47 ROYAL MARINES COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

11th November 2000

A DISPATCH.

Millennium No.1

From Editors to readers.

The intention is to communicate with each other by means of "a dispatch" thrice a year, March, July and November. We three, have volunteered to produce the first three publications. Your contributions are indispensable. We would like 'our' dispatch to be newsy and to entertain. The format we have chosen for this edition is submitted to you – the readers- for your criticism and suggestions with regard to the future format. 'Dispatch' is not an edict from the Committee. It is a circulation to members to ensure that we communicate with each other regularly. **This is your Association so please, please write.**

Chairman's 'Epistle'.

It is by coincidence that I am writing this on Remembrance Day and have just received an e-mail from a friend of a younger generation which I would like to share with you. It reads as follows.

Good evening to you Both (Peter and Mickie)

We would like to convey to you both and to all the veterans of 47 Royal Marine Commando Association, the sincere thanks of our generation for all that you and many others did, and endured, on our behalf in the dark days of W.W.2 all those years ago. We thank you sincerely!!!

Pauline has been doing her best to educate the ten and eleven year olds of a school recently, about those days and the significance of Remembrance Day. Our thoughts, prayers, and humble thanks are with you all, particularly both of you.

Please accept love and best wishes from us both, our family, and on behalf of a large number of other people who WILL remember.

Thank you, and God Bless you all.
Godfrey, Pauline, Nan and all the family.

To continue, I would like to welcome **Peter Spear** and **Sandra Tebbutt** onto the Committee, both having been elected at the AGM. A special welcome, on behalf of all of us, goes to the new members of our Association, **Nick Johnson, Gordon** and **Coral Taylor** and **Bernard Woodgate**. Nick, as many of you will know, has been our faithful bugler at nearly all of our meetings and, indeed, sounded the Last Post at the funeral of one of our members. To Gordon go our grateful thanks for his splendid Video coverage of our reunions, asking only for voluntary contributions to the Association's funds. I have tried for many years to locate Bernard, my old MOA, and finally he is now one of us. I hope that they enjoy being with us as much as we enjoy having them.

News.

You will be proud to know that a Royal Marines Memorial was unveiled in the Mall on 7th May 2000. Known as the Graspan Memorial, it was originally erected in April 1903 to honour the men of the Royal Marines killed in South Africa and China in 1899 to1900. After a recent very considerable refurbishment to the memorial and its surroundings, it has now been dedicated as the official Memorial to all Royal Marines killed on active service.

We have received news from Patricia, wife of **Gerry Brent** of 'A' Troop, now living in Australia. Gerry, at 80 years old and wheel chair bound as the result of Polio some years ago, had been diagnosed as having cancer, and on 6th October underwent a severe operation from which he is now recovering. He is still running his company and Patricia is sure that he is getting better as it seems he is issuing orders and instructions left right and centre. We wish him a rapid recovery.

Also in Australia is **David Walters** of 'Y Troop'. He has been on the phone recently asking for news of the Association. His wife is now happily recovering from a heart attack but poor David has to attend hospital every two weeks for a blood transfusion. He asks to be remembered to his friends in 'Y Troop' and anyone else who might remember him.

Our congratulations go to another member, **Susan Parroy** who, in October received the first "Distinguished Service Award" for her services to Physiotherapy, given by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Well done Susan.

We are delighted to welcome in our midst our new secretary **Mrs. Catherine Snook**. Catherine has been very generously sponsored by **Michael Parroy** to replace **Lynne Goldsmith** who regretfully was forced to resign at the AGM for reasons of ill health. The thanks of all of us go to Lynne for the wonderful work she has done for the Association and the outstanding manner in which she has organised our reunions over the last five years. We wish her a speedy recovery. Catherine's address is: 6, Verrington Park Road, Wincanton, Somerset BA9 9DA. Telephone 01963-34779.

Letters. (See 'Attenshun')

For this, our first issue, we only have one to offer but hope for more from you in the future.

Lannah Battley very kindly offered to write her reminiscences of our October Portsmouth reunion. This is a time consuming affair and she has produced the following splendid account.

47 RM COMMANDO ASSOCIATION REUNION
15th-18th October 2000

The Royal Sailor's Home Club in Portsmouth proved to be the ideal venue for 47 Royal Marines Commando Association's year 2000 Reunion. Old friends greeted each other with happy smiles as they arrived on Sunday, 15th October and met in the foyer, lounges and bar. As well as having an excellent dinner in the restaurant that evening, all the other facilities of the Club were available to residents and some chose to swim and use the Jacuzzi and steam-room. Strangely, spies have provided reliable information that nobody from the group pounded the treadmill or any of the other machines in the gym.

The most important event of the reunion came on Monday morning when the men of 47 honoured their war dead in a ceremony at the memorial stone in the Garden of Remembrance at Eastney Barracks. Royal Marines recruits, five weeks into their training and looking crisp and keen, lined up behind them and four Royal Marines Buglers and a Bandmaster were in attendance to sound the Last Post.

The Rev Bill Matthews, RN, led the Act of Remembrance and in his address related an anecdote of a cafe owner in once-occupied Europe pleased to provide a meal for present-day young servicemen in the absence of her former British liberators, whom she had hoped to meet and feed once more. With so many young recruits present, this seemed a very apt way to stress how the high standards, integrity and reputation of the service get handed on to the next generation. Tom MacAndrew spoke Laurence Binyon's famous words, "They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old..." before laying the wreath at the memorial stone.

There was then time to look around the Royal Marines Museum and shop before lunch in The Bugle Major. We then continued to the D-Day Museum where the stunning D-Day Tapestry rightfully takes pride of place. Later, some journeyed on to the Royal Armoury at Fort Nelson. Here, as well as seeing an enormously varied array of exhibits, the group was able to catch a performance by a talented young actor as a British soldier suffering all the rigours of war while making his way to Dunkirk, and on the beach before his ultimate evacuation by boat to home and safety. The script, based on actual records, ran the gamut from horrendous to humorous with touches of poignancy along the way.

Back at the Club, following pre-dinner drinks, members went to the ballroom to watch a display by HM Royal Marines Band Corps of Drums whose turnout and performance was, of course, second-to-none.

The group then repaired to the Nuffield Lounge for the Reunion Dinner where members of the Corps of Drums, were able to join us. Now in mufti, it became apparent that a couple of the bandsmen were actually women, two of the first to complete their two-year training, keen as mustard and proud to take their places among the men. Following dinner, the Lounge bar remained open on a special extension and many of the veterans were still hardy enough to survive into the small hours. (So I'm told.)

Next day the group visited Portsmouth Dockyard. We were able to see the hulk of the *Mary Rose* and the many preserved artefacts from the wreck, and explore the restored *HMS Warrior,* handsome hybrid of sail and steam and pride of the Navy in Victorian times. All absorbing and fascinating stuff but the conducted tour of Nelson's Flagship *Victory* probably turned out to be the highlight of the day for most.

Fortunately, there was time to return to the Club to rest weary feet before the Annual General Meeting in the Board Room followed by the final dinner of our stay, taken in the restaurant, and a last night-cap, for some, in the bar.

On Wednesday morning it was time for fond farewells as our company dispersed far and wide to Scotland, Wales, France and Spain, among other places, all looking forward to next time.

On behalf of the wives and friends who attended, I'd like to thank the gentlemen of all ranks of 47 Royal Marine Commando Association for giving them the chance to spend such an enjoyable few days in their collective company.

Snippet's Corner.

Extracts from other letters not published. (Nil this issue).

Just a thought.

In the USA, in November, they celebrate 'Thanksgiving Day'. This year it is 'Thank God' that we have a President Elect 'at last'! Or 'Maybe' at the time of writing.

In England, in November, we celebrate 'Guy Fawkes Day'. "The only man to have entered Parliament with honourable intentions!". One of his co-conspirators is the ancestor of a member of this Association. For this reason the Committee has decided to appoint a Master Sergeant at Arms who will inspect the cellars, under tables and under chairs at future AGM's. **You never know with Genes!**

An American Acronym for **George DUBYA Bush.** Dim, Unexciting, Bush-like, Yabbering American.

Pause for thought.. (Contributed by **Carol Winter**).

The World's easiest Quiz

1) How long did the Hundred Years war last?

2) Which country makes Panama hats?

3) From which animal do we get catgut?

4) In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?

5) What is a camel's hair brush made of?

6) The Canary Islands are named after what animal?

7) What was King George VI's first name?

8) What colour is a purple finch?

9) Where are Chinese gooseberries from?

10) How long did the Thirty Years War last?

Answers next March, order your copy now! If any of you would like to send in your answers to our secretary, a prize of a box of chocolates will go to the first correct answer pulled out of the hat.

A corner to 'A' Muse.

O, for a draught of vintage! That hath been
Cool'd along age in the deep-delved earth.
Tasting of Flora and the country green.
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker of warm South,
Full of the true, of the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
and with thee fade away into the forest dim.

J. Keats.

Not Champagne!

Matches and Hatches.

You have not divulged any of your indiscretions for this edition. We look forward to recording many entries in future.

Ladies Corner.

Famous ladies.

The Female Soldier, 1750

On 2 June 1750, in a local London pub, a young marine stunned his fellow soldiers by announcing that "he" was really a woman in disguise. For over two years Hannah Snell had concealed her true sex while serving in a regiment of the Royal Marines. She had sailed to India through great storms and fought in mud-filled trenches at the siege of Pondicherry. She claims to have been severely injured in the battle.

Having recovered from the shock of this revelation, Hannah's mates encouraged her to make the most of her extraordinary story and suggested that she request a pension from the head of the English army, the Duke of Cumberland. Hannah followed this advice and approached the Duke on 16 June 1750 while he was reviewing troops in St. James's Park. Surprised by the curious figure standing before him, the Duke accepted a petition from Hannah, which detailed her many adventures.

Within days, news of Hannah's exploits had trickled into the London press and the public clamoured for more information. Eager to profit from this notoriety, Hannah immediately sold her story to the London publisher, Robert Walker. Her appearances on stage in uniform caused a sensation, and the news of her adventures quickly spread across Britain.

In November 1750, the Royal Chelsea Hospital officially recognised Snell's military service and granted her a lifetime pension. She lived for another forty years, marrying twice and raising two sons. In 1791, Snell was admitted to the lunatic asylum, Bedlam, where she died six months later.

Courtesy the Internet.

Finally, the first granddaughter to apply for membership of 47 RM Commando Association was **Gemma Tebbutt,** daughter of **Sandra Tebbutt**.

Farewell.

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Roy Mansfield of 'B Troop' on6th April. Roy died suddenly at home and the funeral took place on 13th April. . Nick Johnson was present to sound the Last Post to a packed church. Lynne Goldsmith laid a wreath on behalf of the Association. Roy was one of our most ardent members and worked tirelessly for the good of our group. It was Roy we have to thank for finding the Royal Sailor's Home Club, the venue of our last reunion. Our thoughts go out to Jane and we hope that it will not be long before she feels able to join us again at future reunions.

A telephone call was received from Sandra Tebbut on 1st November giving us the sad news that her mother had just passed away peacefully in hospital after a heart attack. Sandra, her brother Frank and daughter Gemma were at her bedside. You may remember that the late Mrs. Eva Tynan was the wife of TSM 'Tiny' Tynan of 'Y' Troop, with whom I had the great privilege to serve. I am sure that the thoughts of all of us will be with Sandra and her family at this difficult time. Flowers were sent on behalf of 47 Commando Association.

'Attenshun'.

Matters requiring your action ASAP.

1. Complete the form of intent for proposed meetings 2001 and return to the secretary as soon as possible. (See appendix)
2. Post your future contributions to 'Dispatch' not later than the end of January for March, the end of June for July and the end of September for November, addressed to Peter Winter.
3. Please amend nominal list enclosed by the secretary and return to her.
4. Subscriptions due, £10.00, on 1st January. Please send these to the secretary for collation and she will forward them to the "Keeper of the Monies", currently John Forfar. Cheques to be made out to 47 RM Commando Association.
5. Your letters to 'Dispatch'.

We propose to publish the best two letters received for each issue, anything up to 400 to 500 words, preferably shorter but not longer. The remainder will receive a mention in 'Snippet's Corner'. Any subject permissible, Personal experiences, Opinions, Current Affairs. (No pornography!). Remember our objective is to be newsy and to entertain and to keep in touch with far away members.

The best letter published – selected by ballot at the AGM – will be awarded four bottles of Champagne, kindly presented by **Peter Spear**, and his or her name recorded on

'The Champagne Scroll of Honour'.

'Bubbles winking at the brim' after the AGM will be obligatory!

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL.