



# *The Bulldog Bulletin*

THE ROYAL BRITISH  
LEGION



**Patron: Her Majesty The Queen**

**President: H.M. Consul General Andrew Whittaker**

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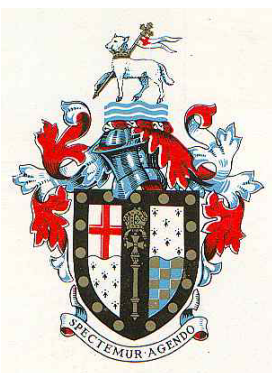
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## **Royal Navy detonates bomb found in Portsmouth Harbor**

Dredging works in Portsmouth Harbor have once again unearthed a wartime bomb that was detonated by Royal Navy's bomb disposal experts on Friday morning.

The British-made Armstrong Whitworth munition was found at 2am in the excavator head of a barge dredging the harbour.

Dredgers have revealed at least four historic ordnance in the harbor since works started in September last year.



The Royal Navy said it was not known how the device could have ended up at the bottom of the Solent.

Divers of the Royal Navy's Southern Diving Unit 2 (SDU2) were called to the scene, lowered the device to the seabed and carried out a controlled explosion at around 8.30am.

"The swift action by my team to get to the barge and safely remove the bomb before the morning ferries sailed meant people were not disrupted or placed in danger," *Petty Officer (Diver) Scotty Eaton said.*

"The device was a British munition, and it's a mystery as to why it would be at the bottom of the approaches but as always the Royal Navy stands by to deal with these things and keep people safe."

Dredging works are part of infrastructure upgrades taking place in preparation for the arrival of the Royal Navy's new 65,000-tonne aircraft carrier.

The main channel used by shipping in Portsmouth will be deepened by one metre and new power facilities are being built, navigational aids installed and jetties upgraded to take the carriers alongside.

## SITTING ON A GOLD MINE

**Tank collector shocked to find £2million gold bullion hidden** in the fuel compartment of his £30,000 vehicle

Tank fanatic Nick Mead, 55, believes the gold bars were looted by Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait during the gulf war **a tank fanatic got a new model in a £30,000 trade-in — and found more than £2million of gold bullion hidden in the fuel tank.**

Nick Mead, 55, discovered the five gold bars in the Russian T54/69 while restoring it to add to his collection of 150 military vehicles.



“How many more are there? This is better than having puppies! I don’t believe it.”

The pair then phoned the police after making the incredible find.

In the footage, Mr. Mead says: “It’s not something I’d thought I’d be doing, finding b\*\*\*\*\* great bars of gold hidden in a tank. Absolutely incredible.” But, we’ve got to ring the police. I don’t know whether this is millions or hundred of thousands worth. But one thing is for certain, I don’t want it lying around my office.

“We’ll get a receipt and hopefully, just hopefully, we’ll get to keep it. What’s the chance of us keeping it?”

But off camera, someone replies: “Absolutely zero.”

The origins of the tank are unknown but it is believed to be a Chinese copy of the Russian T-54 design made under the designation Type 69.

Northamptonshire Police has since taken the bars away for investigation and given the military buffs a receipt in return.

It is thought inquiries are being made in Kuwait to see if the haul can be matched to any bullion stolen during Iraq’s invasion in August 1990



# The Most Badass Prison Escapes in the History of War

## The Capture:

One of the most absurdly complex and overall ludicrous prison escape attempts in history is thanks to a pair of British pilots named [Oliver Philpot and Eric Williams](#), who wound up in a Nazi prison camp along with another British soldier named Richard Codner. Philpot and Williams had been shot down during a bombing run, but it isn't exactly clear how Codner wound up there. Though, from listening to the guy, it is quite possible he voluntarily entered the prison just to see if he could break out. In his own words, "I enjoyed myself when we were escaping. We were really living then. I think it's only when you're being hunted that you really live... I liked being hunted..."

## The Escape:

It wasn't the guards, guard dogs, or barbwire fences at [Stalag Luft III](#) that were the biggest problem inmates faced: it was the dirt. On top was dusty grey, but not far underneath was sandy yellow. Any yellow dirt that turned up in the prison meant a tunnel was being dug.

Tunnels, like the three used in [the Great Escape](#) were being dug all the time, but most of these were discovered because of the amount of time and yellow dirt required to dig from one of the prison buildings.

There had to be a way around it.

Together, the three men built a really big [pommel horse](#) (the rail with a pair of handles, like gymnasts use), capable of holding up to three men uncomfortably inside. Then they convinced the guards that they, and many other inmates, just loved the hell out of gymnastics.

't exactly chalk full of protein.

The men took turns [hiding inside the horse](#); inmates carried it in and out to the yard, placing it in the same spot by the fence every day (Closer to fence = less dirt). From inside, a digger took the top layer of grey dust and placed it in a box. Bowls were used for shovels. So as not to leave a gaping hole in the yard, a board was placed over the hole and covered with the grey dust from the box.

Guards walked right over it, and didn't notice.

The yellow dirt, meanwhile, was brought inside the prison with the digger, where it was disposed of in gardens, rooftops, and the toilet, Shawshank-style. The noise from digging, which would be picked up by microphones placed along the fence line, was attributed to the gymnasts leaping around the yard.

Almost four months and many sweaty testicles later, the tunnel was ready. The three men [punched through](#), assumed fake identities, and travelled across Europe, eventually making it to Britain via Sweden. As for the pommel horse and all those gymnasts back in the camp...we're sure they bear no hard feelings for leaving them there to rot.

[Airey Neave](#) was a British soldier who was wounded and captured by the Germans in World War II. He immediately picked up escaping as a hobby and at his second prison camp, Stalag XX-A, he escaped with a friend and nearly made it into Russian territory in Poland before being picked up and turned over to the Gestapo, better known as the biggest assholes of the war. For his transgression, Neave was sent to where all problematic POWs go: [Oflag IV-C](#), the castle of Colditz.

This place was so badass, it got its own [TV show](#), [TV movies](#), [regular movies](#), board game, and computer game. Oh, and some books too.

### **The Escape:**

[Hermann Goering](#), the second biggest douche in Germany in the 1940s, declared Colditz "escape proof."

Several prisoners, including Neave, set out to prove him wrong using various batshit insane methods.

One prisoner was sewn into a mattress in order to be smuggled out.

Two others built an entire glider out of scavenged wood. Tunnels were also popular, but like each of these [attempts](#), ultimately big fat failures (to be fair, the [glider](#) just didn't get finished in time).

Having rehearsed their exit, they paused at the door leading out of the prison, exchanged a few remarks in German, and even put on their gloves before calmly leaving. The guards were completely fooled into thinking Neave and Luteyn were visiting officers.

After passing through the courtyard and through the moat, they ditched their "German" uniforms and became two Dutch workers with papers, which were also fakes that gave them permission to travel from Leipzig to Ulm. When they tried to buy train tickets for somewhere else, the police arrested them, later bringing Neaves and Luteyn to the foreign workers office because they really thought they were Dutch workers who had gotten confused; the duo split the moment the nice policemen weren't looking. Even when the Hitler Youth stopped them, Neaves and Luteyn remained composed and told another lie: They were Germans, from the north, of course. After this, Neaves and Luteyn kept to the country and travelled on foot.

Hungry and a little frostbitten, **they made it into Switzerland.**



**A very dirty war: British soldiers shot dead by enemy troops waving the white flag and Argentinian prisoners bayoneted in cold blood. An ex-Para tells of the horrors of the Falklands**

Heroic: Victorious members of 2 Para in the Falklands during the 1982 conflict

I came home little more than two months later hard and cynical, tormented by harrowing memories.

Back in my home town of Dundee, I spent long nights

with only a bottle of whisky for company, drinking myself into a haze to evade the nightmares. I became angry, moody and difficult, and my marriage disintegrated as a result.

One day my mother sat me down and spelled it out to me. I had no heart any more, she said. I'd left it 8,000 miles away on the Falklands.

Pulling myself together and dealing with the past took years — but eventually, as I'll describe in this series, I turned by life around, became a successful businessman and even appeared on TV's Secret Millionaire.

For a long time, I doubted whether the sacrifice of my friends' lives and the trauma inflicted on those of us who survived had really been worth it. But I came to see the value of what we achieved and be proud of it.

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Two hundred and fifty eight British servicemen paid with their lives for the recapture of the islands, and a further 775 were wounded. Many of the rest of us paid with our peace of mind.

But, with the Argentinian government again rattling sabres, it is important to know that 30 years ago we did the right thing. The islanders are British through and through. Despite what we soldiers had to do and endure, there is no doubt in my mind that wresting back the Falklands from the Argentinian invaders was justified.

And if there were to be another war to fight down there, I know now that I for one would want to fix bayonets and do it all over again.

The first time we went into battle back in 1982 I was as scared as I'd ever been in my life. We were engaged in an all-out war in which two national armies were trying to pound each other



into submission by killing as many of the enemy as possible. We were heavily outnumbered and far from home.

It was unbelievably cold on those barren hills. Many of us were suffering with frostbite and trench foot from the soggy conditions under foot.

We were also a little dazed because we had never actually thought it would come to this. We had been on board ship for six long weeks heading down from Britain. My battalion, 2 Para, was on a requisitioned North Sea car ferry, the Norland, and for most of the way, we believed we were on a fool's errand.

There wasn't going to be any fighting. It would all be sorted out diplomatically, the fleet would turn around in mid-ocean and we could all go home. But we ploughed on southwards relentlessly, and the training and the drill took on greater urgency. There was no last-minute peace deal. We were going ashore.



Mentally scarred: Tony Banks during his days in the regiment

Our landing on the remote western coast was unopposed, and at first things were quiet as we dug in and waited in the bitter weather. After a week we were ordered to march on Goose Green, the second-largest settlement in the Falklands.

ans had an airstrip there and had imprisoned more than 100 villagers in the community hall.

It was to become the site of one of the war's most famous engagements. As we advanced, machine-gun bullets whipped through the air, mortars and grenades exploded and white phosphorus illuminated the sky. Men were screaming in terror and pain, and, as our officers urged us on — 'Move! Move! Move!' — all I could think was, 'Please God, get me through this battle.'

Then the adrenaline kicked in, and my fear vanished. Trust in your training, I told myself. Remember the teamwork and do the job.

As we fought our way forward, two of our men charged ahead, firing from the hip and killing two Argentinian soldiers before being hit themselves. Short on fire-power, we desperately needed to retrieve their machine gun, which was lying just feet from the enemy trench.

'Get out there and get that gun,' I told myself.

Suddenly I was sprinting the 15 yards to the two fallen men. One was limp and lifeless, but the other was alive and I hauled him and the gun back to our position. While I was doing that, the others advanced and obliterated the trench and its occupants with a phosphorous grenade.

Then, all of a sudden, snipers opened up on us from well-concealed positions. One of our platoon was dead, a bullet through the front of his helmet and out through the back.

It affects you deeply when you lose someone from your own platoon. There are only 30 of you, and you live in each other's pockets day in, day out. It's like losing a member of your family.



## Britain's Struggle To Build Effective Tanks During The Second World War

In May 1945, as the war in Europe drew to a close, six prototypes of a brand new British tank were hurried to the front in the hope that they could be tested in action.

The tank was the Centurion, which went on to become one of the most successful of all post-war British designs. After years of struggle, Britain had finally produced a well-armed and well protected battle tank.

Sadly for many British tank soldiers of the [Second World War](#), it was far too late. Germany was defeated, but its tanks and anti-tank guns had proved lethally superior to the very end.

For much of the Second World War, the British Army was saddled with a succession of tanks that ranged from the bad to the barely adequate. Some were rushed into service too quickly and proved notoriously unreliable.

Others spent too long in development, or only achieved a degree of usefulness after numerous modifications. Most lacked the armour to resist enemy anti-tank weapons, and nearly all were under-gunned.

From 1943, British armoured divisions were equipped en masse with the American Sherman. This tank, though itself nearly always outclassed by the opposition, was at least reliable, adaptable and available in large numbers.

It was a testament to both American industrial might and British procurement failure. Britain's belated equivalent, the Cromwell, was outmoded by the time it entered service. Its more powerful successor, the Comet, was certainly the best British tank of the war, but only saw action in the last weeks of hostilities. The Centurion would have been a game changer, but belongs to the post-war world. So why had it taken Britain so long to produce a truly effective tank?

