

# One of Dover's Quiet Heroes David Norris 1921 - 2021

Margarita (Maggie) Waite

David Norris was born in Winchelsea Road and attended Belgrave Road School and then St Martin's, until he left at age 14. He swam for the school, belonged to 2nd Dover Sea Scouts and was a talented pianist, playing from seven years old.



David Norris (1921–2021)

A bricklayer by trade, after completing his apprenticeship he worked on the construction of Old Park Barracks right up to the outbreak of war. David then enlisted in the Merchant Navy, serving initially on the troopship *King George V* which had originally been built for the Inveraray service. From 1935 the vessel was based in Oban, cruising round Mull to Iona, Staffa, and Fort William. In 1940, after being requisitioned as a troop carrier, she helped rescue thousands of British soldiers from Dunkirk, making six trips in all, returning the soldiers to both Dover and Margate piers. David was awarded the Dunkirk medal.

He also took part in the Normandy landings in 1944, serving on the supply vessel *Jesse J Cotting*, making four trips to the Utah and Omaha beaches carrying vital supplies.

In 2017 he was awarded the French Legion of Honour, which was presented by Mr James Ryeland, the Honorary Consul for France, at Dover.

After the war, David returned to bricklaying and built his house in River, where he lived for the rest of his life. He also had his own fishing boat, which he kept on Dover beach for many years. He cooked, grew his own vegetables and made preserves well into his nineties. When his beloved wife of sixty years became ill in her later life, one of his greatest achievements was the

loving care that he gave her, at home, right up to her death in 2016.

David was always cheerful and was as big a hero in his personal life as he was during the war.



French Legion of Honour