Sergeant Thomas Daly No.12 Commando and Holding Operational Commando.

Collection courtesy of his son Richard.



	COMMANDO
- 1	SERVICE CERTIFICATE
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	This Certificate is an Appreciation, of Loyal Service given to Commandos by 8/232037 Bet. T. Daly BALERO.
	oth sorth, 1946 Ryanuch.
	Survey in Sourceardon from April 1941 to April 1944
	680 Averila 1946 Alert

Service in the Commandos 21 April 1941 to 15 April 1946

Tom was born in 1913 in Darlington, the 5th of six children of a master plumber (also called Thomas Daly) and his wife, Mary Catherine. As the second eldest son, he was sent away to a Roman Catholic seminary to train for the priesthood, but he decided this wasn't for him, and started working in the law instead.

He served 5 years as an articled clerk and qualified as a solicitor in 1938. He joined the forces around the time war broke out. I remember him telling me that the soldiers he was with were lined up and told that a new unit had been formed, and was looking for volunteers. Dad was aware of the soldiers' rule "Never volunteer", but thought it had to be better than where he was, so put his hand up. Hence becoming a commando.

He recalled training in Snowdonia and Scotland, and I think a raid on the French coast; but mainly because of his background he was given administrative work, in particular for Lord Sysonby; and he worked with a corporal called Fred Hunt (who always sent an Association Christmas card, and who wrote to me after Dad's death – see the enclosures). He would put proposals in to Lord Sysonby, who would return them, endorsed "I concur. Sysonby". This became quite a saying for my Dad, to the end of his life!

He was demobbed in 1946, and went to work in a law firm in Doncaster, where he met my mother at a New Year's Eve dance. They married in May 1949, and I was born in 1957, they having moved to Darlington shortly before this. He treasured his green beret, though it did look increasingly disreputable down the years. His Association wall plaque is still pristine, though.

Dad was a gentleman, and indeed a gentle man – most unlike the popular image of a commando, but I believe he was quietly proud of his service. I well remember visiting the memorial at Spean Bridge with him, and his sadness at the death of many comrades in the war. He died in July 2002.

Written by his son Richard Daly.

Holding Operational Commando Wiesham 16th Jeb. 406. To Whom it may concern, Sgt Daly has served in bommandes for your years and during the last three year have been in close contact with him, and in a position to study he character under the varying conditions of army service. I have found him at all times, cheenful, willing and trustworthy, a man who ded not try to avoid responsibility and upon whom a heavy burden of work could be placed with the certainly that the work would be efficiently and queckly done. During his army arrive he has been employed in a responsible administrative capacity, and is made the welfare of the men her yeast concern. I have no doubt whatsoever that the ability he has shown in the service will be equally displayed in civil life and recommend him without recommend as a man of considerable promise.



THE COMMANDO ASSOCIATION With the Compliments of the General Secretary

190, HAMMERSMITH ROAD, LONDON, W6 7DL. Telephone No. 081 - 746 3491

Letter from Fred Hunt No.12 Commando and Holding Operational Commando

16th December 2002.

Dear Richard,

upset when she died.

Thank you for your letter of last week, when I saw your signature as I opened the letter, I feared it was bad news.

1 am so very sorry to hear that Tom had passed away, and I thank you very much for letting me share your last few weeks together. Although your Dad and I were "friends" for all off 60 years, our time together was actually only from April 1943 to July 1946, which now seems such a short space of time. Nevertheless during those 3 years we were very good friends, even though he rose to the exulted rank of Sgt and I was a mere Corporal. when we eventually moved to wrexham late in 1943, I eventually met and married a local girl, and in 1945 we had a daughter. when the time came for Pat to be christened, my wife and I would have loved to have your Bad as her godfather, that shows how close we are, and your Dad actually approached a priest to see if he could fulfill this role, but due the fact that we were not RC's this never took place. Anyway your Dad was always welcome at our home (I lived outside the barracks after we were married) and we had many meals and evenings together. I remember sometimes your Dad would arrive with a large tin of pork meat, a present from the Sgt Mess, which my wife would later make into a large pork pie, in the days of strict rationing

this was quite womething. Some years latter of course your Dad met Kathleen and after they were married it as your Mum and I who wrote the Xmas cards, and exchanged reports on our various holidays that year during the Summer months. I seem to rember that France was a great favourite during those years, which of course you knew all about. Although I never met your Mum, through our correspondence she came over as a lovely lady, and I always thought of her as a friend, and I was quite

So now you are on your own, but of course you may have relatives and friends to spend Xmas, and I hope you enjoy the rest of the year, and wish you a Happy and proc percus New Year, and good health for the future. Thanks once again for taking the trouble to give me the news, even thought it was so sad to receive.

Yours , most sincerely,

Frede Hunt

2nd letter from Fred Hunt

with some memories of their time in the Commandos

9th January 2003.

Dear Richard,

I cannot thank you enough to refeive yourletter about your Dad, and the eulogy which you gave at his funeral. I was much moved that you included me in the message, even if anonymously, thank you once again.

You are quite correct when you say it isnt until you lose someone that you realise how little you know of their earlier life. My Dad, wa& a regular soldier and a erved 4 years in the trenches 1914 - 1918 and I know very little of the conditions under which he served. He won the DCM, quite a high ranked mordal but it was only after his death, that I read the citation and learnt how he won the medal.

You asked me to try and remember details of your Dad's career in the commando's, well I have stretched the old brain cells and I hope the following throws some new light on what you alreedy know.

Early in the Spring of 1943, together with another volunteer, I arrived at DorchesterStation from Aldershot, and somehow eventually _rrived at a large house in Maiden Castle Road, I had arrived at the HQ of No. 12 Commando. I was then sent to my civilian billet with a Mr. Bouvier at Frome terrace, Dorchester who was a butcher so, I eat quite well for a short time. The next day I presented myself in the Orderly Room, run by ROMS Ray (Ruby) Ayres and his second in command a certain Sgt T. Daly. At the end of Maßden Castle Road was a Roman fortification Sgt T. Daly. At the end of Maiden Castle Road was a Roman fortification around which we had to run most days, before tossing a few tree trunks about, which was our PT. I had nt been at Dorchester many days before I learnt that we were going to move to Scotland for mountain warfare training, and before I knew where I was I was on Dorchester railway station along with the rest of the lads. The Adjutant was marching in front of us with a folder under his arm, marked "Top Secret, Move to Braemar" (a bit like Dad's Army). The journey took about 36 hours, and lucky for me we stopped at Leicester to refuel the engine, and I was able to ring my Dad on the phone at work, to tell him I was OK and moving up we had to "brew up" and cook inside the carriages on little North. "Tommy Cookers", I think there was more smoke coming out of the carriages than out of the funnel. Eventually we arrived at Ballater, the nearest ation to Braemar, and the Fyffe Arms Hotal. The Officers were in the Hotel but we lesser ranks were in huts in the ground s. The Orderly Room was in a large lounge at the front of the Hotel, and one of my jobs was chopping up small trees to keep the fire going in the office. We, the HQ staff did not more far from the hotel, but the troops were on the mountains throughout the week and only came into the Hotel at weekends. we soon made friends with the local young boys and used to play them at football on the famous Braemar Highland Games site. At weekend we sometimes ran a dance in the village, and it seemed heavan for the girls from miles around to suddenly have about 200 young men arrive from what to them was 'outer space'. After about 4 weeks the CO. The Lord Sysonby DSO. TD thought the lads needed a break, so we all boarded 5 tonners and set off for Aberdeen, a trip of some 60 miles. we were billetted in the YMCA for the weekend, and we had a brilliant weekend as far as I can Some years later I took my wife and daughter on holiday to remember. Aberdeen (it was still standing) and we went to Braemar, and I took tea in the old Orderly Room, it was quite a moment. Eventually out time was up and we had to return to Dorchester (We had not invaded Norway, as some Whilst the main body of No. 12 Commande bright comrade kept telling us). way in Dorchester, "B Troop" were in the Shetland duing raids on Norway and another troop where in Dover doing little jobs in France and the Channel Islands. I dont know whether your pad told you this story but Channel Islands. on one of the raids on the Channel Island, a certain Capt Pickney and his men took some German prisoners. and +i-a +v .

2nd letter from Fred Hunt (page 2)

with some memories of their time in the Commandos

Although this seems quite a reasonable thing to do, it was a parently contrary to Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners, and when Hitler eventually heard about it, he was furious and issued a proclamation that any Commando solders capture in raids on the Continent should be shot by firing squad. This unfortuately happened to a few Commandoslater on

we were not long at porchester, before we entrained for weston Super Mare, but not much happened there apart from the mundane life in the Army. I seem to remember we ran a pance at the winter Gardens entitled "Welcome to the Co mandos" and the next week we left for Bognor Regir.

At Bognor life was much the same, our HQ was in a large Hotel opposite the Pier, and althought the South Coast was prohibated to the civil population of the rest of the UK, we troops were allowed to have the beaches to ourselves. It was whilst at Bognor that we heard the Bad news that our Commando was to be disbanded. Our CO was given a staff job in Washington DC (Who could blame him) and the rest of us were re allocated in to different Commandos. It was the luck of the draw, your Dad and I could have finished up dead on the 6th of June 1944, instead we were tucked up nicely in Wrexham when the news of the invasion was announced.

We went to Wrenham in October 1943 and stayed for over 3 years. I met my wife, Aurwen, married and we had our lovely daughter, Pat, who now lives in Nth London with her husband and 2 children, Deborah and Adrian, both in their 20s. After I was married, I was allowed to live at my wife's home, over the Barrack field wall, and ity there that we used to invite your Dad for a meal every now and then, and of courde we met up in Wrexham in the evenings. When the War final finished in Europe in May 1945, it soon became my job to de-mob all the rest of the Army personnel as they became due for demob, and eventually the Army Commando Group at Wrexham, was commanded by one Sgt. T. Daly, Cpl Hunt and 2 OR's. The Commando side of the Military was to be taken over by the Royal Marines, who had never quite forgiven the Army for pinching their role, and we 4 "Pongos" joined up with the Royal Marines in Wrexham Barracks and were transported to a place in NTH Wales called Llwyngwil, just south of Barmouth, where we used to spend our evening, either at the "New White Cinema" a tin shack or the local hostelries. Eventually we got rid of the 2 ORs back to thier parent Regiments, your Dad was demobbed about June 1946. Because he was that much older then me hw was demobbed a month before. so that left me. I somehow got posted to Sth Wales District HO at Abergavenny. I remember I got the job of collecting an absentee from Barlinney Gaol in Glasgow and taking him to Hereford, had a fortnights leave and was eventually demobbed at Oldham in Lancs, and that is the end of the story.

I hope I have filled in a few gaps in the life of Sgt. T. Daly and that I have not bored you too much.

Thank you, Richard, for your letters, it was nice to sit down and recollect my times with Tom Daly. He used to say that really here to Thomas Sebastian O'Daly but he had changed his name by deed poll, that was your Dad, was'nt it. God Bless.

Yours nost sincerely,

Fred Hunt



Tom Daly and his son Richard.

A few days later Tom passed away.

Wight RELEASE LEAVE CERTIFICATE Army Form X 202/A Army No. 23/037 Present Rank. SERVE EXPIRES Sumume (Black Letters) Wristian Name/s..... SVGENOC OL Unit, Regt. or Corpe...... BE DAYS RELEASE Date of : *Last collistment..... Calling up for military service. * Strike out whichever is inapplicable. (1) Service Trade Clash Class II & (Atre) (a) Trade on enlistment.
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Two poems written by Tom Daly

Dawn (Before Embarkation)

Sweet child of night! Oh lovely dawn, Upon the open arms of light So gently borne, So soon to die beneath the might Of day, Thy touch is hope, thy gift eternal morn.

A trumpet call, an angel prayer, Upon the lonely mountains falls And lingers there In echoes, whispered from the halls Of death. Be free my soul!

Let heaven fill the air!

In Thankfulness (and in Memory of a Blind Soldier)

At last I see

Life's wonderful reality.

Beyond the vanity of dreams I've passed,

To certain rapture have I come

At last.

I live in an uplifted land

And hold the future in my hand.

What king can claim

My untold treasure, what my name,

Or what vast empire can enclose

My life?

I go in freedom, undismayed

By strife

That shadows day and burns the night;

Misfortune cannot steal my sight.



Thomas Daly Born 18-07-1913. Died 09-07-2002.