

**Service at Noirmont War Memorial
Sunday 8th May 2016**

1. I have been asked to say a few words and I am pleased to have the opportunity of doing so. Today's service is to commemorate those fallen from 250 or more Islanders who lost their lives during the Second World War – in many cases Islanders who left the Island in 1939 or 1940 to help the war effort, in others perhaps those who were in the regular forces at the time war broke out.

2. My father was one who left the Island in 1940 following a family conference about who should go and who should stay. These were difficult decisions with many torn between a desire to serve their country and a recognition of the need to maintain farms or businesses in service of the local community, or indeed caring for elderly or young relatives. In my father's case, it turned out that his eyesight was such that he was not medically fit for active combat, and he spent the war in the RAF loosely attached to the intelligence service seeking to decode German messages – but even so, he was fortunate, living in Bromley, to avoid injury or death during the German bombing raids of the Blitz, on one occasion returning from the air-raid shelter to find a block of concrete over his pillow, his lodgings having been damaged in the raid.

3. Many people were not so lucky and it is them we remember today, out here on this headland where this memorial stone is placed. Most places of remembrance are quiet restful places, but out here,

the wind of God is certainly with us! But somehow that is just as appropriate for it is vibrant place.

4. It is right, so it seems to me, that if possible the memorial service should take place on VE Day rather than on Liberation Day. Today is a celebration of victory and a remembrance of those who gave their lives to achieve it. In Churchill's memorable statement to the House of Commons he said "*You ask what is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.*"
5. All that was no doubt true and we can and should rejoice in victory over an evil regime. This service is about remembering the price paid by Islanders to achieve it.