

ducer of ducks for the Chinese restaurant trade in Australia. Although he had funded his initial businesses through his many winnings at poker, he was soon a millionaire in his own right. He was also actively involved in the anti-war movement and later was awarded a United Nations Medal for Peace for his involvement in the anti-nuclear movement.

At the end of the Eighties, he completed his memoirs and returned to the US, where he first lived in a remote valley in Montana but later moved to Greenwich, an affluent commuter suburb in Connecticut. Later, the American army returned all of his military awards to him.

He became a respected television commentator and defence writer for *Newsweek*, covering the first Gulf War. Inevitably though, he fell foul of the editor when he refused to cover some minor Latin American hostage crisis and divine what the US Special Forces were going to do to release the hostages. He maintained his own website (www.hackworth.com) which was heavily visited by serving troops, for whom he remained a legend. He was a strong advocate of military reform, urging the creation of a more streamlined force.

David Hackworth was a short, heavily built man, who exuded a raw charisma. There was nothing egocentric about him but he subliminally projected a warrior-like mien. He spoke in short, gruff sentences and was not someone to cross in any circumstances. During the Vietnam War, a wide-eyed Special Forces soldier barged into a poker game in which he was playing and ostentatiously placed his loaded Colt 45 automatic on the table. Hackworth did not raise his voice but merely said, "Son, unless you are going to eat that 45, can you put it back in your holster right now?" In the first Gulf War, a group of French foreign correspondents initially ignored his polite request to cease smoking but hurriedly stubbed out their cigarettes when he suggested what his next step might be.

He suffered from bladder cancer, which his friends believe could have been triggered by the chemical defoliants sprayed indiscriminately by the US Air Force in Vietnam. Even here, he saw the bright side, saying that his newly installed bladder now gave him a capacity of one litre.

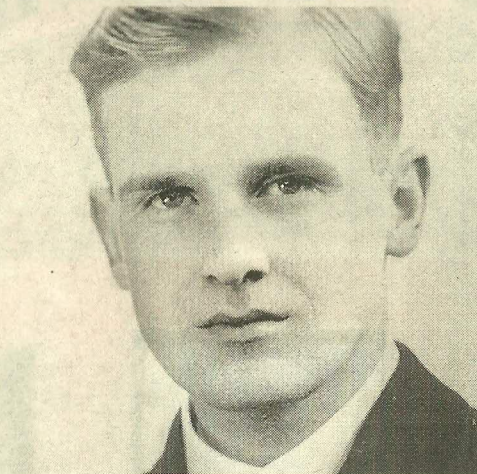
Hackworth will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia, with full military honours later this month.

Bruce Palling

David Haskell Hackworth, soldier and writer: born Venice, California 11 November 1931; married first Patricia Leonard (one son, two daughters; marriage dissolved), second Peter Margaret Cox (one son; marriage dissolved), third Eilhys England (one stepdaughter); died Tijuana, Mexico 4 May 2005.

LT-CDR JOHN RUSSELL

Beach-master who lost a leg at Anzio



Russell: 'without the shadows'

Early in the Second World War John Russell won a Distinguished Service Cross serving on destroyers against U-boats in the Mediterranean. At Anzio, where he was commander of "N" section Beachhead Commandos he was awarded a Bar to his DSC. In 1944 he lost his right leg to a shell from "Anzio Annie". With no leg beneath his groin, 90 per cent disabled, and shrapnel that still spilled from his body in the 1970s, Russell had extraordinary balance and patience. He became a horticulturalist and award-winning sailor.

John Russell was born in 1917 at Netley military hospital, where his father was military commandant. King George V, on a visit, picked up John's silver and bone orb rattle off the floor. "I've got one of those and they won't let me put it down," said the King, handing it back to him.

His mother, a violet grower, born Gladwys Miles, died in the 1920 scarlet fever epidemic. His father, Major George Russell, served on Lord Wolseley's relief expedition to Khartoum in 1884. In 1930 the surviving family moved to Instow, on the Torridge estuary in north Devon. John had won a scholarship to Pangbourne naval college. He and his brother frequently sneaked their father's boat to sea, so

their father built one with them: *Flatiron* – it leaked like a sieve. John became midshipman on a South Atlantic fleet destroyer, *Amphion*, based at Simon's Town, South Africa. He did grain runs to Port Elizabeth and transported two long-beam 19th-century sailing ships to Tasmania, for the South African government, keen to preserve these rare vessels.

During the war he served in the Fleet Air Arm, piloting reconnaissance planes to check coastal depths to ascertain safe entrance for supply ships. Then he became principal beach-master at Anzio. The future MP Denis Healey served on the next beach. Russell used gentle warmth and canniness to lead his "N" battalion ("N" for nuts, they called themselves) and to subvert the Americans.

The Germans used glider bombs to attack shipping in the anchorage. The destroyer *Janus* was hit and sunk. Russell found and commandeered two troop carriers belonging to the Americans. Boarding one himself, they set off to rescue survivors. But his American driver proved a reluctant hero. First he announced that he had no petrol and could not go on; but Russell uncovered two full reserve jerry cans. Next the driver complained the vehicle was making water. Russell found the pumps worked perfectly – provided they were switched on. Finally the troop carrier appeared to have developed engine trouble. Russell declared they would return to the shore. He instructed the driver to turn 80 degrees, then 180 degrees, and finally 360 degrees – "with instant recovery in the engine". But of course this meant they were still heading out to sea.

In the darkness they picked up a number of survivors and then set off back to shore. Later an American officer called on Russell to ask him to give the driver a certificate for a citation for his good work. Russell, tongue in cheek, duly certified that the troop carrier had been of great value and that its driver had done everything asked of him.

He married the actress Mary Seymour in 1941: sister of Sir John Chichester Bt. Because the London theatres had grown dark and wages ceased, Seymour had moved to Devon. She portrayed a White Russian, balefully gazing from a train window in Jacques Feyder's fanciful but painterly 1937 film *Knight Without Armour*, starring Robert Donat and Marlene Dietrich.

The years following Russell's disablement were bleak. He moved around Sussex and Hampshire in search of work. A market garden at Battle failed in the Depression. A daughter died of appendicitis, their son was born mentally handicapped. He took a long while to recover, listening to marching bands on Radio 4 daily at 5.45am. Once he painted a drawing room black. The war had created a national empathy with the afterlife. The Russells became spiritualists and attended seances. Yet he saw life from all sides. As his Devon novelist friend Henry Williamson wrote: "John sees things as the sun does; without the shadows."

Returning to Devon changed their fortunes. He became manager of a grain merchant in Barnstaple. At North Devon Farmers he could scale a ladder and run it along a shelf like a stilt. He restored ponds and kept bees by the River Yeo, making boxes of comb honey complete with propolis.

Russell became commodore of the North Devon Yacht Club in 1957. Despite his handicap he won many races: particularly in the Taw Torridge one-design yachts. He used to stow his tin leg up in the forepeak as it got in the way. He frequently sailed with the nearby RAF station commander, who flew across the estuary in his helicopter, which he parked on Instow beach. He had two artificial legs. With only one good leg between them they still won races.

John Russell's grip could crack open two walnuts in his fist. When he was 69, he captured and disarmed an ex-paratrooper wielding a 10in gutting knife in Exeter, who was attacking three policemen. He was awarded the Chief Constable's Good Citizenship Award in 1986. He spent his last 25 years at Ilfracombe, where he kept a caravan, which he lent to anybody he enjoyed meeting while travelling to holiday parks in North Wales and Cornwall. He had a variety of specially adapted Morris 1000s which he drove tortoise-like, exercising his dogs at the helm of the car.

He took his children sailing and understood every nuance of his disabled son's speech and logic. Christopher led his father most willingly into the world of car boot sales, industrial estates and the seafront lights of Ilfracombe.

In 1944 Captain Andrew Grey wrote from Naples: "Have spent the last couple of days at the beach – where things are much the same – except that there's nobody to take *your* place, in any sense of the word." And that private commendation makes sense still, of how he was missed at Anzio by his band of brothers.

Nicholas Johnson

John Blakeley Russell, naval officer: born Netley, Hampshire 11 March 1917; DSC 1942, bar 1944; married 1941 Mary Chichester (one son, two daughters, and one daughter deceased); died Ilfracombe, Devon 11 April 2005.