

SPECIAL BOAT SECTION MEMORANDUM
FORMATION TO FEBRUARY 1944.

Authority was given for the formation of a Special Boat Section (Home) on 2 APRIL 42.

Major R.J. Courtney, M.C. was selected to command this Section.

The Unit was originally intended as a feeder for overseas S.B.S. who were under the command of Flag Officers (Submarines) in various parts of the world.

The functions of the unit were to operate canoes from other craft - i.e. M.T.B's. or Submarines for the destruction of shipping, recce. of beaches, sabotage of shore installations and communications, supply of navigational aids to the landing forces.

The Home Establishment consisted of 47 All Ranks, which was subdivided into 4 Operational Groups and a Section H.Q. Each Operational Group had one Captain, one Subaltern, two Sergeants and two Corporals. These Operational Groups were easily detachable.

At S.B.S. H.Q. there was the C.O., a Captain as 2 i/c., Chief Instructor, and three Subalterns, the C.S.M., three Sergeants (these would also act as reinforcements for the Operational Groups if necessary) and the Administrative Officer, O/R. Sergeant and their staffs, Q., A. and M.T.

The Unit began to form at Ardrossay/Saltcoates, Ayrshire, Scotland, on 2 APRIL 42 under the guidance of Headquarters, Special Service Brigade. It was intended to be Mobilized on 7 MAY 42, this date was, however, put back until 30 MAY 42.

This Section was destined to be No.2 Special Boat Section and at the beginning consisted of a great part of No.101 Troop (which was the Folbot Section of No.6 Commando) until Major R.J. Courtney took over, was under the command of Capt. G.C.S. Montanaro, D.S.O. The personnel considered suitable were absorbed into No.2 Special Boat Section under the command of Major R.J. Courtney, M.C.

No.2 Special Boat Section carried out arduous training under the Chief Instructor at Ardrossay/Saltcoates. The Section after three months was ready for operations, and in consequence moved to Titchfield in September, 1942.

The following paragraphs are short notes on each officer who served with No.2 Special Boat Section.

In April, 1942, 2/Lt. P.A. Ayton joined and after two years service was promoted Captain. He was killed on 26 DEC 43 whilst taking part in a surface craft raid on the Island of Sark.

On 29 April, 1943, 2/Lt. J.P. Foot joined us and subsequently took part in the landings in North Africa with General Clark (U.S.A.). He has received the M.B.E. and Africa Star and is at present serving as a Captain in No.2 Special Boat Section.

Lt. K.S. Kerr joined on 27 April, 1942, and operated on H.M.S. "Titanic". He was sunk in a submarine under the command of Cdr. Caley about January, 43.

Lt. D.S. Bidders arrived in April, 1942. After one year's service became a Captain. As since gone abroad to S.A.C.S.B.A. in command of 'B' Special Boat Group as a Major.

Lt. R.P. Livingstone joined us on 5 May, 1942 from No.6 Commando, was promoted Captain and took part in several operations, notably the early landings in North Africa. Has received the M.B.E., a Mention in Despatches, and Africa Star. Was Chief Instructor of the S.B.S. and is now 2 i/c.

2/Lt. H.V. Holden-White arrived from The Royal Sussex Regt. in April, 42 and is now a Captain serving with 'A' Special Boat Group in S.E. Asia. Took part in Gran Harbour operation.

2/Lt. P.S. Snee arrived from the Royal Artillery on 10 May, 42. Served on H.M.S. "Titanic" and took part in the Sark Raid, December 43.

Lt. B.N. Richard arrived on 21 May, 42 from I.S.R.B. Formed C.O.F.P. introducing them to canoeing, and now holds the appointment of Chief Instructor to No.2 S.B.S.

Capt. R. Wilson, D.S.O. disembarked in the U.K. on 8 MAY 42 from the Malta Detachment of S.B.S., which he was in command. He was taken prisoner in a raid on a harbour on the Italian Coast, 22 September, 42, operating from the Home Base.

Lt. G.B. Courtney was posted in April as Admin. Officer. He went on to the operational side and took part in several operations in the Mediterranean theatre. Has since formed 'Z' S.B.S. and is now a Major in command with the M.B.E., M.C., Palestine Medal and Africa Star. Has gone to S.A.C.S.E.A. by air in command of 'Z' S.B.S.

Lt. S.B. Durnford was posted from No.6 Commando on 20 June, 42. and is now awaiting transfer to the Navy in Mobile Flotation Unit.

Capt. G.C.S. Montanara, D.S.O., R.N. fulfilled the duties of Chief Instructor in the early days until detached to command Mobile Flotation Unit, was granted commission as Lt-Cdr. R.N. and left the S.B.S.

2/Lt. J.C.C. Pagnan arrived 2 August, 42. Took part in operation at Oran. Assumed duties as Administrative Officer at Headquarters, December 42. Promoted Captain and has since joined H.Q. S.S. Group as Staff Captain, Liaison, November, 43.

2/Lt. Iann came, after completing a Battle Course, from Commando Depot on 24 September, 42. Took part in several operations - notably Oran Harbour. Joined S.B.S. in Mediterranean, promoted Captain and has now flown to S.A.C.S.E.A. with 'Z' S.B.S.

About the period September, 42, several officers were attached to this Unit for courses from 1st Bombardment Unit, R.A. which was then part of "Expeditionary Force" later to become 1st. Army, amongst them were Capt. Pate, Capt. Langston, Capt. Davidson.

2/Lt. Van Houten from R.A. (A/Tr) served with the Unit for a short while and returned to his parent unit on 12 November, 42.

2/Lt. McFlair, an ex-Sgt. in the S.B.S., was posted to us from a Short C.O.F.U. Course in November, 42. Took part in several operations as an officer. Is now in 'Z' S.B.S. as a Captain.

2/Lt. H.G. Kennard was posted from No.12 Commando. Has since joined 'Z' S.B.S. and is now a Captain after two years service with No.2 S.B.S.

Some officers from the Royal Canadian Engineers came down for a Polbot course on 23 December, 42.

Some Submarine Officers, R.N. underwent a few short Polbot courses given by No.2 S.B.S.

More Officers from 1st Bombardment Unit, R.A. came for courses in January, 42. Some of the former officers who had been with us returned for a more intensive hand course.

Lt. Colville and Lt. W.G. Davis were attached in January, 43 from No.62 Commando to which we were attached about this time. Lt. Colville ruptured himself badly in training and has undergone two operations, is now 'Y' Listed. Lt. W.G. Davis is at present on H.M.S. "Midstone" and joining 'Z' S.B.S. in S.E. Asia.

2/Lt. W.W. Armstrong arrives from Recce. Corps to fulfill Navigational Officer's appointment, April 43. Ex. No.9 Commando, holds Mate's Ticket and has held the appointment of 2nd.Mate.

Capt. R. Davy, R.A.S.C., after completing a Battle Course at Commando Depot, arrived in March, 1943. Now holds Technical Officer's appointment in H.Q. No.2 S.B.S. Carried out several experiments with Wellmen and Welfreighter.

Major M.E.B. Kealy arrived back in the U.K. on 28 July, 43. Was in command of No.1 S.B.S. Middle East, after the departure of Major R.J. Courtney, M.C. Was senior officer in command of 'A' & 'B' Special Boat Groups when they formed under this Unit (No.2 S.B.S) guidance and has embarked for S.A.C.S.E.A. with them as S.M.O. on 10 Jan. 44.

Lt. Peters came from Commando Depot on 23 July, 42, is now in 'B' Group, S.A.C.S.E.A.

Lt. Stobie served with S.B.S. from October, 43 until joining S.A.S. in December, 43.

Lt. H.S. Quigley, ex O/R Sgt. of No.2 S.B.S. at Ardrossan joins as Administrative Officer after a year of absence and completing a course at Commando Depot.

2/Lt. Barnes, M.M. (Bar) commissioned on 6 December, 43. Was ex-C.S.M. to the Unit - now abroad with 'A' Group.

2/Lt. J.B. Sherwood (MM) - ex-Sgt. from Middle East, is granted directed commission in S.B.S. on 6 December, 43.

2/Lt. Wesley - ex-Opl. S.B.S. commissioned on 6 December, 43 within the Section. Proceeded overseas to S.A.C.S.E.A.

The foregoing completes a few short notes on each officer who has served or is serving with Special Boat Section.

Here are a few notes on Other Ranks who have served with the S.B.S.

C.S.M. Rubelin, R.E. Original C.S.M. to No.2 S.B.S. Was killed taking part in Oran Harbour Operation, a very great loss to the Section. Ex-101 Troop and a regular soldier.

C.S.M. Weatherall was a 1/Sgt. in 101 Troop of No.6 Commando. Was abroad in No.2 S.B.S. Has carried out operations with Capt. Livingstone, M.B.E. has a Mention in Despatches and is now Operational C.S.M. at No.2 S.B.S., regular soldier.

C.S.M. Galloway was a Sgt. in 101 Troop, now in '2' S.B.S. on H.M.S. "Maidstone" making his way to S.A.C.S.E.A.

C.S.M. Jones from No.12 Commando. Originally intended to go to S.A.C.S.E.A. with 'A' and 'B' Groups, now at H.Q., No.2 S.B.S. as C.S.M., a regular soldier.

Sgt. Preece received D.C.M. for operation in Boulogne Harbour where he and Capt. Montanaro, D.S.O. blew up shipping. Served for a period in M.P.U. now out with '2' S.B.S.

Sgt. Ellis - a parachutist, ex-101 Troop, several recess. channel coast, took a prominent part in Oran Harbour Raid. Has been with Section since formation.

Sgt. Sidlow - ex-101 Troop, now '2' S.B.S. In Oran Harbour Raid and has been with Section since formation.

Sgt. Gilmour - has done considerable work with the Navy mostly in the Mediterranean. A parachutist, now with '2' S.B.S.

Cpl. Evans - Ex-No.6 Commando - paddled a canoe with Sgt. Ellis practically to Dover from the French Coast after missing the M.T.B. Returned to No.6 Commando in June, 42.

Pte (ex-Opl) Wheeler. Now unfit because of feet - ex-101 Troop attached to M.F.U. for 18 months. Been with us since formation and is now a Driver at H.Q.

Sgt. Hutchison - with the late Capt. P.A. Ayton guided approx. 5000 men to a safe landing beach near Oran. Ex-101 Troop and has been with section since formation.

Sgt. Salisbury - Ex-No.6 Commando. Now A/C.S.M. to 'B' Group out at S.A.C.S.E.A.

Pte. Miller came from No.6 Commando, served the whole period with 101 Troop but was temperamentally unsuitable and returned in June, 42.

Sgt. Bates - another original member of the S.B.S., has taken part in Sark and Oran Raids.

Sgt. Elwett - Ex-101 Troop, been with Section since formation, was at Oran Harbour and was with 'Z' S.B.S. when they formed in Mediterranean. Has done some submarine patrols and is now at H.Q. No.2 S.B.S.

Sgt. Thompson won an M.M. in the Mediterranean. Now with 'Z' S.B.S. Was Major G.E. Courtney's partner.

Sgt. Hawkins, from Intelligence Corps, a parachutist, served with M.F.U., born in France, now A/C.S.M. to 'A' Group.

Opl. Loasby taken prisoner at Pantelleria whilst doing a beach recon. Came from 1st Police Intake.

Pte. Massey - 2nd Police Intake - trained with us for a short period but transferred to C.M.P. (S.I.B.).

Opl. Roberts - a parachutist, ex-Policeman, took part in Sark Raid, December, 43.

Pte (Ex-Opl.) Wright, operations at Oran - 1st Police Intake, now on Admin. Staff at S.B.S. Headquarters.

Opl. Hart - came to the Unit as a civilian but did not marry into the Unit affairs, and returned to parent Regt. at own request.

Pte. Watson - joined the Unit as a civilian, stayed for 3 months and returned to Parent Regt.

Sgt. Penn - Sgt. Smith. Ex-No.2 Commando, came from No.1 S.B.S. Middle East. Several ops. to their credit.

Sgt. Booth - ex-No.8 Commando and No.1 S.B.S. Received D.C.M. for virtually saving a submarine with a Bren Gun by wiping out the guns crew of an Italian Ship.

Opl. Diddcott, Royal Marines - volunteered from the R.M. (Special Service). Several ops. with No.1 S.B.S., now serving at H.Q. No.2 S.B.S.

Pte. Williams - ex-No.1 Commando. Served in North Africa from the first landings. Now in the 'Q' Dept. at Headquarters.

I/Opl. Horner - ex-No.1 Commando. Was in Norway with Independent Troops, in first landings in North Africa and now serving in 'Q' Dept. H.Q.

Opl. Smithson-Opl. Somers - two parachutists and ex-No.4 Commando. In Dieppe Raid and now in No.2 S.B.S.

Opl. Hook, ex-No.4 Commando now serving with 'B' Group, SBS. in East Asia.

Pte. Darlington, ex-No.12 Commando. Received M.M., stayed with us for three months.

Sgt. Parks joined us August, 43. Reported missing in S.B.S. raid on Sark, December, 43.

Cpl. Carver, Ex-No. 8 Commando was Boating N.C.O. at Commando Depot before coming to H.Q. No. 2 S.B.S.

Sgt. Austin - O/R. Sgt. to the Unit. Has been with No. 2 S.B.S. since its formation.

Cpl. Gain - an original No. 2 Office Clerk. Now Admin. Cpl. to 'A' Group.

Cpl. Toogood - Ex-No. 12 Commando now O/R. Cpl. at H.Q. No. 2 S.B.S.

Pte. Boyes - Ex-No. 12 Commando now office clerk at No. 2.

Cpl. Swain - has been with Unit since formation, came from the R.E. Now N.C.O. i/c Transport at Headquarters.

Ptes. McKenzie, Miles, Lovell, all drivers i/c and have been with Unit since formation.

The above concludes the description but there have been many operations on which some of these officers and Other Ranks have been on and they are not mentioned. To include them all, would make too lengthy a description and possibly, perhaps, the minor ones would make rather uninteresting reading.

There are many other personnel who have been absorbed into 'A' and 'B' Groups but have not made a name for themselves operationally. They have carried out the usual arduous course and are at present abroad in S.E. Asia.

There are also at least 100 Officers and men who have passed through here at various times on courses and are too many and too varied to be mentioned individually.

The more recent activities of the Unit was to form 'A' and 'B' Groups under Major Kealy as Senior Military Officer with the following Officers serving within the War Establishment :-

'A' GROUP

Major M.R.B. Kealy.
Capt. H.V. Holden-White.
Lieut. G. Barnes. RM.

'B' GROUP.

Major D.S. Sidders.
Lieut. Peters.
2/Lt. E. Wesley.

They formed under this H.Q. guidance, we mobilized them and sent them abroad on 10 JAN 44.

'Z' S.B.S. was mobilized ~~for~~ abroad soon afterwards and departed by air. The personnel were (Officers)

Major G.B. Courtney, M.B.E., M.C. S.M.O.
Capt. E.J. Lunn.
Capt. A.R. McClair.
Capt. N.C. Kennard.
Capt. W.G. Davis.

The Headquarters of Special Boat Section now consists of the following officers with a Headquarters Staff, Q. and M.T. and an operational group with some reserves.

HEADQUARTERS, NO.2 SPECIAL BOAT SECTION.

Commanding Officers.
2nd. in Command.
Chief Instructor.
Technical Officer.
Navigational Officer.
Administrative Officer.

Major R.J. Courtney. M.C.
Capt. R.P. Livingstone, M.B.E.
Capt. B.N. Eckhard.
Capt. R. Davy.
Lieut. W.W. Armstrong.
Lieut. H.S. Quigley.

Operational Officers.

Capt. J.P. Foot. M.B.E.
Lieut. D.S. Snee.
Lieut. J.E. Sherwood. M.M.
Lieut. J.F. Rodney.

The above concludes a swift survey of our functions, a brief description of all personnel and the Appendix 'A' by Capt. R.P. Livingstone, M.B.E. gives an outline of the Special Craft, Rations and Equipment used by Special Boat Section.

Appendix 'B' is a short history of No.1 and No.2 Special Boat Sections from July, 1940 to February, 1944.

Henry S Quigley

c/o G.P.O.,
FAREHAM.
FEBRUARY, 1944.

.....Lieut.
Admin. Officer, No.2 Special Boat Section.

SPECIAL CRAFT AND STORES.

USED BY NO.2 S.B.S.

The craft normally used by this Unit are :-

1. The Mk.1+ Canoe. This is a Kayak-type canoe with a rubber skin on a collapsable wooden framework 16'4" long by 30" beam, and carrying two men. We also use a few old Mk.1's, some Mk.1++ and some Silver Kings, all of which are similar but vary slightly in detail. Total weight carried 480 lbs.
2. The Mk.111 Canoe. Similar to the above but built of plywood. Its dimensions are 18' x 29". On account of its narrow beam, which was specified to allow its passage through the torpedo-hatch of a submarine, it is fitted with adjustable catamarans. The Mk.111+ and Mk.111++ differ in having moulded hulls, and the latter is made in three detachable sections. The Mk.111 was designed to supplement rather than to replace the Mk.1. It is a rough-water boat, and will carry upwards of 700 lbs. including crew. It also has a mast and sail, which it is intended shall be used for long journeys of escape.
3. 18' Motor Dory. The standard type used throughout Combined Operations Command.
4. Fighter Dinghies (R.A.F. Type) are carried on a scale of one per man in canoe operations where it seems desirable.
5. Inflatable Craft (Inflatable Intruders, 2-boats, Ranger Boats) have been made use of on some operations for carrying stores ashore, but are not normally used.

The equipment of a canoe normally consists of :-

Fighter Dinghies - 2.
Torches, hand signalling - 1.
Very Pistols - 1. (and/or smoke floats or flares)
R/T Sets, walky-talky - 1. (American type).
Compasses (R.A.F.) P.8 - 1. (with board and compensator).

This is over and above paddles, air-bags, painters and bailers. R/G. (infra-red) transmitter and receivers have been used for "homing" to parent craft.

Weapons.

Weapons hitherto used have been T.S.M.G., Sten, Pistol (Luger 9 m.m. and Colt .45 automatic), Knives F.S.

Clothing.

Mac West or Tropical suit is always worn. Other clothing is at the discretion of Force Commanders for individual operations. Soulier Vibron Boots are often used on operations.

Food.

The 24-hour emergency escape ration. Specialist stores for demolitions, cliff-climbing etc. are the same as for other units engaged in these types of work.