

## War Record of Lt. Geoffrey Norton Lugg

Geoffrey Norton Lugg, born 5<sup>th</sup> February 1910, volunteered for Home Guard duty April 1941, ten months after marrying Joan Russell. They were then both working for the same company in Slough.

On 28<sup>th</sup> August 1941 he enlisted into the Royal Corps of Signals. He completed Officer training and started as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant from 7<sup>th</sup> July 1943 and Lieutenant from 7<sup>th</sup> January 1944. He finished his service as Acting Captain.

He was trained to use Morse Code and was sent on Special Ops to Scotland prior to Operation 'Overlord' (D-Day). Planning for this operation had begun in 1942, and it was the units intended for beach work that receiving additional training at Combined Operations training centres.



Geoffrey Lugg, far left, on Special Ops training, Scotland 1942

He embarked on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 and was in the second wave to land on 'SWORD' beach Normandy, attached to 101 Beach Sub Area, part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> British Division. The maps show that the 3<sup>rd</sup> British Division embarked from Newhaven and landed on Queen Sector of Sword.

Context – Sword Beach and Beach 101 Sub Area internet extract:

Sword Beach, was one of the five main landing areas along the Normandy coast during the initial assault phase, Operation Neptune, of Operation Overlord. The Allied invasion of German-occupied France commenced on 6 June 1944. It stretched from the mouth of the River Orne to the east of St-Aubin-sur-Mer. The initial assault at 07:25 hours was by the 2nd Battalion, East Yorkshire Regiment, the 1st Battalion, South Lancashire Regiment, alongside the Duplex Drive (DD) Sherman tanks of the 13th/18th Hussars, 5th Assault Regiment, Royal Engineers and the flail tanks of A Squadron, 22nd Dragoons. The East Yorkshires were held up by the German

strong point 'Cod', they were joined by the South Lancashires and the position was taken. The two battalions started clearing the beaches.

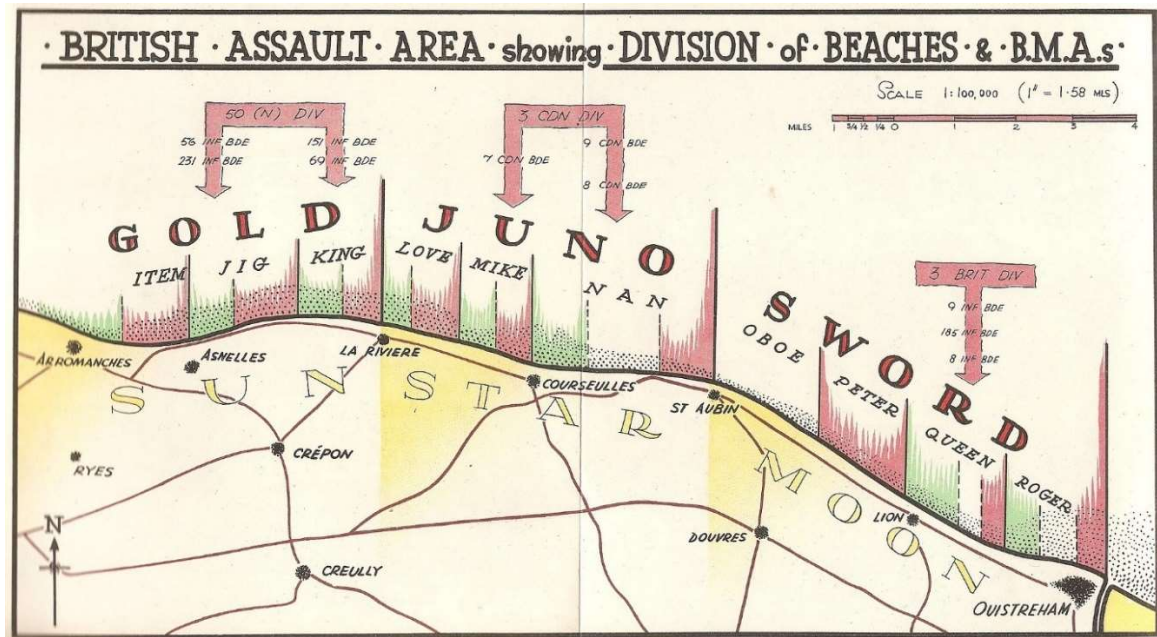
The next wave included the 101 Beach Group Sub-Area tasked to clear the obstacles, direct traffic and generally keep things moving on and off the beach.

The engineers set to work clearing mines and obstacles under a steady hail of small arms fire and artillery fire from Périers Ridge just south of Hermanville. Resistance on the beach was initially fairly strong, with wrecked vehicles piling up and casualties mounting; however, with most of their armoured vehicles successfully landed, the British were able to quickly secure the immediate area. By 09:30 the engineers had cleared seven of the eight exits from the beach, allowing the inland advance to begin

At 08:40 hours the Commandos of 1st Special Service Brigade came ashore under the command of Brigadier Lord Lovat. Their objective was to meet up with the paratroopers of 6th Airborne Division who had taken the Orne River and Caen Canal bridges at Ranville, and this was achieved by 13:00 hours.

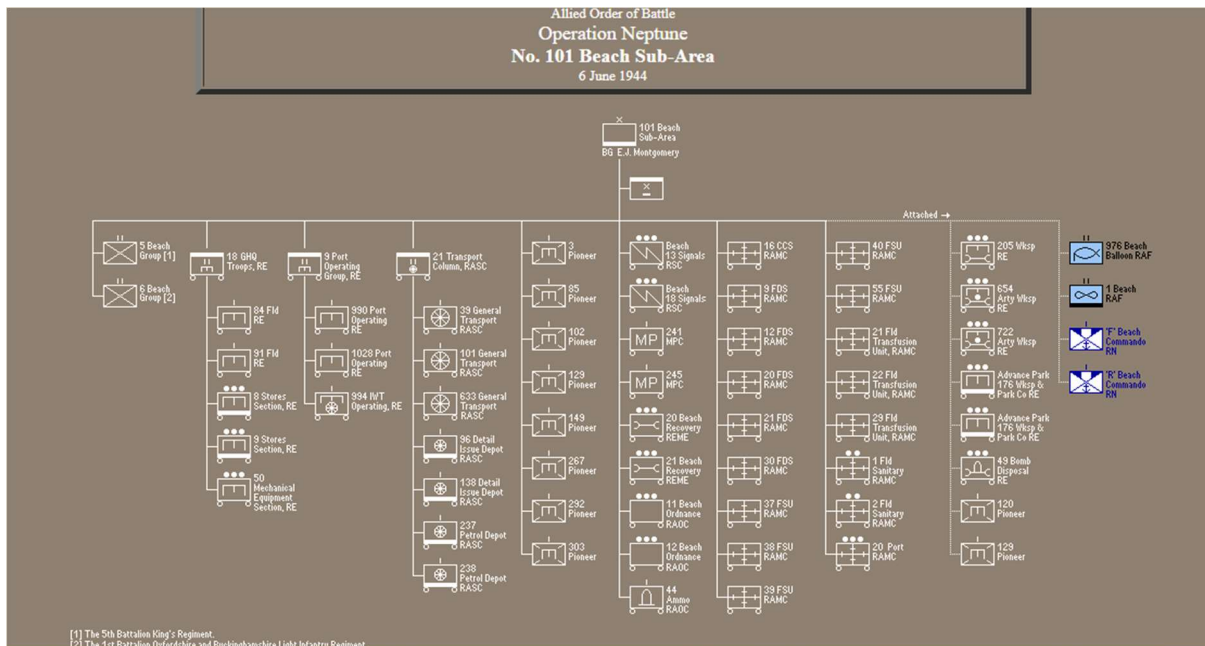
By the end of the day 3rd Division and 27th Armoured Brigade were ashore, amounting to 28,845 soldiers with 630 casualties.

More information on the Normandy campaign is in Annex No 1.



The role of 101 Beach Sub Area was in fact wider than indicated in the above internet extract, for as well as the 5 Beach Group and 6 Beach Group forces, it also included all the HQ, logistics, engineering and medical units for Sword, as listed in the

Order of Battle, page 11 in Annex No1. It was responsible for the organisation and administration of the whole of Sword beach.



While the Order of Battle show that 3rd Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals was the overall signals Division on Sword, the chart above shows the two specific Signals units of 101 Beach Sub Area, namely Beach 13 Signals and Beach 18 Signals (first two units immediately right of the central line in the chart). Geoff must have been with one of these two units.

His role at Sword and later at Caen is recorded by the National Archives reference WO 373/91/314 in the recommendation for award of MBE for **W/Lieut Geoffrey Norton Lugg army No 284862 of 101 Beach Sub Area Signals** as follows:

*Lieut G.N. Lugg, R.Signals landed with the unit on "D" Day as Company Subaltern. He assumed Signalmaster duties in the Beach-head Signals Office. This office was under shell fire and suffered extensively from enemy dive-bombers.*

*With the removal of Sub Area HQ to CAEN it was necessary to divide the unit. Lieut. Lugg took charge of the party centered in that city and in addition to functioning as Signalmaster, assumed responsibility for the Administration of personnel under his command. During this time CAEN Signals Office developed very rapidly as a L of C (line of command) Office involving Air Dispatch Letter Service and very extensive DRLS (dispatch rider) runs. Lieut Lugg showed great initiative in the way in which he organized his office with personnel who had been trained previously only for Beach Assault work.*

*In the varying phases in which this unit has been subsequently employed, he has displayed those same qualities of good leadership and organization to meet those contingencies.*

The original document is reproduced at the end below and shows "Brussels Garrison 11 L. of C. Area" as brigade and HQ L. of C. as corps, with top recommending signatory as Maj Gen. G Surtees CB. CBE. MC. Comd L of C.

The move of 101 Beach Sub Area Signals to Caen was probably around 9 to 12 July 1944. Searches show that “Sword Beach closed on 12 July” and that Caen had been captured by 9 July, though it wasn’t fully liberated until 19 July.

The taking of Caen had been an objective for D Day itself. One of the few things Geoff commented on was “The trouble was we were held up taking Caen”. There were many contributing factors, probably the most immediate one being the major counter attack during the afternoon of D-Day by the 21st Panzer Division, based around Caen, which separated the 3rd British Division on Sword from the 3rd Canadian Division on Juno.

Another delay directly affected 101 Beach Sub Area, which had included three Port Operating Units, presumably for Ouistreham port. However (internet extract): “Although Ouistreham was captured intact on D-Day, the small port of it could not be used due to German shellfire from around Caen. There were some attacks by E-boats and a German air raid on 8 June struck the beach maintenance area, destroying 450,000 litres (100,000 imp gal) of petrol and 410 tonnes (400 long tons) of ammunition. Due to this interference, 101 Beach Sub Area posted the lowest receipt-of-stores rates; Sword Beach was closed on 12 July. Minesweeping did not commence at Ouistreham until 21 August and it was not opened to shipping until 3 September.” Until then they were backed up by supplies from Mulberry B on Gold, which had been “almost functioning by 19 June”, something that Geoff praised as having been a brilliant concept and really vital.

Over the days and weeks following the landings Geoff took many photos of the destruction in France as well the wrecks of the gliders that had landed at Ranville. These were considered important enough as a record to be scanned by ‘The Assault Glider Trust’ at RAF Shawbury, Shrewsbury where they can be viewed. They are reproduced in full as Annex No 2, including his hand-written notes from the reverse of each, but as they are too huge to include in this word document they are attached as a separate pdf. A transcription of the hand written notes is however included at the end of this document. Annex No2 is best looked at on screen and enlarged, though a print of the notes transcript may be helpful.

The notes mostly state the photograph locations so as a result we know where he was. However, they are not numbered and there are only a couple of dates, and as their physical order has long-since been scrambled they cannot be sequenced. To give some “story” to them we have therefore sorted them into five groups, as follows:

Around Sword. These are presumably the earliest pictures, mostly around Queen Beach including at the landing sites at La Brèche and Riva Bella, with others a little along the coast including one at Lagrune. Others are a mile or so in land, including at Hermanville and at “La Deliverade” (Douvres-la-Délivrande?). This is the largest group of pictures and includes scenes on the beach, “first cover for troops storming in from the sea” (not a lot), wrecked British equipment, wrecked German equipment, wrecked French buildings, “Hellfire X Rds”, scrap yard and early graves – see list at the end of this document.

Ranville. These include photographs of the half-wrecked Horsa gliders of the paratroopers of 6th Airborne Division who had “landed” at Ranville and taken the Orne River Bridge and Caen Canal bridge (Pegasus) on D Day. Whether these were taken before Geoff was in Caen or afterwards is impossible to say.





As well as the MBE recommendation, he was awarded the 1939/45 Star, the France and Germany Star, the Defence Medal and was Mentioned in Dispatches – source London Gazette supplement dated 04.04.1946.



Photo of Lt Geoff Lugg in uniform, together with his medals. These have been passed on by his daughter Catherine to his grandson Jonathan Lugg, and are now with Jonathan in Amsterdam.

HEADQUARTERS  
21 JUN 1945  
21 JUN 1945  
21 JUN 1945

BRUSSELS GARRISON: Brigadier L. of C. Area HQ of C. Corps

Schedule No. Unit 101 Beach Sub Area Signals.

Rank and Army or Personal No. W/Lieut 284862

Name: GEOFFREY NORTON LUGG  
(Christian name must be stated)

Army Form W.3121  
Date recommendation passed forward  
Received \_\_\_\_\_ Passed \_\_\_\_\_

Brigade \_\_\_\_\_ 354  
Division \_\_\_\_\_  
Corps \_\_\_\_\_  
Army \_\_\_\_\_

Action for which commended  
(Date and place of action must be stated)

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Recommended by  
Major T. MARTIN, MC.

Honour or Reward  
MBE

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46970

P.T.O.

WO 373/91 Pt. 1

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1 2 3 4 5

<b>Geoff's text with The Assault Glider Trust scanning number</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Group 1 Around Sword</b>	
24 Queen Beach looking towards Lion sur-Mer	
35 Queen Beach – towards Riva Bella	
34 LCT beached at La Breche. (Ramp pierced by shell)	NO PHOTO
41 First cover for assault troops storming in from the sea	
18 Beach entrance at La Brèche. Blockhouse on right used as a beach dressing station	
6 a L.C.T. that did not return	(=Landing Craft, Tank)
36 Blockhouse near La Brèche	
37 88mm Gun, La Brèche	
38 Hellfire X Rds La Brèche	
43 Graves of first British dead near Riva Bella, 6/6/44	
48 Defended houses, La Brèche	
49 Beach Craft, La Brèche	
50 Beach defenses, La Brèche	
8 Scrap at La Deliverade. Site of 1 Corps CRE "D" Day + 3 / 4	(=Corps of Royal Eng's)
40 Anti-tank ditch Riva Bella (where Casino stood until blown up by Germans)	
47 Blockhouse near Ouistreham	
13 The road from the sea	
12 Machine gun post	
39 Fortified house Lion-sur-Mer fired upon by landing craft during the afternoon of D Day and which continued to reply until set afire in the evening, said to have been blown up by a Marine Commando who won the VC so doing	NO PHOTO
19 Dump. Blown up in a bombing raid 8 June 1944	
20 Hermanville Hellfire X Rds	
15 Hermanville Church	
51 Ammunition Coaster off La Brèche hit by shelling 27/6/44, Thirty 1000 bombs in the hold did not explode. Old warships in rear sunk to act as breakwater	1000 lb bombs
14 Tank cemetery, La Deliaerande (Deliverade?), Douglas Harrison D.R. B13 Section	
25 Re-loading on Beach, Hermanville	
4 Scrap at La Deliverade	
56 picture of scrap	no label
17 Sig Edmond's grave at Hermanville. Killed on blockship Corbelle, 22 July 44	
9 Church at Langrune (Shell hole in spire)	On Juno

<b>Group 2 Ranville</b>	
MK1A to MK1F    Ranville	
26 Where the remnants of the 6 <sup>th</sup> Airborne “married” up with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> . Brit. Div.	
1 German HQs at Ranville taken by 13 Lancs Bn Parachute Regt & used as a hospital	
16 6 Airbourne Div. Cemetery, Ranville	
52 Ranville Cabourg Rd	
<b>Group 3 Approaching Caen</b>	
5 Cambes. Scene of very bitter fighting	
21 Cambes Church	
60 Cambes. Scene of very bitter fighting	
7 Colombelles	
27 Colombelles	
28 Colombelles	
31 Carpiquet	became Caen airport
32 Carpiquet	
53 Carpiquet	
<b>Group 4 South of Caen</b>	
10 Outskirts of Laize-sur-Orne	
11 Laize-sur-Orne Once a French Village. War passes by!	
42 Argences – Troan Rd in flood	
33 Bretteville-sur-Laize	(has Canadian war cem)
59 Bretteville - sur - Laize	(snow)
54 Airon (?) Church, Caen – Meziden Rd	
46 Caen Falaise Rd	
3 Caen – Falaise Rd (German field gun)	
2 Caen – Falaise Rd (German tank)	
29 Caen – Falaise Road	(in snow)
30 Caen – Falaise Road	(in snow)
<b>Group 5 Other</b>	
57 Leech, Sykes, Haynes, -----, Jarvis, Clifford, Davis, Stares Huntinford, Biggin, Clarke, Lewis, ---- Maxted, Ball, Cutforth Reed, Harrison, Jackson	
58 Lucking, Evans, Spring, Davis, Dransfield Parfit, ----- Mason, Sissions	
55 Tank Cemeteries. They were buried by the tanks they served so well	
23 Menin Gate	
44 Menin Gate, Ypres, 1914 – 18 War	
22 Ostend	
45 LST returning troops to England	
61 Defended houses, La Brèche	not used Duplicate of 48