



# What role did Barking and Dagenham play during WW2?

## A Biography of Sir Tasker Watkins

Sir Tasker Watkins was an incredible man who showed bravery and courage during World War 2. He was born in Glamorgan, Wales, in 1918 but as a teenager, his parents moved to Dagenham in search of work. He grew up there and attended school in Romford. He loved sports and was a captain of the cricket and football teams. He also played rugby, which became a significant part of his life.



In 1939, when World War 2 began, Watkins joined the British Army. In 1941, he married Eirwen Evans at the Dagenham Parish Church. Impressing in the army, Watkins received officer training and became a second lieutenant in the Welch Regiment. He was assigned to the 1/5th Battalion, which was part of the 53rd (Welsh) Infantry Division. The division moved to France in June 1944, shortly after the D-Day landings.

On the 16th of August, 1944, Watkins, now a lieutenant, displayed remarkable bravery. He was the only officer remaining in his company during a challenging battle. Undeterred, he fearlessly led his men in an assault on a German machine gun post. As the other officers fell, Sir Tasker Watkins charged forward, eliminating two enemy posts and saving his men's lives. Despite being outnumbered, he even led a bayonet charge, helping his unit overcome a counter-attack. Watkins' courage and disregard for his own safety had a decisive impact on the outcome of the battle.

For his incredible bravery, Watkins was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest British honour for valour in the face of the enemy. His citation described his "superb gallantry" and his role in saving lives during a difficult period.



Watkins was a national hero, born in Wales but made in Dagenham. Despite his heroic achievements, Watkins remained humble. He rarely spoke about the war and believed that it was just part of being a soldier. He emphasised the importance of camaraderie and caring for fellow human beings. In 1971 because of his work as a judge he was knighted, making him Sir Tasker Watkins.

Sir Tasker Watkins passed away in 2007, leaving behind a legacy of bravery and selflessness. His Victoria Cross is displayed in the Lord Ashcroft Gallery in the Imperial War Museum. He will always be remembered as a hero from Dagenham who fought with incredible courage during World War 2.





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## A Biography of Sir Tasker Watkins - Comprehension

1. Why did Sir Tasker Watkins move to Dagenham?

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2. Where did Sir Tasker Watkins get married?

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3. What historic event happened shortly before the 53rd (Welsh) Infantry Division moved to France?

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4. Explain what he did that was incredibly brave.

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5. What did Sir Tasker Watkins receive for his bravery?

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6. What word is used in the text that means, 'great courage in the face of danger'?

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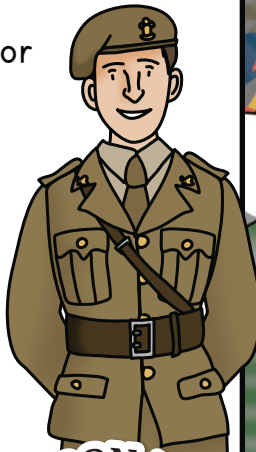




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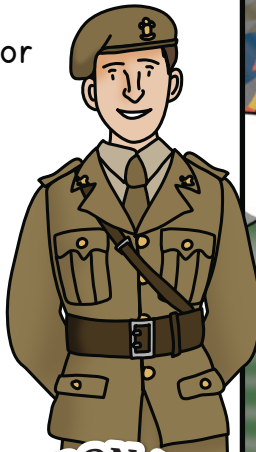
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#### 1. Why did Sir Tasker Watkins move to Dagenham?

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#### 2. Where did Sir Tasker Watkins get married?

Sir Tasker Watkins married Eirwen Evans at Dagenham Parish Church.

#### 3. What historic event happened shortly before the 53rd (Welsh) Infantry Division moved to France?

The D-Day landings happened shortly before his division moved to France.

#### 4. Explain what he did that was incredibly brave.

Sir Tasker Watkins bravely led an attack on a German machine gun post continuing even as soldiers fell around him. He took out two enemy posts and his actions saved the lives of many of his men.

#### 5. What did Sir Tasker Watkins receive for his bravery?

For his bravery, Sir Tasker Watkins received the Victoria Cross which is the highest British honour.

#### 6. What word is used in the text that means, 'great courage in the face of danger'?

The word valour means great courage in the face of danger.







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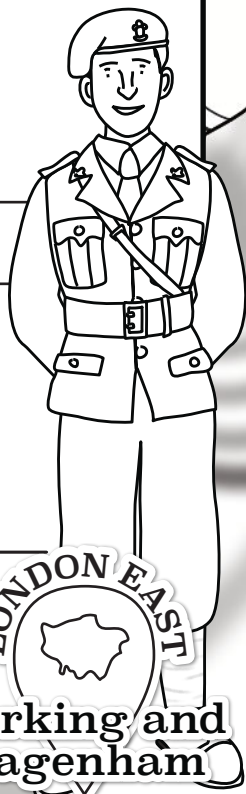
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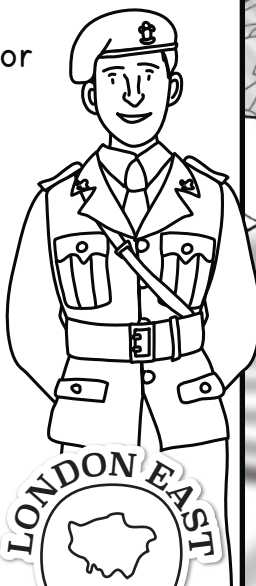




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**Barking and Dagenham**



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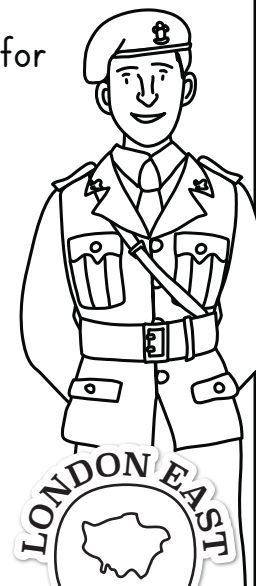
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# Local History

Historic England and Teacher's Pet have come together to bring you a collection of free resources that you can use in your local history teaching.

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Historic England



Teacher's Pet

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## Who are Teacher's Pet?

Teacher's Pet have been providing downloadable and playable educational content to early years and primary school teachers for over 14 years. We cover all areas of the curriculum and use a team of in-house teachers and designers to create engaging and memorable concepts, that the children will love.

## Why local history?

At [Teacher's Pet](#) we want to empower primary school teachers by giving them the tools they need to deliver inspiring and thoughtful lessons about the local area and its history. We believe local history teaching has such an important part to play in a child's wellbeing – helping to give children a sense of pride in where they live.

Our Local History project is designed to provide teachers across the UK with everything they need to successfully carry out a full scheme of teaching about their local area, through key enquiry questions and source led activities.

Working with [Historic England](#) gives us access to archived maps and photos for resources and information from knowledgeable local historians, as well helping us to provide the content to you free of charge.

For more information about our Local History project or to find out more about Teacher's Pet Classroom Resources, please visit our website.