



ELECTRICCANADIAN.COM  
AGRICULTURE & WILDLIFE  
ARTICLES  
BETH'S FAMILY TREE  
BOOKS  
BUSINESS  
CHILDREN'S STORIES  
CLANS & FAMILIES

HELP TERMS OF USE CONTACT US

CULTURE & LANGUAGE  
DONNA'S PAGE  
ELECTRICSCOTLAND.NET  
FAMOUS SCOTS  
FAMILYTREE  
FORUMS  
FOOD & DRINK  
GAMES

GAZETTEER  
GENEOLOGY  
HISTORIC PLACES  
HISTORY  
HUMOR  
JOHN'S PAGE  
KIDS  
LIFESTYLE  
MUSIC

NEWSLETTER  
PICTURES  
POETRY  
POSTCARDS  
RELIGION  
ROBERT BURNS  
SCOTS IRISH  
SCOTS REGIMENTS  
SERVICES

SHOPPING  
SONGS  
SPORT  
SCOTS DIASPORA  
TARTANS  
TRAVEL  
TRIVIA  
VIDEOS  
WHATS NEW

## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for April 24th, 2015

To see what we've added to the Electric Scotland site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm>

To see what we've added to the Electric Canadian site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

For the latest news from Scotland see our ScotNews feed at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/>

### Electric Scotland News

14th Annual Tartan Day on Ellis Island Delights Thousands

New York, NY - "Tartan Day on Ellis Island" – the nation's largest Tartan Day celebration - returned for its 14th annual observance from April 9-12, 2015 serving as a spectacular finale to NY Tartan Week. The highlight of the weekend was "Captain Kidd and the Hangman's Noose," a new exhibition, produced by the Clan Currie Society.

While one doesn't normally associate pirates (at least seafaring pirates) with New York City, they were plentiful in the 1600's. Born in Dundee, Scotland in 1645, Captain William Kidd was a major figure in 17th century New Amsterdam (New York City).

Pirate money pulsed through New York. Here's a vivid account of NY in the late 1600s from Edwin G. Burrows' and Mike Wallace's Gotham: "This boodling was worth a hundred thousand pounds a year to the city...Tavern keepers, whores, retailers and others flourished as buccaneers swaggered through the streets with purses full of hard money — Arabian dinars, Hindustani mohurs, Greek byzants, French louis d'or, Spanish doubloons."

A unique addition to the exhibition was an original screen-worn costume from the first two installments of Disney's smash hit film series, "Pirates of the Caribbean" on loan from Walt Disney Archives.

The 2015 edition of Clan Currie's popular program enjoyed impressive attendance records with over 35 thousand visitors from around the corner and around the world. This statistic was effectively underscored by a complete sell-out of ferry tickets to Ellis Island from Battery Park in Lower Manhattan. In addition to the exhibition, a steady stream of visitors came to experience "Scotland in Miniature" on Ellis Island." Weekend VIP guests included the Rt. Hon. Sadie Docherty, Lord Provost of the City of Glasgow.

In addition to the exhibition, Clan Currie hosted a performance by piper Andrew Craig from Carnoustie, Scotland. Craig performed the world premiere of "The Immigrant's Lament," a new pipe tune commissioned by Clan Currie for the occasion.

See a video of this at [https://youtu.be/YQa\\_vacG2as](https://youtu.be/YQa_vacG2as) and other videos at: <https://youtu.be/ManDsQlyIIE>

According to Society president, Robert Currie, "The Immigrant's Lament" is a haunting tune which captures the essence of a Scots emigrant yearning for his homeland far, far away. No doubt countless numbers of Scots yearned for Scotland as they embarked upon a new life in a new world. Inspiration for the lament comes from John Watson Nicol's evocative painting, "Lochaber No More," which vividly captures the loss and despair experienced by a Highland couple as they leave Scotland with just their meager belongings packed in a small wooden trunk or kist as it was known."



Lochaber No More by John Watson Nicol

Weekend guests to the island also thrilled to the sights and sounds of the NY Celtic Dancers, the Rampant Lion Pipe Band, John Grimaldi – the Kilted Juggler, the Celtic Cross Dancers of Ottawa, Ontario and Jerry Dixon – the Piping Pirate as they stepped ashore on Ellis Island.

Inside the Captain Kidd exhibition area, visitors enjoyed the delightful sounds of fiddle, guitar and small pipes performed by Amy Beshara, Alex Carmichael and Matthew Christian.

Renowned kilt maker, Bonnie Heather Greene, led a kilt making demonstration and had many sample kilts on hand to try on which was a huge hit for young and old alike. The program also included an information table which provided a whole host of information about Scottish history and culture, Tartan Day, and resources to look up family names and clan tartans.

Another key highlight of the event was an unexpected visit by 40 choir students from the High School of Grand Rapids, MN. Said Currie, "The students had been thoroughly entertained when disembarking on Ellis Island by our company of performers and reported that they wanted to return the favor. They did so with a magical a cappella rendition of "Loch Lomond" in our exhibition room. The sound was incredible and there were very few dry eyes when they finished. It was magical."

This was the 14th observance of Tartan Day on Ellis Island produced by the Clan Currie Society. Past programs have included, "The Life and Legacy of John Muir," "Loyalty and Exile - The Jacobites and America," "Scots Gifts to the World," and "An Leabhar Mòr – The Great Book of Gaelic."

Added Currie, "Many of our exhibits are available for loan from the Clan Currie Society for use in Tartan Day programs across the country. In fact, our exhibition entitled "A Celebration of Tartan" served as one of the cornerstone elements of the first Los Angeles Tartan Day celebration this year."

#### About Tartan Day on Ellis Island

Tartan Day on Ellis Island is one of the principal Scottish heritage events in the United States. Playing host to literally thousands of domestic and international visitors each day, it is the largest Tartan Day celebration in the world. Ellis Island is a fitting place to observe Tartan Day. The island and its historic buildings represent America's "Golden Door."

From 1892 to 1954, more than 12 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island. Although many Scots arrived during the colonial period of our history – helping to build the new nation - an additional half-million Scots came through Ellis Island. It has been estimated that 40% of Americans today can trace at least one ancestor's entry into the United States through Ellis Island.

Describing the program, noted Scottish journalist and author Roddy Martine reported that of all the Tartan Day events held in the United States, the Ellis Island observance has, "stood out as a beacon of what USA Tartan Day is all about: the emigrant ancestors of ordinary Americans who over three centuries crossed the Atlantic Ocean to create the world's greatest democracy."

As part of the 2011 celebrations, Clan Currie commissioned a specially designed Ellis Island Tartan© to mark the 10th Anniversary of Tartan Day on Ellis Island. Each color in the tartan reflects upon the American immigrant experience. The blue represents the ocean that had to be crossed to reach the American shores. The copper-green is the color of the Statue of Liberty. The red depicts the bricks of the Ellis Island buildings where 12 million Americans took their first steps towards freedom. The gold is the golden door that is the United States of America and the dawn of a new life in America.

#### About Captain Kidd

Captain William Kidd was a Scottish sailor who was tried and executed for piracy after returning from a voyage to the Indian Ocean. Some modern historians deem his piratical reputation unjust, as there is evidence that Kidd acted only as a privateer. Kidd's fame springs largely from the sensational circumstances of his questioning before the English Parliament and the ensuing trial. His actual depredations on the high seas, whether piratical or not, were both less destructive and less lucrative than those of many other contemporary pirates and privateers.

Born in Dundee, Scotland in 1645, Kidd emigrated to lower Manhattan, or rather New Amsterdam in 1691. His story checks off all the boxes for a great Ellis Island exhibition – pirate, Scotsman, immigrant, New Yorker, colorful history – it's got it all. And treasure hunters have been searching for Kidd's treasure chest throughout the NY area on the Jersey shore, Gardiner's Island and even up the Connecticut coast.

While Kidd the man left New York in 1696, his historical DNA and even a bit of ectoplasm can still be found throughout the Wall Street area. Ghost hunters have encountered the Captain in the churchyard of Trinity Church, his old haunt at Fraunces Tavern and near the site of his home near what is now the corner of Pearl Street and Hanover Square.

Our thanks to Clan Currie for sending us in this account.

#### We're Moving

On 28th April we are moving to a new address. You might remember that a couple of years ago we had a fire which meant we had to move to a temporary address where we've been ever since. On the 28th we are now moving to our new permanent address. This means we will be down for a short time as we will have to power down our servers to transfer them to the new address. The new address is just five minutes up the road so we shouldn't be down for long. At most I would assume we'll only be down for around 30 minutes.

The new address also gets a new internet line which will also increase the bandwidth we offer so hopefully you'll notice a speed increase when we bring the service back up.

Steve has actually been building the new home for our site which has meant he's been completely renovating the building. I'm hoping once we are settled he'll have time to work on several outstanding matters and be able to add new services which have been on hold for some time now.

## Electric Canadian

Wild Canada

Added a series of videos about wild Canada and its wild life at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/wildlife/index.htm>

Indian Diaspora In Canada

Added a new video to our page at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/hindu.htm>

Iranians in Canada

Added a video which discusses the Iranians in Canada which you can view at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/iran.htm>

## Electric Scotland

Renfrewshire

By Frederick Mort (1912).

Now completed this book with the final chapters.

You can find this book on our current Renfrew page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/renfrew/>

A Tour in Sutherlandshire

With extracts from the field-books of a Sportsman and Naturalist by Charles St. John, Esq. in two volumes 2nd Edition (1884).

We are now up to Chapter XVI of Volume 1 of this book and for those that enjoy wild life this should be an enjoyable read.

You can read this book at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/sutherland/index.htm>

The Scottish Historical Review

Added Volume 16.

Volume 16 includes: Brus versus Balliol, 1291-1292: the Model for Edward I.'s Tribunal. By George Neilson, LL.D. With facsimile of portion of deed showing signature of John of Caen; Two Features of the Orkney Earldom. By J. Storer Clouston. With map of Orkney showing Trithings and Halves; The Revolution Government in the Highlands. By A. Cunningham; On the Church Lands at the Reformation. By R. K. Hannay; Mr. Hutcheson's 'Journal,' 1783. By W. P. Ker; Journal to Arran in [Buteshire] Argyle-shire, 1783. By Charles Hutcheson; Precedency among the Canons of Carlisle. By Rev. James Wilson, Litt.D.; Four Cases stated about Precedency; Two Unpublished Letters of James VI. (1) James to his Wife, 1594-5. (2) James VI. of Scotland to Henri IV. of France; Peasant Life in Argyllshire in the end of the Eighteenth Century. By Mrs. K. W. Grant; In Memoriam: Peter Hume Brown. By C. H. Firth. with Portrait; Bibliography of Works by Professor Hume Brown; Newhall on the North Esk, with its Artistic and Literary Associations. By Horatio F. Brown; The Scottish Craft Guild as a Religious Fraternity By Robert Lamond; Glasgow in 1781. By David Baird Smith; Some Unpublished Letters of Henry Cardinal York, 1767. By Walter W. Seton; A Lady's Gown: A Forgotten Custom. By James F. Whyte; John of Swinton: A Border Fighter of the Middle Ages. By Capt. George S. C. Swinton; The Highland Emigration of 1770. By Miss Margaret I. Adam; Lord Guthrie and the Covenanters. By D. Hay Fleming With Note by the Hon. Lord Guthrie; The Seaforth Highlanders, August 1914 to April 1916. By H. H. E. Craster, All Souls, Oxford; Gibraltar in 1727. By Professor R. K. Hannay. With extracts from the 'Journal of a Voyage from Leith to Barcelona, etc., in 1726-27,' by Edward Burd, Junior, supercargo of the ship Christian of Leith; Reviews of Books; Communications and Notes.

You can get to this volume at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/review/index.htm>

Genealogical Collections concerning the Scottish House of Edgar

With a Memoir of James Edgar, edited by a committee of the Grampian Club (1873).

The latter part of the collection consists of excerpts which may be found useful to genealogical inquirers into the earlier history of several of the great families in the South East of Scotland—the Dunbars, Homes and others.

You can read this book at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/edgar.htm>

Old Bethesda at the Head of Rockfish

By Bion H. Butler (1933) (pdf).

As the author says... On account of those boyhood Sundays, and many other days, I have often felt that enough has been said about the Southern belles and cavaliers, the quarters and the great houses, and that something ought to be said about the men and women who carved out the least romantic but most distinctive and solid of the Southern states, who furnished nearly one quarter of the whole strength of the Confederate Army, and who sent uncounted legions to help win the West.

I've provided a link to this book about Scots and Scots-Irish settlement in North Carolina at the foot of the page below the pictures at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/nc/>

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Got in the May 2015 edition which you can read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft/>

Clan Muirhead

Found a site with lots of information on the name so added a link to it from our Muirhead page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/m/muirhead.html>

Songs by John Henderson

John sent in seven poems and songs this week and have added them to the foot of his page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/doggerels.htm>

Dumbartonshire

By F. Mort which I've added to the foot of our Dumbarton page along with a video of an aerial view of Dumbarton castle.

You can get to this at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/dumbarton/>

Wilson's Border Tales

Have now made available the complete 6 volume set. Tons of reading!

I actually have the complete set in my home but due to the sheer size of the publication I only ever ocr'd in some of Volume 1. There were various editions of this publication in a variety of volumes from 3 to 12. I might add that if you use our site search engine you'll also find other books by the author.

You can read these at <http://www.electricscotland.com/bordertales/>

Genealogical Collections concerning the Scottish House of Edgar

With a Memoir of James Edgar, edited by a committee of the Grampian Club (1873). You can read this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/edgar.htm>

History of Logie-Coldstone and Braes of Cromar

By Rev. John G. Mitchie (1896). Added this book to our page on Logie-Coldstone at:

[http://www.electricscotland.com/history/statistical/logie\\_coldstone.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/history/statistical/logie_coldstone.htm)

I might also note that we have another book on the site which provides information on this area entitled...

Reminiscences of Cromar and Canada, By Donald Robert Farquharson which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/HISTORY/canada/cromar/index.htm>

History of Scottish Seals

By Walter de Gray Birch, LL.D., F.S.A., Late of the British Museum (1905).

It was due to the work on the US Great Seal that got me interested in seals and so found this publication which you can read at the foot of the page at <http://www.electricscotland.com/council/>. On that page we already have a book about Scottish Town Council Seals.

Margaret Oliphant

Added one of her novels, "Kirsteen", The Story of a Scotch Family Seventy Years Ago (1891). She actually produced some 100 novels so thought I should make at least one of them available for you to read. You can get to this at

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/women/wh49.htm>

Memorials of the Scottish Family of Glen

By Rev Charles Rogers (1888).

Added this through my work on researching Scottish names and you can get to this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/dtog/glen.html>

Memoirs of the Don Family in Angus

Having discovered this book I have now added a page for the name to our site and added a link to it from this new page at <http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/dtog/don.html>

## THE STORY

Tommy Macpherson

The hero in a kilt who tackled a Panzer division on his own! (and then accepted the surrender of 23,000 German soldiers)

By Tony Rennell

The undercover British officer crept silently through the bushes, his tartan kilt a bizarre form of dress for a man who did not want to be conspicuous.

Then he stopped to take in the awesome might of the enemy. Through the gloom, he could make out the 15,000 battle-scarred men and 200 machines of the cruellest and most feared of all the SS forces in war-torn France in the summer of 1944.

Parked up for the night, their tanks, half-tracks and heavy guns stretched as far as his eyes could see. How could he and the tiny band of amateurish French Resistance fighters he commanded possibly take on these professional killers? Yet that, come what may, was his mission.

Tommy Macpherson was an exceptional warrior-hero, acknowledged by experts as one of the bravest, most determined and resourceful British soldiers of WW II.

The notorious Das Reich panzer division was on its way from southern France to Normandy to help repel the Allied armies that had landed there on D-Day.

If they made the 450-mile journey in time, they could well be the difference between victory and defeat — which is why scores of Resistance units like this had been mobilised to slow their progress by whatever means they could . . . and at whatever cost.

That cost was already terrible. In towns and villages of the Lot and Limousin regions, the bodies of partisans swung from lampposts and telegraph poles as the SS soldiers — veterans of barbaric battles on the Russian front — ruthlessly took revenge on anyone who got in their way.

This do-or-die sabotage halted the SS in its tracks.

And now they had reached the patch of 23-year-old Major Tommy Macpherson — a fresh-faced former Fettes schoolboy, athlete and aesthete and, before the war intervened, a man destined for the dreaming spires of Oxford rather than this bleak French backwater where there was every chance of his being killed.

Macpherson was an exceptional warrior-hero, acknowledged by experts as one of the bravest, most determined and resourceful British soldiers of World War II. Today, at 90, he is Britain's most decorated former soldier.

His story — told in his forthcoming autobiography — is one of remarkable daring and danger, outstanding even in the annals of that unique generation, as he fought his very special war, almost entirely behind enemy lines.

He did indeed go up to Oxford after the war, gaining a first-class degree. Today, he remains president of the Oxford and Cambridge athletics club, having retired from his career as a successful businessman: he was variously a director of the National Coal Board and High Sheriff of Greater London.

But inevitably nothing in his later life had quite the drama of the extraordinary exploits he undertook in his one-man war against the Nazis.

Recruited into the Army straight from the sixth form, he was picked to be in the newly-formed elite band of Commandos, and earmarked for specialist training to carry out clandestine raids on enemy territory.

Tommy Macpherson took on a Nazi division almost singlehandedly.

And so began an extraordinary series of escapades in which he relied solely on his own cunning, bravery and initiative to stay alive.

In North Africa in 1941, he slipped ashore from a submarine on a reconnaissance mission.

But his sortie went disastrously wrong when the sub that was supposed to collect him did not arrive, and he was forced to trek for days on foot across the desert towards his own lines, sabotaging enemy installations as he went, only to be captured by Italian troops.

Held in a prisoner-of-war camp in Italy, he made several attempts to escape but was caught each time. He was handed over to the Germans and interrogated by the Gestapo before ending up in a remote camp on the far eastern borders of Germany.

He slipped away from there wearing a French uniform, made it to the Baltic coast and stowed away on a ship to neutral Sweden.

His flamboyance made him a legend in France.

On his return home in November 1943, he could have been forgiven for seeking a quiet life after two years at the sharp end. Dodging bullets and Nazi forces, he had already endured and survived more danger and hardship than almost any other soldier.

But his unrivalled experience of clandestine operations was vital to the war effort. He was needed for the Special Operations Executive, to parachute into France and gee-up the reluctant foot soldiers of the French Resistance in the aftermath of D-Day.

At Churchill's behest, he was to arm them, train them and lead them in a guerrilla war against the occupying Germans.

In the dead of night and accompanied by a French army officer and an English radio operator, he dropped into south-central France on June 8, 1944 — two days after the Allies stormed the Normandy beaches.

He was in his Highlander's battledress, kilt and all — and deliberately so. He was meant to be visible, his undisguised presence a symbol for any wavering Frenchmen that liberation was at hand if only they took the battle to the Boche.

His attire caused consternation. He heard an excited young Resistance fighter babbling to another that a French officer had landed 'and he's brought his wife!' The lad had never seen a man in a kilt before.

The Longest Day: With just three companions, Macpherson bluffed one German garrison of 100 soldiers with a mock show of force.

The unit Macpherson joined was a joke, despite all the assurances he had been given back in England that the maquis was a dedicated fighting force.

Here in the forests and mountains of the Massif Central it had just eight members, four of them mere boys, a few guns and a single, clapped-out lorry for transport. In four years, they had never mounted any sort of operation to trouble the occupying Germans.

He brought them a machine gun, grenades and plastic explosives, but did they have the savvy and the guts to use them? He found out soon enough when, just days later, the Das Reich SS column hove into his sights.

It was do-or-die moment — and dying seemed the more likely outcome. He decided that engaging them directly would be suicidal and pointless. But ingenious, cleverly-planted booby traps might do the trick of slowing them down.

Through the night, he and his men felled trees to block the road ahead of the convoy and laid their only anti-tank mine, strapping plastic explosives to it for extra oomph. Grenades dangled from overhanging branches — primed to fall and explode.

Communists and Nazis alike put a price on his head.

Primitive though these measures were, they was surprisingly effective. In the morning, the Germans had to bring up heavy equipment to move the tree trunks. Minutes ticked away. Then a tank hit the mine and slewed across the road.

More delay. Finally, Macpherson and his men sprayed troop carriers with their Sten guns and then dashed away into the trees — classic hit-and-run tactics. Hiding at a distance, they heard shouts and screams as the grenades did their job.

Eventually and inevitably, the SS column moved on, but precious hours had been won. With similar small victories the length of France, it took Das Reich more than a fortnight to complete what should have been a three-day journey, by which time the Allied hold on Normandy was secure.

So, too, was Macpherson's hold on his new friends. With this success under his belt, his status was assured and streams of newly-emboldened volunteers arrived to join him. Now they began to fight back in earnest.

German supply lorries were hijacked for food, railway lines and road bridges blown up, steam engines wrecked, enemy petrol dumps drained (though not blown up for fear of civilian casualties). The major encouraged children to scatter nails in the street to puncture the tyres of German trucks.

One of his favourite targets was electricity pylons, and he took enormous schoolboy pleasure from blowing up two together. As they crashed, massive sparks flew out, like a giant firework display. To celebrate Bastille Day, he knocked out eight in one exhausting night.

Macpherson: had a price put on his head by both Nazis and Communists.

In his Cameron Highlanders' tartan, with a Sten gun in his hand, explosives in his pockets and a skean dhu — the traditional Scottish dagger — tucked into his sock, his flamboyance made him a legend in this rugged area of rural France.

Furious and frustrated, the Germans offered a 300,000-franc reward for the capture of this 'bandit masquerading as a Scottish officer', as Wanted posters described him, but he seemed as elusive as the Scarlet Pimpernel and as bulletproof as a tank.

Driving round the countryside to muster and train his growing fighting force, he narrowly missed German patrols on the road, or - skidded away from road blocks just in time.

Pursued by an enemy patrol one night, his car's fuel tank was hit by bullets, but even then his luck held. They had just enough petrol left to turn into dense woods, dump the car and seek refuge with the nuns in a nearby convent.

He was at times able to turn the tables. Returning from a night raid on a railway, he was warned that the road he was on was used regularly by the Germans. Indeed, the local commandant's staff car was expected shortly.

'We were at an unmanned level crossing with a heavy wooden pole that lowered itself across the road when a train was coming. It was a perfect opportunity. I fixed some plastic explosive to the wire holding up the pole and rigged it with a fuse.'

When the open staff car sped into view, he blew the fuse, the pole came down and the car hit it at 50mph, decapitating the commandant and his driver. Then Macpherson's men mowed down the cavalcade's motorcycle escort with Sten guns. All in all, he recalls phlegmatically, 'a satisfactory morning'.

By now, the war was swinging decisively in the Allies' favour and it was time for Macpherson to become ever more brazen in his defiance of the Germans. To impress the locals, he began to fly a Union Jack and the Cross of Lorraine flag of the Free French from his black Citroën.

Then he sat in full uniform at a café in a town square, nonchalantly and openly drinking wine with the mayor, just to show that he could. It was almost an act of bravado too far.

Suddenly a German armoured car swung into the square. In the nick of time, Macpherson and his driver leapt into the Citroën and raced away into the hills, chased by the Germans.

With the advantage of the higher ground, they stopped and lobbed a makeshift grenade into the pursuing armoured car, destroying it. Then they laid charges around a bridge over a river and blew that, too. 'It was,' he recalls, 'just another day at the office'.

But his most extraordinary achievements were yet to come.

With Allied forces now advancing into the heart of France from both north and south, the Germans were on the retreat. But would they depart without causing a bloodbath? Subtlety and subterfuge were called for.

With just three companions, Macpherson bluffed one German garrison of 100 soldiers with a mock show of force.

He and his men wrapped wet handkerchiefs inside the metal hand grips of their light Sten guns, so that when fired they made the deafening noise of heavy machine-guns. The garrison, fooled into thinking themselves outgunned, surrendered.

Then he went one better when a German column numbering 23,000 men and 1,000 vehicles was heading back to the German border through the last remaining gap between the two advancing Allied armies.

In the Loire valley, a small band of Resistance fighters held a vital river bridge, and a fight to the death — which they had no hope of winning — seemed inevitable. Unless the German general could somehow be persuaded to give up without a fight.

At a parlay with the Germans, Macpherson once more bluffed. 'My job was to convince the general that I had a brigade, tanks and



artillery waiting on the other side of the river and they could not get through.

The clincher was when I told him that I was in contact with London by radio and could at any time call up the RAF to blow his people out of sight. In truth, the only thing I could whistle up was Dixie, but he had no way of knowing that.'

The German general bowed to what he was persuaded was the inevitable and surrendered, bringing the liberation of France a large step closer but with no loss of life.

Amazingly, Macpherson's war did not end even then. With France freed from the Nazis, he was whisked off to Italy to organise the partisans in their last struggles to evict the Germans.

There he found himself up against a new enemy — communist forces loyal to the Yugoslavian leader, Tito, and intent on annexing parts of Italy.

Macpherson's determined opposition succeeded in thwarting these plans, with the result that Tito pronounced a death sentence on the 'interfering major'.

To have had a price put on his head by Nazis and Communists was a rare distinction, and as highly prized as the Military Cross and two bars, the Legion d'Honneur and the Croix de Guerre this most buccaneering of British soldiers was awarded for his extraordinary exploits.

Behind Enemy Lines: An Autobiography Of Britain's Most Decorated War Hero by Sir Tommy MacPherson with Richard Bath, is published by Mainstream at £17.99.

And that's it for this week and hope you all enjoy your weekend.

Alastair