



47 Royal Marine Commando Association

(A Specialist Branch of the RMA-TRMC)



Membership Information Guide



47 Royal Marine Commando Association

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

Life President:

Admiral the Right Honourable Lord West of Spithead GCB DSC PC

President:

Colonel W R Norcott Royal Marines
Commanding Officer 47 Commando (Raiding Group) Royal Marines

Executive Committee

Bob Perry, Chairman
Paddy O'Connell, Vice Chairman
Anne-Marie Nicholls, Secretary
Allen Withington, Treasurer
Geof Haywood BEM, Events Co-ord



Co-opted Members

Lisa Roberts, Membership Co-ord
Georgi Nicholls, Despatch Editor
Lou Sartorel, Standard Bearer
Ken Cowdery, Historical Records
Abby Eaton, Webmaster

Dear fellow Supporter,

Welcome to the 47 Royal Marine Commando Association (47RMCA), a specialist branch of the Royal Marines Association - The Royal Marines Charity (RMA-TRMC), dedicated to honouring the men of the wartime 47 Royal Marine Commando. Whether you are a family member of a veteran, a retired or serving Royal Marine or simply someone with an interest in learning more about the high achievement of the Commando in North West Europe during WW2, you will find that you have joined a friendly and family orientated organisation with a strong partnership with both the serving Corps and the RMA-TRMC.

Throughout the year the 47RMCA organises a variety of events and regularly travels to France (Port-en-Bessin and Fécamp) and to the Netherlands (Walcheren) to perpetuate the memory of those killed during the liberation of Europe. We also meet in London in March each year to enjoy the Massed Bands of His Majesty's Royal Marines performing at the Mountbatten Festival of Music in the iconic Royal Albert Hall. The magazine of the 47RMCA 'Despatch' is published biannually in January and July and contains a wealth of news, articles and historical features. Details of all our events and contact details are on our website at: www.47rmcommando.org

Due to our charitable relationship with the RMA-TRMC we are unable to levy a subscription fee upon our members. Instead you can make a donation via Direct Debit (DD) to RMA-TRMC; this will attract Gift Aid - for every £1 donated that qualifies, the RMA-TRMC will receive an extra 25p from HM Revenue & Customs at no additional cost to you. The RMA-TRMC then forwards your entire donation to the 47RMCA. The necessary DD form can be found on the front page of our website. If you are unable to print the form then please contact our Membership Co-ordinator who will be pleased to post a copy to you. Thank you for your understanding and support in this matter - membership donations are the only regular income that the 47RMCA receives.

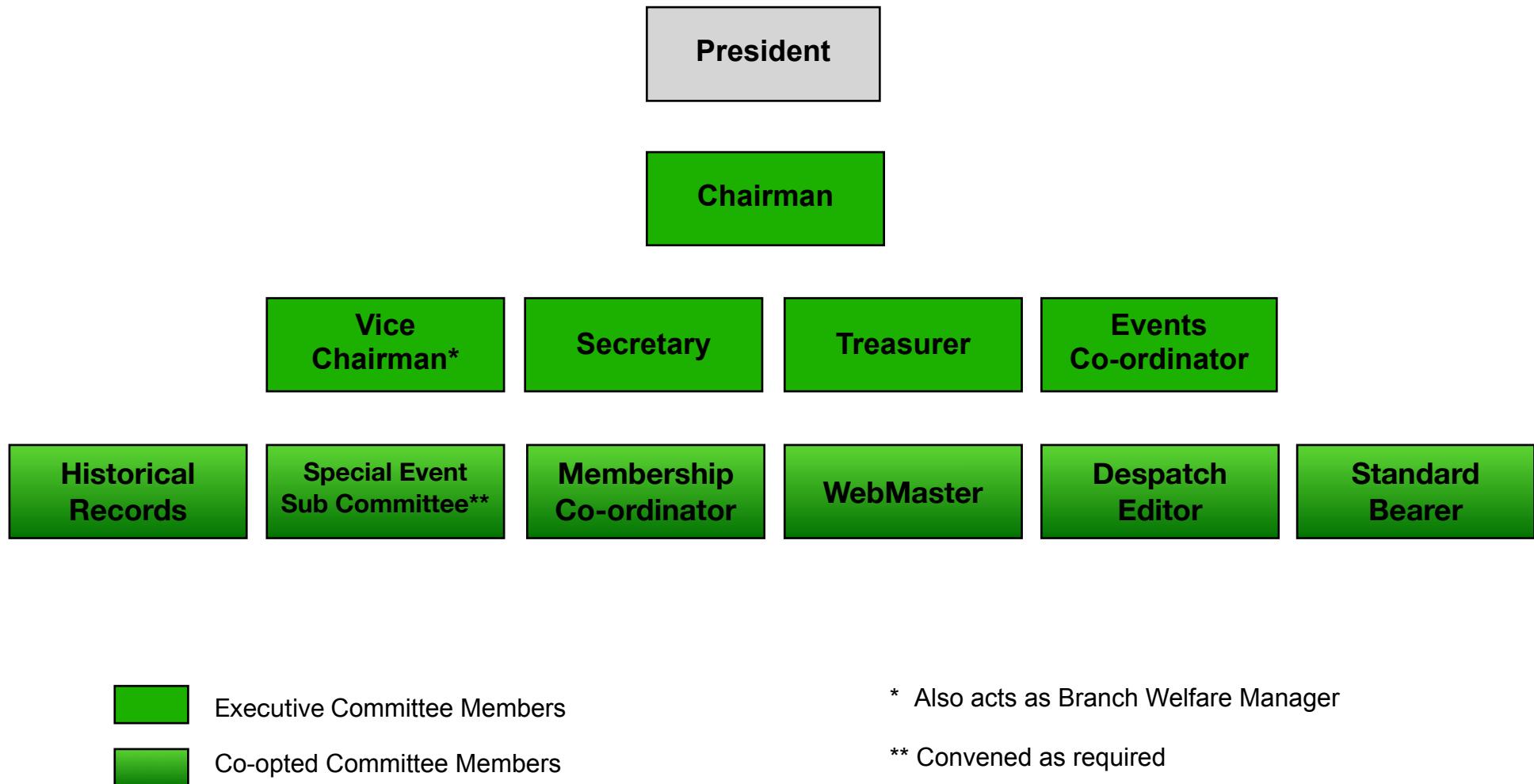
I look forward to meeting you in the near future - in the meantime if you have any general enquiries please contact the Secretary at anne-marie.nicholls@47rmcommando.org or for specific membership enquiries lisa.roberts@47rmcommando.org

My Warmest wishes,

Bob

Organisational Diagram - Committee

**Royal Marines Association Branch
47 Royal Marine Commando Association**



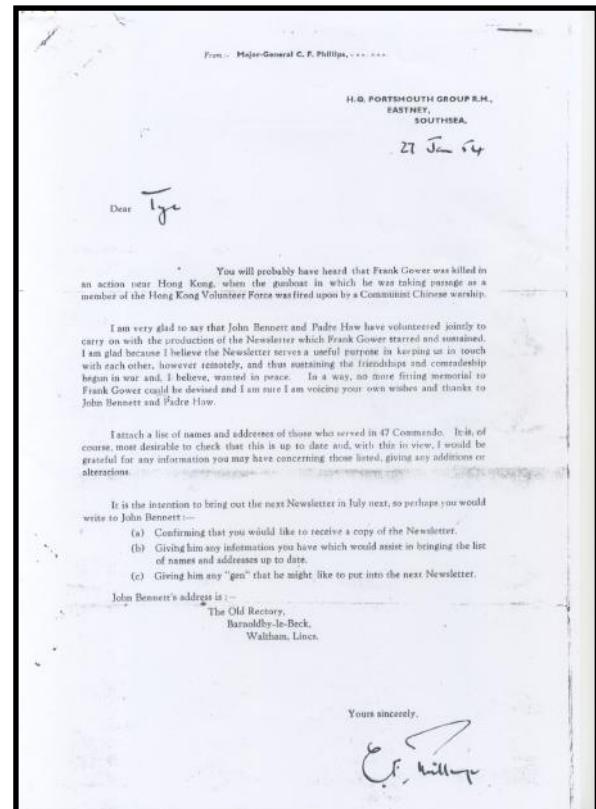
A Short History of 47 Royal Marine Commando Association

47 RM Commando Association is a group of veterans' widows, families, friends and Royal Marines serving and retired. It has an illustrious history of bringing together people of all ages to remember the sacrifice of those who died serving with the unit. It's an atypical organisation and until recently was independent of the wider Royal Marines Association (RMA). It is useful to divide its history into four chapters.

1946 - 1984

The men of 47 RM Commando were de-mobbed from active service in 1946. The unit was disbanded and most of the men left the forces, to be known as Hostilities Only. Some notable exceptions included the Commanding Officer, Lt Col C F Phillips DSO, who went on to serve as the Commander of 3 Commando Brigade in Malaya 1951-52 where he was mentioned in despatches. He became Chief of Amphibious Warfare in 1954 and retired in 1957 as Major General Sir Farndale Phillips KBE CB DSO.

But in 1946, he was instrumental in asking the men of 47 to stay in touch. He ordered his staff to draw up a list of addresses of those who could easily be mustered. A formal letter, issued in early 1954, to this effect is still in existence. This typed sheet of names and addresses has in the past been mistaken as a full list of those who served, but in fact it's the best the unit could achieve with the resources of the time. It's thought up to 1000 men served with 47 from 1943-46 (details of many of these individuals may be found on the Association's website).



Above right: The covering letter, signed by Major General C F Phillips, of the list of names and addresses of known members of 47 RM Commando.

The veterans exchanged letters and Christmas cards, and held informal reunions; photographs exist from the 1960s showing some of these meetings in Manchester and London. Where two or more veterans lived in the same area these became more frequent with the more active organisers seeking to achieve larger numbers by holding bigger reunions in the UK. Until 1984 only small numbers made it informally to France or the Netherlands.

1984 - 2000

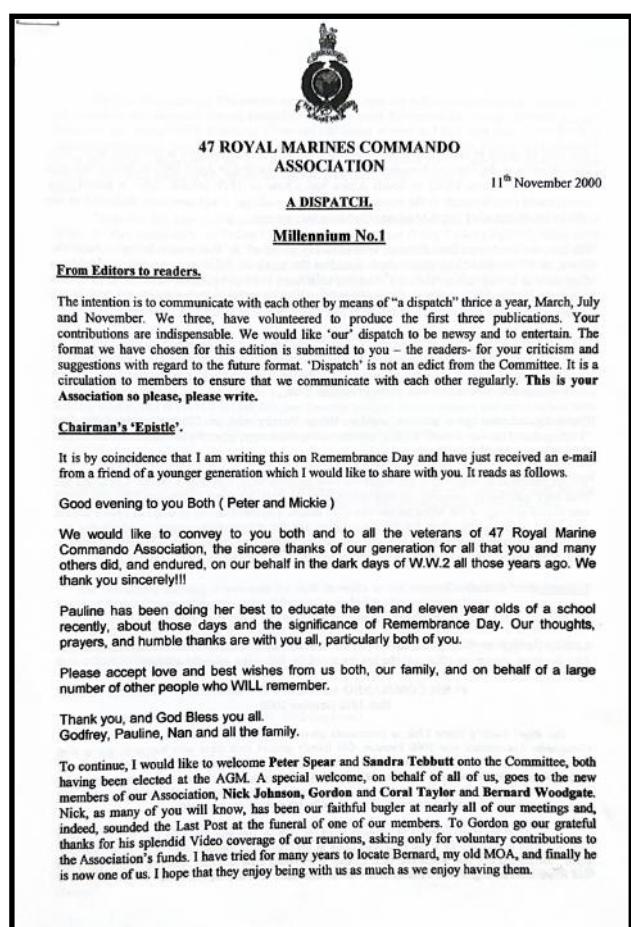
1984 saw the return of hundreds of D-Day veterans from all units to Normandy. HM the Queen attended arriving on board the Royal Yacht. In famous scenes on the beaches, President Ronald Reagan addressed the men who'd returned, *'Here the allies stood and'*

fought.' The men of 47 RM Commando with their wives and supporters filled two coaches. It is likely fifty veterans of the unit attended.

The veterans were alarmed to see that many historians had assumed Port-en-Bessin had been liberated by the brave Americans landing at Omaha beach. The men decided more history lessons were needed including for the Corps, and from all this emerged a plan to return every five years or more to France and to the Netherlands and to form up a more formal organisation.

The origins of the present day 47 RM Commando Association can be traced to an inaugural meeting held on 6 November 1994 in the Hotel Westduin, Vlissingen, Walcheren, organised by Peter Phillips, son of the wartime commanding officer. Also, in the 1990s, two school teachers in Port-en-Bessin organised a walk retracing the unit's route from Gold Beach to their town. The schoolchildren formed penpal relationships and the teachers Michel Laulier and Michel Deserable were later made Honorary Vice-Presidents in thanks from the veterans.

The men then mounted two bus trips each year, one to Port-en-Bessin in June and the other to Walcheren in November. The coach would start in Edinburgh picking up Scottish veterans and drive south before heading by ferry to France. Local historians in the Netherlands and in France assisted the men and knowledge of the role of the unit was secured. A biannual newsletter '*Despatch*' was created with every edition sent to the RM archives.



between 1994 - 1999 and sent to Association members. Copies of all past issues of Despatch and the newsletters can be found on the Association's website.

2000 - 2019

The Unit Medical Officer wrote a book of the exploits '*From Omaha to the Scheldt - The Story of 47 Royal Marine Commando*'. Serving members of the Royal Marines, including Major Bob Perry and recently retired Warrant Officer Geof Haywood began offering muscular assistance for the building of memorials and the involvement of the Corps. A website began under a Dutch supporter Marc de Bolster which began collating information and people researching their family history began to join in new numbers assisted by the internet. These included family members and new veterans were found who attended near the end of their lives. The Association elected its first non-veteran chairman in recognition of the fragile health of the men. Mayors from France and the Netherlands were invited to the UK in thanks for the years of support and a true bond of international friendship.

Above left: The first edition of Despatch; prior to this a newsletter was published

evolved. 47 was re-born as an operational unit when 1 Assault Group Royal Marines was renamed as 47 Commando (Raiding Group) RM. The pandemic struck and many veterans would never travel again.

2019 - 2025

The last of the veterans passed away and the Association held meetings via the internet during the pandemic. Gradually emerging from the period of maximum change a new direction began with family members, supporters and members of the Royal Marines. The membership has a reputation for lively and poignant events gaining respect in wide circles for its loyalty and affection with memorials far and wide. The annual walks - *'In the Footsteps of 47 Commando'* in Normandy and *'Rushing to Flushing'* in Walcheren - attract hundreds of people learning about the exploits of the Commando and bravery of the men.

The RMA invited the Association to form as a virtual or specialist branch and this has now happened.





Chairman Appointments:

Peter Winter - 47 RM Cdo veteran (1994-2004)

Chuck Harris - 47 RM Cdo veteran (2004-2011)

Patrick O'Connell - Son of 47 RM Cdo veteran Guy O'Connell (2011-2019)

John Prentis - Grandson of 47 RM Cdo veteran Chuck Harris (2019-2024)

Bob Perry (present Chairman) - Retired RM (2024-Present)

Secretaries included:

Betty Field - Widow of 47 RM Cdo veteran Bill Field and later partner of 47 RM Cdo veteran Gordon Tye

Ingrid Fearne - Relative of 47 RM Cdo veteran Ted Battley

Anne-Marie Nicholls (present Secretary) - Daughter of 47 RM Cdo veteran Nobby Nicholls

Treasurers included:

Sandra Tebbutt/Gemma Davison - Daughter/Granddaughter of 47 RM Cdo veteran Frank Tynan

Allen Withington (present Treasurer) - Nephew of 47 RM Cdo veteran John Withington (KiA)

**47 Royal Marine Commando Association
Royal Marines Association Branch**

CONSTITUTION

Section 1 - General

1. The name of the RMA Branch (hereafter referred to as the Branch) is 'The 47 Royal Marine Commando Association' (hereafter referred to as the '47RMCA').
2. The Branch is part of the Royal Marines Association (hereafter referred to as the RMA) and the 47RMCA will aim to conform with the RMA Constitution and Objectives. Any guidance and advice will be sought from the RMA Central Office for any matter arising should this be required.
3. The RMA - The Royal Marines Charity (hereafter referred to as the RMA-TRMC) is registered in England and Wales (1134205) and Scotland (SCO48185) and is a charitable Company Limited by Guarantee (07142012) registered with Companies House.

Section 2 - Objectives

4. To honour the memory of the men of 47 RM Commando especially those who died on active service. This includes the provision of wreaths at battle memorials, war graves, memorial services, etc.
5. To provide a service to the families of 47 RM Commando veterans to ensure that the opportunity is given to maintain contact among each other and to visit battle sites in which 47 RM Commando took part, often at the request of the communities liberated by the Commando.
6. To assist widows and family members of 47 RM Commando veterans whom the committee considers require help.
7. To liaise with the relevant military and civil authorities, including the Royal Marines, other veteran associations and military museums both in the UK and in countries in which 47 RM Commando served.
8. To maintain a written history of the actions in which 47 RM Commando was involved.

Section 3 - Funds

9. Due to the charitable relationship with the RMA-TRMC, membership of the 47RMCA is free of charge, however the Branch would welcome any voluntary donations to help cover routine costs. Members are encouraged to donate to the Branch via the RMA-TRMC Direct Debit scheme; by using this method the Charity receives the donation and is able to benefit from 25% Gift Aid from HM Revenue & Customs. The RMA-TRMC then forwards the entire donation to the 47RMCA. Other income will be derived from fundraising activities and other donations.

10. Funds will be used to better serve and support the membership and to assist any members in particular need at the Committee's discretion. However, should further finances be required in order to meet the Branch Objectives, the Committee shall retain the power to seek a grant from the RMA-TRMC or any other suitable organisation.

11. All Branch income is to be used to further the Objectives of the 47RMCA, as determined by the Committee.

12. Committee and Co-opted members duties are voluntary and shall not be remunerated from Branch funds. Members may be reimbursed for any extraordinary expenditure incurred in any activities solely for the purposes of the Branch, at the discretion of the Committee. No member of the Committee or Co-opted members shall undertake any substantial trading activities on behalf of the Branch.

13. No member leaving the Branch shall have any claim upon past contributions, voluntary donations or other monies, paid into the funds of the Branch.

14. The funds of the Branch, including all voluntary donations, other income and bequests, shall be paid into an account operated by the Committee in the name of the 47RMCA at a reliable bank that the Committee shall decide. The funds belonging to the Branch shall be applied only in furthering the objectives the 47RMCA.

Section 4 - Welfare

15. The Vice-Chairman as the nominated welfare representative, will undertake to communicate with any Branch member in cases of hardship, or distress, and to alert the Committee for any assistance that might be considered by the RMA-TRMC, or by associated service welfare agencies, such as the Royal British Legion, SSAFA, etc.

Section 5 - Membership

16. Prior to joining the 47RMCA prospective members must have joined the RMA-TRMC in one of the following categories:

a. Full RMA Membership shall be confined to anyone who serves or has served in the Royal Marines in a RM Unit or filled a Line Number in a RM Unit, regardless of length of service.

b. RMA Associate Membership shall be confined to anyone who is the parent, spouse/civil partner or child of a Full Member; this can be extended to grandparents or carers who have raised the Royal Marine, and grandchildren being raised by the former Royal Marine. Must be sponsored by a Full Member.

c. RMA Supporter Membership shall be confined for those who do not have a direct relation to a Royal Marine.

17. Any member having a complaint in connection with Branch matters should bring it to the attention of the Chairman at the earliest opportunity for immediate consideration by the Committee.

18. The 47RMCA exists to serve all members to the best of its ability. The Branch is non-sectarian and non-political, although individual members are free to act as their consciences may dictate.

Section 6 - Honorary Officers of the Branch

19. The following Honorary Officers will be re-elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM):

- a. Chairman.
- b. Vice-Chairman.
- c. Secretary.
- d. Treasurer.
- e. Events Co-ordinator.
- f. Any other person deemed beneficial by the Committee.

20. Any member of the Committee may have a dual role (eg. Secretary/Treasurer). Committee members will be elected for a period of three years, or any other period as determined, and will normally be available for re-election by the membership at the appropriate AGM.

21. Committee members are both individually and collectively responsible for the effective organisation of the 47RMCA, ensuring that the agreed Constitution and Objectives are maintained and complied with.

22. The Chairman shall chair the meetings of the Committee and the AGM. If the Chairman is absent from any meeting then the Vice-Chairman will deputise.

23. All committee voting matters shall be determined by a majority vote of the members of the Committee. In case of equality of votes the Chairman (or Vice Chairman if deputising) shall have the casting vote.

Section 7 - Duties of Honorary Officers & Co-opted Members of the Branch

24. The President is the ceremonial representative of the Branch and as such is the senior member but has no vote on the Committee. The President can attend any Committee or Sub-Committee meeting for situational awareness but has no part to play unless called upon by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman for advice within the proceedings.

25. The Chairman is responsible in all respects for the good order of the Branch. They provide leadership to the Committee and Co-opted members, sets the style of the Branch and manages all meetings as may be called from time to time.

26. The Vice-Chairman is to deputise for the Chairman as required. The Vice-Chairman is also the Branch welfare representative and reports to the Committee on the welfare of the membership.

27. The Secretary is responsible for all administrative matters and the recording of proceedings at every Committee meeting and AGM.

28. The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the day-to-day accounts of the Branch and to provide financial details when required. The Treasurer is responsible for receiving and banking any voluntary donation and other income as agreed by the Committee. The Treasurer is to ensure that the Chairman and Secretary have full access/signatory permissions to the 47RMCA bank account. The Membership Co-ordinator is to be afforded account viewing only permission.

29. The Events Co-ordinator is responsible for the programming and organisation of all Branch events as agreed by the Committee. All draft programmes should be submitted for Committee discussion prior to final distribution to the membership.

30. The Membership Co-ordinator is responsible for the maintenance of the register of all members (including RMA membership number and category) and acknowledging receipt of any voluntary donations as agreed by the Committee. The Membership Co-ordinator will not normally be required to attend Committee meetings.

31. The Standard Bearer represents the Branch on ceremonial occasions and maintains the high RMA standard of dress when carrying the 47RMCA Standard. The Standard Bearer will not normally be required to attend Committee meetings.

32. The Webmaster is responsible for the designing, creating, improving and managing the Branch website. All news and details of events should be uploaded to the site at the earliest opportunity. The Webmaster will not normally be required to attend Committee meetings.

33. 'Despatch' is the magazine of the 47RMCA and is published biannually in January and July each year. The Editor is responsible with generating ideas for content, editing articles and proofreading, with the assistance of the Committee. The Editor will not normally be required to attend Committee meetings.

34. The Historical Records member is the custodian of all documents, maps, diaries, photographs, etc, relating to the history of 47 RM Commando. All copies of such documents should be stored on the Branch *DropBox* account and accessible to the membership, external agencies and other individuals as agreed with the Committee. The Historical Records member is responsible for dealing with all historical enquiries submitted to the Branch. The Historical Records member will not normally be required to attend Committee meetings.

35. The Committee may appoint a Sub-Committee for the purpose of performing any function that in the opinion of the Committee would be more conveniently undertaken, or carried out, by a Sub-Committee. All proceedings of any such Sub-Committee shall be fully and promptly reported to the Committee as required.

Section 8 - Branch Committee Meetings

36. The Committee will normally meet on four occasions annually at a location agreed by the Chairman and at a suitable time designated. The meetings will normally be held in January, April, July and October.

37. Meetings should normally be conducted face-to-face although, due to the dispersed geographical location of Committee members, meetings may take place via video conferencing.

38. The Secretary shall maintain a record of proceedings of every committee meeting.

Section 9 - The Annual General Meeting

39. The 47RMCA AGM will normally take place in Port-en-Bessin in June at a date/time/ place to be agreed by the Chairman. The business to be transacted at the AGM shall include:

- a. The Chairman's Report (to include a review of the past 12 months activities).
- b. The Secretary's Report.
- c. The Treasurer's Report.
- d. The Membership Co-ordinator's Report.
- e. The election or re-election of Honorary Officers.
- f. Any other business that has been previously notified to the Secretary and has been included on the AGM agenda.

40. Notice of the AGM and agenda should be promulgated to the membership at least one month prior to the AGM.

41. Nominations of any new members of the Committee, who must have been members of the 47RMCA for at least six months, should be received by the Secretary at least two weeks prior to the AGM, duly proposed and seconded. Those members proposing or seconding a nomination may only propose, or second, one nominee.

42. Any suggestions or propositions for the AGM are to be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least two weeks prior, clearly bearing the names of the proposer and seconder.

43. Notwithstanding paragraph 42, due to the geographical spread and therefore difficulty of members meeting regularly, at the discretion of the Chairman any other brief miscellaneous business for the good of the 47RMCA may be raised by any member at the appropriate time.

44. The Secretary shall keep a record of proceedings at every AGM.

Section 10 - Amendments to the Constitution

45. The Constitution may only be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voted on at the AGM. Any proposed changes must be notified at least three months in advance and must set out in full the terms of any proposed amendment, or alteration. Such alterations may have legal ramifications and further advice may need to be sought.

Section 11 - Conduct

46. Any 47RMCA member who acts in a disrespectful, abusive, or any other manner that brings disrepute to the branch may have their membership either suspended, or terminated, by the Committee if deemed appropriate to the situation concerned.

Section 12 - Dissolution

47. If the Committee decides that it is necessary, or advisable, to dissolve the Branch, it shall call a special meeting of the membership, with no less than four weeks' notice, to notify members and to discuss the situation.

48. If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present, the Committee shall have the power to dissolve the Branch, including the realisation and distribution of any Branch funds, or assets, remaining after clearing any outstanding debts that may exist. Should this situation arise, further advice and guidance will be solicited from the RMA Central Office.