

ROYAL MARINE BAND SERVICE

FACT SHEET



Unit Memorial Dates

The Unit Memorial dates listed below are taken directly from BR2118 Royal Marines Instructions

40 Commando RM - The Landing at Termoli - 1943

40 Commando RM - The Assault on Port Said - 1956

42 Commando RM - The Battle of Kangaw - 1945

42 Command RM - The Attack on Mount Harriet - 1982

45 Commando RM - The Attack on Monforterbeek - 1945

45 Commando RM - The Attack on Two Sisters - 1982

Commando Logistic Regiment RM - Landing at Ajax Bay - 1982

3 Commando Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron RM - The Landings in San Carlos Water - 1982

Operational Landing Craft Squadrons - The Landings in Normandy - 1944

Operational Landing Craft Squadrons - The Landings in San Carlos Water - 1982

40 Commando RM - The Landing at Termoli - 3 October 1943

In the early hours of 3 October 1943, 40 RM Commando (Lieutenant Colonel J C Manners) with No 3 Commando and elements of the Special Raiding Squadron landed under cover of darkness at Termoli, a seaport town on the Adriatic coast, north of the River Bifurno and behind the German lines, 40 Commando penetrated well into the town before the enemy were alerted and brisk close-quarter fighting with German parachute troops ensued. By 0800 hours, 40 Commando had captured the town and controlled the approaches. So complete was the surprise that German vehicles and motor cyclists still drove into a Commando ambush position until noon. The Germans retaliated in strength and 40 Commando with 3 Commando, the Special Raiding Squadron and some reinforcements from the 78th Division, held off repeated and heavy infantry and armoured counter-attacks by the 26th Panzer Division until eventually the 8th Army linked up with them on 6 October. The operation was an outstanding success. They had overcome all attempts, by a force vastly superior in numbers and armament, to dislodge them and in so doing, won a valuable harbour; they caused the enemy to withdraw from the natural defence line on the Bifurno and denied them the use of the important lateral road from Naples, thereby forcing them to retreat further northwards.

ROYAL MARINE BAND SERVICE

FACT SHEET



40 Commando RM - The Assault on Port Said - 6 November 1956

In the summer of 1956 President Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal. The British and French Governments subsequently decided to reoccupy the Canal zone and 3 Commando Brigade was nominated to spearhead the amphibious assault. At dawn on 6 November 1956, 40 Commando RM (Lieutenant Colonel D G Tweed MBE), together with 42 Commando on their right, supported by Naval bombardment and with close air support, landed across the beaches at Port Said. Its task was to recapture the main part of the town, the government offices and the docks area. Heavy street fighting followed all day down narrow alleys and through high tenement blocks, all under constant enemy sniping. With determination, military skill and superb junior leadership, all the Commando's objectives were seized before a cease-fire was ordered later that day. This was the first major seaborne assault since the Second World War and 40 Commando played a significant part in this entirely successful phase of the operation.

42 Commando RM - The Battle of Kangaw - 31 January 1945

In Burma during January 1945, following the capture of the Myebon Peninsula, 3 Commando Brigade was given the task of making a further landing near Kangaw, with the intention of cutting the Japanese lines of withdrawal down the coast. On 22 January 1945, 42 RM Commando (Lieutenant Colonel H H Dales) together with No 1 Commando landed and occupied positions in the mangrove swamp. Subsequently the Commando was ordered to capture a heavily wooded ridge known as Hill 170. Two days of hand-to-hand fighting were necessary before the Japanese could be driven from the ridge, and no sooner were they dislodged than they subjected it to heavy artillery fire. After a lull of several days, the Japanese counter-attacked at dawn on 31 January 1945. The enemy attacked repeatedly. In spite of heavy casualties to the Commando, the Japanese were finally beaten off, and withdrew, leaving their dead dying among forward Commando positions. In a Special Order of the Day to 3 Commando Brigade, Lieutenant General Sir Philip Christison, Commander of XV Corps, concluded "The Battle of Kangaw has been the decisive battle of the whole Arakan campaign, and that it was won was very largely due to your magnificent defence on Hill 170".

42 Commando RM - The Attack on Mount Harriet - 11/12 June 1982

During the initial landings on the Falklands Islands on 21 May 1982, 42 Commando RM (Lieutenant Colonel N F Vaux) were brigade reserve at Port San Carlos before seizing Mount Kent in a night move by helicopter. By 4 June the unit had moved forward, mostly under cover of darkness, to positions west of the high ground overlooking Stanley and the last Argentine stronghold. After days of probing reconnaissance, a Brigade assault took place on the night 11/12 June in which the Commando's task was to secure Mount Harriet on the Brigade right flank. In the moonlight and freezing temperatures, 42 Commando moved undetected through enemy minefields in a 9 kilometre right-flanking movement to surprise the enemy in their rear.

ROYAL MARINE BAND SERVICE

FACT SHEET



Consecutive assaults by K and L Companies followed up steep slopes on to company positions among the crags at either end of the feature. Careful planning, resolute leadership and the boldness and determination of Marines against initially strong resistance and continuous artillery bombardment eventually prevailed. By first light more than 30 enemy had been killed and over 300 prisoners taken as 42 Commando consolidated Mount Harriet.

45 Commando RM - The Attack on Monforterbeek - 23 January 1945

During their advance on Linne in Holland on 23 January 1945, 45 RM Commando (Lieutenant Colonel W N Gray) was held up by well-prepared positions behind the Montforterbeek dyke. After hard fighting in bitterly cold weather and over flat ground covered in snow, the leading Troops achieved their objectives. Meanwhile Command Headquarters and the remainder of the unit, lying in the snow and frozen with cold, were subjected to heavy shelling from self-propelled guns and suffered numerous casualties. It was during this action that Lance Corporal H E Harden, RAMC, the medical orderly attached to 'A' Troop, particularly distinguished himself. He crawled in the snow across 120 yards of flat open ground to dress the wounds of three casualties and then carried one man back under intense mortar and machine-gun fire before returning with a stretcher party for the other two. While bringing back the third man he was shot through the head and killed. Harden was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his fearless action. The Commander of the 7th Armoured Division passed the following message during the day, which was published as a Special Order:

*"To all ranks, 45 Commando.
The Divisional Commander congratulates 45 Royal Marine Command
on their valuable work today, which has been
of great importance in driving back the enemy on the Divisional front.
Well done Royal Marines!
You put up a fine show today, and I am very proud of you".*

In spite of a determined night counter-attack during which hand-to-hand fighting took place in front of the slit trenches, the captured German positions were held until the unit was relieved by No 6 Commando in the morning.

45 Commando RM - The Attack on Two Sisters - 11/12 June 1982

In the dawn assault on the Falklands Islands on 21 May 1982 45 Commando RM (Lieutenant Colonel A F Whitehead) landed at Ajax Bay on the Brigade's right flank. After securing the western side of the beach-head, and while ships were being unloaded under Argentine air attack, 45 Commando marched across more than 80 kilometres of rugged terrain in freezing weather and driving rain via Douglas Settlement and Teal Inlet to be in a position on Mount Kent for 3 Commando Brigade's main attack.

ROYAL MARINE BAND SERVICE

FACT SHEET



The Commando's objective was the twin peaks of Two Sisters, the centre of the Brigade's three objectives. Bold reconnaissance between 4 and 9 June had pinpointed enemy positions and fighting patrols, while artillery harassing fire had caused some early casualties to the enemy. A silent approach and a two-pronged attack during the night of 11/12 June against well-equipped and dug-in opposition up the jagged, craggy rock formations culminated in fierce hand-to-hand fighting for the final enemy company positions. About 50 prisoners were captured and 20 enemy either killed or wounded; the remainder had retreated to the east. Thirty-six hours later the Commando advanced swiftly to Sapper Hill, again on foot, and thence into Port Stanley.

Commando Logistic Regiment RM - Landing at Ajax Bay - 22 May 1982

The Falklands campaign was fought some 8,000 miles from 3 Commando Brigade's base in Plymouth. This stretched the logistic support to its utmost. The Commando Logistic Regiment RM (Lieutenant Colonel I J Hellberg RCT) was faced with the problem of supporting an enlarged Brigade spread over more than 30 warships, auxiliaries and merchant ships. The skill, dedication and exceptional devotion of the ordnance, transport, repair and medical elements of the Regiment in adverse weather conditions and often under heavy enemy air attack played a major part in the success of the landing in San Carlos Water. During the following three weeks of the campaign, from the beach support area at Ajax Bay where it landed on 22 May, the Regiment supported a Divisional Headquarters and two brigades, treated 695 casualties, processed 2,000 prisoners of war and dealt with over 8,000 tons of stores, ammunition and equipment. The logistic support provided by the Commando Logistic Regiment RM was a battle-winning factor.

3 Commando Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron RM - The Landings in San Carlos Water - 21 May 1982

After Argentine forces had occupied the Falkland Islands in April 1982, 3 Commando Brigade RM was the landing element of the amphibious task force ordered to recapture them. The landing force consisting of 40, 42 and 45 Commandos RM, reinforced by 2nd and 3rd Battalions The Parachute Regiment, embarked in HMS FEARLESS and INTREPID, Landing Ships Logistic and in many ships taken up from trade and sailed 8,000 miles south via Ascension Island. The latter stages of the voyage were conducted in poor weather conditions and under threat of Argentine surface, subsurface and air attack. Sound planning in conjunction with the Naval Task Force Commanders, culminated in a successful unopposed Brigade night landing in the San Carlos region of East Falkland before dawn on 21 May 1982. For the next seven days the landing force was under constant attack as the Argentine Air Force attempted to dislodge it from the beachhead.

ROYAL MARINE BAND SERVICE

FACT SHEET



The choice of this remote, sheltered landing force to withstand the air assault and played a major part in ensuring the successful recapture of the Falkland Islands during the ensuing weeks.

Operational Landing Craft Squadrons - The Landings in Normandy - 6 June 1944

On 6 June 1944, Allied forces based in the United Kingdom successfully assaulted the coast of Normandy as a first step to the defeat of the German Army in the west. Royal Marines manned the assault landing craft carrying the first and subsequent waves of the five leading infantry divisions. In addition they manned the guns of the support landing craft and men of the landing craft obstruction clearance units were among the first ashore in order to clear the defences on the beaches. For weeks after the initial assault, landing craft crews continued to ferry ashore men, vehicles and stores of the reinforcing divisions. Both afloat in landing craft and ashore in the naval beach parties, the Royal Marines played a prominent and vital part in the invasion.

Operational Landing Craft Squadrons - The Landings in San Carlos Water - 21 May 1982

After Argentine forces had occupied the Falkland Islands on 2 April 1982, a British Task Force was formed and ordered to recapture them. Starting before dawn on 21 May 1982 in San Carlos Water, the RM landing craft squadrons from HMS FEARLESS and INTREPID, together with the 1st Raiding Squadron RM, landed 3 Commando Brigade on to 5 separate beaches without loss. After these initial landings the Squadrons continued to off-load the logistic shipping in deteriorating weather and under constant air attack. Later all raiding and landing craft were formed into the Task Force Landing Craft Squadron, which subsequently operated on both flanks supporting 3 Commando Brigade and 5 Infantry Brigade in dangerous and testing conditions. The new Squadron also assisted the Commodore Amphibious Warfare in minesweeping duties and Special Forces raiding and insertion tasks. Without this invaluable contribution, before, during and after the main landings, the Falkland Islands Task Force could not have achieved its objective in such a timely manner.