

## MAJOR KENNETH GEORGE MAYHEW RMWO (R29-34)

He was born on 17 January 1917 the son of a farmer near Ipswich. At the College he was a Foundation Scholar, prefect and a fine sportsman : he was in the Cricket, Football Hockey and squash teams. After leaving the College he joined Fisons and was there until the war.

Prior to the outbreak of war he played cricket for Suffolk and hockey for Norfolk.

In January 1940 he entered the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He was 2nd lieutenant in the 1st Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, where he served from 1939-1945. His battalion was part of the 3rd Army Corps, led by the legendary Field Marshal Montgomery. During D-Day, he was commander of a company with 13 Carriers, armored tracked infantry. On 28 June 1944, they fought a bitter battle for the Château de la Londe at Caen, which left some 161 dead on the British side. After that he progressed through to the Netherlands where on 24 September 1944 his battalion arrived in Weert. He had been promoted to captain and was in charge of detecting German positions. To find them, they sometimes had to draw the attention of the Germans - if they started shooting then their position were known. This was then passed to the British mortar units and the Germans then came under fire. During these actions he was injured.

Mid October 1944 he was sufficiently recovered to take part in the Battle of Overloon and Venray. In Venray they had to make a bridgehead so that the allied tanks at Loobek could cross. On 16 October he was again wounded, this time by shrapnel in the boggy ground. He was evacuated and taken to a hospital in Brussels. In November, he came back to his unit, which experienced a cold winter in Blitterswijk. During the march to the Rhine he got injured again on 25 February 1945 and he was evacuated to England.

On 24 April 1946 he was awarded the Military Order of William for achievements in Venray and Overloon and the liberation of Weert (22 September 1944). He had "During the fighting for the liberation of the occupied Dutch territory distinguish themselves by committing excellent deeds of courage, and loyalty. They repeatedly demonstrated exceptional devotion to duty and perseverance, and in all respects, by a laudable example, had been an inspiration for all in those glorious days. "

After the war he represented a fertilizer company and played cricket, hockey and squash for Norfolk.

On retirement he started to play golf and achieved a handicap of 20 and still played at the age of 97, carrying his own clubs.



In 1994 he came to Venray to attend the unveiling in honor of the Suffolk Regiment. He was presented at that time with the highest military decoration in the Netherlands. On 18 September 2011 at the age of 94 he attended a commemoration of the war victims in Venray. In November 2011 he received the insignia of the modern Willem's on behalf of the Royal Order of Knights of the Military Order of William from Colonel BD GJC Slots. On 9 May 2012 he was received by Queen Beatrix and in the afternoon he received the Medal of the City of Venray.

In 2014 he is the oldest living knight and the SOF Norfolk Supper in November 2014 was dedicated to him and his wife Trish.



In May 2014, to mark the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Holland by the Allied Forces there was a ceremony at the Dutch ambassador's residence in London called Tulips for Liberators, at which he was the honoured guest.



The report reads "*Major Kenneth George Mayhew RMWO, bearer of the highest Dutch military Medal of Valour, has officially baptised the new Liberation Tulip at a ceremony at the Residence of the Ambassador of Holland, Ms Laetitia van den Assum. The red-yellow Triumph Tulip was cultivated by bulb-grower JUB Holland for this occasion, which marks the first step in commemorating the liberation of Holland in 1944-45 by the Allied Forces, which started with Operation Market Garden in 1944.*

*Major Mayhew (97), who played an important role in the liberation of the Dutch cities of Venray and Weert and in the battle of Overloon, baptised the tulip on behalf of all Allied Forces who were involved in the liberation of the Netherlands. Representatives of British, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, Polish and US forces were also present, as was Major General Hoitink, Director of Operational Readiness, on behalf of the Dutch Chief of Defence Staff.*

*The launch of the tulip was the first milestone in a flower-themed commemoration project that will run until May 2015, when 70 years of freedom will be celebrated in Holland. The Tulips for Liberators project is a collaboration of the Liberation Route Europe, Keukenhof Holland, JUB Holland and the Embassy of Holland in the UK. The next step in the project will be the planting of two flower mosaics this autumn, one of which will be in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in London and the other in Lincolnshire, from where the RAF carried out Operation Manna. This was the first relief operation, which began on 29 April 1945 and lasted till 8 May. Countless sorties were made and tons and tons of food dropped over the Western part of Holland, for which the Dutch are still deeply grateful. Ceremonies will be held at the Kew Gardens and Lincolnshire sites on the occasion of the planting and flowering of the mosaics."*

# Certificate

On this day, the fourteenth of May two thousand and fourteen, a red-yellow Triumph Tulip has been baptised by K.G. Mayhew RMWO, Major (Ret'd)

## Liberation

On the occasion of the launch of 'Tulips for Liberators', commemorating the liberation of the Netherlands in 1944-45 by the Allied Forces, The Royal General Bulbgrower's Association (K.A.V.B) in Hillegom, The Netherlands, has reserved this name for registration.

The Royal General Bulbgrower's Association (K.A.V.B) will list this tulip variety with the registration permanently in the international Tulip Cultivar Register.

The ceremony of baptizing has been held at the Ambassador's Residence in London.

Signed for: Jac. Mittenbogaard en Zn. bv Royal General Bulbgrower's Association (K.A.V.B) Signed for: Liberation Route Europe Foundation

R. Mittenbogaard, Director

J. van Schepen, Tokoomb

V. van Krieken, Managing Director

Signed for: Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

J. H. de

M. S. A. C. van den Assum, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

I, K.G. Mayhew RMWO declare herewith that I consent to the above mentioned tulip to bear the name of Liberation.

K.G. Mayhew RMWO, Major (Ret'd)



Old The Society of  
Framlinghamians  
[www.oldframlinghamian.com](http://www.oldframlinghamian.com)

In early 2016 he received the Legion d'Honneur from the French Government as a Normandy Veteran. The announcement in the autumn of 2014 embraced not only troops but Royal Navy and RAF personnel who operated support for the Landings on 6 June 1944 as well as wider campaigns at that time to assist in the Liberation of France. The award which is France's highest decoration is going to all living personnel; the Embassy expected some 300 to apply; in the event applications came in from 3,500 veterans so the process of distribution has been rather slow.

He was serving in 1st Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment and on D-Day in 1944 he was in the platoon HQ Carrier and driven on to Sword Beach by Cliff Kindred who worked for Jacksons of Bruisyard, near Framlingham.

He has attended many commemorations since and especially noteworthy on the 40<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



In the Gibraltar Barracks Museum of the Suffolk Regiment in Bury St Edmunds, James Ruddock-Broyd (G46-52) spotted recently in the Curator's Office a photograph of Ken leading the 40<sup>th</sup> parade as L-marker at Arromanches in 1984.

On the Normandy 50th Anniversary the President of the Royal British Legion was General Sir Patrick Howard Dobson (1921-2009) who was escorting the Queen on a walkabout in Bayeux Cemetery when he spotted Ken in the crowds of veterans and with his usual magnanimity Sir Pat brought the Queen over to speak to him – a moment never forgotten.

On the 60th Anniversary Bill Collard (S55-58) saw Ken at a distance in a 5,000 crowd in Caen during an hour's wait for the arrival of Prince Charles on 5 June in blazing sun. As soon as the formalities were over he and James R-B dived through the crowds to meet Ken and Trish and later saw the coach taking the Suffolk Regiment veterans to anniversary events.