

D-Day 80's Tribute to Scottish Piper William (Bill) Millin



Step into the extraordinary tale of heroism that unfolded amidst the thunderous chaos of D-Day. Among the valiant British troops who descended upon Sword Beach, there emerged a figure whose unwavering spirit embodied the very essence of awe-inspiring courage. Bill Millin, a mere 21 years of age, stood alone amidst the tempest, adorned in the ancient garb of a Scottish piper, chosen by none other than Lord Lovat himself to wield the power of music in the face of devastation.

It was an audacious act, for the war's stringent regulations forbade pipers from venturing onto the front lines. Yet, as the echoes of combat reverberated through the air, Millin fearlessly defied convention. When he reminded Lord Lovat of this transgression, the gallant lord, in his resolute Scottish manner, responded, "Ah, but that's the English War Office. You and I are both Scottish, and that doesn't apply."

At the break of dawn, around 07:25, the great invasion began. Among the early waves, Lord Lovat's craft crashed upon the shore, accompanied by the haunting melody of Millin's bagpipes. With unyielding determination, our piper led the brigade ashore in Queen Red Sector, his music echoing across the hallowed grounds. Through a hailstorm of bullets and the heart-wrenching descent of fallen comrades, he strode, his tunes weaving a tapestry of courage and defiance. "Road to the Isles" and "Highland Laddie" danced on the wind, inspiring those who fought alongside him to press forward with unwavering resolve.

Now, we invite you to witness a recreation of that historic scene as our 21 year old piper Alex Smith retraces the footsteps of 21 year old piper Millin, embarking on a journey that spans 10 kilometres from Sword Beach to Pegasus Bridge, passing through the poignant landscapes of Colleville-



Piper Alex Smith, 103 Regt RA Pipes & Drums Association.



Sword Beach, Normandy

Personal Piper to Simon Fraser, 15th Lord Lovat
Commander
British 1st Special Service Brigade
D-Day 6th June 1944



Main photo: Bill Millin plays his pipes for fellow soldiers in 1944.

Montgomery and Saint Aubin d'Arquenay - the initial objective of the valiant 4 Commandos.

Once the bridge has been crossed, "Blue Bonnets" shall fill the air, a testament to the indomitable spirit that resided within the heart of a lone piper.

Moreover, as night descends, the resonant sound of bagpipes shall grace the capital cities of the United Kingdom - London, Edinburgh, Belfast, and Cardiff - at 9:10 pm, just before the beacons ignite, symbolising the unity and indelible bond forged on that fateful day. Across the nations involved in the D-Day landings, the capital cities shall resound with the soul-stirring melodies of bagpipes at 9.10 pm.

We will also have a presence in the capital cities of the allied nations that took part in this operation. From Washington DC to the distant shores of New Zealand's Auckland, from Ottawa to Paris, and from Canberra to Brussels, Athens and Amsterdam, Oslo, Warsaw and Prague, at 9.10 pm local time the timeless power of the pipes shall intertwine with the eternal memory of the brave souls who fought for freedom.



Landing on Sword Beach; Bill Millin is in the foreground at the right; Lord Lovat is wading through the water to the right of the column.

Tribute to Scottish Piper William (Bill) Millin continued



NORMANDY, FRANCE

Robert Procter, 103 Regiment Royal Artillery Pipes and Drums
Location: the British Normandy Memorial

Alex Smith, 103 Regiment Royal Artillery Pipes and Drums
Location: Sword Beach & Pegasus Bridge

UNITED KINGDOM



England

Mike Shanahan, Royal Hospital Chelsea
Location: Tower of London



Scotland

Isla Jane-Stout
Location: Edinburgh Castle



Northern Ireland

Campbell College Pipes & Drums
Location: Belfast



Wales

Chris Lindsay
Location: Welsh National War Memorial, Cardiff

REST OF THE WORLD



Australia

Stephen Ladd, Canberra City Pipes & Drums
Location: Australian War Memorial, Canberra



Belgium

Brussels Caledonian Corneymusers
Location: Anglo-Belgium War Memorial, Brussels



Canada

RCMP Pipes, Drums and Dancers: National Capital Region
Location: The National War Memorial, Ottawa



Czech Republic

1st Czech Pipes & Drums
Location: Prague Castle, Prague



Denmark

The Heather Pipes & Drums Copenhagen
Location: The statue "Vore Faldne", Kastellet, Copenhagen



France

Paris and District Pipe Band
Location: The Memorial de la France combattante, Paris



Netherlands

The Arthur Troop Pipes and Drums
Location: Nationaal Monument op de Dam, Amsterdam



New Zealand

Sally Craik
Location: Pukeahu National War Memorial Park, Wellington



Norway

Nikolai, Oslo Caledonian Pipe Band
Location: Akershus Fortress, Oslo



Poland

Czestochowa Pipes and Drums
Location: plac Krasinski, Warsaw



United States of America

Graeme Dodworth, MacMillan Dunn Pipes and Drums
Location: World War II Memorial, Independence Ave, Washington D.C.