

King and Queen of Jordan attend the funeral of the King's grandfather



Amman, Dec. 2 (Petra)--His Majesty King Abdullah II led the funeral of his maternal grandfather and father of Her Royal Highness Princess Muna Al Hussein, Major General Walter Gardiner, who passed away yesterday.

Also attending the special funeral were Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hussein Bin Abdullah II, Her Royal Highness Princess Muna Al Hussein and other members of the Royal family.

King Abdullah and princes accepted condolences from Royal family members, the prime minister, the Senate president, speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, president of the Judicial Council, Royal Court chief, the King's advisors, cabinet members, chief justice, the grand mufti, chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, directors of the intelligence, gendarmerie, public security and civil defence departments, members of the diplomatic corps in Jordan as well as high ranking civic and military officials.

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, Her Royal Highness Princess Muna Al Hussein, and other princesses also accepted condolences from Royal family members, wives of senior civic and military officials, women ministers, and members of the Senate and the Lower House of parliament and wives of foreign diplomats.

The Royal Court announced that people can record their sympathies in a Book of Condolences at the Royal Court on Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00pm until the mourning period at the Royal Court ends on Tuesday.



Lieutenant-Colonel Tony Gardiner, who died on December 1<sup>st</sup> aged 95, began his military career aged 14 as a carpenter and ended it as grandfather of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan; in the meantime he was awarded an MC for his bravery during the Italian Campaign.

He was born Walter Percy Gardiner on December 12<sup>th</sup> 1914 at Stanford, Norfolk, to Arthur Gardiner, a gamekeeper, and the former Mabel Jane Tovell. In 1929 he joined the Army, qualifying as a military carpenter at the Army Technical School (Boys) Chepstow with number 19 Group and, on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1932 at the age of 17, joining the Royal Engineers. Military friends and colleagues always knew him as Tony.

During the 1930s he was promoted through the NCO ranks. His first taste of the Middle East, which was to play such a large part in his later life, came in 1936, when his squadron was sent to Palestine for 18 months to clear roads of mines and ensure water supplies.

At the outbreak of the Second World War he was sent to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. Commissioned in the field, he was responsible during the retreat through Dunkirk for ensuring water supplies on the beachheads, and later spent many frantic hours rowing by moonlight back and forth between the beach and the flotilla of rescue boats in order to evacuate personnel.

Back in England, he took on responsibility for the beach defences in Devon and Cornwall, where many of his pillboxes still stand today.

By 1942 he was commanding 558 Company RE, which deployed to North Africa in the Windsor Castle in spring 1943. En-route the ship was hit by an air-launched torpedo, but she was able to limp on towards Algeria; with the hull taking in water, the embarked troops had to trim the ship by moving around the decks. Windsor Castle sank about 100 miles off Algiers some 13 hours after being hit, but all 3,000 people aboard, save one, were safely embarked on to other vessels. Once ashore, Gardiner's squadron joined the campaign across North Africa, which culminated for his men with the reconstruction of Tunis harbour.

On at least one occasion, under Stuka attack, he found himself taking very uncomfortable refuge in a cactus farm.

In 1943 Gardiner took command of 271 Field Company (46 Division), providing close support to combat operations during the Italian Campaign and seeing intense action at Monte Cassino and in the advance to the Gothic Line. This involved, among many other things, moving heavy supplies by mule across tough terrain around the rivers Arno and Carigliano.

His company found itself constructing bridges under continuous enemy shellfire. At one point he and his colleagues were sleeping on the upper floor of a house while, unknown to them, German troops were searching the ground floor. Gardiner was awarded an MC, his citation noting that his gallantry and coolness under fire had a marked effect in maintaining the efficiency and high morale of his company even though it had suffered considerable casualties. Promoted lieutenant-colonel, Gardiner subsequently became responsible for the Divisional Engineer troops. Transferring from Italy to Salonika, his war ended with the capitulation of Axis forces in Greece and, in 1946, he left the Service to become a landlord at Bridge, in Kent.

Tony Gardiner re-joined the Army in 1952 and, in 1954, was posted to Malaysia as the Garrison Engineer at Selangor and Penang. But it was not until the end of the decade that he had the opportunity to return to the Middle East.

This occurred when he moved with his family to Jordan to help organise the engineering units of the Hashemite Kingdom's own Armed Forces. It was a turbulent time for Jordan and for King Hussein, as he struggled to resist interference from the Pan-Arabist union of Syria and Egypt, led from Cairo by Nasser.

Jordan was regarded by some in the Arab world as dangerously pro-Western and, on August 29 1960 Prime Minister Hazza Majali was killed along with 12 other officials by a bomb planted next to his desk. A second bomb exploded 40 minutes later causing further loss of life; this would undoubtedly have included the King had his defence minister not dissuaded him from going to the scene after the first blast. Typically, Tony Gardiner was among the first on the scene to help with the clearance operation.