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It will not escape the member's notice that this issue is almost exclusively devoted to the Second World War, a period which the majority will remember and of which the outbreak, fifty years ago, was commemorated on the 3 September 1989.

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While I was at home I somehow heard a rumour that the Battalion was on the move. I got Michael Previt 's brother-in-law, Maj V D Thomas to come and have lunch with me, and extracted from him the information that the Battalion had gone in HMS *Berwick* and HMS *Glasgow* as the infantry element of a force, commanded by Colonel Sturges and bearing his name, to occupy Iceland. Missing this really was a disappointment - and still continues to be one. The following day my kit, which I had of course left in my tent at Bisley, was delivered by Carter Patterson at my house "Carriage Forward". As I paid the charges I felt that these really might have been defrayed, in advance, by the arm breaker!

During the occupation of Iceland Richard Darwall distinguished himself in his own inimitable way. After the landing he, as Intelligence Officer, was wanted; but he was busy taking photographs which were subsequently published with some success in the Illustrated London News. There was one motor car for the Force Commander - Richard had taken it. There was enough hot water for one bath - Richard had it.

Shortly after the Battalion returned from Iceland I managed to get the doctor to let me go back to Bisley. Here I discovered that Squires, my MOA, had taken the opportunity of my absence, and the departure of the former storeman, to work himself into that desirable position. I was therefore again faced with finding myself a servant. I still persisted in my determination to have a Continuous Service man which was very foolish as there were excellent Hostilities Only men who had been in private service, footmen in noble households and so forth available. However I got hold of a pleasant and agreeable young man named Robinson and all seemed to be satisfactory.

Soon after, the breakthrough of the German armies and the evacuation from Dunkirk produced a very different atmosphere. Shortly before the final evacuation from France there were strong rumours that our Brigade was to be sent over and put into the line. Support was lent to these by the appearance in our camps of Major Moulton - then a GSO 2 at GHQ in France - but unfortunately this proposal, if it ever existed, did not materialise. There was talk of training in boatwork and the whole of the Brigade going at night, by march route, to Eastney for the purpose.

However we were not to remain long at Bisley, and towards the end of June 1940 we began that series of abortive, and semi-abortive, embarkations and expeditions that were to continue for the next three years. We went first to Pembroke in South Wales. Whilst the main body went by train, I and my transport joined up with Nogs Finnes and the 3rd Battalion vehicles to make the journey by road. After seeing the Battalion march out, I presumably handed over the camp to some authority, but I have no clear recollection of doing so. I do remember making a final tour of the camp, and in a store tent which contained the straw for the palliasses, finding an old, old man in an archaic uniform sitting placidly on a bale of straw. When I asked him who he was and why he had not left with the unit, he replied "Sir, I am the Quartermaster's striker, and I always travel on the transport." So we had to find a place for him on one of our heavily laden vehicles. We went by way of Bagshot and Ascot and finally bivouacked for the night in one of the beautiful Cotswold villages. The countryside brought back memories of hay harvests of years gone by and I wondered if I would ever see them again.



We finally reached Pembroke next day to see our Battalion flag flying over the historic keep of Pembroke Castle, where Henry of Richmond had been born. We were not long there before we were ordered to embark in the *Queen Emma* at Pembroke Dock. She had not long finished her refit and though the officers we were accommodated well enough the mess decks were very crowded and uncomfortable. The veil of secrecy was securely drawn at the time. I have since learned that we were standing by for a possible occupation of Southern Ireland, had there been signs that the enemy contemplated similar action. After some days we disembarked and returned to our billets in Pembroke. We did a great deal of training and regularly marched out to places along the coast to practise coastal defence positions and living in bivouacs. This was not an item that had figured in our training curriculum, and not it seemed in Robinson's. My bivouac was generally the least secure and most uncomfortable in the Company. The first night we practised this a howling wind and heavy rain developed. Away went the furze bush, away went the poor little stones and slates with which I had tried to secure my ground sheet covering, and away went most of my martial ardour. I spent most of the night sitting up against a rock draped in a sodden blanket, holding by groundsheet above me on my walking stick in poor imitation of an umbrella. The roar of the petrol cookers in the early morning as the tea making began, was one of the most welcome sounds I had ever heard.

From Pembroke we moved to South Devon. Peter Picton Phillipps had, I suppose, gone in command of the advance party as I took the Company, not with the whole battalion, but in a separate train. We first went to a really dreadful transit camp on the outskirts of Plymouth. The Camp Commandant was an offensive, bibulous old Quartermaster sort of person, but two words and one look from our Commanding Officer served to make him revise his words very rapidly. We weren't there for very long before we moved to a much more pleasant place, a tented camp in the park at Flete. As was often the case we had undertaken to erect our own camp, and while this was being done the advance party was lodged in the vast and splendid stables of Flete House, near Modbury. Our Commanding Officer possessed great charm and affability of manner and wherever we went these helped very materially in establishing cordial relations with the people whose houses and domains we invaded. Lord Mildmay himself made us very welcome and took a keen interest in our activities.

While we were still at Pembroke it had been decided to organise a course for candidates for promotion from Marine to Corporal. Robinson was on the list of candidates and obviously it would have been wrong to stand in his way. So when we arrived at Flete off he went and at last I did what I should have done long before - asked the Company Sergeant Major to find me a man. As a result Marine J B Sign eventuated. Sign was a regular little London sparrow; he was smart, very alert and a very good soldier. As he had never done this sort of job before he came to me without any preconceived ideas and so didn't have much difficulty in falling in with my ways. As my wife says of Sign and others "Their secret of success was that they knew how to handle you, giving great attention to the things you fuss about, not worrying too much about the other items." Sign's father had been a Petty Officer in the Royal Navy in World War 1 and he himself worked in peace time in the Port of London Authority and I suppose it was these tenuous bonds with the sea that had attracted him to the Marines. From August 1940 until the end of the war, Sign remained with me frequently in defiance of regulations. He gave me the loyal and efficient



service and was a friend of us all. My son learned to say 'Sign' before he could say 'Father'.

While we were at Flete we had a coastal defence role at Yealmpton, I think for one Company. Due to Peter Philipps' zeal and energy this seemed to be our Company for most of the time, and we used to spend days and nights gazing out to sea through the mist and haze while the others indulged in a final fling amongst the flesh pots of Plymouth. Always busily practising the arts of war, Peter established a command post as well as his battle HQ and darted madly between the two. I was established with one platoon at the battle HQ - an empty villa - and was supposed to maintain contact with the next platoon about two miles to my left. I managed to get hold of a horse named Oliver from the local dealer to carry me on these pilgrimages. When Oliver was not required for immediate duty he had to live in a small yard outside the kitchen and generally had his head inside the through the window, collecting most unsuitable titbits. Our Brigadier, Robin Campbell, coming to visit, expressed himself as rather dissatisfied with the hygiene of the arrangement, and suggested that I should use a motor bicycle. He alleged that he himself did so and that motor bicycling was a necessary accomplishment for all officers. It was one which I never acquired.

At this stage our original four Battalion Brigade had been divided into two Brigades - one consisting of the 1st and 5th RM Battalions, being commanded by Brigadier St Clair Morford, and the other, comprising 2nd and 3rd RM Battalions, by Brigadier Campbell. When the latter assumed command, it was arranged that he should inspect the battalion on parade and then have luncheon with us. Shortly before the parade, rain began to fall and orders were given for capes to be worn over fighting order. Peter Picton Philipps who habitually took not the slightest interest in matters of dress, chose this occasion to rummage in the recesses of his memory and discover that, for officers to conform to this instruction, they should wear mackintoshes, under their web equipment. One of the 'advantages' of the 'new improved' equipment was that it took about twice as long to adjust as the old, and it was clear that, as my equipment has been fitted for wear over my battledress too, it would certainly not accommodate a mackintosh as well. I therefore decided to leave off the battledress jacket entirely and proceeded, cool and comfortable, and with my equipment fitting nicely, to parade. The officers of the other companies were wearing capes. The Battalion had not long been formed up when - with the typical perversity of the English climate - out came the sun, and out came the order 'Off Capes'. The other officers of our Company had first to remove their equipment, then their mackintoshes, and then resume their equipment; but they were better placed than I. For me it was a case of mackintosh or shirt sleeves. The discarded mackintoshes and capes were collected and carried away, but still I could not draw anyone's attention to my plight. I felt that on a Battalion parade I could hardly, schoolboy fashion, hold up my hand which might arouse quite the wrong association and interpretation, as my antics eventually did. I tried 'proving' cavalry fashion; no result. I tried to move over to Peter or the Adjutant; this was noticed and the Second in Command was ordered 'Dress the line of Officers again'. Finally Dick Smalley came over to discover the cause of my agitation; he and the Commanding Officer could hardly conceal their amusement, and Dick came back to say "You are to remain as you are - in your mackintosh". Afterwards in the Mess I was called over to relate the whole episode to the



Brigadier myself and it provided an amusing opening gambit for a very successful luncheon..

After we had been at Flete about a month we were issued with tropical kit, given embarkation leave,, and it was clear that we would soon be off. Eventually orders came that we were to go by train to Liverpool and embark in SS Kenya. At first it was thought that it would be the 'Possessions' Class cruiser of that name, but our ship proved to be a B & I liner which had been empressed as transport. The Company under Peter was employed in loading the baggage and stores at Ivybridge Station so I attended the final 'O' Group. At this the question of transporting the Wolseley pattern white helmets arose. Clearly they could not be concealed, and there was just as much chance of a breach of security from carrying them as wearing them, so to my great satisfaction, it was decided that helmets should be worn - following the accepted pre-war trooping procedure. I personally was always on the lookout for some way to avoid wearing those dreadful little khaki sidecaps - so frequently and incorrectly called forage caps - which had come in as the accompaniment for battle dress. Some people I believe have an affection for the coloured version, and this, well cut and fitted, and poised above a suitable countenance may be alright. My full moon countenance is not suitable. These khaki caps seemed to me to provide a perfect illustration of change for the sake of change. Everything about the old army was bad, therefore anything different from it must be good. Maybe the stiff wired peaked cap was awkward (although it had been worn throughout the 1914-18 war and under far more difficult conditions) but the soft topped, stitched peaked cap, which was worn in the Royal Marines, and in the Brigade of Guards, could be packed just as easily as the side cap, to which in every other respect it was far superior. Why not this pattern ? The side caps produced by the clothing contractors were of the shoddiest material, skimped and abominably cut. If a man turned his head and eyes smartly the cap fell off; if the wind blew, the cap blew off. If a man bent down during weapon training or working on a vehicle or on fatigues, the cap fell to the ground; if the wearer tried to save it, frequently with oily hands, the oil was transferred to the cap, which even when in position afforded no protection against rain or sun. I have no great love for the beret, but it is a vast improvement on the side cap which fortunately seems to have gone forever.

We entrained late in the afternoon at Ivybridge. A first class coach had been provided for the officers, but we were not allowed to use this, and followed the principle laid down to travel in the same coach as the men. This was uncomfortable for us and also added to the men's discomfort as the twelve who had been dispossessed by us had to cram into the other already crowded compartments. Having, after the manner of troop trains, trundled through the night, we arrived at a station in some suburb of Liverpool during the forenoon. Here we detrained and set out to march to the Docks. It was not very far and the enthusiasm we provoked was quite remarkable. All the populace turned out to stare, and the men were bombarded by offerings of fruit, sweets and cigarettes - this was not very good for march discipline but it was difficult to refuse without giving offence.

Peter Picton Phillipps was always on the lookout to do his best for the Company and had secured a mess deck right forrard in the eyes of the ship. Although this was liable to be a pretty uncomfortable place if there was any sort of sea running, he reckoned that this defect was offset by the fact that it would be cool in hot weather and there was only the fo'c's'le deck and no other



living space above ours. The forrard well-deck would provide a convenient place of parade. Many of us, I think, were overawed as we stood on the jetty waiting to embark. A ship never looks so large as when she is alongside with her sides towering above one.

Our embarkation went very smoothly and rapidly and no doubt this was facilitated by the knowledge and experience of our officers and men. This made the whole business a good deal simpler for the Ship's Officers than it might otherwise have been, and thus early they formed a good opinion of the battalion.

When I made my way to the cabin which had been allotted to me I could hardly believe my eyes. For the first, but not the last, time in my Service career I felt that I must be acting as a super in a film, or at least be in a dream. This could not be reality. Here was I, who last night had slept on the floor of a third class railway carriage, and for nights before that on a camp bed on damp and sloping ground under a tent, transported to the luxury of a first class cabin in a liner. There was a comfortable bunk, a fitted basin, an outboard scuttle, admirable built in furniture, numerous lights and a carpet on the deck. This could not be meant for me. Indeed when Sign, accompanied by a Goanese steward - who also seemed anxious for the privilege of waiting upon me - appeared, I told him not to unpack until I made sure. However my fears were groundless and in due course I went up to the ship's smoking room where I found (inevitably) Cuttles and his officers, getting busy with 'man size gins' at tuppence a tot.

I think it must have been on our first day in the *Kenya* that I encountered an RNVR Officer who was to be the Divisional Officer for the naval ratings forming the ALC boats' crews. The ALCs could themselves be seen, made fast in a neighbouring basin, prior to being hoisted to the *Kenya's* davits from which the lifeboats had been removed. This was our first sight of the craft of which we had heard so much from Peter, and of which he claimed to be the *accoucheur*. The naval officer proved to be Lieutenant Reggie Paget, son of Major Guy Paget, to whose writings I, in common with most hunting people, was much attached; and though Paget and I disagreed on almost every point, we were unanimous in one thing - enthusiasm for his father.

The gin had just begun to steady my equilibrium when we were summoned to luncheon and my nervous system suffered another shock on finding that we were to mess as first class passengers - but all for free!

We remained alongside in Liverpool for several days, long enough for a story to develop that one of the Marines, leaning over the rail, had been hailed by a dockyard matey with "Wotcher Royal. I know where you're going. You're off to Dakar." In fact we went several other places on route, the first being Scapa Flow. For many of us this was our first professional association with the sea, indeed some of the men had never even seen it before. My own sea-going activities had been restricted to one cross channel trip, and one yachting expedition with my uncle, on which I had been so dreadfully sea-sick that I had been sent ignominiously home by train.

*To Be Continued*



## MARINES AND AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE - Part 2

By Lieutenant Colonel Donald Bittner USMCR

### The Landing Exercises: Operations Ashore

In such instances, certain conditions were necessary. These included an objective which was not defended by an enemy, ie, an initial benign or non-hostile environment; an existing road network for transportation; either an existing pier or location where one could be constructed; and a beach suitable for the landing of men, supplies and equipment. Thus, no need would exist for the diversion of limited funds for shipping especially designed for an amphibious assault (15); ad hoc arrangements, usually aboard a major surface combatant, would be sufficient. Hence all landings would be essentially administrative in nature, with the vital ship-to-shore movement and build-up being an administrative and non-tactical one.

And this is what the photographic record reveals. (16) All the major inter-war exercises were located near an existing port and area which would coincide with a benign and non-hostile situation; Portland in 1927, the Isle of Grain in 1928, Falmouth in 1929, Milford Haven in 1930, Fort Cumberland (near Portsmouth) in 1933 and 1934, and Lamlash in 1935. These all included an existing pier facility or a location where a temporary one could be quickly constructed. All the exercises included both, and time trials were conducted to determine how long construction would take to erect temporary piers. (17) The pier was necessary because often the coastal defence weapon would have to come ashore dismantled, hence the need to have a capability to take the parts of the weapon from the landing craft quickly, and move them to the battery firing sites, as shown in the Portland exercise of 1927. (18)

Linked to this was an existing road network. If weapons were disassembled, they had to be moved quickly ashore and thence by motor transport to sites for erection. Without a suitable road network, this could cause major delays. Hence the exercises included not only time studies for pier erection, but movement on existing roads or studies of efforts required to move pieces of equipment over rough terrain, as at Portland for the former in 1927, and Falmouth for the latter in 1929. And once at the site, the weapons would have to be erected as at Fort Cumberland in 1933. (19)

But what did these battery positions look like? Again, the evidence of an administrative landing in a benign or non-hostile environment is clear; clearly nothing approaching an amphibious assault such as Tarawa, Normandy or Walcheren was envisaged or anticipated. In all cases, the sites were not tactically developed be it Portland, the Isle of Grain, Falmouth, Milford Haven or Fort Cumberland. (20)

For a comparison with some US Marine Corps ideas, even with the focus on the defence of an advanced naval base, these actions were years behind what USMC Officers were already developing before World War 1 at the US Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. For example, the Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps between 1934-36, Major General John Henry Russell, had been on the staff at Newport in 1909-1910. In these two years he had studied this very issue and concluded that Marines had an evolving significant mission; the seizure and defence of temporary advanced naval bases. In analysing this problem and relying upon his interpretations of the lessons of the Boer and Russo-Japanese Wars (and prior to World War 1), Russell concluded that such bases must be defended from both land and sea attack, and that ultimately the threat to the naval base came from a ground attack. To defend adequately against such an attack from a force which might get ashore,



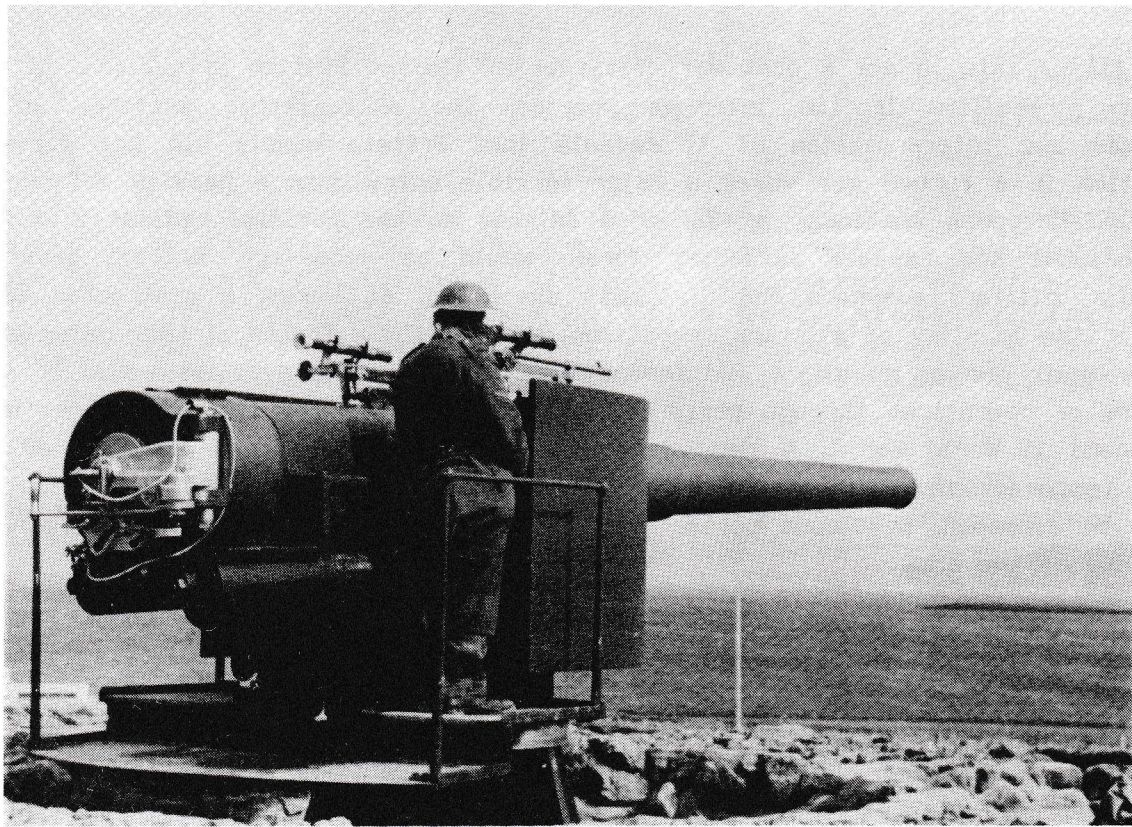
defenders had to use entrenchments (not in a line), barbed wire, interlocking bands of defensive machine gun fire, supporting artillery, cover over the trenches, and infantry regiments organised and trained for base defence, all supported by aircraft, submarines and other ships. Six years later, Russell would write a major article for the new **Marine Corps Gazette** calling for a "plea for a new mission" for the US Marine Corps, one which by the 1930s (with his support as Commandant) would shift to the offensive aspect of seizing advanced naval bases, even against objectives defended by an enemy which would mean an amphibious assault. (21)

But the Royal Navy and Royal Marines landing exercises of the inter-war era revealed a different conceptual approach and underlying assumptions. Hence, encampments were likewise not tactical. In fact there is no photographic evidence of any tactical sites or operations at Falmouth, Milford Haven or Lamlash. Certainly the inspecting officer at Lamlash, Vice Admiral E A Rushton CB, CMG, nor the battery position being inspected were in a tactical operational mode. (22) In fact all the battery positions were developed in an open, administrative and non-tactical mode; or it was envisaged that such units might have to be operational in combat in exposed positions on or just above the waterline as shown in photographs of the various exercises. (23) Lest this be construed as idle speculation about peacetime exercises, in Iceland in 1940, similar defensive artillery positions were developed for the defence of that country and the British Forces based there in a military operational area, placed on the island to defend against a possible German invasion or attack. (24)



"A 6 inch gun being mounted in a cradle at Fort Cumberland 1933"





"A 6 inch Naval Gun on Grotta Peninsular overlooking Reykjavik Bay in ICELAND during WW2"

#### **The Landing Exercises: Shipping and Landing Craft**

These exercises also revealed another major weakness in this area of amphibious warfare, inadequate shipping. In all of them, major combatant vessels of the Royal Navy were used to transport the troops, equipment and supplies. Any 'generic' ship could be used, be it cruiser or battle cruiser, such as HMS *Hood*. (25) The simple fact is that major surface combatants were not designed for such a role, and if so employed and they had to function in their primary role, any such landing force might hinder the ship's operations in combat. They would definitely imperil the landing force's equipment carried on them. In the cited exercises, HMS *Repulse*, *Benbow* and *Iron Duke* were used.

The visual evidence of the stowage of equipment clearly indicates the problems. At Portland in 1927, the administrative nature of the landing is clearly revealed, with equipment and stores stowed on the main deck of a surface combatant. The Isle of Grain exercise in 1928 again illustrated the difficulties. Two years later, aboard HMS *Iron Duke* at Milford Haven, and five years later at Lamlash in 1935 aboard the same vessel, photographs clearly show the problem of a lack of suitable shipping. In calm seas or without a chance of battle, such improvisations might work: but what if a severe storm was encountered or, more significantly, the warship had to engage in surface combat? With the gear and equipment stored near the turrets, losses of landing force stores could be expected through enemy fire, the simple movement of turrets, or the concussion from firing the ship's guns, with the ensuing destruction or ejection overboard of equipment. (26)

However, in 1940, the Royal Navy still had not improved their capability. When the Royal Marines occupied Iceland in May 1940, they arrived aboard two cruisers HMS *Berwick* and *Glasgow* with gear stored on deck, and moved ashore via destroyers. Luckily for them, an administrative unopposed landing ensued as there was no German opposition and the Icelanders offered no resistance. (27)



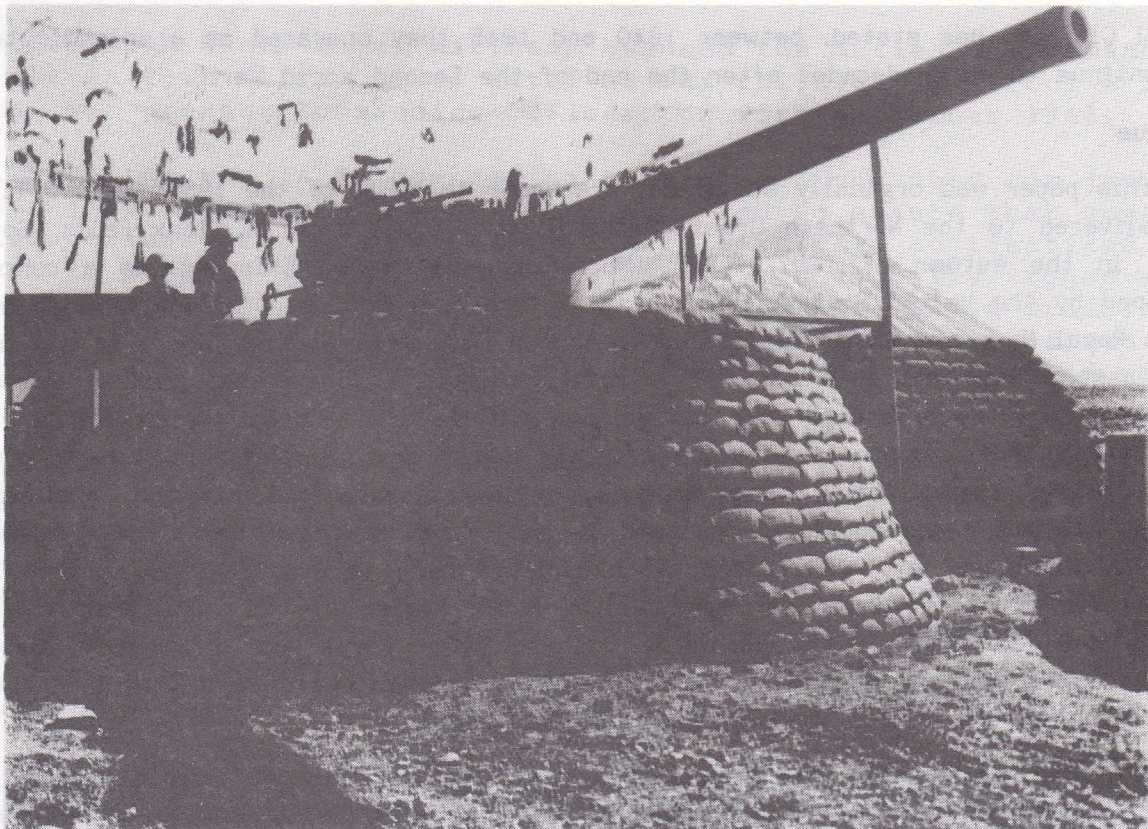
All of this is not a post-war criticism of limited British offensive amphibious warfare capability in the inter-war period. The photographic evidence and the analysis and interpretation of it reveals that Britain simply did not foresee a situation in a future war where a major forcible entry onto a heavily defended and occupied European continent or defended islands in the Pacific, against a modern, professional and capable defending force, would be necessary. British government officials, military planners and diplomats envisaged, at worst, a contracted landing area in the locality of military operations, with friendly forces already defending it, either their own or an ally's. Reinforcements, equipment and supplies would enter the theatre of operations through ports or areas already held by friendly forces as had happened in World War 1. A limited maritime need for defence of an advanced naval base, temporary in nature and not heavily defended by an enemy, was the most that could be foreseen. Developed ports, such as Singapore, Malta and Gibraltar would be defended by the army.

But conditions changed. To its credit, after 1940, Britain was quickly able to develop the forces, equipment and revised doctrine to implement offensive amphibious operations against defended shores. And, ironically, some of this had been inadvertently worked upon during the inter-war years. While implementing their exercises, the British were also doing beach trafficability studies, checking beach gradients, soil composition and vehicle movement over various types of beaches. (28) Equally important, as early as 1925, they had prototypes of major landing craft, which had flat bottoms and bow ramps for the quick exit of men and vehicles; and time studies were conducted regarding the debarkation of weapons, vehicles and troops. (29) The key here would be the design, evolution and construction of various types of landing craft to move men, equipment and supplies; reduction of their weight; and the development of special ships to carry them; from this came such naval vessels as the LST (Landing Ship Tank) and LSD (Landing Ship Dock). After 1940, Britain would do this, as well as designate certain units for specific types of specialised amphibious operations and train larger units in the conduct of major amphibious assaults attendant to a major land campaign.

## Conclusion

What does all this reflective analysis mean to any contemporary reader? It is that military and government professionals, like historians, are not prophets, seers or fortune tellers. Men of good intentions will try to prepare for the present and the future by analyzing what has occurred in the distant and recent past, ascertain trends and 'lessons', and make judgements and decisions. Men of experience and developed professional judgement can view the same events, technology, policies and potential foes and friends, and come to different conclusions. In war, the key ultimately may not be if they were correct in the peacetime preparations for a future conflict, but once war occurs and their pre-war assumptions and judgements were proved wrong, how flexible and adaptable a government and its military professionals (both those in and out of uniform) are in adjusting their approaches, policies, doctrine, organisation, units and operational concepts to new conditions. After 1940, it was fortunate that the British government and its military forces were adept at doing this and could adapt to the changed conditions that occurred after Dunkirk. Britain did not anticipate amphibious assaults in the 1920s and 1930s, but proved, with her American allies, between 1940 and 1945 that such operations could be conceived, planned and implemented with the proper doctrine, unit organisations, equipment and shipping. If both the United States and the United Kingdom operated on 'parallel courses' between 1918 and 1939 in the arena of amphibious operations, as





(above) "6 inch naval guns play their part in the defence of Iceland at Saurbaer Camp"

(below) "Close up of a gun crew in action guarding the coast of Iceland"





Colonel Clifford has stated, between 1940 and 1945 they operated as a splendid team and continue to do so decades after the end of the Second World War.

## Epilogue

This paper was originally subtitled "precursor to M.P.S. of the 1980s" and written and delivered to the Northern Great Plains History Conference in Sioux Falls, South Dakota in the autumn of 1987. M.P.S. (Mobile Pre-positioned Shipping) is a concept developed by the United States; it rests on several assumptions similar to those held by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines in the inter-war years between World Wars 1 & 2. These assumptions are the entry of a military force into an area through a non-combat landing; the existence of a benign, non hostile environment; the existence of a pier system with supporting storage area and other facilities; and adequate transportation system with, at a minimum, suitable roads; and although the ships carrying equipment are specially designed for the M.P.S. concept, they are not intended for a forced entry into a defended beachhead. If there is a difference between the British efforts of the inter-war era and the M.P.S. system of the United States five and six decades later, it is that the United States possesses the capability to project combat power ashore in both the amphibious assault mode and that predicated upon the benign environment envisaged by the M.P.S. concept.

But then, since 1939, the ideals of a world which saw major treaties signed in 1921-22 and 1930, limiting naval armaments, and the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact of 1928, have been submerged under the realities of World War 2 and its aftermath; the Cold War, the violent process of decolonisation of the European empires and the subsequent turbulent years in newly independent nations, and the many regional conflicts both involving (directly and indirectly) the great powers and those independent of them. Overall, governments and their military officials have had to live in a stark, open, hostile world; the ideals of an earlier generation of the 1920s many still exist, but they are, as John Le Carré has written in *The Perfect Spy*, like the stars: they may be unattainable but we are better for their existence. Until such ideals as the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Ten Year Rule of the British Government of the 1920s are anywhere near realisation, the military of the post World War 2 world has had to plan for many contingencies. Of these, the capability to project combat power ashore into a locality has now been institutionalised into two capabilities, those of amphibious assault and the M.P.S. For better or for worse, our military forebears of the 1920s and 1930s did not have this; they did the best they could, operating within political, military and cultural milieu of their era. As military professionals that is all they could do and we can strive to do, with the underlying assumption that our officers and men then and now do the best with the assets and guidance given to them.



## References:

15. Colonel Kenneth J Clifford USMCR *Amphibious Warfare and Development in Britain and America from 1920-1946* (Laurens, New York: Edgewood Inc, 1983) pp 72-82 discusses the problem of shipping, ie, the lack of specialised vessels of amphibious operations, the anticipated needs in case of a future war, the cost of such vessels, and discussions on the possibility of amphibious landings against defences held by major and minor powers. However, studying amphibious warfare and developing doctrine in the 1930s did not necessarily mean immediate preparedness; for example, for a discussion of the severe shortage of amphibious warfare shipping in General Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Theater in 1942-44, see William M Leary, ed., *We Shall Return! MacArthur's Commanders and the Defeat of Japan* (University of Kentucky Press, 1988) Chapters titled 'Thomas C Kincaid: MacArthur's Master of Naval Warfare' and 'Daniel E Barbey: Amphibious Warfare Expert'.
16. RM Archives. Photographic records used in this paper are in the following files: ARCH Phot 13/11/44 (MNBDO Exercises 1927-1934); ARCH Photo 13/11/41 (MNBDO Exercise Lamlash 1935) and ARCH Photo 13/11/44(A) (Repository and Allied Equipment).
17. ARCH 13/11/44, Portland 1927, photo 36: 'Horseboat unloading at Corduroy Road' and photo 33: 'Beach Roadway and wharf gantry completed, general view of landing place'. Isle of Grain 1928, photo 135: 'Pier at 1700. Completed in 4 hrs, 50 mins, Falmouth 1929'; photo 203: 'Pier nearing completion' and photo 205 'Pier completed.' Milford Haven 1930, photo 250: 'Pier under construction', photo 267 'Pier building progress' and photo 269: 'Pier landing completed'. Fort Cumberland 1933, photo: 4126 'Landing equipment from a horseboat'.
18. ARCH 13/11/44, Portland 1927, photo 49: '6" barrel hoisted at pier.'
19. ARCH 13/11/44, Portland 1927, photo: 66 '6" guns installed and ready for action', photo 57 '6" gun barrel on tractor' and photo 91: '6" guns being towed from site by two Hathi tractors.' Falmouth 1929, Photo: 211: 'Hathis towing barrel platform over ploughed land' and photo 213: '6" gun being wired up a steep slope.' Fort Cumberland 1933, Photo 333: '6" gun being mounted in cradle.'
20. ARCH 13/11/44, Portland 1927, photo 74: '6" guns installed and ready for action.' Isle of Grain 1928, photo 159: 'General view of 6" guns and towers.' Falmouth 1929, photo 224: '6" and 3" battery positions.' Milford Haven 1930, photo 291: 'Anti-aircraft battery in action.' Fort Cumberland 1933, photo 340: 'View of 6" battery.'
21. US Naval War College Archives, Record Group 8, Box 79, Files XBAA, Studies by Major John H Russell USMC *An Outline Study of the Defense of Advanced Naval Bases* dated 30 September 1909; *General Principles Governing the Selection and Establishment of Advanced Naval Bases and the Composition of an Advanced Base* dated 9 December 1909; *Additional Notes of Field Work Construction for Advanced Base Guns* dated December 1909; and *Lecture: The Preparation of War Plans for the Establishment and Defense of a Naval Advanced Base* dated 23 May 1910. Other Marine officers followed Russell at Newport and continued to work on this subject. Among them were Major Robert Dunlap (1911-12), Major Dion Williams (1912) and Capt Earl Ellis (1913), all of whom wrote papers and gave lectures on the subject. For Russell's USMC Gazette article see *A Plea for a Mission and a Doctrine* Vol 1, No 2, June 1916, pp 109-112.
22. ARCH 13/11/44, Falmouth 1929, photo 209: 'View of pier and approaches.' Milford Haven 1930, photo 303: 'View of Camp.' ARCH 13/11/41 Lamlash 1935, photo 139: 'Tour of Inspection by Vice Adml Rushton, Royal Marine camp and defensive installations.'
23. ARCH 13/11/44, Portland 1927, photo 71: '6" gun mounted, adjusting sites.' Isle of Grain 1928, photo 166: 'Lewis gun mounted on tripod.' Falmouth 1929, photo 234: '3" heavy anti-aircraft gun in firing position.' Milford Haven 1930, photo 292: '3" anti-aircraft battery.' Fort Cumberland 1933, photo 338: '6" gun and ammunition alongside mounting.' ARCH 13/11/41, Lamlash 1935, photo 118: 'Searchlight mounted and ready for action' and photo 79: '6" gun pointed and ready for action.'
24. Imperial War Museum, London, England. Photographic archives. Photo H 3124 'Views of guns which have been mounted in Iceland, 6" naval guns overlooking Reykjavik Bay on Grotta Peninsular - August 1944'; photo 3313: 'Two of the anti-aircraft gunners, 7-10 August 1940'; photo 9583 '6" naval guns play their part in the defence of Iceland at Saurbaer Camp 5-12 May 1941; photo 9585 'A Close up of a 6" naval gun guarding the coast of Iceland.'
25. ARCH 14/2/2, Photo 281: 'HMS Hood.'
26. ARCH 13/11/44, Portland 1927, photo 18 'Horseboat loaded with gun mounting stores by HMS *Benbow*.' Isle of Grain 1928, photo 126 'Lay of gear, port side; trucks, wagons, Hathis, etc.' Milford Haven 1930, photo 243: 'HMS *Iron Duke* port side quarterdeck, storage of supplies by turrets.' and photo 248: 'HMS *Iron Duke* debarkation of vehicles and supplies.' ARCH 13/11/41, Lamlash 1935, photo 33 'View of quarterdeck and stores, HMS *Iron Duke*' and photo 27: 'HMS *Iron Duke* - car being hoisted.'
27. Donald F Bittner, *The Lion and The White Falcon: Britain and Iceland in the World War 2 Era* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1983) pp 34-47.
28. ARCH 13/11/40-A, Two photos, no identification 'Artillery in landing craft'. Possibly photos 119, 135 or 261 with dates October 1929 or September 1930 showing MLC No 10 'landing with horses on beach'; photo 110 'Unloading 6" gun barrel on trailer from BMB No 1 at Eastney, 1930'; photo 137: '6" gun on a tractor in horseboat'; photo 146, 2 June 1932 'Trials of Light Military Tank and Motor Landing craft at Fort Cumberland'; photo 134 'Burford Tractor and 18 pounder gun from MLC 10, 10 September 1930, Fort Cumberland.' ARCH 13/11/44, Portland 1927, photo 33: 'Hathi Tractor No 1 running out of MLC at Corduroy Road.' Photo 26: 'Hathi tractor being driven ashore', photo 27 Hathi tractor bogged down in soft ground.' Photo 101 'Loading ammunition cases into horseboat at Portland.' Fort Cumberland 1933, photo 306: '6" cradle on trailer.'
29. ARCH 13/11/44, Lamlash 1935, photo 26: 'HMS *Iron Duke* hoisting MLC 1.'



26th May 1941

Some time later Col Lessweive of the Australian Medical Corps arrived and told me he was moving east to Kaleves that night, which would mean a twelve mile walk. He did little to reassure us about our safety when he said that we would be treated well as prisoners. I was in rather a hurry and rather unceremonious, so he left after shaking hands and told us that any time we were in Australia, we must call and see him.

By this time the first ambulance drove up with a good supply of food that had been found by PO Parkes. The second ambulance appeared a little later with more food organised by Father Ainsworth. Everyone who could possibly walk the distance was got out, and told to walk west through Suda one mile, take cover and await further instructions if there were no ships to take them off. I sent Ainsworth, the RC padre in charge of them. I then called CPO Congdon and told him I required one CPO, 2 POs and 7 of the staff to remain while the remainder moved off looking after the walking wounded and to meet one mile east of Suda. They were to toss immediately for those who went and those who remained. I then told the WRAs (Wardroom Attendants) to get their rifles and move off at once. Mne Harris said that he had been with Surg Lt Jeffrey for over a year and wished to stay and take anything that was coming. Mne Robertson did not hear my orders and also stayed. He was to prove of great service later when we carried the last of the stretcher cases away. George, the interpreter, also stayed and did some very fine work despite his lack of physical strength.

We loaded the first ambulance and sent Surg Lt Ball with it. He was loathe to leave and in the end I had to give him a direct order to go. I considered it essential an officer should go and arrange what he could at the other end, my idea being to step the journey to Kaleves where I knew a hospital was being started up. I called all the medical officers together and said I wanted two of them to stay behind with me. Jeffery and Sugars at once claimed the right as we had been together for so long, but the others would not have this and Surg Lt Innes suggested we should get away as many wounded as possible and then decide who should stay. It was also Innes who suggested the brilliant idea of putting the patients head to heel, two to a stretcher so that in some cases, we got ten in an ambulance. It enabled us to get everyone away in the end.

There was some delay in getting the second ambulance away because I had foolishly sent it off with a spare second driver to bring back a truck that had been left unattended down the road. Of course when they got to the place where the truck should have been it was not there. CPO Congdon, who had won his toss with Miller, led his party away and acted as chief whipper-in to the stragglers of the walking wounded. He told me next day that he left us about midnight and managed to get a few patients on board a destroyer at Suda. He then decided to push on to the hospital he knew existed at Kaleves, where he arrived with the remainder of the walking wounded at 0745 hrs. Congdon told me later the reason the destroyer pushed off from Suda was because enemy aircraft overhead were dropping flares. An officer at Suda told him he was fighting a rearguard action and expected the enemy there by dawn. Congdon was much helped by an officer of a Highland Regiment who tacked his party on behind him. These troops had just been landed to assist the rearguard action.

CPO Congdon managed to get the worst of his walking wounded lifts in Bren carriers or trucks. When he got to Kaleves he organised the wounded under the olive trees and when our ambulances arrived, sent them to collect the stragglers. This



accounted for the delay in the ambulances returning to Mournies to evacuate the hospital.

I again repeated the order that no-one was to move about the hospital without at least one person with him. By this I hoped that any German sniper might not open fire in case the second gave the alarm. Patients were moved ward by ward, and the next lot got ready for the next ambulance that arrived. The drivers deserve great credit for driving back and forth through such danger. The last two patients were two officers. I gave the two German wounded large doses of morphia and put food and water beside them. If the worst came to the worst, I intended to surrender to the best of the two, and thus, remembering the 7th General Hospital, I hoped to avoid a lot of killing. In the last look round before leaving, Jeffrey and I were unable to find the second of these patients and I conclude that he had either fallen off the stretcher or the morphia had worn off and he had realised the position and crawled away.

A couple of bottles of brandy were opened but very little was drunk. Mainly, I think, because everyone realised they had to keep their wits about them. There was not the slightest evidence of panic, but we were slower than usual in doing such jobs as filling the ambulances because people were so physically and mentally tired. One of the few grim jokes we had that evening was when an SBA tried to rouse one of the three corpses in the mortuary to tell him to prepare to move. Another eerie moment was standing outside the mortuary tent and hearing one of the corpses moving with *rigor mortis*.

#### 27th May 1941

By 0430, the last of the ambulances had been sent off and we were left with eleven of the 48 who had had to travel on stretchers. A number had been put beside the driver sitting, who we regarded as being fit enough. Four staff, headed by CPO Miller, used a farmcart that had brought in wounded a few days before, and taking five stretchers, pushed it down the road in the direction of Suda. This cart broke down about three miles out and the patients were then carried in relays in the ordinary manner until they met one of the ambulances returning. However the cart had taken them out of the area of immediate danger. This left us with one stretcher and no stretcher bearers. Several methods were tried such as two stretchers end to end and three bearers, but the man in the middle found the load too heavy. We also tried two patients on one stretcher but this was also too heavy. In the end we moved down the road in relays, going a couple of hundred yards and then doubling back and picking up the last stretcher. It would have been a difficult enough journey at the best of times, but as things were it was a nightmare, partly as we were in such a hurry. I can only imagine the reason we were not stopped by the enemy was because they thought there was a much stronger party following us.

Not far west of the monastery in Tidbury Terrace we fell in with a small detachment of Royal Marines. They were having some food and we were glad of the opportunity to share some. A few minutes later one of the ambulances returned and we were able to load all except two stretchers on to it. The two remaining stretchers were carried by Surg Lt MacRitchie, SBAs Jones and Blundell and myself. We now felt comparatively safe but it was broad daylight at the time and we were afraid of being machine gunned from the air, so between rushes we hid in a ditch whenever there were aircraft about.

Jones, to our surprise and delight, still had some food and tobacco left which he shared out. He seemed completely unperturbed by what was going on, and was always the same whatever the danger during that week. We were so tired by this time that we



could only go about 15 paces without resting. The patients, two heavy Maoris, were almost unbelievably patient. Almost at the end of Greenery Sreet we were met by an ambulance driven by Surg Lt Sugars collecting our stragglers. Very soon we passed through Suda going on to Kaleves where we arrived about 0920 hrs. Finding the hospital under Col Russell, whom I had met before, our bed patients were put under his care, and our walking wounded parked out in some olive trees, where we remained for the rest of the day.

The hospital was very full and had far too much to do with their lack of staff and equipment, so I sent Russell some medical officers and staff during the afternoon. There were walking wounded everywhere together with the remanants of all sorts of medical parties which had been evacuated there. Some time later the ADMS and Col Lasswieve heard that we were there and sent for me. Both seemed astonished that we had got through. Lasswieve made the splendid gesture of giving me his last cigarette.

During the afternoon Surg Lt Sugars drove me down the Suda road in an ambulance to try to contqact HQ. Col Russell, who had told me its position, must have been misinformed because we were unable to find it. Being machine gunned most of the way there and back, we spent more time in the ditches than we did in the ambulance. During the evening for about 3 hours the enemy gave a wonderful offensive air display of bombing and machine gunning. Throughout this time, they left the hospital which was clearly marked alone, but the walking wounded beneath the olive trees spent their time crawling round and round their respective trees to get the trunk between them and their attackers.

I said goodbye to George and was impressed to find that he refused to take any money although I explained it was a gift from the medical officers. Dusk fell, about 2100 hrs and I had previously been ordered to report to the ADMS then. Everyone collected outside the hospital and soon after the ADMS gave me the following instructions:-

"Walking wounded who could walk four miles could leave at their own risk. Failing to cover the distance would mean certain death by starvation. We were not to move during the hours of daylight, and were to be as circumspect as possible at all times."

We were under the impression then that the walking wounded had only to walk four miles to some spot from which they would be taken off. We received the news that we would take as much food as possible with sardonic humour. Our route was via Neon Corridor, Vryses, Askypnos, Invros and then Spahkia.

We then kidnapped Capt Laxton who was a bed patient with severe wounds of the back and leg. I also decided to take George as a guide, a decision we were later to be thankful for. Both ambulances were packed as full as they could be and the first one driven by Mne Hunt, with George, myself Sugar and three others sitting in front. Hunt won our admiration for his driving over those roads in the dark, crowded with men and vehicles. A relief driver took over but could only stand the strain for a few minutes. Sugars also drove for a short period but I would not let him continue, knowing his exhausted state. For similar reasons I would not drive myself. Even sitting in front I began to have hallucinations. Capt Laxton and the others must have had a very unpleasant ride but nobody complained.

28th May 1941

At dawn we arrived in a saucer shaped depression in the hills. We estimated we had done about 18 miles in the 9 hours since we started. Apart from two stops to put



the ambulance under the trees whilst enemy aircraft were overhead, we had kept moving as fast as the state of the road allowed. I would not move from here until the drivers had been rested. We then hid the ambulances under the trees and arranged to meet again at 1100 to decide whether to make a dash for it there and then or wait until nightfall. After seeing the wounded under cover, we hid on the hillside as best we could and those of us who had food ate it.

At 1100 the medical officers met as arranged and it was decided to move on at once. We collected as many more wounded as we could find from now on, and if we had been packed tight before, we were certainly overloaded in a horrifying manner now. Making much better time and heading south through wonderful mountains we arrived in sight of the sea soon after 1300. Half an hour later we were stopped on the road about 1,000 feet above sea level. General Weston, who had stopped us, was angry that we had come so far down, but I explained that we had only followed the truck in front. It was then suggested that we made an RAP (Regimental Aid Post) in one of the ambulances, but I was completely against this in such an exposed position on the hillside, and wanted to push the vehicles over the edge. My idea was to get the RAP set up as well as best we could under cover, and treat the feet and wounds of the men arriving. I thought this might relieve the RAP that the ADMS at Kalevs had told me was being set up by Captain Gilbert RAMC.

We moved a little way down the slope and obtained some food from a ration lorry in front of our ambulances. During this meal we were bombed and machine gunned, setting the ambulance on fire. I received a flying lump of earth on my head. All my medical stores were destroyed and I shouted for my party to get down the hill under proper cover. I realise now that it was very foolish of me to remain so near the road for our meal. We were joined by Major Wright, head of the Hygiene Section on the island. He was rather badly shaken and remained with us until we got to Alexandria.

We remained in hiding in the rocks and crevices all that morning and evening, being joined by streams of men in uniform. The cover was ideal which was very lucky as there were several air attacks on the road above. Our party had little food, but water was obtainable from a nearby hamlet. Except for the lack of RAF, which caused extreme bitterness, everybody in our party was very cheerful. I am sure that only the officers understood that, but for own exertions, we would have been left behind in Mournies. At 2100 I judged it dark enough to march from cover and move along the plateau guided by George. During the previous afternoon, George had been into the hamlet to find out what he could about the geography of the district. He had done this very discreetly. During this walk George was, as usual, quite unperturbed and tried to talk to me about Byron.

A great many men now appeared in various uniforms, but they were all like a lot of sheep, nobody knowing the way. I trusted in George who seemed to know where he was bound for, even when streams of people turned round and came back through us. We were on a rough gradual slope, shelving down on our left to the hills and going up on our right to the foothills and mountains. Before long we were bombed again, the first stick falling somewhere on the road above us and the next sticks falling parallel, but each time nearer to us. During a short respite, I gave the order to move south of the path we were on, but either this was not heard or the wounded were too tired to understand. In addition I had foolishly chosen 'Naval Unit' as out call to one another in the dark, and this led to all sorts of confusion, all sorts of people coming to our call, so I changed it to 'Naval Hospital Unit'.



At one point, we were stopped by armed sentries, who would not let us pass until I explained who we were and called everybody by name. This was more or less simple with the staff, but impossible with most of the wounded, so many having joined us whom I had never seen before. Some 20 minutes later we came to what appeared to be the outer wall of a village. Here everybody was halted and I went ahead to find someone in authority, who might be able to us further instructions. I met Col Payne RAMC whom I had met before. He told me to get my men and wounded on board when the time came, and showed me some more wounded in a church that I could help with, but I explained that I had about 100 men to look after myself.

He took me to a house where I met an old friend, Major Farrer RM, who was suffering from shock, having been blown up a short time before. I also met Col Sergeant RM who seemed to me to be in a rather excited state. Farrer said he would keep watch and tell me when there was any news, and I fell asleep on the floor. At about 0100 Farrer woke me and suggested I should collect my men. I was then told about a Lieutenant Commander in the next room and wounded in the right leg. This officer had had his wound dressed so I only made a cursory examination, promising to look after him when we got on board. I wanted to take him myself but was told his removal had already been arranged. I had some difficulty getting back to the men in the dark. We fell in with the rest of the wounded outside the church, and helping them down a long, steep and difficult path, reached the boats where we were taken on board various destroyers. I was on board HMS *Napier*, where I found the ship's medical officer Surg Lt Murphy and his staff already hard at work looking after the wounded that had already arrived. Murphy worked with his staff all night, being helped by our PO Empson. I got to sleep on the deck of an old shipmate's cabin. At about 3 o'clock the next afternoon we arrived in Alexandria, being met by the Fleet Medical Officer, Surg Capt Grierson and ambulances. We were attacked once during the trip over from Crete,

#### **29 May 1941**

I find Father Ainsworth had been very much upset by the final bombing while we were in the ship. He will take a long time to get fit again, and is perhaps the most shaken of any of us. After a muster on the quayside I found that Phillips and Hunt, the two ambulance drivers, Craig and the two cooks are the only ones missing. Later I was to see them all within the next few days. All the ratings were sent to Sidi Bishr and the officers were taken to Raseltin and from there sent to an hotel. I had been told by the FMO that Surg Cdr Brown was very anxious to get in touch with me directly I arrived, so after a general clean up, I 'phoned him and he asked me to dinner with himself and Cdr Arnott. After dinner the others came over to the Cecil Hotel.

#### **30 May 1941**

I went to Raseltin to find out where the staff had been sent. After a great deal of difficulty I got to the Naval Accommodation Camp at Sidi Bishr. They were all there except Craig who had passed through the day before. Brown and Taylor were sent to hospital with debility and diarrhoea. Father Ainsworth, more shaken than ever, had left for Cairo. There is no news of what we had to do yet. I drew some money and went and got some clothing.

#### **31 May 1941**

I wanted to have a photograph of the Unit taken today but they were out in the town and I could not collect them. I took George, the interpreter, to the Greek Consul, not knowing what to do with him. I was told I could keep him till he was no



longer required. The OC Greek Forces gave me an excellent lunch, during which I met the old SMO from Crete.

HMS ROBERTSON

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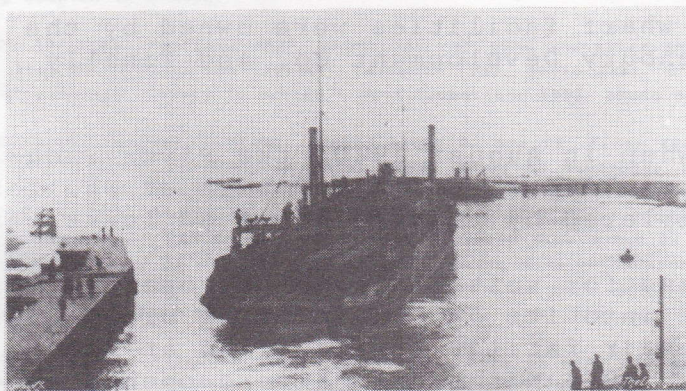
For the next month the party remained in Egypt, some going to Cairo. Reports were written on individuals, and evidence was given to an official military enquiry. The author finally met up with 11th RM Battalion. The diary finishes on 30th June 1941.

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These extracts were taken from a Medical Officer's Journal - Volume 6 5 of 1st Royal Marines Group, and released by kind permission of the Ministry of Defence. The name of the author is not disclosed.

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These illustrations relate to Pages 56-57.

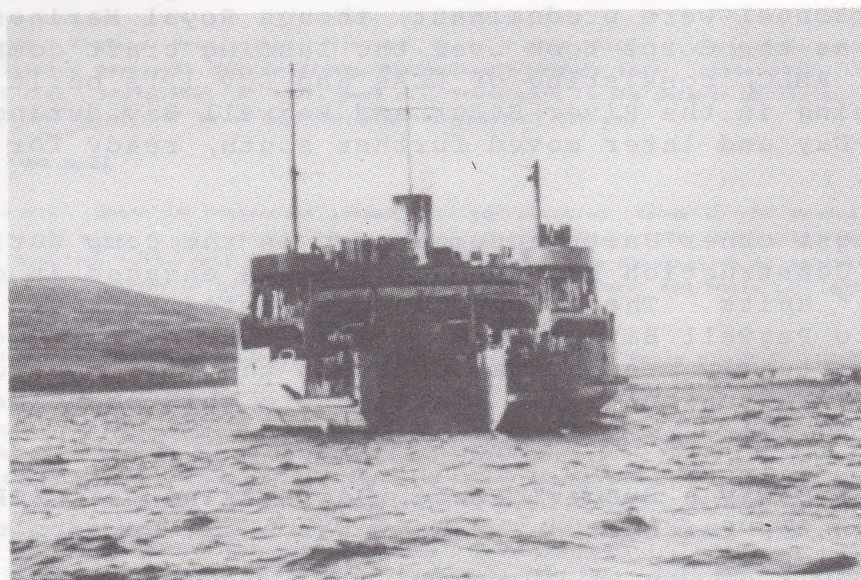


THE FERRY APPROACHING ITS BERTH

Stern view.  
"Richborough train-ferry,  
note the two funnels  
abreast.

Reproduced in "THE  
ENGINEER"  
(1919)

(below) "HMS 'IRIS' (TF1) after conversion to landing  
craft ship (stern chute) and with single stack"



HMS 'Iris' (T.F.1) after conversion to landing craft ship (stern chute) and with single stack



## HMS ROBERTSON

At least three Landing Craft bases were commanded by Royal Marine Officers during World War Two, one of which was HMS ROBERTSON near SANDWICH in Kent, a brief history of which is here reprinted from the Globe & Laurel of October 1946.

"Swan songs are fashionable these days and HMS ROBERTSON is about to join the chorus. The ship paid off on 31st August, 1946 and the rear party should have pulled out by the middle of September. Since this will be our final contribution to the Globe and Laurel, some account of the ship's activities during the war might be recorded.

The story really begins in 1916, when Kitchener, Haig and Cowan Camps, as well as Richborough Wharf, were constructed for use by the Royal Engineers, Inland Water Transport Section. The wharf then boasted about 30 cranes instead of the four which are at present in use. Of the three camps originally built, Kitchener is HMS ROBERTSON, Haig is a Royal Engineer Holding Unit, and Cowan Camp is devoted to the noble industry of mushroom growing. The river was a hive of industry and innumerable tugs and barges were kept busy taking munitions and materials of war to our armies in France.

Between the two wars the wharf facilities were owned by the Southern Railway, Port of Queenbury Development Co. and finally, Pearson, Dorman Long.

And so to World War II, when in August 1940, the River Stour was effectively closed by the sinking of two blockships at Shell Ness and anti-invasion measures completed by the mining of adjacent beaches.

By 1943, there was a demand for suitable combined operations bases and the River Stour came into its own again. The blockships were cleared, landing craft repair facilities installed at Richborough Wharf and, on 2nd July, 1943 Kitchener Camp re-opened as HMS ROBERTSON. From 1940 Jewish refugees had found a sanctuary in the establishment.

Commander T J Linberry, RN was the first Commanding Officer and served in that capacity until 21st March, 1944. During this period naval personnel were predominant, though Royal Marines soon began to flood in as the Corps took over the landing craft commitment. "C" Squadron, RMLC, consisting of LCAs and LCV (P)s built up and completed its training in the River Stour and Pegwell Bay during the months before D-Day and later moved further south, ready for the grand crossing.

Amongst other Units accommodated in the camp during 1944 was an American Construction Battalion which was engaged in constructing "Mulberry" units. These were launched into the River Stour and towed into Pegwell Bay, near Ramsgate. One of the Americans in this Unit had actually been accommodated in the same camp during the 1914-18 war. Unfortunately, his reactions to this coincidence are not known.

After D-Day a Special Recce, Unit trained at ROBERTSON prior to serving in the Far East. The Unit was built up from members of all three Services.



Lt Col K Hunt, Royal Marines, assumed the duties of Commanding Officer on 21st March, 1944, until he was relieved by Lt Col W S North, our present Commanding Officer, on 25th September 1944.

With the war in Europe coming to a close, the need for jungle training became more and more important, and to ensure that Royal Marines transferred to the Far East were partially acclimatised, a miniature jungle was constructed at Eastry. When fully rigged with booby traps, dummies, etc., it had everything, as many a trainee will testify. Many senior officers from various Units examined this course and paid tribute to the officers and NCOs who had worked so hard in its construction.

Many Royal Marines will remember their nights at Richborough Castle as members of the defence platoon which was organised as an anti-invasion measure during 1944. The castle was originally of Roman construction and had stood on the very edge of the sea, though it is at present a good 1½ miles from the shore. Off the record, it is reported that the ghost of a Roman legionary prophesied the collapse of the Germanic tribes during the middle watch on the morning of 6th June, 1944. He had the "gen" from a centurion in Gaul, also a member of the underground.

Since a Royal Marine without a parade ground is like a duck without a pond, the Royals constructed their own parade ground in three months, a very creditable performance.

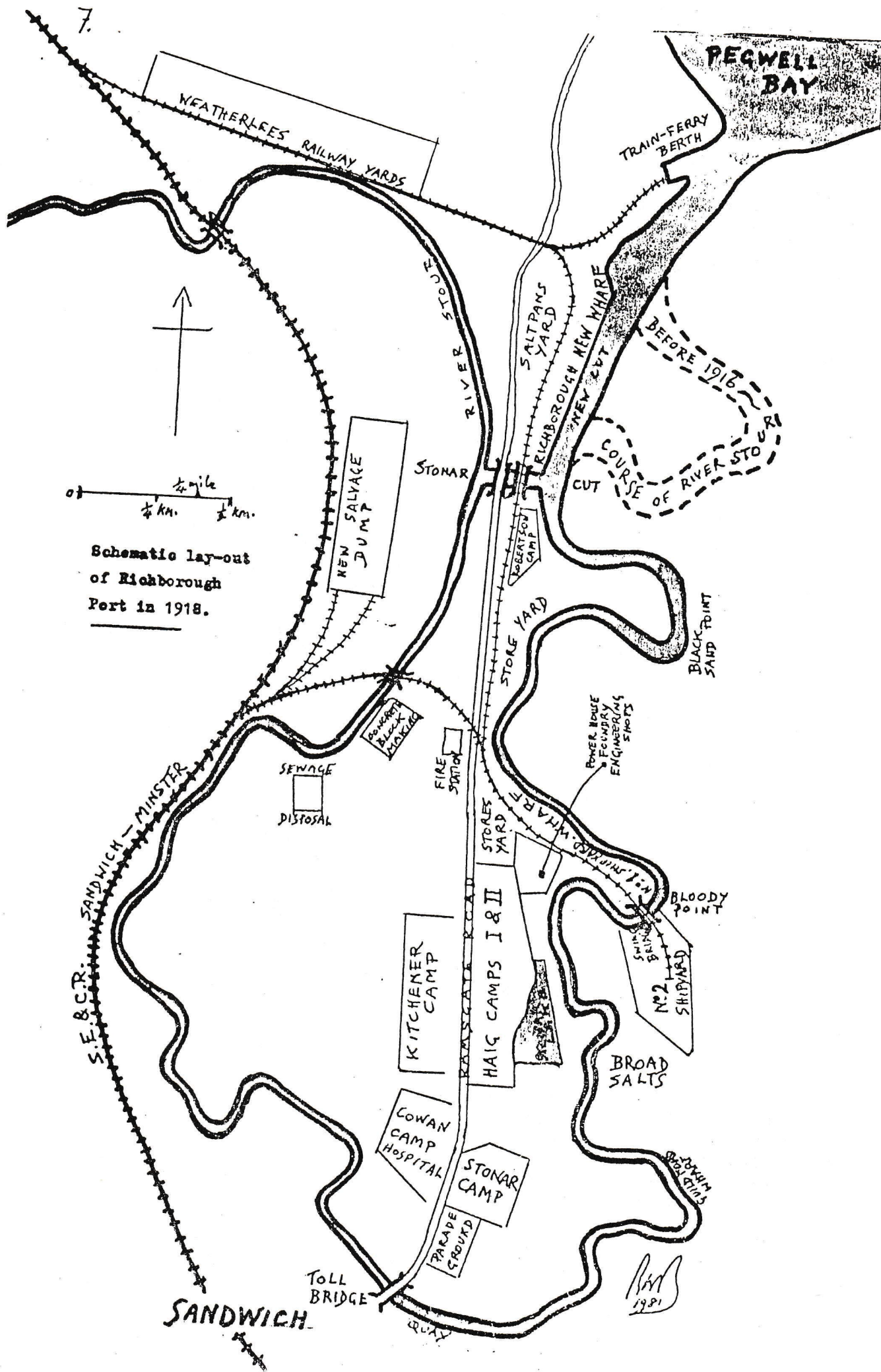
For the past twelve months Richborough has served as a storage depot for minor landing craft. As ships and establishments decommissioned, their craft were sent to Richborough until, in April this year, the total number of craft topped 600. To find space for even one more craft became quite a problem. Eventually an order came for the transfer of all minor landing craft to Gillingham and the Clyde area. This meant early morning and late night work for ranks employed at the wharf. In the case of the Base Flotilla all-night work was not unknown, since the craft had to be towed to sea and loaded into ships as quickly as possible in order that HMS ROBERTSON should dispose of its commitments before the decommissioning date. At the time of writing, all craft have been transferred and the wharf has a barren and desolate appearance. Grass and weed are already beginning to reclaim the hards and roadways.

As a prelude to paying-off, a White Ensign which had been worn by HMS ROBERTSON was presented by the Commanding Officer to St Clement's Church at Sandwich during morning service on Sunday, 11th August 1946. This interesting ceremony was well attended by local people, as well as the ship's company, which had used the church during most of the commission."

FOOTNOTE On a recent visit I observed the White Ensign still in position just inside the main door ( though rather 'off-white' now) with the accompanying wall notice - 'This White Ensign worn by HMS ROBERTSON was presented by the Commanding Officer Lt Col W S North RM to commemorate the fact that her officers and men worshipped here during World War Two. 11th August 1946.'

According to Lt Col North, his command was unusual and as far as he knew such an appointment had not happened before, or since WW2. The ship's company, consisting of Naval maintenance teams, a







detachment of Wrens and up to 2,000 Royal Marines carried out Naval Routine, Colours, Divisions, Sunset etc., and came under the RN Discipline Act in the Command of Flag Officer Dover, and later CinC NORE.

Little evidence remains of this or any other of the camps along the road from SANDWICH to RAMSGATE; a housing estate now covers the Parade Ground and Industrial Buildings obliterate most of the camp sites (with just the odd wartime building still standing, including what looks like a Theatre/Cinema on the roadside opposite Robertson Camp.) The Richborough Wharf is at the end of a lane opposite the Power Station and looking very derelict now.

The map detailing camp sites is reproduced by kind permission of Robert Butler, a local historian, whose booklet VITAL HAVEN includes coverage of WW2 involvement on the River Stour and surrounding area, but although serving as an RNVR Officer (1940-46) in frigates and destroyers his association with Sandwich began post war. Salvaging considerable information from fast fading memories his research is greatly appreciated. AJP.

'In 1938 the whole place was in a very run down condition and looked alot more derelict than New Wharf does now! Jewish refugees from Nazis were allowed by the Home Office to occupy some of the accomodation blocks. In 1942 the Navy had a small repair party on New Wharf but was not made into a fully fledged RN establishment until 1943 when some RN Commandos arrived; not so long after that the Royal Marines arrived and an RM Officer appointed Commanding Officer to what was still, and remained, a Naval Establishment.

A unit of Royal Engineers returned to Richborough in January 1944 to assemble parts of the 'MULBERRY HARBOUR' (actually the sections code-named 'WHALE' which connected the floating sections to the land); they needed about 500 feet of New Wharf and there seems to have been a bit of a problem because the Royal Marines said they needed it all! A compromise was reached whereby the RE Unit built a temporary section of the wharfage between the north end of the New Wharf and the wreckage of the old train ferry berth. This temporary section acted as a sort of 'lay-by' for the RN/RM landing craft. Nothing of it remains today.

HAIG, KITCHENER and ROBERTSON camps at Richborough erected for WW1 were presumably named after the three Field Marshalls, but whereas the latter retained its name during WW2 (and thought to be Army occupied) it is possible that the Navy in renaming KITCHENER CAMP to HMS ROBERTSON were honouring Colonel (later Brigadier) John Kerr Robertson RE who was responsible for the construction of RICHBOROUGH GARRISON during WW1. Second-in-Command of the Royal Engineers (Mechanical Engineering Section) who built the camps was Sir Bruce G White KBE, FCGI, RIMEchE from a firm of Consulting Engineers who served with the regiment in both World Wars and was a Major during the first of these. He published a booklet THE ARTIFICIAL INVASION HARBOURS CALLED MULBERRY in 1980 printed by 'The Viking Group', and one of his interesting observations was that during the WW1 camp construction period a Mr Gluckstein of Lyons (catering firm) was taken on as Messing Officer with the rank of Major, with the result that catering at Richborough became equal to that of any of Lyons hotels or restaurants. Major Gluckstein later became Managing Director of Lyons and he once remarked that when he first went to Richborough in 1916 there were 3000 men there, messing in up to a hundred different places with separate cookhouses, which



resulted in waste and poor food. By the end of the war there were about 20,000 men and they ate in three large mess halls with central kitchens, managed by top class chefs paid £10 per week (very high pay then). The Officers only had to pay 6d per day mess bills, though some complained that when in London they had to pay 10/6 for dinner at Lyons Trocadero Restaurant for a meal much the same as they got at Richborough as part of their 6d per day messing!

(Copies of Robert Butler's booklet VITAL HAVEN are available from Mr C R Dalton, Director of DEAL MARITIME MUSEUM, 5 Blenheim Road, DEAL, CT14 7AJ (Tel: 0304 362837) or from KENT MUSEUM Clock House, Royal Harbour, RAMSGATE, Kent. CT11 8LS (Tel: 0843 587765). From another book, as yet unpublished, Mr Butler has enlarged on this subject and has kindly allowed the following extraction.)

"3000 Jewish refugees were there and among them all kinds of highly educated people: professors, engineers, doctors, artists, and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra as well. A professional gardener laid out gardens and a farmer looked after the growing of vegetables. They formed a "Camp University" to continue interrupted studies, and all had English lessons given by voluntary teachers from the surrounding district.

On the outbreak of war in September 1939 the three ex-Richborough train-ferries were requisitioned from the LNER for the Navy and were used during the 'phoney-war' period for transportation of Army equipment from Dover to Calais and Dunkirk. In the early months of the war merchant ships taken over by the Navy continued to be manned by their peacetime crews on "T.124" Agreements, which put them under Naval discipline while still being paid at Merchant Service rates. The merchant sailors, at that time, thought they were on starvation wages - with some justification but, nevertheless, they were getting several times as much as their Royal Naval opposite numbers doing the same job in even harder conditions.

The three LNER, ex Richborough, train-ferries survived the Dunkirk evacuation. However, quite large elements of the British Army, unable to get to Dunkirk, had swung westwards in the hope of getting lifted off from such places as le Havre or Cherbourg. The 51st Highland Division found itself out of its only way out via the small port of St Valery-en-Caux, about 15 miles west of Dieppe (not to be confused with "St. Valery" on the estuary of the Somme, about 38 miles NE of Dieppe). The ex-Richborough ferry "TF2" was ordered to attempt an evacuation. For their size they were very manoeuvrable ships and only needing 10 feet of water the job could have been done but for the Luftwaffe who were buzzing around in strength and TF2 was sunk by overwhelming air attack outside St. Valery on the 10th of June 1940 with the loss of most of her ship's company. This was one of several evacuation attempts under the code-name Operation "CYCLE".

TF1 and TF3, were now given names for the first time, respectively "IRIS" and "DAFFODIL", the same names as the two Mersey ferries made famous by their part in the Zeebrugge raid of 1918. "IRIS" and "DAFFODIL" were extensively rebuilt in 1940 and converted into what became known as "Landing Ships Stern-chute," or "LSS."² In essence this involved the re-forming of the stern into a slipway down which small landing-craft, 13 Mk 1., or 9 Mk 2, could be launched off trollies. The four standard gauge tracks on the main deck were replaced by three 6ft gauge tracks for the boat



trolleys. The two main exhaust uptakes were altered to lead out through a central funnel.

In the planning stage of Operation "OVERLOAD", the Allied invasion of Normandy, a War Office requirement arose for the conversion of vessels to discharge railway locomotives and rolling-stock on to an unprepared quay. "IRIS" and "DAFFODIL" and the three Southern Railway, 1936, train-ferries - "TWICKENHAM", "HAMPTON" and "SHEPPERTON" were chosen. As the requirement would be for a limited time at an unspecified date the ships had to be modified to be, in effect, dual purpose ships. In the meantime "IRIS" and "DAFFODIL" had a full programme to fulfil as landing-craft mother ships; and the maximum time which could be spared for the conversion was six weeks. The problem was complicated by the stern slipway which had to remain for further use after the "temporary requirement" was completed, thus the modifications to "IRIS" and "DAFFODIL" were substantially different from what was done to the 1936 train-ferries. The solution was to provide a link-span, 120 feet long, carried in the stern-slipway and able to pass railway wagons and road vehicles over a maximum gradient of 1 in 10, and railway locomotives on 1 in 30. A lifting frame was mounted on the stern of the vessel for placing the link-span on to quay bearings. By laying additional rails the four standard-gauge tracks were re-installed without interference to the 6ft tracks. Most of the fabrication went on while the ships continued in service as mother-ships and the components were installed when they came in for boiler-clean. The fitting of the link-span had to be postponed until it was needed for use, but it could be fitted in 24 hours, and removed in a similar time. Thus "IRIS" and "DAFFODIL" played a very important role at that supreme moment. In March 1945 "DAFFODIL" (ex TF3) was mined and sunk in the Channel. "IRIS" (ex TF1) survived and was converted back to her original form and re-christened "ESSEX FERRY". She then returned to the Harwich-Zeebrugge service for British Railways until she was scrapped in 1957.

In the meantime (1942) the Navy came to Richborough Port, using New Wharf and some of the workshops, later re-opening Kitchener Camp as HMS "ROBERTSON" in July 1943, the refugees having moved elsewhere. This was a Naval Shore Establishment concerned with Combined Operations and landing-craft. However, Royal Marine trainees were soon in a majority and from March 1944 the command was given to a Royal Marine officer, Lt Col K Hunt - and from 25 September 1944 Lt Col W S North RM, who eventually presented their White Ensign to St Clement's Church, Sandwich, when "ROBERTSON" paid off, 11 August 1946.

The Military Port Repair Organisation of the Royal Engineers was established at Marchwood, near Southampton, in 1941. During 1943 they became responsible for much work connected with the "MULBERRY" project for Operation "OVERLOAD". Ten miles of floating roadways, code-name "WHALE", were going to need more room than Marchwood had to spare, and the provision of another construction depot was vital: Richborough was chosen, but the Navy and RM were already there. However, the Flag Officer, Dover, (Vice-Admiral Pridham-Wippel) agreed to let the Royal Engineers have 500 feet of the north end of "New Wharf" provided that a temporary trestle "lay-by" of equal length be built by the REs for the use of the Navy to 'park' their landing craft. The REs did the RNs proud and built them a trestle lay-by to completely fill up the space between the north end of New Wharf and the south end of the



old ferry berth, a length of 1,200 feet, making a continuous mooring 3,500 feet long. (All trace of the lay-by section has since disappeared). The Army had a bridge erection yard behind their piece of New Wharf and, at its north end, they fitted up a 30-ton electric crane for the assembly of the floating bridges. They used the old camp buildings from the previous war to accommodate 1,600 men.

The "WHALE" assemblies were bulky and awkward products consisting of six bridges, each of 36 tons, supported by floating "Beetles" the whole unit being 500 feet long and occupying the full length of quay now allotted to the Army. The units were fully equipped with tools, stores etc., and then towed away down Channel to the "OVERLOAD" assembly areas. Production started in February 1944 and, by "D" Day, fifty units were ready for service on the "far-shore". Further along the Wharf, at HMS "ROBERTSON", the Royal Marines were training for the invasion of South-east Asia and Japan, a potentially very bloody operation which the atom-bomb made unnecessary. The following personal note comes from an officer who was then on the training staff at "ROBERTSON".

"We did training along the banks of the Stour with the major landing craft crews from LCG(M)s and LCG(L)s and Flakkers who were at ROBERTSON while their craft were being tropicalised for service in South-east Asia. One of my training officers had a nicely set up Section exercise where the men came across a footbridge made with sleepers and obviously part of the original railway marshalling yards of the 1914-18 war. The local Council must have maintained this bridge for it was in good order when I first saw it in 1944. In this exercise the Section leader brought his men over the bridge and paused to see which way to send them - left or right? As the file of men slowed behind their leader, he would suddenly be catapulted forward as his men rushed to get clear of the explosions coming up under the bridge, caused by well timed fuses on No 69 plastic grenades floated downstream on bits of wood by a Sergeant. Quite startling jets of water were hurled up between the railway sleepers. At the same time a Bren gun fired bursts under the bridge into the opposite bank, a Corporal firing it on a diagonal line from the south bank to the north.

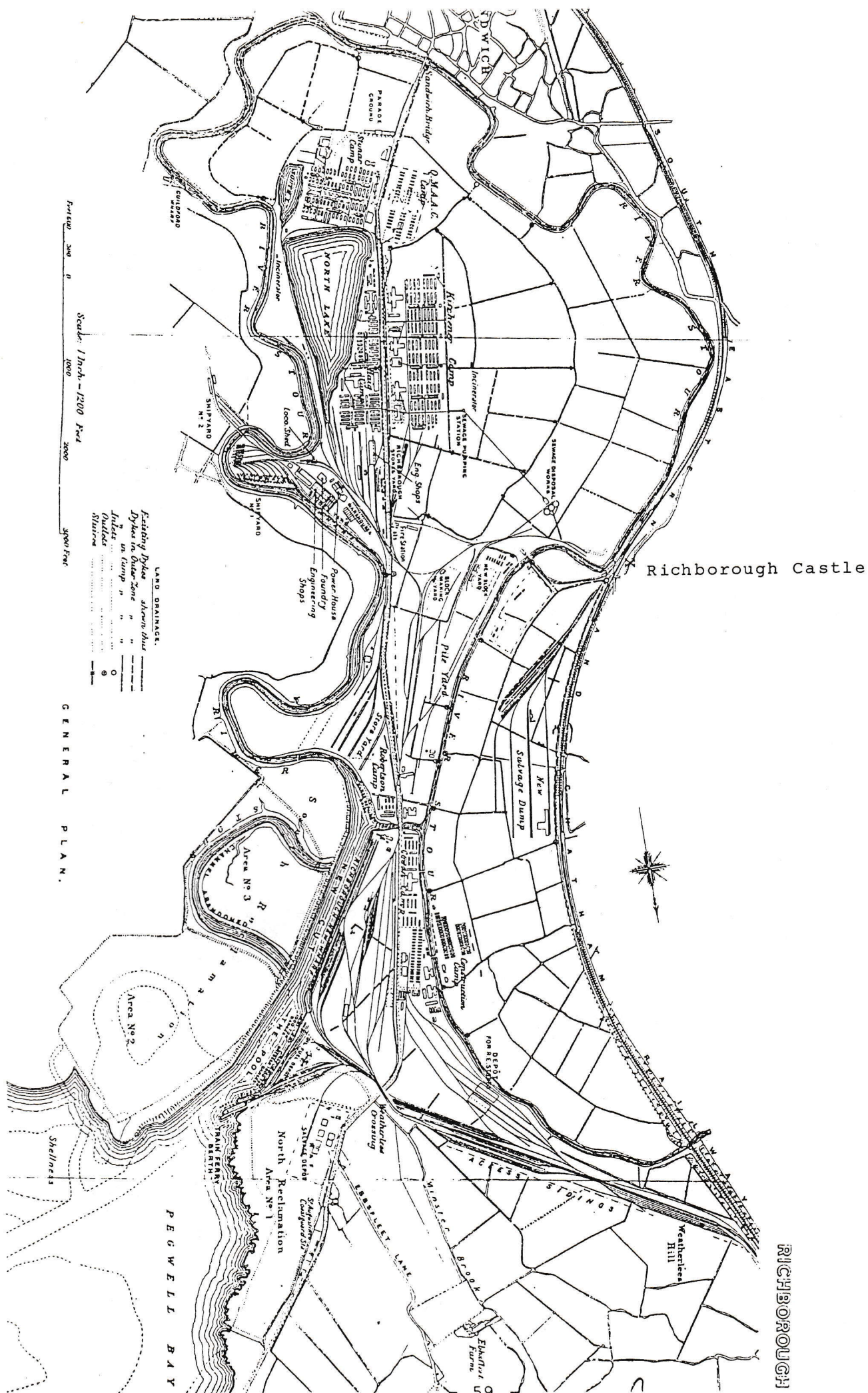
What carefree days those were, for this was not a field firing range but farm land used for exercises.

2i/c of "ROBERTSON" thought the Bren might cause an accident which would be hard to explain, whilst the number of sleepers lifted from their mountings on the footbridge became too obvious damage to escape detection. Indeed, the last Section attack in which I saw the 69s used, blew three or so sleepers almost into the river and gave the men too close an experience of simulated action under fire to justify any further chances. None was hurt, but it would only have been a matter of time before someone got caught by the blast. Thereafter, the 69s were used only for fishing."

Ah yes, "what carefree days those were," but when the cold hand of peacetime reality again descended upon Richborough the old inhibitions were quick to return. The old 'death wish' for it to go derelict again.

Robert Butler







## HOW THE MARINES ASSAULTED TOBRUK By Major Wilfred R Sendall RM

Reprinted from "The NAVY" Feb 1946 (The official organ of the Navy League)

Perhaps the magnificent success that attended the great Combined Operations of 1942, 1943 and 1944 may have led many to underestimate the immense difficulties of amphibious assault against a coast defended by modern weapons. To do so would be unjust to the men who planned and executed the three D-Days in North Africa, Sicily and Normandy; it would be more than unjust to those who bought with their lives the experience on which those victories were built. Dieppe, we all know, was part of the price paid, and 40 RM Commando was there to help pay it. Less well known was the gallant failure of the 11th Battalion, Royal Marines, in their raid on Tobruk on 14 September 1942.

11 RM started life as the Land Defence Force of the Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation that distinguished itself in Crete. Part of the tragedy of Crete is the fact that 11 RM did not reach the island in time to take part in the battle, to meet the very situation for which it had been trained, for the presence at Maleme of even one well-trained, fully equipped and fresh battalion might have had an incalculable effect on the course of history. After Crete 11 RM went into training in the Marines classic role, as an amphibious striking force at the disposal of the Naval Commander-in-Chief.

Their first task was a small-scale but entirely successful raid on the little island of Kuphonisi, south-east of Crete, where one company destroyed an Italian radar station. Later, in great secrecy at Haifa the battalion began preparing its stroke against Tobruk, by this time Rommel's vital forward supply base against the Eighth Army at El Alamein. The object of this raid was to get control of the harbour for 12 hours, time for demolition parties to wreck completely the port installations that saved the Germans 260 miles of road transport. The sea-borne raid was to take place in conjunction with operations ashore by the Long Range Desert Group.

On 11th September the battalion, with attached parties of Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers, embarked at Haifa in the destroyers HMS SIKH and ZULU. Sailing early next morning and making 25 knots, the two ships reached Alexandria after dark that night. Intelligence officers with the latest "gen" and certain small special parties were rapidly embarked, the two destroyers slipping away again before dawn. When the sun came up the Marines on board found themselves steaming due east, escorted by the anti-aircraft cruiser HMS COVENTRY and two Hunt class destroyers.

At this time the secret of the objective was broached to all ranks, and final briefing took place. Later, the convoy altered course to the north-east, then north-west till they were making towards Crete. As darkness fell SIKH and ZULU broke away from their escort and steered due west at the top of their great speed. At midnight they altered course again, due south, straight for Tobruk.

At that moment 60 RAF Wellingtons began a bombardment of Tobruk that lasted three hours. As the destroyers closed the harbour mouth the questing searchlights, the garish colours of climbing flak and



the dull flashes of bomb-bursts could be seen on the horizon, a confusion of lights and fires glowed through the thick darkness. At two o'clock the code word "Nigger" was received, indicating that the Long Range Desert Group had taken a coastal battery at the mouth of the harbour, the essential pre-requisite of the raid. A quarter of an hour later came a signal from the Prime Minister, Mr Winston Churchill, who ever since the days of Antwerp in 1914 has had a soft spot for the Royal Marines, wishing them good luck in their latest enterprise.

Cheers went up from the crowded mess-decks of both destroyers. Then the men of the first flight in both destroyers climbed into their harness. Just after three o'clock, when they were two-and-a-half miles offshore, the powerful engines that had been driving SIKH and ZULU at over 30 knots slowed down and stopped. There was a heavy swell, but all appeared quiet in the neighbourhood of the beach, though Tobruk was still a pyrotechnic uproar.

A large fire burning in the town threw the escarpment behind the beach into sharp relief but obscured the beach itself to eyes straining through the darkness from seaward. The craft for the assault were then lowered. These, however, were not the handy LCA used at Dieppe and in North Africa, all of which were needed for the vast attack now preparing at the other end of the Mediterranean. They consisted of six wooden power-boats each towing two dumb lighters that had been specially built for the occasion. Scrambling nets were thrown out and the Marines began to embark. The craft heaved and tossed on the swell, making embarkation difficult for men loaded up with 24-hour rations, a full water-bottle, a hundred rounds and at least one Bren magazine, together with a liberal provision of grenades, slabs of gun-cotton, primers, detonators and fuses. In addition, many of the Army men now descending by the shifting nets had not the long practice of the Marines in this tricky operation. After some delay the first flight was packed in and the destroyers steamed away, to return later to a rendezvous where they would meet the craft back from the beach for the second flight.

It was then that the troubles began. The tow ropes failed to stand the strain of heaving and tossing in the swell. Several soon parted. One broken rope twined itself round the propeller of one of the power-boats while the whole bow-piece of one of the lighters was pulled out by the violence of the sea. Of the six tows only three were able to struggle with great difficulty to the beach after wrestling for over an hour with the malevolent sea.

To make matters worse the enemy soon began to show an unwelcome interest in the proceedings. A searchlight began to sweep the sea at 30-second intervals, the craft were soon spotted, and HMS SIKH, returning to the rendezvous, was also picked up. A battery of heavy coastal guns opened fire on her while a crashing fusillade of smaller weapons opened on the three sets of barges that were closing the beach. Major J N Hedley, senior officer in these craft, with orders to land and establish a bridgehead, shouted "Full speed ahead and prepare to land." As the craft closed in the enemy opened up with all he had; 88-mm, shells, mortar bombs and bullets hailed upon them. The Marines could see the white surf crashing upon the rocks, while behind them, in the lurid light of searchlights and shell bursts, SIKH and ZULU were fighting their last desperate, unequal battle with the shore batteries. A shell smashed into the leading power-boat and she began to sink. The dumb lighters were cast off



and the Marines took to the water, whipped all around them by bullets. The more fortunate found bottom and scrambled up over the slippery wet rocks.

Then the dumb lighters crunched on to the rocks. The Marines leaped out, many slipping into deep water that completely covered them. Gasping for breath, dragged down by the weight of water in their equipment, they clawed their way on to the slippery shelves, still lashed by the enemy's fire. As one lighter struck she took a direct hit from a mortar bomb that blew out her bows. A few of her company struggled to the shore. A mortar bomb dropped plumb into another lighter, the burst killing six men.

The remnants of the force got across the beach as fast as they could and went to ground, bullets screaming over them and the ugly fragments of mortar bombs that whir through the air like the sound of the wings of a startled pheasant. The last of the lighters crashed on to the rocks and overturned, flinging the men into six feet of water, and many were lost before they gained the beach.

The whole landing had gone astray. The scanty few who survived were on the wrong beach, their craft smashed to matchwood on the rocks, while out at sea HMS ZULU, after an effort to tow off the mortally stricken SIKH, reluctantly abandoned her sister ship and withdrew, only to be subjected to a series of devastating air attacks that sank her before she reached Alexandria. Under the circumstances no one would have blamed Major Hedley if he had thrown up the sponge, but instead he gathered those who had survived that terrible landing - fewer than a hundred men-and resolved to do the enemy all the damage he could.

Though he was under no illusion as to their plight, he was cheerful, determined and inspired every man with him with a vigorous offensive spirit. Valiantly supported by Capt Wright, Lieut C N P Powell, Lieut Dyall and Sergeant J Povall, he organised his little force, leading them forward into a wadi under heavy fire.

Sergeant Povall and three Marines on the right flank encountered about 20 enemy advancing on them. They opened fire and the enemy fled. A hundred yards farther on they met another party. In the words of Corporal G T Hunt, one of the survivors: "We had occasion to kill many Italians with bayonet and bullet." After about half a mile the force came against a prepared defence position, supported by heavy machine-gun posts.

Against these Major Hedley led the attack himself, with a well-aimed grenade putting out of action a machine-gun mounted on a lorry. During this fight, Hedley, with Sergeant Povall, attacked a section post manned by six Italians. Povall shot the first but before he could reload, Major Hedley shot the other five with his revolver. One of the Corps' notable pistol shots, he never did better shooting than this. Lieut Dyall led an attack on a group of buildings; he shot one Italian but was killed by a bullet from another standing in the shadows. This man was disposed of by Corporal Hunt.

Hedley's aggressive spirit kindled the whole party. Though all the time they were under fire, constantly having to dive to ground when Verrey lights illuminated them, they never hesitated to attack the enemy wherever they found him, usually with the bayonet. To quote Corporal Hunt again: "I heard Sergeant Povall well up in front, shouting encouragement and appearing to enjoy himself, judging by



the remarks he was making. He used his bayonet with great effect on many occasions."

Major Hedley was pressing on as fast as possible, hoping to reach adequate cover before full daylight. A large party of Italians tried to surrender but the Marines ignored them in favour of a Breda gun position which was silenced. Corporal Hunt, who had been wounded in the left side over the heart but still carried on leading his section, saved his Commanding Officer's life. An Italian rushed Hedley, who for the moment was out of ammunition. Quick as a flash Hunt fired from the hip and killed the man as he charged.

The wadi ended in a steep, bare slope, swept by fire. Engaging the principal enemy position with fire from rifle and Bren, the Marines neutralised it sufficiently to get across the skyline. For the first time since they landed they were no longer under enemy fire, but it was a sadly depleted party-only seventeen strong- that Major Hedley gathered in an old building, where they settled down to cleaning their weapons. Corporal White of the RAMC, who had gallantly stuck to the party, dressed their wounds, but as he hoped to strike overland under cover of night in hope of reaching British forces, the Major forbade them to touch water or rations. Then they pushed on over a high ridge into an "S" shaped wadi, at the head of which were some caves, in which they took shelter. Here Hedley planned to lie up until nightfall, but during the afternoon a large force of Germans surrounded the caves. The seventeen were forced to surrender.

Thus ended a failure, illuminated by as fine a courage as any victory, conducted according to the highest traditions of a famous Corps. Many of those who survived the ill-fated raid had their revenge in the fullness of time, when in the ranks of the Royal Marine Commandos, they came up from the sea once more to smite the enemy.

POSTSCRIPT After the war Maj Sendall RM joined the staff of the 'Daily Express' as correspondent.

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#### THE COMMANDO ASSOCIATION MEMORIAL SERVICE

Annual remembrance services are held by the Commando Association at Seaford College which was formerly LAVINGTON HOUSE, used as Headquarters Commando Group (Lavington) during the Second World War. This takes place in the chapel on the Sunday before Advent, which this year fell on the 26 November and was attended by RMHS member Jean Snowdon who served here with the WRNS, as secretary to General Sturges from May 1944 through to the war's end.

Headmaster, the Reverend Canon Charles Johnson welcomed the visitors and the service was conducted by the Rev J E C Nicholl MC (No 2 Commando), with the first lesson being read by Henry Brown Esq MBE (No 1 Commando) and the second by Lieut Richard van der Horst RM (currently serving with 45 Cdo RM) whose father (Col Rupert van der Horst), mother, grandfather and grandmother were also present.

LAVINGTON HOUSE and the nearby BURTON PARK HOUSE, both of which were commandeered during WW2 for the Commando HQ are near PETWORTH in West Sussex.



## Books by Members

*The following books have been received, written by members.*

### **The Falklands Military Machine**

**by Derek Oakley**

This book, in a series which includes *Napoleon's Military Machine* and *Wellington's Military Machine*, follows a practical format giving a series of double page articles depicting various aspects of the British Task Force which sailed to the South Atlantic in April and May 1982. There are individual chapters on every type of warship from carriers to minesweepers; military units from the Royal Marines and Parachute Regiment to the RAOC and RCT; air power from Harriers to helicopters. But probably most important are the chapters on the logistic back up from our own Commando Logistic Regiment to the Ships Taken Up From Trade and support tankers and supply ships.

There are short chapters on diplomacy, strategy, command and control, tactics and weapons. Finally there are the battles themselves, concise accounts without frills. The book is simply written and for the first time covers all aspects of the extraordinary military machine that went into action as a result of the Argentinian invasion of the Falklands.

The book is profusely illustrated with over 200 photographs and maps in colour and black and white. The book is excellent background for general reading, and gives a clear account of the campaign as seen by the then editor of *The Globe & Laurel*. As he says on the dust jacket 'this book sets out to show how this victory was accomplished within the limited resources available, made possible with a skilled force of highly trained professional soldiers, sailors and airmen.

(Spellmount - £19.95)

Available from the Royal Marines Museum or signed copies direct from the author.

Please add £2.25 for postage and packing.

### **SAS Operations**

**by James Ladd**

This excellent account of SAS Operations from their beginnings in 1941 to the Falklands is now available in paperback. First published in 1986, James Ladd gives an insight into this secretive regiment, bringing out many facts previously untold. He follows the fortunes of the Regiment through deserts and jungles, highjackings and sieges. It shows the special kind of soldier who volunteers for the unknown, a man versatile enough to remain undetected and uncomfortable within a 100 yards of an enemy for days on end, or to deliver a baby in the depths of the Borneo jungle.

Particularly revealing is the Appendix giving a summary of operations carried out by the SAS from a disastrous raid in North Africa in November 1941, then as the Long Range Desert Group, to June 1982 and the vital role performed in surveillance and reporting on Port Stanley before the final battles of the campaign. There are about 300 such operations, nearly half of them since World War 2.

(Robert Hale - £5.95)



