

Henry Brown OBE

No.1 Commando

General Secretary of the Commando Association

1946 -1987

Wartime service is still so clear in his mind Saluting a sergeant who helps others

A WAR veteran from Ruislip has travelled the globe rubbing shoulders with royalty as a result of his wartime role.

Quartermaster Sgt Henry Brown, now of Hill Lane, was working in his father's grocery business in Stockport when the Second World War began.

He was called up in 1939 when he was just 20-years-old, and left his Northern home to join the army's number one commando unit.

The unit was disbanded in 1946 but the camaraderie between the troops held strong.

The Wartime Commando Association aimed to retain this spirit and help the commandos settle back into life on civvy street.

In 1946, he became secretary of the association and this year, the 80-year-old was voted in as association president.

He said: "I did say to them at the interview for the secretary job that the only administration work I had done was during the war.

"I thought that if I make a hash of it, I will go back to Stockport."

Far from making a mess of things, his work helping service men find jobs and representing the association at gatherings has won him awards.

He became a Member of the British Empire (MBE) in June 1946 for his dedicated service.

He was also awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977, but said he is used to meeting those with regal connections.

He said: "I was honoured and privileged to meet the Queen Mother five times."

He first met Her Majesty in 1946 at a concert in aid of the commandos at the

Royal Albert Hall. In 1952, their paths crossed again at the unveiling of a commando memorial at Fort William in Scotland.

Like many of the members who are still in the association, his wartime service is still clear in his mind.

A year after signing up, he was in Norway stopping German landings. His tour of the globe continued in Algiers in 1942.

Being bombed in the Mediterranean in May 1943 and spending Christmas in Egypt, Alexandria, is not something he will forget.

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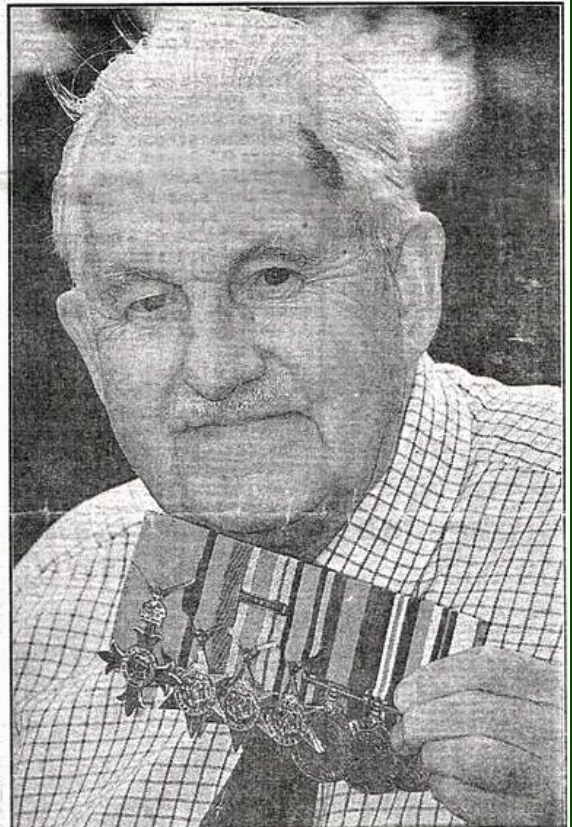
His memories have been used in many books about the war and the role of the commandos.

March Past by the late Lord Lovat is perhaps the most poignant one, as he greatly admired the peer.

His reminiscences are also featured in Robin Neillands, *The Army Commandos, 1940-46*.

As the years pass, the number of those who were part of this dwindle.

He added: "There were 8,500 of us in 1986 and there are 3,000 now. All very sad, but part of life."



● **WARTIME ROLE:** Quartermaster Sergeant Henry Brown, who has won awards for his dedicated service C3760

Written by Lisa Wakeling.

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