



*For immediate release,*

## **D-DAY80: THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS ON MARCH 18 WITH FATHER AND SON PIPERS KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY**

On June 6, 1944, a young Scottish soldier defied Army rules and played his bagpipes as he led the 1<sup>st</sup> Commando Brigade ashore on the beaches of Normandy as part of the D-Day landings. Through a hailstorm of bullets and the heart-wrenching decent of fallen comrades he played on, pressing forward with unwavering resolve.

The story of piper Bill Millin is the stuff of boys' own legend. Born in Canada to Scottish parents, Bill served in several regiments before he joined the Commandos and became the 1st Special Service Brigade's own piper commanded by Lord Lovat.

Now father and son pipers, John (69) and Jacob Millin (41) will honour his memory as they lead the 80-day countdown to the D-Day commemorations.

At 8am each morning, starting from March 18 and for ten days, John will play his pipes in the garden of his home in Rampton, Nottinghamshire and remember the bravery of his dad, Bill, who served with honour under distinguished Brigadier Lord Lovat.

John, a retired mental health nurse, explains: "Lord Lovat's speech to his Commandos a few hours before boarding the landing craft taking them to Normandy and Sword Beach, ended with him telling them that a hundred years from now their children's children will look back and say they must have been giants in those days. This is my way of saying thank you to the giant that was my dad, and all the many other thousands who gave their all on the five beaches in Normandy for the freedom of France and Europe."

John will hand over to his son, Jacob who lives in Sheringham, in Norfolk, and will be playing 'Highland Laddie' the haunting tune that veterans afterwards said lifted spirits and increased determination on those fateful hours of June 6, 1945.

**For Jacob, too, it will be an act of great pride and reflection. He explains; “I am looking forward to playing my role. I feel it important that my generation, the grandchildren of those who so bravely gave their all, ensure that their memory never fades. My grandfather was a giant of a man to me, whose story, like many others, will be long told by generations to come. I am a father of a one-month-old baby girl and a four-year-old son. Both have been treated to the sound of the pipes, Barnaby is already aware of who his Great Grandfather was and has taken books to school to show his classmates.”**

**Pageantmaster Bruno Peek CVO OBE OPR D-Day80, and of the 80-day countdown to June 6, 2024, says; “It is only fitting that John and Jacob Millin lead the other pipers around the UK as a unique tribute to Bill and all his comrades who served with him on the blood-soaked beaches of Normandy on D-Day.”**

**He explains: “In 1944 Allied forces mounted the largest amphibious invasion the world has ever witnessed. Operation Overlord, D-Day, saw over 5,000 ships and landing craft set down more than 150,000 troops on the five Normandy beaches that would bring about the liberation of north-west Europe from Nazi occupation.**

**“In order to commemorate the peace and freedom given to us through the bravery and ultimate sacrifice of so many thousands involved in the D-Day landings, and throughout the whole of WW11, beacons and Lamp Lights of Peace will be lit across the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories - and in a very poignant gesture these special lamps will be lit on the five beaches in Normandy, at 9.15pm local time that night, to coincide with the lighting of beacons at that time too.**

**“However, at 9.10pm, as night descends - and just before the beacons ignite - the resonant sound of bagpipes will be heard across the capital cities of London, Edinburgh, Belfast, and Cardiff. We will also have a presence in the capital cities of the Allied nations that took part. 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.**

**“There will be many locations such as hospitals, care homes, pubs, hotels, and restaurants and even families etc, that would like to take part but do not have the facility to light beacons, so with this in mind, we developed the Lamp Light of Peace so would like to encourage people to purchase and light a Lamp at 9.15pm, coinciding with the lighting of the beacons that night.**

“The light from the flame will represent the ‘light of peace’ that emerged from the darkness of war, with the lamp providing a very simple and safe way of taking part in this important 80th anniversary occasion, and once used, can be lit again at 11am on every Remembrance Sunday thereafter, in tribute to the many millions that sacrificed their lives during WWII.”

**Notes to Editors:** More details about the plans for D-Day80 can be found on the website [www.d-day80beacons.co.uk](http://www.d-day80beacons.co.uk)

All pipers and locations, with contact details listed below.

## **ENGLAND**

### **19TH – 28TH MARCH 2024**

Piper John Millin

Tel: 01777 248 939 & 07951 146 951

Email: [millin@aol.com](mailto:millin@aol.com)

**LOCATION:** Rampton, Nottinghamshire

### **29TH MARCH – 7TH APRIL 2024**

Piper Jacob Millin

Tel: 07738 357 935

Email: [j.millin@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:j.millin@hotmail.co.uk)

**LOCATION:** Sherringham, Norfolk

## **SCOTLAND**

### **8TH APRIL – 17TH APRIL 2024**

Piper Lady Jane Macrae

Tel: 01467 651 229 & 07484 289 87

Email: [macrae\\_jane29@yahoo.com](mailto:macrae_jane29@yahoo.com)

**LOCATIONS:** 7<sup>th</sup> Crathes Castle - 8<sup>th</sup> Inveraray Castle - 9<sup>th</sup> Eileen Donan Castle - 10<sup>th</sup> Dumvegan Castle - 11<sup>th</sup> Drum Castle - 12<sup>th</sup> Castle Fraser - 13<sup>th</sup> Delgatie Castle - 14<sup>th</sup> Craigievar Castle - 15<sup>th</sup> Huntly Castle - 16<sup>th</sup> Balmoral Castle.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND**

### **18TH APRIL – 27TH APRIL 2024**

Piper Ian Burrows

Tel: 07740 175 747

Email: [ian@weddingpiperni.co.uk](mailto:ian@weddingpiperni.co.uk)

## **ENGLAND**

### **28TH APRIL – 7TH MAY 2024**

RAF Piper Denise MacRae-Ramsbotton – RAF Waddington Pipe Band

**LOCATIONS:** 28<sup>th</sup> April - Sandringham - 29<sup>th</sup> Framlingham - 30<sup>th</sup> HM Tower of London - 1<sup>st</sup> May – Buckingham Palace - 2<sup>nd</sup> Windsor Castle - 3<sup>rd</sup> St James's Palace, 3<sup>rd</sup> Hampton Court - 4<sup>th</sup> Norwich Castle, 5<sup>th</sup> Woburn Abbey - 6<sup>th</sup> Somerleyton Hall

## WALES

**8TH MAY – 17TH MAY 2024**

Piper Chris Sullivan – Welsh Piping Society – Cardiff

Tel: 07445 422 864

Email: [chrissullivan@sky.com](mailto:chrissullivan@sky.com)

**LOCATION:** Cold Knap Beach, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan:

## JERSEY & GUERNSEY

**18TH MAY - 27TH MAY 2024**

Piper Ken Brawley – Jersey Pipe Band

Tel: 07797 736 960

Email: [kqbrawley@gmail.com](mailto:kqbrawley@gmail.com)

**LOCATIONS – JERSEY:**

**LOCATIONS – GUERNSEY:**

## ISLE OF MAN

**28TH MAY – 6TH JUNE 2024**

Piper Alistair Lothian – Elan Vannin Pipes and Drums – Isle of Man

Tel: 07930 399 052

Email: [alistairlothian@gmail.com](mailto:alistairlothian@gmail.com)

**LOCATIONS:** 28th May - Alistair Lothian, Laxey Rose Gardens

29th May - John Struthers, Douglas Head

30th May - John Struthers, Douglas Head

31st May - Sheila Quaggin, Port Soderick, Help for Heroes

1st June - Alistair Lothian, Parliament Square, Ramsey

2nd June - John Shakespeare, Peel Castle

3rd June - Jane Falconer, Onchan Head

4th June - Jane Falconer, Douglas War Memorial

5th June - Fiona Hill, Jurby Church war graves

6th June - Alistair Lothian, St John's Isle of Man National War Memorial

For further information, please contact:

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