

STEEL HELMET

This Airborne type Steel Helmet was worn by Major John Howard during the Bridges Operation. The bullet holes are the result of sniper fire when his Company was surrounded by enemy Panzer troop in ESCOVILLE on D+1 (June 7). During that operation the Company lost over 50 NCO's and men (killed, wounded & missing), a very sad set-back after losing only 1 killed and 12 wounded during the capture of the bridges soon after midnight on D-Day.

NOTE: The helmet was worn by film actor Richard Todd who portrayed Major Howard during the filming of "The Longest Day".

ESCAPE WALLET

Carried by Major Howard during and subsequent to the Pegasus Bridge operation. They were issued to all British Airborne Officers for the invasion and contents included:- Benzadrine tablets, water purifying tablets, aspirin, matches, small magnetic compass, chewing gum, needle & cotton, medical adhesive tape and a plastic waterproof document pouch.

(Other wallets issued also contained a supply of French francs which Major Howard is said to have lost on about D+14 playing Poker with a cadre).

UNIFORM SHOULDER FLASHES

Worn by Major Howard on 'best' Battledress'. The 'FIFTY-SECOND' relates to 5th and 6th of Foot or 52nd Light Infantry as the 2nd Bn. Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry was often known. The 'Pegasus' flash was the Divisional Badge worn as a shoulder flash by all British Airborne troops.

SILK MAP

Sewn into the Battle-dress of Major Howard prior to the invasion and not removed until returning to UK mid-August 1944. These silk maps were issued to all Airborne soldiers as escape aids, together with such things as magnetised brass trouser buttons (emergency compass) and steel files (also sewn into battle-dress).

OPERATION ORDER COPY No 1

Original Operation Order issued to Major Howard by Brigadier Poett 2 May 44 as Commander of 5 Para Bde under whose command the Coup de main party operated for the invasion.

I confirm that the above articles have been given by me to the Association pour la Sauverie de Pegasus Bridge.

*John Howard*

31 Dec 73