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BEACH COMMANDO MONTHLY MEMORANDA.

SECRET.

15th August, 1943.

22. Loss of Naval Identity Cards (Officers) and S.43's (Officers and Ratings). R.A.L.B. Temporary Memorandum No. 152.

- (a) It is important that the losses of all Naval Identity Cards (Officers) and S.43's (Officers and Ratings) be reported to the Secretary of the Admiralty (for Director of Naval Intelligence), and the fullest enquiries made from all sources where the document is believed to have been lost.
- (b) In view of the fact that H.M.S. QUEBEC and H.M.S. DINOSAUR are the accounting bases for all Combined Operations personnel, replacements of S.43's only must of necessity be made from these establishments. To facilitate the prompt replacement of these documents, a copy of the report to Director of Naval Intelligence should always be forwarded to H.M.S. QUEBEC or H.M.S. DINOSAUR as applicable, who will take the necessary action to issue a new S.43A after a brief period of time has elapsed from date of loss. This is in case recovery has been effected.
- (c) When reporting losses of S.43's the fullest description possible should be given and the decision of the Investigating Officer as to whether the loss was due to accident or neglect must be stated. Disciplinary action should always be taken where neglect is proved.
- (d) Commanding Officers of ships and establishments should bring this order to the notice of all Flotilla Officers under their command and should ensure that these losses are correctly reported.
- (e) Admiralty Fleet Orders 4611/41 and 5615/41 refer.
- (f) For losses of Naval Identity Cards (Officers) Admiralty Fleet Orders 3683/40 and 4723/42 refer.



23. B.C.M.M's Circulation. Owing to the difficulty in obtaining supplies of stationery, it is not possible to send a copy of each B.C.M.M. to every officer in the organisation. B.Mr's are requested, therefore, to ensure that their copies are passed to all A.B.Mr's for information.

24. Pay - C.O. Ratings (Combined Operations Temporary Memorandum No. 36)

Special steps are to be taken at all C.O. Bases to call the attention of Flotilla and other C.O. officers who are responsible for paying C.O. ratings, to the importance of ensuring that the printed paybook alteration forms issued by "QUEBEC" and "DINOSAUR" are correctly dealt with. If the men's pay is to be kept properly up to date it is essential that the lower half of the form be stuck in the paybook and the top half promptly returned as directed.

2. There has recently been a large number of cases where no action whatever has been taken on receipt of these forms, and, even more inexcusable, of the top half being returned indicating that the lower half has been stuck in the paybook when, in fact, this has not been done.

3. Officers concerned who show carelessness in this respect do great disservice to the men under their command.

4. C.C.O. attaches great importance to this matter and requests that Commanding Officers of Bases will give it their personal attention, and also ensure that an organisation exists at each base for encouraging and enabling men who think the wrong rate is shown in their paybooks to represent the matter so that it can be rectified.

25. White Uniform - Officers (Combined Operations Temporary Memorandum No. 37).

The attention of all C.O. officers is directed to A.F.O. 2930/43.

2. As there still appears to be some doubt as to what uniform C.O. officers detailed for service abroad should provide themselves with, the following points are promulgated for information and guidance:-

...../(a)



(a) White Uniform.

All officers detailed for service overseas are to provide themselves before sailing with white uniform (No.10).

(b) Tropical Uniform.

Officers attached to Landing Craft Flotillas, Beach Commandos or Beach Communication Parties have been authorised to provide themselves with khaki instead of white tropical kit, for wear as a working rig only. This kit consists of the following items of Army Tropical Kit:-

Bush Shirts;	Waist Hooks;
Drill Trousers;	Helmet - chin strap - linen bag;
Drill Shorts;	Hose tops - anklets.
Buckles;	

If available, these items may be taken up from service stocks on repayment at the price for corresponding articles of naval kit indicated in para.2 of A.F.O.989/43 and at the prices shown in the current issuing price list for R.M. clothing (B.R.141) in the case of the remaining items.

3. Conditions governing the eligibility of officers for the increased grant (£10) for the provision of white and/or tropical uniform are laid down in A.F.O.3253/43.

26. Petty Officer's Rig. Reference B.C.M.M.11, the following is an extract of a letter received from R.A.C.O.B.(N):-

"The authorised uniform for all unconfirmed Petty Officers dressed as Seamen is that laid down in Section VIII of the Appendix to the Navy List and described as uniform kit, Class II. No deviation from this list is permissible and necessary action is to be taken immediately to enforce these Regulations amongst the personnel serving under your Command."

27. Wearing of Lifbelts during Deep Water Reconnaissances. (Combined Operations Temporary Memorandum No.40).

Whenever Deep Water Reconnaissances are carried out, lifbelts are always to be worn.

2. Any non-swimmers are to be placed on the inshore ends of chains, irrespective of height.



28. Marking of Kit. Beachmasters are to ensure that all kit is clearly marked. Cases are frequently occurring of blankets, boots and clothing not being marked or the name not being legible.

No responsibility will be taken for boots sent to "ARMADILLO" for repair unless the name of the owner is stamped on each boot.

29. Slit Trenches - Hitting back at Aircraft. (Extract from Army Training Memorandum No.45-1943).

The following was taken from a letter written by an officer to a friend:-

"Experience from theatres of war shows that, despite repeated references in previous Army Training Memoranda, the lesson of the very great deterrent effect of well-aimed small arms fire on low-flying aircraft is still not appreciated.

The lesson is now clearly as old as the hills; it was learned in Norway and confirmed in France, the Middle East, Greece, North Africa, and, in fact, in every theatre wherever active operations have taken place.

An attempt has recently been made to calculate the probable effects of air attack on ground targets. These calculations show that against a moving column, spaced at normal densities, low-flying fighters must attack each vehicle separately, and it is only when march discipline is slack and vehicles are allowed to close up that pilots are presented with an easy target. The lesson that good march discipline saves lives is therefore again confirmed.

The outstanding features of these calculations, however, is that the accuracy of the pilot (and also the effect of the attack) is reduced by as much as four-fifths when the attacking aircraft is subjected to controlled fire from all available LMC's and rifles, and even by up to nine-tenths when fired on also by a proportion of light anti-aircraft artillery. These figures should be made known to all ranks in their own interests, for they show very clearly that, quite apart from the material damage inflicted on the aircraft, a vigorous attack when subject to low-flying strafing is the most effective means of defence.

...../(2).



2. Incidentally, machine-gunning from the air is perfectly bloody - worse than bombing or shelling. The accuracy of it is something I never imagined. An unopposed fighter can guarantee to hit a solitary car. But, again, if you have got slit trenches, casualties from it are "nix" and you find that, after all, the noise was the worst part of it.

3. Slit trenches deserve a paragraph all to themselves. A few days after we landed we spent literally a whole day at Tabarka being dive-bombed and machine-gunned from the air. This went on intermittently all the following week at Djebel Abiod, plus more than enough shelling. Since then the men have dug slit trenches automatically, even if they arrive at a place soaking wet at three in the morning - and they are a full 5 ft. deep too; anyone will tell you tales of miraculous escapes due to slit trenches - shells landing a couple of feet away without hurting the bloke inside, etc. I do not think you could ever shell this battalion out of a position, if only because they know they are safer in slit trenches than out of them.

4. Somebody once said, 'Warfare consists of boredom punctuated by odd moments of excitement.' This is absolute rot. When you're living out in shocking weather with nothing but a gas cape over your head and thirty men to look to you to censor their letters, dish out N.A.A.F.I. stuff, make the best of the rations, get them kit from the "Q", there's too much to do to get bored. When you in turn have to see they are always ready to fight, that they are in good heart, that they are clean and healthy, and that the NCO's are doing their jobs, you may get browned off but never bored. Discipline is the hardest and most important thing to keep going. You and the NCO's are 24 hours a day with the men, and it's almost bound to slacken off if you're not on your guard. I find the best way is to keep a strict routine however shocking the conditions, i.e. washing and weapons clean by ? hours, meals at ? hours, etc. If you keep a firm hold on the men over these

...../small



small day-to-day things you'll find you've got them right under control when trouble starts.

5. Finally, remember that 'there are bad officers but no bad troops'. This is horribly true; we have often seen it out there - indifferent men fighting magnificiently under a first-class officer, and vice versa. It does make you realise what a vitally important job you've got. . Motto: 'It all depends on me'. "

30. Beaching of Major Landing Craft. Beach masters must realise that most of the early training of Major Landing Craft Officers is done without the use of Beach Signs and without the assistance of Beach masters. This has resulted in a lack of knowledge of the Beach masters' functions.

For efficient working a clear understanding must exist between the Beach and Craft personnel. This can only be achieved by a real effort on both sides to discuss each others points of view.

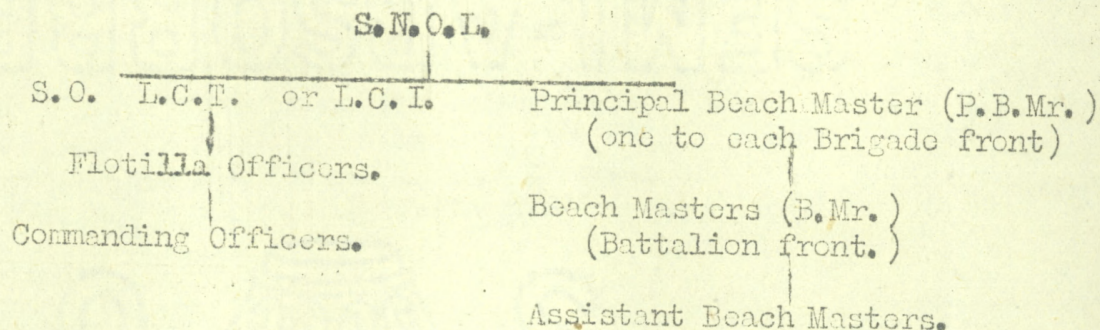
2. The following is taken from a draft received from Captain, Major Landing Craft, of the instructions he proposes to issue to Major Landing Craft Officers:-

Beaching of M.L.C. Co-operation with Beach Organisation.

1. ....../

2. Naval Command at Landing.

"The ships, the landing craft, and the R.N. Beach Commandos are all under the command of the Senior Naval Officer, Landing (S.N. O.L.). The chain of command as it affects Major Landing Craft is:-



The S.N.O.L. may use the P.B.Mr. as his deputy or there may be a Local Naval Commander for a section of the coast on which the landing is being made."



"3. Duties of Beach Masters.

It is the duty of the R.N. Beach Commandos to guide ships and craft to their landing points. They may do this by any or all of the following methods:-

- a) By W/T or R/T through the Beach Signal Station. (B.S.S.)
- b) By the exhibition of Beach signs by day and by night.
- c) By V/S - flashing or hand flags.
- d) By the special beach signals for calling in craft to particular points

Flag "G" waved by day.

"G" (---<sup>o</sup>) flashed by night.

4. Directions by Beach Masters.

To enable him to make the best choice of landing places the Beach Master will have made a reconnaissance of the beaches and the approaches before Major Landing Craft are called in. In order to avoid dangers it is essential that Commanding Officers of craft obey the directions of the Beach Masters. These dangers will include, in addition to rocks and other navigational dangers, sunken or stranded landing craft, underwater defences and mine fields."

(NOTE: It has been suggested by Armadillo that the following be added to this para:

"These points will, if possible, be marked

- (a) by day with a red flag.
- (b) by night with a red light  
on either the shore or a buoy").

"The exact points at which Major Landing Craft will be required to beach will also be determined by the location of beach exits and, on soft or shingle beaches by the placing of beach roadway for the landing of wheeled vehicles. For these reasons, too, accurate beaching is essential."



"5. Limitations of Major Landing Craft.

The limitations of Major Landing Craft (especially L.C.T.) are appreciated.

- a) L.C.T. have a large turning circle and make considerable leeway.

L.C.T. will be called in on a steady course from as far off the beach as possible. Men making calling-in signals not to change their position on the beach during the run in.

- b) When L.C.T. are beaching in a unit no substantial alteration of course can be made within half a mile of the shore.

Last minute changes of course will not be signalled.

- c) Owing to their slow speed L.C.T. are set down by tide or cross wind relatively more than faster craft such as L.C.P. and L.C.I.

Allowance for this is made by the Flotilla Officer or Divisional Leader and this is understood by the Beach masters.

- d) The engine noises on the bridge of an L.C.T. make it impossible to hear instructions given on loud hailers in time to take effective action when running in.

Loud hailers will not be used to communicate with M.L.C. during the run-in though they may be used to pass instructions when craft are already beached.

6. Calling in M.L.C. from a Rendez-vous.

The orders for an operation may lay down either

- a) That a formation of M.L.C. is to beach at a stated place at a stated time.
- b) That a unit of M.L.C. is to be in a given position at a stated time to be called in by the Beach Master as required.

In the case of a) the Senior Officer of the M.L.C. will bring his unit in to beach in formation without further signal from S.N.O.L. or the Beach Master, keeping a good look-out for the beach signs which may be exhibited."

...../6 Cont'd.



"6. (Cont'd).

In the case of b) a signal will be made by W/T or R/T through the Beach Signal Station to S.N.O.L. on landing wave. This should be intercepted by the M.L.C. and the required unit (i.e. the craft carrying the loads next required on the beach) will proceed to beach either in formation or singly as directed.

7. Beaching Singly.

M.L.C. will not normally be required to beach singly except

- a) To beach on beach roadway for wheeled vehicles or at a special landing point for tracked vehicles.
- b) When the beach is very narrow, or there are only narrow approaches through dangers to the beach.

In both cases extremely accurate beaching is required. Whenever possible the landing point will be indicated by a transit. When no transit is shown it is assumed that craft will approach at right angles to the line of the beach making the necessary allowance for leeway.

8. Beaching in Formation.

Normally only one landing point will be indicated on which the leader is to beach. If this is observed to be near either the right or left hand beach limit sign or near a danger sign the formation is to deploy to starboard or to port as required.

If the landing point is in the centre of the beach craft will "beach together" deploying on either side of the Divisional or Sub divisional leader as laid down in the Landing Craft Appendix 20 (b). Exceptions to this are:-

- a) In a strong cross wind or tide craft should be ordered to deploy and beach to the leeward or down tide of the leader.
- b) On groyned beaches where the groynes are at short distances apart, or when there are several narrow gaps between dangers a landing point may be indicated for each craft. To comply with this special alertness will be required during the run-in and the Senior Officer is to order the deployment required in good time to enable all craft to beach accurately on their marks. When such obstacles are natural ones or permanent defences this can be expected to be in the orders."



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"9. Responsibility for Landing.

Major Landing Craft are to lower doors and landing ramps directly the craft grounds.

It is a naval responsibility to tell the O.C. Troops on board the depth of water at the door or ramp if he required this. Unless other orders are signalled or made by loud hailer from the beach it is the responsibility of the O.C. Troops to order the vehicles to drive off or the men to land immediately the door is lowered. When a large formation of M.L.C. has beached together, the Beach Organisation may not be able to handle all the vehicles at once and will therefore indicate the order in which craft are to disembark vehicles, but normally craft are to be unloaded and unbeached without delay.

10. Control on the Beaches.

- a) The Beach master is responsible for control of the beach and the craft while beached. The instructions he given are to be taken as coming from the S.N.O.L. or Deputy S.N.O.L. and obeyed as such.
- b) If bow lines or quarter lines have to be taken out to the beach to keep the craft steady, he will provide a party from the R.N. beach commando to do this. Commanding Officers are to be prepared to provide wires or manillas as an evolution.
- c) The Beach master will provide men to sound for runnels between the door or ramp and the waters edge on flat beaches.
- d) If the Beach master requires to embark vehicles, stores or casualties from the beach he will inform the Senior Officer M.L.C. who will detail as many craft as are required. The Senior Officer of the unit of M.L.C. will give the order for unbeaching which is to be carried out as laid down in DINOS 468.

11. Withdrawing from Beaches.

M.L.C. should, unless navigational dangers prevent this, withdraw to leeward or down tide from a beach in order to leave room for the next wave which, in its turn will approach from windward or with the tidal stream. This manoeuvre is to be exercised frequently. Units are to be formed as soon as possible and proceed as ordered by S.N.O.L. or in execution of previous orders."



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"12. Special orders and instructions may be given by Force Commanders: principles set out above have been agreed for the training of R.N. Beach Commandos and M.L.C. personnel in co-operation during landings".

H.M.S. ARMADILLO.  
15th August, 1943.

Lieutenant Commander R.N.  
Commanding Officer.