



**80 YEARS ON (2)**

**June 2024**

## **King hails ‘immense sacrifices’ of Monte Cassino heroes**

**King Charles** has paid tribute to “the courageous men and women” who lost their lives at **Monte Cassino** on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the pivotal Second World War battle.

The tribute was delivered by the **Duchess of Edinburgh** as she joined **Jack Hearn**, a 100-year-old veteran, for an event at the British Embassy in Rome and **Lord Llewellyn**, the ambassador, at the Cassino War Cemetery.

“Coming together to honour the fallen in this hallowed ground, reminds us that the rights and freedoms we enjoy today were won at great cost, and bring with them great responsibilities for our generations and those yet unborn,” the King said in his message. “Such sacrifice can never be forgotten.” The King spoke of the ‘immense sacrifices’ made by British and Commonwealth soldiers during the bloody battle, which raged from January to May 1944, noting their victory was a vital contribution to the Normandy landings just a few weeks later.

“Let us pause to reflect on the immense sacrifices made by so many for the cause of freedom in Europe – perhaps even more poignant today,” he said. British and Commonwealth troops from Canada, India, New Zealand, and South Africa fought and died alongside French and Polish soldiers in the campaign to wrest control of the mountain stronghold from German troops in freezing winter temperatures and heavy snow. “It was the most horrible battle in the war,” Mr Hearn told *The Telegraph* by telephone from his home in Northumberland before he left for Italy. “We were terrified.”

Daily Telegraph, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024

The battle was for control of the strategically important mountain-top Monte Cassino Monastery founded by **St. Benedict** in AD 529. **Major Robert Nevill Cobbold** #470 Welsh Guards died on 27<sup>th</sup> May towards the end of the 5-month battle just before victory was achieved. His headstone carries two lines from **Rupert Brooke’s** poem *The Soldier*:

*“In this rich earth a richer dust concealed that is for ever England.”*

Anthony Cobbold

