviving on whatever they could obtain from generosity of the local Italians.

The vast majority of these Italians were contadini - poor subsistence farmers who were tied to the land and completely reliant on the benevolence of their landowner - the padrone, for their own survival. Anne provides an invaluable insight into how these contadini willingly took in prisoners of war and cared for them until the Allied advance reached them.

Anne has extensively researched the actions of these escaped Allied prisoners of war and the contadini in the province of Marche and has produced a book that is both insightful and comprehensive. Allied prisoners of war owe them a great debt, especially as any Italian identified as having assisted a prisoner of war on the run was liable to summary execution.

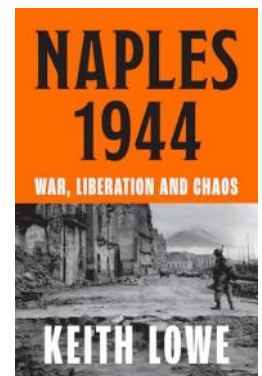
*Published by the Monte San Martino Trust, and available from bookshops and Amazon. Recommended by Frank de Planta*

### **'Naples 1944, and the making of post-war Italy'**

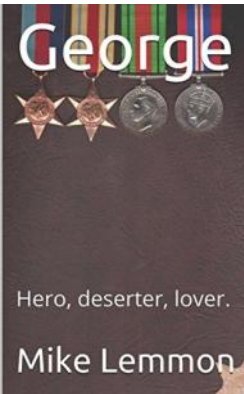
by Keith Lowe

The author looks at the effect of the war and liberation on the city of Naples.

*Published in September 2024 by William Collins. Available in hardback, paperback and Kindle from booksellers, [timesbookshop.co.uk](http://timesbookshop.co.uk), and Amazon*



Two books recommended by Jessica Hayward:



**'George: Hero, Deserter, Lover' by Mike Lemmon**

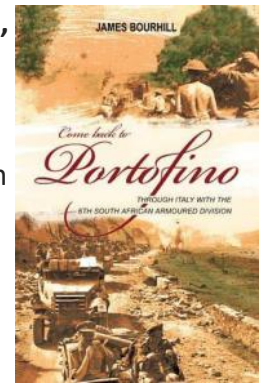
A novel based on Mike's father's war experiences in Cassino.

*Available in paperback and Kindle*

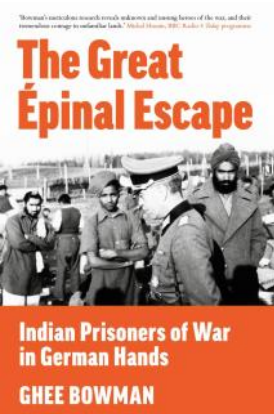
**'Come Back to Portofino, through Italy with the 6<sup>th</sup> South African Armoured Division'**  
by James Bourhill.

A non-fiction book based largely on the 350 letters that my Granddad wrote home from the front line.

*Available from booksellers and Amazon*



**'The Great Épinal Escape: Indian Prisoners of War in German Hands' by Ghee Bowman**



The little-known and extraordinary story of the break-out of a POW camp by 800 Indian prisoners of war on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1944. Many escapees were helped by local French civilians, and 500 made it to Switzerland. Ghee Bowman of the University of Exeter has extensively researched the experience of those 15,000 Indian soldiers who were captured and held in Nazi-occupied Europe, and has published his study as a book.

*Available from booksellers and Amazon*

Recommended by Sue Hughes

**'The Forgotten Altar'**, a play by Jack Cornes

In early August we attended the first performance of 'The Forgotten Altar', a play by actor and playwright Jack Cornes inspired by the Battle of Monte Cassino, where his late great uncle Clifford served. The play follows the experience of three characters, Riflemen Jack and Clifford and Italian local woman/ambulance driver Lucia, as they each negotiate their way through the horror and misery of the Battle of Cassino. Having fought at the Station, Jack is tormented by things he saw and did, and early in the play we gather that the shock and shame of one particular action caused him to be invalided out of the line for a while by



the army psychiatrist, suffering from 'shell shock'. Now back in the line and waiting for the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> battle of Cassino, he meets Clifford, a former comrade. Each man has his demons to bear, and Clifford confides in Jack telling him of the very formal relationship with his father which makes it difficult to truly



express himself when writing the obligatory soldier's 'Final Letter' before going into battle. In time the call to action is heard, and the two leave the stage.

Later we find Jack in the ruins of a house in Cassino town, under the sights of a German sniper. Pinned down, he starts to remember previous horrors and once again 'goes to pieces'. Lucia emerges from the rubble and tells him this was her home, she is the only one left and has nowhere to go. She calms Jack and tells him of her own misery; her young son Paolo disobeyed her orders not to leave the house when she went off to

drive her ambulance, and he 'always played at the Station', where she now knows he was killed in the crossfire. The penny drops for Jack and the audience, and we realise that what haunts him is that it was he who shot her son. Inconsolable, Jack stands up, is shot by the sniper, and dies in Lucia's arms.

In the final scene, Clifford has survived the war and returns to England to be met from the train by his father. He can see from his father's expression that he must have read the 'Final Letter' and there is now a warmer understanding between them.

The play was well-written and acted by the excellent small cast, conveying the pain and brutality of life around Cassino for soldier and civilian alike. Despite the author having clearly done a considerable amount of research into the battles for Cassino, there were a few factual errors which could be easily fixed by some script changes, but overall this was a powerful performance which deserved to be seen by a larger audience.

Helen James



**New members**

**Mark Cook** – Son of Private William ‘John’ Cook of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment

**Olivia Barnard-Firth** – Daughter of Oliver Douglas Barnard, Royal Corps of Signals

**Vincent Jones** – Son of Cpl Norman Jones, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The Lancashire Fusiliers

**Jim Maitland** – Son of Staff Sgt James Maitland, Royal Army Service Corps

**Nigel Richardson** – A general interest in the Italian Campaign

**Paul Thurston** – Grandson (in law) of Sgt William Herbert Rogers of 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Lincolnshire Regiment

**In Memoriam**

**Les Wenham**, Veteran, The Royal Sussex Regiment

**Contact us:**

**Lesley Teasdale, Hon. Secretary** : lesleytea.lt@gmail.com

Rockstone, Rocky Park Ave, Plymouth, Devon, PL9 7DJ; 01752 492799

**Diane Soady, Treasurer** : dianesoady@gmail.com ; 01760 722590

**Helen James, Newsletter Editor**: helenconrad@btconnect.com

**Sue Hughes, Liaison officer** : suehughes4@icloud.com

**Des James, Website and Facebook Coordinator** : desjames@btconnect.com

**Michael Wilson, Committee member** : mwilson827@btinternet.com

**Frank de Planta, Committee member** : f.deplanta@btinternet.com; www.cassinobattlefields.co.uk

**John Leach, Committee member** : johnleachportloe@gmail.com

Website : [www.montecassinosociety.co.uk](http://www.montecassinosociety.co.uk)

Facebook : **The Monte Cassino Society** and **The Monte Cassino Society Group**

Twitter/X : <https://twitter.com/MonteCassinoSoc>

Photo credits: Lesley Teasdale, Frank de Planta, Robert Deakin, Des James, Helen James, Helen Prescott, Dave Mann, Vincent Jones, Jessica Hayward, Maureen Rutledge, Jack Cornes.