



Wallace Sydney Dean

Private 3909379 Wallace
Sydney Dean
2nd Battalion South Wales
Borderers

1920 - 1942



Life in the Community

Wallace Sydney was born in May 1920 and lived at home in Coed y Caerau with his father William Charles Dean, who worked as a Roadman for the County Council, and his mother Ethel Mary Dean (nee Newton). Also at home were several brothers and sisters. Wallace Sydney joined the Army when he was 17 years old and his brothers Gordon, and Billy also joined the Army at the outbreak of the war.

Whilst the older boys were away from home the family moved from Coed y Caerau to The Gorelands. That house had been used to take in evacuees from the various cities around the UK that were under threat of bombing from the German Airforce. It needed some hard work to make it back into a proper family home.

During these years, Wallace's father worked as a grave-digger at Langstone Church and his children at that time had the task of collecting the stones which were dug up and placing them along the boundary of the churchyard.

In 1944, during the time that the family were living in The Gorelands, Wallace's five year old brother Francis Charles was killed in a road accident whilst he was on the way home from Llandevaud School. He is buried in the grounds of Langstone Church in a plot beside Wallace.

Military Service



The Second World War was only two weeks old when the British Government declared that an attack on Norway would meet the same resistance as an attack on Britain itself. Britain wanted to blockade Germany's sea-borne supplies especially the high grade Swedish iron ore for their armaments. Operation Weserübung was the code name for Germany's assault on Denmark and Norway and the opening operation of the Norwegian Campaign. In the early morning of 9th April 1940 Germany invaded Denmark and Norway, ostensibly as a preventive manoeuvre against a planned, and openly discussed, Franco-British occupation of Norway. After the invasions, envoys of the Germans informed the governments of Denmark and Norway that the Wehrmacht had come to protect the countries' neutrality against Franco-British aggression.

The 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers was the first battalion of the Regiment to go into action in the war. It became part of a small allied force, which included a Polish Brigade and some of the French Foreign Legion and Chasseurs Alpains, sent to the aid of the Norwegian army north of the Arctic Circle.

In the early morning of 11th April the 2nd Battalion left Scapa Flow on a Pacific Steam Navigation Company liner Renia del Pacifico which had been converted into a troopship. She was escorted by HMS Warspite, a First World War battleship, and a number of destroyers and cruisers bound for Harstad in Norway and the Bygden Fjord.



Upon reaching the Bygden they steamed in circles for two hours while the Fjord was depth charged by the escorts. She was bombed during the embarkation but suffered no damage. Troops were disembarked on 15th and 16th April and the 2nd Battalion were housed in a ramshackle fish meal factory which was standing on stilts above the snow level.

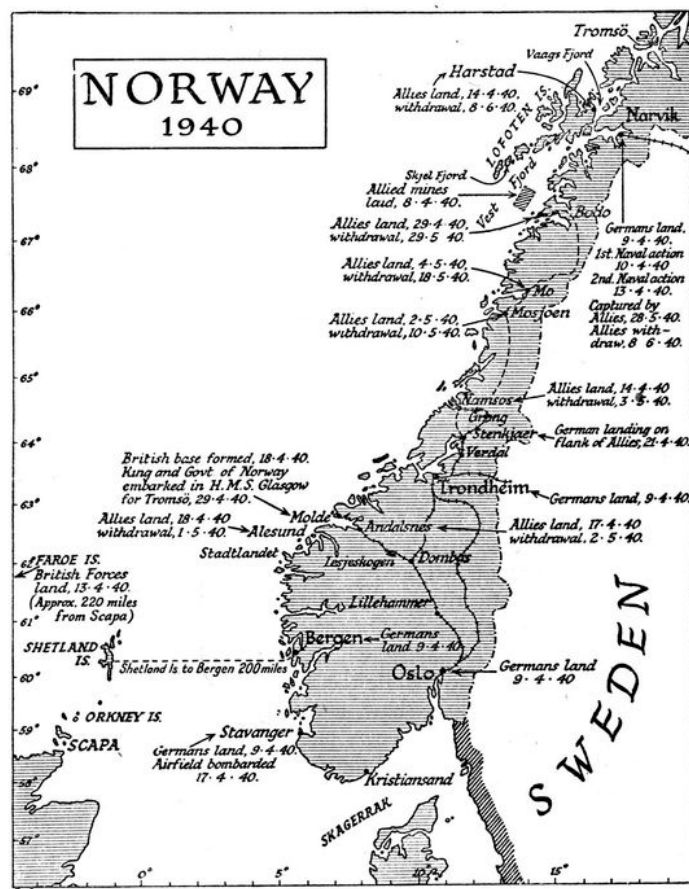
The battalion then moved in Norwegian fishing boats to the Ankenes Peninsula opposite Narvik where they were to support a drive towards Narvik by the Chasseurs Alpains. On the 30th April the battalion's first casualties were sustained and the next day it successfully beat off a German attack. On 2nd May a single German aircraft dropped 14 small high explosive bombs on the 2nd Battalion position wounding some of the men.

The Battalion advanced with its allies along the Peninsula until it was withdrawn and embarked on HMS Effingham on 16th May. The next day the Effingham struck an uncharted outcrop of rock whilst travelling at 23 knots and she had to be abandoned but no lives were lost. The men were rescued by the destroyer Echo and continued their journey towards Narvik.

On 21st May, and for the rest of the campaign, the battalion was responsible for the defence of Bodo where an airfield was under construction and they were subject to many enemy air attacks. The psychological effect of prolonged exposure in the snow to 18 hours of daylight became oppressive.

The South Wales Borderers War Diary describes the 31st May as "the worst day most of us have experienced". Together with the Scots Guards, who had a 25 pounder gun, they held off the enemy vanguard until all of the troops were clear. The whole Allied Force in Norway was withdrawn owing to the successful German invasion of Belgium and Holland and the growing threat to both France and Britain.

On 5th June 1940 the 2nd Battalion were evacuated from Norway to Newton Stewart, Northern Ireland. The final evacuation of all remaining allied troops was completed by 8th June 1940. Fifteen troop ships docked at Halstad for the evacuation but due to restricted space could only move in two at a time. The convoy was attacked by the Luftwaffe and U-boats as they were seen by the enemy as valuable targets. The German heavy cruiser Admiral Hipper, which was armed with 8 inch calibre guns, sank several allied ships in the convoy.



The allied forces that landed in Norway during the campaign numbered 45,000 and at the time of their evacuation they were confronted by 80,000 German forces. The campaign had been unsuccessful and the amount of actual fighting the 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers had done was small. Casualties amounted to thirteen wounded and six dead, and two DCMs had been won for gallantry. Conditions had been extremely trying and the whole force had been hampered by lack of equipment suitable for a campaign in snow, and by the lack of air support but the battalion had the distinction of forming part of a small force sent to help a gallant ally fighting against overwhelming odds.

Private 3909379 Wallace Sydney Dean was evacuated along with the rest of the troops and eventually returned to a military hospital in Denbigh North Wales having, been declared on 26th June 1941 as being unfit for any form of military service. He died on 17th February 1942 from illness due to his War service.

ROLL OF HONOUR
Dean.—In fondest memory of Wallace, Private W. Dean, S.W.B., who died Feb. 17, 1942, in a military hospital from illness due to War service.—Ever remembered by dad, mam, brothers and sisters. "No hour through all the waking years Without its thought of you." O

Commemoration

Wallace is buried at Langstone Church and his little brother, Francis Charles, is buried in a plot beside him.



★ REES, Ldg. Airman JOHN, D/JX.135276, R.N. H.M.S. *Dardanus*. 15th May, 1940. Block B. Row 5. Joint grave 89.

GLASCOED (ST. MICHAEL) CHURCHYARD, LLANBADOC FAWR
(Index No. U.K. 6776)

ROWLAND, Lt.-Col. RONALD FOTHERGILL, 108531, R.A.O.C. 12th December, 1944. Age 43. Son of James Frederick Fothergill Rowland and Clara Priscilla Rowland; husband of Norah Winslow Rowland, of Kingston Hill, Surrey. South of church.

AC TO
CARDIFF
WESTGATE
LEVA

GRAIG CONGREGATIONAL CHAPELYARD, RHYMNEY
(Index No. U.K. 6777)

THOMAS, Dny. THOMAS WILFRED, T.3911554, R.A.S.C. 15th April, 1946. Age 31. Son of Thomas John and Pheobe Thomas, of Rhymer, S. F. Row 15, Grave 23.

GREIG (ZION) PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPELYARD, GROS MONT FAWR
(Index No. U.K. 6772)

LLEWELLYN, Pte. VICTOR HENRI, 4077378, 13th (24th Bn. The South Lancashire Regt.) Bn. The Parachute Regt., A.A.C. 16th March, 1944. Age 24. Son of Lewis and Margaret Llewellyn, of Llanvangel. N.W. part.

LLANDOGO (ST. DOCHWEL) CHURCHYARD, TRELECH UNITED
(Index No. U.K. 6773)

★ HARRIS, Sgt. (W. Op./Air Gun.) PERCYVAL WILFRED, 1177011, R.A.F. (V.R.) 10th October, 1941. Age 21. N.E. of church.

LLANELEN (ST. HELEN) CHURCHYARD, LLANOIST FAWR
(Index No. U.K. 6774)

FENCOTT, L.A.C. LEONARD JAMES, 1180627, R.A.F. (V.R.) 28th May, 1945. Age 31. Son of William Leonard and Alice Gertrude Fencott, of Coldbrook, Abergavenny, South of church.

LLANFAIR CHAPEL (ST. MARY) CHURCHYARD, LLANDEILO UNITED
(Index No. U.K. 6770)

JONES, A.C. GEORGE ALLAN, 1883916, R.A.F. (V.R.) 3rd April, 1945. Age 35. Son of Charles and Theresa Jones, of Cross Ash; husband of Gwendolyn Frances Jones, of Cross Ash. North of chancel.

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LLANFAIR KILGEDDIN (ST. MARY) CHURCHYARD, LLANOVER FAWR
(Index No. U.K. 6775)

BERRINGTON, Pilot Offr. (Pilot) DOUGLAS JOHN DAVIES, 115095, R.A.F. (V.R.) 7th June, 1942. Age 25. Son of Major John Spencer Davies Berrington and Alice Christine Davies Berrington, of Betws Lodge, Family enclosure. N.E. of church.

KILNER, Sgt. (Flt. Engr.) RONALD HENRY, 979520, R.A.F. (V.R.) 9th June, 1944. Age 24. Son of Herbert Alexander and Edith Kilner, of Llanvair Kilgeddin. West of church.

OWENS, Sgt. (Nav.) RICHARD ARTHUR, 1410618, R.A.F. (V.R.) 7th August, 1943. Age 21. Son of James and Gladys Glendinning Owens, of Llanvair Kilgeddin. West of church.

LLANFRECIFA (ALL SAINTS) CHURCHYARD, LLANFRECIFA LOWER
(Index No. U.K. 6778)

JEFFRIES, Pte. DONALD EDWIN VERNON, 1066842, R.A.S.C. 17th March, 1945. Age 29. Son of Levi and Rose Jeffries; husband of Maryona Violet Jeffries, of Llanfrecifa. North side. Row 11, Grave 3.

JONES, Flt. Sgt. (Pilot) DANZEL, 1412783, R.A.F. (V.R.) 6th Sqdn. 3rd March, 1944. Age 20. Son of Sidney Henry and Edith Jones, of Croesycollog. North side. Row 10, Grave 6.

SMITH, Pte. CLIFFORD, 13086539, Pioneer Corps. 24th April, 1945. Age 31. Son of Walter and Charlotte Smith; husband of Elaine Smith, of Ponthir. North side. Row 11, Grave 4.

LLANGIBBY (ST. KYB) CHURCHYARD, LLANGYBI FAWR
(Index No. U.K. 6779)

WHITEFOOT, Sgt. (Nav.) JORRIBUC, 1654216, R.A.F. (V.R.) 57 Sqdn. 2nd March, 1945. Age 21. Son of Alfred Thomas Whitefoot and Elsie H. Whitefoot, of Whitstone, Herefordshire. S.W. corner of church tower, Grave 1A.

LLANGSTONE CHURCHYARD
(Index No. U.K. 6780)

DEAN, Pte. WALLACE, 3909379, 2nd Bn. The South Wales Borderers. 17th February, 1942. Age 21. Son of William Charles and Ethel Mary Dean, of Langston. North of church.

In Memory of
Private

Wallace Dean

3909379, 2nd Bn., South Wales Borderers who died on 17 February 1942 Age 21

Son of William Charles and Ethel Mary Dean, of Langston.

Remembered with Honour
Langstone Churchyard



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission