

The Second World War

Assemblies for D-Day 65th Anniversary

DAY 4: DOCTORS AND NURSES

Script

Over the last two days we have learnt about the Navy and the Air Force and some of the work they did in the build up to D-Day and on the day itself. Another group that is part of the Armed Services (military) is a group of people who don't fight but are there to try save lives.

What people have you heard of that work to save lives and treat people who might be injured?

Doctors and nurses – well doctors and nurses also work during wars, even during battles and attacks. They are not there to fight, their job is to help those that get injured in the fighting and to try and save their lives.

On D-Day, lots of medical staff landed on the beaches with the fighting soldiers so that they could help those hurt from the very beginning. Medical staff also landed by parachute to help the men fighting there. Everywhere that soldiers go, there are doctors and nurses supporting them – do you think that is dangerous?

Absolutely – doctors and nurses still get shot at and killed even if their job is not actually fighting.

Dennis Kenwood

Army, Royal Army Medical Corps, Sword Beach – attended casualties in an operating tent.

Mr Dennis Kenward was trained as a nurse before the war and called up to the army at the age of 19. The 40th Field Surgical Unit set up medical camp near Hermanville (France) after landing on Sword Beach. During the night of June 6, Kenwood and his team worked until the small hours dressing wounds, dosing patients with morphine, and reassuring the soldiers where they could.

"I couldn't believe it when, at about 4 am, the corporal shook my shoulder and told me that the lorry with the operating tent had arrived," he says. "We had to get up, pitch the tent and start operating on people straight away. We were all so tired, but knew we just had to keep going."

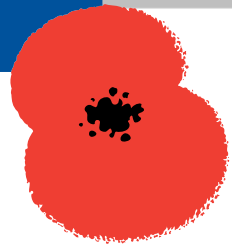
Raymond Daeche

Army, Royal Army Medical Corps, Pegasus Bridge – treated dying and wounded soldiers.

On D-Day Raymond Daeche landed in a glider at Pegasus Bridge in Normandy. It was his regiment's job to hold the Eastern flank for the period of the landing.

He was also a medic, treating soldiers and civilians after the carnage at Normandy. On one occasion he spent one hour searching through blood drenched clothes for a cutting of the Tottenham Hotspurs, just to make a wounded soldier smile.

Without the doctors and nurses that were part of the D-Day invasion, many more men would have died from the injuries they received. Even in war and conflict, they are able to save lives.



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*Show Photograph - Beach casualties being helped to sick bay on HMS Frobisher
(photo IWM A 24104)*

Moment of Reflection

Sometimes we don't know about all the different jobs that people do to make our lives safer. Doctors and nurses work at all times to try and make a difference and to help those that are ill and injured. In times of war, it's the doctors and nurses who have to try and save lives when so many others are being killed. It is important for us to remember them and the work and service that they give to those affected and caught up in war.

Poem or a Prayer

This poem was written by a Canadian doctor, John McCrae, who had been in the First World War and saw the poppies growing in France. The Poppy inspired people who believed that those who had fought should not be forgotten and they started to wear a poppy at the time of the anniversary of the end of the war.

In Flanders' Fields by John McCrae

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' fields.