

Major William Fraser's War Diary - Page 1 of 5

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| May 1936 | British Army /Gordon Highlanders | Scotland | Aged 19 William Fraser followed in his step-father & grandfather's footsteps by joining the Gordon Highlanders. Posted to First Battalion, promoted to lance corporal & noted as 'distinguished' on his non-commissioned officers course. Fraser made the cadet football team, bayonet fencing team, depot gymnastics demonstration squad, and was a marksman of note. |
| Sept 1939 | BEF | Lille, France | British Expeditionary Force, deployed in a barn near Lille in a blocking position, awaiting the German advance. |
| 29 Dec 1939 | BEF | France | Departed France for Scotland to attend 165 Officer Cadet Training Unit. |
| 25 May 1940 | Officer Training | Dunbar, Scotland | Commissioned Officer passing out parade, promoted to second lieutenant. Fraser attained grade 'A' at the weapons training school. Graduated to news of the Dunkirk withdrawal of the BEF from France. |
| June 1940 | Gordon Highlanders / 11 Commando | Aberdeen, Scotland | Reported for duty at the Gordon's barracks just as the Dunkirk evacuation was ending & news of his battalion's demise was coming in. Immediately volunteered for and joined the newly formed Commandos, recommending fellow Gordons Jack Bryne, Bob Tait, Jeff Du Vivier, Dougie Keith & John Cheyne for the Commandos too. Fraser was assigned B Section commander of 8 Troop, 11 (Scottish) Commandos. |
| July 1940 to January 1941 | 11 Commando changed to Special Service | Scotland | Commando training, practicing amphibious operations & raiding tactics, preparing for operations in the Mediterranean. In November 1940 the Commandos (a controversial name as it originated with Britain's enemy during the Boer Wars in South Africa) were renamed the 2 Special Service battalion (an equally controversial name due to the initials SS). |
| 31 Jan 41 | Special Service to Force Z | Scotland | 2 SS battalion renamed Force Z as they set sail from Scotland. Due to German advances in the Mediterranean the convoy was rerouted to sail to Suez via south Africa. Enroute for Suez Force Z was remaned Layforce. |
| February 41 | Force Z to Layforce | Atlantic Ocean /Indian Ocean | Stopping in Freetown Sierra Leone & Cape Town South Africa, avoiding German U-boats & battle ships, their convoy circumnavigated Africa. |
| 7 March 41 | Layforce | Eygpt | After delays due to magnetic mines in the Suez canal Layforce arrived in the Middle East &were billeted at Abbassia Barracks, Siani. They were immediately granted leave till 28th March before transitting via Port Said. |
| 16 April 41 | Layforce | Eygpt | Embarked in Alexandria for Operation Addition, a proposed raid on Bardia. Operation cancelled en-route. |
| 23 April 41 | Layforce | Eygpt | Depart Alexandria for Haifa in Palestine |
| 29 April 41 | Layforce | Palestine | Embarked for Cyprus to build coastal defences at Larnaca against German invasion. |
| 4 May 41 | Layforce | Cyprus | Rienforced by New Zealand Expeditionary Force, billeted at Lefkoniko. |
| 14 May 41 | Layforce | Cyprus | His Excellency The Governor of Cyprus inspected the Commando at Lefkoniko |
| 22 May 41 | Layforce | Cyprus | Moved to Kondea in preparation for invasion of Syria |
| 4 June 41 | Layforce to 11 Commando | Cyprus | Embark fo Op Exporter, the Invasion of Syria, sailing via Alexandria. Reverted to 11 Commando name. |

Major William Fraser's War Diary - Page 2 of 5

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| 8 June 41 | 11 Commando | Mediterranean | Landing at Litani River to secure bridges for advancing 7th / 21st Australian Division cancelled due to high sea, but enemy alerted allowing them to prepare for demolition of bridges. |
| 9 June 41 | 11 Commando | Syria | Battle of Litani River. Two sections landed in front of fortified Axis positions in error. Heavy casualties. Bill concussed by ricochet against his helmet and temporarily hands over command. |
| 10 June 41 | 11 Commando | Palestine | Arrived in Haifa from the Litani River. |
| 15 June 41 | 11 Commando | Palestine | Embark for Cyprus to continue island defence |
| 21 June 41 | 11 Commando | Cyprus | Gata Peninsula defensive preparations |
| 23 June 41 | 11 Commando | Cyprus | At 13.00 hrs Brigadier Laycock arrived from General Head Quarters (G.H.Q.) in Egypt, and spoke to the assembled men congratulating them on their recent operation. |
| July 41 | 11 Commando | Cyprus | Island Garrison |
| 6 August 41 | 11 Commando | Cyprus | No. 11 Commando disbanded at Abbassia Barracks in Cairo |
| 27 August 41 | 11 Commando to SAS, L Det | Egypt | Bill noted as Major Fraser, Officer Commanding No.1 Troop. Kabrit. |
| Sept / Oct 41 | SAS, L Det | Egypt | Training. Bill injured during parachute training & unable to go on Op Squatter, the first SAS operational paracute jump made in 40mph wind speeds on 17 November. |
| 17-26 Nov 41 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Op Squatter: Bill became part of LRDG recovery party, collecting the SAS parachutists who'd survived the jump, navigated correctly & evaded capture (22 out of 55) |

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| 19 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Wadi el Faregh | Patrol led by Bill transported to 40 miles south of Jedabya airfield by LRDG Patrol S1. RV with Patrol S2. |
| 20 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Jedabya Airfield | Dropped by S2 about 15miles from target. Tabbed into observation positions above the Jedabya Airfield. |
| 21 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Jedabya Airfield | Laid up, observing airfield and other troop movements. |
| 22 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Jedabya Airfield | 37 aircraft, one tractor and a lorry destroyed with 39 Lewes bombs. RV with LRDG. R.A.F. Blenheim Light Bomber Patrol attacked their vehicles in error, killing two LRDG members. |
| 23 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Egypt | RV with David Stirling at Jalo |
| 24 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Egypt | Op prep at Jalo |
| 25 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Depart with LRDG Patrol T2 for Arae Philaenorum Airfield. Dropped 10miles south of target. |
| 26 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Laid up, observing airfield and other troop movements. |
| 27 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Recce'd airfield to find no aircraft. Returned to Layup point. |
| 28 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Laid up awaiting RV with LRDG, who were unable to make RV |

Major William Fraser's War Diary - Page 3 of 5

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| 29 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Desert march with 1/2pint of water each |
| 30 Dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Desert march, water gone. Became ill after trying to drink from salt lakes |
| 31 dec 41 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Laidup in caves near lakes, 1 pint of water distilled and used to make tea |
| 1 Jan 1942 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Party of 2 goes to find water and returns with Jerry can after hijacking a German Army truck. Left salt lake cave. |
| 2 to 7 Jan 42 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Escape Across the Desert |
| 8 Jan 42 | SAS, L Det | Libya | Arrive Sebkha es Segira |
| March | SAS, L Det | Siwa Oasis | New Camp as Jalo was now in Axis hands. |
| 16 March 42 | SAS, L Det | Siwa Oasis | Depart for Benghazi, Libya. 400mile trip with multiple raiding parties. Bill's target was Barce Airfiled. |
| 18 March 42 | SAS, L Det | Bir el Garrari | Laidup |
| 20 March 42 | SAS, L Det | Barce | Op Barce. Only 1 aircraft and 8 repair wagons found at airfield. All destroyed. |
| 28 March 42 | SAS, L Det | | Returned to Siwa, after RV with main party on 27th. |

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| 13 June 42 | SAS, L Det | | Op Benina / Berka |
| July 42 | SAS, L Det | Kabrit | Depart for Cairo to meet with David Stirling |
| 3 July 42 | SAS, L Det | Cairo | Depart Cairo to RV with LRDG |
| July 42 | SAS, L Det | Alexandra | Depart for Fuka with LRDG |
| 7-8 July 42 | SAS, L Det | Fuka | Fuka Landing Grounds attacked, 10 Aircraft destroyed |
| 11-12 July 42 | SAS, L Det | Fuka | 2nd Fuka Landing Grounds attack but with a damaged vehicle & incoming fire during the attack it was called off. |
| September 42 | SAS, L Det | | Operation Bigamy (?) |
| 21 March 1943 | SRS | Palestine | Moved to new base at Azzib for training as newly formed SRS under Paddy Mayne. Bill OC 1 Troop. |
| June 43 | SRS | SS Ulster Monarch | Inspection by Field Marshall Montgomery |
| 4 July 43 | SRS | SS Ulster Monarch | Depart Palestine bound for Sicily |
| 10 July 43 | SRS | Sicily | Capu Murro di Porco landing as part of Op Husky. Embarked landing craft 0100hrs in high seas carrying over 35kg each. Enroute they picked downed British Airbourne Glider Troops from the water. This included Brigadier Philip Hicks, Commander of the Airbourne Forces. |
| 10 July 43 | SRS | Sicily | Within minutes of landing at the Cape the gun battery was captured; 40 KIA or POW enemy forces. 0520hrs guns were blown and green flare signal given to invasion fleet. 0600hrs, 2nd enemy gun battery 3miles away targeting fleet. 1 & 2 Troops neutralize battery quickly taking many Italian POWs. SRS suffered one KIA, Geoff Caton. 150 Italians KIA and 500 POWs. |

Major William Fraser's War Diary - Page 4 of 5

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| 12 July 43 | SRS | Sicily | Depart Syracuse on SS Ulster Monarch for Augusta, a Naval Port 11 miles north. Embark landing craft 1930hrs. Landed under fire and town taken by dawn. SRS greeted the 17th Brigade Infantry into the town with an impromptu concert using a pianola in the town square. |
| 17 August 43 | SRS | Sicily | Training at Camp under Mount Etna. Marching up and down volcanos. |
| 1 Sept 43 | SRS | Sicily | Left Mount Etna Camp. |
| 4 Sept 43 | SRS | Italy | Bagnara landing, |
| 3-6 Oct 43 | SRS | Italy | Termoli battle. Bill was WIA when a German mortar landed in the bed of a loaded truck, killing seventeen SAS & additional civilians. Bill was besides the truck. |
| 13 October 43 | SRS | Italy | Billeted in Molfetta, a coastal town. |
| 25 Dec 43 | SRS | Algeria | Depart for Britain by ship. |
| January 1944 | 1 SAS | Greenock | Arrived back in Britain and awarded 1 month leave. Reverted to SAS name. |
| February 44 | 1 SAS A Sqn | Darvel | New training camp in SW Scotland. Major Bill Fraser was Commander of A Squadron. |
| Spring 44 | 1 SAS A Sqn | Ringway | All SAS members completed parachute training at Ringway Airfield, Manchester. |
| 4 May 44 | 1 SAS A Sqn | Darvel | A Squadron 'celebration', drinking 1/2 pints of rum and singing from the Squadron Song Sheet |
| 6 June 44 | 1 SAS A Sqn | France | Op Houndsworth - A Squadron raiding party behind enemy lines for 3 months, based at Vieux Dun. Bill parachuted in 5 days after the advance party, on the 11th. |
| 26 June 44 | 1 SAS A Sqn | France | Op Houndsworth Attacked German camp at Maquis Camille |
| 26 June 44 | 1 SAS A Sqn | France | German reprisal massacres in Duns-les-Place |
| 6 July 44 | 1 SAS A Sqn | France | Op Houndsworth - resupply of jeeps, kit & post |
| August 44 | 1 SAS A Sqn | France | Op Houndsworth - In all 6 trains derailed, 23 vehicles destroyed, an oil refinery mortored and 220 Germans killed or wounded. Base at Morvan. |
| 6 Sept 44 | 1 SAS A Sqn | France | Op Houndsworth - Before A Squadron returned to Britain Bill presented the people of Duns-les-Place with the regimental flag for their courage and stocism . |
| Oct 44 - Feb 45 | 1 SAS | Britain | Leave, training, mission prepaation. |
| 18 March 45 | 1 SAS C Sqn | England | Depart for Op Archway from Hylands House Essex with 2SAS, under Lt Col Franks. It was made up of two reinforced Special Air Force squadrons, one each from the 1st and 2nd Special Air Service regiments. The force would number about 300 all ranks, mounted in 75 armed Jeeps, some also equipped with 3-inch Mortars |
| 25 March 45 | 1 SAS C Sqn | France | Their first mission in support of the XVIII Airborne Corps consisted of reconnaissance patrols in northern Germany. They crossed the Rhine in amphibious LVT Buffalos, on the 25 March at Bislich |
| 26 March 45 | 1 SAS C Sqn | Germany | Reconnaissance Patrols for 6th Airbourne around Hamminkeln |

Major William Fraser's War Diary - Page 5 of 5

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| 27 March 45 | 1 SAS C Sqn | Germany | Action to clear woods of German defences that a Battalion of Canadian Paratroppers had been repulsed from with 8 KIA. Bill took 12 Jeeps & attacked the flank, clearing the wood with 10 Germans KIA, 32 POW. Bill was WIA, shot through the hand & sent to casualty clearing station after handing over command of C Sqn |
| 15 April 45 | 1 SAS | Germany | 1SAS Recon Patrol first to see Bergen Belsen. It was the following troops, the British 11th Arm'd Div that liberated the camp. |
| 9 May 45 | 1 SAS | Belgium | Both recovering from wounds, Bill and Ian Wellstead met up with 1 SAS to celebrate VE Day |
| 11 May 45 | 1 SAS | England | Returned from Europe |
| 15 May 45 | 1 SAS | England | Embarked Aircraft for Norway, 760 men & 33 tons of stores |
| 30 May 45 | 1 SAS | Norway | Setup camp in Bergan, overseeing the disarmament of 300,000 German soldiers |
| 25 August 45 | 1 SAS | Norway | Sailed for Britain |
| September 45 | 1 SAS | England | Colchester |
| 1 October 45 | 1 SAS | England | Final 1 SAS Parade at Hylands House, Chelmsford |
| 4 October 45 | 1 SAS | England | Disbandment of both 1 & 2 SAS confirmed. |
| November 45 | Gordon | Highlanders | Returned to his unit before voluntary discharge in 1948 following a demotion in rank for being drunk on duty. |
| 22 Jan 1975 | Veteran | England | Bill passed away aged fifty-eight at Edward VII Memorial Hospital near Warwick. |

Rest-in-Peace Bill, you are Remembered