

47 ROYAL MARINE COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

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DESPATCH 23 January 2011

COMMENT

Remembrance has featured a great deal since our last issue and not simply because of ceremonies in November. Our trip to Walcheren in July for the opening of the Liberty Bridge certainly embodied remembrance. Major General John Rose CB MBE and Lt Col Bob MacDonald MBE RM have an article in the current *Globe & Laurel* entitled *Memorials Matter!* stressing their importance in general and with comment on the new bridge at Westkapelle in particular.

At the moment, the Royal Marines Museum has a special exhibition running called *Why Stay Silent* on the same theme of reflection on the past. This opened in October 2010 and runs until October 2011.

Most people connected with our Association would probably agree that memorials and remembrance are often an important part of their present. Just as a funeral can mark the sense of loss for the living, so a more communal occasion may do the same for a much more diverse network of people and add an awareness of the achievements of those mourned.

However, back to now and the future, here's wishing everyone the best for 2011. Lannah

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Marc and Mariel spent a weekend with me from 27th to 31st August. I introduced them to the rural life of North Essex and Suffolk and, of course, several hosteries which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Unfortunately, that weekend Captain A P 'Mickie' O'Brien RM MC passed away at his home in Spain. He was cremated but requested that his devoted daughter, Samantha, should take his ashes back to the UK to be scattered in Cornwall where he spent a happy time rock climbing and instructing others to do so.

On Friday, 1st October, I drove down to Pendoggett to meet up with Sammy at a pub called the Cornish Arms, very civilised. The following day Sammy then drove me down to Gulval near Penzance to scatter some of the ashes on her mother's grave. After a touching ceremony, we were able to refresh ourselves before continuing to Port Gaverne. There we climbed to the top of the cliffs where Mickie used to practise his expertise. There we were joined by several more friends and two RM Buglers. Sammy scattered the rest of our comrade's ashes before we retired to the nearest inn.

We are very fortunate in having Ingrid Fearne taking over the Hon Secretary's job from our dear Betty. We will all have to give her our support in this onerous task.

I joined the Commando Veterans Association and other commando vets on Remembrance weekend in November. At the ceremony at Spean Bridge, I laid a wreath at the foot of the Statue on behalf of 47 RM Commando Association and miracle of miracles there was not

any rain on the Sunday and the sun shone upon us!

Bless you all and the very best of wishes for a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year.

Chuck(C J Harris)

THE ROYAL MARINES LIBERTY BRIDGE

This report and photo appeared in The Globe and Laurel dated September/October 2010.

47 & 48 RM Cdo Associations in Holland

Members of 47 and 48 RM Commando Associations combined to travel on 22nd July to Walcheren for the opening of the Royal Marines Liberty Bridge in Westkapelle on the 23rd. Our bus held only 19 but we were pleased to be joined by other members of both Associations, based in Holland and further afield, who travelled independently.

The bridge, built largely by local people, connects the Tank Monument on the sea wall with the gardens of the Polderhuis Museum and represents the continuing link between the RM Commandos and the local community.

Our day began at the Museum, which records the social history of Westkapelle from earliest times as well as the hard-fought assault to liberate the island commencing on 1st November 1944.

A buffet lunch and refreshments were served in a marquee in the grounds. The fine weather meant that these could be enjoyed outside before the ceremony.



Ted Battley, Arthur Thompson & Ernie Staphnill after their interviews

The start was marked by a fly-past by Victory Wings, some of the WW2 planes swooping incredibly low, the one emblazoned with the RAF roundel receiving great applause.

Prayers at the inauguration were led by Rev Joe King, Hon Chaplain to 48 RM Commando Association. We were welcomed by Lt Colonel Bob MacDonald MBE RM who had organised the whole event and Major General John Rose CB MBE, representing the Commandant General Royal Marines, made the opening address. The service included the singing of *For those in peril on the sea* and the Royal Marines and Commando Prayers. Denis Fawcett of 41 RM Cdo Association spoke the Exhortation and the Last Post was played by a bugler of the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps. The Dedication ended with the symbolic driving home of the last post of the bridge in the traditional pre-mechanisation style of building sea walls and other structures. A massive tripod allowed the weight of the hammer to drop from a great height with a team of beefy men hauling the weight to the top via pulleys. This was performed with song by *Wasschappelse Heiploeg* (which roughly translates as the Walcheren Team of Stake Wallopers!) in traditional Dutch dress complete with clogs. With the formal opening complete, the veterans who took part in the assault on Walcheren

were, naturally, the first to step onto it and cross to the sea wall. Chairman of 47 Cdo Association, Chuck Harris was interviewed by local TV and three more veterans spoke to the local press and were photographed at the foot of the bridge.

One section of the Liberty Bridge has many inscribed stone tablets which include the Rolls of Honour for 41, 47 and 48 RM Commandos together with that of Support Squadron Eastern Flank.

In the evening it was party time with an excellent running buffet and music from 'Crazystance' making everything go with a swing. Everyone enjoyed themselves, with a wonderfully happy mix of local people and the Royal Marines and all their connections. Next morning we began the long journey back but all agreed that, although just for one day's activities, it had been well worthwhile and an enjoyable trip in good company.

LB

Liberty Bridge Extras:

Many thanks to Linda Warren, Secretary of 48 RM Cdo Association, for some very useful contributions to the above.

[Many of the stone tablets on the Bridge are inscribed to individuals, one being for Peter Winter, our late Chairman.](#)

Jackie Armor, daughter of the late Lt George Brooker who was wounded at Kapelsche Veer, was over from the USA and able to attend with her husband. Great to meet her, at last, after numerous previous communications by email.

LIBERATION OF WALCHEREN

As members visited Walcheren in July, there were not enough people able to travel in November to justify an official trip to mark the anniversary of the liberation.

However, Marc and Mariel managed to drive down from The Hague. Their visit didn't quite coincide with the Dutch ceremonies but they visited Bergen-op-Zoom Cemetery, the Tank Memorial at Westkapelle, Erica Beach and the Lighthouse Cemetery and laid a cross at each memorial.

Marc also presented a print of a 1944 map of the landing areas mounted on poster board to the Polderhuis Museum.

In contrast to previous years, the weather was perfect with sunshine, no wind and a comfortable temperature, fine enough to have a drink and a meal outside. Incredible. Maybe there was a blue moon, too.

IN MEMORIAM

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

Brigade-General Jan Linzel 6th February 2009, aged 90. He was the CO of the Dutch Commandos of 10 IA Commando which landed at Westkapelle with 47 Commando. He began as a platoon commander in the Dutch army in 1940 attempting to hold the line against the German invaders. With the fall of Holland, he managed to escape to England at the second attempt and after intense screening joined the Princess Irene Brigade. He then volunteered for Commando training and after successfully completing the course at Achnacarry became a member of No 2 Dutch Troop. As well as Walcheren, he was involved with Operation Market Garden. Later he served in Indonesia and Korea, where he was badly wounded and ended his career as Dutch Defence Attaché in Jakarta.

He received the Dutch award the Bronze Cross for his escape to Britain in 1941 and the Bronze Lion for his actions in Market Garden and Infatuate II.

S Michael Peretz 2010, aged 93. His daughter wrote about him in the 'Other Lives' obituary section in *The Guardian* of 3rd August 2010. People may remember him from the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the Walcheren landings. He joined the Royal Marines soon after the war began and learnt how to operate "Winnie" and "Pooh", the big guns at Dover firing across the Channel. Later, as a gunnery instructor he invented the 'Peretz Tiltometer', a device to help keep guns steady for firing at sea. These were used on two craft for the



Walcheren landing. Michael travelled on one to see how it worked in practice. Both craft were sunk and he was lucky to survive.

After the war he had a successful career in the pharmaceutical industry, holding many important posts including president of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry.

(Photo IWM. LCG101. Michael Peretz foreground)

Frederick Charles James Batt 28th August 2010, Liss, Hampshire, aged 93. C/Sgt Fred Batt served in HQ Troop, landing in Normandy on 6th June and captured on the afternoon of the 7th from the rearguard position at Port en Bessin. He was moved to several camps ending up at Bad Schwartau before being liberated by the Second Army on 2nd May 1945. His family have kindly sent copies of his POW diary (which includes a couple of accomplished cartoons) to the website.

After the war Fred worked as an accountant in the UK and then became Head Accountant for Unilever in Nigeria. He returned to Britain and eventually retired to Liss. He was buried with full military honours in St Mary's Churchyard, Liss.

Robert Lines 10th December 2010, Hull. Robert volunteered for the Marines in July 1941, serving with various units and was also an accomplished boxer at that time. Posted to 47 RM Commando in July 1944, he landed at Walcheren where several of his friends were killed. He and another comrade survived, managing to land further along the beach but he was wounded on the 2nd November.

Robert was very much a family man with a son, daughter, five grandchildren and also great grandchildren. He was cremated on 23rd December with many local Royal Marine veterans in attendance.

Albert Peter 'Mickie' O'Brien 29th August 2010, Oliva, Spain, aged 89.

The following obituary for Mickie appeared in the current (Nov/Dec 2010) *Globe & Laurel*. A variation on this was published in the *Daily Telegraph* obituary column of 4th October.

Captain A P O'Brien MC



Captain A P 'Mickie' O'Brien MC who has died aged 89, took part in the Normandy landings in 1944 and was awarded the MC.

Lt O'Brien was in 47 Commando Y Troop and was leading a patrol in a silent raid on the enemy's FDLs east of Sallenelles early in the morning of 23 July. When about 50 yards from the enemy position, one man of the patrol trod on an anti-personnel mine. Surprise was lost. The enemy opened heavy automatic

fire aided by flares. For a moment it looked as if the patrol would fail in their task but Lt O'Brien by his total disregard of danger, by his personal example and by his determination got the patrol together again and led them into the enemy position. When the patrol had returned to our own lines with an officer prisoner, Lt O'Brien hearing that some of the patrol were missing returned to the enemy minefield moving through our defensive fire and stayed there in the fast-growing light until all the wounded had been removed.

Mickie was born in 1921. Commissioned into His Majesty's Royal Marines aged 18 in June 1940 and invalided out aged 29. At the end of the war he was a climbing instructor in the Cliff Assault Wing based in St Ives Cornwall where he met and married his first wife Eva

Stephens with whom he had two children, Kevin (who sadly died in 2007) and Sammy-Jane. Mickie joined Sutcliffe Catering in 1954 as a Trainee Manager which then consisted of 20 units and he subsequently became MD and then Chairman, the organisation now worldwide with approximately 1000 units and employing 10,000. He took early retirement in 1973. He went on to live in Australia, Cyprus, Florida, Costa Rica, Malta (where he married again briefly), Mallorca and finally Oliva in Spain.

He was respected, he was loved, he was admired. Everyone who met Mickie would say it was a privilege, an honour to know the man, to laugh and to have a drink... or two. He used to say his blood group was 'Johnnie Walker'! He will make a lasting impression on all our lives. He wrote of himself 'I have no elders remaining. I revere the Crown, the Law (when it's not an ass!), the Aged. I have faith and believe in the 'Creator'. I believe in genuine democracy'. His philosophy was and still is that life should be fun. Sadly it is not always, it is not on tap. It is often necessary to pump from an inner well.

Mickie who died on 29 August in Spain is survived by his daughter Sammy Jane. S O'B

St Ives As mentioned by Chuck Harris, Mickie's ashes were scattered at various favourite places in Cornwall on 2nd October, first at Polperro and then at Gulval Church in Penzance where Sammy scattered some ashes on her mother's grave. Mark Bentinck reported that there were about a dozen people there, mostly CLs and MLs, with a couple of serving Royal Marines Mountain Leaders in their best blues as well as Chuck.

The party continued to a clifftop near Port Gaverne where Sammy sang a favourite song of Mickie's followed by two RM Buglers who, she says, were magnificent. The rest of Mickie's ashes went out to sea as he had requested.

Surrey Sammy also arranged a buffet evening at the Albert Arms, Esher in memory and celebration of Mickie which was a great success.

WHY STAY SILENT?

As mentioned previously, The Royal Marines Museum has a special exhibition about remembrance called *Why Stay Silent?*.

Ted Battley was asked to contribute his thoughts on being a member of the Association for one of many panels on display measuring approximately two metres high.

The reproduced panel is on the back page. His contribution reads:

47 Royal Marine Commando training was extremely hard and hazardous. It required the utmost cooperation and mutual respect throughout the unit. This engendered a sort of kinship among us - "a band of brothers" only more so.

The Association is a natural extension of that devotion and comradeship, forging goodwill and lifelong friendships. It is not about glory and heroics, though these were in abundance. It's about the part we played together in unravelling a world in turmoil and remembering our comrades who never returned.

The exhibition opened on 25th October 2010 and will run until 2nd October 2011. The opening, to which Ted was invited, coincided with family visiting Wales so it was impossible to attend but we hope to see it next time we're in Portsmouth. LB

47 RMCA IN CHURCHILL'S BUNKER

An unusual and happy day last Autumn brought veterans, family and RM cadets together for a whistle stop tour of rarely-seen London. During the worst of the bombing of the UK during the war, the Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff would meet underground, in a system of bunkers now known as the Cabinet War Rooms. Yards from Downing Street, the cramped chambers were full of maps, cigarette smoke, and of course, Royal Marines.

The whole system was garrisoned by Royals, and this brought an invitation to us from the

man in charge to come and have a look. Here is a brief report on our day, which ended with a tour of the Thames, beginning with the gathering of all of us from all over Europe!

Since the First World War, the Union Jack Club near Waterloo has hosted servicemen and women, with officers only allowed in by permission. Thanks to the suggestion of Lt Ian Jones, the lead instructor at Bromley Royal Marine cadets, we all met here as the Club extended us a fabulous welcome. Our veterans Chuck Harris, Ted Battley, Arthur Thompson, John Baker, and Peter Ford were met by cadets Caroline, Matt, Jack and Andrew, in full blues.

We sat in the bar, steadyng our nerves for the day ahead. Among the new faces beyond the cadets were some family members who'd not managed to attend an association meeting before and also Bob Perry brought along his dear Dad Bill, like many of our own members, a veteran of two uniformed services. Ted arrived with Lannah on his arm, Chuck brought a host of Harris girls, Glynnis, Pat and Carole, Peter had new family for us to meet, Susan Lord and Chris Collins, and Alan Jenkins whose father served with 47 came from Wales with Keith Jenkins and friend Dorian Samuel.

Patrick O'Connell was there in a rare organising mode along with Marc de Bolster and Mariel who'd come from the Hague and stayed over with him. At one o'clock, in a fleet of black cabs, we arrived at the War Rooms. As tourists looked on from behind the glass, our veterans were shown inside the cabinet rooms and invited to sit down in the historic chairs. The man in charge, Phil Reed, Director at the Imperial War Museum, gave us a talk on the important history we had stepped into. This was not a sanitised version, he told us Churchill hated to come down there, how you could see where he banged the arms of his chair, and we all felt the atmosphere in a very vivid way. Veterans then moved to the map room, and before long we were up blinking in the sunlight once again.



War Cabinet Room, tourists' eyevew. Veterans sitting in the most important chairs, RM cadets behind.

The RM standing right was very quiet.

Then it was lunch by the Thames and off on a DUKW tour of the river to take in the Houses of Parliament and more. These amphibious vehicles were used during D-day

and after, and our one dated from the war itself. John Baker was able to tell the group that he used to drive one! Luckily it stayed afloat, and we said our goodbyes at 5pm.

There are many thanks to Barbara Russell at the Union Jack Club, Lt Ian Jones and his cadets, and Phil Reed at the War Rooms. There is one piece of news to come, which is that Marc is going to give a lecture to the whole cadet group later this year, after we circulated a quiz sheet on the campaigns the veterans fought. One last admission from me, the tour guide, would be that I packed the schedule very tightly, and I became known for telling everyone "Five Minutes to get moving!" This is highly unlike me, but when organising events of this happy kind in the future, I have learnt to slow things down.

Lastly, many of us in the support group felt once again privileged to travel in the company of such men as our veterans. Here's what Alan Jenkins wrote to me, making his first Association visit in memory of his dad. "The visit to the Cabinet War Rooms was wonderful and made even more special by being in the company of those magnificent Veterans and association members. It was an occasion I will never forget." P O'C

[Many thanks to Patrick for organising this very enjoyable trip. It must have felt like keeping a group of recalcitrant schoolkids out of trouble, at times!]

LONDON FOLLOW-UP

As mentioned, Marc de Bolster has been invited by Caroline Peagam, the RM Cadet Instructor who led the group who met and assisted us in London, to demonstrate his collection of World War Two RM commando gear. As a result, he plans to go to one of their meetings in Bromley, wear his authentic WW2 commando outfit and tell them about 47 RM Commando's part during the war. Veterans and members are invited if they wish to attend but the date is not, as yet, fixed. It will probably be some time in March. If interested, keep in touch with Marc or Ingrid (phone etc at the end of this issue) , who will be able to give more detail nearer the time.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

It was good to hear from Betty Field who wrote to say that, Pauline and Malcolm, her daughter and son-in-law, took her to the Royal Marines Museum at Eastney on Remembrance Day. Betty laid a wreath on behalf of 47 RMCA. It was a filthy day, pouring with rain but, as always, a very good turnout for the open air service.

TRACING THE PAST

B Troop group photograph

Many thanks to Jim Kelly and his daughter Eileen for sending a better quality version of the photo which appeared in the last issue. They were also able to add and correct a few names. Jim lives in Chadwell St Mary, Essex and, though a member of the Association, is not well enough to travel to reunions. We send our very best wishes.

On the beach

We heard from Chris Short who wonders if any members who landed at Gold Beach on the 6 June 1944 remember passing a Royal Artillery gun emplacement on the top of the Arromanches cliffs on their way to Port-en-Bessin. His father who is an eighty-six year old RA veteran well remembers having a conversation with Royal Marine Commandos on their way inland from the beaches having himself landed there on the 6 June. - This is a very long shot but it would be great if anyone recalls the incident. You never can tell.

BOOKS

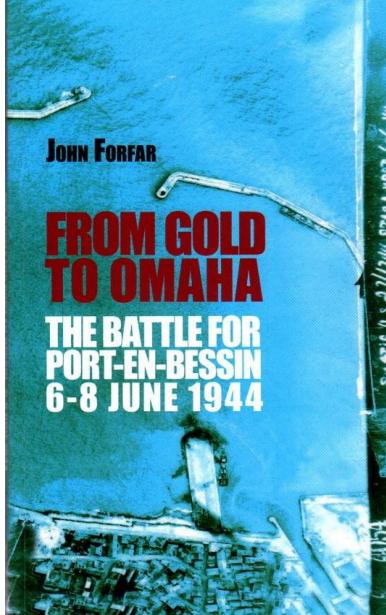
Nothing Impossible, a Portrait of the Royal Marines, ed Lt Col E Southby-Tailyour This covers the Royal Marines from its inception to date and has text as well as being lavishly illustrated, with an index and glossary. John Forfar wrote the section on 47's wartime activities and Mark Bentinck, the Corps Historian, was very much involved with its production. It's big, it's glossy and quite expensive but we wouldn't be without it. Published by Third Millennium, October 2010 at £45. There's a slight discount available on the publisher's website and there are a few new copies on Amazon at £31.50.

Commando Tactics: The Second World War by Stephen Bull, November 2010, Pen and Sword Books. Extract from a press release we received:

“*Commando Tactics* presents an in-depth study of commando tactics and history and seeks to dispel the myths and misunderstandings that surround them, whilst placing these elite troops of 70 years ago in the context of their times.

British commandos are among the most celebrated soldiers of the Second World War. Their daring, ingenuity and bravery have given rise to an almost legendary reputation that makes it difficult to appreciate fully their role and their true value as fighting men...”
It's not clear how much refers to RM Commandos but you might find further information on the website www.pen-and-sword.co.uk where the offer price is £15.99.

From Gold to Omaha by John Forfar. Les Gens du Phare, 2009



Bob Perry still has copies of John's history of the capture of Port-en-Bessin at £15 post free. It adds extra photos and information to the account which appeared in *From Omaha to the Sheldt* and received excellent reviews in both *The Globe and Laurel* and *Despatch 21!* Some copies may be signed by John.

To order a copy please send your cheque, made payable to Mr R W Perry at 225 Sopwith Crescent, Merley, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 1SU and mark your envelope “Gold to Omaha”.

(Also available in French)

PLAQUES

That most helpful and enterprising man, Geof Haywood, still has two 47 RM Commando plaques for sale. They are available direct from him at 10 Elizabeth Road, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 1AX or phone 01202 888194 or email Geofandjillh@btinternet.com. The price is £25 plus £2.14 p&p.

GORILLA

It's ages since there's been space for a joke so how about:

A man wakes up one morning to find a gorilla on his roof. So he looks in his local directory and, sure enough, there's an ad under 'Gorilla Removers': "ex RM Commando, prompt service". He calls the number and 30 minutes later the gorilla remover arrives. He gets out of his van and unpacks a ladder, a baseball bat, a shotgun and a mean-looking pit bull terrier. "What are you going to do?" asks the man.

"I'm going to put the ladder up against the roof then I'm going up there to knock the gorilla off with this baseball bat. When the gorilla falls off, the pit bull is trained to seize it by the

testicles to keep it subdued until I come down and put it in the cage in the back of the van." So he leans the ladder against the wall, picks up the baseball bat and hands the shotgun to the home-owner.

"What's that for?" asks the man.

"If the gorilla knocks me off the roof, you shoot the dog."

MONEY MATTERS

Another year has rolled by which means that the annual subscription for 2011 of £10 per head now falls due.

Our Treasurer, Gemma Davison, will be very pleased to receive your contributions. Cheques should be made payable to '47 RM Commando Association' and sent to:

Mrs G Davison
91 Catherine Street
Rochester
Kent ME1 2HL

PORT EN BESSIN 2011

Our trip to Port en Bessin will be from 5th to 9th June. Rooms are booked at the King Hotel but if you intend to travel you need to let our secretary, Ingrid Fearne know **as soon as possible**, sending a £25 per head deposit to:

Mrs I Fearne
138 Beauchamp Road
Upper Norwood
London SE19 3DB

Please make cheques payable to '47 RM Commando Association'.

The coach will pick up (very early) at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, and at the ferry terminal. If you wish to stay at the **Royal Maritime Club** please book as soon as possible. (Advance Bookings: 0239 2837681)

At the time of writing the Club has double rooms available for the nights of both the 4th and the 9th June. There are singles available on the 9th but on the 4th, only twin rooms if single travellers wish to share (the same cost as two singles). If you have no option but to book a double then they will give you a discount if you say you're travelling with 47 RM Cdo but it will not be as cheap as a single.

Due to the increasingly high cost of coach travel, people travelling out separately from the coach will need to make some contribution if they use it while in France.

This year we are holding the **AGM** at the King Hotel during our stay, probably on 8th June. If you have any queries, please ring Ingrid on:

0208 2390145 or email: ingrid.fearne@blueyonder.co.uk

COMMUNICATIONS via the WEBSITE

Air Reconnaissance Peter Jenner got in touch regarding air reconnaissance over Port en Bessin in November 1943. He edits the newsletter *Dispersals* of the 2nd Tactical Air Force Medium Bombers Association. During some research, he came across the aircraft log of this flight. There had been a rumour of a reef off-shore from the port though it did not appear on maps. A low level photo pass showed the hint of a dark "shadow", suggesting that a seaborne approach would require local knowledge and pilotage and it is thought that may explain why 47 attacked from inland.

One suspects that, as an elite unit trained in stealth and surprise, a direct frontal attack on the port was never envisaged but it would be interesting to hear other people's views.

Sidney Barlow is a member through the 'Supportive Units' section of the website being involved with Naval Party 1502 which sailed from Portsmouth on D-Day. Sidney, who is 90, lives in Llandeilo and emailed me, as a near neighbour, to say hello. I replied, of course, but thought he would appreciate a quick hello from the Association at large.

Commando War Cabinet Weekly Resumés Marc found these on the web and there are just too many to print here and, being resumés, are rather statements regarding landings,

assaults etc though no less interesting for that. e.g. a week in March 1944 records: In the Adriatic on the 19th a Commando force, including Royal Marines, raided Solta Island (south of Split) and captured or killed the entire German garrison of 106, of which 78 were taken prisoner.

It doesn't include D-Day which was perhaps dealt with separately but has the following regarding Walcheren:

[WAR CABINET WEEKLY RESUME (No. 270) of the NAVAL, MILITARY AND AIR SITUATION, from 0700 26th October, to 0700 2nd November, 1944]

NAVAL SITUATION.

General Review.

1. R.M. Commandos have been landed on Walcheren with supporting fire from land, sea and air.

Home Waters.

6. Early on the 1st, Royal Marine Commandos carried out two assaults against Flushing and the gap in the Westkapelle dyke already created by Bomber Command. The former which embarked at Breskens in assault landing craft was successful, but the latter which left Ostend in tank landing craft was strongly opposed and there were heavy casualties in craft and men. Low cloud prevented air support till the afternoon, when H.M. ships Warspite (battleship), Erebus and Roberts (monitors) bombarded enemy batteries with the help of spotting aircraft, and rocket-firing Typhoons also attacked. Shelling of beaches prevented store-carrying craft from unloading in daylight. By the evening the Corps Commander was reported to be satisfied with the general progress of the operation.

[WAR CABINET WEEKLY RESUME (No. 271) of the NAVAL, MILITARY AND AIR SITUATION from 0700 2nd November, to 0700 9th November, 1944]

Northern Group of Armies.

36. On the island of Walcheren our troops have been fighting along narrow defiles bounded by flood water, often in the water itself. The bitter struggle for the causeway leading to the island was completed by the evening of the 2nd, and by the same time British commandos had occupied Domburg and most of Flushing.

If you would like to see more, please get in touch with Marc who will be pleased to send you copies.

Y Troop

Marc received this email.

Van: Keith Billington [mailto:kbillington@RefineryGroup.co.uk]

Aan: info@47commando.org.uk

Onderwerp: Living History

I have a rather unusual request.

I am an ex Royal who's looking at putting together a living history/re-enactment group based on Y troop of 47 Cmdo. The aim of the troop would be to take part in a recreation of the troops activities and general life during its operational life and while we have been able to obtain details through our own contacts, we were hoping to get some more information on Y troops activities, kit, members and trades.

Its our aim to bring 47 to life for the general public and to portray life as a marine commando during this period in history. I am hoping that you may be able to help and any information that you feel may be of benefit would be greatly appreciated.

Many thanks for your attention in this matter and I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Keith Billington

Senior Art Director

The Refinery Group appears to be an advertising agency but this came too late for a follow-up to find out exactly where these re-enactments might take place. We hope to have more information next time.

47 RM CDO WEBSITE

As ever, our thanks to Marc de Bolster who lavishes huge amounts of time and money on maintaining and improving our website. The items above are only a very small example of the communications he receives in the course of six months.

Marc is always looking for more material to put on the web and for his collection; photos, documents, information so please don't throw anything away because you think it's past its prime. It might be just the sort of old tatt that Marc is looking for.

Any photos, documents and other material that you think might be of interest can be sent to:
 Marc de Bolster
 Elzendreef 29
 2272 CG
 Voorburg
 Netherlands

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

All original photos etc will, of course, be returned safely.

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



Next issue - Despatch 24: July 2011

Happy New Year!



Left: 47 Royal Marine Commando Memorial Stone, located in the Museum's Memorial Garden.

Ted was wounded in action at Port en Bessin, Normandy, 7th June 1944, and again at Walcheren, Netherlands, 1st November 1944

47 Royal Marine Commando training was extremely hard and hazardous. It required the utmost cooperation and mutual respect throughout the unit. This engendered a sort of kinship among us - "a bond of brothers", only more so.

The Association is a natural extension of that devotion and comradeship, forging goodwill and lifelong friendships. It is not about glory and heroics, though these were in abundance. It's about the part we played together in unravelling a world in turmoil and remembering our comrades who never returned.

Ted joined the 47 RM Commando Association, in the same way other Royal Marines have joined associations relating to ships, conflicts or units they served in. They can identify with those who went through the same things as they did.

TED BATTLELEY