

News story: Ilford Park Polish Home Residents Remember Those Who Fought and Died in the Capture of Monte Cassino 75 Years ago

As the sun shone down on the Ilford Park Polish Home in Devon, residents made their way from the church service remembering those who bravely fought and lost their lives during the Battle of Monte Cassino. The memorial service marked the 75th anniversary of a battle that saw an estimated 48,000 Polish soldiers fighting as part of the Allied assault during the final stages between 17 January and 18 May 1944 on Italian soil during World War II.

The service, organised by the MOD's Veterans UK, part of Defence Business Services, and The Royal British Legion, was held on Tuesday 14 May 2019 and was conducted by Father Jarek Kucharczyk in the Ilford Park Church situated within the home.

Veterans UK continues to deliver 24 hour care on behalf of the MOD and are honoured to help commemorate such a pivotal battle for the residents living at their home.

Resident Mr Zenon Slomka watching the service

Three Polish residents who fought in the battle, Mr Zenon Slomka (96), Mr Wacław Domagała (95) and Mr Jan Grzesik (93), attended the service alongside other Polish residents and their families.

Mr Zenon Slomka said:

It is important that we remember all those who lost their lives in the battle and throughout the war.

It was an excellent service.

Six standard bearers were part of the service proceedings whilst a bugler played the Last Post. Attended dignitaries included Deputy Lieutenant Robin Barlow, Lieutenant Colonel Andy Pierce, Councillor Ken Purchase, Mayor of Newton Abbot and local and county chairmen of the Royal British Legion. Colonel Norbert Czerbniak, Deputy Defence, Military, Naval and Air Attaché from the Embassy of Poland, also attended.

Home Manager, Clare Thomas delivers a reading

Clare Thomas, Manager at Ilford Park Polish Home and who is responsible for

its day-to-day running, said:

We are privileged to have three veterans who live here who are decorated with the Medal of Monte Cassino and three widows as well. It is right and proper that we have a service to commemorate the 75th anniversary.

For those who were unable to return to their homeland, this small part of Devon, fondly known as 'Little Poland', provides a sanctuary and is the nearest that this special group of people will get to going home.

With victory secured by the Allies on 18 May 1944, the Battle of Monte Cassino, one of the toughest and bloodiest battles of World War II, takes a special place in Polish history. In April 1944, the 2nd Polish Corps in Italy numbered around 48,000 soldiers and was part of the British 8th Army.

Winning key German defensive positions and breaking the Hitler Line opened the way to Rome, which was taken over by the U.S. 5th Army on 4 June. The 2nd Polish Corps paid a very high price for its victory: 923 dead, 2,931 injured and 345 missing in action (of whom 251 were found). Considering the many battles fought around Cassino and including all the missing, wounded and captured, the battle lasting half a year claimed 200,000 casualties on both sides.

Ilford Park Polish Home provides residential and nursing care to former members of the Polish Forces under British command in World War II, and who were displaced from Poland following the war, or their spouses. The Home meets a wartime UK government promise made by Winston Churchill. It is the responsibility of the MOD's Veterans UK to continue the promise of the former Prime Minister.

Rob Rowntree MBE, MOD's Veterans UK said:

Veterans UK works hard to deliver services for all our veterans and we are proud of our efforts here in Devon to deliver Winston Churchill's war time promise to the Polish people.

I'm pleased that today's service has given our Polish residents the opportunity to celebrate their unique identity whilst also commemorating all those who gave their lives in this most pivotal and hard-fought battle of World War II.

Deputy Lieutenant Robin Barlow lays a wreath

Since it was opened in December 1992, the premises currently provides a home

for 98 residents in the 81 bed residential care wing, the 14 bed nursing home and three independent bungalows. It is subject to unscheduled routine inspections and meets the standards required by the Care Quality Commission.

Press release: Motorists urged: Be deer aware

Drivers warned to look out for deer roaming on to the country's roads.

Press release: Motorists urged: Be deer aware

Drivers are today being warned to look out for deer roaming on to the country's roads and posing risks to road users. The warning comes after five deer were found dead at one location on the A35 in Dorset recently.

Figures collated from various studies suggest at least there could be some 400 people injured in deer-related collisions each year, and potentially around 20 people killed.

At this time of year, deer collisions peak as many of the animals cross roads seeking new territories. The highest risk of collisions is between sunset and midnight, and the hours shortly before and after sunrise.

So today The Deer Initiative and Highways England have teamed up to give advice to drivers.

Leonardo Gubert, Senior Ecologist at Highways England, the Government company responsible for motorways and major A roads, said:

Sadly, the outcome of a collision involving a deer can be much more catastrophic than vehicle damage or injury to the animal.

You may be well-travelled and on a well-known route without a previous sighting, but there may be deer hidden in nearby foliage or woodlands and some species of deer can gather often in large groups; you may have seen one and avoided it but others may follow and unexpectedly dart out into the roadway.

We want everyone travelling on our roads to reach their destination safely and with as many as 1.5 million wild deer living across Britain it is vital for drivers to be aware of their presence, to be extra vigilant, especially at this time of year when deer are on the move, and to follow our advice.

Deer signs are placed at locations where the animals are known to be active and are likely to cross; they help inform drivers of the need to slow down to give more time to react.

The advice to drivers is:

1. When you see deer warning signs or are travelling through a heavily wooded or forested stretch of road, check your speed and stay alert
2. If your headlights are on, use full-beams when you can, but dip them if you see deer as they may 'freeze' on the spot instead of leaving the road
3. If you see a deer, look for another. They often gather in herds and follow each other as they move through the landscape.
4. Only brake sharply and stop if there is no danger of being hit by following traffic, use your hazard lights. Try to come to a stop as far away from an animal as possible to enable it to leave the roadside without panic. Try not to suddenly swerve to avoid a deer. Hitting oncoming traffic or another obstacle could lead to a more serious collision.
5. If you must stop, use your hazard warning lights

David Jam, Director of The Deer Initiative said:

"The recent spate of accidents is a stark reminder about the dangers of deer on our roads. We urge drivers to check their speed and stay alert especially when they see deer warning signs or are travelling through a heavily wooded or forested stretch of road."

Recently, Highways England traffic officers removed five dead deer in one day from the central reservation on the A35.

Figures collated from a number of studies suggest that while it is safe to say 40,000 deer are killed in vehicle collisions every year, this figure could be as high as 74,000 across Britain as a whole. Conservative estimates of 400 injuries to motorists and passengers related to these collisions could in fact be nearer 1000 annually.

Accurate records of deer-vehicle collisions are vital as they help build an accurate picture of the roads most at risk of deer collision which can then be assessed, and appropriate measures to tackle the issue can be put in place. Drivers are urged to report any incidents via the [Deer Aware website](#).

Highways England works with partners including the Deer Initiative to identify deer-related collision 'hotspots' and to take appropriate measures to reduce the risk, including installing deer proof fencing and constructing larger culverts which provide an alternative route for deer to cross the road.

If you hit a deer while driving, your priorities in this order are:

- keep yourself and anyone with you as safe as you can.
- park your car in the safest place with hazard lights on. Consider using it to also warn other road users.
- call an ambulance if human injuries warrant it.
- call the police.

If you are involved in a deer vehicle collision and require assistance please contact the police. If you need to report a deer vehicle collision or to find out more on safety advice please visit the [Deer Aware website](#).

News story: Better financial reporting for academy trusts

The new [academies chart of accounts](#) is DfE's standard for financial data that underpins the academies accounts return and budget forecast returns.

Academy trusts that choose to adopt the standard will benefit from potential automated data transfer from their finance system to ESFA for financial returns relating to the 2019/20 financial year. An additional benefit is that DfE can provide richer and more accurate financial benchmarking information allowing academies to compare their finances with other similar academies with greater confidence.

Lord Agnew, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System said:

"Our better financial reporting programme is a great step forward in our work to improve efficiency in schools. We have recognised that the current system of submitting financial data to the department is time consuming and offers insufficient benefit to academy trusts.

"By having a standard chart of accounts, we create the essential building blocks for the new system as it provides a consistent way of recording financial data for all academy trusts. This will allow us to reduce the burden on trusts through the electronic submission of financial data directly from finance systems and adding greater value to trusts by enabling us to create new financial efficiency tools as well as improve the timeliness and quality of the existing tools."

Adopting the new chart of accounts will require an investment of time and effort from trusts but this will lead to significant future benefits. For example, around 65% of the accounts return comes from data within a trial balance. Being able to have that data pre-populated will be extremely helpful to trusts.

Trusts can view the [academies chart of accounts](#) and a guide to adopting the new standard.

Adopting the academies chart of accounts is voluntary.

News story: Dstl shares new open-source framework initiative

A new open-source software framework designed by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is now available to help improve tracking technology.

Tracking and state estimation is a vital part of Defence research; being better able to track enemy missiles, vehicles or drones is essential for operational effectiveness. However, the algorithms that crunch the data are complex and difficult to compare. This software framework allows the algorithms to be compared, side-by-side, in a “bake-off” against realistic data.

Leading the project across the 5-eyes nations of UK, USA, Australia, NZ and Canada, Dstl has made the project available to anyone wanting to upload and test their tracking algorithms.

The framework, called Stone Soup, is a software architecture which allows code components to be plugged-in in a modular fashion, such as algorithms, sensor models and simulators.

Users can then model a huge number of outcomes, which can be measured on how they improve survivability, safety, or operational effectiveness. This even has non-defence uses: for example tracking systems are a key component in self-driving cars to ensure the car can be aware of and follow all vehicles and people in its vicinity.

Stone Soup will facilitate and encourage other algorithm developers or tracking practitioners to insert their new components, which can then be compared alongside accepted or state-of-the-art algorithms to help the developers and industry / Government laboratories evaluate them against standard data sets. Alternatively industry can insert their own data into the framework and run this against the standard suite of tracking algorithms it contains. One day this could provide better tracking capabilities for a whole range of difficult problems such as following a swarm of fast drones, tracking space-clutter around the International Space Station or understanding the movements of migrant vessels in the Mediterranean.

This is just one example of the multinational collaboration in science and technology which Dstl engages in. The initiative is supported by four other

nations' Defence labs, including Defence Research and Development Canada, which is contributing to its development.

Professor Paul Thomas, a Senior Principal Scientist at Dstl, said:

We are really excited to be making Stone Soup available to other tracking practitioners giving us the potential to be high-impact in multiple communities. It's a 'standard' platform for tracking algorithm development, and for testing and benchmarking, which will be a huge benefit for the academic and Defence community.

The framework is in its infancy but the long-term aim is to save lives by having data that can accurately track adversaries, giving commanders in the battlefield full situational awareness.

It's an accelerated learning aid for people who are just coming into this area too. Before this, it could have taken months, even years, to learn the detailed mathematics of tracking. This is a fantastic tool with so many benefits; I hope lots of experts can join us in using and contributing to this framework.

The software is free and is available on [Github](#) and some datasets from Dstl are available below. More information can be found [here](#)