

The Royal Marines Association North Wales Branch



2011

in aid of service charities





JANUARY 2011

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY

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ROYAL MARINES CADETS RHYL, CONNAHS QUAY & HOLYHEAD

The Royal Marines Cadets are part of the Sea Cadet Corps in a very similar way to how the Royal Marines operate as part of the Royal Navy. A great deal of the training and activities they take part in are identical to their blue uniformed counterparts but they also place great emphasis on land based training including fieldcraft, weapon handling skills and section level infantry tactics identical to those employed by the Royal Marines.

They follow a similar rank structure and progression to the Royal Marines and start as recruits. After completing the relevant training, assessments and also serving the right amount of time in a rank they can reach all the way the heights of Cadet Sergeant. In 2009 the Marine Cadets Detachments from Rhyl, Conna's Quay and Holyhead attended the Treetops high rope activity centre in Betws y Coed, North Wales.

From the pictures above, you can see they definitely had a 'swinging' time!



FEBRUARY 2011

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GRAHAM JONES

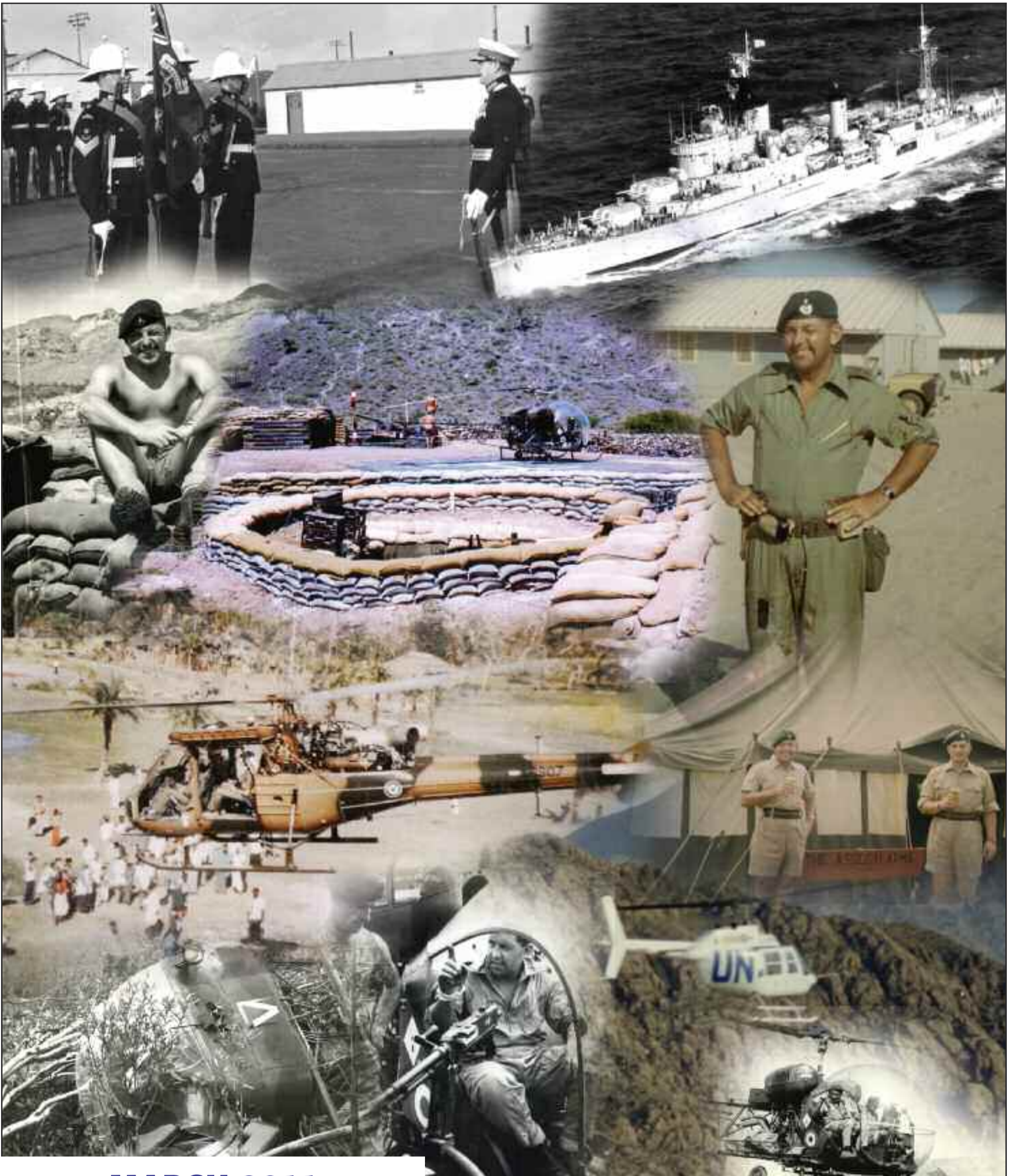
Joined the Corps on 22nd September 1980, aged 16 years and 3 months as a Junior Marine. Passed out of Commando training at Lymptone and joined Zulu company 45 CDO in sunny Arbroath, still cant get the smell of the 'smokies' out of my system.

On 1st April 1982, the day the Argies invaded that well known Island 'off Scotland' I joined Defence Section, HQ & Sigs Squadron at Stonehouse Barracks, Plymouth. Being told I was to young to join my mates in the trip down south I badgered the brigadier into allowing me to join the Task Force, so at the age of 17 I got wet cold and shot at and eventually celebrated my 18th birthday, with my best mates, in a school room in Port Stanley, this was the day the heir to the throne was born (Prince William).

In July 1983, I completed a drivers course at Royal Marines Poole and returned to the MT section at HQ & Sigs Squadron where I later became an instructor on various vehicles. Having already spent 3 months with wooden planks attached to my feet and my head continually buried in the deep snow of Norway, the Corps decided I was to remain an Arctic Fox for the next 6 years spending 3 months each year freezing cold and picking myself out of the snow, some of the happiest times in my career.

A trip to Denmark, France and a summer tour of Norway followed in the next few years (no sunshine trips-ever) and in 1985 I was drafted to the MT section at the Commando Training Centre at Lymptone. A spell attached to a recruit troop training team followed until October 1986 when realising I missed the exciting trips to cold and wet countries I returned to HQ and Sigs Squadron where amazingly I was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal (didn't like this to much so let them have the stripe back a few months later). A brief spell at Royal Marines Poole followed where I completed yet another course then back to Stonehouse Barracks where I finished my last year and a half in the Corps in Naval Transport.

In June 1991, I left the Marines and became a Police Officer with Grampian Police, transferring to Cheshire Constabulary in 1999 where I remain serving as a Police Dog Handler.



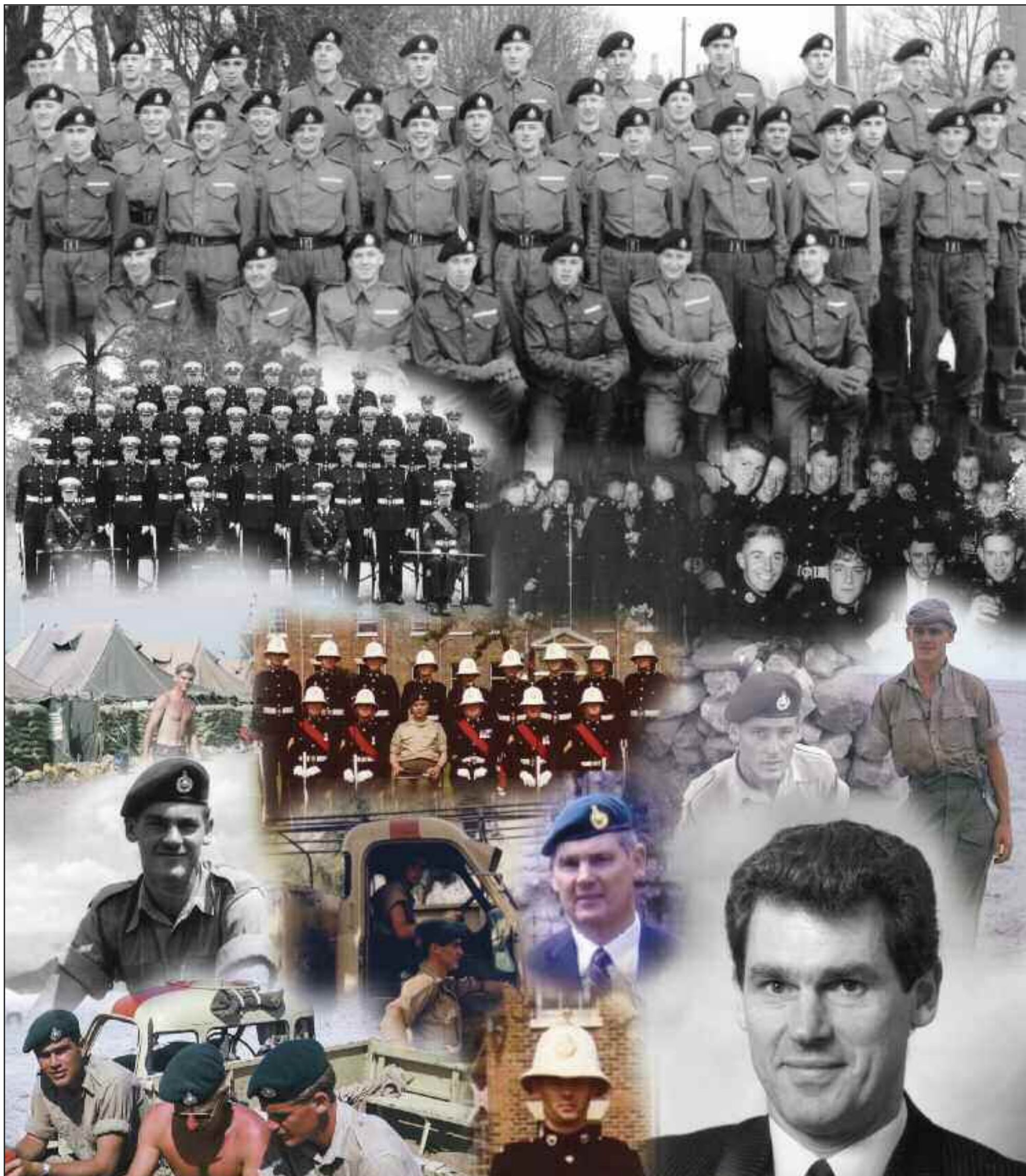
MARCH 2011

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JOHN FROST

Joined Corps in Feb 1953. On completion of recruit training was selected for naval gunnery training (3 different courses) and eventually joined first ship – HMS Newfoundland – a WWII Colony Class Cruiser where we sailed from Pompey, thro’ the Med & Suez Canal to join the 5th Cruiser Sqdn, Far East Fleet for 18 months. Only action throughout was a 24 hour bombardment to keep the terrorists in Malaya awake and many sorties in bars in Singapore, Hong-Kong, Perth, Manila, N Borneo, Japan, Bangkok, Korea and Penang. Returning to UK, further gunnery training at Whale Island and qualified as a First Class Gunnery rate as a Corporal. Drafted to HMS Birmingham for 18 month with Med Fleet then joined newly re-formed 41 Cdo at Bickleigh. Re-qualified as HWI then to 45 Cdo (Aden) for first 12 month tour there. Back to 41 as Troop Sgt of Rifle Troop during which we flew out to take over from 45 Cdo to assist with clearing up the Tanganyikan army’s mutiny. Qualified as Light Helicopter Pilot, commissioned to Lt (SD) and immediately flew out again to Aden to help form 45 Cdo’s brand new Air Troop of 3 pilots and served a second very interesting and rewarding 12 month op tour. After suffering 18 months in an admin job in DPRORM, joined newly-formed 3 Cdo Bde Air Sqdn in Singapore for a 2.5 year tour as Brunei Flt Commander. Highlights of this tour was being able to save the life of a badly injured Ghoorka soldier by carrying out a night deep-jungle casevac, taking my Flt to East Pakistan to assist with the Cyclone disaster (Op BURLAP), and surviving a horrendous crash in W Australia! Returning to UK, retired from the Corps in early 1972. From then until 1994 flew for several helicopter companies in UK and Iran then in 1984 set up and managed for 4.5 years a light heli-op in support of the UNHCR in Pakistan looking after over 3 million Afghan Refugees from the Afghan/Russian War. This involved flying UN staff between some 284 different refugee camps right along the Afghan/Pakistan border from well south of Quetta in Baluchistan right up as far as Chitral in the mountains of the NW Frontier of Pakistan. Retired from active flying in 1994 after surviving two major crashes and totaling in excess of 14,000 flying hours.



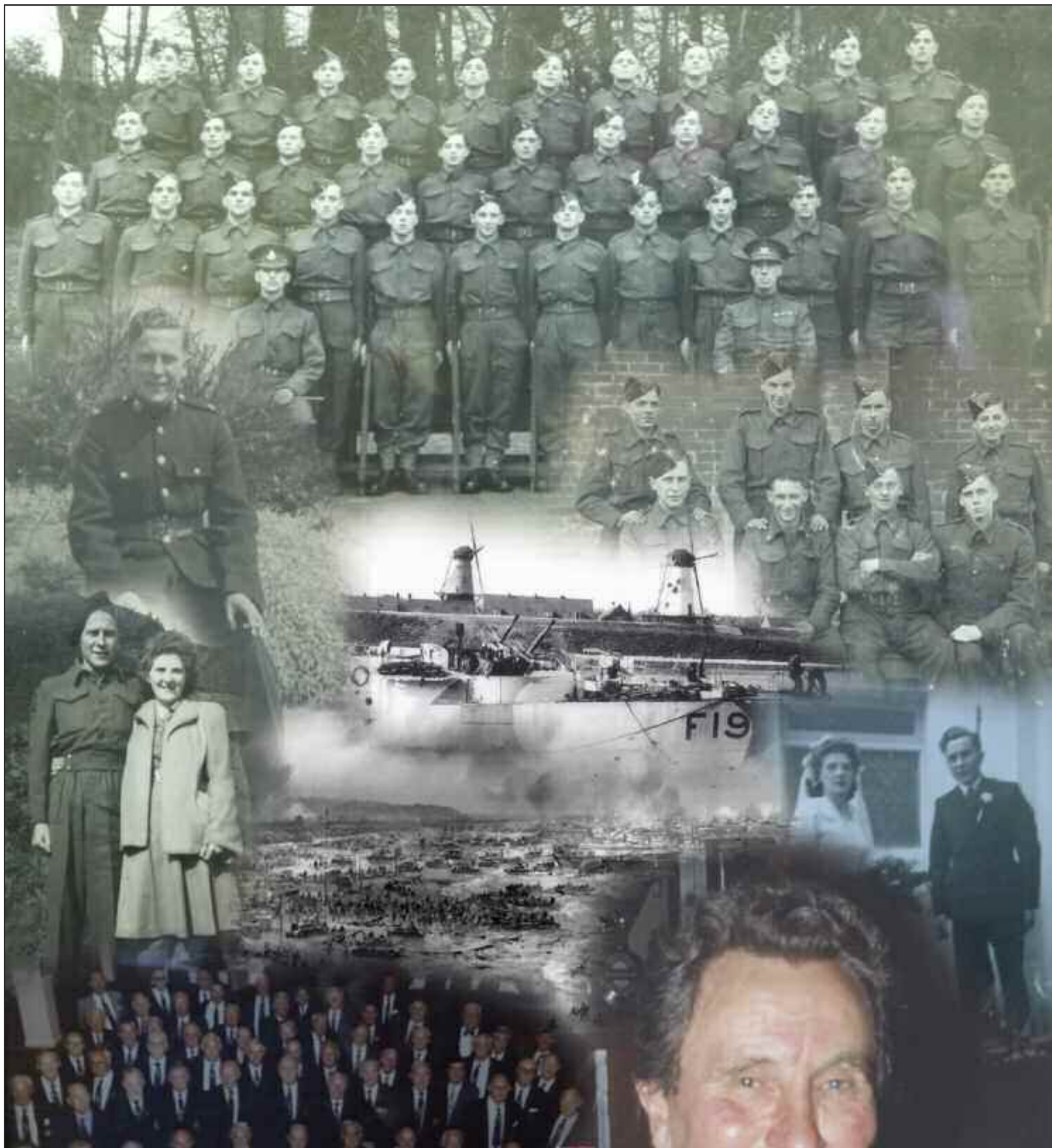
APRIL 2011

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JOHN WALTERS

Joined 792 Squad at Deal during the very cold winter of 1962. (The new barrack room blocks were very warm and comfortable) On completion of training and after a short spell at Eastney, flew to Aden to join 45cdo. On arrival, found no one at home, they'd all gone to Tanganyika to fire blanks at the enemy. Joined the unit in Mombasa harbour and was allocated to "Y" company and given a nice big radio to carry with the instructions to stick to the troop commander "like s**t to a blanket." Sailed back to Aden on HMS Albion and settled into the routine of fighting up country in the Radfan or Internal Security duties in Aden town. Returned to the UK in January 1965 and settled into the Stonehouse Barracks routine with 43cdo. After leaving the Corps, joined RMR Merseyside in 1969, and having qualified as a VM, enjoyed many years as a civilian marine. Tours with the RMR included Cyprus twice, Malta twice, Holland with the Dutch Marines and several courses including a para course in 1975. Left the RMR in 1987.



MAY 2011

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COLIN ELSLEY

A Nantwich lad, I became a Royal Marine a year under age, Hostilities Only volunteer – November 1942. Initial training at RM Depot Lymington and the camp God forgot ITCRM Daulditch – Woodbury Common. Combined Operations Sea Service training at RMB Eastney-Gosport and Hayling Island followed; leading to crewing LC (Flak) 19 on its commission at Troon, Ayrshire – June 1943. On the trip south to Southampton engine trouble forced us into Holyhead, lucky me – that week I met my future wife Elsie. On the 4th June 1944 LC (Flak) 19 joined Support Squadron Eastern Flank, 'Force J' for 'Overlord'. We covered the landing of the Green Howards at Cours and Legrune Sur Mere, firing over open sites at less than 2,000yds. Truly a Day of Days – lucky again - we survived it and the great storm, becoming part of 'Operation Troutline' guarding the Normandy beachhead, 4hrs on 4hrs off for 13 weeks. As part of 'Force T' LC (Flak) 19 took part in Operation Infatuate 1 and 2, Walcheren and South Beveland. The Atom Bomb cancelled our final draft for LC (M) duties in the Far East and we demobbed in June 1946. Elsie and I were married in 1950, raising our family in Holyhead.



JUNE 2011

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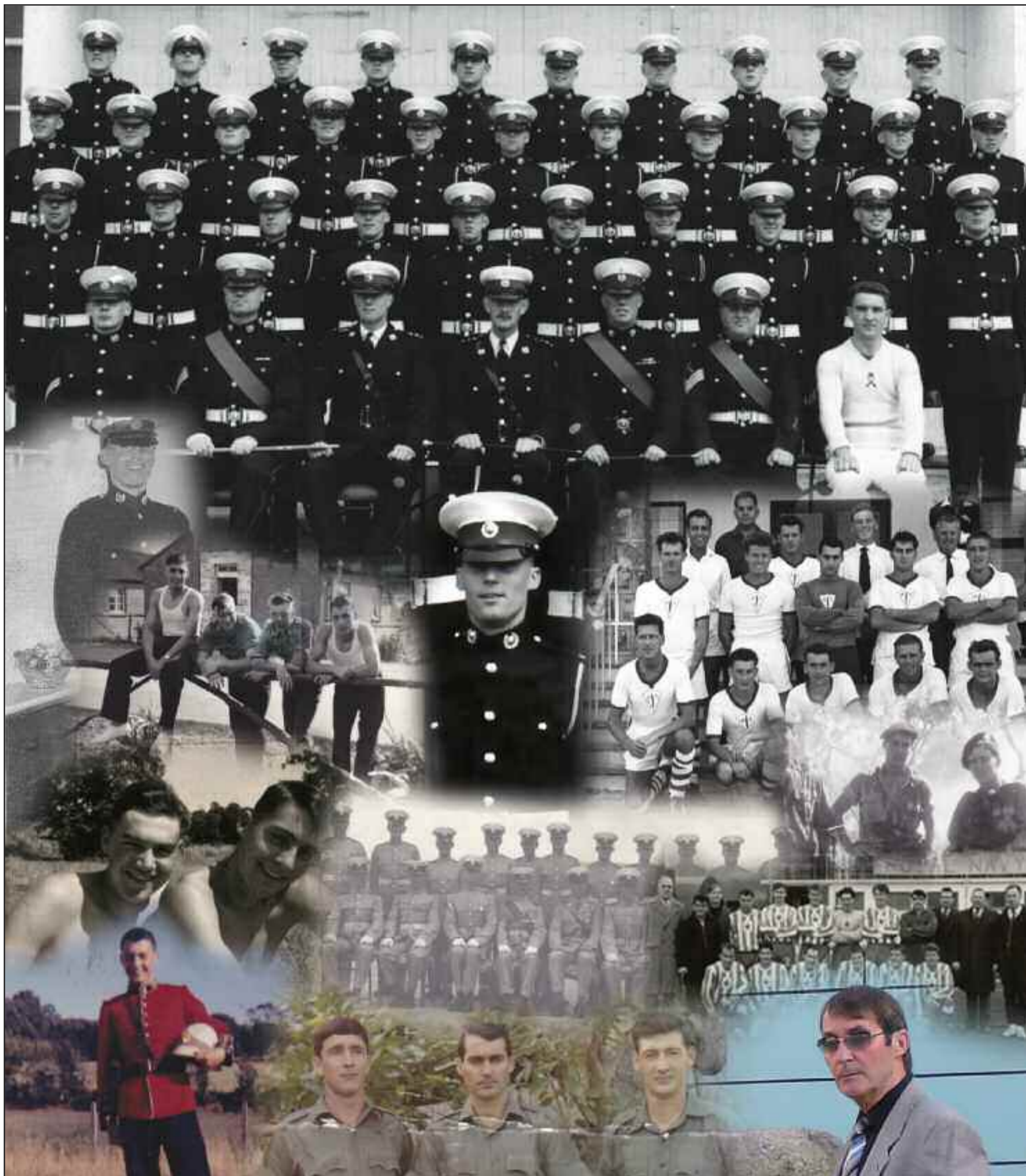
ALLAN G THOMAS

I was called up in April 1946, to report to Lymptone, Devon. Several of us arrived at the same time and walked up that well known pathway from Exton station and passed the assault course which was being used at the time. It was then I began to wonder what have I done. It all resulted in a superb experience which I enjoyed until the last day in the service.

After 12 months, Groups 1 & 2 training, I was sent to Brown-down for another 2 month hectic course, very different but very enjoyable. Only one person on the course received a distinction, his name was Geoffrey Palmer who was in our class who made a big name for himself as an actor in later life "As time Goes By" with Judy Dench.

We arrived back in Lymptone to join the team of training staff. Dartmoor became our second home. Well! more or less. After about 6 months 2 of us were sent down to Deal on the training staff. It was here that I met our brilliant Secretary Phil, who I last saw as a St John's Ambulance Cadet.

After that spell in Deal we were glad to be back at Lymptone and that's where we stayed until demob. I must say it was all a great experience and I shall always be grateful for the opportunity I was given.



JULY 2011

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BILL McKENNA

In December 1960 I joined the Royal Marines Squad 754 at Deal aged 17 years 6 months. Passed out commando training at Lympstone December 1961. Joined HMS Whirlwind to the West Indies just in time for the Cuban crisis. On my return it was back to Deal for a few months. Then joining 41 commando and a trip to Tanganyika. On return a short period with the forming up of 43 commando at Crownhill Barracks. 1964 - 65 was the next move joining 45 commando in Aden, and all the places there one remembers to forget. Back to Deal, then finally in late 1966 joining 42 commando in Singapore, 2 1/2 year commission spent attached to NCO's Training CADRE Neesoon. Finally back to Deal for the end of a mainly, very happy part of my life. In most of these years I was lucky enough to represent The Corps, The Navy and The Combined Services at football. For the next 30 years in the Fire Service, the first 5 at Manchester Airport and the next 25 in the Chemical Industry with Shell.



AUGUST 2011

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KEN HAWKINS

I was born 1st October 1917 and joined the Royal Marines in 1934. After initial training, and completing the 15" Gun course at Chatham, I served on the battleship HMS Ramillies. Within the year I was drafted to the heavy cruiser HMS Cumberland – on the China Station. Besides seeing the delights of pre-war Singapore and Hong Kong the ship witnessed the bombing and the occupation of Shanghai, by the Japanese, 1937. At the outbreak of WWII I was serving on the battleship HMS Resolution. Convoy duties in the North Atlantic, then the Norway action and attacks on the Vichy French Fleet in North Africa, kept us busy. I joined 40 Commando RM ('A' Commando RM) in 1942. We were billeted in Weymouth where I met and married my wife Vera, 69 years ago. Life wasn't all beach landings, speed marches and flanking attacks!! After Dieppe the unit was tasked for the landings in Sicily and then in Italy at Pizzio, Termoli and the Garigliano River. At the Anzio beachhead I was taken prisoner but managed to get away in Germany, late 1945. Five months leave saw me back to the islands of Hong Kong, this time with 44 Commando RM. I finished my time with the Corps in 1948, working for BP until I retired. I am a member of the 40 Commando Association (1942-1946) and the Royal Marines Association, the North Wales Branch.

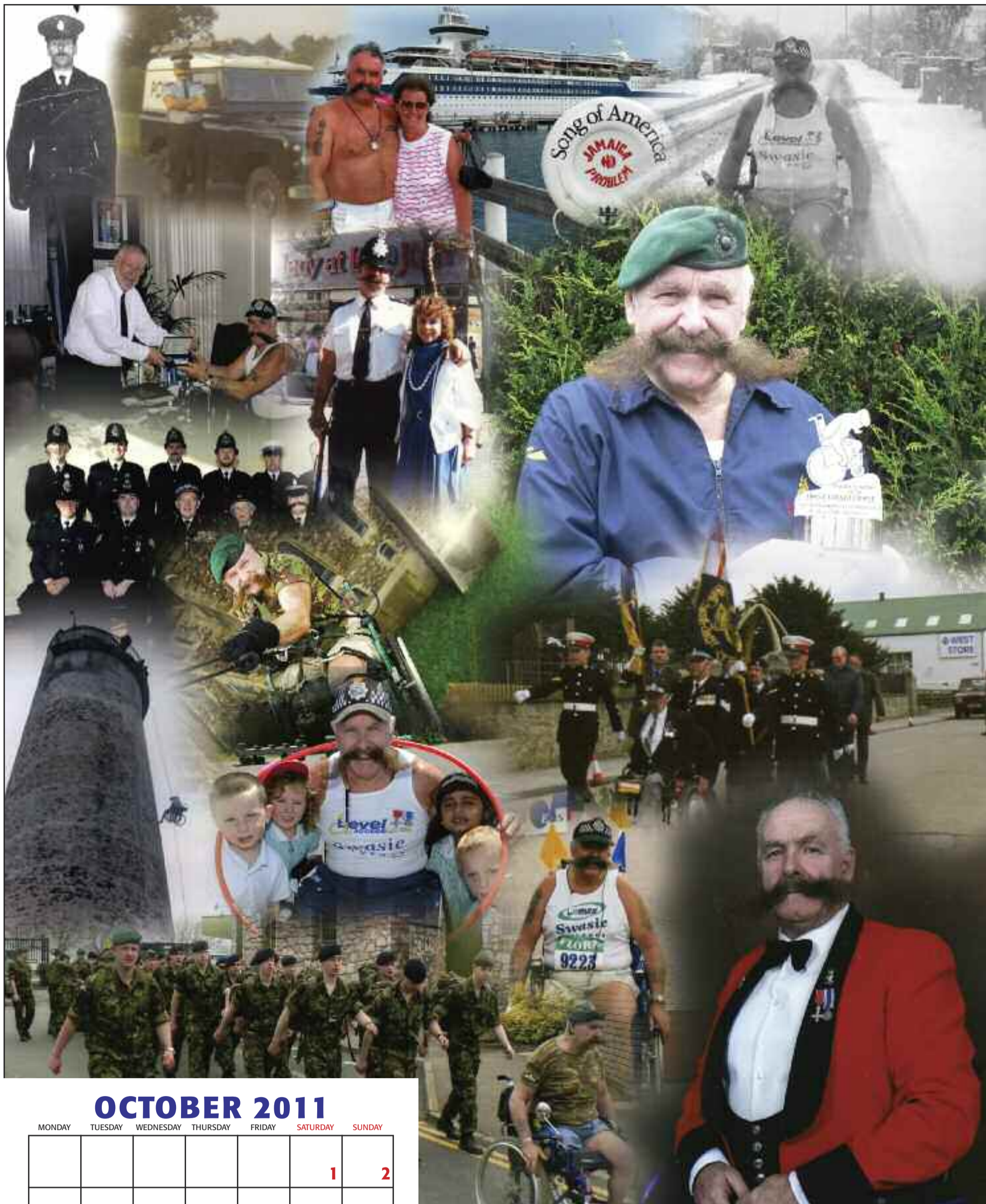


SEPTEMBER 2011

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WILLIAM 'WILL' PARRY

A Harlech lad, I joined the Royal Marines for Hostilities Only at the outbreak of WWII, and after training joined the newly formed 1st MNBDO. The Norway operation was the 'work-up' for the Unit move to Crete. 1st MNBDO came into the sights of the German bombers at Skuda Bay with the skies full of paratroopers and gliders. It was a very confused time and sea taxis were in short supply. With others I managed to evade the German invaders on a slowly sinking Landing Craft for a two week 'cruise' in the Med, followed by 4 months in the sickbay. Back in the UK I undertook Commando training at Achnacarry with a posting to 45 Cdo. My old CO had other ideas and as a SNCO skilled diesel fitter I worked on the amphibious vehicle preparations for D-Day. 5th June saw me seriously injured mid-channel after a 'Matador' broke free on the LC (T), in rough seas. The lads seemed to manage OK though. Ceylon and Burma claimed me next, working with Fleet elements on the Irrawaddy and other things. Before the dropping of 'The Bomb' we were posted to Australia as a leading element liaison force to work with Americans. I am a member of the Royal British Legion and a member of the Royal Marines Association – North Wales. Once a Marine always a Marine.



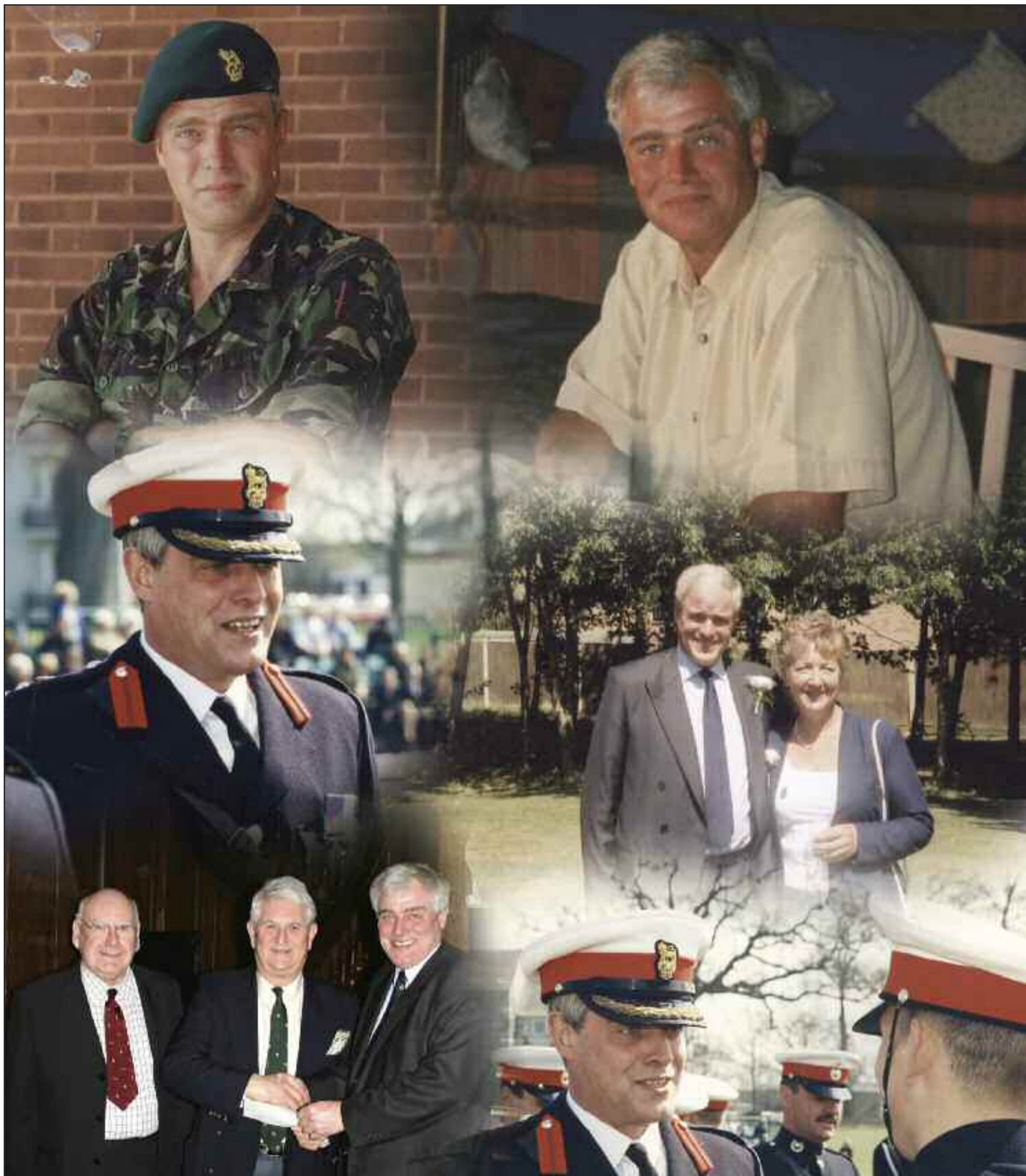
OCTOBER 2011

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SWASIE TURNER MBE

After serving 27 years as a front line cop on the streets of Merseyside, my police career was brought to a premature end due to an act of gratuitous violence whilst on duty. My injuries were such that it was necessary to amputate my right leg high above the knee which resulted in my becoming an NHS wheelchair 'pilot' (a prosthetic limb was unsuccessful). Shortly after my wheelchair confinement my wife and childhood sweetheart succumbed to cancer and passed away when I needed her most. After her death I became an ardent and obsessive fundraiser to assist cancer research. My obsession turned into an obsessive crusade to raise funds for other worthy causes. My fundraising activities included extremely long distance pushes which included John O'Groats to Lands End, in my standard NHS issue, 47 lb chair. My other eccentric means of raising funds included climbing lighthouses, Blackpool Tower, the Isle of Man TT Circuit and retracing 3 Cdo Brigade's 1982 'Yomp' from Port San Carlos to Stanley on East Falkland, to raise a substantial sum for SAMA. My activities became known at CTCRM Lympstone and I was then asked to give an illustrated address to the injured recruits of Hunter Company on 'Overcoming Adversity'. After this, my involvement with Her Majesty's Royal Marines then began in earnest nine years ago. I went on to complete endurance courses with those nearing re-entry into their mainstream training, completed three road 30 milers and indulged in 'Bottom Field', Woodbury and Dartmoor activities on a regular basis. Consequently, as a result of my regular and ongoing involvement with Hunter Coy I was eventually awarded my proudest possession, my honorary 'Green Lid'. Further to this I have also been honoured with the privilege of becoming a member of the RMA. I am fiercely loyal to 'my' North Wales branch and I am now an ardent and active fundraiser for the association. In the eleven years of my wheelchair confinement I have now pushed my chair 36,000 miles worldwide and have recently managed to reach the magic sum of £1 Million. I deem it an extreme honour and privilege to be among such brilliant company as the infamous 'Bootnecks'.



NOVEMBER 2011

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CHARLIE HOBSON

Charlie joined the Corps in 1976 as a University Cadet and promptly failed his degree. So he trained early in 1978 and went to Northern Ireland with 40 Cdo RM for his first tour of duty. After a great year with 40 Cdo RM, serving with one Tim Cahill a North Wales Branch Member, he was appointed as a schools liaison officer for the East of England. During this period he went to the Falklands in 1982 as a Battle Casualty Replacement and managed to be part of Exercise Nutty Pom 1. This exercise was about four mad Royal Marines cycling across Australia and running up the North Island of New Zealand, raising money for Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Charlie eventually specialised in logistics within the Corps and was DCOS of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines in the late nineties and was privileged to be the Commanding Officer of the Commando Logistic Regiment Royal Marines for the Kosovo Tour. Later he was in the Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood for 9/11 and operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and his last appointment was in the Ministry of Defence Main Building. He left early in 2005 to be the Chief Executive of the Royal Marines Association. Charlie is a mad keen sportsman and played cricket for the Combined Services and the Royal Navy for many years. He is married to Trish and they have one daughter and four sons who keep them both well and truly under the thumb.



DECEMBER 2011

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TOM SHARPLEY

I joined the Royal Marines in April 1940, completing my training in December the same year. During this time I met Norman Finch who won a VC on the Zeebrugge Raid on 23 April 1918. I gained my second stripe in February 1941 after initial posting to Gladstone Dock in Liverpool. At 18 years 8 months I was surely one of the youngest Corporals in the Corps, at that time. However In January 1942, I voluntarily reverted to the rank of Marine when posted to operational duties with the 5th Battalion, I felt too young to have men's lives in my hands should we go into action. In May 1942, I responded to a call for 'Special Service' from the Army and Volunteered to join the Commandos. I was posted to No.3 Army Commando - unusual for a Royal Marine! Six weeks weeding out followed at Achnacarry.

In July 1943 the Commandos were being expanded and Royal Marines in Army Commandos were being posted back to newly formed Royal Marine Commandos. However, I was posted back to the newly formed Holding Operational Commando at Hermitage Camp, Wrexham. Holding a pre-war professional boxing licence, having won a Pompey Boxing Competition and passed a Junior Non Commissioned Officers Course, I found myself an Assistant Physical Training Instructor (PTI). This entailed passing both the Army and Royal Marine PTI courses. I soon regained the rank of Corporal and set about helping design the Assault courses and syllabus with all the rigours one would expect from Commando selection and training. Twelve to Fourteen Troops would pass through at a time; mainly Army but some Royal Marine, also sometimes French, Belgian, or other Europeans. Any Officer intakes would be given a particularly difficult time. In 1944 I attended a course in Deal then volunteered to join about 90 other Royal Marines attached to No.41 (RM) Commando for D-Day. We landed in the wrong place, suffered casualties, and ended up in Caen.

After time in Pompey, and my return to Wrexham, I helped prepare replacements for losses in the European War and the Far East. I have many happy 5memories of my time in Wrexham, the surrounding area, and of The Sun Inn at Rhewl. I have been married to Margaret for 52 years and have a daughter Susan and two grand children, James and Katie.

"Soldier an' Sailor Too"

As I was spittin' into the Ditch aboard o' the Crocodile,
I seed a man on a man-o'-war got up in the Reg'lars' style.
'E was scrapin' the paint from off of 'er plates, an' I sez to 'im, "'Oo are you?"
Sez 'e, "I'm a Jolly -- 'Er Majesty's Jolly -- soldier an' sailor too!"
Now 'is work begins by Gawd knows when, and 'is work is never through;
'E isn't one o' the reg'lar Line, nor 'e isn't one of the crew.
'E's a kind of a giddy barumfrodite -- soldier an' sailor too!

An' after I met 'im all over the world, a-doin' all kinds of things,
Like landin' 'isself with a Gatlin' gun to talk to them 'eathen kings;
'E sleeps in an 'ammick instead of a cot, an' 'e drills with the deck on a slew,
An' 'e sweats like a Jolly -- 'Er Majesty's Jolly -- soldier an' sailor too!
For there isn't a job on the top o' the earth the beggar don't know, nor do --
You can leave 'im at night on a bald man's 'ead, to paddle 'is own canoe --
'E's a sort of a bloomin' cosmopolouse -- soldier an' sailor too.

We've fought 'em in trooper, we've fought 'em in dock, and drunk with 'em in between,
When they called us the seasick scull'ry-maids, an' we called 'em the Ass Marines;
But, when we was down for a double fatigue, from Woolwich to Bernardmyo,
We sent for the Jollies -- 'Er Majesty's Jollies -- soldier an' sailor too!
They think for 'emselves, an' they steal for 'emselves, and they never ask what's to do,
But they're camped an' fed an' they're up an' fed before our bugle's blew.
Ho! they ain't no limpin' procrastitutes -- soldier an' sailor too.

You may say we are fond of an 'arness-cut, or 'ootin' in barrick-yards,
Or startin' a Board School mutiny along o' the Onion Guards;
But once in a while we can finish in style for the ends of the earth to view,
The same as the Jollies -- 'Er Majesty's Jollies -- soldier an' sailor too!
They come of our lot, they was brothers to us; they was beggars we'd met an' knew;
Yes, barrin' an inch in the chest an' the arm, they was doubles o' me an' you;
For they weren't no special chrysanthemums -- soldier an' sailor too!

To take your chance in the thick of a rush, with firing all about,
Is nothing so bad when you've cover to 'and, an' leave an' likin' to shout;
But to stand an' be still to the Birken'ead drill is a damn tough bullet to chew,
An' they done it, the Jollies -- 'Er Majesty's Jollies -- soldier an' sailor too!
Their work was done when it 'adn't begun; they was younger nor me an' you;
Their choice it was plain between drownin' in 'eaps an' bein' mopped by the screw,
So they stood an' was still to the Birken'ead drill, soldier an' sailor too!

We're most of us liars, we're 'arf of us thieves, an' the rest are as rank as can be,
But once in a while we can finish in style which I 'ope it won't 'appen to me.
But it makes you think better o' you an' your friends, an' the work you may 'ave to do,
When you think o' the sinkin' Victorier's Jollies -- soldier an' sailor too!
Now there isn't no room for to say ye don't know -- they 'ave proved it plain and true --
That whether it's Widow, or whether it's ship, Victorier's work is to do,
An' they done it, the Jollies -- 'Er Majesty's Jollies -- soldier an' sailor too!

RUDYARD KIPLING

