

Good morning Sam

Following your initial proposition, the East Wittering Local History Group would like to put forward two potential suggestions to be considered when naming the new flats at Middleton Close (REF: EWB/19/02494/FU L).

We feel strongly that incorporating the history of our villages into the naming of future housing projects could provide a wonderful opportunity to engage current residents with our past and reinforce our intrinsic sense of communal identity through civic pride and local representation.

We would, therefore, like to propose that the new housing incorporates either the word 'FABIUS', or the word 'JUNO' into their address (e.g. Fabius Court).

'FABIUS' was the official title given to six naval exercises conducted in May 1944, and at the time they constituted the greatest amphibious military operation in history. 'Force J', as it was codenamed, was assigned to 'invade' Bracklesham during Fabius III. The Force was composed chiefly of elements from the Canadian 7th and 8th Brigades, along with extensive support from the Royal Navy. Surviving Naval Orders from the time detail how an armada of 230 landing crafts carrying tens of thousands of soldiers descended upon our villages while Prime Minister Winston Churchill observed the awesome spectacle from the Bracklesham Bay Hotel.

When D-Day finally came, these Canadian Divisions (along with Royal Marine Support) transferred the lessons of Fabius into decisive military success at 'JUNO' beach. By the evening of June 6th, they had advanced six miles inland, further than any other Allied Division, and won a precarious toehold into Hitler's Fortress Europa.

The first paragraph in the liberation of Europe had been written that day. But among its footnotes the trampled rhubarb patches and devastated beach huts of Bracklesham found their place in one of the most significant military victories in world history.

We believe this would also be an appropriate way of commemorating the many thousands of Canadian soldiers who passed through our villages between 1941 and 1944, forging behind many wonderful memories and friendships as they did so. Indeed, when it came time for the Black Watch to finally leave our villages in May 1943, the diarist noted, with a hint of wistfulness, that "Many strong friendships have been formed in this part of the country and the general feeling on our forthcoming departure is one of deep regret". In the words of Neil Theobald, a resident of Bracklesham during the war: "The soldiers became 'our Canadians' and were made very welcome by us residents".

We hope that you will consider our proposal with an open mind and would like to offer our sincere gratitude at being afforded the opportunity to contribute to this discussion.

Kind regards

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[REDACTED] | General Secretary
East Wittering Local History Group

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