

S S

COMMANDO

OVERSEAS



2 Commando Overseas

A False start.

Everybody knew we were going overseas. But at least we were going to get seven days embarkation leave before we went, and it was a crowded leave train that pulled out of LYR station on that Friday night. It was to say the least of it rather a blow to be woken up at one o'clock in the morning with the news that the train had been turned about and that we were to return to the sleeping landlords and ladies we had left but four hours earlier.

Six days later, April 13th, 1943 GOUROCK seemed no less dismal than LYR, and it was no real relief to be assembled in an overcrowded hold while the Colonel told us that the Commando was about to spend three months on the Rock of Gibraltar - because everyone knew that the Second Front would open "any day now"!

The Rock.

Gibraltar was enjoying a "Levant" when the DUNOTTAR CASTLE steamed in after an uneventful trip. The main Billet was to be ALAMEDA BARRACKS with its Nissen Huts and the protective screen of cannon which had repelled the French during Rooke's heroic defence in 18;;. There were knowing looks when it was heard that the Officers were to be guests of a Pioneer Company in the appropriately chosen Nunnery. By way of Commando training the only natural amenity offered by the Rock was climbing. An assault course built by the Independent Company, striven over, competed over, and sworn over, seemed the only alternative to the local sport of burrowing and tunnelling or a continuous round of bathing in SANDY/CASHEM BAYS. Later, this monotony was varied by the use of two obsolete LCLs to convey as many men as they could possibly be made to carry on a round trip of the Rock, and to land them on a machine-gun-swept beach for the assault on an imaginary power station. "Exercise Seaweed", as it was dubbed, was immensely popular with its instigators at least. Two unfortunate troops had to repeat it seven times in almost as many days for the benefit of the great and their greater guests.

Sport.

Normal entertainment on the Rock palled all too rapidly. The Football team were knocked out of the Prince of Wales Cup before they got very far. The Commando and Independent Company entered a combined side in the Cricket League, but only came into the limelight when Sgt. Prescott and Pte. Coulthard set up an all-time Rock record for a first wicket stand. Batting against a team of Sappers they scored 150 odd before being separated. Another all-rock victory was gained by the Unit with 100% in the Saluting competition. Water Polo and 6-a-side Hockey were indulged in, but without conspicuous success. Derby day however coincided with Payday, and this was too much for a subaltern inspired by the Sport of Kings. A vast blackboard was erected in one corner of the square, and as the Pay queue dwindled in the other corner the crowd around the "Bookie" grew. Runners and riders with their prices were chalked up by the Troop Sergeant Major, the inspired subaltern took the bets, and the Troop Commander's Batman, remembering his days as a barrow-boy in the East End of London, shouted the odds. The Troop Commander himself had an excellent alibi, and a non-plussed R.S.M. found himself unable to deal with the technical illegalities. Those concerned, on the contrary gained a measure of fame from a notice in the pages of "The Rock".

Vacancies for leave to Spain were all too few, but those who went came back with bulls ears and other parts of bulls, to encourage a practical demonstration in the mess. Sides were taken, the initiated took the floor, and chaos reigned.

"Rock-happiness", a virulent disease, had taken its grip. The "Off-the-Rock Society" was formed, and exercise "Huts!" was the first of their many activities.

In the theatrical world the Commando made its mark upon the Rock with Lt. Frank Mason's very successful production of the first "Green Berets" show, starting a Crazy Gang tradition which was to be followed with similar success elsewhere. For entertainment also a far-seeing Welfare Association produced Vivien Leigh, Ecaterice Lillie and Leslie Henson. The latter, after a dinner at which Lieutenant-Commander Tommy Woodruffe had proved to Col. Jack that the Fleet could be lit up to order is known to his undying shame to have recorded in his diary ".....had an evening with some very tame Commandos"!

The Navy combined with the local defenses to provide a fitting climax to the end of the North African Campaign, in Exercise "Gehenna", when every blunderbuss on the Fortress hurled H.M. into the sky for three minutes, while Winston Churchill sat on the highest Rock to witness the proceedings.

At Last!

Sanity was preserved by the arrival just three months after we had reached the Rock of Lord Louis Mountbatten, who, in a rousing speech, told us that 3 Commando and the two Marine Commands had left something for us to do in Sicily. And with some still firmly believing that this was just a cloak to hide our intended assault on the Coast of France or "The Grapes" in Apr, the PRINCE CHARLES and PRINCESS HELENE took the Commando with what could be packed into a large valise to SYRACUSE, and then late at night to AUGUSTA.

BRUCOLI, where we were destined to stay for most of the Sicilian campaign, brought heat and flies and dysentery, and an initial loathing of the Italian race. The Commando exercises which preceded the SCALETTA operation were distinguished by the Colonel's new invention for hurling arrows into the air (it was made from a Boat tripod) and by his first use of the Mad Minute, practically demonstrated. Neither invention got beyond the training stage, though it would have been good to see them used in battle.

SCALETTA.

The Scaletta operation itself was an anti-climax. To the whole Commando assembled aboard the Prince Charles, Major-General Leese led off with a fearsome pep-talk whose main theme seemed to be that the immediate future might well be 'bicoler than Saint Nazaire'. Lack of information, and the frantic haste of planning and preparation did nothing to lessen the fearful expectancy. And so when the Navy dropped us at the wrong place and at the wrong time, we were pleasantly surprised to be able, after a short mortar engagement, to march triumphantly into MESSINA. A rather hollow success.

SALERNO.

After another period in the orange groves, this time outside Catania, where malaria was added to the distress of dysentery, the Commando was moved across the breadth of Sicily to some more pleasant groves outside PALERMO. Life here was still further improved by the American 5-in-1 ration; and for the first time since coming abroad there were no complaints about the food.

Being attached to the 5th Army however, had its disadvantages, as was agreed when a Negro lorry driver informed a party of men of the exact details of the coming operation at SALERNO. His forecast turned out to be more detailed than our scanty briefing when it came.

With the Rangers, who gave us a grand reception, in two LSI and ourselves in a third, and 41 RM Commando in LCIs we made the sea-passage mostly in daylight. Except for one small air attack it was uneventful. The three Churchills (Col. Jack, Col. Tom and Capt Randolph) were conspicuous by their presence. The last named demonstrated a masterly command of the Italian language in translating a message from General Eisenhower, though it is possible that he might already have seen the English original. Not even he, however, could explain the truth about the Italian surrender announced at 9 p.m. that evening. The guesses were many, and the betting was high.

BATTLE.

The second wave were not unduly surprised to hear that the initial assault had gone in without any opposition on the beaches. But they were rudely shaken by the mortar barrage that met them as they neared the shore in broad daylight. However the primary objectives were taken with comparative ease; though opposition was encountered on the high ground above MARINI, and the I.O. killed by an 88mm, when ordered to threaten Salerno. The Marines were holding the LA MOTINA pass covering the main road into the town, but they had been counter-attacked repeatedly and suffered many casualties. The situation there was precarious and we had been moved over to relieve them when a final and almost successful counter-attack was put in. We were pushed back from the crest of the hill, but managed to dig in on the reverse slope. A barrage was put down ahead of us by a regiment of 25 pounders, a cruiser, and the monitor ROBERTS, and we were able to retake the hill.

The Infantry relieved us in due course and we regrouped in the now captured Salerno town. After a short rest the depleted Commando moved out of the town under mortar fire in M.T. The convoy eventually reached a leafy valley, where the C.O. gave orders for a "beat" in six columns, making as much noise as possible to flush the gunc! No attack on Jericho could have been more successful, because nearly 150 Boche were put in the bag before daybreak, for the loss of one man wounded!

The subsequent attack was not so pleasant, and 1 and 2 Troops were badly mauled (all the Officers and the Sgt Major were casualties in 2 Troop) before being brought within the perimeter of the village of Piccoletto, where the C.O. organised an all-round defence. Two nights later, to the strains of an occasional tune from Mad Jack's pipes; the Commando was finally relieved, and returned to the Salerno beaches. The short period here was notable for an amazing tribute in a speech to the whole unit by Major General McCreery, then commanding 10 Corps.

Re-Org.

An ISI sufficed to carry us back to Sicily, and by stages to Catania. The Brigade was reformed, and rumours were rife. All the prophets proved false, and 3 Commando sailed Blightywards while we were destined for TARANTO. We made TARANTO harbour in the rain, and suffered initiation to the miseries of the Italian State Railways in a freezing journey to MOLFETTA.

From MOLFETTA the first recruiting boards went out, and here later the first cadre courses were formed. Infective Hepatitis or Jaundice spoiled the Christmas festivities for some, but the remainder were able to enjoy the second Green Berets show, and to show Italy the meaning of Whoopie!

The opening weeks of 1944 saw an exodus of two troops at a time to the monastery of San Michele. The area proved a natural Italian Achnacarry, with climbing on the snow-clad slopes of Monte Vulture to remind some of Ben Nevis.

Meanwhile the Commando had been left to the tender mercies of a succession of remarkably similar organizations known in turn by the obviously progressive titles as Forces 133, 266 and 399. For all the veil of secrecy which cloaked their activities, our connection with them was soon to have patent results, and with the New Year cognac still a powerful memory advanced elements of the Commando were whisked away to join a minute recee party under the C.O. on the Island of Vis.

DAIUMETIA.

The Yugoslav partisans gave us a phenomenal welcome. With the Germans barely 12 miles away across the water, and their last remaining Island threatened, there is no doubt that they were glad to see us. Indeed the shots that sang across our bows from riflemen ashore were but indicative of their pleasure. Full street lighting was on; organized parties of men met the ships and formed a guard of honour and conveyed the baggage to billets which had been cleaned by organized parties of women; organized choirs of men and women sang partisan songs while we waited; a brass band struggled with National Anthems and addresses were read from the steps of "Navy House".

The set-up for Commando tactics was ideal. Recce parties and wireless stations on the German-held Islands were maintained almost continuously during the first few weeks. While the rest of the Commando and the first intakes were still in Italy going through the San Michele mill, Colonel Jack led two daring if not typical raids on the Islands of Hvar and Brač. In a raid he had himself planned for 2 Troop Captain Bare was unluckily wounded, and died while being carried back to the boat by the German prisoners he had secured. He was given a funeral with the full military honours of three nations in the British Cemetery where the sailors of George III had been buried years before.

By the end of February the whole Commando was divided between the two small harbours of VIS and KOMIZA and the house on the central plain which Farmer Captain Walker had christened Duck's Plash. Lieutenant B.J. Barton M.C., on his own initiative carried out two very successful small-scale 2-man raids, which earned him the D.S.O. and the nickname, Barton of Brač.

Solta

The first and most fruitful combined operation was planned as an attack on the garrison of the Island of Solta. The Navy were to land the Commando and a detachment of Rangers, with a few Italian 47/52 pack guns and an R.A.F. link set in a small cove on the South side of the island. The whole party was then to cross the Island under cover of darkness and surround the town of GROHOJE, if possible in complete silence. At first light the fighter-bombers were to strafe the town and then the heavy weapons were to pummel it into submission. The raid was an outstanding example of close co-operation of all forces. A remarkable feature was the number of Officers who had spent 24 hours or more with Yugoslav partisans in their hideout on the Island prior to the final briefing, and by reconnaissance close to the enemy positions in daylight had provided a thorough picture of the task in hand. The Navy did the right thing by landing us in the right place at the right time, the RAF established perfect communication and gave us an air-circus exhibition of precision bombing, while FWB rose to the occasion and provided a loud-speaker to call for surrender which actually did work! The presence of Admiral Sir Walter Cowan was an inspiration sufficient in itself to secure the success of the operation. The entire garrison of over 100 was killed or captured, and for two days the Germans on the mainland knew nothing of what had happened. Then they sent over a rowing boat, and finding no Huns they took a couple of unsuspecting females who could only tell them that the English came and the Germans went.

Results.

The German reply came in the form of three air raids on the Island - concentrated but comparatively ineffective as regards material damage done. "Flaps" and threats of seaborne and airborne landings abounded. The Island was fortified and prepared for defence. Parachute divisions and gliders were reported on the coast. Siebel ferries of unimagined proportions became the subject of lurid Intelligence reports.

More sport.

But in the hours of daylight, life continued as normal. The game of Rugby football was introduced to the inhabitants of Dalmatia, who apparently considered it rather a brutal form of sport. Soccer matches were arranged, culminating in the tournament to celebrate May Day. Everything went according to plan with the very painful exception of the fact that the Partisans lost in the final to S.B. Bdc. Further return matches were at once projected, but nothing could compensate them for having lost their game on their ground on their day.

Boarding Parties.

Schooner hunting soon became the rage. The Royal Naval complement included MGBs, MLs and Vospers and under the inspired leadership of Lt. Comd Tom Fuller they carried boarding parties from the Commando on nightly tours between the Islands and the enemy coast. The object was to sink or capture the unsuspecting schooners which by night were bringing supplies to the now beleaguered German garrisons. One of the captured craft contained Danish butter in sufficient quantities to keep Navy House and other places - supplied for at least a month. There was an additional spice of excitement in the occasional brushes with U boats and aircraft which these trips produced.

The ceremony of handing over the first of these schooners to the Partisans was conducted by a visiting Admiral taken completely off his guard. He had to remain rather long at the salute while the flags were being changed, because with both flags at half mast there was a technical hitch only solved eventually by a man who climbed the rigging to release them.

MLJET.

The raid on MLjet will be remembered for many reasons. For the scale on which it was projected (a Solta six times over) for the success with which the landing was effected; for the damage it was to have inflicted on the sizeable garrison; for the enormous amount of sweat and effort expended; for the perfect summer weather and the driving wind and rain; for the grandeur and the superfluity of the mountains; and for the rumour which still persists that someone saw a German. All the same the RSR fired a good many rounds of 75 mm at the un, and the propaganda set broadcasting from the Sea War drew enemy mortar fire from somewhere, the RAF scored near misses on a good many crags, and it was quite nice to be back in Vis.

BRAC II.

Shortly after Mljet the first party of Officers went back to the mainland on a Parachute course at Brindisi; but in the meantime a spot of bother occurred in Yugoslavia. Tito's HQ had been attacked and the Marshal himself nearly captured. A large Partisan force was directly threatened and a diversion somewhere was vital. Appeals were made to the British, and a large scale attack was planned on the German garrison of Brac. Col. Jack was acting Brigadier, and with 40 and 43 Commandos as the spearhead he led the attack. His resulting capture and the death in action of Col. Manners cast a gloom over the whole island. An attempt to rescue Col. Jack proved abortive.

TITO.

It was particularly sad that Col. Jack Churchill was not able to be present at the presentation of the Commando to Marshal Tito. This ceremony, performed at 1030 on June 23 was accompanied by a really full-scale diversion by the 25 pdrs of the 111 Fd Regt and by the 3.7s of the AA Gunners. The Marshal, escorted by an entourage of Tommy Gunners appeared to be entirely in his element. He addressed the Unit, and his speech when translated was found to be duly appreciative and highly complimentary.

V. I. Es.

This was the first of a number of inspections which characterised the closing days on Vis. Brigadier Davey commanding Land Forces Adriatic saw the Commando and gave a hint that they would be seeing more of him. The G.O.C. SS Group paid us a visit inspected the Unit, breakfasted with the Officers, and gave a lecture on Commando activities in France. Admiral Cowan - Commando Cowan - left the Island after inspecting our Guard of honour and receiving our cheers.

Still more Sport.

A demolition course of considerable scope was run on the little neighbouring Island of Bisevo where the Partisans had made a prison Camp for the many Germans who kept rolling in. Football, swimming, soft-ball, basket-ball - all kinds of sport filled the summer days between raids. A 3rd edition of the "Green Berets" ran to 16 performances in various parts of the Island.

SPILJE

But the C.O. had been called to Italy for conferences, and it became evident that we were destined for other fields. After a tremendous farewell party in the Officers Mess, with Partisan bands outdoing each other and suitable interruptions by the Commando piper we at length embarked in LCIs and an ancient Adriatic steamer for Italy. We reached MONOPOLI camp on July 16th, and almost immediately started training with the HLI for operation HEALING II. This operation which was minutely planned with models and photographs and pages of paper was a harassing task designed to destroy the German garrison of HIMARA near the town of SPILJE in Albania. The garrison which was guarding that sector of the main supply route to the south proved a very tough proposition. When we landed on July 29th and formed up under cover of darkness for a dawn attack on their positions they did not seem unduly surprised to see us, and despite the support of heavy naval gunfire and RAF fighter bombers and the guns of the RSR they could only be dislodged by the determined frontal attacks of the Commando and the HLI. Even then they hit back in no uncertain fashion, and the attacks went on all day. In the end the time factor forced us to withdraw, but not before the town of SPILJE had been entered and the German forces so disorganized and depleted that it was a comparatively simple matter for the Partisans to nab the rest next day. Sgt. Webster, Cnr. Pallett and Dvr. John were out off during the battle when the latter was wounded and the force returned without them. Two attempts had been made to bring them out in the week which followed, but no success achieved, when they were evacuated by Force 399 through their Liaison service with the Partisans who had been sheltering them.

Italian Summer

Casualties at Spilje had been fairly high, and the beginning of August saw most of the Commando on leave in Rome and other high-spots. A visit from Col. Charles Vaughan who inspected the unit and told us much about the future, France, England, the present the "Humming Bomb", and ourselves, was a feature of the month. The promotion of Major Fynn to Lt. Colonel, and his confirmation as C.O. was the occasion of a magnificent party in the Grotto at POLIGNANO when most of the Uniform and practically all the fairest of the fair sex in South-Eastern Italy assembled to wine sup and Dance. As incidentals to this operation the local Italian population were shanghaied into such rowing boats as they could find, with their musical talent amongst them, and amid a shower of mortar flares and Verey Lights they sang their way into the Grotto from the sea. A Motor convey on the neighbouring road is reported to have halted for half an hour fearing a fresh invasion. Other "attractions" included a Yugoslav partisan choir, the Pipes, and a succession of Lightsome Reels.

In September the C.O. was married at Saint Augustine's Church in Bari, Padre Banting officiating. A guard of honour outside the church was formed by Troop Commanders and Warrant Officers with Fighting Knives as befitted so important an occasion. But the Commando touch was added by Captain Parsons who had organised a smoke screen belching Verey lights and flares, and a particularly explosive Jeep to convey the couple to the reception. The Jeep didn't make the grade (again by arrangement) and the entry of the "horseless carriage" towed by a second guard of honour and led by the Pipes, provided an excellent start to an excellent party.

SARANDE.

But even while the festivities were going on, planning was proceeding apace. L.F.A. we discovered had quite a bit Staff, and they were certainly not devoid of ideas. Operation after operation was mooted, planned and scrapped, and finally after three false starts began the "fifty-hour operation" of SARANDE.

We arrived at the chosen beach on the ALBANIAN COAST a few miles North of CORFU, to find that our recon party under Capt. Alec Parsons had been attacked by the Germans and nearly put in the bag. To cap this, shortly after daylight it started to rain, and to the troops in K.D. with the lightest possible equipment, who were forced for their own protection to hold positions at about 2000 feet the rain was a decided nuisance. We had been sent over to "harass" the Hun for the necessary period of 24 hours, in lieu of some other specific operation which had to be cancelled. So harass the Hun it was. And for fifteen days we patrolled and strafed and reconed in the craggy mountains and the waterlogged plain, all the time holding the valley in which our beachhead lay by manning positions on the flanking mountains. There was no water on the mountains, nor any food, and even when mules had been provided to do some of the arduous carrying, several of these died under the strain and the men had to take over their loads. Gradually a Brigade Force was built up under Brigadier Churchill, consisting of ourselves and 40 RM Commando, 150 Assyrian Levies, and elements of Royal Artillery and the ESR: and all the time offensive patrolling went on, and most of the time it rained. There were many casualties from exposure in the first few days, and despite the surprisingly good morale quite a few men had not recovered in time for the battle. Rain and the sharp rocks in particular played havoc with men's feet.

However, on the 7th and 8th October we began to move up for an attack on the garrison of Sarande, carrying up the ammunition and stores required over the mountain tracks. At 0245 on October 9th the leading Troops began to advance and by 1015 our final objective, a Battery of captured British 25 pdr guns on a fortress hill, was secured. The Royal Marines in a magnificent battle cleared Sarande, and the job was virtually done.

We withdrew by sea to our original beach, and amid a confusion of orders and counter-orders from Italy the C.O. led a party to CORFU to clean up the Germans who remained. This party received a magnificent welcome from the populace, many of whom spoke English, and the work of reconnaissance was somewhat hindered by the need for Ceremonial and receiving the honours paid. Lt. Eastaugh halted by a crowd in a village had to listen to a speech in modern Greek in which he was assured that his party were "not men but angels, sent from Heaven to protect us."

BIBBETTO

Brigadier Churchill took his leave of the Commando on Oct 16, and the next day we returned to MONOPOLI and another spell of leave. In November, the camp at Monopoli showing signs of reverting to the marsh it must originally have been, we moved to billets in BIBBETTO. Re-organization started in earnest. A speech to the Commando by Major-General R.E. Laycock after he had inspected us seemed to indicate that operations of a different kind were ahead of us. Innumerable courses were laid on, intake troops were recruited and trained, and Christmas Horses, Mules, and the proximity of Bari, were the only things that should have interfered with training.

A New Year

By the beginning of 1945 it was evident that something was afoot. Mountain warfare training in the snow seemed to be the order of the day, and with two troops at a time "battling" in the hills at GRAVINA, and later a 2 day Bde Exercise at Minervino, it seemed logical that our farewell to LFA at the conclusion of this feverish spell should be the prelude to our move to the flat, flat plains of RAVENNA.

Here we came under command of 5 Corps, and arriving on February 18th, went into the line with 12 Lancers on the 21st. After ten days we returned to RAVENNA, were in the line from March 4th to the 11th, and again from the 19th to the 22nd. During these periods there was a good deal of patrolling to be done, and we suffered a number of casualties from shell and mortar fire, and from the vast numbers of mines both own and enemy with which this much contested sector was littered.

The Spit

In the interim between the second and third spells in the line, and in the last week of the month training was carried out at a feverish pace with Pantails and Stormboats, in which new craft it was intended that we should carry out our share of operation "ROAST". This remarkable operation to clear the Germans off the Spit of land between Lake COMACCHIO and the ADRIATIC, and thus secure the right flank for the big attack which was to follow, was carried out by the whole Brigade and won honours for all units taking part. From our own point of view even now there is that about the success of the operation which savours of the miraculous. No brief account can do justice to the story. Let it be said merely that everything that could have gone wrong in the early stages had been foreseen and provided for; all those things did go wrong, and the snags had to be overcome by independent or concerted effort; as, for example, the little detail of having to walk half the way knee deep in soft mud and waist deep in water. We reached the beaches six hours late, without our anti-tank guns without our reserve ammunition, with a minimum of medical supplies. The initial assault was done by a Troop and Commando HQ together, the only flights able to reach the right place by daylight. Instead of one troop as had been arranged, two and a half troops had to land on 9 Commando's beachhead, leaving a very depleted force to take the main objectives. Yet within four hours of landing these objectives had been secured by whirlwind tactics, and the troops with 9 had fought their way through from the south to join us.

When, on the evening of the third day after landing, the Brigade, having carried out its task of clearing the Spit, was relieved by 24 Guards Brigade, we had accounted for about 250 Germans in wounded and P.W. alone, and had secured large quantities of guns and equipment.

The battle of the Dykes.

After a few days rest we were moved up with 43 RM Commando and Bde HQ to the town of CONSELLICCI, from where we were destined to carry out our last action in Italy. This was briefly the task of making good the left flank of the thrust through the Argenta gap, by the not-so-simple expedient of fighting our way up the four dykes which contain the river RENO and the canals which run immediately alongside it. To the left a large stretch of floodland robbed us of the power of manoeuvre and immediately to the right was our boundary with the main effort.

The principal snag was the difficulty of lateral communication. There was no information as to which of the four dykes held the main strength of the enemy, and once a part of our force was committed to one of the dykes as a line of advance it was virtually on its own. To reinforce against opposition encountered or to exploit success on a particular dyke was a slow business. Troops were decidedly under strength after the days in the line and the matter of the Spit, and until the capture of a heavily defended lateral bridge improved communications, individual troops must have found it a decidedly chancy business.

The supply problem too was acute; finally a jeep-track was made by the simple expedient of driving through the undergrowth, but much of the difficulty still remained. And the better the results of the fighting, the worse was the problem of supply.

Finally, after a very sticky period in which troops had to hold on to their gains in face of heavy fire and attempted counter-attacks, 43 Commando broke through with the tanks, and almost at once we were leap-frogged through again to take up the chase.

Short of MOLINELLI, when the situation on our flanks was entirely obscure, and the German situation obviously chaotic, we were halted for a couple of days during which we patrolled in all directions, taking prisoners and drinking pre-war Vermont dug out of hiding for the occasion by the Italian Partisans.

The end

We were taken back to RAVENNA for a rest, and immediately re-organised into three troops and a Recce section to meet the commitments which were designed to follow. Then, amid talk of further special training for the crossing of the PO, on a sudden we found the PO was crossed, and the end in Italy had come.

April 13th 1943 - May 8th 1945 ; Gourock - Ravenna.

Brigadier, what now ?

DECORATIONS and AWARDS

BAR TO D.S.O.

Lt. Col. J.M.E.F. CHURCHILL. M.C. D.S.O.

D.S.O.

Lt. Col. J.M.E.F. CHURCHILL. M.C.

Lt. B.J. BARTON. M.C.

BAR TO M.C.

Capt. H.H. WEBB. M.C.

M.C.

Capt. J.P.L. HENDERSON.

Lt. G.L. PARSONS.

Capt. R.H. HOOVER.

Capt. L.L. MacCALLUM.

Capt. M.W. STILLWELL.

Capt. D.R. PETERS.

Capt. L.F. McWILLIAMS. R.A.M.C.

Capt. R.W. KEEF.

Capt. J.E.C. NICHOLL.

Capt. G.F. WHITEFIELD.

D.C.M.

Sgt. RUDGE. W.F.

Sgt. ELLWOOD. W.

Dvr. HAUSMAN.

C.S.M. MORLAND. P.D.

C.S.M. HUTTON. G.F.

Cpl. JACKSON. J.

M.M.

Sgt. O'BRIEN. R. D.C.M.

Cpl. PLACHEY. F.

Cpl. HUMBLE. W.

Cpl. SIMISTER. C.A.

L/Cpl. WEBB. J.

Sgt. WHITE. J.E.

Sgt. MYRAM. A.E.

L/Bdr GEESEY. J.W.

L/Bdr MULLOCH. T.J.

Cpl. A'CHOR. J.

L/Sgt ROGERS. J.G.

Dvr DRANSFIELD. G.D.

L/Cpl. HOWARD. G.

L/Sgt. SMITH. T.

Sgt. PERKINS. I.

Rfn. GILL. R.

Pte HENDRY. B.J.

Fus. GRAY. A.

Cnr. CLARK. J.

C.S.M. TOMLINSON.

Fus. COOPER. D.

M.I.D.

C.S.M. G.F. HUTTON. D.C.M.

Pte KIRTON. E.

Sgt. SMALLBONE. N.

Sgt. BARNES. W.

L/Sgt. MURPHY. L.

Sgt. I. PERKINS. M.M.

Capt. MacCALLUM. L.E.

CASUALTIES.

Operation.	<u>OFFICERS.</u>			<u>O.Rs.</u>		
	Killed.	Missing.	Wounded.	Killed.	Missing.	Wounded.
SCALFARIA- MESSINA.	1	-	2	5	-	14
SALERNO.	7	-	4	26	9	110
DALMATIA.	2	1	6	2	14	33
SPILEJE	-	-	4	6	1	47
SARANDE	3	-	3	3	-	25
LINE DUTIES.	1	-	3	10	3	28
COMMACHIO	-	-	1	3	-	25
ARGENTA GAP.	-	-	3	4	-	26
TOTAL	14	1	26	57	27	308

Total Officers : 41.

Total ORs : 392.

Embarked with unit 13 Apr 43 and remaining with unit until V.E. Day 1945 :

3 Officers, 161 ORs.