

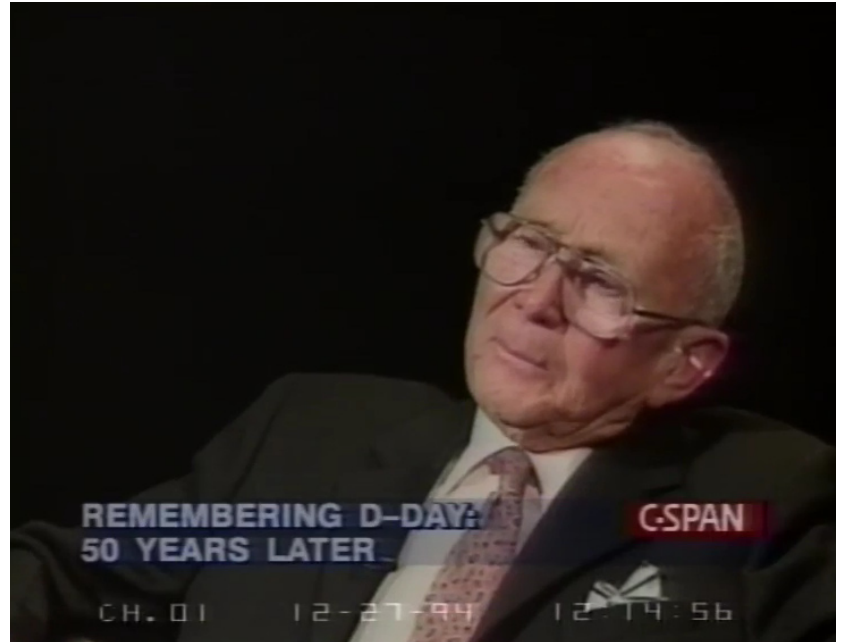
My Great Great Uncle Pat

Patrick Francis Kinna MBE

Private Secretary to Winston Churchill



This is a photograph of him in his flat in Brighton, Sussex.



This is a photograph of him during a television interview in December 1994.

Born: 5th September 1913

Died: 4th March 2009 (aged 95)

Uncle Pat was born in 1913 in south London. He was the youngest of 7 children and his father was a military man called Captain Thomas Kinna. As war was looking likely to happen his brothers who were already in the services said he should also sign up, so he joined the reserves. After only spending one night in Aldershot, Hampshire, he was told that he was going to France to become clerk to the Duke of Windsor (later Edward VIII). As the Germans were drawing closer the Duke was told to leave Paris immediately and Uncle Pat never saw him again. The Duke later wrote to Uncle Pat to say thank you for his work. Shortly after this Uncle Pat received a request from Downing Street to work with...

...WINSTON CHURCHILL

Uncle Pat's new job was to be Confidential Secretary to the Prime Minister. The first trip was to join a warship in Scotland that would take Churchill to a mid-Atlantic meeting with the American President Franklin Roosevelt. Uncle Pat was chosen to work with Churchill because of his quick shorthand (150 words per minute) and his typing (90 words per minute). He accompanied Churchill on many overseas trips including a rather uncomfortable trip to the Ukraine (with a six hour drive!) in 1945 for a meeting with Stalin and Roosevelt.

After the war Churchill lost in the elections and Uncle Pat was asked if he would continue as his private secretary but he declined. He was very tired after the war and Churchill understood his feelings. He wrote to him and included a testimonial which ended:

“He (Uncle Pat) is a man of exceptional diligence, firmness of character and fidelity.”

Uncle Pat was then asked by Ernest Bevin (the Foreign Secretary) to work for him which he did until Bevin died in 1951.

A photograph taken in Moscow in August 1942

*Uncle
Pat*



Winston Churchill

Joseph Stalin



*Uncle Pat & Granny Sue
(My mum's mum)
in the 1980s*



*Uncle Pat in the gardens
where he lived in Brighton
in the 1980s*

Uncle Pat's Obituary

from The Guardian Newspaper

Support The Guardian

Available for everyone, funded by readers

[Contribute →](#)

[Subscribe →](#)

[Search jobs](#) [Dating](#)

[Sign in](#)

[Search](#)

[UK edition](#)

The Guardian

[News](#)

[Opinion](#)

[Sport](#)

[Culture](#)

[Lifestyle](#)

[More](#)

[UK](#) [World](#) [Business](#) [Coronavirus](#) [Football](#) [Environment](#) **[UK politics](#)** [Education](#) [Society](#) [Science](#) [Tech](#) [Global development](#) [Obituaries](#)

Politics past

Patrick Kinna

Confidential secretary to Winston Churchill

Jean-Paul Flintoff

Tue 7 Apr 2009 00:01 BST



Advertisement



Patrick Kinna, who has died aged 95, witnessed many of the most significant allied meetings of the second world war as clerk to the prime minister, Winston Churchill. The job came out of the blue, with a call from Downing Street instructing Kinna to join a warship in Scotland that would take the prime minister to a mid-Atlantic rendezvous with the American president, Franklin Roosevelt.

At that meeting, the prime minister's dictating fluency threatened to smother the president in a flood of long messages. "I was terribly busy all the time," Kinna later recalled. "I spent days and days typing." Asked why he was chosen for this important job, Kinna always said it came down to his great speed at shorthand (150 words per minute) and typing (90 wpm).

From then on, Kinna accompanied Churchill on each of his many overseas trips, which were not always comfortable: getting to Yalta, in Ukraine, for the February 1945 meeting with Stalin and Roosevelt, involved a six-hour drive from the airport along what Churchill called "the Riviera of Hades"; on the way back, Churchill asked to have his clothes deloused.

Kinna recalled another trip: "One year we spent Christmas in the White House. Winston went to the bathroom and told his valet to send me in. So I went along and there he was, as naked as the day he was born, getting in and out of the bath as he dictated. The poor valet was trying to dry him, but Winston wouldn't give him a chance. Then there was a knock on the door and Winston went to open it himself, with nothing on. It was President Roosevelt, in his wheelchair. Winston said: 'You see, Mr President, I have nothing to hide from you.'"

After travelling extensively with Churchill, Kinna got used to the prime minister's eccentricities. And as well as Roosevelt, he saw Stalin at close quarters. On a first visit to the Kremlin, Churchill entered the office Kinna had been given and allowed himself an angry outburst at the expense of "this terrible man Stalin". The room was almost certainly wired. "The next morning Stalin came to Winston's office," Kinna recalled later. "He had obviously heard. He was very nice and polite and sweet - he couldn't afford to tell Winston to buzz off."

Kinna was born, the youngest of seven children, to a military family in south London. Hoping to become a parliamentary reporter, he enrolled after school to learn shorthand and typing. As war with Germany became increasingly likely, Kinna's brothers, already in the services, told him he must sign up before it was too late. So he joined the reserves, "rather than end up in the catering corps, washing dishes".

Sent to Aldershot, Hampshire, in the general call-up, he spent his first night in a tent on the parade ground. The next morning, orderlies told him he was going to France, where he learned he was to serve as clerk to the Duke of Windsor. He was pleased, and served the former king for nearly a year. He found him "a nice person, full of smiles", but never met Wallis Simpson.

As the Germans drew nearer, an order came through that the Duke should leave Paris immediately. Kinna never saw him again, but the Duke wrote to apologise for not having had the opportunity to thank him for his work, and hoping he would get through the war safely. Soon after that, Downing Street called on Kinna to work with Churchill.

After the war, Churchill lost the general election. As leader of the opposition, he asked to see Kinna. "He started talking about the war and the places we had been and the things we'd seen together... Then he asked if I would continue as his private secretary. I felt very honoured, but I wanted to think about it. I was so tired, after all those years of long hours." Churchill habitually worked late into the night: on one occasion, in Moscow, he had started a meeting with Stalin at 11pm.

After thinking it over, Kinna declined. Churchill wrote back saying he understood. Kinna kept that letter, along with a handsome testimonial that had been typed - by whom, Kinna did not recall - but with a last paragraph in Churchill's handwriting: "He [Kinna] is a man of exceptional diligence, firmness of character and fidelity."

Then came another of those phone calls. This time it was Ernest Bevin, the wartime minister of Labour, now foreign secretary. "I wasn't Labour myself," Kinna noted. "I was Conservative. But I liked Bevin. He said: 'I hear you are not going with Winston and I tell you what you are going to do instead. You will come and work with me in the Foreign Office.'"

Kinna worked with Bevin till he died, in office, in 1951. One of Bevin's friends, a businessman with a timber company, offered Kinna his next job. It was fine, and he rose to become personnel director before his retirement in the mid-1970s, but hardly as glamorous as what had gone before.