

# **The Royal Air Force Servicing Commando and Tactical Supply Wing Association**

*Representing a Common Heritage*



## **D-Day 70th Anniversary Newsletter 2014**

Dear Members,

June this year has carried broad significance for our Association and veterans in general. 100 years ago this week, Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo, leading to the Great War. Closer to home, 70 years ago this month, Allied Forces regained a foothold in northern Europe through Operation Overlord and the events of D-Day in particular, leading to an inexorable advance across Europe and the defeat of Germany. The Commemoration of the actions in Normandy attracted widespread attention and the events themselves were a fitting tribute to those involved.

The RAF Servicing Commandos were involved in the success of the Normandy Campaign and your Committee had hoped to mark this achievement with a return visit to France by those Servicing Commandos able to make the journey. Unfortunately, the march of time was out of step with these aspirations; and we were represented by one of our number attending with the Normandy Veterans Association. Mr Alan McQuillin laid a wreath on our behalf at the Servicing Commando Memorial at the B3 Airfield, St Croix sur Mer.

Our annual reunion weekend (20-22 June) culminated in a memorial service at the Servicing Commando Plinth at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) to mark the 70th Anniversary of D-Day. At both this and the Normandy event, photographs captured the occasions and a selection of photos accompanies this note to allow members to see what was done on their behalf. Also, a copy of our order of service at the NMA is included, which contains a description of Servicing Commando activities 70 years ago.

Your Association continues to mark past and present deeds by members and to promote the special bond and pride we share. I hope you find this piece interesting and thought provoking and I welcome any comments you have.

Yours aye

David

David Orr  
Chairman

# D-Day 70th Anniversary Commemoration at the NMA



Alan McQuillin, David Orr, Duncan Grant, Tim Newstead



We Will Remember Them



Alan McQuillin laid the Wreath



The Wreath



The RAF Servicing Commando Plinth



Alan McQuillin and David Orr



**Duncan Grant, Mark Farrell, Alan McQuillin, Mick Stokes, David Orr, Tim Newstead and Kit Ayers**



**David Orr, Duncan Grant and Tim Newstead**



**Tim Newstead and Gwyneth Pritchard**



**Ernie Deighton, Pauline Luckett and Rae Taylor laid a wreath in remembrance of 3207 SC friends**

## **D-Day 70th Anniversary Commemoration at B3 Airfield**



**Alan McQuillin laid a wreath at B3 Airfield, St Croix sur Mer, Normandy, during the D-Day commemorations there**



**The Royal Air Force  
Servicing Commando  
and  
Tactical Supply Wing  
Association**



**Act of Commemoration  
to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day**

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2014**

The National Memorial Arboretum  
Alrewas, Staffordshire

## Order of Service



- **Introduction**

- We meet to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invasion of Normandy and, in particular, RAF Servicing Commando Units involved in Operation OVERLORD.

- **Prayer**

- Prayer of thanks for opportunity to meet, for those who gave their lives, for comradeship.....

- **Reading**

- **Psalm 100**

**A psalm. For giving thanks.**

<sup>1</sup> Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before Him with joyful songs.

<sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD is God.  
It is He who made us, and we are His;  
we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Enter His gates with thanksgiving  
and His courts with praise;  
give thanks to Him and praise His name.

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good and His love endures  
forever;  
His faithfulness continues through all  
generations.

- **Commemoration of D-Day**

- Six Servicing Commando Units (SCUs) – Nos 3205-3210 – had been formed in April 1943 to take part in Operation Overlord and all six were in Normandy within a week of D-Day. 3205, 3207, 3209 and 3210 went ashore the day after the initial landings; 3207 SCU was the first SCU to land.
- No 3205 SCU sailed from Gosport at 1100 on D-Day aboard four LCTs. It comprised 5 officers, 176 other ranks, 20 3-ton lorries, 2 x 350 gallon water tenders, 2 x 15 cwt trucks, one jeep and 4 motorcycles. In the rush to unload, the doors of one LCT were opened prematurely and two 3-tonners were driven off into deep water. The two vehicles and equipment were lost but the occupants swam ashore. The unit went ashore on Gold beach near Ver sur Mer.
- No 3207 SCU went aboard two British LCIs and an American LCT at Gosport at 1800 on D-Day. Early next morning the ships were attacked by torpedoes. One LCI was hit amidships and caught fire; one airman, Jack Croft, was killed and another badly burned. The troops aboard the damaged landing craft were eventually rescued by a US Coastguard Cutter and returned to the UK. The remainder of the unit went ashore on Gold beach at 0800 on 7 June.
- Very little information is available concerning 3209 SCU's part in Operation Overlord; however, Edward Skeggs was also killed on the LCI that was torpedoed with 3207 SCU on board. The Unit landed on 8 June near Beny sur Mer.
- No 3210 SCU embarked on 6 June 1944 and made a landing some 24 hours later at 1100 on 7 June, D-Day plus one, on Juno Beach. However, the Unit lost two trucks carrying their stores and equipment and about 10 men lost their personal equipment while trying to disembark.
- Nos 3206 SCU and 3208 SCU landed on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June respectively.
- Within 3 weeks from D-Day, 31 Allied Squadrons were operating from airfields in north-western France and eventually reached a total of 81. Without the SCUs, the projection of Close Air Support and tactical air power over the battlefield would have been seriously hampered, and as the troops advanced, become increasingly difficult as aircraft had further to travel to reach the battles. The SCUs gave tactical air power in Normandy a vital characteristic: Immediacy.

- **Laying of wreath**

- Laying of wreath
- Let us remember before God all those who have died in the cause of freedom, especially those members of the RAF Servicing Commando here commemorated.
  - We will remember them.
  - One minute silence

- **Closing Prayer**

- Heavenly Father, we thank you for the freedom we enjoy as a nation, freedom earned at such enormous human cost. We give thanks for the bravery and courage of those men and women of our Armed Forces, particularly the Royal Air Force, who are involved in bringing peace and justice to many areas of the world today. Amen