

Dear Friends,

I hope that you are all keeping well. This week we give thanks for the life of Bert Williams. Sadly, it will not be the funeral that one would have wanted, with full military honours. Under present circumstances only ten people are allowed to attend.

As I have prepared the material for his funeral I have been moved by his service and dedication to his family, the church and this country. Bert was part of an elite group of thirty men chosen to support Field Marshall Montgomery. On D-Day, 6th June 1944, Bert with his unit were part of Operation Overlord, which commenced with the crossing of nearly 160,000 Allied troops over the English Channel to land on the beaches of Normandy. Bert with others in his unit were heading for Gold Beach. It was the code name for one of the five areas of the Allied invasion. Bert's job on landing was to mend tanks and trucks often under enemy fire.

Field Marshal Montgomery had three caravans and Bert put a shower in one of them for him. I believe it still exists and can be seen in the Imperial War Museum, Duxford. On 4th May 1945 on Lüneburg Heath, Field Marshal Montgomery accepted the surrender of the German forces. Bert was present just outside the tent, hiding with others in the bushes waiting for the signal that the treaty had been signed. When the signal came all those hiding cheered out loud.

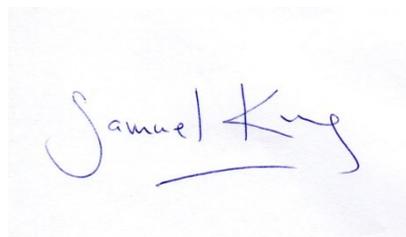
A week on Friday we will commemorate Victory in Europe Day. A day to remember the formal acceptance by the Allies of Germany's surrender of its armed forces on 8th May 1945 - four days after Bert was present at the signing of the treaty.

I have been inspired recently by Captain Tom Moore who has raised over £30m just before his 100th birthday. He reminds me so much of Bert, both true gentlemen from the same generation, and both demonstrating great humility and determination. May we remember the sacrifice that so many made for the freedom and liberty that we have today. Bert modelled something of the selfless life of Jesus, even willing to lay down his life for others.

- Please continue to hold Cynthia and the wider family in your prayers, as we give thanks to God for the life of Bert Williams. There will be opportunity for us to give thanks for his life at a later memorial service.

N.B. This Sunday we will be sharing communion together online, so please get your bread and wine ready beforehand. If you have anything you might like to share with us all on our Sunday broadcasts please do let me know.

God bless you all



Samuel King