

COLONEL JOHN WADDY OBE TURNS 100

CO OF B COMPANY, 156 PARACHUTE BATTALION AT ARNHEM



At home, in Somerset, John celebrates his 100th birthday today. All present sang 'For he's a Jolly Good Fellow', and then the Lieutenant-General Sir John Lorimer KCB, DSO, MBE, the Colonel Commandant of the Parachute Regiment congratulated John as one of the most respected elders in the Regiment and said some kind words before presenting a letter. The bugler played 'Reveille' and 'Danny Boy', John's favourite song.

Lieutenant Colonel Rob Arts, the Dutch Military Attaché then presented the Dutch Liberation Medal to John and explained that John is the most well-known and much loved Veteran of the Airborne in Holland. John said how much he enjoyed the friendship of the Dutch and how Arnhem was his second home.



*Top left - Col John Waddy with Lt General Sir John Lorimer, Parachute Regimental Mascot Bruno and Pony Major LCpl Richards.
Bottom left - John with Lt Colonel Rob Arts. Right - Colonel John Waddy in his bush hat with his Dutch Liberation Medal and his old Schmeisser, similar to the one brought back from Italy in 1943.*

Colonel John Waddy OBE turns 100



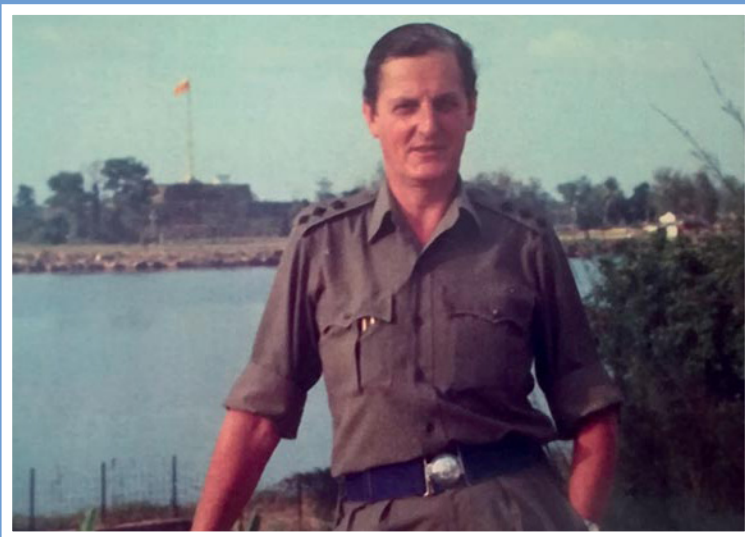
Major John Waddy, Commanding Officer of B Company, 156 Parachute Battalion, 1944

Colonel John Waddy OBE turns 100

Colonel Paul Rodgers brought along John's old Schmeisser MP40 Sub-Machine Gun and his bush hat which had been retrieved from the Airborne Museum at Duxford. This was all made possible with the help of his wonderful carer, Colleen De Villiers.

At Arnhem John was seriously wounded whilst leading an attack against German SS troops. He was later taken to an aid post where an operation was carried out on a billiard table at the Tafelberg Hotel. In this makeshift hospital, whilst lying in bed, he was wounded twice more, as the hospital was on the front line in the village of Oosterbeek near Arnhem. Lucky to survive, he spent the rest of the war in a PoW camp.

John continued his military career after the war serving as 2ic of 2 Para before taking over as Colonel Commandant of the SAS Regiment. His final military role was serving alongside the Americans as an observer in Vietnam where he saw the value



Colonel John Waddy OBE, photographed at the end of his tour of duty serving as Colonel Commandant of the SAS Regiment.

of using helicopters for the swift movement of troops and, upon his return, recommending their use in special forces. In this respect, he was ahead of his time. On his retirement from the Army, he joined Westland Helicopters, advising on their development and safety for troop transport. John's breadth of knowledge was sought by the producers of the film *A Bridge Too Far* and he was chosen to be their military advisor.

John has a glass of gin with onions every day, a custom started in India to make the less than palatable gin drinkable. This week he put his longevity down to this daily tipple each lunchtime. Asked why onions, he replied: 'In India the gin was so foul-tasting that one needed the onions to disguise the taste.' He became so fond of the combination that it became a life-long habit.

JOHN O'REILLY

156 Parachute Battalion Association

17 June 2020

Colonel John Waddy OBE flanked by Lieutenant Colonel Dickie des Voeux's daughter, Jane Pockney, and grandson, James Pockney, at 156 Battalion Reunion, Melton Mowbray 2016.



Words by John O'Reilly
Design & Layout by Will Stark
www.156para.co.uk

