

47 ROYAL MARINE COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

Committee

Prof. J.O.Forfar MC President
G.P.O'Connell Chairman
P.G. Spear Vice-Chairman
C.J. Harris Parade Marshal
E.L. Battley
M. de Bolster
E. Hartwell
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DESPATCH 24 July 2011

COMMENT

It's a pleasure to report that Professor John Forfar, known to many veterans as 'the Doc', has accepted the post of President of 47 RMCA. It's very appropriate as he has done so much over the years to ensure that 47 Commando's achievements are more widely known. There are more changes. Our Chairman, Chuck Harris, is standing down and below is his final letter for *Despatch*. He took over the Chairmanship at quite a difficult time when the late Captain Peter Winter gave up the post due to ill health. Chuck's term of office has been a very successful one for the Association and as well as the normal duties one might expect, he also keeps in touch by telephone with many 47 veterans who are no longer able to travel or meet up with their comrades.

His successor, Patrick O'Connell, has made valuable contributions to the Association over the last couple of years, often being the prime mover in some very enjoyable reunions. Geof Haywood, who also joins the Committee, has been successfully involved with the Association over quite a long time. A big welcome to them both.

Incidentally, please don't think that Chuck has gone away. He continues as a Committee member and also as Parade Marshal so be sure to keep in step! Lannah

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

All in all, it has been a very successful year with plenty going on, especially the reunions arranged by Paddy O'Connell.

The annual Port en Bessin trip was a great success. Everyone seemed to enjoy it. My two daughters certainly did. The Mayor, Dr Pierre-Albert Cavey, his staff and the people of the town proved as friendly and hospitable as ever.

Thanks to all of you for your support over the last seven years. I could not have managed without you. I will still be the Parade Marshal in the future so you will hear my dulcet voice, no escaping it.

Bless you all,

Chuck(C J Harris)

PROFILE

The majority of members will not have met our new Chairman so here's a brief rundown:

Guy Patrick O'Connell is the son of the late Captain Guy O'Connell who commanded 47 RM Commando's Heavy Weapons Troop.

Patrick is a broadcaster and journalist. In 2001 he was the BBC reporter in New York on the

attacks of 9/11. He had been due at a meeting in the Twin Towers but overslept. As Paddy O'Connell, he has a regular Sunday morning programme, *Broadcasting House*, on BBC Radio 4 and as a freelance takes on a lot of other work, too.

A couple of years ago he managed to unearth from the BBC Archives, the recording of a live broadcast made just after the Walcheren landing in which his father's voice, among many others, can be heard. Since then he has been a staunch member and very much involved with the Association.

NORMANDY 2011

This report and photo are due to appear in the July/August issue of The Globe and Laurel.

47 RM Commando Association in Normandy, June 2011

On the morning of the 6th June, raining cats and dogs, we scurried to our coach parked on the quay at Port en Bessin. Arrived at Bayeux, we walked, many umbrellas raised, to the Cathedral. By the time the massive double doors were reached, the rain had stopped and we were blessed with dry and sunny weather for the rest of our stay.

Our party included a bakers dozen of veterans of 1944 vintage, eight of whom served with 47. Not a bad haul.

During the Service of Remembrance at the Cathedral, His Excellency Sir Peter Westmacott KCMG LVO, HM Ambassador to France, read the lesson and also laid the wreath.

Afterwards, at the invitation of the Mayor of Bayeux, we attended a *vin d'honneur* at the Hôtel du Doyen.

After lunch we made our way to the British Military Cemetery at Bayeux where many men of 47 Commando lie. During a brief wreath-laying, Bugler Ben Paine RM sounded the Last Post. We also had with us Steve Hignett, ex-Sgt RM and experienced cameraman. On top of general filming, Patrick O'Connell began the interviewing of veterans on camera.

Food, drink and plenty of laughter and good cheer in the Bar de la Marée, aka the 'Commando Bar', in Port en Bessin rounded off the anniversary of D-Day.



Veterans and Bugler at Bayeux Cemetery

Next morning, the 7th of June, when the people of Port en Bessin commemorate their liberation, everyone made their way to the Eastern headland. Many walked up the long and winding track but the veterans were transported by jeep. Two Belgian couples who helped us last year very kindly came to France again and they were assisted by French enthusiasts.

These 1940s vehicles, lovingly restored and maintained, always manage the steep tracks without difficulty despite their age and being fully-laden.

At the top of the headland is the memorial to Captain Terence Cousins RM who gave his life in order to capture this vital strongpoint and turned the tide of battle. Essie Cousins, his niece, who joined us last year, came this time accompanied by her brother David, over from New Zealand, and it was appropriate that he should lay a wreath.

After this ceremony, everyone transferred to the western headland where the main memorial to 47 RM Cdo stands.

After being welcomed by Major Bob Perry RM and the Mayor, Docteur Pierre-Albert Cavey, the Rolls of Honour, both civil and military, were read out and our Chairman, Chuck Harris, spoke the exhortation. Prayers were led by the Rev Tony Pick and our excellent Bugler sounded the Last Post.

A further brief ceremony took place at the plaque on the quayside at Place Gaudin before continuing to a reception at the Salle des Fêtes. There, the Mayor welcomed everyone and spoke of the strong links with 47 RM Commando over many years. Nick Stanley, Deputy Defence Attaché at the British Embassy in Paris, who had joined us for the day, thanked the Mayor and people of the town for their continuing friendship and kind hospitality.

Later, at the invitation of Francois de Bourgoing, we visited Chateau Tracy. This year, with the rest of the family away, he still insisted on welcoming us, "assisted" by his delightful little twin sons. As ever there was a good supply of Calvados and other beverages and the opportunity to admire the impressive building and its lovely grounds.

Next day we held our AGM at the hotel with an attendance in excess of thirty and after lunch visited Juno Beach where one of our landing craft veterans had brought Canadian troops ashore on D-Day.

Being our last evening, everyone enjoyed dinner in the Bar with around forty of us seated and very well-served by our friends Natalie and Stephane Pitel who also presented the veterans with bottles of wine.

As ever, we are grateful to the Mayor, his staff and the people of Port en Bessin for their hospitality and friendship. Thanks must go, too, to our terrific Support Party, being Major Bob Perry; Major Mark Bentinck(Rtd) the RM Corps Historian, Geof Haywood, Chairman of RMA Poole and Marc de Bolster our webmaster and photographer. This also was the first reunion organised by our new Secretary, Ingrid Fearne, who must be congratulated on arranging such a successful and enjoyable trip.

The final comment must be for our splendid veterans, none under eighty-five, who despite the passing years, keep marching on with cheerfulness and excellent good humour. Good on 'em.

LB

Normandy Extras:

Betty Field came to have a drink with us in the bar of the Royal Maritime Club on the night before we left for Normandy. She was looking very well and relaxed and came with her daughter Pauline and son-in-law Malc who were celebrating their wedding anniversary. Betty sent good wishes to everyone and hoped we would have a good trip. Our group gradually expanded as more and more people arrived until our one table increased to three or four and we formed a rough circle taking up a large proportion of the bar. We weren't at all rowdy, well hardly, and had a very enjoyable evening.

Bob and Michele

Madame Michele Blondy, the Secretary at the Mayor's office in Port en Bessin (Secrétaire-Général) and a most important link in our arrangements over the years, retired this year. Unfortunately, she was unable to attend the reception on 7th June so the planned presentation could not be made. As a result, Bob Perry took the engraved glass bowl for a private presentation next day. That's his story, anyway.



Carl Isherwood While the coach was parked in Bayeux, a lady boarded in great excitement because she had, by sheer chance, discovered us. She was the daughter-in-law of Captain Kenneth Isherwood. As a result, both she and her son, Lt Carl Isherwood RN have been in touch with Ingrid. Carl teaches navigation to landingcraftsmen at 1 Assault Group RM and passed the Commando Course at Lympstone last year and wears his green beret with pride though, of course, with a RN cap-badge. He asked for any information that veterans had of his grandfather. Ken Isherwood commanded B Troop so Ted Battley was able to furnish some recollections of this well-respected officer and we were able to give him other names of B Troop veterans. Mrs Isherwood also mentioned that John Bennett was godfather to Ken's third son, Nick.

Carl intends to become a member of the Association.

Royal Marines Association, Deal A group from RMA Deal stayed at the King Hotel and though their schedule didn't coincide with ours very much, we did meet occasionally in the Commando Bar. Michael Conn of their Association has been in touch with Ingrid saying that they hope to make the trip again next year when, with the agreement of comrades of 47 Commando, they would like to take part in our ceremonies.



At the Chateau

Marc on Normandy: With the boot of the car fully loaded, we drove off on 5 June. Soon after arrival, the 47 Commando coach arrived, and upon this reunion met several others who had also travelled to Port-en-Bessin to meet the veterans and the association. Among them was Pete Robbins, son of the late Tom Robbins, who brought a whole case of documents for me to copy. This forced me to stay behind and skip the events in Bayeux on 6 June, in order to get it all copied in time. As I had finished copying, I secretly changed into the 47 Cdo Battledress I had worn in Bromley in March and waited for the coach to return to surprise everyone. The rest of the day all were able to look at the uniform and talk about it. Bugler Ben Paine thought it would be a good idea to also keep his full rig on, which caused a lot of people to want us to pose for a photo.

Our Belgian friends who provided extra jeeps last year were kind enough to assist again and contacted me to discuss final arrangements for 7 June, to drive the veterans up the Eastern Feature. They made contact with a Dutch couple on their camp site, who were happy to provide a third jeep. In the evening Mariel got talking to a local Frenchman, who in his turn immediately called two of his friends to also assist with their jeeps, making it a total of five.

Next morning the five jeeps arrived, parking next to the coach, where I decided it would be easier and more comfortable for the veterans to get in the jeeps straight away and be driven up the feature without having to get on and off the coach first. Patrick thought it would be better to get cameraman Steve and Eric Corlett up the feature first, so they could film the veterans coming up in the jeeps. While driving back to collect the veterans, we ran into a sixth jeep with Belgian license plates – I still have no idea where it came from – and asked the driver to follow us.

After the ceremony, the veterans were again driven by jeep to the Western Feature, and after that taken back into the port for the final one at Place Gaudin. After the reception, I again changed into Battledress and took some additional webbing I'd acquired to the Commando bar, where several veterans showed me how to gear up properly.

After the AGM on 8 June, we all got to see an old documentary about 47 Commando, provided by Patrick O'Connell.

The next day meant saying goodbye again, and after we had a last cup of coffee in Bar de la Marée, we drove off in the direction of Holland. We decided to take a little detour to visit the grave of Major Walton at the cemetery in Fécamp, and then continued our journey home.

To us it was another great trip, where we made many new friends, as well as direct contacts with French and Belgian jeep drivers who offered to assist us again next year. Marc de B.

AGM

Well over thirty members attended the AGM, held at the King Hotel, Port en Bessin on 8th June 2011. Committee and other changes have been mentioned above. One decision made was that veterans no longer need to pay annual membership but, of course, it is important that family, friends and other supporters continue to do so. Minutes will be sent to all Committee members but any other members who would like a copy please let Ingrid know by phone: 0208 2390145 or email: ingrid.fearne@blueyonder.co.uk or by post::

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

WHY STAY SILENT



Anna and Ted

Unable to get to the opening of this exhibition at the RM Museum last October, we managed a visit when we got back to Portsmouth from Normandy. We were met by Anna Lebbell, the Assistant Curator, who had devised it. She showed us around, not only this section but many of the other exhibits which included a lot of fascinating new material since our last visit some years ago. We also managed a few photos. We were able to stop for a rest and some coffee with both Anna and Ian Maine, the Curator, before continuing our tour. It was good to see several school groups there and they all appeared to be enjoying themselves. We found all the staff incredibly kind, friendly and helpful. – A very enjoyable day.

LB

KEN PARKER IN CRETE

Whilst visiting my daughter in Crete in March I was invited to participate in the 70th anniversary of the assault by the German Paratroops on Crete May 22nd 1941. I accepted the invitation and returned to Crete to attend the ceremonies at the Commonwealth

Cemetery at Souda Bay on May 22nd -23rd. I contacted Wendy at Central Office and CEO Charlie Hobson to see if they would send me a wreath to lay on behalf of the RMA which they readily agreed to. Present at the ceremony was the Duke of Gloucester representing HM the Queen, Heads of States, Ambassadors, Attachés, Heads of the Armed Forces from Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, Canada, India and Greece and an American Admiral. There were also a contingent of German Paratroops, the ship's company from HMS *Cumberland* and members of the Greek Navy. The guard of honour was provided by ratings from the *Cumberland*. My wreath was laid in line ready to be laid when called upon to do so. Firstly the Heads of State and so on until my name was called and a young Wren saluted me and I saluted back, took the wreath from her and proceeded to lay it alongside all the other associations represented. The cross took on a beautiful arrangement of colour. The Greek Navy Band led on the *Cumberland* guard of honour and played all the national anthems, the guard of honour firing the salute and a 21 gun salute from a Greek Naval Ship in the Bay. Over 1000 people attended for the occasion. The weather was in the 30s with a slight breeze blowing in from the Bay making it pleasant. On the 23rd I travelled to Chania to watch the Red Arrows give a wonderful display in support of the anniversary. I feel proud to have been asked to take part on these special two days. KWP

IN MEMORIAM

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

Ronald William Liggins 2nd May 2009, Solihull. Ronald, better known as "Ginger" Liggins served in HQ Troop and landed with 47 in both Normandy and Walcheren. John Forfar recounts in *From Omaha to the Scheldt* that at Walcheren the medical weasel (one of two) which Ginger was driving took a hit. After it sank he managed with great difficulty to reach the dunes. When a volunteer driver was required for a salvaged weasel, Ginger went forward but was beaten to it by a friend who waved cheerily as he left but ran over a mine after about 100 yards and was instantly killed.

Unfortunately, we didn't hear of Ginger's death until early this year.

Albert Thompson February 2010. Albert served in Q and Y Troop. His grandson, Drew Thompson, has been in touch with the website in the hope of finding out more about his service with 47 Commando.

Hugh Corlett 25th January 2011, Liverpool, aged 90. Hugh, largely known as Hughie, served in X Troop. He joined the Royal Marines in 1941 (PLY/X.103169) and, from its formation, served with 47 Commando, landing in Normandy and Walcheren. His memories of the tasks achieved by 47 were always full of pride and admiration for his comrades, both officers and men, especially Major Walton: "He was fearless".

After the war, Hughie worked in the building trade and then for a time as a Liverpool docker. Right to the end Hughie kept his quick wit and sense of humour and will be deeply missed by his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

John Brereton 13th June 2011, Dorchester, aged 91. Long-time member of the Association, Sgt Maj. John Brereton was brought up in Wells, Somerset and partly educated at a Jesuit school, in France. When war came along John joined the Royal Marines and was part of the crew of HMS Barham when it was sunk in the Mediterranean, in November, 1941, with a loss of over 800 men.

John's time in France meant that he could speak fluent French, something that was noted by those at the War Office who were putting together a special commando team (30 Assault Unit) and he was told to report to London, where he was interviewed and duly selected. He was told to report to Amersham and it was there that he met Sgt Maj. 'Tiny' Tynan, later Troop Sgt of Y Troop, 47. After basic training John was sent to Elstree Studios, to learn how to use a camera and became 30 AU's cameraman. He operated in North Africa and Italy, and when D-Day came landed at Omaha Beach with the Americans. On arrival John and a small section, were given the task of finding and photographing the V1 sites and later, as the War was coming to an end, had the privilege of escorting Admiral Dönitz into captivity.

After the War John settled in Dorset and became a professional photographer and married his wife Ruth. Both of them have been avid supporters of 30 AU Veterans' Association and

he continued to keep his links with 47. His loss will be greatly felt by his relatives and many friends.

Brian Bates

PS by Geof as this went to "print" – RMA Poole were asked by a friend of John's, a serving RM, to attend the funeral. Geof with a colleague went and was not aware until reading Despatch of the 47 RM Cdo link only his much publicised locally 30 AU time. There was good support from the RBL, RNA and local friends. The RM Bugler now a Cpl, was Alaine Shakespeare so the 47/RM link was with him for his final journey.

BROMLEY R M CADETS

It started with a new friendship, obtained at the London venue visiting the Churchill War Rooms. I made contact online with Sgt. Caroline Peagam days after our visit, and she straight away invited me to come to the Bromley Royal Marines and Sea Cadets unit, to give a presentation on 47 RM Commando, and if possible have veterans present as well. It was decided to let it take place on 28 March 2011, and she put me in contact with Lt. Ian Jones to get it all sorted out who suggested a second presentation at the Hornchurch Cadets on the next day.

I had already come up with the idea to buy a reproduction wartime Battledress, to create a replica of a 47 RM Commando uniform and wear it in Port-en-Bessin on the coming Normandy trip to surprise the veterans. So this Bromley and Hornchurch venue was the perfect opportunity for a dress rehearsal.

I soon started planning the trip, and looked at options to also visit The National Archives and the Imperial War Museum for research on the history of 47 RM Commando, as well as meeting the curator of the Royal Marines Museum in Portsmouth who invited me some time ago

In the meantime I received my Battledress, and started sewing on the 47 Commando shoulder titles and Combined Operations patches. Ted Battley provided a bit of advice on how to wear it. The finishing touch and hardest part was to obtain Ammo Boots in my size, finally obtained a week before the planned trip.

Meanwhile, Eric Corlett, son of the late Cpl. Hugh Corlett, sent word he also wanted to meet me at the Royal Marines Museum.



At TS Narvik

The whole operation was running like a Swiss clock, taking off from Amsterdam on the morning of Saturday 26 March, landing at Gatwick, catching a train to Portsmouth and a taxi to the museum. The curator was not able to meet me in person, but left me a copy of John

Wetjen's personal account on D-Day to collect. Eric Corlett was already waiting for me in the museum's café, and we had a very good conversation for several hours. I then took a train to East Croydon where Fred and Ingrid would pick me up to stay with them. The next day I was treated to a lovely lunch in the country, and upon return took a train to London Victoria to get to Patrick's place.

The Monday started with a visit to the archives of the Imperial War Museum, and after collecting my uniform at Patrick's, we went to Bromley to meet veterans Chuck Harris, Arthur Thompson, John Baker, Fred Wildman, Ted Battley, and several relatives and friends. Our treasurer Sandra Tebbutt also joined us at TS Narvik.

Although it was my first time giving a presentation in English to cadets, talking about 47 RM Commando in World War Two with veterans present, it turned out to be a successful event. The next day we went to The National Archives Kew, where I was able to copy some very interesting documents relating to 47 RM Commando. Late afternoon we travelled to Hornchurch (Essex), and although no veterans were able to attend, the second presentation was as successful as the first one.

Wednesday evening I would be going back to Holland with a few kilos extra luggage, but had to buy a new suitcase first because my travelling bag got torn. I got back home on Wednesday at about 2200 hrs.

I would like to say a word of thanks to Fred and Ingrid Fearne for having me stay at their home and treating me to the lovely lunch, Patrick O'Connell for making it all possible and guiding me to all the places we visited, and both the Bromley and Hornchurch Cadets units for having me there!

Marc de B.

BROMLEY via Patrick

There is nothing like a pub to draw together the troops. And so we found ourselves thanks to an invitation from Royal Marine cadets in the London area to the veterans of 47 RM Commando. Marc de Bolster had assembled as close a replica uniform as he could and was due to wear it and give a talk to the Bromley cadets. Some of us were able to meet in the nearby pub for a late lunch first. Three tables of veterans and family members mixed and mingled with a good chance to meet new faces and say hello to the old ones. The full list of pub going veterans plus family was John Baker, Ted Battley, Chuck Harris, Arthur Thompson and Fred Wildman who joined us at TS Narvik. The message seems to be that the more time we have for socialising the better, since it always seems that just as you get going, you have to get a move on. **So...**

LONDON DINNER

Veterans, family members and association members are warmly invited to a formal dinner in London on Saturday September 17th. This will be a chance to welcome old friends and benefactors and also to thank Chuck Harris for his chairmanship. There has been a lot of progress in setting up new memorials in France, and this will be a chance to view a small film and to pay thanks to the team of friends who have built and funded them. As a social gathering, members are invited to gather on the day from 12 midday at the Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, near Waterloo Station. Thanks in part to a donation from the oil company Shell, the Association is able to pick up the bill for an overnight stay at the club for any veteran who wishes, and to pay for the evening dinner costs of any veteran.

For an idea of how much this will cost the rest of us, and to talk about making a donation if you wish, please contact **Geof Haywood**, and let him know if you are coming as he will need to know the numbers very soon:

phone 01202 888194 or email Geofandjillh@btinternet.com

Dress will be formal and we will take the opportunity to have a group photo.

PO'C

MISSING by GERRY BRENT

We checked out from the Canadian checkpoint as usual around 8.30 PM into a bitterly cold night on a "look and listen" patrol. The Canadians ran this sector and supervised the "ins" and "outs" of our day and night patrolling. The total strength of our patrol was: 1 Lance Corporal, 3 Marines, Myself, 1 Bren gun with 4 magazines and 1 portable wireless.

The road from Oosterhout which leads north to Utrecht, and is now a 4-lane highway, was in those days virtually impassable for transport - full of shell holes and abandoned military hardware, and it provided ample opportunities for ambush and traps. I had become quite experienced in this type of night patrolling. In fact, this was to be my last stint in a row of 6 nights checking up on German activities on our side of the river.

A week earlier I had been caught by the Canadian MPs "speeding" (doing 20 mph in a 15 mph zone) in Breda, on my way back from Bergen-op-Zoom to our lines. The Canadians forwarded the infringement notice to the Colonel, for which I was given the 6 night patrols in a row.

In the preceding nights I learned quite a bit about the German habits and their methods of patrolling. These patrols varied from small patrols like ours, to fighting patrol strength of 30-40 men; they all had to come across the river Maas which was fast flowing and full of ice this time of the year. They had rigged up ropes along the bridge (blown up when the Germans retreated). The men in the boats pulled themselves along the bridge which somewhat slowed the fast moving waters of the river.



Gerry in 1945

The nights crystal clear with heavy frost would carry noise a long way. Also smells like tobacco smoke would carry some distance. Above all, however, were the German hobnailed boots that crunched on the hard frozen ground making an easily recognizable sound. In contrast, our boots heavily vulcanized were practically noiseless compared to the German footwear.

So we made our way cautiously to our normal patrol "headquarters". This was a little transformer hut just about 100 meters from the River Maas. As this hut was the only protection from the wind and the cold, I am sure we shared our "headquarters" with Germans on alternate nights. That evening I thought we might investigate a small disused shipyard situated further up stream which was surrounded by four or five dilapidated houses. We approached with utter caution! This was a new spot for us where we had never been before!

Just as well!

All of a sudden we heard German voices very close – in fact, too close for comfort. We were out in the open, there was no cover and I didn't fancy our chances in a shoot out in utter darkness with a German fighting patrol obviously well-established in the surrounding houses. A few yards away to our right stood one dilapidated building. As my major concern was to get some cover I was prepared, if necessary, to fight our way into the place or out of the area, if possible. As it turned out, we were lucky – there was nobody in the building, but the Germans had no intention of moving on.

We must have strayed right into a German fighting patrol of about section strength, who were well acquainted with this particular area and had used one or the other of the small houses as shelter before.

We spent the rest of the night listening to the Germans chattering away, huddled in one room on the ground floor, ready for any intrusion.

When daylight broke and the Germans still made no attempt to withdraw (after all, they were on "our" side of the River), I went to explore the rest of the house and much to my dismay found at the top of the stairs an unexploded "Panzerfaust".

Whoever has seen what this little piece of machinery can do to a tank, can well imagine my concern at having it lying at the top of the stairs with 4 marines, as uninvited guests, traipsing up and down the stairs. This was perhaps the reason why the Germans had avoided visiting our present abode.

Much against all training instruction and more my own better judgement I, however, felt compelled to try and get rid of this "Panzerfaust" before it blew us all up. I cannot recollect exactly what I felt at the time, but I lifted this bloody thing up with all the care I could muster (I don't think I lifted anything ever so gently ever after). I carried the unexploded bomb down the stairs and deposited it through the open door on to the ground below.

We spent anxious daylight hours listening to the Germans talking, hoping that the knowledge of the bomb I just disposed of would discourage them from any closer attention.

As soon as it got dark, I decided to attempt to break out. We were again in luck! Just a few minutes after darkness set in, a snow storm came up and enabled us to depart from our most unwelcome abode and the German fighting patrol without being seen or heard! The only problem we had now was to find our way back, hopefully unmolested, and without running into further German patrols.

Although you cannot see very much in front of you in a snowstorm, there is actually an easy way to follow direction in this part of the world by following the dykes which ran parallel to the road. Hand on shoulder of the next fellow we made our way slowly through the storm back to our lines.

Then came a sniff of smoke of a log fire and suddenly the challenge "Halt! Who goes there!" – "Hell" – I thought – what happens now! The password I knew was yesterday's and today's sentry would have no idea what yesterday's password was. If we had a nasty sentry, he would shoot first and ask questions later! But our luck held – he was a friendly fellow and understood our dilemma!

Less though was the Duty Officer, who was most unimpressed when I reported the patrol back in. As we came out of the cold snow storm, frozen to the core, he was sitting there with his feet up in front of a roaring fire, not at all pleased by the paperwork involved in reinstating a patrol which was reported missing the night before.

He was not at all interested in my report! All he was concerned about was that missing patrols should stay missing and not return! Just too much paperwork! He made this very clear to us and I felt more like having come in front of the Duty Officer being A.W.O.L. instead of returning to our lines after 24 hours night patrolling in enemy lines.

But this story has a sad ending.

The next night Lt. Gardiner took over my patrolling stint with a somewhat stronger patrol of 15 marines. He got killed in an ambush.

Lt Gerry Brent (later Captain), who now lives in Australia, transferred from the Royal Welch Fusiliers to 47 Cdo after the Walcheren landing and fought at Kapelsche Veer. Later he served with 6 Commando through to the end of the war. More from Gerry next time.

TRACING THE PAST

Janet Heap, the daughter of **Philip Buckley** is trying to get more information about her father. He served with 47 Commando, being involved with Naval Party 1502 which was to make the port of Port en Bessin safe (from mines etc) and operational. Sid Barlow who served with the Naval Party has given her a lot of information about the work involved but it would be excellent if anybody can remember Philip and pass on any information about him. As mentioned above, Drew Thompson would be glad to know more about his grandfather, **Albert Thompson**'s time with 47. Albert, who died in February, served with both Q Troop and Y Troop.

BEST WISHES

**All good wishes to Major Bob Perry who leaves for Afghanistan next month.
He's done so much for the Association and we'll miss him badly.**

**Geof Haywood does a successful "shoebox for the troops" appeal so Bob's
asked him to bear him in mind.**

**Bob can still be contacted by email boberry@live.co.uk or by post:
Maj R W Perry RM, CAMP DUBS, BFPO 758**

From the ladies: X X X X X X X X X X

BASEBALL CAPS

Geof Haywood, still has two baseball caps for sale at £8 post free. They have the RM logo (ie Globe & Laurel) on the front with lettering "47 Royal Marine Commando Assoc." They

are available direct from him at 10 Elizabeth Road, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 1AX or phone 01202 888194 or email Geofandjillh@btinternet.com

OTHER NEWS

On his travels up and down the country, Bob Perry, as well as visiting John Forfar on several occasions also managed to see Cliff Kingstone in Redcar. Cliff is the architect who designed the Memorial Gardens in Port en Bessin and the stone for the Captain Cousins memorial. He is now 87 and not in the best of health but asked to be remembered to all in the Association. Bob was also in touch with our generous benefactor, Malcolm Ross and hoped to be able to meet up with him before leaving for Afghanistan.

A documentary film company was in touch regarding a series planned on "D-Day to Berlin". They interviewed John Forfar and Fred Wildman and possibly other veterans but there is no further news on this as yet.

MONEY MATTERS

The annual subscription remains at £10 per head and if you've not yet got round to paying this year's sub, now's as good a time as any. As mentioned above, veterans need no longer pay but we hope everyone else will chip in.

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

WALCHEREN 2011

It is expected that there will be enough people to justify a coach to Walcheren this year. The likely date is from around 30th October to 4th November. If you plan to come please let 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

Cheques should be made payable to '47 RM Commando Association'. The coach will pick up (very early probably) at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, and at the ferry terminal at Dover. If you wish to stay at the **Royal Maritime Club** please book as soon as possible once the exact dates are known. (Advance Bookings: 0239 2837681) Ingrid can also be reached on 0208 2390145 or email: ingrid.fearne@blueyonder.co.uk

47 RM CDO WEBSITE

Among the many people in touch with the website in recent months, Marc heard from veteran 'Dobbie' Dobson who joined Q Troop in March 1945 and was later assigned to A Troop. He has sent an A Troop photo and several of parades in November 1945. Dobbie, who lives in Ipswich, also helped Marc with the naming of officers in group photos taken in Holland in 1945.

Allan Drummond, the son of Cpl Peter T Drummond of HW Troop, has also been in touch. He reported that his father was still fit and mobile so we hope that they will both want to join the Association.

Message from Marc: In addition to previous requests for wartime photos and documents relating to 47 RM Commando, I would also be very interested in copies of Service Certificates, in which all the dates and other information relating to the service of the men in the Royal Marines and the Commando is documented. Please be aware that this is not for publication, but only for my personal research. I discovered that there is some very

interesting information to be found in these, when it comes to different ranks and units some men were in.

So anyone willing to assist me in my research, please send me a copy either through email or to my home address.

I thank you for this in advance!

Photos, documents etc can be sent by post 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.

The website is at: www.47Commando.org.uk



By-eee!

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