



## MAURICE TURNBULL

GLAMORGAN REMEMBERS  
1944 2019  
THE 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF D-DAY

Maurice Turnbull, one of Wales` finest all-round sportsmen was killed in early August 1944 during the Liberation of Europe following Operation Overlord. Having played county cricket for Glamorgan and Test cricket for England, both rugby and hockey for Cardiff and Wales, as well as being a founder member of Cardiff Squash Club and squash champion of Wales, one can only wonder at what else he might have achieved had he not given his life to King and Country whilst serving with the Welsh Guards in Normandy.

He and his battalion had arrived on the Continent a fortnight after D-Day, and during late July and early July, Maurice led a number of successful raids on Nazi troops as the Allied Forces moved forward through Normandy. However, on the outskirts of Montchamp, he paid the highest price for his bravery during a counter-attack by German forces. Having reached the small town by August 5<sup>th</sup> Maurice and his men were undertaking reconnaissance in the fields when they spotted the start of the counter-offensive with a column of Panzer tanks with foot soldiers either side and behind, heading towards them along the sunken road, lined by hedges, leading into Montchamp.

Without any decent cover or anti-tank weapons, Maurice told his men to hide alongside a hedge lining one of the orchards. As the tanks came closer, Maurice told his number two to quickly run back into the town with news of the German advance, before assembling a small group of men armed with guns and grenades in an attempt to immobilize the lead vehicle. In typically brave fashion, he led the group as they crawled alongside the hedge, but as they were alongside the lead vehicle, machine-gun fire opened up from the German troops, and the tank pushed its gun through the hedge and opened fire. Maurice was right alongside and killed instantly.

Others in the Company were also either killed or wounded, before a hasty retreat began. Maurice`s prostrate body lay in the ditch alongside the hedge until Sergeants Fred Llewellyn and Rex Fowles from No. 3 Company came across his body. As Fred remembered, “ We found Major Turnbull face down in the ditch by the hedge. He had been hit by a shell splinter in the back of his head. I had so much respect for him and did not want to see his body just left there in the burning sun. Not having a stretcher available, Rex and I tore down the door from an out-building nearby, and we carried his body back to the regimental first aid post. I also gathered up his personal belongings and in his jacket pocket found his wallet – on top of which, was a lovely photo of his wife and three children. I felt so sorry for them.”

Maurice was one of over 160 casualties sustained by the Welsh Guards during the German counter-attack on Montchamp on the evening of 5 August with his body being later laid to rest in the military cemetery at Bayeux. As it turned out the German counter-attack was short-lived as the following day, having linked up with their colleagues in the town, they retreated as the Welsh Guards and other Allied troops safely secured and occupied Montchamp, before continuing their advance through Normandy as part of the Liberation of Europe.