

An aerial photograph of a lush green landscape. In the foreground, a sandy beach meets a body of water. A dense forest of green trees covers the middle ground, with a river or stream winding through it. Beyond the forest, there are rolling green fields and some distant buildings under a hazy, overcast sky.

# D-DAY 80

*Events Guide & Stories from a Forest at War*





## EVENT LOCATIONS

Lepe Country Park  
 Beaulieu National Motor Museum  
 Forest Arts Centre, New Milton  
 New Milton Recreation Ground  
 New Milton Memorial Centre  
 Palais Des Vaches, Exbury  
 Exbury Gardens  
 New Forest Heritage Centre, Lyndhurst  
 St. Barbe Museum & Gallery, Lymington  
 Bolderwood Car Park  
 Totton Library  
 Carvers Clubhouse Ringwood Recreation Ground, Fordingbidge  
 Sway Youth Centre & Village Hall  
 Copythorne Parish Hall  
 Hurst Road Playpark, Milford on Sea  
 Ringwood Meeting House  
 Hythe Centre & Pier  
 Hythe & Dibden Parish Hall  
 New Forest Airfields Memorial  
 Bransgore  
 Aviation Heritage Centre, Bransgore  
 Jubilee Hall, Fawley  
 Gang Warily Recreation Centre, Fawley

## BEACONS

Beacon Lighting Sites include:  
 New Milton  
 Ringwood  
 Hythe  
 Dammerham  
 Copythorne  
 Barton on Sea  
 Lepe Clifftop

# ALL QUIET IN THE FOREST

The New Forest, with its serene beauty and rich history, became an integral part of the Allied strategy for the liberation of Europe during the Second World War.

Its sprawling landscape provided a canvas upon which British, American, Canadian, French, and many other troops stood shoulder to shoulder, to execute one of the most audacious military campaigns in history.

From 9th May to 22nd June 2024, there will be a series of events, commemorative memorials, exhibitions and projects taking place across the New Forest to mark the 80th Anniversary of D-Day, telling the fascinating stories of the land, air, sea and espionage operations that shaped the outcome of the war and world history.

It is incredible to imagine how Allied forces and residents of the New Forest managed to keep the arrival of 100,000 troops secret from the enemy. Through captivating narratives, archival photographs, and firsthand accounts, the theme of secrecy keeps recurring through the pages of this souvenir publication.

I am grateful to editor Dan Goater, designer Spike Golding, Dan Snow MBE, Helen

Wallbridge and all our contributors and heritage organisations for creating this programme of very special 80th anniversary memories and events.

From a touring 'Discovery Bus' with interactive displays to film screenings of 'The Longest Day'; from world-class photographic exhibitions to 1940s tea parties with music. A week of events at Lepe Country Park, the launch of a new sculpture with flypast at Palais Des Vaches, family events in New Milton and Fawley, something for everyone all washed down with a plate of fish and chips.

We hope you will take part in your local beacon lighting ceremony on 6th June, a moment that offers an opportunity to reflect on the significance of this historic milestone. As the last remaining survivors of D-Day pay their tributes, we remember the sacrifices made on the shores of Normandy and the legacy of courage and resilience that endures within the heart of the New Forest.

With deepest respect and gratitude.

*Jacqui Ibbotson*

Director, Culture in Common

*Special thanks* to Advertiser and Times, Beaulieu National Motor Museum, Marc Heighway, Dan Murray, Spitfire AA810 Project, John Stanley and Dan and Tracy Turton.





# DAN SNOW ON A FOREST AT WAR

Dan Snow is a much-loved historian and television presenter and has lived with his family in the New Forest since 2009.

**Q: As a military historian, what do you think marks out the New Forest in relation to the rest of the country in the lead up to D-Day?**

What strikes me as so amazing is that the New Forest has got a wonderful history and reputation, right from the Norman hunting grounds, as this great wilderness.

But then briefly in 1944, this wilderness becomes an extraordinary centre of military activity. It becomes this industrialised landscape you still see the impact of today; the road widening, the classic remains and bits of concrete that we still see around the place and then the airfields. Those airfields in June 1944 were some of the busiest airfields in the world. We suddenly saw massive troop concentrations, tanks parked in the undergrowth, massive equipment stores and thousands of ships.

It was indeed the biggest number of ships and boats that's ever been put to sea – 7,000 flotating craft in all. I'm reminded of a story from a local man about looking out on the boats: he said you could walk from Lepe to the Isle of Wight just on vessels parked there for D-Day. It would have been this incredible scene, even miraculous to our gaze today.

**I understand that many of the troops in the first wave were inexperienced. Do you have any comments about how the invasion was managed and those plans and decisions that were made?**

It was sadly inevitable that many of those troops were going to be inexperienced given the nature of war to that point and given the nature of British and American and Canadian military expansion and how rapid it was.

I'm always struck that no stone was left unturned. Every single little aspect of those landings had been thought through from new weapon systems to the training that they received, to the airborne landings, to the disinformation campaign. It's bizarre, in fact, that they hadn't given this much thought to what happened next, and I think arguably, some of the problems they had in Normandy after the landings were because they thought more about the landings, than they thought about fighting the Germans once they had arrived in France. The main thing to get right was the landings. There'd be no second chance.

**You have met a lot of D-Day veterans through your work. Are there any particular stories you can recall that made a particular impression on you?**

I've been fortunate to meet many D-Day veterans. I met a man from Portsmouth and

he said that the hardest thing was taking a fresh load of troops from the troop ship onto the beach, knowing what was waiting for the men.

It's one thing being unloaded on a beach, having to fight for your life and get up the beach and survive and it's something else, driving into that beach, risking everything, having a breather, turning around again and going back into it. The rhythm to that was very, very difficult, he said. To cope with and get your head around seeing another fresh load of young men going into battle was very traumatic for him. That was a real memory.

One Australian I met flew his Spitfire from the New Forest, and he flew once at dawn and once at dusk, he didn't see any [enemy] aircraft at all. He flew across the channel up and down the beach and flew back. Then he flew across, travelled up and down the beach, flew back and that was his June 6th, 1944.

So, he flew the entire length of D-Day beaches twice on D-Day at fairly low level just looking at everything. I thought in that one day he probably saw more of life than I've ever seen in my whole life. I think what an extraordinary thing. They were just very remarkable men.

**When you visit the D-Day beaches in Normandy, does it put a different**

**perspective on the invasion when you're there and actually seeing the landscape?**

I've been so fortunate in my career to get to go to historic places that you read about. And it has a very powerful effect.

Even in our era of clever online tools and satellite imagery and maps and video, there is such a powerful effect of going somewhere and walking the landscape and feeling it and that feeling of the sand under your toes, as it were.

When you go to Omaha, you instantly realise how terrifying a problem it must have been with those high bluffs overlooking the beach. Of course, beyond other beaches you get the low-lying meadows which would have been flooded by the Germans. You get the bocages with the tight hedges and narrow little lanes and very stoutly built Norman farmhouses are all built like fortresses. So going to those places is just so revealing.

**In the lead up to D-Day, how long were Allied troops here for and did the locals all know what was going on? Did they know what was happening and what all of these events were going to be leading up to?**

I think about the number of American and Canadian troops stationed on the New Forest and the way they interacted with local people was so fascinating.

I am reminded that Barack Obama's grandfather was one of those Americans that was in the Forest for that brief amount of time.

Not his Kenyan grandfather, but his mother's father. But yes, he was stationed in the New Forest. There were people from all over the world gathering here.

In my experience talking to locals and reading the accounts, people were very respectful of the need for privacy and so they just accepted the comings and goings at night and the noise of lorries and, of course, the roaring of aircraft.

And we shouldn't forget how many aircraft crashes there were. For example, at a couple of sites, you can still smell the aviation fuel in the ground. The Allies tried to pretend that there was a plan to invade from Kent and they built lots of fake landing craft and tanks. There was a deliberate attempt to make the population feel like there were more troops based there than there were.

**As a local resident, are there any D-Day sites in the New Forest you would urge people to visit and see for themselves?**

In the New Forest, I love the Beaulieu airfield. That's very special, where you can still see some outbuildings in the airfield, and some of the Second World War campsites around it, with some stone-built

structures around. Like many people, I taught, my kids how to ride a bicycle on that airfield. Obviously, I love going to Lepe beach.

Or there are still reminders on the Beaulieu River itself. There's an old wooden landing craft beached on the mud flats and gates of steel and concrete curve which are slowly being eroded.

And so, there's the idea that this place that we've always thought of as this natural, bucolic but unspoilt setting was in fact this centre of a modern industrial war. And then how that shadow moved on, how suddenly the New Forest had returned to its former self and how transitory it all was.



# BOOTS ON THE GROUND

**Plans for D-Day, the invasion of Europe, began in 1942, writes Helen Wallbridge.**

The New Forest played a vital role: its woods, plains and coastlines were ideal for military training and preparation, and it was close to Southampton Docks.

A top secret map shows two embarkation areas marked at Stanswood Bay at Lepe and Lymington. The coastline was a highly restricted area as it was prepared for embarkation. Roads throughout the Forest were widened, junctions modified and bridges strengthened.



Top Secret Map Area B © D-Day Museum

One-way systems were implemented and control points, manned by military policemen, were set up to prevent unauthorised access. Residents were issued with passes. The whole of the New Forest was sealed off.

Camps appeared throughout the forest. Four main marshalling camps were built at Roydon

Woods, Penerley Woods, the Cadland Estate and Knights Copse. Many of the big houses, such as Exbury House, were requisitioned. Designated as HMS Mastodon, this Royal Navy shorebase and WRENS (Women's Royal Naval Service) station, was responsible for the training and preparation of landing craft and crews.

Meanwhile, agents of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) who had finished their training at Beaulieu, were sent to France to gather intelligence and sabotage infrastructure ahead of the invasion.



Churchill Tanks (TR214)©IWM

D-Day required a lot of construction on the Forest. Artificial Mulberry Harbours were built at Lepe, Marchwood and the Beaulieu River.

Dubbed Operation Pluto, British engineers built an oil pipeline under the sea from Fawley to Cherbourg, and airfields were built to provide air support for the landings.



Working on widening and strengthening Mill Road bridge Brockenhurst during build up to D Day ©IWM

In April 1944, landing craft began to assemble on the Lymington and Beaulieu rivers and all along the Solent.

A mind-boggling variety of military vehicles, many of which were American, began to fill the lanes and village greens. They were concealed by camouflage nets, and the crews slept in their vehicles. On 24th May, King George VI visited Exbury to witness the final preparations. He sailed down the Beaulieu River and out into the Solent to take a salute from the assembled vessels.

The first crews to load up at Stanswood Bay were the 4th / 7th Dragoon Guards with their Sherman Duplex Drive swimming tanks.

They loaded on 3rd June and sailed out to the assembly point off the Isle of Wight. Bad weather, which delayed the invasion by a day, meant several uncomfortable and tense nights at sea.

On D-Day, 6th June, the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards were the first to land on Gold Beach at 7.20am, among them was tank shell loader Cecil Newton.

Many residents of the New Forest were interviewed for the New Forest National Park Association's 'New Forest Remembers' project. They told fascinating stories of witnessing the military build-up and of hearing planes and vehicles departing on D-Day and continuously for many days after. Many had befriended the British, American and Canadian troops and were surprised how quickly they had all disappeared. Besides the memories, many physical remains and memorials exist as reminders of the important role the New Forest played in the Second World War.



2nd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers train with Light Machine Guns on Matley Heath, Lyndhurst. (H4455)©IWM



Clockwise from top left: Trucks carrying 2nd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers heads towards Lyndhurst (H4452), Churchill Tanks training near Brockenhurst (H 22421), Troops from the 2nd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers training on Matley Heath, Lyndhurst (H4459)©IWM

# 'LUCKY TO SURVIVE'

FORMER ROYAL DRAGOON GUARD CECIL NEWTON SHARES HIS STORY



D-Day veteran Cecil Newton says he and his comrades didn't have the "imagination" to be scared as they landed at Gold Beach under heavy fire 80 years ago.

Now aged 100, the former Royal Dragoon Guard Trooper still vividly remembers how the fateful day unfolded for him and his fellow tank crewmen.

Born in Wales in 1923, Cecil volunteered to join the army after his brother volunteered and was killed in April 1945 as a Lieutenant in the Royal Tank Corps in Germany.

Setting out from Lepe for a "very rough" sea crossing on 3rd June, Cecil and his fellow Troopers in their Sherman Duplex Drive (DD) found themselves with a clear view of the German blockhouse they were assigned to destroy on the Normandy coast the morning of 6th June.

Cecil was the wireless operator and shell loader for the tank's 75mm gun, a job he described as "not very physical until the tank got hit" when he and his fellow guardsman had to "try to get out of the damn thing".

Shortly after landing at Normandy, the tank had fallen into a shellhole on the beach and became stuck after attacking the blockhouse.

"We were never nervous," recalls Cecil. "We were too young to be nervous, we hadn't got the imagination for that.

"Gold Beach was what we expected, and we just accepted it."

After the blockhouse attacked Cecil's tank surrendered - and with their tank still submerged - Cecil found a pushbike, which he rode to the western end of the landing area to see if any tanks were "available" but found none.

By the time Cecil and his crew were assigned a new tank, they went to engage the enemy at Les Verrières.

"It was an absolute massacre," recalls an emotional Cecil. "There were so many tanks hit and so many people killed. Two infantry battalions were mowed down, there were many casualties."

Cecil recalls seeing two German tanks raining fire down on Allied tanks from an elevated position as they arrived at the village.

He said: "I remember saying to our corporal - we had a replacement corporal in charge - that I saw smoke coming out of two tanks with people in it, being burned. He went very quiet and he didn't do anything and I

said, 'for \*\*\*\*'s sake, get out of this'.

"Our tank driver Ford swivelled around and we went off and helped with the attack on nearby Lingèvres."

Following other engagements, Cecil's tank was the first to make it to the centre of Lille, where he recalls French civilians climbing on board in celebration.

The crew was then redeployed east to the occupied Netherlands to try to help rescue paratroopers dropped there as part of the infamous Operation Market Garden.

Cecil's crew later pushed on into Germany where they were hit by an anti-tank weapon, with Cecil suffering a shrapnel wound to his leg. Standing wounded on top of the tank, Cecil was shot in the back three times by a German officer with a low calibre pistol but survived.

"I crawled into a house, and I can remember a person standing in one of the doorways had witnessed it all and they took me to hospital. I was exceptionally lucky to survive."

Looking back on the Second World War leaves Cecil filled with "sorrow and regrets".

Cecil says he hopes to return to Normandy at least once more to pay his respects to the fallen.



Cecil (front left) with the crew members just before advancing into Germany



Cecil at Lepe's Royal Dragoon Guards monument with fellow veterans

**"It was a waste of young lives. It does make me feel angry but as the years have gone on, it disappears slowly."**

"I would be doing those young men a disservice if I didn't," he added.

Based on an interview recorded by the BBC for its "We Were There" project. If you or someone you know has memories of the Second World War to share, please email [haveyoursay@bbc.co.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@bbc.co.uk) and include a contact number if you are willing to speak to a BBC journalist.



Arriving in Lille - Cecil is in the turret looking at the camera, 3rd September 1944

Monday 3rd - Sunday 9th June

## LEPE COUNTRY PARK

Mon 3rd - Sun 9th June

**EXHIBITION** by the D-Day Lepe Heritage Group featuring storyboards, film and audio, maps, photos, models, medals and memorabilia. An overview of Operation Overlord, highlighting locations on the Forest that made major contributions including: Marshalling Camp B9, Embarkation Hard Q2, phoenix caissons and launching facilities, sheltered invasion force berthing, the Pluto oil pipeline project departure point, plus the departure point for army regiments in tanks.

Mon 3rd June

**COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE** at Lepe Beach led by veteran Cecil Newton

Thurs 6th June

**NATIONAL BEACON LIGHTING** at 9.15pm.

Sat 8th June

**FAMILY FUN DAY** from 10am to 4pm.

Local traders stands, military vehicles, and children's activities, with representatives from the D-Day Lepe Heritage Group, Friends of the New Forest Airfields and local servicemen in attendance plus live music throughout the day.

Sun 9th June, 10.30am

**COMMEMORATION SERVICE** on the cliff top by the memorial anchor. Attended by New Forest East MP Julian Lewis, Hampshire County Council chief executive Carolyn Williamson and the Drummond family.

[hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/lepe](https://hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/lepe) or e: [lepe.enquiries@hants.gov.uk](mailto:lepe.enquiries@hants.gov.uk)

Lepe Country Park,  
Exbury, SO45 1AD



Above, Cecil Newton and Lepe Beach

# SECRETS AND SPIES

**“She cycles about at night ... and is extremely handy at blowing up things. Her explosives are stored under her bed.”**

That was the glowing assessment of Beaulieu-trained Second World War spy Yvonne Rudellat, codenamed Jacqueline.

Working as a courier for the Special Operations Executive (SOE), she became the first woman to be posted behind enemy lines in occupied France.

“She looks 15 years younger and has definitely found her niche,” continued the effusive report written by her handler, fellow Beaulieu-trained agent Francis Suttill.

Codenamed Prosper, Francis headed up the

biggest SOE network in France during the war years.

‘Prosper’ and ‘Jacqueline’ were among more than 3,000 agents trained in the shadowy arts of spycraft at Beaulieu before undertaking daring and dangerous missions that were critical to the war effort.

Their stories are being told by Beaulieu in its new Secret Army Exhibition, after surviving family members of both agents met Lady Montagu to help her build a picture of their lives.

Francis left behind two baby sons who he never saw again after joining the SOE and taking up his role in France.

Similarly, Yvonne left behind a daughter when she began her spy training at the relatively late age of 45.

She went on to keep explosives under her bed in France, which she used to sabotage train lines, factories and a power station.

The agents’ families have loaned personal photographs and medals, as well as one

of Prosper’s canisters, which would have contained guns and ammunition, to Beaulieu.

Yvonne’s suitcase, complete with her lace-bordered handkerchief, has also been loaned to Lady Montagu to help illustrate her story.



An SOE issue radio on display at Beaulieu

Personal letters home also put their stories into context. One letter from the War Office to Mrs Suttill says:

“I am very pleased to be able to inform you

that your husband has arrived safely at his destination and is in good health.”

In reality, Francis was dropped into occupied France ‘blind’ - with no reception committee - 12km from his intended point and dislocated his knee, breaking the cartilage where the muscles were already atrophied from childhood polio.

Before being recruited by SOE, Yvonne had worked as a saleswoman in a London department store and settled in Pimlico, before marrying an Italian waiter.

She developed a wide range of interests, including interior design, Buddhism, yoga, Eastern philosophy and vegetarianism. Her friends remembered her as a romantic soul, often creating fantasies about herself and dreaming of adventure.

In his report about Yvonne, Francis wrote: “She cycles about at night with her plastics and is extremely handy at blowing up things. Her explosives are stored under her bed. She looks 15 years younger and has definitely found her niche.”



Typical SOE agent equipment on display at Beaulieu. All photos courtesy of Beaulieu

Unfortunately, neither of these agents’ stories ended well. After the fall of the Prosper circuit, both were captured. Francis was executed, while Yvonne was in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp when it was liberated on 15th April, 1945, but died from typhus and dysentery a few days later and was buried in a mass grave.

Lady Montagu can be heard telling these agents’ stories in a recording at the new exhibition, which can be seen as part of a visit to Beaulieu.

**Beaulieu’s Secret Army exhibition is open daily at the museum from 10am to 5pm. Visit John Montagu Building, Beaulieu, Brockenhurst SO42 7ZN**



Francis Suttill aka ‘Prosper’



Yvonne Rudellat aka ‘Jacqueline’

# GRANDPA, THE SPY

My Grandfather died before I was born but he’s always occupied a kind of superhero status in my mind. His work as a secret agent for the Special Operations Executive (SOE) took him to occupied France during 1943-44. Codenamed Xavier, he headed a clandestine network named Marksmen which played a vital role in supporting the Maquis, one of the largest arms of the French Resistance. A significant period of Xavier’s spy training took place in Beaulieu. He said:

**“It was here that one was taught how to survive, how to communicate and how to take on a false identity... it was important to remember the details - survival depended on remembering, and it is surprising how many details you have to remember to stay alive.”**

His training included some very glamorous sounding spy tactics - coded messages, cover stories, evasion techniques and invisible ink (yes, they really did use invisible ink!) however, in reality these skills played a vital role in the dangerous and secretive world of reconnaissance, espionage and sabotage. Not a huge amount is known about his experiences on the ground because of the covert nature of his work, however I am grateful that our family has kept his story alive and that he was able to share it in his incredibly vivid biography, Xavier.

**Jemma Heslop (Corbin)**  
Community Arts Producer,  
Culture in Common





# STREET ART PROJECT AT NOADSWOOD

Operation Overlord may not mean much to today's teenagers but for some young people in the New Forest, being close to military action is not so far away. A new street art project offers a creative experience for young people from military families at Noadswood School in Dibden Purlieu. Expert street artists – Mike Ness and his team from MBN Arts in Bournemouth - will work with students in May 2024 to co-create a new mural for their school.

Following a session to explore identity and the impact of being a young person from a military family with all the young people, a smaller team will experiment with design ideas and be taught skills in spray-painting before creating a permanent mural for a wall for their school.



# THE D-DAY DISCOVERY BUS

The D-Day Discovery Bus is making a whistlestop tour of Forest locations in the build up to the 80th anniversary commemorations.

Take a step back in time as you get on board to learn about the incredible preparations for the D-Day landings that took place right here.

This mobile experience features poster displays, short videos, and fascinating oral histories recorded by local residents.

Children can immerse themselves in the era by dressing up in period costumes and taking part in fun, hands-on activities – all free of charge.

**Don't miss your chance to visit the D-Day Discovery Bus at the following locations and events\*:**



\*Dates and venues may change – Before travelling check the Culture in Common Facebook page

- Wednesday 29th May**  
10am – 4pm  
Bolderwood Car Park,  
New Forest National Park Lyndhurst SO43 7GQ
- Thursday 30th May**  
9.30am – 4.30pm  
Totton Library,  
Library Road, Totton SO40 3RS
- Saturday 1st June**  
10am – 12pm  
Ringwood Centre, Carvers Clubhouse BH24 1JD  
2pm – 4.30pm  
Fordingbridge Recreation Ground SP6 1AN
- Sunday 2nd June**  
10am – 3pm  
Hythe Hotspur House,  
Hythe Pier SO45 6AG
- Thursday 6th June**  
10am – 4pm  
Sway Youth Club, Station Rd, SO41 6BA  
7.30pm – 9.30pm  
Copythorne Parish Hall, SO40 2NZ
- Saturday 8th June**  
10am – 3pm  
Lepe Country Park,  
Exbury SO45 1AD
- Sunday 9th June**  
10am – 3pm  
Milford-on-Sea  
Hurst Rd Playpark, SO41 0PY

The D-Day Discovery Bus is supported by Culture in Common, St Barbe Museum & Gallery, New Forest Heritage Centre, Maritime Archaeology Trust, New Forest National Park Authority & Hampshire Community Heritage.



## Monday 3rd - Friday 14th June NEW MILTON MAY FAYRE

Come to New Milton Recreation Ground to enjoy a traditional family fun day with a wide variety of stalls and live entertainment, including a fun dog show, wrestling demonstrations in the main arena, children's amusements, refreshments, BBQ and a bar with special emphasis on D-Day 80 and the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

- Town Car Parks, New Milton Rail Station & Bus services X1 and X2 available to venue**
- Lions Club of New Milton District**  
a.d.watson@btinternet.com  
07771 754025
- New Milton Recreation Ground,**  
Whitefield Road, New Milton, BH25 6DE

## Saturday, 22nd June FAWLEY ARMED FORCES DAY featuring Fawley Show

Fawley Parish Council has invited the organisers of the Fawley Show to bring the 'heart' of their show into the town's Armed Forces Day. This year, visitors can expect a variety of military vehicles, including some from the Historic Army Aircraft Flight group, as well as classic cars, live music, a funfair, children's activities, the model boat club and a craft market. Food and drink will be available in the arena and by the lake, or visitors can bring their own picnics.

The successful partnership behind the show were named joint winners of the best community event award in last year's Hampshire Village of the Year competition.

- Gang Warily Recreation Ground**  
Newlands Road, SO45 1GA

## FREE FAMILY EVENTS

Indoor & Outdoor, suitable for all ages!

### Saturday 22nd June D-DAY 80 IN HYTHE

- 8.00am**  
D-Day 80 proclamation by Hythe's town crier in the High Street next to Waitrose
- 11.00am**  
Schools in Hythe & Dibden will read the D-Day Poem
- 5.30pm**  
Film Screening: The Longest Day at Hythe Parish Hall, SO45 6AA
- 7.30pm**  
Music by Goodnight Sweethearts next to Hythe Pier, Prospect Place, SO45 6AT
- 9.15pm**  
A reading of the International Tribute before Beacon Lighting, Hotspur House, Hythe Pier SO45 6AG

- Display and talks in Hythe Library in the week before 6th June.**
- Bus services available to Hythe Pier, also Hythe ferry from Southampton**
- www.hytheanddibden.gov.uk**  
e: admin@hytheanddibden.gov.uk  
t: 02380 841411
- Various locations, including Hythe Library, 38 Pylewell Road, SO45 6AQ**

ALSO SEE FAMILY EVENT AT LEPE COUNTRY PARK ON SATURDAY 8TH JUNE. See page 7

## TAKING A STAND, SIDE BY SIDE



Clockwise from top: GI Buck Northington sat centre alongside Forest folk and fellow GIs Robert Watkins and Albert Williams, also pictured right. Left, Burmese pilot Htin Yain Lao with fellow 257 Squadron pilots

© New Forest & Hampshire Wartime Association



**As we look back at the sacrifices made on D-Day, it's important to recognise the often overlooked contributions of those from Black and Asian allied troops who played vital roles in the pivotal assault.**

Among them were Black American troops stationed on the New Forest in the lead-up to D-Day.

One memorable story recorded by the New Forest Remembers Project of 2013 relates to the landlord of the Royal Oak pub at Hilltop, Beaulieu, throwing white American airmen out of the establishment after they had prevented black servicemen from remaining.

Incredibly, Black and white US Army units were segregated during wartime, and this would have been witnessed locally.

The majority of Black Americans worked in logistics and support, so I do not believe that any left the New Forest on D-Day in combat roles.

However, some were photographed in Brockenhurst in July 1944, probably en route to France in support roles.

It was a very different story in the RAF. During the Second World War, many nationalities flew in combat for the Royal Air Force, including black Caribbean men.

Among these often unsung heroes is the remarkable Htin Yain Lao, a young man whose journey epitomises the courage, determination, and resilience of so many.

He was born in Burma (now Myanmar), a land as far removed from the New Forest heathland and villages as one could imagine.

He joined the Burmese Volunteer Air Force in November 1940 along with four other ex-college students. After Japan invaded their homeland, the four of them came to Britain and volunteered to serve in the RAF.

Lao and a fellow Burmese pilot, Selvyn Khin, were eventually drafted into 257 Squadron and trained to fly Hawker Typhoon fighter bombers. In April 1944, four RAF squadrons, including 257 with Lao and Khin, were posted to a temporary airfield named RAF Needs Oar Point, just south of Buckler's Hard and to the west of the Beaulieu River.

It was from here they would fly operations over northern France, tasked with softening up targets before the D-Day invasion. This included attacking railway junctions, viaducts, and V1 rocket sites that were under construction.

It didn't come without a cost. Through April, May, and June of 1944, thirteen pilots from Needs Oar Point were killed in action whilst supporting the lead-up to D-Day and the days afterwards. Three were also taken as prisoners of war after crash landing in France.

Thankfully Lao and Khin were not amongst these casualties. In fact, during this period, Lao married an English girl on the Forest.

In July, the pilots of 257 Squadron left England for advanced landing grounds in France and continued to support the Allied invasion. Lao flew in combat whilst his new wife remained in England.

Tragically Lao was killed on 20th January, 1945 when his Typhoon was lost in a snowstorm south-west of Utrecht. He is buried in Dordrecht General Cemetery in the Netherlands, over 5,000 miles from his ancestral home.

Perhaps the saddest postscript to this story is how the wife Lao married on the Forest, just weeks before D-Day, was pregnant at the time of his death. The baby was born four months later and was named David.

**The boy never got to meet his father, a brave young man from Burma, who came to England, flew from the Forest, and ultimately sacrificed his life for others.**

Lao's story, and the stories of other Black and Asian troops that served in the New Forest during wartime underscores the universal spirit of valour that transcended borders and backgrounds in the lead up to D-Day and beyond. Their contribution should never be forgotten.

By Marc Heighway



# YOUNG VOICES OF 1944

The New Forest Knowledge website is a wonderful resource for discovering local stories and podcasts of recorded memories of D-Day in the New Forest. Here are some that highlight the lengths that the army and residents went in order to keep the secret of the invasion and also the impact on children of the arrival of American troops.



**Terry Gittoes**  
then a young lad in Lymington, heard the planes:

*"When we came back from school they were coming back and taking off again – going out west towards the needles and the French coast.*

*"We knew it had happened because they flew quite near our house, about five in the morning, we heard the roar of them taking off, but it wasn't admitted for 24 hours because of secrecy."*



**Frank Rosier**  
2nd Battalion  
Gloucester Regiment,  
aged 17.

Frank's battalion was training in Scotland when the order came that they had to walk to Brockenhurst to prepare for embarkation. Frank sailed from Southampton to Gold Beach on D-Day.

*"We went into the sealed camp and that was at Brockenhurst, and a sealed camp meant we were not allowed out and military police patrolled the area to stop us going out and we weren't even allowed to speak to them."*

**Doreen Biles**

from Ringwood was  
7 years old and remembers,

*"First, I believe came the Tech Corps, then we had the Black Americans and then the White Americans. They were always kept separate so they were never there together. One very big American was a sparring partner to Joe Lewis, the famous boxer, and he used to organise boxing matches.*

*"They also used to play baseball where the car park is now in Ringwood – it used to be a big field. Us children used to go and watch hoping for some chewing gum or a comic."*

**Brian Hayward**

*"The American soldiers had 'candy', what we call 'sweets' and that the New Forest was like "a huge parking lot for thousands of vehicles, all camouflaged.*

*"One night, we were all woken up ... by this huge roar and my parents woke me up and the huge roar turned out to be hundreds upon hundreds of vehicles all coming down across the Forest going down through to Fordingbridge, to join the main road. My parents held me up in the window looking east towards the village green and coming down it was a continuous stream of blacked-out vehicles of all sorts, moving at 10-15mph maximum, and this went on for hours upon hours."*

**Lady Belinda Montagu**

*"Well, we only went as far as we could ride on our ponies or on our bikes, because there was no petrol. We had this great contingency of Irish labourers living just at the back of our house. They came to build concrete roads and jetties before D-Day and you couldn't put a pin between all the vehicles and stuff before they went off. It was extraordinary watching it all.*

*"Then of course, there were all the secret people in the houses in the woods which were requisitioned. It was all very hush-hush, but we sort of knew about it, because you do when you're a local, find out about things. They were being trained by the local keepers to live off the land and survive."*



**Ted Bentley**

Crew on landing craft  
tank 629 Stationed in  
Southampton remembers,

*"We were told that we'd be taking the 13th Royal Canadian Artillery and we used to go down to Lepe Hard to pick them up, take them for a journey, and take them back again, so that they could come on board and make sure that they were all stowed correctly on the tank deck.*

*"We used to go ashore there and use the public bath because there was no bath on board. We used to go ashore for fish and chips.*

*"We didn't know where we were going on D-Day, but the army did. After we were loaded, a soldier got on board, armed, and he stayed on the ship to make sure nobody went ashore to give the enemy the tip – very necessary."*



*Use this QR code to hear more stories and memories or see more about the project at*

[www.nfknowledge.org](http://www.nfknowledge.org)



Tuesday 28th May – Saturday 8th June  
10am - 5pm

## HONOURING D-DAY VETERANS EXHIBITION

The New Forest Heritage Centre will be displaying portraits and filmed interviews with several living D-Day veterans. This is the work of acclaimed photographer Alistair Morrison, who has had over 80 pieces of his work on display at the National Portrait Gallery in London and, for the past 35 years, has worked alongside some of the most notable international icons and dignitaries. He has recently been on a personal journey to photograph and interview veterans of 6th June, 1944 and this is the first time this work will have been shown.

- **FREE entry**
- Suitable for all ages
- Indoors

**NFDC parking charges.**  
 **Bus services available to venue**

**New Forest Heritage Centre in Lyndhurst, SO43 7NY**



# BIRD'S EYE VIEW ON ENEMY



**A campaign has been launched to commemorate a Second World War hero from the New Forest.**

Horace Victor Le Dieu from Barton served in the RAF's Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) – aerial photographers and navigators who risked their lives to gather intelligence about the Nazis in the build up to D-Day.

Often flying Spitfires and Mosquitos, the

photographs the PRU took were sent to the Cabinet War Rooms – now the Churchill War Rooms – to share same day intelligence on enemy activity that was used by all Allied forces.

Now the Spitfire AA810 Project has launched a campaign, backed by New Forest West MP Sir Desmond Swayne, to create a permanent national memorial to the PRU, including Mr Le Dieu.

Formed in September 1939, the PRU conducted highly dangerous, clandestine photographic reconnaissance operations over numerous theatres of operation, capturing more than 26-million images of enemy operations and installations.

The photos were instrumental in planning major operations like the D-Day landings and the Dambusters Raid. The PRU was also credited with monitoring major ship movements, including the Bismarck and Tirpitz, and finding a V1 and V2 rocket launching site at Peenemünde.

Due to the secretive nature of its work, the PRU flew solo operations, unarmed and unarmoured, and is believed to have had one of the lowest survival rates of the war – a serviceman's life expectancy was believed to be less than three months.

Among those serving in the PRU was Horace Le Dieu, son of George and Louisa Le Dieu, who was from Barton.

He trained as a pilot and joined 69 Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron, flying in a Baltimore II AG742 aircraft on reconnaissance operations in the Mediterranean.

On 10th January, 1943 Mr Le Dieu and his crew took off from Malta for a reconnaissance mission off the Strait of Messina in Italy in the Baltimore, but they were never to return.

No trace of the aircraft or any crew members has ever been found so Mr Le Dieu - who was only 23 - remains "missing" to this day.

Supporting the campaign to honour the PRU and Mr Le Dieu, Mr Swayne said: "I am delighted to support the campaign to commemorate those who served in the Photographic Reconnaissance Unit.

"This includes Horace Le Dieu, who served under exceptionally difficult conditions, and I would urge anyone who might have any more information on him to get in touch.

"I look forward to working with the Spitfire AA810 Project to establish this memorial and to being able to pay my respects there once it is completed."

Anyone who is related to, or who knew Mr Le Dieu - or anyone else who served in the PRU – is urged to visit the website [spitfireaa810.co.uk](http://spitfireaa810.co.uk) or email Tony Hoskins at [tony@spitfireaa810.co.uk](mailto:tony@spitfireaa810.co.uk) with information.

Story courtesy of the Advertiser and Times. Images © Spitfire AA810 Project.



# MUSIC AND FILM

Thursday 9th May 7.30PM

## Hits from the Blitz




The unique "feel-good" 1940s show, as featured at Dame Vera Lynn's Charity Gala Nights and TV's Dad's Army. Famous War-Time tunes & "sing-a-long" songs brought to life by the singers and multi-instrumentalists of the "Five Star Swing" band. Suitable for 14+

-  FREE parking - Patrons must register at Box Office. Train & Bus at New Milton.
-  Tickets £15 adv / £17 door [www.forest-arts.co.uk](http://www.forest-arts.co.uk) or t: 01425 619983
-  Forest Arts Centre, New Milton, BH25 6DS

Thursday 6th June 2.30pm - 4.30pm

## D-DAY 80 COMMEMORATIVE AFTERNOON TEA



A talk on the D Day landings by Angela Trend, followed by a performance by The Good Night Sweethearts while afternoon tea is being served. This indoor event is suitable for all ages, but aimed at older people.

-  FREE parking. Hourly H9 bus service to Fawley.
-  FREE event [www.fawley-pc.gov.uk](http://www.fawley-pc.gov.uk)  
e: [helen.bradley@fawley-pc.gov.uk](mailto:helen.bradley@fawley-pc.gov.uk) / t: 02380 890761
-  Jubilee Hall in The Square, Fawley, SO45 1DF

Thursday 6th June 7.30pm

## IF YOU MISS THEM IN THE AFTERNOON

you can catch Goodnight Sweethearts in Hythe in the evening. This outdoor event is suitable for all ages.

-  NFDC car park. Bus services available to Hythe Pier, also Hythe ferry from Southampton
-  FREE event [www.hytheanddibden.gov.uk](http://www.hytheanddibden.gov.uk)  
e: [admin@hytheanddibden.gov.uk](mailto:admin@hytheanddibden.gov.uk) / t: 02380 841411



# Goodnight Sweethearts



Saturday 8th June 2.30pm - 4.30pm

## D-DAY COMMEMORATIVE Concert

Local orchestras & Rock Choir - 'Last Night of the Proms' style concert. This indoor event is suitable for all ages.

-  Town Car Parks, New Milton Rail Station & Bus services X1 and X2 to venue
- Tickets £8
-  e: [a.d.watson@btinternet.com](mailto:a.d.watson@btinternet.com)  
t: 07771 754025
-  New Milton Memorial Centre, Whitefield Road, New Milton BH25 6DE





Thursday 6th & Friday 7th June

## THE LONGEST DAY (PG) CINEMA SCREENINGS

The Longest Day is an epic 1962 American war film based on Cornelius Ryan's 1959 non-fiction book of the same name about the D-Day landings in Normandy. The film stars John Wayne, Kenneth More, Richard Burton and Sean Connery, many of whom saw action during the war. The film covers all the landings across the five beaches, Pegasus Bridge and the parachute drops behind enemy lines.

Thursday 6th | Showtime 5.30pm | TICKETS £6  
**HYTHE PARISH HALL**

-  Parking at site and in Hythe. Bus Service.
-  Advance tickets from Pebbles clothes shop, 25 High Street. More at [www.hytheanddibden.gov.uk](http://www.hytheanddibden.gov.uk) or t: 02380 841411.
-  West Street, SO45 6AA

Friday 7th | Showtime 7.30pm | TICKETS £7  
**SWAY CINEMA VILLAGE HALL**

-  FREE Parking. Bus & Train service.
-  [swayvillagehall.co.uk/cinema-listings](http://swayvillagehall.co.uk/cinema-listings)  
e: [swaycinema1@gmail.com](mailto:swaycinema1@gmail.com)  
t: 07564 817130.
-  Middle Road, SO41 6BB

*Superb, they swing like crazy!*  
Sheila Tracy, BBC





Reginald 'Tug' Wilson with his wife Win and daughter Wendy in 1944



From top left: (A12190) Wren stripping and cleaning a Lewis Gun, (A12195) assembling cylinder tanks of an Motor Torpedo Boat engine, (A12198) installing a Vickers Machine Gun, (A23592) King George VI inspecting Wrens aboard HMS Bulolo in the Solent before DDay, (A12186) Wrens bringing a Vickers gun ashore for servicing © IWM , Wrens at Exbury House HMS Mastodon © Exbury Veterans Association.

Exbury House and the Beaulieu River have a special significance to D-Day.

Much of the planning for Operation Overlord was conducted there, with the famous D-Day landing craft being built at Bucklers Hard, and the river serving as a vital location for training.

Celebrated British photographer Alistair Morrison has commissioned a local sculptor to create a permanent art piece to commemorate D-Day that will sit on the riverbank, at a designated site on the salt marshes, as part of the Time to Connect arts trail.

The statue is set to be unveiled by a famous actor, or perhaps two, on Tuesday, 4th June at high tide. The actors have been asked to read poems and the families of veterans will recite letters in what is sure to be an emotional recognition of the sacrifices made.

The sculpture is being unveiled in honour of the women who remained on home soil during the war.

The WRNS will be represented at the unveiling by Commodore Catherine Jordan and Warrant Officer Janice Scott, 100-year-old Joyce Denman and 102-year-old Beryl Nevell, who served with the WRNS during the Second World War.

The Royal Navy has confirmed it will send a senior woman officer to be rowed to the site of the sculpture on the river while the vessel "tosses an oar" in salute on the day of the unveiling.

Alistair Morrison, says Time to Connect is his "most significant undertaking" to date, describing it as a culmination of his life's work and creating a legacy for many generations to come.

# HAIL & FAREWELL

Tue 4th June 8am – noon  
**TIME TO CONNECT**  
Photography exhibition


The unveiling of a collaborative sculpture entitled 'Ave Atque Vale' honouring the Women's Royal Naval Service and the mothers, daughters and families that were left behind.

8am – noon  
**PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION**


8.30am – 9am  
**UNVEILING CEREMONY** including the Royal Navy 'Tossing the Oars' salute, and Royal Air Force Flypast

- **FREE entry**
- Suitable for all ages
- Indoors and outdoors and will proceed in bad weather



 **Free parking for up to 80 cars**  
**No public transport to event**

 **www.palaisdesvaches.co.uk**  
**e: info@palaisdesvaches.co.uk**  
**facebook.com/palaisdesvaches**  
**instagram.com/palaisdesvaches**

 **Palais des Vaches art gallery,**  
**Lower Exbury Farm,**  
**Inchmery Lane, Exbury,**  
**SO45 1AE**

In the Palais des Vaches art gallery there will be a temporary exhibition on HMS Mastodon, the name by which Exbury House was known in the war.

Also on display will be the White Ensign from the D-Day landing craft of Reg Wilson.

Reg was known for successfully traversing the beach five times on D-Day and Palais des Vaches will be displaying photos of him and his wife as well as his razor.

Nick de Rothschild said he once held the razor up for inspection by the late Queen Elizabeth II, joking with her that Reg had two close shaves on D-Day.

Also on display is the White Ensign, which was ripped by shrapnel and bullets 14 times, and was repaired by Tug's wife.





From top left: Tank Gunners in Ringwood (H11831), Training in Brockenhurst (A27303), American Airmen at the 'Sir John Barleycorn' Cadnam (D14560), 33rd Army Tank Brigade in Burley (23423) © IWM



6th June, 9.15pm

## BEACON LIGHTING CEREMONIES

The bravery and sacrifice of the people who secured the peace and freedom we enjoy today will be observed by the lighting of beacons around the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories. Villages, towns, cities and organisations of all sizes will mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day by lighting a beacon at 9.15pm on 6th June 2024, in celebration of the 'light of peace' that emerged out of the darkness of war, followed by an event to commemorate one of the most momentous achievements in living memory.


Locations with beacons in the New Forest can be seen on the map on page 2 of this programme and include:

- Copythorne Parish Hall
- Ringwood
- Barton
- Damerham
- Hythe
- Lepe
- New Milton

**Christchurch Quay** will also light a beacon and many locations offer events beforehand such as in Hythe and Copythorne.

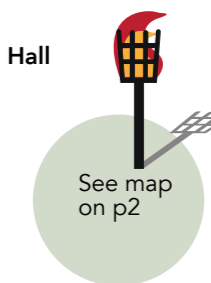
On 6th June at 11am there will be an 80th Anniversary of D-Day Commemoration at **New Milton War Memorial** (pictured) at the town's recreation ground.

At **Copythorne Parish Hall** there will be a fish & chip van and music by a cadet band and a singer. Copythorne's lighting has been arranged by the town's Royal British Legion.

 **Parking fees may vary please check with venue**

 **For Copythorne event info e: [gingekinley162@gmail.com](mailto:gingekinley162@gmail.com) or t: 07990 752855**

**For national events info visit [www.d-day80beacons.co.uk](http://www.d-day80beacons.co.uk)**



# ALLIES' SECRET WEAPON

**The magnificent Mulberry Harbour – developed and built in secret at Lepe – played a critical role in ensuring the success of the D-Day operation.**

Mulberry was the codename for a range of structures which would act as artificial harbours – about the same size as Dover harbour - with one being deployed at Omaha beach and another at Gold.

On the afternoon of 6th June, 1944, more than 400 Mulberry Harbour components were separately towed across the Channel to the two Normandy beaches, where they were rapidly constructed.

Mulberry A Harbour at Omaha was used by American forces to land but was not securely anchored to the seabed.

By 19th June the harbour had suffered what was officially described as “irreparable damage” although some repairs were made to the structure. By this time, however, the beach had been secured and the US Army was landing as many supplies and vehicles by landing craft as via the temporary dock.

Faring much better was the Mulberry B Port at Gold Beach – nicknamed Port Winston – which was used for six months after D-Day.

During those six months the Allies landed more than four million tons of supplies, two and a half million soldiers and over 500,000

vehicles in France via Port Winston.

Civil engineers developed a range of floating jetties and piers for use on D-Day, and they each earned their own nickname.

Hippo piers were so called because they could be fully submerged or lie just below the water's surface, while crocodile bridges were long and slender.

Another critical component for these artificial harbours was the phoenix caisson. Made from reinforced concrete, these large breakwater structures were built out of sight at Lepe beach and elsewhere on the South Coast.

The caissons came in six sizes, to displace between 2,000 and 6,000 tons of water, and were sunk off the Normandy coast to support artificial harbours, rising from the water's surface like phoenixes.

There were more than seven miles of piers and jetties on Gold and Omaha beaches, and they played a key role in keeping the Allies supplied in the push back against the Nazis.

By December 1944, the Allies had seized Antwerp port, allowing them to ship supplies closer to the frontline and making the Mulberry Harbour less useful to the overall war effort.

With thanks to Maritime Archaeology Trust.



Clockwise from top: Beetles at Marchwood from New Forest Knowledge, D-Day exercise off the New Forest coastline, May 1944 Mulberry construction site, believed to be Lepe foreshore (C 4626) © IWM



**Dressed to the nines and helping to keep the wartime spirit alive, historical re-enactors Dan and Tracy Turton are set to drive their 1942 Willys MB Jeep from Totton to Normandy in June for the D-Day 80 memorial service.**

Often found at military history events throughout the country, the sharply-suited couple recently showed off their Jeep – and their 1942 Dodge weapons carrier - in Lymington High Street as the town's Royal British Legion celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Barber Dan said displaying these vehicles and talking to families and young children about the importance of D-Day and the Second World War is his and Tracy's way of honouring the sacrifices made by the Allies.

“From childhood I've had a fascination with Second World War history,” Dan said. “I grew up playing with toy trucks, and the trucks just get bigger as you get older.

“I loved history at school and had a great teacher who was very enthusiastic about it.

“I was asked by the organisers of Lymington's legion's anniversary celebration to take part because I think it helps enhance the experience for everyone.

“For me, events like that are all about getting youngsters interested in the vehicles and,

through that, it encourages them to find out what happened in the war and what these incredible people did.”

Dan continued: “Military displays are mostly US vehicles because America gave us so many during the Second World War, and I think the nation only finished paying that debt back about 10 years ago.

“Having these vehicles at events is very visual for people. You try to explain to a child about the impact and importance of D-Day and the Second World War and it might not get through but, when you sit them in the driver's seat of a military vehicle, they start to get a better sense of what happened and connect with the history a little more.

“Tracy and I will be heading over to Normandy for the D-Day 80 service.

**For me it's all about keeping the memory of the war years alive - it seems the least our generation can do to recognise the sacrifices that were made.”**

# MAKING NEW MEMORIES

Dan and Tracy led a convoy of mostly Second World War vehicles from the Happy Cheese at Ashurst through the New Forest via Beaulieu to take part in Lymington Royal British Legion's 100th anniversary celebrations.

Alongside the vehicle display, the legion marked the special day with a service at St Thomas's Church in the town followed by a performance by a marching band.



Images © Dan Murray and Dan and Tracy Turton



# ACTORS WAITING IN THE WINGS OF EUROPE

## A POEM BY KEITH DOUGLAS

Actors waiting in the wings of Europe  
we already watch the lights on the stage  
and listen to the colossal overture begin.  
For us entering at the height of the din  
it will be hard to hear our thoughts, hard to gauge  
how much our conduct owes to fear or fury.

Everyone, I suppose, will use these minutes  
to look back, to hear music and recall  
what we were doing and saying that year  
during our last few months as people, near  
the sucking mouth of the day that swallowed us all  
into the stomach of a war. Now we are in it

and no more people, just little pieces of food  
swirling in an uncomfortable digestive journey,  
what we said and did then has a slightly  
fairytale quality. There is an excitement  
in seeing our ghosts wandering.....

(The final stanza of this poem is incomplete.) © by owner.




Bomb Damage New Milton © St Barbe


## Monday, 3rd - Friday 14th June SWAY DURING THE WAR


It is difficult to appreciate what the people of Sway and the surrounding New Forest towns and villages would have gone through during the Second World War - their fears and anxieties as their lives were turned upside down, but also their sense of purpose as they 'kept calm and carried on'.

The village only had half as many residents at the time, and during the 1930s it must have been a wonderfully tranquil place to live, but all that changed with the declaration of war. Learn about the villagers' experiences, and the role Sway and the Forest played in the war in an exhibition by St Barbe Museum & Gallery, in collaboration with Sway Parish Council. Images from the St Barbe archive and private collections will be on display, alongside the poetry of Keith Douglas, stationed in Sway before D Day and first-hand accounts from the people of Sway.

- **FREE entry**
- Suitable for all ages
- Indoors

 **Free parking. Bus services to town and five minutes' walk from Sway rail station**

 **For more information visit [www.stbarbe-museum.org.uk](http://www.stbarbe-museum.org.uk) t: 01590 676969**


 **Sway Youth Centre in Station Road, SO41 6BA**

## Saturday 25th May, 10am-4pm THE IMPACT OF D-DAY ON NEW MILTON

In the Memorial Centre there is an a WWII exhibition curated by historian, Nick Saunders which explores how D-Day impacted on the people of New Milton.

It will cover the impact of three bombings on the community of New Milton, the Home Guard and the 1423 men and women of the town who lost their lives.

- **FREE entry**
- Suitable for all ages
- Bus services to town and five minutes' walk from Sway rail station

 **Town Car Parks, New Milton Rail Station & Bus services X1 and X2 available to venue**

 **Contact the Lions Club of New Milton District for more information. e: [a.d.watson@btinternet.com](mailto:a.d.watson@btinternet.com) t: 07771 754025**

 **New Milton Memorial Centre Whitefield Road, New Milton BH25 6DE**



# MYSTERY FALLS FROM THE SKY

One of the most intriguing and enduring mysteries of the Second World War took place on the Forest just a few weeks before D-Day began.

On 18th April, 1944, a German bomber emerged from the clouds above the Isle of Wight before heading across the Solent towards the Forest.

Harried by RAF Typhoons and anti-aircraft fire, instead of fleeing or fighting back, the overloaded Luftwaffe plane unexpectedly began circling and sending out red distress flares.

The Junkers 188 twin engine aircraft made it to the airspace above Exbury House before it crashed, killing all seven of the German airmen on board.

To this day, the intent of the crew is not known, although it has been suggested they



The crash site is close to Exbury House

were making a desperate attempt to defect from a failing Reich.

On the day of the crash, the Allies' top brass, including King George VI and Winston Churchill, were overseeing D-Day preparations just a few miles away at Studland, near Poole.

The tantalising mystery surrounding the downed aircraft became an "obsession" for author John Stanley, whose interest was piqued after reading the account of a man serving in the Royal Observer Corps on the island that day.

John said: "The serviceman's account said he had never seen an enemy aircraft behave the way that one did and that it was the weirdest thing he'd seen during the war. I became extremely fascinated."

John spent seven years researching the crash, viewing both Allied and Luftwaffe war records relating to the ill-fated flight and interviewing the families of five of the seven airmen on board.

He traced and spoke to servicemen and Wrens stationed at Exbury on the day of the crash and, as he puts it: "Before I knew it, I'd written a book."

On the day of the crash, the Junkers 188 was supposed to be a pathfinder for the final bombing raid of the war on London.

Stationed at Avord in France, the Junkers was meant to fly to Soesterberg in Holland before deploying to lead the attack on the capital.

Instead, the Junkers took off from France on a "beeline" for the south coast of England.

It has been suggested the crew got lost, having taken off in low visibility, but John is not convinced by that explanation.

He said: "They were all fairly junior in rank, but that's how the Luftwaffe was at that time.

"They were a designated pathfinder unit and they had flown together for a year. They'd seen operational tours in Italy and were experienced.

"There were also seven men on board and, at most, there should only have been five."

On the day of the crash, King George VI, US General Eisenhower, Field Marshal Montgomery and Winston Churchill were at Studland personally overseeing dry runs for the D-Day invasion.

John has also heard an account from a Wren working in Winchester during the war that the Junkers crew was expected by senior Allied military personnel, but an order not to fire on them was not followed on the day.

The German airmen were buried at Fawley with full military honours, including a brass band and gun salute.



The Junkers crew and, below, their erratic final flight path © John Stanley

John said: "Just because they were the enemy it doesn't mean they were any less deserving of respect.

"Over time my research became less of a mystery and more of just a tragic human story."

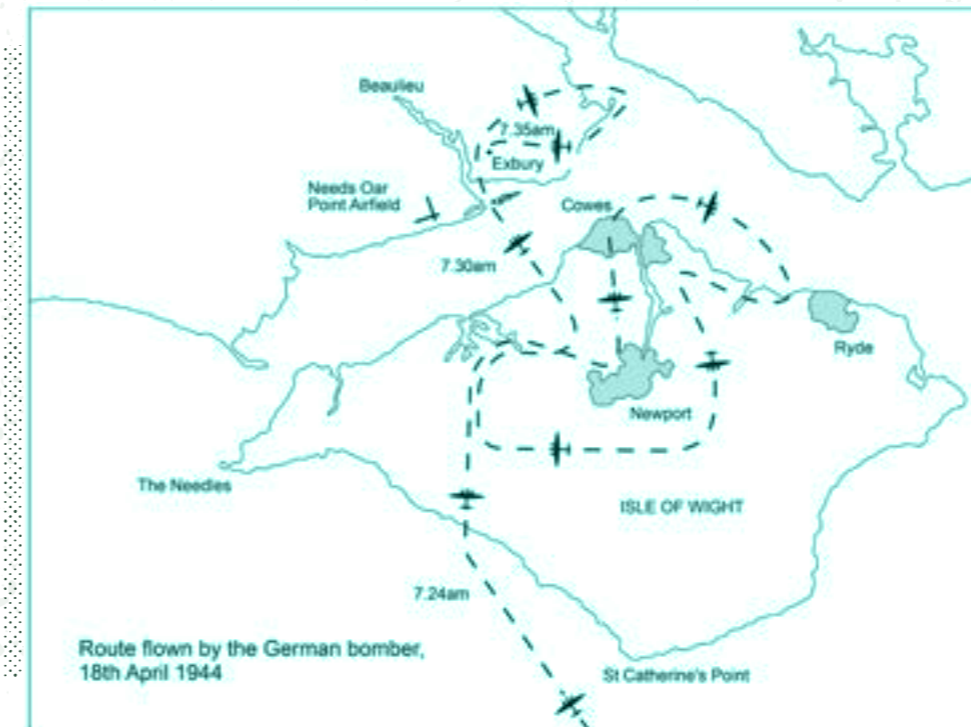
He concluded: "The bottom line is I don't think we can arrive at any degree of certainty as to what brought the plane here.

"The surrender of the crew can't be ruled out, but I've seen letters from one of the airmen who was very hostile towards the British for the bombing of German cities and killing of civilians."

The story of John's research and the people involved is told in *The Exbury Junkers: A World War II Mystery*, available at woodfield.org.uk and Exbury Gardens.

John Stanley will lead a wartime walk at Exbury Gardens on Saturday, 8th June from 11am to 2pm. To book a place, call 02380 891203.

With thanks to the Advertiser and Times



## Sat 1st - Sun 9th June D-DAY EXHIBITION involving Ballard School, with a focus on airfields

Charity FONFA has partnered with Ballard School in New Milton to host an art exhibition focusing on the critical work done by people at the New Forest's 12 airfields during the Second World War.

These airfields were crucial during the D-Day period, with the arrival of the RAF 2nd Tactical Airforce and the 9th USAAF, comprising 1,200 fighter bombers and night-fighters, in support of Operation Overlord.

While the airfields were operational, more than 24,000 military personnel were stationed there and a further 10,000 local civilians were engaged in various support roles.

These people had an incredible impact on the local community and the outcome of D-Day and FONFA say they are keen this should be understood by people of all generations.

For the exhibition, Ballard School's art department has produced work in a range of media including drawings and paintings, mixed media, 3D work using wire and clay, and textile works incorporating weaving, ceramics, silk painting and batik.

- Suitable for all ages
- Indoors
- **FREE** with a gardens admission pass or a Friends of Exbury membership



 **Exbury Gardens, SO45 1AF**  
Exhibition supported by  
Friends of New Forest Airfields

 For more information visit [fonfa.co.uk](http://fonfa.co.uk) or email [fonfa2010@gmail.com](mailto:fonfa2010@gmail.com)

## Sat 8th June, 2pm D-DAY 80 COMMEMORATION with Friends of the New Forest Airfields

A service conducted by the friends' chaplain to commemorate D-Day 80. Local dignitaries and representatives of the nations which flew from the 12 airfields will be in attendance.

- Suitable for all ages
- Outdoors (even in bad weather)


 **FREE, limited off-road parking.**  
 **No public transport to event**


 **New Forest Airfields memorial in Black Lane, Bransgore, BH23 8EB**

## Sun 9th June, 10am - 4pm D-DAY EXHIBITION

The heritage centre will be exhibiting models of planes and gliders which took part in D-Day with information boards and interactive screens sharing stories from pilots and other people involved.

- Suitable for all ages
- Indoors
- £10 adults, £4 children over 10

 **Limited free parking. No public transport to event**

 **FONFA Airfields' Heritage Centre Mosquito Way, Heatherstone Grange, Bransgore, BH23 8HE**





Left: (TR215) Churchill tanks of A&B Squadrons, 43rd Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment, 33rd Brigade. Clockwise this page: 2nd Battalion Northumberl & Fusiliers training on Matley Heath, Lyndhurst, preparing and firing Howitzers at Linford (H7718) (H7722) ©IWM.



# Fish & Chips

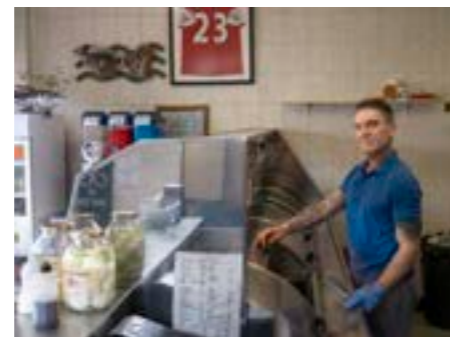


'Fish and Chips' is often considered the British national dish, but many people may not be aware that the humble meal was considered to be a vital ingredient of the war effort in both the First and Second World Wars. Sir Winston Churchill called the simple dish our "good companions" and would not ration the dish during the Second World War for fear of sparking widespread discontent.

The British Government safeguarded the supply of fish and potatoes during both world wars to ensure the dish remained a boost to morale. So ingrained are fish and chips in the national psyche that the dish was used as a life-saving code-name of sorts during the D-Day landings. British troops used to call out to each other, and one would shout "fish" and wait for a response of "chips" to identify each other on the field. It worked as a simple and effective way to ascertain who was friend or foe.

**Culture in Common** commissioned documentary photographer Niall McDiarmid to capture Fish & Chips shops in the New Forest and on 6th June your fish & chips might be wrapped in the images of the shop owners.

DAY NATIONAL FISH AND CHIPS  
JUNE 6TH



Daily 10am – 5pm	Secret Army Exhibition	Beaulieu National Motor Museum	EXHIBITION
9 May 7.30pm	Hits from the Blitz	Forest Arts Centre, New Milton	MUSIC
25 May 10.30am – 4pm	The Impact of D-Day on New Milton	New Milton Memorial Centre	EXHIBITION
25 May 11am – 4pm	New Milton Lions May Fayre	New Milton Recreation Ground	FAMILY
29 May 10am – 4pm	Discovery Bus D-Day 80 Touring Exhibition	Bolderwood Car Park	ACTIVITIES
30 May 9.30am – 4.30pm	Discovery Bus D-Day 80 Touring Exhibition	Behind Totton Library	ACTIVITIES
31 May 2 June 10am – noon	D-Day Exhibition	Ringwood Meeting House	EXHIBITION
28th May - 1st June	Honouring D-Day Veterans	New Forest Heritage Centre	EXHIBITION
1 – 9 June 10am – 5pm	D-Day Art Exhibition	Exbury Gardens, Exbury	EXHIBITION
1 June 10am – noon	Discovery Bus D-Day 80 Touring Exhibition	Ringwood Centre, Carvers Clubhouse	ACTIVITIES
1 June 2pm – 4.30pm	Discovery Bus D-Day 80 Touring Exhibition	Fordingbridge Recreation Ground Play Park	ACTIVITIES
2 June 10am – 3pm	Discovery Bus D-Day 80 Touring Exhibition	Hotspur House, Hythe Pier	ACTIVITIES
3 – 9 June 10am – 4pm	D-Day at Lepe Exhibition	Classroom at Lepe Country Park	EXHIBITION
3 June 10am – noon	Commemoration of the 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards	Lepe Country Park/Lepe Beach	EVENT
3 – 14 June Daytime	Sway During the War	Sway Youth Centre	EXHIBITION
4 June 8am – noon	Hail & Farewell Sculpture Unveiling	Palais Des Vaches	EVENT
4 June 7pm – 9pm	D-Day on The New Forest Airfields	Sway Village Hall	TALK
6 June 8am	Town Crier D-Day 80 Proclamation	Outside Waitrose, Hythe	EVENT
6 June 11am	D-Day 80 Commemoration	New Milton War Memorial	SERVICE
6 June 2.30pm – 4.30pm	D-Day Afternoon Tea & Goodnight Sweethearts	Jubilee Hall, Fawley	TALK & MUSIC
6 June 10am – 4pm 7.30pm – 9.30pm	Discovery Bus D-Day 80 Touring Exhibition	Sway Youth Club Copythorne Parish Hall, Copythorne	ACTIVITIES
6 June 7.30pm	Goodnight Sweethearts performance	Prospect Place, next to Hythe Pier	MUSIC
6 June 7.30pm – 9.30pm	Fish & Chip Supper & National Beacon Lighting	Lepe Country Park	EVENT
6 June 9.15pm	National Beacon Lighting	Various (See map p2 & listings on page 25)	EVENT
6 June 5.30pm	The Longest Day	Hythe & Dibden Parish Hall	FILM
7 June 7.30pm	The Longest Day	Sway Village Hall	FILM
8 June 2pm – 3pm	D-Day 80th Anniversary Service	New Forest Airfields Memorial	SERVICE
8 June 7.30pm	D-Day 80 Commemorative Concert	The New Milton Memorial Centre	MUSIC
8 June 10am – 3pm	D-Day Family Day and Discovery Bus	Lepe Country Park	FAMILY
9 June 10.30am – noon	Commemorative event of Remembrance	Clifftop, Lepe Country Park	SERVICE
9 June 10am – 4pm	D-Day Planes & Gliders – Friends of New Forest Airfields	Aviation Heritage Centre, Bransgore	EXHIBITION
9 June 10am – 3pm	Discovery Bus D-Day 80 Touring Exhibition	Hurst Rd Playpark, Milford on Sea	ACTIVITIES

EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Culture in Common exists to create more opportunities for New Forest communities to enjoy arts and creative activities selected by them. Why not visit our website to join our mailing list and find out what else is on in your area:

[www.cultureincommon.co.uk](http://www.cultureincommon.co.uk)

# CULTURE IN COMMON



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