

Nieuwsbrief - Newsletter

**STICHTING WAR CEMETERY
BRUNSSUM
FOUNDATION WAR CEMETERY
BRUNSSUM**



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Nieuwsbrief - Newsletter

Programma Dodenherdenking 4 Mei 2014 (Brunssum) Concept

18:45 Samenkomst St Gregoriuskerk, Oecumenische Kerkdienst.
19:00 Internationale Oecumenische dienst in de St Gregorius Kerk
19:45 Verzamelen bij de St Gregorius Kerk, Dorpstraat.
19:45 tot 20:00 uur Klokken luiden St Gregorius Kerk.
20:00 Twee minuten stilte

- Openingsgebed Pastoor Delahaye

- Openingswoord Burgemeester L.M.C. Winants

Kransleggingen door vertegenwoordigers namens Gemeente Brunssum, Stadt Alsdorf, Ambassade van Israel, JFC HQ, NATO AWACS Early Warning Force E3A Component Geilenkirchen, Politie Brunssum, Royal Air Forces Association, Nederlandse Veteranen, Amnesty International afd. Brunssum, leerlingen van het LVO en de Scouting.

Individuele krans- of bloemenleggingen

Doden Appèl

Declamatie door een jongere uit Brunssum

Het Wilhelmus

Beëindiging plechtigheid

Aankomst op het Britse Militaire Kerkhof. Twee Britse 'Ceremonial Guards' houden de Ere-wacht bij het Brits monument.

Openingsgebed United Kingdom

Muzikaal Intermezzo

Kransleggingen namens de Gemeente Brunssum, namens de Britse Strijdkrachten en Gemeenschap bij het Allied JFC HQ Brunssum, namens de Air Force Association, Amsterdam Branch/Club Limburg, namens de Stichting War Cemetery Brunssum.

Declamatie door leerling van de International School UK Section in Brunssum.

Vervolgens - worden door leerlingen en scouts uit Brunssum bloemen gelegd bij alle 328 graven op het Britse Militaire Kerkhof en zullen 328 witte ballonnen worden los gelaten.

Tijdens deze bloemlegging zal een piper van de Coriovallum Pipe Band uit Heerlen het "Lament" spelen.

Mogelijkheid tot individuele bloemenhulde.

(niet zeker: voordracht door Engelse chaplain: "At the going down of the sun we will remember them")

"Last Post" gespeeld door bugler

Een minuut stilte.

Brunssum sluit de ceremonie af met het Britse Nationale Volkslied, "God Save the Queen".

21:00 Einde plechtigheid.





**Dodenherdenking Bruns-
sum
Zondag 4 Mei 2014**

**Remembrance Day
Brunssum 4 May 2014**

We Will Remember Them

18.45 Kerk/Church

**20.00
Kerkhof/Cemetery**



WIN

5th MILITRACKS

17 & 18 mei 2014
Oorlogsmuseum Overloon

Met veel rijdende Duitse WO2-voertuigen en
een grote militaria- en documentatiebeurs!



RUUDSWINKELFOTO.NL



WWW.MILITRACKS.NL



Geopend van 9 tot 17 uur. Toegangspreis: €14,- per dag,
incl. entree museum. Niet geldig i.c.m. andere kortingsacties.

Attentie: er rijden de hele dag militaire voertuigen over het
terrein, dus: bezoek op eigen risico!



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MILITRACKS 2014

U kunt entreekaarten voor dit geweldige evenement winnen. Stuur een mailtje naar: warcembrsm@live.nl o.v.v. Militracks, of per post naar; Stichting War Cemetery Brunssum, Prinses Beatrixstraat 55, 6441AH Brunssum o.v.v. "Militracks".

"Met dank aan - Thanks to: Oorlogsmuseum Overloon"

You can gain tickets for this wonderfull event. The only thing you have to do is send a e-mail to: warcembrsm@live.nl or sent it to; Foundation War Cemetery Brunssum, Prinses Beatrixstreet 55, 6441 AH in Brunssum, metioning "Militracks".

Militracks 17 & 18 Mei 2014 - Overloon

Militracks is een evenement voor iedereen die geïnteresseerd is in de militaire techniek van de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Op Militracks staan twee dagen lang (09.00-17.00 uur) vooral Duitse Sd.Kfz. voertuigen centraal. Er zijn tijdens dit bijzondere weekend zowel motoren, transportvoertuigen, commandowagens als halfrupsen en tanks te zien. Sterker nog, ze staan er niet alleen maar rijden ook nog rond op het speciale parcours dat door rond het oorlogsmuseum loopt. En u kunt meerijden! Een uniek gebeuren!

Militracks is a great event for everybody interested in military technology of World War II. At Militracks, mainly German Sd.Kfz. vehicles are in the spotlights during two great days (9AM-5PM). A wide range of motorbikes, transporters, command cars, together with halftracks and tanks are on display during this weekend. Even better, they drive around on the 1-mile circuit around the war museum of Overloon. And you can drive along! A unique happening!

<http://militracks.nl>

Nieuwsbrief - Newsletter





14-12-2013

Bezoek van John Middlemass en zijn kleinzoon Jake Renwick aan het graf van zijn vader te Brunssum - Rest in Peace: James Middlemass †

14-12-2013

Visit of Mr. John Middlemass and his grandson Jake Renwick to his fathers Grave at Brunssum War Cemetery - Rest in Peace: James Middlemass †





We Will Remember - Robson, Alex

Rank: Private

Regiment/Service: King's Own Scottish Borderers

Unit Text: 5th Bn.

Age: 19

Date of Death: 28/12/1944

Service No: 14415172

Additional information: Son of Hugh and Minnie Robson, of Hawick, Roxburghshire.

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead

Grave/Memorial Reference: IV. 151.

Cemetery: BRUNSSUM WAR CEMETERY

Adopted by: Valerie Niesten



We Will Remember - Attwood, Sidney James

Rank: Serjeant
Regiment/Service: Royal Artillery
Unit Text: 86 (5th Bn. The Devonshire Regt.) Anti-Tank Regt.
Age: 32
Date of Death: 23/01/1945
Service No: 4807633

Additional information: Son of Bertie and Charlotte Attwood; husband of Mary Catherine Attwood, of Walthamstow, Essex.

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead
Grave/Memorial Reference: VI. 288.
Cemetery: BRUNSSUM WAR CEMETERY
Adopted by: Annie van de Bergh

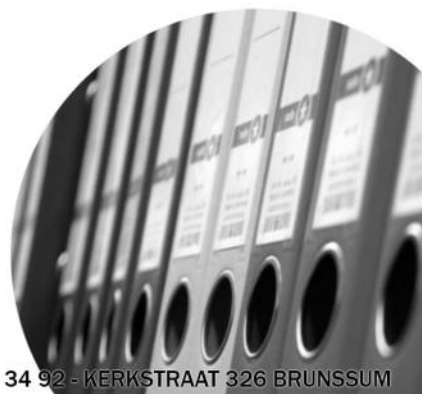
"Photo taken by Waltmans - Lindeplein Brunssum"



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Photo E. Ackermans



Nieuwsbrief - Newsletter

In de komende nieuwsbrieven schenken wij extra aandacht aan het boek Wallace & Marie, "One Man in 326.000" van Tony Ponsford ©. In deze nieuwsbrief publiceren wij de eerste 8 pagina's van dit bijzondere boek, met in de hoofdrollen Wallace en Marie Ponsford. Wallace, Edward Ponsford stierf op 7 december 1944 en ligt thans begraven op Brunssum War Cemetery †

In our following newsletters we will pay extra attention to the book Wallace & Marie, "One Man in 326.000" written by Tony Ponsford ©. In this newsletter we publish the first eight pages of this book, starring Wallace and Marie Ponsford. Wallace, Edward Ponsford died december 7th 1944 and is buried at Brunssum War Cemetery †



Tony Ponsford

WALLACE AND MARIE

ONE MAN IN 326,000



COMPILED AND EDITED BY TONY PONSFORD
WITH FOREWORD BY SIR TREVOR McDONALD

WALLACE AND MARIE

ONE MAN IN 326,000

Foreword

Introduction

Chapter 1 – Before the War

Chapter 2 – 1940 - 1942

Chapter 3 - 1943

Chapter 4 – 1st January – 18th June 1944

Chapter 5 – Embarkation and the sinking of
the Derrycunihy

Chapter 6 – North West Europe

Chapter 7 – 1945 and beyond

Appendix

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FOREWORD

We think of great conflicts like the Second World War as part of a panoramic sweep of violence, mindless brutality, unimaginable destruction and death. The names of battles and places leap from the pages of our blood soaked history to stun the senses....Stalingrad, Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw, Katyn. The most cursory look at how these places came by their infamy convinces us more than ever of man's inhumanity to man, about the fragility of the conventions of civilised behaviour, and about what one observer of the wretched depravity of the Third Reich called the 'banality of evil'.

But there is of course another way of looking at such battles and places and we are brought to it by individual tales of heroism and sacrifice, but also by innumerable stories of lives torn apart, and loves lost, and by the cruelty of memories which hold their captives in a vice like grip, thus denying them the luxury of forgetting

T S Eliot said the use of memory is for liberation. This book of letters under the title 'Wallace and Marie' is about the pain of remembering, and it turns out to be nothing even vaguely resembling liberation. Told in their own words, and with arresting simplicity, it is a story of the lives of two people who happened to meet and to fall in love as the Second World War raged at its fiercest, and how that war affected their lives. Its about two ordinary lives set against the backdrop of world shattering change to which they can only react with powerless hope, because they are trapped in the vortex of fast moving events over which they have no control.

In putting these letters together for this book Tony Ponsford is not unduly sentimental about their content, although he might be forgiven if he were, because he never knew his father (indeed he learned so much about him through these letters) nor did his father ever live to see his son. And the son is also very careful not to attach undue significance to the letters or to make any extravagant claims about his compilation. Instead, he describes his father, not as a hero, but rather as 'One Man in 326,000'. In other words, he was one of the many who never made it home.

All deaths are tragic, but Wallace's was particularly so because he died just as the War was coming to an end. This particular tragedy was more acute in that he left behind a grieving young widow to bring up their son. There must be hundreds of thousands of such stories. What gives this book its poignancy and its emotional charge though, is that in their letters to each other and for the time they knew each other, it seems that there could have been no greater love, no finer or more touching story of two people whose lives were totally entwined.

So far as we can make out they never for a moment stopped thinking of each other and wrote faithfully, sometimes three or four times a week. Their letters deal in the main with the multiplicity of everyday details which are universally part of domestic life. But nothing of the ordinary or the mundane could possibly obscure the passion and the beauty of their relationship. They poured their hearts out to each other making this a romantic tale of love and devotion as marvellous as any other. Reading their letters you can feel the intense pain of their separation - he training and serving with the 43rd (Wessex) Reconnaissance Regiment at the front in Europe, she serving as a Waaf then back at home, willing the war to end. To Wallace Ponsford Marie, his young bride, was his 'celestial being'.

Wallace talked about how he found it impossible to describe his joy when he was near Marie. And in another passage he wrote: 'I want to hold you and to murmur a hundred times that I love you' Marie explained in one of her letters why she wanted to marry him. She said 'I want to share a home with you, be there when you come home from work each evening...kiss you goodbye every morning I want to go on long walks with you on summer evenings, returning physically tired but

Nieuwsbrief - Newsletter

happy, and sleep soundly till morning' And they wrote thousands of words like those, sending and receiving them in the middle of a war. Alas, like so many doomed lovers of literature, their time together was too short and they were never to share the bliss of which they dreamed.

Marie married again in 1950 and had two other children James and Jo. I married her daughter Josephine and so came to know Marie as my mother in law. We only have Wallace's letters to speak for him but I can write about my knowledge of Marie. On the many car journeys she and I shared from her home in Rottingdean to ours in London she talked a great deal about various episodes in her life, but never in our conversations, so far as I remember, did she ever talk to me about Wallace. Perhaps I was too distant a part of the family chain for such confidences. Although I do recall that on one Mediterranean cruise, in conversation with a fellow passenger, and with her daughter Jo not very far away, she referred to herself as a War Widow, totally ignoring the fact that she had been married again to Jo's father. She apparently did the same thing on several other occasions.

Marie could be great fun. She was bright and confidently independent. She had a very sharp and practical mind and possessed a sound business sense, which she employed to good effect to ensure that in her later years she would never be a burden to her children. She was quietly proud of her grandchildren, just missed seeing her first great-grand child and, after a long life, died peacefully on August 15th, 2007.

But, and this point cannot be overstated, only now, in reading these letters do we members of her family begin to understand the extent to which Wallace's death affected my mother in law's life. A famous Greek writer talked poetically about how persistent the feeling of loss can be. He said 'even in our sleep pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart'. In Marie's case that was the exact truth. She was never able to banish entirely from her mind the memory of the man with whom she intended to spend the rest of her life. Her days after his untimely passing, were in so many ways defined by a permanent feeling of ill fortune and by a sense of irreparable loss. To a large extent that loss shaped her personality as much as it shaped the way she forever viewed the world. By the story of her relationship with Wallace as illuminated through their letters, we know so much more about the way she saw us. They tell us too a great deal about her. It is almost as though we have really come to understand for the first time, someone we've known for ages. The letters pulled back the curtain and pierced the gloom surrounding a largely unknown chapter of her emotional life.

Importantly the letters also remind us that wars are about more than epic battles, mighty conquests and the changing fortunes of nation states. And even the grimmest Second World War statistics about the unconscionable loss of life tell only part of the story. Behind the loftiest calls to go forward to battle and the noblest admonitions to turn back the invader, are individual tales, hardly of any great significance on their own, but which taken together represent crucial elements in the study of our human condition. Wallace's and Marie's story is surely a part of that. In a deeply cynical age, it reminds us of the greatest of all qualities, love. And although I cannot claim to be a disinterested party, Tony Ponsford and his family are to be commended for keeping the records and producing this fine and moving chronicle.

Trevor McDonald

August 2008

Nieuwsbrief - Newsletter

INTRODUCTION

Sergeant Wallace Edward Ponsford 2617967

43rd (Wessex) Reconnaissance Regiment

Killed in action 7th December 1944

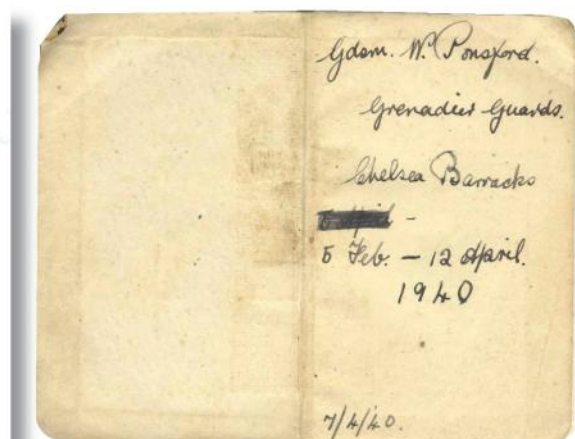
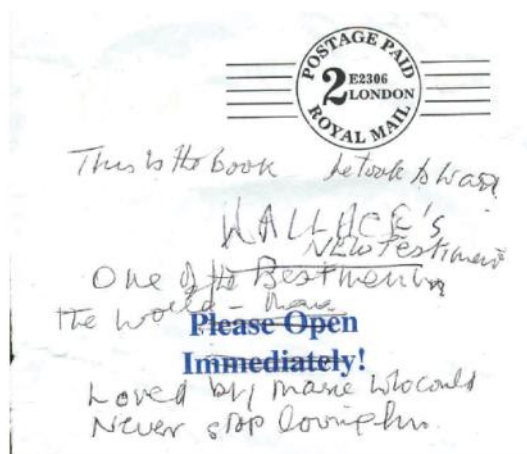
My father was just one man in 326,000 British military deaths in the Second World War. Being 1 in 326,000 does not make him special but his overwhelming love for my mother, Marie, and the fact that he was my father does.

I was 11½ weeks old when he was killed – he knew all about me but never returned to see his son. Throughout my life I had assumed that those training and fighting away from home were out of touch with home life for months at a time. I am sure that they were in many theatres of the war but, in my father's case, he was sometimes writing and receiving 3-4 letters a week and, occasionally, two in a day.

I never discovered my father's deep involvement in domestic issues whilst training and fighting at the front until I went through my mother's little red writing case in 2007 after she had guarded it closely for 62 years. Inside I found over 100 of his letters, starting in February 1942 and ending with his last letter, written on 5th December 1944, two days before he was killed in action.

Also in the case was his Soldier's Testament inside which I found a note written on a scrap of envelope by Marie, when in her eighties, which says: -

*"This is the book he took to war
Wallace's New Testament
One of the best men in the world - Marie
Loved by Marie who could never stop loving him"*



SHE NEVER STOPPED LOVING HIM.

Nieuwsbrief - Newsletter

General background

Wallace Edward Ponsford was born in Bristol on 17th January 1917 and left school at the age of 14. He was a printer by trade. As a King's Scout and scout leader he attended the World Jamboree in Holland in 1937. He enlisted in the Grenadiers in February 1940, transferred to the Guards Brigade Reconnaissance Corps in January 1941 then to the 43rd (Wessex) Reconnaissance Regiment in July 1942. He was part of the pressure, under Operation Market Garden, to relieve the Airborne Divisions fighting for the bridges at Arnhem and Nijmegen and was then based in the Nijmegen area for some time before fighting into Germany where he was killed in action on 7th December 1944. He is buried in Brunssum, a town in the Southern part of Holland, in the province of Limburg

Marie, née Allsop, was born in Putney on 25th April 1921. Early in the war she was a secretary, in an engineering firm that designed aircraft fuel tanks, until she enlisted in the WAAF. She was still supervising a radar watch on the cliffs of Northern Ireland whilst carrying me. Marie remarried in 1950, gave birth to James and Josephine and had five grandchildren. As I started to compile these letters Marie died peacefully on 15th August 2007.

Wallace and Marie married in Wandsworth on 21st September 1943 and I was born on 18th September 1944.

The Letters

To the best of my knowledge the following includes the majority of the letters written by Wallace to Marie in 1943 and 1944 with a few from 1942. I believe the gaps to be training periods, periods at the Front and the times that they were together. Wallace did not have the same facilities to keep letters that Marie had; however I have put in those of hers to him that I have found. Like all personal letters these contain some references to events, people and private conversations that I cannot explain after 63 years so I have made no attempt to do so.

I have used as many photographs as possible but some are of poor quality because the originals were small, taken on basic cameras, had to be scanned in and, in some cases, were received by e-mail.

Many of Wallace's letters in 1944 mention his concern at the rental prices of the properties that Marie was looking at. His preoccupation with these costs is more understandable when the following are taken into consideration: -

1. His home was Bristol where rates would have been lower than in the London area
2. He expected to have to find a new peacetime job and start again after the war
3. Although only in his twenties he was already committed to giving financial support to his parents because his father was disabled

Some of the letters that Marie received from others after Wallace was killed have also been included.

This is not a war story but a story of love between two people and the war's effect upon their love.

I have tried to put the War around the letters.

Military background

When I started to read my father's letters I got a shock. I was not expecting to read about his fighting experiences, the censors would have put a stop to that, but it shook me to find that, having volunteered at the start of 1940, he did not see action until the summer of 1944. This needs an explanation.

There was nothing unusual in his not seeing action until 1944. The vast majority of those earmarked for the invasion had not previously seen action and the 43rd Wessex Division was part of Britain's Home Forces. Whilst they were rigorously training for the time that they would have to fight to liberate North West Europe they also had an anti-invasion role on home soil. In the days of the Battle of Britain those defences became perilously close to being needed.

In the words of Brigadier F R Henn CBE in his introduction to the history of the Division, "When it sailed for Normandy in June 1944, the 43rd Wessex Division was held generally to have been the most highly trained infantry Division ever to have left British shores."

Wallace, as a sergeant in the Reconnaissance Regiment, was fighting at the sharp end. He went through France, Belgium, Holland, and into Germany in a three man Humber Mk IV Heavy Armoured Car. This was a 7 ton vehicle with a 37mm gun and a 7.92mm Besa machinegun. Patrols were generally carried out at a walking pace because of the high risk of ambush.

The excerpts in boxes between the letters from January 1944 onwards are direct copies from the 43rd Reconnaissance Regiment's War Diary. This diary will be better understood by reference to "Breakdown of a Reconnaissance Regiment in 1944" in the appendix at the end of this book.



Nieuwsbrief - Newsletter



Acknowledgements

As I got into this I found that I needed more help than I had expected and I must thank the following, in no particular order: -

My aunt, Elizabeth Lane, still going strong in Canada at the age of 88 as I write this - she was there in the 1940's and her memories of some of those referred to in the letters have been invaluable.

My sister, Jo McDonald, who, as keeper of the family records, drip fed me with photos as she found more and more in her loft

Paul Hannon, Historian of the 43rd Recce Regt History Group, who has been incredibly patient with my total lack of understanding of all things military. If there are still military errors in this they are not of his making

Tom Metcalfe (supported by two generations of his family!), Laura Wilson and Sandra Dixon - between them they deciphered all the handwritten letters into a first draft for me. It was not only the writing that they had to decipher, phrases and the use of individual words have changed markedly in 60 years.

Hanneke Dye for her support and encouragement, for straightening me out with regard to Dutch place names, and who contacted her friend Jos for me in Holland who led me to Jan Rombout's widow and son.

Michael Lovitt for his encouragement

Jos Van Beeck, who managed to locate the descendants of those who befriended Wallace in Nijmegen in 1944

Mrs Rombout-Spruit and Wim Rombout who filled in some of the gaps regarding the weeks Wallace spent in the Nijmegen area

Hylde Mutton who was there in Northern Ireland as a WAAF in Marie's day and took the trouble to write and talk to me at length about what it was like to be a radar operator at Glenarm as well as casting her mind back for me to talk to me about war-time travelling conditions in the UK

Carole Saville and my Bristol relatives who have stripped their lofts in efforts to find early records and photos of Wallace

Brigadier F R Henn CBE for allowing me to quote his comments about the Regiment and its training

Ron "Bill" Leach, a Trooper, later Corporal, in the same Troop as Wallace who has total recall of those days and has been a mine of information. Ron kindly allowed me to include many of his memories around Wallace's letters

Roy Merrett, who runs the Old Comrades Association of the Regiment, for putting me in touch with those who still remember Wallace

Len Llewellyn, Sergeant in C Squadron when he and Wallace were training in Eastbourne, for sharing his memories of Wallace with me

Susan Rudland, daughter of Sgt Harry Rudland, Troop Sergeant, 2 Troop, A Squadron, who lent me his photos

Norman Brittain, another British soldier befriended by the Rombouts in Nijmegen, for his memories of the Rombout family and their kindness

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ambachtelijke wijze en
met zorg bereid,**

**Zonder toegevoegde
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zonder conserveer-
middelen!**



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06-29253830**

info@jacquelines-jam.nl



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046 43 707 69

Maastrichterlaan 45
6191 AB Beek



Wij willen langs deze weg Wim & Estelle Seelen van het Eyewitness Museum in Beek, hartelijk danken voor de geweldige rondleiding in hun schitterende Museum

“Het bestuur van de Stichting War Cemetery Brunssum”

Honoring Those Who Gave Their Lives

“Freedom is never Free”

Painting by e-ster-art © - www.e-ster-art.com



**Herdenk hen die gevallen zijn voor onze vrijheid
Remember those who fell for our freedom**



STICHTING WAR CEMETERY BRUNSSUM

Draagspeld - Brooch

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