# Rye man reunites with father’s lost WWII documents 18 years after his death



In a remarkable twist of fate, Sandy Rodger, living in Rye, has been reunited with a treasure trove of World War II documents that once belonged to his late father, Ian Rodger. The papers, detailing Ian's service as a captain with 2 Squadron of the 6th Armoured Division Signal Regiment, were hidden in a desk sold at auction in Glasgow four years prior, unbeknownst to the buyer, Martin Reid.

The discovery came about as Reid was moving furniture; he stumbled upon a folder containing letters, photographs, and maps that chronicled the British Army's involvement in the Liberation of Italy from 1943 to 1945. This serendipitous uncovering of a historical narrative began with a well-placed appeal through the Church of Scotland, leading Sandy to reclaim the documents that held deep personal significance.

Expressing his gratitude, Sandy reflected on the chaotic time in early 2021 when he was helping his ageing mother move into a care home. Amid the emotional upheaval, he had inadvertently overlooked a folder that contained his father's wartime memories. “But for Martin’s kindness and initiative,” he stated, “they would have remained lost.”

Ian Rodger’s military service saw him navigate through campaigns in Italy and Tunisia, commanding a crucial role during a pivotal period in WWII. The documents not only highlight his military endeavours but also illustrate a wider historical context, detailing the struggles and triumphs of the 8th Army as they advanced through Northern Africa and into Europe. The importance of such personal accounts cannot be understated as they provide rich insight into the war's impact on ordinary lives, echoing a growing interest in individual stories within the broader tapestry of history.

Upon meeting Reid in Edinburgh to reclaim the papers, Sandy was struck not only by the content of the documents but also by their emotional weight. They included significant artifacts from his father’s life that he had never seen before, reviving connections to a past that had shaped his family. Furthermore, the folder contained items like maps detailing military strategies, which accentuated the profound complexities of the campaigns that Ian Rodger participated in, including his interactions with contemporaries such as Major Jack Profumo, who would later become a controversial political figure.

Ian Rodger, after his military career, practiced as a solicitor in Glasgow and made significant contributions to his community, co-founding Scottish Opera and engaging with the local Church of Scotland. His commitment to service extended beyond the battlefield, where he was a respected elder. Sadly, he passed away in 2007, and his widow Isabel followed in February 2023. This reunion of Sandy with his father’s documents offers a poignant reminder of the enduring nature of memory and history, and how artifacts can bridge generations, rekindling stories that might otherwise fade into silence.

As families like the Rodger's reflect on their histories, the motivations for preserving such memories become more apparent. Personal artifacts from times of war, like letters and photographs, are critical to understanding the human experiences behind historical events. Indeed, communities and individuals alike continue to foster discussions around remembrance, utilising platforms that celebrate and honour not just the bravery of soldiers but the very personal narratives associated with such sacrifices.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25204150.rye-man-reunited-fathers-wwii-documents-18-years-death/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/second-world-war-papers-found-hidden-in-desk-bought-at-auction-145855/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25204150.rye-man-reunited-fathers-wwii-documents-18-years-death/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/church-elder-s-secret-wwii-papers-discovered)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25204150.rye-man-reunited-fathers-wwii-documents-18-years-death/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/church-elder-s-secret-wwii-papers-discovered), [[6]](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380060314_4_Meeting_in_No_Man’s_Land_Motives_for_remembrance_among_British_and_German_descendants)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25204150.rye-man-reunited-fathers-wwii-documents-18-years-death/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/second-world-war-papers-found-hidden-in-desk-bought-at-auction-145855/> - In May 2025, Martin Reid from Lanark, South Lanarkshire, discovered a folder containing Second World War documents hidden in a desk he purchased at auction four years prior. The papers belonged to Ian Rodger, a Glasgow native who served as a Captain with 2 Squadron of the 6th Armoured Division Signal Regiment, participating in campaigns in Italy and Tunisia. The folder included photographs, letters, and maps detailing the British Army's involvement in the Liberation of Italy between 1943 and 1945. After an appeal through the Church of Scotland, Ian Rodger's son, Sandy, was located in Rye, England, and the documents were returned to him. ([kentonline.co.uk](https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/second-world-war-papers-found-hidden-in-desk-bought-at-auction-145855/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/church-elder-s-secret-wwii-papers-discovered> - In May 2025, a folder of Second World War papers belonging to Ian Rodger, a Church of Scotland elder from Glasgow, was found hidden in a desk bought at auction by Martin Reid from Lanark. The documents, including photographs, letters, and maps, detailed the British Army's involvement in the Italian campaign against Nazi Germany. After an appeal through the Church of Scotland, Ian Rodger's son, Sandy, residing in Rye, England, was located, and the documents were returned to him. ([premierchristian.news](https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/church-elder-s-secret-wwii-papers-discovered?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://keyt.com/health/2021/01/19/man-reunited-with-dads-wwii-documents-after-police-found-them-by-chance/> - In January 2021, Carl Wolfe from Western Wyandotte County, Kansas, was reunited with his father's World War II documents after they were found by police in a vacant motel. The documents, including promotion papers, had been missing for at least five years. Carl Wolfe expressed his gratitude, stating that the documents were part of his father's life story and reflected his honorable and conscientious nature. ([keyt.com](https://keyt.com/health/2021/01/19/man-reunited-with-dads-wwii-documents-after-police-found-them-by-chance/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.wwjohnston.net/dadswar/> - The 'Dad's War' website by Wesley Johnston offers resources and personal accounts for those researching their fathers' World War II stories. It includes links to various personal narratives, such as Marshall Stelzriede's experiences with the 96th Heavy Bomb Group and Sheldon Rhodes's tribute to his father Harold Rhodes, who flew 29 missions with the 8th Air Force's 389th Bomb Group. The site serves as a valuable tool for preserving and sharing wartime memories. ([wwjohnston.net](https://www.wwjohnston.net/dadswar/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380060314_4_Meeting_in_No_Man’s_Land_Motives_for_remembrance_among_British_and_German_descendants> - This academic paper explores the motives for remembrance among British and German descendants of World War II soldiers. It discusses how personal connections to wartime history influence the desire to preserve and share memories. The study highlights the role of objects, such as photographs and letters, in maintaining the communicative memory of war and the importance of digital preservation efforts. ([researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380060314_4_Meeting_in_No_Man%27s_Land_Motives_for_remembrance_among_British_and_German_descendants?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://wartimememoriesproject.com/ww2/homefront/index.php> - The Wartime Memories Project is an online archive dedicated to preserving personal accounts from the Home Front during World War II. It features stories from individuals who lived through the war, including those who contributed to the war effort on the home front. The project aims to collect and share these memories to provide a comprehensive understanding of civilian life during the war. ([wartimememoriesproject.com](https://wartimememoriesproject.com/ww2/homefront/index.php?utm_source=openai))