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As Lord Bramall dies at 95, not one of the detectives who hounded him over false sex abuse claims has been punished



THE HERO WHO DIED WITHOUT JUSTICE

Ordeal: Lord Bramall's home was raided by police

THE war hero hounded by police over false child abuse claims has died without a single officer being held to account.

The final years of Lord Bramall,

By Stephen Wright
Associate News Editor

who was wounded in the D-Day landings, were ruined by Scotland Yard's disgraceful inquiry. Indulged by incompetent police, a wicked

fantasist nearly ruined the reputation of the infantryman who rose to head of the Armed Forces.

The field marshal's home was raided on the uncorroborated word of 'Nick', real name Carl Beech, and he was subjected to a humiliating 100-minute interview under cau-

tion. Beech was jailed for 18 years in July but Lord Bramall, who was 95, said police should have been in the dock too.

He accused Scotland Yard of perverting the course of justice and of raiding his home for public relations

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reasons. His wife of 66 years was terminally ill when 20 officers carried out the search in 2015.

In his last newspaper interview in July he said he was investigated for almost a year even though the then head of the Metropolitan Police, Bernard Hogan-Howe, knew he was innocent.

A harrowing victim impact statement penned by the peer – spelling out how Beech's lies and Scotland Yard's shocking inquiry into them had wrecked his life – was read out at Newcastle Crown Court as his accuser was sentenced.

Last night the widow of former Tory home secretary Leon Brittan, also falsely accused of child sex abuse by Beech, led tributes to Lord Bramall.

Lady Diana Brittan said: 'I got to know [him] in difficult circumstances but he was a truly remarkable man and he became a close friend. He faced a great many challenges in his later life but, even in his nineties, he had a great strength of character that carried him forward and supported those around him.'

'He was a deeply compassionate individual who was totally devoted to serving his country, both as a soldier and as a public servant.'

Lord Bramall died at home a few days after being released from hospital, where his health had declined sharply in recent weeks. He lived to see the 100th anniversary of the Armistice Day celebrations on Monday.

Under pressure from Labour's deputy leader Tom Watson, Scotland Yard officers led by former Met deputy assistant commissioner Steve Rodhouse took Beech's lies seriously and ruined Lord Bramall's final years.

After Operation Midland closed without any arrests or charges in 2016, the war hero received a belated apology from the Met and £100,000 compensation.

Last night Met commissioner Cressida Dick, who endorsed the launch of Operation Midland and has admitted errors of her own in overseeing the early stages of the inquiry, said she was 'very sad' to hear of Lord Bramall's death.

'I met him recently to apologise personally for the great damage the Metropolitan Police investigation into Carl Beech's false allegations has had on him and his family,' she said last night.

'It was very humbling to be in his company and hear first-hand his experience. He was a great man, a brilliant soldier and leader, and much loved family man. He was a true gentleman and will be hugely missed.'

In his impact statement, Lord Bramall

'Brilliant soldier and leader'

wrote: 'Of course, it is a matter of public record that the Metropolitan Police apologised to me for their conduct towards me and the then commissioner stated that I was innocent of the allegations against me. Despite this, mud sticks.'

His death will reignite the row over the 'whitewash' report by the police watchdog which cleared five Operation Midland officers of misconduct – four of whom were not even interviewed in person.

Sir Bernard, who as Met chief oversaw the shambles, has been made a peer; Mr Rodhouse has been promoted to head of operations at the National Crime Agency; and Diane Tudway, who was in day-to-day charge of Operation Midland, was promoted to superintendent while under investigation for alleged misconduct and retired from the force.

Retired High Court judge Richard Henriques wrote a scathing article in the Daily Mail this summer about Operation Midland, alleging that police had broken the law to search the homes of the war hero and other VIPs.

In a second article in October, Sir Richard attacked the 'flawed' Independent Office for Police Conduct inquiry into the five officers, highlighting 'gross and inexcusable delays'. In 2016 he wrote a report identifying 43 major errors in £2.5million Operation Midland.

Paying tribute to Lord Bramall, chief of the defence staff General Sir Nick Carter said: 'He was a remarkable soldier who served our country with great bravery and dedication over many decades, inspiring his many subordinates, and overseeing significant change as a chief of staff that we still benefit from today.'

'We will all miss his wisdom, his generosity and his rifleman's lightness of touch.'

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DECORATED BY MONTY

Honour: Field Marshal Montgomery pins on his Military Cross in 1945



PROUD BESIDE THE QUEEN

Distinguished position: Watching the VJ Day



iviversary parade



GRILLED BY DETECTIVES

Quiz: A still from his police interview, aged 91, and (right) with his late wife and son



WITH HIS LOVING FAMILY

SHORTLY after landing on the D-Day beaches in June 1944, Lieutenant Edwin Bramall was on his way back home again. A German 88mm field gun had opened up on his company's flank near the village of Maltot, killing many of his comrades. Bramall was the only survivor in his immediate group and was so badly wounded that he had to be evacuated back to England and thence to a hospital in Edinburgh.

Just five weeks later, however, he was back in the thick of the action in Normandy only to be wounded and hospitalised again, this time with shrapnel in his shoulder. A mere three days later, he had discharged himself and was leading his platoon into action once more. And he had not even come of age.

Towards the end of 1944, young Bramall spent his 21st birthday in a snow-covered Belgian slit trench, celebrating the fact that he had just been awarded the Military Cross for his assault on a forest infested with German snipers and mortars. He fought on into Germany, witnessed the horrors of Belsen concentration camp and ended the war in Hiroshima where he saw, at first hand, the aftermath of atomic warfare.

Yet, for all these experiences – the like of which few of us could possibly imagine – nothing would prove as wounding as an attack that came towards the very end of his life.

At least Field Marshal Lord Bramall KG GCB OBE MC, who has died at the age of 95, has gone to his Maker safe in the knowledge that the man who tried to destroy him with fabricated accusations is now behind bars and wholly discredited.

It was just a pity that he did not survive to see the police officers behind this monstrous ordeal brought to justice, too.

'Dwin' Bramall, devoted husband, father and grandfather, was one of the outstanding military figures of the last century.

He not only rose to the very top of the Army – just in time for the Falklands War – but went on to direct national defence strategy, run umpteen national organisations and reshape conventional military thinking with a sharp, original, questing brain.

Yet none of this mattered a jot when a demented fantasist and serial liar known as 'Nick' – real name Carl Beech – made a series of ludicrous claims about child abuse at the hands of an Establishment cabal.

One of the names on Beech's list was Lord Bramall.

Equally staggering was the extent to which credulous, box-ticking Metropolitan Police high-ups – urged on by the former deputy leader of the Labour Party Tom Watson and embarrassed by the unchecked paedophilia of the late Jimmy Savile – gave Beech credence.

They even called his claims 'credible and true', despite a manifest lack of substance. It remains a saga with terrifying

by Robert Hardman

implications for all of us. In March 2015, a team of officers from the Met swooped on the Bramalls' Hampshire home unannounced and ransacked it.

It was an especially harrowing experience since the field marshal was also caring for his wife of 66 years, Avril, who was suffering from Alzheimer's.

The police found nothing. Seven weeks later, he was interviewed for two hours, at the end of which the police remained as clueless – literally – as they had been after the raid. With exquisite tactlessness, the police summoned him to a second interview just days after Avril's death. It proved equally futile.

Yet, it was not until the following year that Scotland Yard finally conceded that they had found nothing to go on. So, Avril died never knowing for sure that her husband was entirely blameless of these repulsive charges.

It was a further ten months before the Met Commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, finally deigned to apologise – and only then after a sustained campaign by family supporters, the Daily Mail and a deeply sympathetic public.

It later transpired that the Met had paid a substantial six-figure sum of damages for its ineptitude. Yet no amount could atone for the hurt felt by a great servant to his country.

In July, as Beech finally received a hefty 18-year prison sentence for his monstrous lies, Lord Bramall issued a lengthy state-

ment via his solicitor. He had been dismayed by the impact of the police raid on his sick wife and also the reverberations around a tiny rural village.

The 20-strong police squad had made sure that everyone knew exactly what they were up to at the Bramalls' home, especially when some of them adjourned to the local pub for lunch.

Under interview, he wrote, the officers had failed to give him details of the claims against him. He was too modest to add that

he was interviewed by such a junior policeman that the entire process had to be repeated, not that it yielded any further information. For this was a witch-hunt devoid of a witch.

As Lord Bramall told the court, he felt grievously let down by a nation for which he had risked everything. 'Above all what, really upset me is this,' he wrote. 'My record of public service speaks for itself. In service of my Queen and Country I have done all that has been required of me. I have suffered both physically

and emotionally as a result and did so without regret or complaint. I thought I could be hurt no more. I can honestly say however I was never as badly wounded in all my time in the military as I have been by the allegations made by 'Nick'.

These are devastating words for a police force still desperately trying to bury one of the most ignominious chapters in its history.

HOUNDED BY A FANTASIST

Before he was 21 he'd survived Normandy – twice. He went on to the very top of our Armed Forces. Yet Lord Bramall died still scarred by Carl Beech's ludicrous accusations that were swallowed by police... who remain unpunished



'NICK', HIS ACCUSER

Lies: Beech, initially known only as Nick, was eventually jailed for perverting the course of justice in July

ets) in 1943, he served with the regiment through one bloody battle after another right across Europe until the German surrender in May 1945.

He was then assigned to the airborne forces preparing for the invasion of Japan, only to be spared that grim prospect by the atomic bombs which landed on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Bramall later reflected that he had witnessed not dissimilar destruction in Hamburg, as well as the horrors of the Nazi concentration camp at Belsen; they were all images that would remain with him for life.

With the war over, he was finally offered that place at Oxford but, instead, opted to remain in the

Lieutenant of Greater London. He had noticed that one of the spurs on his uniform was coming loose and was mortified.

Then he had a bright idea. He asked if one of the photographers in the press pen might have a toolkit and an obliging snapper got down on all fours to whack the errant spur back into place, for which the field marshal was profusely grateful.

He was clearly cut out for success at an early age. It was just a question of what sort of success. His father's family had once been prosperous cotton traders – distantly

related to the Tory prime minister Robert Peel – but the money was running low by the time Edwin was sent to Elstree prep school and then to Eton.

There he excelled at cricket, scoring the winning run in the 1942 Eton-Harrow match, and also at art. At the age of just 16, he had two paintings accepted for the Royal Academy's summer exhibition.

Bramall was deemed well up to scratch for university entrance to Oxford but, by then, war had intervened. Commissioned in to the King's Rifles (later the Green Jack-