

47 Royal Marine Commando Association

(A Specialist Branch of the RMA - The Royal Marines Charity)

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What a spectacular and momentous series of events in Normandy to commemorate D-Day 80! Whether you were standing on Gold beach or watching at home on the TV, you could not fail to have been moved by the sight of serving Royal Marines wading ashore from landing craft to be greeted by huge crowds and the skirl of the bagpipes courtesy of our very own Kelly. Add in the dedication of a new memorial bench and the names of our fallen inscribed on a magnificent stone tablet at Asnelles and you can see why we were all emotionally exhausted - even before setting off on the 'Following in the Footsteps' walk magnificently organised by Ken, Alex and the remainder of their team! In everything we did in Normandy, the only missing ingredient was our late veterans who, I am sure, would have been so proud to have been part of it all. A full report of all of our activities can be found elsewhere in this edition of Despatch.

At the AGM, our long serving chairman John Prentis decided to finally retire and hand the baton on to yours truly. I am deeply humbled and proud that you have placed your trust and confidence in me to lead the Association for the foreseeable future. John achieved so much during his long tenure that space precludes me from listing everything here (see the enclosed Globe & Laurel article!). Thank you for everything John and we look forward to seeing you at many of our future events.

And finally, I send our collective congratulations to our new medallist of the British Empire. Geof Haywood has been a tireless supporter of our veterans and their families over many years. Everyone in the Association is thrilled that his selfless commitment to others has been recognised at such a high level.

VMT for your continued support!
Bob

The following article appeared in the July 2024 edition of Dorset View (reproduced by kind permission of DorsetView/Viewpoint Magazines).

British Empire Medal for Wimborne man

Report and photo by Marilyn Barber | newseditor@dorsetview.co.uk

A Wimborne man has been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours list for his voluntary service to Second World War veterans and their families.

Geoffrey Haywood, who has lived in the same house in the town since 1976, is to receive the British Empire Medal (BEM). He is married to Jill, and they have three daughters and five grandchildren.

Known as Geof, he joined the Royal Marines as a Junior Marine in March 1960 and served for 23 years.

He was sent for initial training to the Joint Services Amphibious Warfare Centre, Poole for landing craft training and subsequently served on several amphibious assault ships.

He ended up as LC Branch Sgt Major and during the Falklands War, together with his wife, he supported families who had lost loved ones.

He said: "The care and support of the men I served with was, and in some cases still is, a major part of my role."

He left the Royal Marines at the age of 40 in 1983 and had a number of jobs, the last one being at the Royal Marines Base Poole.

"I was back amongst the people I understood, and as chairman of the Poole and District Royal Marines Association which met in the camp, I could cover both within my working day."

The main reason for Geof's citation is his link and participation with the 47 Royal Marine Commando Association Veterans and Families. In 2005, he went on a RM Battlefield Tour of Normandy and subsequently the officer in charge of the trip decided that the march from the beach to liberate Port-en-Bessin should be re-enacted.

Geof said: "I joined his team and carried out various admin or liaison tasks to include being part of placing two new memorials, the programme of events, the 12-mile march from the beach to the port, and

remembrance ceremonies. Later, we travelled along the Commandos' route to Germany, recording the graves of all who fell for a book."

Six years ago, a new memorial was made and Geof was in the lead to liaise with the Dutch for design, material, the productions and placing of the memorial.

Geof subsequently became 'Chef de Ceremonies' for both France and Holland.

"For all the ceremonies in France or Holland, I contact and liaise with the

local people, mayors or officials, plus the RM or other service groups," he said.

Over the years, Geof has supported many veterans and their families, and he reckons he puts in two hours a day in this work — although just prior to the 80th anniversary of D-Day, when he accompanied a party of 70 to Normandy, it was more like four hours a day.

"It has been a privilege to hear the stories of veterans and their families and to call them friends.

"For funerals, I have

organised RM Buglers to play the Last Post and Reveille, discussed with the priest the order of service, plus offered advice for a military funeral."

Reflecting on his citation, Geof said: "For me this award is an honour, but I feel I will wear it on behalf of the many others with whom I have worked to achieve all that I have done."

"I am part of the 47 RM Commando team and my colleagues, who have also been my sponsors, have supported my efforts. They should feel part of this award."



Geof Haywood served for 23 years in the Royal Marines

The following article was submitted for publication in a future edition (hopefully July/ August) of the Globe & Laurel. The photographs accompanying the article below may differ from those chosen by the G&L Editor!)

The Corps Family in Port-en-Bessin to Commemorate D-Day 80

by Bob Perry

Although it was not expected that the 80th anniversary commemorations of the high achievement of 47 RM Cdo on D-Day would surpass or even match the fitting programme of commemorations experienced ten or even five years ago, it turned out that Port-en-Bessin on 6/7 June was still very much the place to be!



As an Association we realise how extremely fortunate we are to have such strong attendance from the serving and retired Corps at our commemorations each year. This year was no exception: The CO and a large contingent from 47 Cdo (RG) RM, two coaches packed with RMA members (including WW2 LC veteran Norman 'Grandad' Ashford), the RM Paddle Group who canoed across the Channel to Port-en-Bessin, the D-Day Cycle Group peddling from Dorchester via Roscoff and a strong (and noisy!) cohort from the RMA Riders Branch, all supporting our commemorations. Add to the mix a 3-star RM General, 400 people participating in the Asnelles to Port-en-Bessin 'Following in the Footsteps' march, four landing craft berthed in the inner basin of the port, a street in Tracy-sur-Mer renamed 'Rue du 47 Royal Marine

Commando', a new stone bench at Asnelles dedicated in honour of the men of the Commando who were killed on Gold Beach with their individual names inscribed on a separate memorial - all of the ingredients combined for a most memorable and fitting series of commemorations to honour all those who participated in the largest amphibious operation in history.

Our programme commenced early on 6 June with a ceremony on the seafront at Asnelles, close to the location on Gold Beach where 47 RM Cdo landed in 1944. A stone memorial bench was unveiled commemorating the 29 men of the Cdo who were killed or drowned when their landing craft were hit by exploding shells from shore based batteries or struck underwater mines.



Their individual names were inscribed on an impressive adjoining memorial listing the names of all the British assault force personnel killed on Gold Beach on 6 June 44. Following the ceremonies, concurrent activity was order of the day with many Association members visiting Bayeux War Cemetery, the final resting place for forty-two men of the Commando killed during the D-Day assault, the approach march and subsequent battle for Port-en-Bessin. For our other more active members it was time to pull on the yomping

boots and start marching! 'Following in the Footsteps of 47 RM Cdo' is now a well established annual event on 6 June that retraces the 12-mile route taken by the Commando from Gold Beach to Port-en-Bessin. Serving and former Royal Marines, many British, French, Belgium and Dutch friends and families walk the route at a comfortable pace, hearing the story of 47 RM Cdo's mission and actions at specific points along the route. During the walk time outs were taken at Tracy-sur-Mer to join the mayor in the renaming of a road and at the magnificent 12th century Benedictine abbey of Sainte-Marie de Longues where the owners, Isabelle and Jérôme d'Anglejan and their family have been



welcoming the 47 RM Cdo veterans and friends for many years. Our final stop was Mont Cavalier (Point 72) where we heard the CO 47 Cdo (RG) RM share the plan of attack on Port-en-Bessin given by CO 47 RM Cdo, Lt Col C F Phillips RM, on 7 June 1944. Ms Sophie Coevoet from the Port-en-Bessin Cultural Centre then told us more about the impact of Nazi occupation and liberation had had on the local community. A huge well done to Ken Cowdery, Alex Wilson and the remainder of their team for expertly organising the walk and liaising with the many mayors and landowners.

The liberation of Port-en-Bessin is commemorated by the local community and 47 RM Cdo Association on 7 June. The first ceremony was at the 47 RM Cdo Memorial Garden on the Western Feature overlooking the harbour. The service of remembrance was led by RMA Honorary Chaplain the Rev'd Justin 'Monty'

Montague with LCpl Bugler Gill Forde sounding the Last Post and Reveille. The very large gathering, including Lt Gen Sir Charlie Stickland KCB OBE (Chief Joint Operations), Col Will Norcott (CO 47 Cdo (RG) RM) and Capt PJ Wills RN (Naval Attaché Paris), then transferred to the Cousins Memorial on the Eastern Feature for a similar service. Capt Terence Cousins RM is recognised as playing the decisive role in the battle of Port-en-Bessin; his outstanding qualities of leadership, determination, initiative and courage that he displayed during the attack on the enemy fortifications, near where the memorial now stands, continue to be an inspiration to the current generation of serving Royal Marines. We were proud to lay wreaths in honour of the gallant troop commander who lost his life leading his men in battle. A further short ceremony followed at the bunker in Place Georges Seurat and an opportunity to pay tribute to the crews of the French cruisers Montcalm and Georges Leygues that supported the Allied landings. At the post ceremonies reception in the Salle des Fêtes, our chairman thanked the mayor and the people of the town for their hospitality and those French



civilians who, as the battle for the port raged around them and while the outcome was still unknown, gave so much assistance to the wounded of 47 RM Cdo. The afternoon was set aside for socialising, spinning dits and witnessing a spectacular cavalcade through the town of historic military vehicles with their owners and crews all dressed in WW2 military uniform.

The following day was an opportunity to recharge the batteries at the AGM. Our long serving Chairman, John Prentis, could not have wished to bow out on a more auspicious occasion. John has expertly steered the Association through some memorable but also choppy waters: the dedication of a major memorial in the dunes at Dishoek, Walcheren, the inauguration of a memorial bench on the Western Feature at Port-en-Bessin, the unforgettable hosting of French and Dutch Mayors at the MFM, the COVID pandemic when travel to Europe was severely restricted



and also the loss of our last veterans, including his own grandad, Chuck Harris, who was much loved and respected by all who knew him. Thank you John and enjoy your well earned retirement. Our last night dinner in our affiliated bar 'Le Criée du 47ème', named in honour of 47 RM Cdo, was the normal raucous and enjoyable affair. The proprietors, Nathalie and Stéphane and their staff, looked after us superbly and we were delighted that they accepted our

invitation to host them in London next March at the MFM. One of the highlights of the evening was the auction of items donated mainly by our German member Juergen Baas. Auctioneer extraordinaire Phil Gilby easily persuaded members to part with their hard earned cash raising an impressive £2920 for the RM Charity.

The 80th anniversary visit to Normandy would not have been such an outstanding success without the hard work of our brilliant committee and membership. Their dedication and commitment to excellence ensures that we will wholeheartedly continue to commemorate the exploits of 47 Royal Marine Commando and, most importantly, to perpetuate the memory of the 114 men serving with the Commando who made the ultimate sacrifice during the liberation of Europe:

**At the going down of the sun
And in the morning,
We will remember them.**

Following in the Footsteps Walk

Huge congratulations and thank you to Ken Cowdery, Alex Wilson and their team of helpers for organising and executing a fantastic 'Following in the Footsteps walk. Below is Ken's post operational report!

Dear walkers and friends,

We would like to thank and congratulate all those who took part in this year's commemorative walk. Despite the traffic restrictions, there was a huge turnout at Asnelles and about 400 of us who took part in the walk. It was a memorable day for us and we hope the same for you too. I have uploaded some photos to our event website [**www.DDay80-47cdo.info**](http://www.DDay80-47cdo.info).

A few memories stick out in our minds:

Firstly, it was inspiring to see the men and women of 47 Cdo RG RM and the Royal Navy wade ashore from their landing craft. They received a very warm welcome and were greeted by piper Kelly Heathfield, the Mayor Alain Scribe of Asnelles, D-Day veteran Norman Ashford, French school children, personnel from the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, WO2 Johnson Beharry VC and a very large crowd of spectators. UK media, the Telegraph and The Sun, both had a photo of the personnel coming ashore on their front pages on 7th June.

It was a shame that walkers could not stay for the commemorative service at Asnelles. In case you did not hear, the reason was that at about 07.15 that morning we received a new security directive that all walkers and support vehicles must be out of Asnelles and across the junction at Le Carrefour before 11.00. For those who stayed, they will have seen the new 47 RM Cdo Association bench and a magnificent memorial wall listing the names of all those killed, drowned or mortally wounded on or near 'JIG' sector of Gold Beach on D-Day.

At La Rosière, walkers were welcomed by the Mayor Daniel Cattelain of Tracy-Sur-Mer. Although the audio equipment did not turn up and the RM Bugler was stuck at Asnelles, we still managed to pay our respects at a brief ceremony at the 47 RM Cdo totem. Mayor Cattelain then led a party to inaugurate the new road named after 47 RM Cdo. He was accompanied by Colonel Will Norcott, local children, the landowner and members of the Association. Walkers hopefully had a chance to get a glimpse of the new road sign as we marched past.

Having crossed private farmland thanks to Mr Hue and family, our next stop was the beautiful Abbaye Sainte-Marie de Longues. Isabelle and Jérôme d'Anglejan and their family have been welcoming the 47 RM Cdo veterans and friends at the Abbey for decades. It was such a treat to have our picnic there and to hear Isabelle tell us some of the history of the Abbey.

Our next stop was Mont Cavalier ('Point 72') where we heard Colonel Norcott, Commanding Officer of 47 Cdo RG RM share the plan of attack on Port en Bessin given by 47 RM Cdo's Commanding Officer Colonel Phillips on 7th June 1944. Ms Sophie Coevoet from the Port-en-Bessin-Huppain Cultural Centre then told us more of the impact of Nazi occupation and liberation on the community of Port-en-Bessin-Huppain.

We then headed into Port-en-Bessin. On route, Bob Perry and walk 'Troop Leader' Stephen Ainscough laid a wreath at the 47 RM Cdo totem at Escures. On reaching the church, we formed up for a splendid final parade into the port led by RM Band Lance Corporal Bugler Gill Forde and 47 RM Cdo Association piper Kelly Heathfield and RSM Matt Hill MBE. Despite a few hiccups, we accomplished our D-Day80 mission. We had all arrived safely in Port-en-Bessin and I hope those who took part did not suffer too many aches and pains in the following days. It was a fitting way to honour and commemorate the achievements and sacrifices of the men of 47 RM Cdo and the men and women of our modern-day armed services who protect our liberty to this day.

In recognition of your own participation in the walk, please find a link to a **commemorative certificate**. If you were with a group, please do forward this email on to the rest of your party.

We would like to thank all those who helped with the walk - too many to mention in person but needless to say a big thank you to all those mentioned above. Very special thanks to Colonel Will Norcott, Major Andy Atkinson and all from 47 Cdo RG RM, 30 Cdo IX Gp RM and the Royal Navy; it was an honour to walk with them. Also, very special thanks to the Mayors and communities of Asnelles, Tracy-Sur-Mer and Port-en-Bessin. Many thanks also to all those who volunteered as 'Troop Leaders' and 'Medics' and to our photographer Oliver Sidla.

Finally, if you wish to support the work of The Royal Marines Charity and/or 47 RM Cdo Association so that we can continue to keep the walk going long into the future, please consider donating in one of the following ways:

1. **Sponsor** one of our Fundraising Team members and help toward our £8,047 target. Go to **<https://justgiving.com/team/47rmcwalk>**

Funds go to the Charity and are eligible for Gift Aid.

2. **Pledge to Remember and Sponsor** one of the 29 men of 47 RM Cdo killed, drowned or mortally wounded at or near Gold Beach on D-Day and whose names are listed on the new memorial wall at Asnelles. In return for £80 or €80 sponsorship, you will receive a unique commemorative certificate acknowledging you to be the sponsor. Donations go to the 47 RM Cdo Association to offset against its own €2,250 pledge toward the cost of the memorial.

To make a pledge, please email **walk@47rmcommando.org**. The pledge will be taken until all names are sponsored. The Pledge/Sponsorship can be from an individual, family, group of friends, company, association, etc. There are only a few names left to sponsor so don't take too long to decide.

We hope to see you again on a future walk - it is the same day every year. We will keep your names in our event mailing list so that you are informed of future walks - but do feel free to unsubscribe if you prefer.

With thanks again and out kindest regards,

Ken Cowdery and Alex Wilson

Annual Subscriptions

A personal message from your Chairman:

It is concerning to note that a significant proportion of the membership is in arrears with their annual subscriptions - the accumulated amount runs to several hundred pounds. You will agree with me that this is disappointing and not sustainable now or in the future.

Your subscription (£15 annually - veterans' widows and honorary members are exempt) is used to offset the day to day running costs incurred by the Association - in particular the purchase of poppy wreaths, *Despatch* production and distribution costs and personal travel expenses when conducting essential Branch business (although these expenses are kept to an absolute minimum). All of these costs have risen over the last few years: For example, in the last year alone we have spent over £700 on wreaths/funeral costs and more than £400 on printing and postage.

Your annual subscription becomes due on 1st January each year. Please assist our hard working Treasurer, Allen Withington, by paying promptly, preferably by Standing Order or Bank Transfer (details below). If you believe you may be in arrears, then please contact Allen to agree a mutually acceptable way to settle the amount outstanding. His contact details and those of our bank are:

Email: treasurer@47rmcommando.org
Tel: 07808 929291

Allen Withington
23 Primrose Hill Road
London
NW3 3DG

47 Royal Marine Commando Association
Lloyds Bank
Account: 03793869
Sort Code: 30-97-12

Please remember to include your name (or all names if paying for more than one family member) as the Reference. If you wish to pay by cheque, please make the cheque payable to 47RMCA and post to the Treasurer at the address above. Sterling notes or Euros will also be readily accepted.

Of course, some of you may have decided that you no longer wish to retain membership of the 47 Royal Marine Commando Association. We will be sorry to see you leave, but if this is the case then I encourage you to discuss this with me and, if I am unable to persuade you to stay, we will reluctantly remove you from our membership list in accordance with your wishes.

Thank you for your understanding of this particular thorny issue.

The Netherlands Order of the Bronze Lion



Your Chairman recently met with Nicola Lloyd, daughter of 47 veteran Capt Roger Lloyd RM of B Troop. Nicola has generously donated to the Association her father's Order of the Bronze Lion awarded for distinguished service at Walcheren, Kapelsche Veer, North-Beveland and on the island of Schouwen. He was also awarded a Mention in Despatches (MiD) for his gallant actions in Normandy. The Association has subsequently applied for his WW2 campaign medals and MiD oak leaf cluster from the MoD Medal Office; when received the medal group will be offered on a long term loan to the Polderhuis Museum where they will be on permanent display.

In the media...

Bob Perry writes: You will be well aware that Paddy O'Connell, our Vice Chairman, regularly commentates live for the BBC on State occasions, including coverage at the Cenotaph each November. On completion of his commentary duties in 2022, I very mildly rebuked him for describing live on air the headdress worn by the Royal Marines on parade as 'Pith Helmets'. Of course, you will all be aware that pith helmets are synonymous with Rudyard Kipling's *'Only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun'*, etc, etc.



Royal Marines wear a white helmet which is correctly known as the 'Helmet WP' or 'Helmet Wolsey Pattern'. Imagine my surprise, as I listened to Paddy's commentary on BBC R4 last November, when he uttered live on air:

"I'm grateful to one of our listeners, Major Bob Perry, Retired of the Royal Marines, who said 'Don't call them pith helmets, they're white helmets to the Wolsey Pattern!'"

For those of you a little rusty on Royal Marines Dress Regulations, a khaki sun helmet was authorised in 1899 for overseas regiments based in Africa. By 1904 it was adopted for all soldiers serving overseas and was referred to in dress regulations as the Wolsey Pattern Helmet - Sir Garnet Wolsey was C-in-C Egyptian War of 1882. The Helmet WP was authorised in August 1912 for the Royal Marines and is worn in full dress to the present day.

So, now you all know. Don't ever, ever again, refer to the white helmet worn by Royal Marines as a pith helmet...



Orders, Decorations and Medals

by Bob Perry

Apart from being foreign gallantry awards do you know what the American Distinguished Service Cross (second only to the Medal of Honor), the Dutch Order of the Bronze Lion and the French Croix de Guerre with Vermilion Star have in common? If not, then read on...

Honours, by the award of orders, decorations or medals are intended as a means of recognising service of outstanding merit beyond the normal demands of operational duty. In recent years I have had the privilege of learning much about the heroic exploits of Captain Terence Cousins RM for his leadership, initiative and resolve along with a determination to succeed that transformed the battle for Port-en-Bessin from possible defeat into victory - qualities crowned with an act of supreme personal courage and the sacrifice of his own life. I have also had the honour of knowing John Forfar and Mickie O'Brien, both awarded the Military Cross, and Mark Packer who was awarded the Military Medal for single-handedly charging an enemy strongpoint at the W11 bunker complex at Dishoek, Walcheren. Their heroic exploits made me wonder - why does our Association not have a comprehensive list of all those individuals awarded gallantry and other high honours on the battlefields of Europe in WW2?

I soon realised why. What I thought would be a relatively easy project proved to be rather more difficult than I anticipated. It quickly became apparent that this type of detailed work had never been undertaken before, not just for 47 but for any of the other RM Commando units. It is relatively easy to link the name of a Royal Marine with a particular medal or award along with the appropriate entry in the London Gazette; the difficulty arises when attempting to link the name with a particular unit that the individual served in at the time the act of gallantry or meritorious service occurred - most sources of information identify only the parent Regiment or Corps. So, unless you can cross reference the recipients with an accurate 47 RM Cdo nominal (which does not exist), it is rather like searching for the preverbal needle in a haystack...

However, with the assistance of Marc de Bolster's original 47 RM Cdo Association website, the staff at The National Archives, the National Museum of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines Historical Society and the Orders and Medals Research Society, along with a plethora of reference books, personal papers and online websites, I believe that I am now close to provisionally identifying the list of gallantry medals and other honours - a total of 54 awards - made to personnel serving in 47 RM Cdo throughout the European campaign.

Reading all of the citations, written and submitted to higher authority for approval shortly following the heroic deed, I have been in awe at the level of courage and leadership displayed from the youngest marines, NCO's and junior subalterns to the most senior field officers. Although it is rather invidious to single out any particular citations the following extracts provide examples of the bravery of the typical Royal Marine and/or Army personnel who served in 47 RM Cdo:

'...at this critical time...[he] came under heavy fire at close range from an enemy machine gun. Seizing a Bren gun lying on top of a dead marine, and firing from the hip as went, this brave NCO charged this heavily bunkered position alone. He shot and killed 2 of the occupants and, running out of ammunition, he turned the German machine gun with good

effect on 3 more Germans who had fled. Still alone, he worked forward to a second position 30 yards further on where he killed 3 more Germans, 2 others surrendering. In a situation where the odds were strongly against him, and knowing that he was unsupported, the courage and determination of this NCO was above praise...'

'...[he] was wounded in the chest and arm by a stick grenade. Nevertheless, under close range fire from enemy weapons of all kinds, he rushed the nearest weapon pit and killed the 3 occupants with his tommy gun. In the bitter and close fighting which ensued and despite the pain of his wounds, he showed great personal bravery and the highest standards of leadership. It was here that he was again wounded by a bullet. Now grievously wounded and weak from loss of blood, he continued cheerfully and resolutely to encourage those around him. His courage is still the subject of conversation among the men. When things were going badly it was a wonderful example to the whole Commando and in the highest traditions of his Corps...'

'...who is not a strong swimmer, without hesitation jumped into the sea and assisted this marine, who was quite helpless and in great pain, to reach the beach, some 200 yards distance. By this time...[the rescuer] was in a state of complete exhaustion and had swallowed so much salt water that he had to be given medical attention in the beach dressing station. Here his clothes were taken away, but soon as he recovered his faculties this marine, wrapped only in a blanket, rejoined his troop...'

'...as an example of the great spirit of this NCO when in hospital [recovering from his wounds], although he knew that the Naval authorities were evacuating all Royal Marine personnel to the United Kingdom...he insisted that the location of his unit should be found and on leaving hospital immediately rejoined the Commando by getting lifts from passing vehicles. Since the landings on 6 June 44, his name has become famous in the unit for his continued keenness to get at the enemy...'



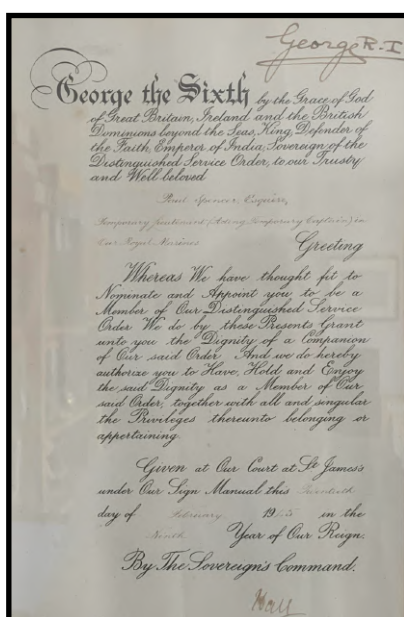
The Military Medal group awarded to Marine R Emsley, B Troop, 47 RM Commando, who was decorated for gallantry in the attack on Port-en-Bessin on 7 June 1944.

(Military Medal G.VI.R, 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, Defence Medal and War Medal 1939-45)

(Photo copyright Noonan's, Mayfair)

My ultimate aim is to finalise the honours list and to produce an illustrated book for Association members detailing information regarding the types of awards, the individual citations and photographs of some of the recipients and/or their medal groups. In the next edition of Despatch I will detail each of the individual awards - 3 x Distinguished Service Order, 1 x Distinguished Conduct Medal, 5 x Military Cross, 15 x Military Medal, 19 x Mention in Despatches, 2 x Member of the Order of the British Empire and 3 x British Empire Medal. I will also include the foreign awards bestowed on members of the Commando: 1 x US Distinguished Service Cross, 2 x Dutch Order of the Bronze Lion and 3 x French Croix de Guerre (one with vermillion star and two with bronze star). During WW2 there was almost an 'exchange' programme of awards between the Allied armies (ie, you give us ten of your awards and we'll give you ten of ours...!).

So, back to the question posed at the start of this article - they are all gallantry honours awarded to personnel serving in 47 RM Cdo. Incidentally, the US Distinguished Service Cross awarded was the only such award made to a Royal Marine or commando in WW2.



Left: The Military Cross awarded by King George VI at Buckingham Palace to the widow of Major D H Walton RM. This officer was the first person in 47 RM Cdo to be recommended for an honour following his gallantry on the approach march from Gold Beach to Port-en-Bessin on 6 June 1944. He was later killed outside Fécamp on 4 September 1944.

Centre: The scroll admitting Captain P Spencer RM as a Member of the Distinguished Service Order. Only thirty-three such awards were made to Royal Marines in WW2 - three were awarded to officers serving in 47 RM Cdo.

Right: The Dutch Order of the Bronze Lion awarded to Captain R E Lloyd RM. The entry in the London Gazette dated 13 August 1946 is incorrect as it refers to the award of the Medal of the Bronze Cross, a lesser honour. In WW2 only two Royal Marines were awarded the Order of the Bronze Lion - the other was CSM C H White, also serving in 47 RM Cdo.

How can you help with the project? I am in contact with the families of some of our awardees but would like to establish communication with as many as possible. If you are able to help with this then please do get in touch.



Above left: The bronze single Oak Leaf cluster is worn to signify a Mention in Despatches. Recipients were authorised to wear the oak leaf on the ribbon of the War Medal 1939-1945.

Above right: Recipients of a Mention in Despatches also received a scroll signed by the First Lord of the Admiralty.

Footnote:

Captain Cousins was recommended for the Victoria Cross but this was not granted and he received a Mention in Despatches. Many of our veterans believed that it was inappropriate that a Mention in Despatches should have been the recognition awarded to him. Therefore, it may be helpful if I explained the War Office policy on gallantry awards that was in force at that particular time.

The Mention in Despatches was, along with the Victoria Cross, the only combat gallantry distinction which could be awarded posthumously. This meant that a great many brave actions which would have warranted a Distinguished Service Order, Distinguished Conduct Medal, Military Cross, etc, were recognised by a Mention in Despatches because the recipient did not survive the action itself or died before the award could be approved. Essentially any degree of gallantry short of the very highest standards, which qualified for the Victoria Cross, would be reduced down to a Mention in Despatches for fallen servicemen. This quirk of the British Honours System was only corrected in 1979 when amendments to the Royal Warrants for the various British gallantry decorations were made to make them available posthumously.

Incidentally, the Victoria Cross and the Mention in Despatches were also the only two combat distinctions to be arm of service and rank neutral. It was really the level of gallantry demonstrated as opposed to the colour of the uniform or the rank of the recipient that governed those awards.

From Constable to Commando...

Bob Perry writes... Tony Moore is a former police officer, now a published police historian and member of the Police History Society, The Metropolitan Police History Society and London Historians. He is currently researching police officers who served in the Army and RM Commandos during WW2 with the intention of writing a book about them to be published in 2025 to coincide with the 80th anniversary of VE-Day.

A total of 427 police officers were recruited directly from the police to the army commandos in 1942. They underwent training in three unique groups at Achnacarry - each one underwent two months training as commandos. Policemen who elected to join the Royal Marines did so individually.

So far, our collective research has revealed that five individuals had prior police service before serving with 47 RM Cdo:

Cpl William Baines (CH/X115758) - Cpl Baines joined the Metropolitan Police on 4 September 1939, warrant number 128100. He enlisted into the Royal Marines sometime in 1943. Cpl Baines served with X Troop in 47 RM Cdo during operations from Normandy to the Scheldt. Post war he rejoined the Metropolitan Police on 18 January 1946. He retired on 13 June 1969 having attained the rank of Police Sergeant. He died on 31 March 2006.

Sgt Harry Horsfield MM (PO/X115384) - Harry was born in Nelson, Lancashire on 16 February 1917. When war was declared he was serving as a Police Constable in Eccles.



Shortly after this he was transferred to Earlstown when on 1 September 1942, he was called up into the RM. At Achnacarry he joined 47 RM Cdo and with them took part in the Normandy and Walcheren landings. During his time at Sallenelles he was part of a patrol with B Troop sent out to capture a German prisoner for interrogation. When his officer and other members of the patrol were wounded in a minefield, Harry took over and continued with the raid capturing several German soldiers. After handing over his prisoners, he returned to recover his wounded comrades. It was for these actions that he was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry and distinguished service. Sgt Horsfield was released from the RM on Class B reserve in

August 1945 and returned to his job as a Constable with Lancashire County Police. He remained in the Force reaching the rank of Sergeant and being awarded the Police long service and good conduct medal. He retired on pension on 1 September 1963. He died after a short illness on 16 April 2004 aged 87.

Cpl Frederick P Kent (PO/X114623) - Resided in the village of Yarnton prior to joining the Oxfordshire Constabulary. He served in B Troop with 47 RM Cdo and his service included Port-en-Bessin, Fecamp and Walcheren. During the latter action he sustained a shrapnel wound to his right knee on 1 November 1944.

Cpl Herbert John Mold (PO/X114621) - Cpl Herbert Mold, known as John, was born on 2 August 1915 and joined the Oxfordshire Constabulary on 24 January 1938. In 1939 he was a Constable serving at Witney. He enlisted in the RM at Lympstone on 13 August 1942 aged 27. Prior to joining 47 RM Cdo he was in the 10th RM Battalion. Following



injuries sustained in 47 RM Cdo (see John Forfar's book page 123) he was evacuated to the UK and underwent reconstructive surgery followed by a lengthy period of recovery. He was formally medically discharged from the Corps on 29 August 1945. He returned to Oxfordshire and attained the rank of Police Superintendent, retiring on pension on 10 March 1968. He died of a heart attack on 17 July 1989. Member of the Commando Association from Cumnor Hill, Oxford.

Cpl George Robertson (CH/X109679) - Was born on 8 August 1917, at Douglas Water, Lanark. He joined the Stirlingshire Contabulary on 15 April 1937 and served at Causewayhead and Falkirk before joining the RM. In addition to being an international standard athlete he was a prominent member of the Stirlingshire Police football team. He was mortally wounded in Port-en-Bessin on 7 April 1944 and succumbed to his wounds a week later. He is buried in Portland Naval Cemetery, Dorset. George Robertson is commemorated on the Cumbernauld War Memorial, the Douglas War Memorial and on a memorial plaque at Stirling Police Station.



Do you know any other serving police officers who served in 47 RM Cdo or can you add any further information to individuals above? If so, please get in touch with Bob Perry.

The following article was published in the May/June edition of the Globe & Laurel

47 RM Commando Branch RMA at MFM with French and Dutch Mayors

by Bob Perry

On D-Day 6 June 1944, 47 RM Commando landed on Gold Beach at Asnelles before successfully capturing Port-en-Bessin, a small Normandy fishing port which would be a vital fuel supply point for the allied armies. The Commando then fought its way northward for 200 miles in a series of battles in pursuit of a determined enemy; joining forces with the 6th Airborne Division for operations in the River Orne bridgehead area before liberating Fécamp. The battle of Walcheren followed. As the the outcome of the many battles were still unknown and as fierce fighting raged around them, many French and Dutch civilians provided valuable assistance to the men of 47 RM Commando and took many of the wounded into their homes despite the threat of enemy reprisals.

Since the end of WW2 the inhabitants of the towns and communities freed from enemy occupation by 47 RM Commando have never forgotten the courage, determination and self sacrifice of their liberators. Every year, on their return to the battlefields, veterans, widows and their families were enthusiastically welcomed by the mayors and residents - a bond of enduring friendship which has continued to the present day.

In this 80th anniversary year of D-Day, 47 RM Commando Branch of the RMA decided to demonstrate their appreciation for that ongoing support by inviting the mayors of the towns and communities liberated by the Commando to London as our guests to thank them and the communities they represent. Accepting our invitation was the Mayor of Port-en-Bessin-

Huppain, Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Fécamp and the Mayor of Texel (who was formerly Mayor of Veere, Walcheren). Regrettably the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Asnelles were unable to be with us on this occasion.

After settling into their hotel in South Kensington, the mayors and their partners were welcomed by branch members at the Hereford Arms, a traditional London pub for an informal evening of renewing acquaintances, dining and beer drinking! Early the following morning several of our guests accepted an offer to tour Billingsgate Market, the UK's largest inland fish market. This was particularly beneficial for the mayors whose home towns are heavily dependent on the fishing industry. The remainder of the day was left to enjoy the sights and attractions of London before all meeting up again at the Elgar Room Brasserie at the Royal Albert Hall prior to experiencing the magnificent Massed Bands of His Majesty's Royal Marines at the Mountbatten Festival of Music.



Lt Col Edith Roussel and David Roussel (Mayor of Fécamp), Pierre Aubrey (Deputy Mayor of Fécamp), Christophe Van Roye (Mayor of Port-en-Bessin-Huppain) and Rob van Der Zwaag (Mayor of Texel and former Mayor of Veere (Walcheren))

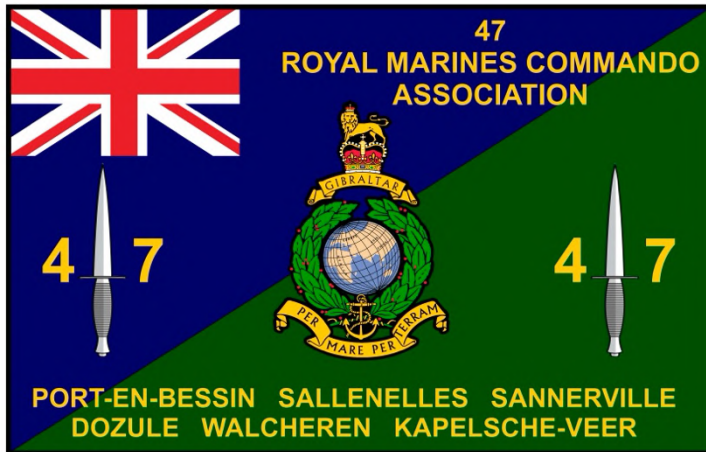
After a thoroughly enjoyable and socially hectic weekend we bid our guests and each other farewell, safe in the knowledge that the bonds of friendship and mutual respect formed by our veterans over many years remain as strong as ever. We look forward to all meeting up again later in this momentous year in France and the Netherlands to commemorate the high achievements of 47 RM Commando and to remember the 114 members of the unit who made the supreme sacrifice in WW2.

The 47 RM Commando Branch is indebted to the small sub-committee responsible for the detailed organisation of the highly successful visit and to a most generous benefactor for funding the hotel accommodation and MFM tickets for our guests.

Proposed Replacement of the 47 RM Cdo Association Standard

by Lou Sartorel

In June 2023, at the Association AGM, it was discussed that the 47 RM Cdo Standard was over 20 years old and showing signs of significant wear and tear. Sooner or later it would need to be replaced. At that time there was also discussion of the Association becoming a specialist branch of the RMA - The Royal Marines Charity. Therefore it would be the ideal time to consider a replacement design similar to that of other RMA Branch Standards. Our



veteran, the late Ted Battley, designed the current Standard with the full approval of his fellow comrades, and which has served the Association extremely well, being paraded at high profile commemoration events in the UK and Europe and at the more solemn occasions such as at our late veterans' funerals.

Left: The existing 47 RM Cdo standard.

Looking at the current Standard it will be noted that the Union Flag is positioned close to the pike but when viewed from the other side the Union Flag is positioned on the opposite side of the Standard as it is double-sided; the Union Flag should be positioned in the top corner close to the pike on both sides. There are two colours, green and blue that divide the standard with the RM Crest centrally mounted. The standard displays some of the names of the towns and areas where 47 RM Cdo saw distinguished action, generally referred to as Battle Honours. A Fairbairn-Sykes (FS) commando dagger on either side of the crest together with the numerals four and seven on either side of each dagger - the FS dagger is synonymous with the commandos of WW2. The standard is finished with heavy gold fringing and a nine-foot gold tassel on the pike. The current dimensions of the existing standard are 3-feet 9-inches by 2-feet 9-inches.

With all that in mind, the commissioning of a new Standard should conform to existing RMA protocols, now that the Association has made the transition to become a specialist Branch of that organisation. British Army infantry battalions display their regimental battle honours upon their King's and Regimental Colours, but RM Cdo units do not. The reason for this is one of history. In 1827, King George IV had a difficult time deciding which battle honours to place upon the new RM Colours as there were too many to place upon the Standard. He decided that 'The Great Globe' itself should be on the colours surrounded by the Laurel Wreath. This would show every place where the Corps of Royal Marines had served with distinction then and in the future! During the war-time period when 47 RM Cdo was operational, the Corps was organised into three Divisions, and the ten Royal Marine Battalions did not have individual Colours as they originated from within those Divisions i.e. Plymouth, Portsmouth and Chatham. It was only the Divisions that had Colours. Today there are two such Colours in 40, 42 and 45 Cdo RM. They are known as the King's

Colour and the Regimental Colour and no doubt will have their 'New Colours' presented soon.

Myself, together with Bob Perry and Geof Haywood, with an 'overwatch' of our Committee, have designed a new Standard that conforms to RMA policy and the established veterans' associations. The proposed standard will have the following changes: The Tudor Crown surmounted on the Corps Crest as opposed to the existing Edward Crown. This also would reflect the change in monarch, which in turn would make the Branch the first to display the 'new' Corps Crest design on a Standard! The positioning of the Union Flag is a critical aspect to consider. As per the established protocol, the Union Flag should retain its position next to the pike. This placement maintains the traditional significance of the Union Flag and aligns with established flag etiquette. The overall dimensions should be increased to conform with similar veteran association standards. The renewed Standard should be approximately 3-feet 9-inches by 3-feet in size. This size strikes a balance between visibility and manageability during official ceremonies and events.

The basic principles of standard design are to keep it simple, use meaningful symbolism, use two to three basic colours and be distinctive or related. These elements can continue to be incorporated into the replacement 47 RM Cdo Association Standard, as they hold historical significance and represent the Corps' heritage.



Above: The author's preliminary design of the replacement 47 RM Cdo Standard.

At present, we are awaiting confirmation from the RM Heritage and Ethos Committee for a decision by the Garter King of Arms, responsible for Royal heraldry at the College of Arms in London. Whether the Tudor Crown will follow the simpler version which appears in HM King Charles III cypher or will be more detailed (with pearls between the jewels, etc) cannot be confirmed at this time. The Corps will pause with all Corps Crest updating work (and therefore we must also pause too) until the new design is confirmed by the Garter.

The replacement Standard will be a visual and psychological anchor for the 47 RM Cdo Association. I am positive if any of the veterans were around to see this new standard they would wholeheartedly approve of it so that the Association can continue to honour the memory of their brave deeds.



Above: Examples of RMA Standards - the replacement 47 RM Cdo Standard will be of a similar style.

Future Events

47 RM Cdo Association Dinner on board HMS Victory

A 47 RM Cdo 'Black tie' dinner will take place on Saturday 23rd November 2024 to round off what will have been a momentous year for our Association. This unique event will be held in Portsmouth and a rare opportunity to dine onboard HMS Victory, Admiral Lord Nelson's Flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar.



Places are strictly limited to 36 diners and by the time you read this probably all remaining places have been snapped up for this once in a lifetime opportunity. Twelve rooms have been booked at the Royal Maritime Hotel on a first come first served basis - this block booking (for Friday 22nd and Saturday 23rd November) has attracted a 10% discount on the normal weekend rate. It is anticipated that attendees could travel to Portsmouth in time for an informal get-together social on the Friday evening, enjoy the sights of the city on Saturday before dining in the Historic Dockyard.

This extraordinary event onboard HMS Victory, the most celebrated warship in British naval history - she is the oldest commissioned warship in the world - will also include a guided tour of this iconic ship prior to being seated for dinner.

Further information regarding menu selection and final costs will be promulgated shortly. For more general information contact Geof Haywood BEM at geofandjillh@btinternet.com

Walcheren 80

The dates for Walcheren 80 are travel from the UK to Holland on Thursday 31st October and return on Sunday 3rd November. Kelly has reserved hotel rooms in Domburg at the comfortable hotel (Hotel de Burg) we have stayed at during recent visits although there is plenty of other accommodation available in the area. This year is likely to attract larger events than usual with the unveiling of the UK Silhouette Project figure by the 1st Sea Lord and the Deputy Commandant General Royal Marines.

It is regretted that, despite increased numbers travelling this year (mainly in private vehicles), it will not be possible to hire a coach due to the prohibitive cost (circa £4k). Members are requested to indicate their attendance to Geof at the earliest opportunity.

Mountbatten Festival of Music 2025

Tickets for MFM 25 need to be booked by the end of July to reserve a block of seats so that all Association members may be seated together. Earlier this year we had excellent stall seats which were cheaper than reserving a loggia box which are only available in groups of eight. Dates for MFM 25 are Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd March 2025 (the Association attends the Saturday evening performance). As always, at the earliest opportunity please indicate your interest to Geof at geofandjillh@btinternet.com

Memorial Pathway Project?



We quite rightly commemorate the 114 men who were killed whilst serving with 47 RM Cdo and their names are remembered on various memorials in the UK, France and Holland. However, probably well over a thousand men served in the Commando between 1943-1946 and, unlike those who made the ultimate sacrifice, are not remembered in any tangible way. Your Chairman has always had an aspiration to commemorate these individuals in the form of a memorial wall or pathway (perhaps leading from the road to the gates of the memorial garden (Peter Winter Path) on the Western Feature). This would obviously be a longer term project and require substantial funding, with decisions having to be made regarding sponsorship of the blocks versus family donations, etc. A group of blocks with engraved names could be dedicated each year with families invited to attend. Your Chairman is keen to receive your thoughts and suggestions as to where such a wall or path could be located (subject to local planning considerations) and whether you believe the project is feasible as outlined above. He would also like to know your ideas regarding fund raising.

In Memoriam

Lieutenant Norman Rose RM

Norman's funeral took place on 11 March 2024 in Brecon with a strong cohort of Association members on parade including Lou Sartorel leading the cortege with our Standard. Many other retired Tri-Service organisations along with serving Army personnel from the nearby HQ 160th (Welsh) Brigade, who had adopted Norman during the last few years, were also in attendance. The Association is indebted to WO1 Rob Govier RN, SO3 Regional Engagement Wales, West England and Channel Islands, for leading with the military organisation part of the funeral ceremony.

Below: Norman's obituary was published in the March/April edition of the Globe & Laurel and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor - a fuller obituary was published in The Telegraph on 14 March 2024 and a report on his death was featured in the Daily Mirror on 11 March 2024.



N ROSE

Norman Rose was born on 11 August 1925. He joined the Royal Marines aged 17. After initial training and a posting to HMS Valiant, he was sent to Achnacarry in the Scottish Highlands for Commando training.

On completion of this he joined 40 RM Commando and took part in landings at Salerno and Anzio in southern Italy. He was posted to 47 RM Commando to join the battle that began on D-Day plus one, to liberate the Normandy town of Port-en-Bessin. For his role in the D-Day campaign he was awarded the Légion d'honneur in 2016.

Still with 47 RM Commando he took part in the invasion of Walcheren in the Netherlands, where on 1 November 1944 his active service ended when he was wounded whilst wading ashore.

Norman went on to have a distinguished 40-year scientific career, becoming one of the country's most senior nuclear physicists at Harwell, Dounreay, Aldermaston and Risley. Amongst more classified activity he developed plutonium fuels for the nuclear fast reactor programme and latterly he oversaw the building of 14 gas-cooled nuclear reactors.

On retirement Norman completed a PhD on Joseph Priestley and travelled extensively, including a seven-week trip to Japan and back on the Trans-Siberian railway. He died peacefully at his home in Brecon aged 98.



*Above left: The 47 RM Cdo Association Standard Bearer leading the funeral cortege.
Above right: Norman with Prime Minister Theresa May in 2019 (D-Day 75).*

Marine Trevor William Stacey

The Association was made aware by David Tannock who is the RBL Membership Engagement Officer (Overseas) that the cremated ashes of Trevor Stacey (1922-2021), a signaller in 47 RM Cdo, had been scattered on Juno Beach on 7 June this year. It would appear that Trevor was attached to the Canadian 3rd Infantry Division on D-Day in a liaison role.

In 2019, Trevor spoke movingly of what he remembered of 6 June 1944. His detailed account provides an insight to the men of 47 RM Cdo who trained hard and fought for their country. The video, which is on YouTube, can be found under the title: Royal Marine Trevor Stacey remembers D-Day - D-Day 75.



80th Anniversary Commemorative Coin

To commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Europe, Geof Haywood has commissioned a Commemorative Challenge Coin (1.75 inch diameter). On the obverse



side is the 47 Royal Marine Commando crest and the Combined Operations badge features on the reverse along with appropriate wording on both sides. The coin is certain to be a best seller so it is recommended that you get your order in quickly. The cost of the coin is £7.00 + postage. An optional presentation box to house the coin is also

available at an additional cost. Contact Geof at geofandjillh@btinternet.com if you would like to purchase this unique item.

Caption Competition

The photo below depicts 'Air Vice Marshal Sir Patrick 'Curruthers' O'Connell' about to set off on his daily commute to Broadcasting House...

Can you come up with something appropriately witty for this image? The best answers will be judged by the editorial team and a bottle of the finest vintage 47 RM Cdo Association wine to the lucky winner - be in to win!

The winning caption will be published in the next edition of Despatch.



Next Issue: January 2025

I am delighted to announce that Georgi Nicholls, granddaughter of 47 veteran Nobby 'G-Dog' Nicholls of B Troop, has agreed to accept the editorial quill and produce future editions of Despatch. A bit like Paddy above we will be flying tandem until she feels confident enough to take over the controls herself!

Therefore, please let Georgi and myself know what you would like to see featured in future editions of **YOUR** magazine. Despatch will only flourish if Association members submit articles (however long or short!) or photographs on a regular basis.

Suggested ideas or material for the milestone **50th edition** should be forwarded to the joint editorial team:

Bob Perry/Georgi Nicholls

Email: chairman@47rmcommando.org

Mobile: +44(0)7500 967515