

47 ROYAL MARINE COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

Committee

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DESPATCH 20 July 2009

COMMENT

The 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings proved, as expected, to be a great occasion. This was largely due to the enormous amount of help and support we had, not least the presence of the Commandant General Royal Marines on the 7th June. Major Bob Perry and his team began liaising many months before with the Mayor of Port-en-Bessin. They not only ensured that everything was in place for the new memorial to Captain Terence Cousins, funded by our benefactor, Malcolm Ross, but also helped to expedite the other events in the town. The Mayor, Dr Pierre-Albert Cavey, his staff and a whole host of townspeople provided food, drink and entertainment on a lavish scale for which we cannot thank them enough. Finally, we were able to relax and enjoy the company of the veterans, other Association members and the serving marines who worked so hard. It should be added that, as ever, we thought of those veterans and members who for any number of reasons could not be there. They were not forgotten.

Lannah

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Greetings to all.

We had a very successful and enjoyable pilgrimage to Normandy. Some of us were with our 'carers', in my case two of my daughters, Pat and Glynis. John Baker had his daughter, Kim, to aid and abet and their presence plus that of all the other ladies brightened the days of all us 'old boys'.

The weather was kind to us, not too hot and very little rain and the RM Corps under the auspices of the Commandant General, Garry Robison, Major Bob Perry, Padre Dave Devenney worked their wonders (not forgetting the Corps RSM), arranging services and transport up both the hills to the Features in Port-en-Bessin.

I will not elaborate further but leave that to Lannah, our Editor. Our thanks must go to Betty, who so soon after her bereavement and with the assistance of her daughter, Pauline, worked her usual brilliance in arranging the always complicated travel, accommodation and itinerary for the trip.

Sincere thanks to all who attended and best wishes to all our members.
May your shadows never grow less.

Chuck (C J Harris)

NORMANDY 2009

47 RM Commando Association in Normandy for the 65th anniversary of D-Day

Our arrival in Port-en-Bessin on the 5th June, allowed old friends to meet anew over drinks and food in the Bar de La Maree on the quayside. After a very early start, those able to stay

awake saw the spectacular fireworks laid on along the whole length of the landing beaches. Next morning, our group went to Bayeux Cathedral for a Service of Remembrance with Prince Charles and Gordon Brown in attendance and where HM Ambassador to France, Sir Peter Westmacott, read the lesson. Our invitations extended afterwards to a *vin d'honneur* at the Hotel de Ville hosted by the Mayor of Bayeux.

Back in Port-en-Bessin, townsfolk were walking the route, (as near as possible after 65 years), which 47 Commando took in 1944 from Asnelles, working inland to take the port from the rear. They were joined by, among others, Major Bob Perry RM, Corps RSM Baz Dawe with his wife and Geof Haywood, RMA Poole. Major Mark Bentinck, the Corps Historian, outlined the key events in 1944 along the way with Alexander Wilson translating his account into French. We joined the walkers for a picnic lunch provided by local people at the farm at Fontenaille.

Our group then returned to the Port while the walkers continued on their way. We were there to congratulate and applaud them at the finishing point where Bob Perry laid a wreath at the trail marker on the harbour side.



CGRM, Capt Stonor, RSM Dawe, Francois de Bourgoing & veterans at Allée Professeur John Forfar

Next morning Major Perry accompanied the Commandant General Royal Marines, Major General Garry Robison, to meet the veterans, many of whom remembered him well from the 60th anniversary. We felt tremendously proud that he had interrupted an extremely busy schedule to unveil a new monument and take part in other ceremonies commemorating the liberation of Port-en-Bessin and those who had fallen 65 years ago.

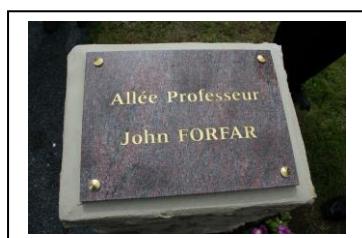
After a wreath-laying at Escures, we made our way to the foot of the Eastern Headland to be transported by jeep up a steep and winding dirt track. These well-maintained WWII vehicles perhaps needed a good run at the gradient. At all events, it was a fast and exciting ride to the top where the new monument to Captain Terence Cousins had been installed. The capture of this headland led by the Captain, at the cost of his life, proved to be the turning point in the capture of the town.

We were welcomed by Docteur Pierre-Albert Cavey, Mayor of Port-en-Bessin. The Corps Regimental Sergeant Major, WO1 B A Dawe, read out an account of the exploits of the Captain and his small band of men. Rev David Devenney RN (Rtd) conducted the service

and the Rolls of Honour for both civilian and military were read out, followed by Chuck Harris speaking the exhortation. Bugler Adam Barber sounded the last post. The Commandant General read the lesson and Captain P F A Stonor RN, Defence Attaché to the British Embassy in Paris, spoke the Act of Commitment.

The very handsome new stone, generously paid for by our great benefactor, Malcolm Ross, was unveiled by Major General Robison and the Mayor of Port-en-Bessin.

Following the exhilarating, kamikaze descent, we rejoined our coach to traverse the town to the main memorial at the Remembrance Gardens on the Western Headland where a similar service took place.



The Standard making it down from the Eastern headland

The town had decided to honour 47 Commando's former MO, Prof John Forfar by naming a road after him. At Allée "Professeur John Forfar", a short ceremony took place and the Commandant General unveiled the handsome stone at the entrance to the lane.

Another brief ceremony took place at the memorial beneath the Round Tower before everyone adjourned to the Salle des Fêtes. There, the Mayor of Port-en-Bessin personally pinned on the commemorative bars which were being presented to each veteran. Major General Robison addressed the men and the many local people present. He thanked the Mayor and his host of helpers for their organisation, hard work and hospitality, not only for today but over the years.

The hospitality continued with an excellent spread and choice of wines and other beverages. Music was provided by a brilliant "GI Band" which played in the Glenn Miller style. To old favourites such as *String of Pearls*, quite a few veterans in their 80s and beyond, proved they could still cut the mustard.

At the final ceremony of the day, the opening of the new police station, a plaque to Henri Gouget was unveiled. Sixty-five years before, the gendarme had guided 47 into the town via ditches and other 'safe' routes and was wounded later that day.

At Chateau Tracy, our final appointment, the whole group, as ever, was made extremely welcome by the widow of the Baronne de Bourgoing and her two sons. Snacks, calvados and other refreshments were pressed upon us. Before leaving, a photo call in front of the Chateau, provided a last chance to get pictures of the Commandant General in our company before he hastened back to duties in the UK.

On our final day, we had time to lay wreaths at Bayeux Cemetery and Sallenelles before heading for the ferry.

Though a typically frantic 47 Cdo itinerary, everyone thoroughly enjoyed the trip. Huge thanks are due to Betty Field, our Secretary, who organised everything in difficult circumstances and to Major Bob Perry and his faithful crew who liaised on our behalf and worked their socks off. Finally, enormous thanks to the Mayor of Port-en-Bessin, his staff and the people of the town who devised so many wonderful events and provided for us so generously.

LB

This report with 2 photos should appear in the next (Jul/Aug) issue of the Globe and Laurel.

NORMANDY EXTRA

We were pleased to welcome **Bill Marshall** who had never been in touch since his service days. As vets are getting rather thin on the ground this was an especially welcome reunion. Bill was directed to 47 via Colin MacMillan of Battleground Tours in West London. Colin takes groups to Normandy and proved to be very familiar with 47 Commando's history.

Trevor M Hughes MBE was able to join us on the 7th. He served as a Captain with HQ Troop and brought his original helmet with him, complete with bullet holes.

Steve Kennedy, the son of the late **Edward Kennedy** of Manchester who served with 47, was too late to get a place on the trip but managed to book a hotel in Caen. We were pleased that he was able to join us at some of the events. He and his wife hope to come on the trip to Walcheren later in the year.

We had Marines from **1 Assault Group RM** (and noticed 1 or 2 familiar faces from last year) at the ceremony at the Cousins memorial where their CO, **Col George Foster**, laid a wreath. At the Western Feature we also had recruits from **985 Troop** in their 12th of 32 weeks training present and looking very smart in RM polo shirts.

While at the Farm at Fontenailles, a journalist from **La Figaro** spoke to the veterans about the battle for the Port and she produced an extensive article which appeared in the paper's Monday edition.

Lt Col I R MacDonald RM MBE (but better known to everyone as Bob) is based in Holland but was able to join us in Normandy in time to walk part of the approach route. We expect to see him quite a bit in Walcheren and among many events laid on, he says it's possible that some landing craft may be present "for those hardy souls who wish to take a trip down memory lane". This will be dependent on what the weather may be doing just then. As ever. But our veterans just might be amphibious in Walcheren again!

CAPT A P O'BRIEN RM MC ON NORMANDY 09

This letter received from Mickie captures, I think, very succinctly how everyone felt about this year's commemorations in Normandy:

Dear Lannah

I know you will write with your customary charm and accuracy of the events of our 65th anniversary of 'D' Day at Port-en-Bessin. However, I thought I would write my thoughts:-

We veterans and family must certainly record our deep appreciation and heartfelt thanks to Major Bob and Reverend David for all the time taken in travel, correspondence, meetings and conversations that were necessary to achieve the improvements at the 'Western Feature', the Gates, plaques of detail, and that most magnificent Eastern Memorial to Terence Cousins – 'dear Theo'.

We acclaim the efficient planning, administration of transport up and down and an epic of Divine Service that will be etched in our memories. A major thank you to Malcolm Ross for his generous financial support through the years, covering the Western and Eastern Features and the memorials to Cousins and Forfar – not forgetting the wine at our dinner on the 7th June. Our thanks to the Council, Mayor, Police and people of Port-en-Bessin for their financial contribution and for their ever warm friendly, yearly welcome. The generous 'Tea Party' at Chateau de Bourgoing at Tracy-sur-Mer and the annual welcome of Francois de Bourgoing and his family. We were greatly honoured yet again by the presence of Major General G S Robison, Commandant General Royal Marines and Captain P F A Stonor, Royal Navy Deputy Defence & Naval Attaché British Embassy Paris.

Thanks and appreciation to Major Bob for the kindly way he marshalled us for events and photographs throughout!

Finally, it was with delight the veterans met the 'young Royals' under training at the Western Feature. We left confident for the future Corps history in battle.

As ever,

Mickie

More correspondence:

(Received via Marc)

From: Michael Cracroft [\[mailto:mcracroft@hotmail.co.uk\]](mailto:mcracroft@hotmail.co.uk) **Sent:** 15 June 2009 21:38

To: info@47commando.org.uk **Subject:** D-day commemoration parade

hello,

My name is Michael Cracroft. I had the honour of meeting some of you when you attended the 65th anniversary of the Normandy invasion. I would just like to say how proud I will be to follow in your brave footsteps one day and hopefully have a green beret of my own. I'm a marine cadet at the moment down in Ashford, Kent, but I will be soon applying for the Royal Marines as an officer. Once again thank you to all of you whom I met, you were an absolute pleasure to talk to you. I was very humbled to talk to men such as yourselves. I would once again like to thank you all, not just for coming to Normandy, but for what you did all those years ago; fighting for our countries freedom. I have the utmost respect for you all and one day I hope I will do you proud. Thank you very much

Yours most sincerely

Michael S. Cracroft (15 years)

This is a member of the RM Cadet unit which attended the Mayor of Bayeux's reception. They marched as a body back to their coach and gave every one of our veterans a very smart eyes-right as they overtook them.

IN MEMORIAM

We have learned of the death of the following veterans and offer sincere condolences to family and friends

Gordon Tye aged 87 years on 11th April 2009, Portsmouth. Gordon, generally known by his nickname Tim (as in Tiny Tim because he was a tall man), joined the Royal Marines in 1938 and served on several ships as a gun layer until he volunteered for the Commandos in 1943. Serving as a corporal with 47 RM Commando, he was wounded in action at Kapelsche Veer. A staunch supporter of the Association, he acted as our Standard Bearer for several years. He also gave great support to Betty Field, our Secretary, following the deaths of both their spouses. Tim came on all our trips, even when his health was beginning to fail. He is sadly missed by us all.

Frank Makings aged 86 years, pre-May 2009, Nottingham. Frank (given name Percy) served with the 10th Battalion RM before training at Achnacarry and joining the newly-formed 47 RM Commando. He landed in both Normandy and Walcheren and stayed with the unit until its disbandment. For many years an active member of Nottingham RMA Branch, he also was a long-time member of 47 RMC Association and became a regular and popular companion on our commemorations and trips abroad. An obituary appeared in the May/June issue of the *Globe & Laurel*.

George W Gregory pre-June 2009. Corporal Gregory's name appeared in an obituary list in the June issue of the Commando Veterans Association publication, "Dispatches". I have no other information but perhaps there are veterans who remember him.

The ashes of **Albert Rutherford**, whose death was recorded in the last issue, were taken by his family to be scattered on Walcheren as he had requested. They were joined by Marc de Bolster and Mariel together with two Dutch families. The ladies are the daughters of the families that Albert and Fred Lanyon were billeted with in Collinsplatte in 1944.

KAPELSCHE VEER

On January 31st the annual commemoration of the fierce fighting around Kapelsche Veer in January 1945 was held. As so often in January, it was bitterly cold. Yet this brutal weather did not stop people from participating in the solemnities. Four members of the Prion Brigade were present, while a number of Dutch commandos observed the ceremonies. The

burgomaster of Kapelsche Veer gave a moving speech, the citizens of the municipality, among them school children, were present in considerable numbers. During the parade the flags of Belgium, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom and Canada were flown at half-mast. For members of 47 Royal Marine Commando wreaths were laid at the monument "Under the Willow" and on the grave of Lt I W Adam.

In 2010, commandos from Roosendaal (the Netherlands) intend to lend a more official character to their contribution to the commemoration. It has also been brought to my notice by officials of the unit responsible for military cemeteries that they still expect to find the mortal remains of a lot more German paratroopers (6th Fallschirmjägerdivision).

Ed Thoden van Velzen

DUTCH COMMANDOS

Many thanks to Leen van der Merbel & Ed Thoden van Velzen for the following article. We look forward to seeing them and the many Dutch Commando veterans in Walcheren this year. They come from far and wide to be present at the Walcheren commemorations and every January at Kapelsche Veer, often in the harshest weather, as mentioned above, and their support is always much appreciated.

Corps Commandos of the Netherlands

The Commando Forces of the Netherlands have two different roots.

The first root is to be found in Achnacarry where a small group of Dutch soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers were given a training by British Commandos. These volunteers came from all over the world, some had managed to escape the Netherlands, then under German occupation, while other volunteers were Dutchmen living abroad. All were united by the common wish to contribute to the liberation of their country. March 22, 1942 could be viewed as the birthday of the Dutch Corps Commandos. On that day a small group of Dutchmen managed to complete their training and received the green beret. They were included in Nr 10 Interallied Commando.

Dutch green berets were among those who landed at West Kapelle and Flushing. Earlier, in September 1944, they had taken part in Operation Market Garden. Others were dropped over occupied territory to assist the Dutch resistance.

One should also look for the beginning of the Dutch Commandos in the so-called "Regiment Speciale Troepen" (Regiment of Special Forces), an elite unit that first fought the Japanese in Java and Timor and later spearheaded against Indonesian guerilla's.

In 1950 both units were merged and became the Korps Commandotroepen. From the beginning they have been stationed at Roosendaal in Brabant, the southern part of the Netherlands. A few years ago the green berets were given a new barracks where, two years ago, they had the pleasure of hosting members of the 47 RMCA. Over the course of many years Dutch Commandos played a role in Nato and UN operations. A group of green berets is at present active in the province of Uruzgan in Afghanistan. Quite recently one of them received the 'Militaire Willmesorde' from Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands for bravery and saving lives under enemy fire. The last time this distinction was given was 54 years ago, during the Korean War.

BACK ISSUES OF THE DESPATCH

Major Bob Perry RM, who has given so much support to the Association is now looking to acquire a complete file of *Despatch*. Unfortunately, there are seven issues which we haven't been able to supply. These are the earliest copies, numbered 1 to 6, produced by our late Chairman, Captain Peter Winter which pre-date August 2003. The other missing issue is No 9, probably dated July or August 2004.

If you have any of these, please could you let Bob know. He will bear the cost of sending them and will, of course, return them intact. You can reach him at:

Major Bob Perry RM, Naval Personnel Team RM, Fleet Headquarters, MP 1-1, West Battery, Whale Island, PORTSMOUTH, PO2 8DX. Alternatively, e-mail:
bob.perry974@mod.uk

IN THE PRESS

GLOBE & LAUREL

Mark Bentinck In the Jan/Feb issue there's an excellent review of our member Mark Bentinck's publication *Vertical Assault, The Story of the Royal Marines Mountain Leaders' Branch* which is a RM Historical Society Special Publication. Royal Marines are just as adept and renowned at cliff climbing as they are at amphibious landings and it is clearly often an essential complement to their skills. The book covers early days centred on Sennen in Cornwall and its development from there. It also records advances in technique and equipment and brings the story right up-to-date with current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Much of the account is through leaders of RM climbing and touches on the many well-known mountaineers who have been Royal Marines. Expeditions to the Himalayas both recent and during the early days are included and the book has plenty of illustrations. Now the Royal Marines Historian, Mark was at one time himself a Royal Marines Reconnaissance Leader. Price £6.50 +£3.50 p&p the book is available from the Royal Marines Museum.

Ken Parker Ken always produces a very readable account of the activities of the Bristol Branch of the RMA in every issue. – Well worth a read even if you're not a Bristolian.

LEGION (the magazine of the Royal British Legion) The summer 2009 issue had a page on selected Normandy events for the 65th anniversary which included for the 6th June "Public walk 'In the footsteps of 47 RM Commando between Asnelles and Port-En-Bessin'."

LE FIGARO Article on Monday, 8th June 2009 as mentioned above.

LA RENAISSANCE DU BESSIN Their "spread" in the 9th June issue is reproduced on the last page.

CALLED TO THE BAR

Nathalie & Stephane requested a photo of themselves with the veterans which they hope to frame and hang in the Bar. That was followed by more pictures with family and friends. This is one of hundreds which must have been taken on several dozen different cameras.



CONGRATULATIONS

Bob Perry received this award last year and details should have appeared in the last issue. I've grovelled a lot so I think he's forgiven me.

ROYAL MARINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY THE DOUGLAS MORRIS AWARD

Major R W Perry Royal Marines

In 2007, while serving at Royal Marines Poole, Major Bob Perry RM led a small team that worked to celebrate the achievements of 47 Royal Marine Commando at Port-en-Bessin in 1944. As well as the construction of a memorial garden overlooking the Port he organised two days of celebrations in France. This included the landing on GOLD beach of serving Royal Marines from landing craft in front of veterans from the Commando. The serving ranks then marched the route taken by their 1944 predecessors, meeting them at selected points. He has also produced a definitive '47 Royal Marine Commando Cemetery and Memorial Register', with photographs of every single grave of those who were killed while serving with the Commando. He has thus played a major part in the commemoration of the deeds of 47 Royal Marine Commando, brought history to life for serving Royal Marines, and has recorded for posterity the accurate details of those who died in this key D-Day operation.

TRACING AND RECORDING THE PAST

Ian Watson

Ian's passing in August 2008 was recorded in our last issue. The family would be interested in having more information about his war service. Some of the following appeared very briefly in the last issue under *In Memoriam*.

Ian took part in the D-day landings on Gold Beach and told his son-in-law that he was a sniper in Number 1 Brigade. He has a testimonial which quotes his service-number Ply/X 103372. He joined the Royal Marines in 1/4/41 and served in the Commando until 7/4/46. Prof. John "Doc" Forfar was able to provide the family with the following information; "As the former Medical Officer of 47 RM Commando I write in response to Marc de Bolster's e-mail regarding Ian Watson. My records contain some information about Marine Ian Watson PlyX 103372. He was certainly a Marine in 47 RM Commando - in No 7 Section of B Troop. His name also appears in a separate list of all members of the Commando. Unfortunately neither of these lists is dated but from the names on the lists, and my knowledge of who was where and when, it would appear that these lists were compiled before D-Day, corroborating the statement that Ian landed on Gold Beach with the commando on D-Day.

I also have a further list of commando members dated 20th February 1945 and Ian Watson's name is also on that. Thus it seems that he served with the commando throughout the European Campaign. I have retained my own medical records and these show that Ian was at the battle for Walcheren (landing 1/11/44). I must have seen him on 4th November 1944 when I went back to the beach dressing station at Westkapelle. He had been diagnosed as suffering from 'exposure'. The North Sea was, of course, cold on 1st November and some of those who had to swim ashore or be pulled ashore from disabled LVTs (Landing Craft Tracked) suffered from hypothermia. (I refer to this in my book *From Omaha to the Scheldt: the Story of 47 Royal Marine Commando* - p.213). If I remember rightly none of those who suffered from exposure and hypothermia, unless also wounded, required evacuation, but in any case due to the stormy conditions at sea and the fact that the accompanying hospital ship had been sunk evacuation was not possible until 8th November and was a traumatic

experience in an open landing craft because of the harshness of the weather (p.242 of my book)".

Ian talked very little about his wartime experiences so the family were glad to have this information about his service.

Further response: Ted Battley was in B Troop and believes he can put a face to the name. He too joined on 1/4/41 (along with 20 or 30 others) and his number was CH/X 103811 (ie via Chatham not Plymouth). This group went to Exton Camp in Devon and formed 125 Squad for 6 weeks preliminary training before joining 10th Battalion RM in Scotland for small-arms training. After this they undertook duties at several different locations including North and South Wales. Those of 10th Battalion who successfully undertook the rigorous training and testing subsequently became the newly-formed 47 RM Commando. Training all over the UK, including "opposed" landings continued until D-Day on 6th June and following a difficult landing, the capture of Port-en-Bessin. Later that year, 1st November 1944 the Commando undertook an even more difficult landing on the island of Walcheren in the Netherlands. Ted was badly wounded on the way in and was eventually evacuated for hospital treatment. He was never able to return to the Commando.

B Troop was composed of 5, 6, 7 and 8 sections (A was 1-4). Ted served in 5 Section and would certainly have been on nodding acquaintance with Ian but would not have had that much contact.

All of the following enquiries have come via Marc on the website:

The family of the late **Arthur Slade** who may have been known as Gurney would be pleased to have more information about his time with 47 which included D-Day. After the war he transferred to HM Submarines. Contact terandviv@blueyonder.co.uk

Allen Withington is wondering if anyone remembers his uncle **Mne John Withington**, who was killed in action on 7 June 1944 in Port-en-Bessin at the age of 19. Allen can be contacted at: awithington@airportlogistics.co.uk, Airport Logistics Home Distribution Limited, Abbey House, 450 Bath Road, Heathrow UB7 0EB, Mobile: 07808 929291

Tony Clarke of the RMA Welwyn Garden Branch is looking for anyone who remembers **Sgt JH Horsfield**. He can be contacted at: anthony.clark44@tiscali.co.uk, or by telephone at 01707276605 (home) or 07879827680 (mobile).



L/Cpl Grimsdell



Fred "Ginger" Tinson



*his friend Paddy
surname unknown*

Simon Grimsdell wants to know if anyone remembers his uncle **L/Cpl HM Grimsdell** (Q-Troop), who was killed in action on 2 November 1944 on Walcheren. Simon can be contacted at: simongrimsdell@yahoo.co.uk

Eddy Coyle is wondering if anyone remembers his uncle **Sgt RHR Brehme** (Y-Troop), who was killed in action on 2 November 1944 on Walcheren. Eddy can be contacted at: edandpeg@hotmail.co.uk

Madeleine Stocks is looking for anyone who might remember her late father **Fred "Ginger" Tinson**. His friend, Paddy, also served in 47 (see photos). Unfortunately she doesn't have his surname but thinks he came from southern Ireland. Madeleine can be contacted at: ms001c0476@blueyonder.co.uk

John Heslop has also been in touch regarding his father **John Roland Heslop** who was a signaller with 47, joining soon after D-Day. He also landed in Walcheren and remained with 47 throughout the rest of the war. Contact johnheslop@cove44.freeserve.co.uk

MONEY MATTERS

The annual subscription of £10 per head runs from January to December. Our Treasurer, Gemma Davison, will be very pleased to receive your subs for this year if you haven't yet got round to it. Cheques should be made payable to "47 RM Commando Association" and sent to:

Mrs G Davison
91 Catherine Street
Rochester
Kent ME1 2HL

WALCHEREN 2009

After France, Holland and another big event for the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the island of Walcheren. Our Dutch friends always plan well in advance and need to know the numbers attending very soon. Please let Betty know just **as soon as possible** if you wish to go. As usual, send a deposit of £25 per head, cheques made payable to "47 RM Commando Association" to:

Mrs E A Field
12 Alfred Road
Stubbington
Fareham
Hants PO14 2QY

Dates: Travelling on 30th October via Dover, returning on 4th November. The usual early start from The Royal Maritime Club means some may wish to book overnight there for the 29th October. Pick up is also possible at Dover Ferry Terminal. All times to be confirmed later.

RMA Membership At a recent meeting in Portsmouth regarding the Walcheren itinerary, Lt Col Ian Grant asked Betty to encourage anyone who was not a member of their local RMA branch to join. They are keen to keep the numbers up and wives and family of RM personnel will also be very welcome as Associate members.

The Royal Marines Museum The Museum at Eastney will have a special exhibition on Walcheren some time after August. There will be a touch screen kiosk featuring a display titled 'Memories to Share'. It will examine the story of Walcheren from three perspectives: the Dutch under occupation, the German invaders and the British liberators. It is being mounted in collaboration with the Imperial War Museum and the Polderhuis Museum in Westkapelle. Director of the Corps Museum, Chris Newbery, is asking anyone who has historic material which they think might be suitable for the exhibition to please get in touch.

Royal British Legion The Legion has released a special D-Day enamel pin badge to mark the 65th anniversary, price £3 including p&p. Call Rajneet Bains on 020 3207 2255 to order.

Email addresses As mentioned before, anyone with an email address who would like their *Despatch* sent electronically, please let me know at lannabatt@aol.com.

MARC'S VIRTUAL MUSEUM

Marc is creating a Virtual Museum online showing some of his considerable WWII collection. You can view it at www.xs4all.nl/~bolster and click on the Union Jack for the version in English. Well worth a look.

47 RM CDO WEBSITE

Among items added recently:

Information from Clifford Sharp, the son of Eric John Sharp who was an Able Seaman on LCT 858 which took part in landing 47 Commando at Le Hamel on D-Day.

Photos

Marc is looking for wartime portrait photos in uniform of men that served in the Commando, to make a collage and if permitted to post on the website as well. If anyone would like to send a high-quality hardcopy or digital scan of such photos (including name, and where possible Troop, service number and age in the photo), please send to:

Marc de Bolster

Elzendreef 29

2272 CG Voorburg

Netherlands

Or email: m.de.bolster@xs4all.nl

Any other material for the website may be sent as above. All originals will be returned safely.

You can access the website at: www.47Commando.org.uk



At Chateau de Tracy with the de Bourgoing family

COMMEMORATIONS A PORT-EN-BESSIN-HUPPAIN 65^e

Le 47th Royal Marine à l'honneur à Port-en-Bessin

■ Dimanche, Port-en-Bessin a rendu hommage à ses libérateurs anglais. Le commando du 47th Royal Marine était représenté par ses valeureux vétérans mais aussi par la jeune génération de militaires.



Inauguration de l'allée John Forfar, vétéran toujours en vie mais non présent, le long de la D 514, ayant participé à cette opération.



Inauguration d'une stèle sur la falaise à la mémoire du capitaine Cousins, décédé durant les combats du 47th Royal Marine Commando pour libérer la ville de Port-en-Bessin.

En présence de la jeune génération du 47th Royal Marine Commando, dépôt de gerbe au jardin du souvenir à l'extrémité du golf.



Dépôts de gerbe place Gaudin.



Remise de médailles de la ville de Port-en-Bessin-Huppain, aux vétérans britanniques ainsi qu'aux vétérans français embarqués sur les croiseurs Montcalm et Georges Leygues, suivie d'un repas offert par la municipalité à ces vétérans et à leur famille.



COMMES : dépôt de gerbe avec les vétérans.



Gilbert Courtel (avec les lunettes) marin sur le croiseur Georges-Leygues (18 ans en 1944) se retrouve à Port pour les cérémonies du 7 Juin. Les croiseurs Georges Leygues et Montcalm (à bord des engagés français, partis d'Angleterre avec les troupes alliées) ont pilonné et détruit les batteries allemandes de Longues-sur-Mer.



Ray Toffeson (85 ans) à droite sur la photo, faisait partie de la 3^e vague d'assaut le 6 Juin 1944 entre la plage d'Omaha et la pointe du Hoc. Blessé dans la barge, il n'a pas participé aux combats et a été envoyé sur un bateau hôpital puis rapatrié. Durant ses 2 années de convalescence il a pratiqué le golf. Recu depuis plus de 20 ans par la famille Levêque de Grandcamp, c'est le fils de la famille qui a l'idée de proposer une plaque pour ce vétéran (les 9 trous du golf portent les noms de fameux libérateurs).

LA RENAISSANCE DU BESSIN - Mardi 9 juin 2009

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