



Friday 30 March 2012

Airborne Assault museum book launch tells the amazing true story of Bing the Parachuting Dog

The Airborne Assault museum at IWM Duxford will be holding a special book launch on Sunday 15 April from 11am to 1pm to celebrate the publication of the new book *The Amazing Adventures of Bing the Parachuting Dog*.

This poignant book was written by Gil Boyd BEM, who served with The Parachute Regiment until 1974 and is now a trustee of the Airborne Assault Museum.

The Amazing Adventures of Bing the Parachuting Dog is a true story about the heroism and devotion displayed by dogs used by The Parachute Regiment during the Second World War. For the first time, this book reveals the secret story of a wartime PARA dog who dropped with his handler behind enemy lines and was awarded the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross.

This delightful children's book has been written in the voice of Bing, an Alsatian-cross who served with the 13th Parachute Battalion. It follows his exploits through basic training and then in active service as a parachuting dog supporting the Sniper Reconnaissance Platoon. Bing was trained to use his highly specialist skills in locating the enemy and guarding the men he loved and served.

Both Bing and his friend Rob, a Border Collie, went on to receive the highest gallantry award given to animals, the PDSA Dicken Medal, which is equivalent to the Victoria Cross, for their selfless and heroic service during D-Day and the Rhine Crossing.

A replica model of Bing the Parachuting Dog is on display in the Airborne Assault Museum.

At the book launch, author Gil Boyd BEM will be signing copies of the book and chatting to visitors.

Also in attendance will be Peg, the dog that Private Conrad Lewis of the 4th Battalion The Parachute Regiment befriended in Afghanistan last year, just before Conrad was killed by gunshot wounds sustained during a firefight. Knowing that their son had grown close to Peg, Conrad's family succeeded in bringing the dog back to England to live in peace for the rest of his days.

Join us for this very special book launch honouring the remarkable role that animals play in the theatre of war.

The Amazing Adventures of Bing the Parachuting Dog can be purchased by contacting the Airborne Assault Museum directly at airborne.enquiries@gmail.com. Please include your full name and postal address in the email and put Bing Book Order in the subject line of your email.

– Ends –

For further press information please contact:

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Notes to Editors

About the author - Gil Boyd BEM

Gil Boyd BEM served in the Second Battalion The Parachute Regiment until 1974, then joined the Police Service, where he served for 30 years, retiring in 2004 as the Principal Technical Officer within the Serious and Organised Crime Department.

Gil's publication of *The Amazing Adventures of Bing the Parachuting Dog* is in aid of The Afghanistan Trust and the Airborne Assault Museum. Gil is no stranger to fundraising, having carried out a series of world record daredevil stunts, including parascending under ten London bridges, abseiling the Telecom Tower and conducting a death slide from the top of London Bridge in the early 1980s in aid of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. It was to this hospital that his son Tom was sent for life-saving surgery after he was born at Cambridge Maternity Hospital.

Tom, now fully recovered, also serves in the Parachute Regiment.

Gil went on to become a patron of the Friends of the Children's Hospice at Milton in Cambridge alongside Dame Norma Major.

Gil designed many innovative pieces of equipment while he served in the Police Force, including the wrist-worn microwave downlink, viewing images transmitted by Police helicopters to officers on the ground. For this work, he received the coveted BBC TV *Tomorrow's World* Inventor of the Year Award in 2000.

Another such design, which came in the wake of the tragic Hungerford Massacre, was a miniature microwave camera system used by search dogs, where the video footage was transmitted safely out to an operator from within a stronghold. This design won Gil a Home Office Award from the Home Secretary.

It was this close work with dogs that helped Gil develop a reasonable understanding of their ability to support humans. It made it possible to write this book through the eyes of one very special dog.

IWM Duxford

IWM Duxford is Britain's best-preserved Second World War airfield, with a fascinating history that dates back to the First World War. Its story reflects the landmark achievements made in aviation history. Duxford is Europe's premier aviation museum, where historic buildings intersperse with state-of-the-art exhibition halls, including AirSpace and the American Air Museum. Historic aircraft can regularly be seen taking to the skies from Duxford's wartime airfield. Through the rich displays of aircraft and the powerful stories of the men and women involved, we tell the story of the impact of aviation on the nature of war, on people's lives and on the social and economic history of the region. With one of the finest collections of tanks, military vehicles and artillery in the UK, we also show the impact of technological development on war and conflict.

IWM Duxford
Cambridgeshire CB22 4QR

Open Daily:

Summer 2012 (17 March to 27 October 2012) 10am to 6pm

Winter 2012/13 (28 October to mid March 2013) 10am to 4pm
Except 24, 25 and 26 December

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IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.

Our unique Collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people's lives.

IWM's five branches are IWM London, IWM's flagship branch with six floors of exhibitions and displays; IWM North, housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; IWM Duxford, a world renowned aviation museum and Britain's best preserved wartime airfield; Churchill War Rooms, housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser HMS *Belfast*.

First World War Centenary

2014 - 2018 marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM will mark the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the country, including the opening of brand new First World War galleries at IWM London in 2014. For more information visit www.1914.org