# Son and grandson revive Bill Millin’s legacy with bagpipe tributes on VE Day 80



# Commemorating the Legacy of Bill Millin: The Mad Piper of D-Day

As the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day approaches, the memory of Bill Millin, famously known as the "Mad Piper," remains vividly alive in the hearts of many. Millin, who died in 2010 at the age of 88, was a Scottish bagpiper who, unarmed but for a ceremonial dagger, famously played his bagpipes on the beaches of Normandy as Allied commandos fought to liberate Europe from Nazi occupation. His courageous act not only boosted the morale of troops but has become a poignant symbol of bravery and resilience.

Millin was the personal piper to Simon Fraser, the 15th Lord Lovat, who adhered to Highland tradition by allowing him to play despite formal military regulations prohibiting such actions during combat. As Millin stepped from his landing craft into the cold waters of Sword Beach, the sound of "Highland Laddie" rang out amidst the harrowing backdrop of warfare, serving as a rallying cry for soldiers facing the chaos of battle. His son, John Millin, reminisced about this storied past, noting on the occasion of VE Day that his father would have undoubtedly commemorated the day with his pipes. John shared, “It is so incredibly important to mark VE Day and remember all those who gave their lives in World War II.”

Honouring his father’s legacy has become a family tradition for John and his son Jacob, who both took up the bagpipes in later years. Ahead of the 80th anniversary of D-Day, they performed a series of tributes, playing in their home village of Rampton, Nottinghamshire, dedicating their music to the sacrifices made during the war. This emotional connection to their family history underscores the importance of remembering the lessons of the past, particularly as younger generations continue to forge a relationship with their heritage.

The significance of Bill Millin's actions goes beyond personal remembrance; they epitomize the collective memory of a nation. First Minister John Swinney highlighted this legacy, stating, “We owe a great debt of gratitude to all who served our country throughout World War II, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice.” This sentiment resonates throughout Scotland, where thousands are expected to participate in a series of commemorative events, honouring those who fought and fell during the war.

The commemorations will feature a variety of events across the UK, including lighting up notable landmarks such as the Falkirk Wheel and Edinburgh’s City Chambers, which will be bathed in light to celebrate the historic moment. Additionally, a national concert titled “Scotland’s Salute – VE Day 80” at the Usher Hall in Edinburgh will provide a space for reflection and gratitude, echoing sentiments expressed by public figures and local communities.

Moreover, efforts to remember the contributions of various military units continue, reflecting the multifaceted nature of the Allied effort during World War II. For example, concerts and services will pay tribute not only to Scottish soldiers but also to the role played by Norway’s sailors in the campaign against the Nazis. This inclusivity in remembrance helps to honour the diverse makeup of those who fought for freedom across Europe.

As we reflect on the legacy of Bill Millin and the sacrifices made during World War II, the hope is that his story—and the stories of countless others—serves to remind us of the fragility of peace and the enduring strength found in unity and remembrance. Events such as these reaffirm our collective responsibility to remember those who served, ensuring that the lessons of history continue to impart wisdom for future generations.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/son-mad-piper-says-late-35165830), [[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Millin)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/son-mad-piper-says-late-35165830), [[5]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24245440.d-day-tribute-young-scottish-piper-played-bullets-flew/), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/aug/19/d-day-piper-dies-war)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/27/son-of-d-days-mad-piper-in-10-day-bagpipe-salute/), [[3]](https://blog.westminstercollection.com/2024/03/12/the-legendary-piper-of-d-day-bill-millin8217s-story/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/son-mad-piper-says-late-35165830), [[5]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24245440.d-day-tribute-young-scottish-piper-played-bullets-flew/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/son-mad-piper-says-late-35165830), [[5]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24245440.d-day-tribute-young-scottish-piper-played-bullets-flew/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/son-mad-piper-says-late-35165830), [[5]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24245440.d-day-tribute-young-scottish-piper-played-bullets-flew/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/son-mad-piper-says-late-35165830), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/aug/19/d-day-piper-dies-war)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/son-mad-piper-says-late-35165830> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/27/son-of-d-days-mad-piper-in-10-day-bagpipe-salute/> - In March 2024, John Millin, son of the famed 'Mad Piper' Bill Millin, commemorated his father's heroism with a 10-day bagpipe salute in Rampton, Nottinghamshire. Bill Millin, who played the bagpipes during the D-Day landings in 1944, inspired his son to honor his legacy. John, 69, performed daily renditions of 'Hieland Laddie' and 'The Road to the Isles' as part of the Pipers 80-Day Countdown, a series of bagpipe performances across the UK leading up to the 80th anniversary of D-Day. His son Jacob Millin, 41, continued the tribute in Sheringham, Norfolk, for the subsequent 10 days. This tribute was part of a broader initiative to honor the sacrifices made during World War II. ([telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/27/son-of-d-days-mad-piper-in-10-day-bagpipe-salute/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://blog.westminstercollection.com/2024/03/12/the-legendary-piper-of-d-day-bill-millin8217s-story/> - This article delves into the remarkable story of Bill Millin, the Scottish piper who played his bagpipes during the D-Day landings in 1944. Serving under Lord Lovat, Millin was tasked with playing amidst the chaos of the invasion, boosting the morale of Allied troops. Despite the British Army's ban on pipers leading soldiers into combat, Lord Lovat, adhering to Highland tradition, believed in the inspirational power of the bagpipes. Millin's bravery and unwavering commitment to his comrades have left an indelible mark on history. ([blog.westminstercollection.com](https://blog.westminstercollection.com/2024/03/12/the-legendary-piper-of-d-day-bill-millin8217s-story/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Millin> - Bill Millin was a Scottish piper renowned for his role during the D-Day landings in 1944. Serving as the personal piper to Lord Lovat, he played his bagpipes on Sword Beach, undeterred by the surrounding gunfire. Despite the British Army's ban on pipers in combat, Lord Lovat permitted Millin to play, believing in the morale-boosting power of the bagpipes. Millin's actions have been commemorated in various forms, including a statue near Sword Beach and mentions in films and literature. He passed away in 2010 at the age of 88. ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Millin?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24245440.d-day-tribute-young-scottish-piper-played-bullets-flew/> - This article highlights the tribute to Bill Millin, the Scottish piper who played his bagpipes during the D-Day landings in 1944. The piece emphasizes the impact of Millin's music on the morale of Allied troops and the unique circumstances of his performance amidst the chaos of battle. It also touches upon the personal experiences of those who served alongside him and the lasting legacy of his actions during the invasion. ([heraldscotland.com](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24245440.d-day-tribute-young-scottish-piper-played-bullets-flew/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/aug/19/d-day-piper-dies-war> - Bill Millin, the Scottish piper who played his bagpipes during the D-Day landings in 1944, passed away in August 2010 at the age of 88. Serving as the personal piper to Lord Lovat, Millin's music provided a morale boost to Allied troops amidst the chaos of battle. His actions have been commemorated in various forms, including a statue near Sword Beach and mentions in films and literature. The article reflects on his legacy and the impact of his bravery during World War II. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/aug/19/d-day-piper-dies-war?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles/the-d-day-piping-legend-bill-millin-did-not-flinch-as-snipers-shot-at-him-he-kept-playing.html> - This article explores the story of Bill Millin, the Scottish piper who played his bagpipes during the D-Day landings in 1944. It details his training, his role as Lord Lovat's personal piper, and his courageous performance on Sword Beach amidst the chaos of battle. The piece also discusses the British Army's ban on pipers in combat and how Lord Lovat's Scottish heritage influenced his decision to allow Millin to play. The article highlights Millin's bravery and the impact of his actions on the morale of Allied troops. ([warhistoryonline.com](https://www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles/the-d-day-piping-legend-bill-millin-did-not-flinch-as-snipers-shot-at-him-he-kept-playing.html?utm_source=openai))