

## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

A colleague of mine recently became chaplain to the High Sheriff of East Sussex, Jane King. He has written that he is lucky to trail around with her, seeing a whole new dimension to life. I quote: “We recently returned from a trip to Dieppe for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the disastrous Dieppe raid of 1942, when more than 6,000 (mainly Canadian) troops stormed the coast near Dieppe as a practice for D-Day. More than 1,000 died; 2,500 were wounded, and almost 2,000 were captured. ‘Lessons were learned,’ the Wikipedia entry says, but that’s not much consolation.

The National Commemoration was attended by the French Minister for the Armed Forces, who looked disconcertingly like Liz Truss. With the *Marseillaise* played four times by a large military band, and much flag-raising and – waving, it felt like a historic happening.”

I mention it today because I knew nothing of this history until so very recently. It is also a reminder of how many other nationalities helping us, lost their lives, for the sake of our freedom and liberation.

If I may quote some more: “The most memorable and moving experience was in St Aubin-le-Cauf, a village outside Dieppe; two Royal Canadian Air Force pilots had been shot down, and had been laid to rest side by side, in the churchyard. Their photos were on the wall: two bright, happy young men in their twenties, with so much to live for. Only they hadn’t.

One had been Roman Catholic, one Protestant. “It makes no difference,” the mayor said. “They were brothers in arms, and now the village cares for them.” The kerbstone around the graves had been newly and carefully repainted for this commemoration. 80 years on from their deaths, I cried.”

All over the world today, we remember those unknown to most of us or even the detail of what happened, where and when, who died for the sake of our freedom and our liberation. We are allowed to cry and to give thanks for them; here in Woodbridge the names are read out year on year under the watchful eyes and ears of our brilliant branch of the British Legion. We remember each life lost in our prayers and in our marking of a solemn silence, or lighting a candle that keeps on burning.

We must do the same today for the peoples of Ukraine where, again, innocent lives are being terrorised. We must listen to God in the words of the prophet Micah:

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”