

Whilst researching the forthcoming Special Publication the Society contacted member Dominic Walsh for details of the special badges worn by each company that took part in the Zeebrugge raid. He was able not just to describe the badges but also to provide us with photographs of many of these badges being worn. We would welcome details of any other special badges that may have been worn on operations.

Special Insignia of the Zeebrugge Raid

Officers' Insignia - 4th Bn - Zeebrugge. Note by General Lamplough Nov 1972

"This being a night operation, a white band was worn on the helmets of all officers. In addition, officers wore white shoulder patches on the tunics. Plymouth Company, a white triangle (sides about 2.5"); Portsmouth Co white circle; and Chatham Co white diamond; MG section white cross."

These special company badges worn for the Zeebrugge raid are clearly seen in the photograph of the officers of 4th Battalion published in Britain's Sea Soldiers VOL III p 180. In fact, it was not just the officers who wore them, as the pictures of 4 Platoon (Chat), 5 Platoon (Ports) and 10 Platoon (Ply) show; the men of each platoon also wore these distinctive shoulder badges.



Officers of the 4th Battalion, Royal Marines

Front Row, 1st on left, Capt CB Coneybeare, wearing the white cross of the MG section.

Third from left, Major CEC Eagles of Chatham company. Second from right, Captain Bamford of Plymouth Company.

Second row, 1st on right, Captain CP Tuckey of Portsmouth company.

was not only frightened of the Foreign Office but also of his various Heads of Departments. This made life for the OCRM very difficult.

It was now mid-winter and the strong wind was extremely cold . We found the RM detachment to be in good heart and well organised. However the accommodation at Moody Brook was appalling; it was not just a case of repairing the existing buildings but a complete rebuild was essential before the next winter. Similarly a loaded vehicle could not cross the bridge to the Barracks thus making a quick deployment of men, weapons and ammunition by vehicle impossible. All this must have been known to the Argentineans as they had been building a new school from where all activities of the detachment in Moody Brook could be watched and filmed. There were also Argentineans at the airport and the fuel depot.

When I got back to London I was very annoyed when the Chief of Staff to CGRM told me there was no need for me to brief CG personally on what I had seen and there appeared to be little follow-up action. However a bit later I was called to Northwood to see Vice Admiral Peter Berger, the chief of staff to CinC [Fleet]. By chance his Secretary was my brother-in-law and before I went in to see the Admiral he warned me that I would get short shrift about the recommendations made in my report. He was so right! I cannot remember much detail of our subsequent discussion but his opening remark was "Do you realise that the work you say is necessary will cost as much as the refit of two frigates? There is no way it can be done".

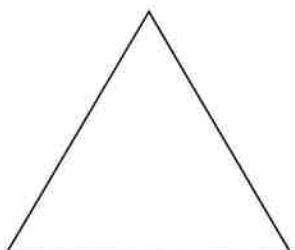
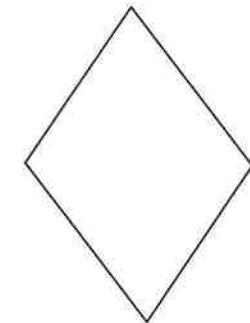
I heard nothing more about my report until just as the news broke about the invasion in 1982 and I had retired, I received a phone call from MOD [Navy] asking if I had a copy of my report as the original could not be found!

There is little point in my making further comments but it must have become as obvious to the Argentineans, as it was to me, that in 1977 neither the British Government nor MOD [Navy] were interested in the security or further development of the Falkland Islands. It was extremely disappointing that the Chief of Staff to CGRM did not pursue the matter more robustly. Perhaps as an afterthought I should add : Thank God for Mrs Thatcher, Lord Lewin and Sir Henry Leach.

Editor's Note: If the prevailing MOD lethargy of 1977 had not existed and the recommendations had been acted upon and the accommodation at Moody Brook improved the Argentineans would have had a much better first objective when they invaded in 1982; and two essential frigates might not have been refitted and taken part in the Falklands Campaign. Pure conjecture, of course, but who expected the British to put up such a fight and win.

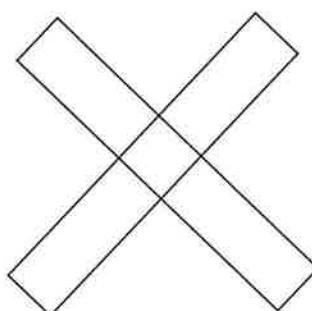


No 4 Platoon, 4th RM Battalion.
A Chatham platoon wearing the white diamond insignia.



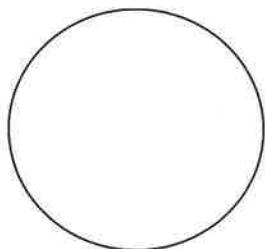
White Cross worn by the Machine gun sections under command of Captain Coneybeare.

Each of the platoons also had a machine gun section, it is likely that these men also wore the white cross insignia.



Plymouth, "C" Company, wore a white triangle, sides about 2.5 inches.

No 5 Platoon.
Made up of Portsmouth men, each wears the white circle insignia



Dominic Walsh continues to research the Zeebrugge raid. He would especially like to make contact with anyone who can help locate pictures of 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 11 platoons as well as the MG section, our thanks for his permission to publish the picture of No 4 platoon.

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