

# Baverstock Roll of Honour



*Lest we Forget*

## World War II



200078    LIEUTENANT

**G. R. H. HARDING**

GRENADIER GUARDS

28TH JANUARY, 1944    AGE 22

*In Loving Memory*

*Audax Omnia Perpeti*

## Guy Robert Hextall HARDING

Guy Robert Hextall Harding was born in 1921 to parents Robert Arthur Cotton Harding and Muriel Annie Frederica Harding (nee Hextall). His birth was registered in the September quarter, 1921 in the district of Kensington, London, Middlesex.

Guy Robert Hextall Harding (200078) was listed in the *The London Gazette* (19<sup>th</sup> August, 1941) as being one of several Cadets of the Grenadier Guards promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant from 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1941.

Lieutenant Guy Robert Hextall Harding, service number 200078, was an Officer with the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Grenadier Guards.

Lieutenant Guy Robert Hextall Harding was killed in action on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1944, at the age of 22, whilst making a hasty retreat during the Battle for Anzio. Lieut. Harding is buried in Anzio War Cemetery, Italy (approximately 70 kms south of Rome, on the coast) in Section III, D, 6 and is acknowledged with a Commonwealth War Graves Headstone.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lieut. Harding as the son of Robert Arthur Cotton Harding and Muriel Annie Frederica Harding of Dinton, Wiltshire.

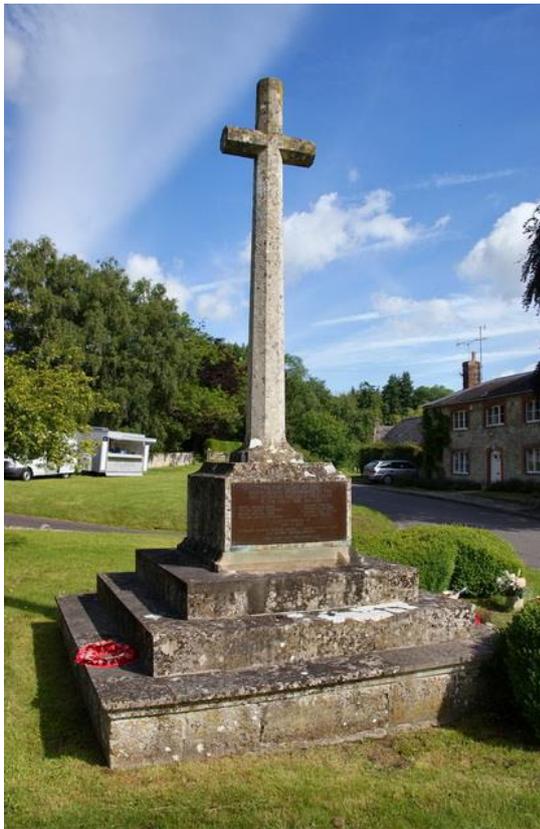
The following notices were placed in newspapers:

*HARDING – In proud and everlasting memory of ROBERT, Lieut., Grenadier Guards, killed in action at Anzio, Jan. 28, 1944. A most beloved son and brother to Andrew.*

*HARDING – In Jan. 1944, killed in action, LIEUT. GUY ROBERT HEXTALL HARDING, Grenadier Guards, aged 22 years, eldest son of Lt.-Col. and Mrs R. A. C. Harding of Baverstock Manor, Dinton, Salisbury.*

Probate /Administration was granted on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1944, in the estate of Guy Robert Hextall Harding of Savile House, Mansfield Road, Oxford, who died on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1944 on War Service, to Robert Arthur Cotton Harding M. B. E. Lieutenant- Colonel H. M. Army, father of the deceased. Effects £1,294 17s. 10d.

Guy Robert Hextall Harding is also remembered on the Dinton War Memorial, which is located at the northern end of the Churchyard.



(Photos by Andrew Stacey)



*They Died That We Might Live*

The Church of St Edith of Wilton, located at Baverstock Lane, Baverstock near Dinton, Wiltshire has stained glass in the west window which is signed by G.E.R. Smith (well renowned stained glass designer), in memory of Guy Harding who died in 1944.



(Photos courtesy of Antony Firth 2014)



## The Battle of Anzio (22<sup>nd</sup> January – 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1944)

Operation Shingle (January 22, 1944) was an Allied amphibious landing in the Italian Campaign against German forces in the area of Anzio and Nettuno, Italy. The operation was commanded by American Major General John P. Lucas and was intended to outflank German forces of the Winter Line and enable an attack on Rome. The resulting combat is commonly called the Battle of Anzio.

The landings began on January 22, 1944. Although resistance had been expected, as seen at Salerno during 1943, the initial landings were essentially unopposed, with the exception of desultory *Luftwaffe* strafing runs. The Germans had already sent their regional reserves south to counter the Allied attacks on the Garigliano on 18 January, leaving one nine-mile stretch of beach at Anzio defended by a single company. The first Allied waves landed unopposed and moved rapidly inland.

By midnight, 36,000 soldiers and 3,200 vehicles had landed on the beaches. Thirteen Allied troops were killed, and 97 wounded; about 200 Germans had been taken as POWs. The 1st Division penetrated 2 miles (3 km) inland, the Rangers captured Anzio's port, the 509th PIB captured Nettuno, and the 3rd Division penetrated 3 miles (5 km) inland. The 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Grenadier Guards were part of the British 1st Division – The British Force "Peter Beach". The 2nd Division were the north-western U.S. Force "Yellow Beach" & the 3rd Division the south-western U.S. Force "X-Ray Beach".



Allied units continued to push inland over the next few days to a depth of seven miles against scattered but increasing German resistance. In the center of the beachhead, on 24 January, the British 1st Division began to move up the Anzio-Albano Road toward Campoleone and, with help from the 179th Infantry Regiment of the 45th Infantry Division, captured the town of Aprilia, known as the "Factory" because of its cluster of brick buildings, on 25 January. Within three days the continuing Anglo-American drive pushed the Germans a further 1.5 miles north of the Factory, created a huge bulge in enemy lines, but failed to break out of the beachhead. Probes by the 3d Division toward Cisterna and by the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment toward Littoria on 24-25 January made some progress but were also halted short of their goals by stubborn resistance. Renewed attacks on the next day brought the Americans within three miles of Cisterna and two miles beyond the west branch of the Mussolini Canal. But the 3d Division commander, Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., on orders of the corps commander, called a halt to the offensive, a pause that later lengthened into a general consolidation and reorganization of beachhead forces between 26 and 29 January.

Upon receiving word of the landings, Kesselring immediately dispatched elements of the 4th Parachute and Hermann Goering Divisions south from the Rome area to defend the roads leading north from the Alban Hills. Within the next twenty-four hours Hitler dispatched other units to Italy from Yugoslavia, France, and Germany to reinforce elements of the 3d Panzer Grenadier and 71st Infantry Divisions that were already moving into the Anzio area. By the end of D-day, thousands of German troops were converging on Anzio, despite delays caused by Allied air attacks.

The Grenadiers were actively engaged for little more than a fortnight - from the 25th of January to the 10th of February: in that time the Battalion lost twenty-nine officers out of their normal establishment of thirty-five, and five hundred and seventy-seven other ranks out of the eight hundred which compose a battalion's complement at any given time.

## ANZIO WAR CEMETERY

On 3rd September, 1943 the Allies invaded the Italian mainland, the invasion coinciding with an armistice made with the Italians who then re-entered the war on the Allied side. Progress through southern Italy was rapid despite stiff resistance, but by the end of October, the Allies were facing the German winter defensive position known as the Gustav Line, which stretched from the river Garigliano in the west to the Sangro in the east. Initial attempts to breach the western end of the line were unsuccessful. Operations in January 1944 landed troops behind the German lines at Anzio, but defences were well organised, and a breakthrough was not actually achieved until May. The site for this cemetery was selected not long after the landings at Anzio and the burials here date from the period immediately following the landings. Anzio War Cemetery contains 1,056 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War. Another cemetery named Beach Head War Cemetery is located 5 klms north of the town & is for the Americans.



*(CWGC photo & information)*



*(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)*

