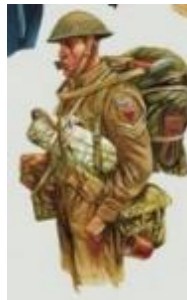




# **AIGBURTH – MERSEYSIDE BRANCH**

## **NORMANDY JUNE 3RD /08<sup>TH</sup> 2019**

As custodians of the title The Liverpool Irish (A Troop) the Association Last year proposed to follow in the footsteps of our 8<sup>th</sup> Kings he Liverpool Irish on the Juno beachhead. in attending the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of the Landings and to Forge a bond with the Canadian Winnipeg Rifles which formed the main assault on the bridgehead.



**8<sup>Th</sup> Kings Battalion Liverpool Irish  
102 Beach Sub-Area Normandy**

**UNIT 8 Kings Regiment, Headquarters and three companies. One Company was with 8 Beach Group on Nan total Strength **MEN 501 VEHICLES 14****



## History

In 1943, the 5th and 8th King's (Liverpool Irish) were provided with specialist training at Ayrshire in preparation for a planned **invasion of France**. They were selected to form the nucleus of the 5th and 7th Beach Groups, whose objectives on an invasion beach were to maintain organisation, secure positions, and provide defence against counter-attack.

As invasion neared in mid-1944, the two battalions were moved from their camps to ports in southern England and embarked aboard troopships and landing ship tanks. Much of the Liverpool Irish embarked aboard the *Ulster Monarch*, a passenger ship that had served on the **Belfast**-Liverpool line before the war. After delays, the invasion fleet proceeded to Normandy on 5 June. Both King's battalions landed on D-Day, the 5th at Sword with the British 3rd Infantry Division and the Liverpool Irish at Juno with the Canadians.

Two companies of the Liverpool Irish landed in the assault wave with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. Under intense machine gun and mortar fire, the landing of Major Max Morrison's "A" Company proceeded well, allowing some to establish a command-post upon reaching the sand dunes. In contrast, in "B" Company's sector, the late arrival of the reconnaissance party and DD tanks exposed the landing infantry to heavy machine gun fire. The company's officer commanding, Major O'Brien, and the second-in-command were among those wounded. Experiences at Sword Beach were similar. As the 3rd Division moved inland, the 5th King's attempted to neutralise hostile positions and snipers. Casualties included Lieutenant-Colonel D. H. V. Board, He had hardly gone ashore when a well-aimed Sniper's Bullet Struck him in the head He was seen aboard a jeep Its driver returning moment later With the CO slumped forward with a neat hole in his forehead The driver alerting "Sniper" and the OC of 9 Platoon, Lieutenant Scarfe, mortally wounded in an attack on a German position.

Under fire, the beach groups collected the wounded and dead, located and marked minefields, attempted to maintain organisation, and directed vehicles and troops inland. The two battalions operated with the beach groups for a further six weeks. While the severely depleted Liverpool Irish was disbanded in August, much of its strength having been transferred to other units as reinforcements, the 5th King's was reduced to cadre strength. Disbandment was only avoided through the determination of Lieutenant-Colonel G.D. Wreford-Browne, who argued that the 5th Battalion was nearly the most senior unit still active in the Territorial Army. The Title was later Taken up by The Local LAD Unit and its to-day Proudly being in the custody of A Troop (Liverpool Irish) 208 Bty RA Aigburth.



## A Troop Liverpool Irish 208 Bty RA



### 7 Beach Group

7 Beach Group was landed on Mike Sector. The first personnel landed with the first assault waves. Mike Sector was to accept personnel and vehicles for the assault division plus 360 tons of stores landed by two LCT. These stores were to be transferred to two Beach Ammunition Dumps. The Commander of 7 Beach Group was also responsible for I Corps Assembly Area and a Casualty Evacuation Post. These were to be reconnoitred and established as soon as the situation allowed.

7 Beach Group was formed around **8 Kings Regiment**. On Mike it was to contain all of the 7 Beach Group units except that it transferred some units to 8 Beach Group for the operation of Nan Green. One company of **8 Kings Regiment**, 242 Petrol Depot, 193 Detail Issuing Detachment and 14 Ordnance Beach Detachment were transferred. In addition one platoon of **8 Kings Regiment** provided the defence for 102 Beach Sub Area Headquarters. Some extra units came under the command of 7 Beach Group. A half of 30 Field Dressing Station and three quarters of 293 Pioneer Company were to operate the Casualty Evacuation Post. Staff were attached to operate the Corps Assembly Area. The primary task of 7 Beach Group was the unloading of vehicles and guiding them on their way to the Assembly Area. The first tide saw units of 3rd Canadian Infantry Division landing under the command and control of the division but it was planned that Mike Beach would receive six LST's with four Rhino Ferries and 40 LCT's to be handled by the Beach Group. These craft should have landed some eight hundred vehicles. The second tide would see a further eleven LST's with seven Rhino Ferries. These would carry a further six hundred and sixty vehicles. Of course unloading was badly behind schedule. Some idea of the size and complexity of the Beach Group can be seen in the order of battle for D Day when the following were scheduled to land:

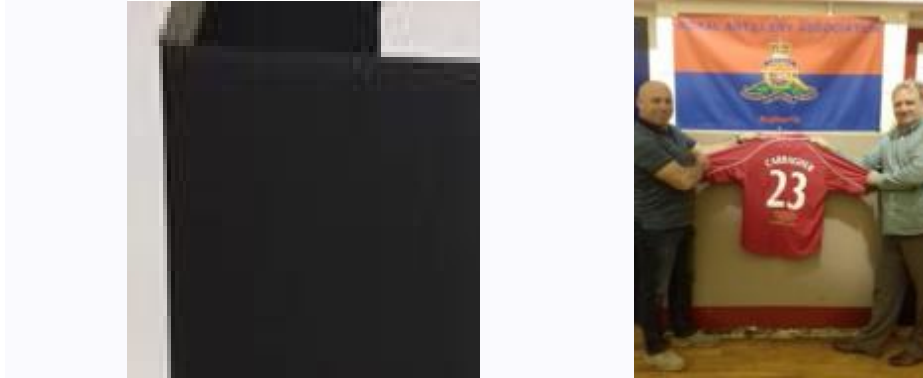


### Planning

The Aim of the visit apart from its obvious Intention of commemoration was to inject a sense of purpose to the Association. Setting an aim not only for the members participating in the Actual visit but support in fundraising and the Social occasions. A Sub Committee was formed and invitations were sent to the Members and our Hosts 208 Bty.

We secured a local travel Company (Galina travel of Chester) and sent out four details and costs for commitments. We had a Nucleus of 20 members and secured our places with a view to increase the number to 30 plus. As time approached and deposits were required The Increased numbers did not materialise. The Travel Company unfortunately had to increase the Costs to a mixed group figure this resulted in reducing the group to 14. One of the key reasons the serving members stated was the fact, which in all essence we should have realised, was the balance of Holiday commitments not only for their Family holidays but also time they need to allocate for annual camp.

In normal Normandy tours the company would have been able to provide the trip for £300 to £350 But due to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Costs had near doubled (being used to such practices when watching Liverpool in Europe this was no surprise) This increase resulted in a further challenge to our fund raising We were most grateful to Allan Solly who agreed to lend financial support from The Association. This was backed up by our own Association funds. A local Brewer Stamps of Crosby agreed to sell a bespoke beer and a label was produced commemorating the Landings.



**Neil Gannon (A Troop) & Pete Brandwood (Branch Secretary)**

The Battery messes then assisted in Holding Raffles and selling the Beers all proceeds going into the Visit. With the Liverpool Irish memorial being located in Bootle's South Park We approached its most famous son Jamie Carragher (Liverpool & England) who was glad to provide a Signed Shirt which was Ruffled at the Mess Function.

We also received an most generous donation from a Branch member this enabled us along with other funds to subsidise the 3 Standard Bearers, who have been the face of the Association on countless occasions the subsidy was most gratefully accepted. Time came for the Final balance to be paid the numbers dwindled to 14 due to Withdrawal for Work commitments and health. Once committed all systems where go .

We were fortunate to have the honour of a visit by Phil Doyle the son of Pipe Major Doyle who Piped the Irish ashore on the landing He proudly showed us the pennant he Wore on the pipes which where in pristine condition and a much Loved Family Treasure.



**8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Kings Liverpool Irish Pennant an Phil Doyle (Background)**

### **The Canadians**

We made initially contact with the Winnipeg Rifles whom informed us of their intent to take Part in the Event when we first explored the Excursion But had lost touch Again Alan Solly came to the rescue passing on a link with **BGen (ret) David Patterson Chair, RCAA Board of Directors** Swiftly he passed me the Link to **Gerry Woodman Ex RSM Winnipeg Rifles**



and comms where restored. Their group where Incorporating both WW1 & WW2 links so we wished them Bon Voyage & Looked forward to meeting them later.

### Day 1 The Off

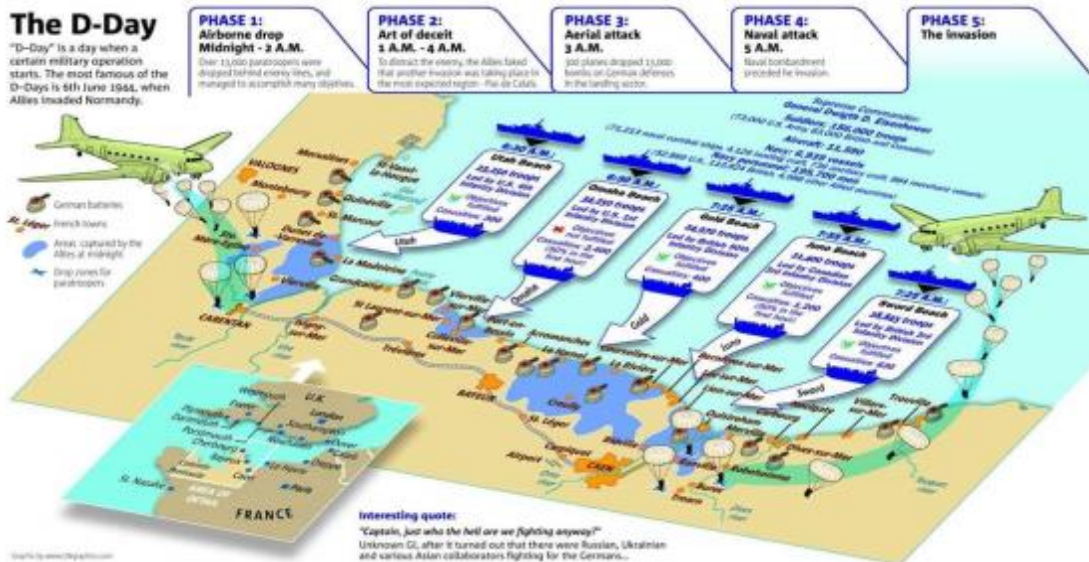
We received the sad news from Our Standard Bearer Harry Heatley that His good lady wife Marj had to pull out of the trip as she had to undergo emergency surgery Our best wishes where sent wishing her a speedy recovery Like many a TA wife/partner Marj gave Harry her blessings and he and his fellow Standard Bearer's Joe Little & Alan Kelly where primed and ready for what was to become a both moving and momentous period in their Support not only to the Unit but to the many from All Nations who gave their lives for our Freedoms.

The Tour started with an 0630 Pick up at Aigburth ARC the start of a long Journey to Dover-Calais and then a further 5 Hours across to Courselles During the 5 hour Journey across France you get an appreciation of the Deception plan success Not only where the German divisions deployed around Calais The Journey they would have to take under an Allied Air supreme Sky line would take much longer than our Excursion.



Much Needed Refreshments Followed by good old singsong

### The Beachhead



### DAY 2 After a not so Hearty French breakfast Pegasus Bridge

The First Allied landing took place when British and American troops Landed to secure key elements for the breakout from the beaches Called *Operation Tonga* A unit of glider Infantry of the 2nd Battalion, the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Infantry 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division, commanded by Major John Howard, was to land, take the bridges intact and hold them until relieved. The successful taking of the bridges played an important role in

limiting the effectiveness of a German counter-attack in the days and weeks following the Normandy invasion. In 1944, it was renamed Pegasus Bridge in honour of the operation. The name is derived from the shoulder emblem worn by the British Airborne Forces, which is the Flying horse Pegasus



Our Standard Bearers & Visit Treasurer Outside Café Gondree the first Building occupied by the allied troops Eric Cox, Joe Little, Alan Kelly & Harry Heatley



**Juno Beach**

Our next port of call was to follow the footsteps of 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion and visit Corselles the spot where They Landed along with the Winniepegs



(Left) Greye-Sur-Mere Memorial 1984 Colonel Max Morrison 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Alongside Michael Ghimaux On behalf of the Town pay their respects (Right) Not Forgotten Our Standards Displayed and memorial laid .



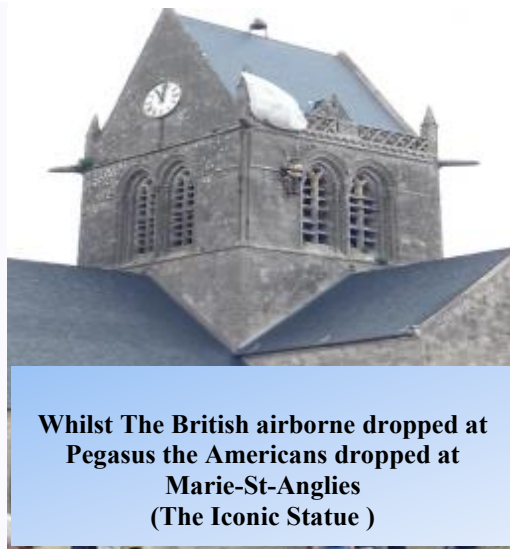
On D-Day after the landing on the encamped Queen White area of Sword Beach at the place known as La Breche d'Hermanville, the 1st Battalion South Lancashire Regiment (8th Infantry Brigade) 20 and nicknamed "Cod" by the Allies, then proceeds in the direction of Hermanville-sur-Mer on the only road that allows to escape from the beach to reach the interior of the land.

**DAY 3 Sword Beach Juno Beach**

**Day 3 US Colleville American Cemetery Omaha & Utah & Marie St Eglise**



**United States Veteran Receive our respects (Pete Brandwood) He also respecting his gratitude for our support**



**Whilst The British airborne dropped at Pegasus the Americans dropped at Marie-St-Anglies (The Iconic Statue )**





US Gunners Meet The Brits

## Commemorative Service at Bayeux War Cemetery







German Loss





THE MAIN PURPOSE MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

**Lance Sergeant Alfred Raymond Benson** 3776940 Aged 29 (Manchester)

Private T W Bibby 3773958 (Liverpool)

**Sergeant Jack Bond** 37757912 (Aged 27)

Son of George & Bessie (Sutton Oak St Helens)

Lance Corporal Harry Durham 14400450 (Bolton) Son of William & Florrie

**Captain Stanley James Foster** 189207 (Aged 30) (Harrow)

Son of George James & Elizabeth

"In Proud And Loving Memory"

**Sergeant Dave Fisher** 3774261 (Anfield)

Our Son Dave who gave his life that we may live now rests with Jesus

Son of Harry & Agnes

**Sgt Bertram Fedrick Hobson** 3774158 Aged 25 (Bromborough)

"Our Bert Everlasting Love"

**Lieutenant Colonel Charles Henry Roger Howie** 40290 (Cardiff) Cdg 1<sup>st</sup> Bn

Hampshire Regiment



**Lance Sergeant Leonard**

**Hunt** 3778602 (Birkenhead)

Aged 28 Son of Albert &

Margaret

WO2 Ged Hunt and the grave  
of his Uncle Leo

**Private R Leak** 14400150 Son of John Henry & Sarah Maggie

Our Dear Brother Reg "The hearts that loved you will never forget"

**Captain D W Jones** 165562 (Green Howards attached) (Liverpool)

Ever Cherished as the finest memory of his Mother Brothers & Sisters

**Sergeant Jack Mackay** 3763452 Son Of John & Elizabeth  
Cherished Memories of our beloved son Jack Sadly Missed "Duty Nobly Done"

**Private Henry Frank Moore** 3783866 (Liverpool)  
Son of Joseph & AD "Carry On"

**Private Trevor Morgan** 3771327 Aged 24 (Blackpool)

**Private Norman George Nuttall** 3782866 Aged 21 (Liverpool)

**Private George Frederick Pritchard** 3772417 (27 Years) (Runcorn}  
"We miss him but God wanted him let His will be done"

**Private John Becket Royle** 14657781 Aged 18

"In ever loving Memory of Becket Dad Mum & Family Rest in The Lord"

"Sleeping in a foreign Grave Grandest Son god ever gave"

**Captain David Wynne Jones** 165626 (Green Howards) Son of Richard and  
Dianne (Mossley Hill)

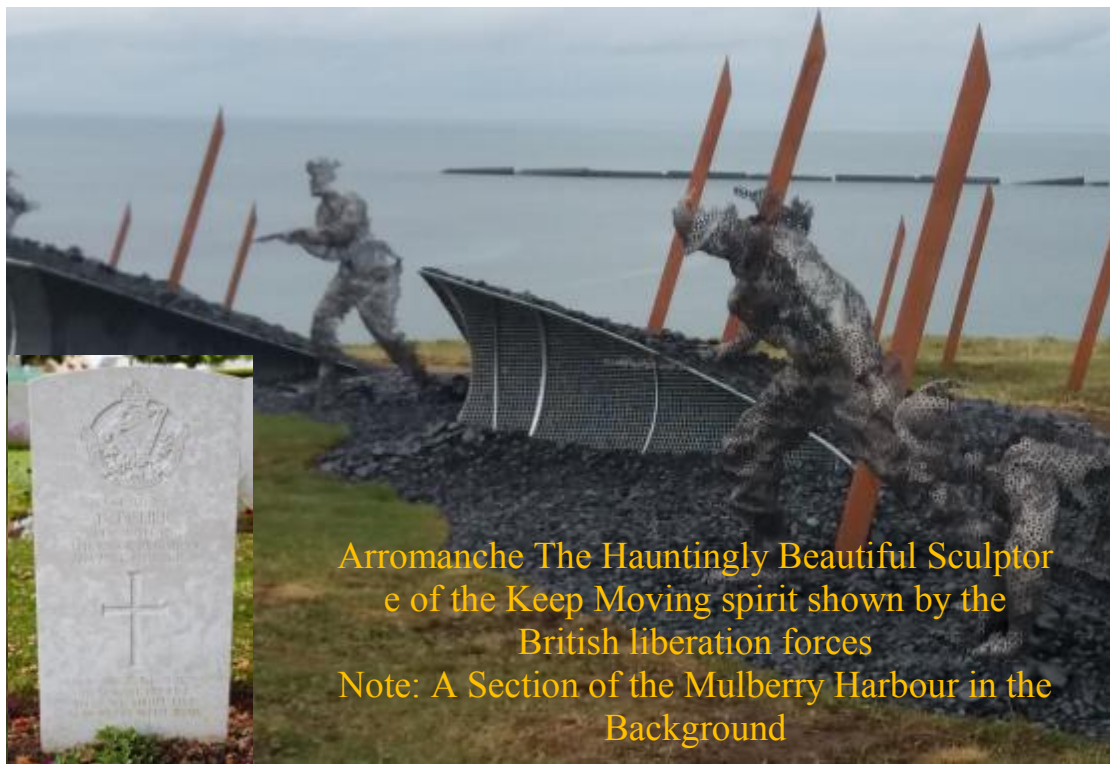


MISSION ACCOMPLISHED





Whilst we were unable to link up with the Winnipegs we did manage to pay our respects at the Beny-sur-Mer Canadian Cemetery And on the when they sent (Very important) representatives to our Commemoration



They went with songs to the battle, they were  
young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds  
uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

