

47 ROYAL MARINE COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

Committee

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DESPATCH 30

July 2014

COMMENT

So much went on during the 70th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy that I found it difficult to cover the whole of it. Rarely lost for words, not on paper anyway, this may have defeated me. All I can say is that I've done the best I can to capture the flavour of it all and the great atmosphere that prevailed among the sun-drenched crowds. Our next 70th anniversary is in Walcheren. It will get nothing like the same media coverage as D-Day but to the Dutch and to us it is just as important and looks like being a very special and enjoyable occasion. Do come if you can.

Lannah

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear 47 Veterans, Families and Friends

Since I last wrote, men of 47 have mustered again in style in France, honouring their comrades who never returned, and winning hearts and minds of all they met. Seventy years on, of the score or so veterans we know are still alive, nine made the journey to Port en Bessin, to Bayeux and to Gold beach. Since many of you reading this edition have worked for far longer than me to tell the story of 47, I hope that you'll agree that this edition shows just how much has been done to remember the brave deeds of 47 Royal Marine Commando.

We are firing on all cylinders - with the occasional need for a tyre change, and regular stops to re-fill with essential fluids.

In the eleven months from D Day on 6th June 1944 to VE Day on May 8th 1945, 47 RM Commando saw 114 men killed and 327 wounded. Since the war, the mission of the Veterans who survived and the families and friends who mourned the dead was to honour and remember this sacrifice. As the years went on, this expanded to telling the story of 47, arranging reunions, and supporting the welfare of veterans and widows.

Serving Royal Marines from 1 Assault Group re-staged the landing at Asnelles on 6th June 2014, joining French citizens and others from the Association in re-staging the twelve mile march to P en B. A new information board was unveiled on 7th June in P en B, and a spectacular liberation parade filled the streets, with wartime vehicles, some carrying veterans. The bar on the harbour wall was re-named the 47 RM Commando Bar and cadets supported the veterans and the Association at every turn. You can read more in the pages ahead.

We also held a memorial lunch for John Forfar at which veterans told their stories about him,

and Michel Deserable, Michel Laulier and Alex Wilson came over from France. In the evening, we had a dinner with raucous ukulele performances at which Ted Battley was seen doing the conga. We have also arranged for Harry Prescott to get his first UK passport at the age of 92, and we have helped encourage the council to fix a new shower in the home of a veteran. At every turn, we have mostly managed to do everything with the cheerfulness and camaraderie both displayed and expected by the President, Chuck Harris.

We've been supported by the Corps of the Royal Marines, and by the friends and family who make up the Association, including Essie Cousins. Thanks to her, 400 books have been sold, largely packed and sent by Ken Parker. And we are lucky to have the most fabulous committee and I'd like to thank them here on behalf of us all - our veteran members Chuck Harris, Ken Parker, Ted Hartwell and Ted Battley, our RM Warrant Officer 2 (retired) Geof Haywood, our Despatch editor, Lannah Battley, our walk organiser, Ken Cowdery. Our Treasurer, Gemma Davison, asks that you remember that unless you are a veteran, you must pay your dues if you are staying in the Association! Our webmaster, historian and vehicle parade king, Marc de Bolster continues to get contact from around the world, and our secretary Ingrid Fearne has just organised the biggest bus tour and reunion of her career.

Please look out for the event in September I am hosting in London for the fabulous work done by our standard bearers, Les Pike and Lou Sartorel and our Vice Chairman, Peter Spear. Thank you all.

But I close with the news that the Forfar family passed to the Association the papers of Doc Forfar to be sent to the RM Museum. They show that veterans have been writing to each other since the end of the war, wanting the welfare and the history of the unit to be honoured and remembered. I feel proud to say that we are doing our best to stand on their shoulders.

Patrick O'Connell, Chairman, Son of Capt Guy O'Connell

MARCH REUNION Celebrating the Life of John Forfar

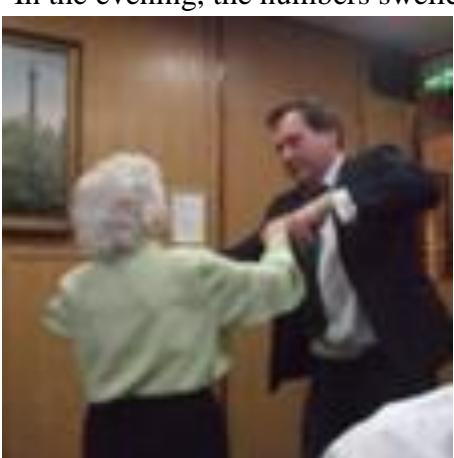
On Saturday, 8th March, members gathered at the Union Jack Club in Waterloo to celebrate the life of Professor John Forfar MC who died last year at the age of 96. A buffet lunch was served on the 23rd floor with fine views across London while accordionist, Kathy Jones, played Scottish, French and WW2 tunes as background music. Seven veterans were able to attend and, from France, "the two Michels", Déserable and Laulier, and Alex Wilson, son of a 47 officer and publisher of John's book *From Gold to Omaha*. Essie Cousins, editor of the new edition of *From Omaha to the Scheldt* which John was able to see and appreciate while still alive, was also there.

After lunch, veterans and others happily reminisced about "Doc" Forfar and afterwards, Chairman, Patrick O'Connell, played a recording which he made with John before his death. With members, family and friends present, thirty-five attended lunch.

In the evening, the numbers swelled to around sixty for dinner in the Gascoigne Room. There, Natalie and Stephane Pitel and their family, also over from France, were able to join us. In the course of the dinner they announced officially the change of name for the Bar. As generous as ever, they also left a present of a decorative mug of Port en Bessin for each veteran. Later, the Red Hot Ukulele Duo arrived and entertained us and it wasn't long before they got everybody going. Many, both young and old, got up to dance, including the Chairman and Rose Wildman (left). I think Fred may have been a little jealous. The evening ended with a huge conga line around the room which everybody joined.

In all, an excellent and exuberant celebration.

LB



RM 1664 CHALLENGE AND 47 RMCA

The 1664 Challenge is being run to raise money for the RM Charitable Trust Fund and to celebrate the Corps founding 350 years ago in 1664. What is it? Well, a Core Team with experts in the relevant field skied from north to south Norway, hopped into a yacht and sailed to Cadiz, changed to bikes and cycled to Port en Bessin (PeB), canoed across the Channel and are currently running round the UK!

After a month away touring, immediately followed by the 47 RM Cdo Reunion, so well organised by Paddy and Ingrid, on the 8th March, I found an email inviting me to go with an “RM Recce Party” on the 12th for the canoe leg of the Challenge planned to depart from PeB. I arranged to meet Michel Laulier and with his guidance we visited the Captain of the Port for berthing and tidal information, the Mayor’s Secretary so that the town knew what was going on and to ask permission to use the Salle de Fete as a canoe store. The Mayor popped in to meet everybody and on being told about the challenge made a face of disbelief at what was planned. Our HQ for planning was the 47 Café plus we went to the Mercure Hotel where they/we would be staying.

The request to 47 RM Cdo was that two Veterans and our Standard should be there for the handover from the cycle team and the departure of the canoes plus we should run a Reception for PeB’s key personnel. Harry Prescott, Ken Parker, Lou Sartorel and I volunteered and were duly booked on the ferry. Throw into the plan the London Graspan Parade – Lou had Cadets on Parade - and a Corp Reception in Billingsgate afterwards – no the fish have gone – made it a hectic day. Lou picked up Harry whilst Geof collected Ken from the coach in Pompey and after supper in a pub we all stayed in HMS Excellent transit accommodation – well it was free!

On arrival in PeB on the 19th May we met the 6-man Core Team, cycle and admin team plus Commandant General RM then moved to the Western Feature for a brief on 47 RM Cdo by Geof and a short service. Following a phone call, the 47eme Café was opened for an hour for us on what was their day off! Next we headed to another bar where the Marines took Harry and Ken under their wings and purchased a “few” whiskies for them – enough said!!

After a late start – see whiskies – we watched the canoe training and went for a ride in the safety Landing Craft Utility (LCU). In the evening 47 RM Cdo/Geof – hosted a reception for local Mayors x 4, Mayor’s Sec, Works Dept, Veteran French Military and Citizens plus the RM – who were delayed by “re-planning for a bad weather forecast” until it had been running for over an hour – panic and “cross”! Eventually the Core Team arrived and presented the Mayor with an RM History, “Nothing Impossible”, and to the Café a mounted Cdo Dagger now proudly displayed behind the bar.

Next day, after a short service at Place Gaudin and a photo call with the Vets, the Core Team set off accompanied by the RM Corps march “A Life on the Ocean Wave” from Geof’s car



stereo – the French were not impressed with the second tune - Rule Britannia!

Our last day, with a box van and three mini buses, one with a canoe trailer, we set course for the ferry and Eastney beach to greet the canoes in. An initial enquiry on the ferry of “did you see any canoes on the way over” was met by laughter for this silly Brit! However,

at midday, we did spot the canoes resulting in a ship's broadcast and Ken being called to the bridge. Maybe the fact that they were told the event was with Brittany Ferries sponsorship helped!

With a full band, families, friends and enough senior officers to make up a squad awaiting them, the canoes duly arrived. Once families were reunited, canoes stored, etc we moved to the Corps Museum for a reception and a further chat with the Core Team who throughout were "chuffed and honoured" that our two Vets were there and by the tales of what they and the Commando had achieved. The history, our standing in PeB and the Association received lots of PR and admiration for what we now have, the only fully supported WW2 Commando Association with veterans who year after year return to France and Walcheren – well done the Vets. If you want to see pictures of the visit and follow the 1664 Challenge visit

www.1664challenge.co.uk

Geof Haywood

NORMANDY 2014

This report and photo are due to appear in the July/August 2014 issue of The Globe & Laurel.

The 70th anniversary of D-Day

47 RM Commando Association in Normandy, June 2014

Leaving on the 5th June, we were able to fill a 53-seat coach this year with many other members joining us in France.

Immediately on arrival in Port en Bessin, our eleven veterans were in demand. St George's School, Ascot, as last year, had a group in Normandy. Due to leave very shortly, they were ready to lay a wreath as the coach arrived. Though many veterans were in mufti, they all had green berets to hand. Afterwards, the girls had a very good question and answer session with them.

The 6th June turned out, indeed, to be our longest day with breakfast at 5.30 for an early start. The service at Bayeux Cathedral was scheduled for 9.15 but security meant that we had to take a devious route via Molay-Littry many kilometres to the south east of the city. There we became part of a convoy to be escorted along closed and empty roads by police outriders. From the coach park, we had help from British service personnel who persuaded some of the veterans to take to wheelchairs and pushed them up the steep, cobbled route to the Cathedral. HRH the Prince of Wales attended the service together with the Prime Minister and other senior members of the Commons. During the service a new bell was inaugurated and named Thérèse-Bénédicte by Prince Charles. Several of us spoke and shook hands with some of the luminaries in the crush on the way out.

Emerging from the Cathedral, our servicemen were there to help veterans reach Bayeux Cemetery. Local people lined the route clapping and cheering and calling "thank you". When veterans stopped to shake hands along the way, the looks of delight on the faces of both young and old were truly touching. The applause continued from the crowds gathered in the Cemetery as the veterans followed a specially laid route to a seated area. Despite the long wait in scorching sun, there was a great atmosphere of happy anticipation.

In the course of the service, HM the Queen, among others, laid a wreath and the Prince of Wales read the lesson. The service ended with the French and the British national anthems. We were then provided with excellent packed lunches and beverages at a bright, football pitch sized marquee. Then it was a long wait, again in sweltering heat for our coach near the Cemetery gates. While there, Prince Charles, on the way to his limousine, stopped and shook hands and joked with veterans and several other members of our group.

Next at Sword Beach, some still with the sun beating down upon them, numerous Heads of State arrived. These included Angela Merkel and Presidents Obama and Putin. Their images flashed up on huge screens around the vast arena to cheers and applause. The final arrival was the Queen which evoked a huge roar of approval. M Hollande, welcomed everyone and spoke

of opportunities for world peace. A re-enactment of WW2 events followed, using the giant screens for newsreel footage together with a well-trained group of performers. At the end they were joined by children for a moving finale which evoked loud and sustained applause. We arrived back at the hotel by about seven, many nursing their sunburn. Yes, a long day but a memorable one.

While we were gone, others undertook the Commemorative Walk following the 12 mile route which 47 Cdo took in 1944 to capture Port en Bessin from the rear. A combination of RM Commandos and crew from HMS Bulwark made a landing at 9 am as 47 Cdo had done 70 years before but this time in easier circumstances.

On the 7th June the liberation of Port of Bessin is commemorated by both the town and the Commando. The first ceremony took place at the memorial on the Western headland. We were honoured to have the Commandant General RM, Maj Gen E G M Davis, in attendance with Brig Peter Cameron, Col G S C Manger, CO of 1 Assault Group RM, the Captain of HMS Bulwark and Captain Christopher Clough, Deputy Defence Attaché at the British Embassy in Paris. There was also a smart turn-out from members of 40 Cdo RM, sailors from HMS Bulwark and Southern Area Sea Cadets. Prayers were led by Rev John Wasley RNR. The Mayors of Port en Bessin and of Huppain, the CGRM and Captain Clough (below), among



many others laid wreaths and two RM Buglers sounded the Last Post.

Everyone transferred to the Eastern headland where a similar ceremony took place at the memorial to Captain Terence Cousins who led the capture of the strongpoint but unfortunately lost his life in the process.

A further wreath-laying at the plaque beneath the Vauban Tower was followed by the unveiling of a new information board by the Mayor, Docteur Pierre-Albert Cavey, and the CGRM.

A reception followed at the Salle des Fêtes where the Mayor presented medals to the veterans, followed by some inspiring speeches and presentations.

In the afternoon crowds thronged the streets to watch the Liberation Parade of WW2 vehicles led by a pipe & drum band and the RM and Sea Cadets.

In the evening we returned to the Salle des Fêtes for dinner with the Mayor and his wife. An excellent local choir serenaded us and then a talented jazz trio kept the party atmosphere going. On the 8th we travelled to Bayeux where we had been invited to watch a parade of WW2 vehicles from the front of the Tourist Board Office. As our convoy of wheelchairs and walkers made its way through the crowds, the veterans were again applauded all the way and, once seated, attracted many photographers and seekers of signatures. After lunch we visited the house at Sallenelles where "Doc" Forfar's Regimental Aid Post had once been and where some traces still remain in the cellar. As last year, Dr Kottler, the owner, made us very welcome and we were served refreshments in his garden, a sunny oasis of peace.

That evening we had the usual enjoyable and lively Corps dinner in the former Bar de la Marée, now Bar le 47eme.

En route to the ferry next morning we visited the 47 exhibition at the Cultural Centre and then laid a wreath at Bayeux Cemetery which had not been possible on the 6th. Remembering those who had not returned home in 1944 was perhaps an especially appropriate ending to our reunion.

LB

NORMANDY Extras

Many thanks are due to all those who undertook the huge amount of organisation required which began long ago. Congratulations to the Chairman and Committee members especially Marc de Bolster, Geof Haywood and Ken Cowdery and in particular to Ingrid Fearne, our Secretary who bore the brunt, dealing with stacks of application forms and red tape and somehow survived the sleepless nights before it all came so successfully to fruition.

St George's School, Ascot arrived in Port en Bessin before the coach and visited the Eastern Feature where Geof Haywood eventually found them. He gave them an account of 47's endeavours and it must have been good because quite a few tourists stopped to listen too. Later there were photos with 47 veterans at Place Gaudin.



Ted Battley Prince Charles stopped to shake hands with Ted at Bayeux Cemetery and had a brief and jokey conversation. Unfortunately, Ted now has very poor vision and over dinner that evening asked us, "Who was the chap with all the gold braid?"

Juergen Baas Speaking at the dinner, Patrick mentioned many people some of whom responded. This included our German member, Juergen, and this is a shortened version of his response:

I think tonight it's not 'ladies first', it's 'veterans first'. Dear veterans, ladies and gentlemen,

dear members and friends of 47 Royal Marine Commando Association. My name is Jürgen and I am a Flight Lieutenant (Captain) in the German Air Force Reserve. In May 1944, at the age of 19 my father came to this beautiful country as an enemy. He was serving with the Panzer-Lehr-Division as a gunner of the 88 mm anti-aircraft-artillery and fighting near Caen, Tilly-sur-Seulles, St. Lo, Falaise and later in the Ardennes and up to the end in Germany. As I said to our French hosts, it's my 20th time in France and my 15th time here in Normandy. Twenty years ago when some French people heard a German word they often said "Well, the German pigs again" or "Sorry, but the pub is closed for Germans". But, fortunately, times have changed. Today I feel welcomed here and I appreciate being here with you tonight. Last year I became a member of 47 RMCA and that really is a great honour for me.

I knew Arthur Thompson and Ernie Staphnill very well. The first time I met them, Ernie was sitting outside here and Arthur came out of the pub as I tried to get inside. He looked at me and said 'Where are you from?' When I answered 'From Germany,' he said 'Oh, that's all right' and gave me his beer. That's how the whole story started.

On Friday I did the 13 miles march from Asnelles to Port-en-Bessin. I'm only an Air Force officer, not infantry or a marine. Dear veterans, now I can a little bit imagine what it must have been like, doing this 'little walk' as Ken said to me, carrying all your equipment, weapons and ammunition and always in the face of the enemy. In the end you 'cracked the nut' and liberated this town on June 7th 1944.

Thank you very much for doing this brilliant job.

But you did not only liberate Port-en-Bessin. In the end you kicked the terrible Nazi-Regime out of Europe, liberated Germany and gave freedom and peace to us as well. You defeated my father but you liberated me.

Dear veterans, my deep respect to you, thank you very much again and all the best to you and to the Royal Marines. See you next year. Thank you."

Sallenelles

Before leaving, we had a wreath-laying ceremony at the roadside memorial outside Dr Kottler's house which is dedicated to members of 41, 46, 47 and 48 RM Commandos who were killed in action in the area.



In the Footsteps of 47 RM Commando

It was 09h20, the tide half out, warships on the horizon. The landing craft door crashed down into the sea near Asnelles. Royal Marines jumped out, and waded waist high onto the beach and approached the shoreline. They were watched every step of the way from the defensive

blockhouse.

No, this is not the story of 47 RM Commando of D-Day but rather an account of the start of 70th anniversary commemorations. Thanks to Colonel Garth Manger, 40 Royal Marine



Commando and ship's crew from HMS Bulwark, arrived to spontaneous applause and made this a very special day for a lot of people.

Our mission was to walk 20km in the footsteps of 47 RM Commando, to learn more about its remarkable mission on 6/7 June 1944 and to honour those who took part. Major Mark Bentinck, Royal Marines historian, recounted the story along the way.

Following a commemorative service hosted by the Mayor of Asnelles and attended by D-Day veteran Les Birch, about 230 walkers headed off in five

'troops' A, B, Q, X and Y – just as 47 did on D-Day. Each troop was a mix of Royal Marines, Royal Navy, young cadets, local family of 47 veterans and both British and French friends. The French community was keen to do its bit too – just as they had done 70 years earlier.

Warm welcomes and refreshments were provided by Mayors at Tracy, Longues, Commes and Port En Bessin. At Tracy, Mme Philip de Bourgoing and son Francois shared their family's memories of D-Day. A picnic lunch was held at L'Abbaye Sainte-Marie de Longues, courtesy of the d'Anglejan family.

By early evening, the five troops arrived in Port En Bessin. The only thing left to do was to thank all that helped and wave off our Royal Marine and Royal Navy escort as they returned to HMS Bulwark. They had been a true credit to their Corps.

Mission accomplished.

Ken Cowdery

Southern Area Sea Cadets: Normandy 70 – Operation Overlord 2014

I, and Darren Erb-Smith, had been planning for the best part of a year to take a party of cadets from Southern Area Sea Cadets to Normandy for the 70th commemoration of 47 Royal Marines Commando liberation of Port en Bessin. As you know, we did it!

Twenty-nine cadets and nine members of staff were in the Port to support the veterans to commemorate their gallant action over those two days in June 1944.

All twenty-nine took part in the walk between Asnelles and Port en Bessin, together with the Royal Navy ratings, Royal Marines and civilians on what turned out to be a very hot and exhausting day.

The cadets got a great sense of achievement from that activity.

Until the cadets came to Normandy and witnessed the events, soaked up the atmosphere and spoke to the actual veterans, D-Day was something you studied at school or watched programmes about on the television. Those experiences have changed their perception.



The services of remembrance at the Western Feature and the Cousins Memorial brought home the cost of the liberation. The liberation parade brought out an element of fun to the proceedings. Marching behind the pipes and drums, amidst the chaos of the parade, combined with the applause, a sense of pride developed amongst the cadets. If that was not enough to take on board the evening event was even more so! The cadets who acted as stewards to the veterans and their families enjoyed that experience immensely. As a result their self-esteem and confidence grew to a higher level. The cake (*see back page*) proved to be a tremendous hit with all; made and decorated by a member of staff from Darren's unit. That evening was a really good end to the commemorations.

I will conclude with a thank you to the Association for the invitation to attend the commemorations and to the Mayor for allowing the cadets to use the football clubs excellent facilities during our stay.

Lou Sartorel

The Liberation Parade Port en Bessin 2014

After almost twelve months of hard work we were finally there: the Liberation Parade in Port en Bessin on 7 June 2014.

On 30 June 2013 the idea was approved, so started my quest to find volunteers. The idea was to get only British and Commonwealth historic WW2 vehicles to Port en Bessin, and to include walking re-enactors in matching uniforms. It started with making a flyer to attract volunteers at living history events in Belgium, but after having participated in several of these historic events handing out flyers, three months had passed without any significant result. Having decided to look further afield, I then stumbled upon a photo of two beautiful vehicles at online social media 'Facebook', stating they were in Normandy 2011. Sending a message to the owner of this photo, led me to two major British based organisations of military vehicle enthusiasts; Invicta Military vehicle Preservation Society or IMPS and the Military Vehicle Trust or MVT. Their committee members and Normandy 2014 tour organisers were kind enough to distribute my flyer and contact details among their organisation members. In the meantime I travelled to Port-en-Bessin to have a meeting with the Mayor and his secretary, who had already welcomed the idea and provided me with a parade route and were taking care of street decorations as well as arranging Pipes & Drums.

A constant flow of e-mails from volunteers started coming in, and the parade started to take shape. Although most of the volunteers came from IMPS and MVT, a lot of individuals also found their way to the organiser of this parade. Historic vehicle owners from Italy, Switzerland, Poland, Sweden, France, Belgium and the Netherlands wanted to take part in this event. Some female volunteers so enthusiastic, they created flag dresses themselves in the shape of the Union Flag and the French tricolour!

French serving gendarmes dressed as wartime policemen as well as re-enactors from several different nationalities.

Luckily Mariel van Mierlo was there to assist me in forming a line-up of the vehicles, and up to a week before I went to Normandy on 1st June last minute volunteers signed up. On 2nd June I



met with Jocelyne Lasnon, the Mayor's secretary, to go through some last minute changes. On the day itself, the vehicles and walking participants met me at the designated area and I asked several jeep owners to go to the hotel to get the veterans who were to take centre stage in the parade. Mayor Cavey and his wife Béatrice sat in the back of a Dodge Command Car, and the parade was led by the Pipes & Drums followed by the Southern Area Royal Marines and Sea Cadets.

We had over 100 historic vehicles there which the crowd loved, while the veterans and participants all enjoyed it very much. The parade ended at the Place Gaudin car park for a static show, where a BARV (Beach Armoured Recovery Vehicle) which landed on 6 June 1944 at Arromanches had been placed as an eye catcher.

All the hard work paid off.

Marc de Bolster

IN MEMORIAM

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

Arthur Leslie Vaughan 3rd October 2013 recorded with no other details in the Commando Veterans Association's January 2014 newsletter. He is on our full list of those who served. Having talked to veteran Aubrey James at the 8th March reunion, I learned that he was a great pal of his but, unfortunately, they were never able to get back in touch. Aubrey knew him as Leslie. He was a signaller with 47 and before the war was a lion-tamer. As a result he had lost two fingers on one hand but was still fit and able enough to win his green beret and to serve.

Jeffrey W Rawson 10th July 2014 who served in X Troop. Marc had news of this via Facebook but no other details have been received.

Albert E Potterton whose death on 7th August 2013 was reported in the last issue, had a longer and much more detailed obituary about his service with 47 in *The Globe & Laurel* Nov/Dec 2013 issue with an excellent photo. It was written by member, Tom Busby, as Secretary to RMA Welwyn Garden City.

HORACE BEDWORTH

Horace Bedworth, serving with 47 Commando, was killed in action on 6th June 1944, aged 23. His family contacted us recently to say that they would be placing a plaque in his memory at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. As a result, on 26th June, Lou Sartorel was able to take the standard and accompanied by veteran Harry Prescott joined the family in the chapel where there were words of remembrance, the Last Post and Reveille. Afterwards the plaque was placed at an oak tree in the grounds. Lou and Harry joined the family for coffee afterwards. It was Horace's great-niece, Louise Instone, who got in touch and she now hopes to become a member and possibly travel to Normandy with us next year.

MONEY MATTERS

The annual subscription, running from January to December, remains at £10 per annum. Veterans have free membership. If you haven't got round to paying this year's subs, our Treasurer, Gemma Davison, will be very pleased to receive your contribution. Cheques should be made payable to '47 RM Commando Association' and sent to:

Mrs G Davison, 91 Catherine Street, Rochester, Kent ME1 2HL

BOOKS

Paul Winter has been in touch in recent months regarding his book *D-Day Documents*. After some delay, it is now due for publication later this month by Bloomsbury. At 544 pages, it is

likely to cost £40 but should be available at rather less online at Amazon and there may be a discount for members.

Andy Holborn who has been in contact with veterans and others now expects *The Gold Beach Landings* to be published later this year also from Bloomsbury.

Marc de Bolster's book *47 Royal Marine Commando: an inside story 1943-1946* is due for publication in September by Fonthill Media and can be pre-ordered from Amazon at £20 with free postage for UK addresses.

PATRICK IN PORTSMOUTH

On a lovely sunny Sunday, the 6th July, Patrick (probably as Paddy O'Connell) compèred the Band Display and Concert by the Band of HM Royal Marines, Portsmouth, in the grounds of the Royal Marines

Museum. It all went well, Geof Haywood reports, with Patrick's usual sense of humour adding to the official script. Geof was there with Jill and our ex-Secretary Betty Field with her daughter, Pauline, and our present Secretary, Ingrid Fearne with Fred. They were given a stand and sold books, prints and some postcards to a total of £210.

The original painting hangs in the Museum foyer and



has generated so much interest that it will remain there until the end of August when it will be returned to Bristol RMR who went to so much trouble to provide its "first home". In the Museum's D-Day display, 47 features prominently and to quote Geof, "47 was the talk of the Museum and everybody knew of the commando and its courage – brilliant".

Correction Many thanks to Michel Laulier who in response to the Lizé Diary item in the last issue wrote to say that Henri Lizé was never Mayor of Port en Bessin. Neither the translation nor the introduction actually mention that so apologies, the error is mine. LB

NEWS

Chuck Harris A member of the Commando Veterans Association reported in their newsletter that, by chance, he visited the Prince Albert pub in Broadstairs, Kent, where they were having a "bit of a bash" for our President, Chuck Harris. Marc de Bolster was there together with our Belgian singers and a print of David Rowlands' painting was in circulation. The pub displays a lot of military memorabilia and copies of Chuck's medals were added to the collection. There's a photo of Chuck signing the print and, naturally, a good time was had by all.

John Forfar An article about John appeared in "Le Pilote", the annual magazine published by the Port en Bessin municipality. Many thanks to Alex Wilson for sending scans of the cover

and text. They wanted to pay tribute to John but the space available was, unfortunately, suddenly reduced but Alex writes that “the importance of John’s contribution to the town is nevertheless well highlighted.”

Norman Rose After returning from the D-Day commemorations, Norman had a long article with a good photo in his local paper, the Brecon & Radnor Express. As well as recounting events in Normandy for the 70th, he mentioned his war service and what he did afterwards.

Major Bob Perry RM Bob writes: By the time you read this I will have returned to the UK on completion of a turbulent 7-month deployment to South Sudan serving with the United Nations. It will be good to be home after serving overseas for the last 3 years with previous jobs taking me to Diego Garcia and Afghanistan. Although I was looking forward to retirement next year, I have been asked to serve for a further 18-mths (until Oct 2016) to complete an appointment at Navy Command HQ in Portsmouth. I have accepted the offer and now very much look forward to renewing my acquaintance with the Association as a serving Royal Marine and supporting all of our veterans and their families. I am hoping to start that re-acquaintance at Walcheren later in the year – hope to see you all there!

Your Editor will be publishing a novel later in the year, probably due in October or November. – Maybe she’s rather aged for a debut novelist but no matter. It’s called *Either End of the Tunnel* and will appear in paperback and also as an ebook. Should you read it, a review on Amazon would be very much appreciated. Even the less complimentary ones are welcome as that will at least prove that somebody’s buying it! There may even be a Book Launch at that Mecca, the Coopers Arms, Newcastle Emlyn.

TV and RADIO

The Great British Menu 47 Commando got a mention on this TV programme as the chefs were producing food suitable for a banquet for D-Day veterans. This episode concerned the fish course and at the beginning they showed black and white footage of the landings and one of the chefs at the Western feature. After looking at the list of names of the fallen on the plaque he went down into the bunker to gaze out over the harbour through one of the gun slits and remarked that it “brought it all home”. Then they got cooking.

Harry Prescott was interviewed by Patrick (as Paddy O’Connell, of course) on his Radio 4 Sunday morning programme *Broadcasting House* on 1st June about acquiring his first British passport at the age of 92 to attend the 70th commemorations in Normandy with 47 RM Cdo. Till now, Harry has had a Canadian passport which could cause all kinds of problems at passport control. The new one seemed to work fine!

D-Day Coverage on TV was quite extensive, apparently, in both France and Britain. Lots of sightings of veterans were reported by family and friends on various news programmes. The closing shots of the all-day programme on BBC1 returned to Bayeux Cathedral and the standards being marched out. There followed a brief view of Ted Battley shaking hands with people thronging the route to the Cemetery and a glimpse of the smart young Royal Artilleryman pushing his wheelchair.

Online on British Forces TV is a very good video of the Asnelles landing by RMs and Geof doing an excellent job relating 47’s exploits on that day 70 years ago. There’s also an interview with Juergen. <http://web202.ssvc.com/news/articles/navy/2838>

47 RM COMMANDO WEBSITE

One contact made through the website in recent months has been Kirstine Smith on behalf of her father, 47 veteran James Bain Smith, both resident in Australia. Kirstine has sent material for the website, including this photo of James ("Jock"), left, and Jack "Taff" Holmes.



Marc de Bolster deals with dozens of enquiries like this from far and wide and is pleased to do so. He is always happy to receive photos, documents and any other material relating to 47 RM Commando and its men. As ever, we thank Marc for his time and expertise in administering and maintaining the website. It has become a very important part of the Association, being the first port of call for all kinds of queries, not just from veterans and their families. It also provides information on 47 Commando's history, its personnel and Association events with plenty of photos and much more besides.

www.47Commando.org.uk

KEEP THE DATE

As the 47 Standard passes from Les Pike to Lou Sartorel, you are invited to a buffet lunch in London at 1200 on Sunday 28th September at the Union Jack Club. Join us to thank Les - and of course Peter Spear - for many long years of service. Help put lead in Lou's pencil for standing in Walcheren in high winds. There will be entertainment afterwards, and travel, food and accommodation is of course free for veterans.

More details soon.

PO'C

WALCHEREN 2014 The 70th Anniversary

The trip to Walcheren will run from Friday, 31st October to Tuesday, 4th November 2014. We shall again have Dinner B & B at the very comfortable Arneville Hotel in Middelburg. That and the cost of the ferry and coach travel will be included in the price, as yet unknown. The more people travelling the better the value. 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) at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, and at the ferry terminal at Dover. If you wish to stay at the **Royal Maritime Club** overnight on the 30th please book as soon as possible, saying that you are with 47 Cdo, Membership no 4600 (or you get charged more), and that you require a packed lunch in lieu of breakfast. (Advance Bookings: 0239 2837681).

Ingrid can also be reached on 0208 2390145 or email: ingrid.fearne@blueyonder.co.uk



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