

PRE-GREECE

Medical Orderly Albert J Jenkins RAMC, attached to 50 ME Commando

General Background to 50 Middle East Commando Unit

From Wikipedia:

No. 50 Commando was formed in the Middle East at Geneifa in August 1940, from volunteers from units serving in the Middle East and a small number of veterans from the Spanish Civil War who had escaped to Palestine after the French defeat in 1940. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George Young, No. 50 Commando had an establishment of a small Headquarters and three Troops. Each Troop had four sections of one officer and 25 other ranks. A total of 371 all ranks.

In February 1941, No. 50 Commando was amalgamated with No. 52 Commando, when a force of Commandos under Colonel Robert Laycock was formed to carry out raids in the eastern Mediterranean. This force, known as 'Layforce' was drawn from 'A' Troop, No. 3 Commando, No. 7, No. 8 (Guards), No. 11 (Scottish) and the amalgamated No. 50/52 Commandos. For reasons of security, the unit was organised into four battalions and were re-designated as such. No. 7 Commando became 'A' Battalion, No. 8 (Guards) became 'B' Battalion, No. 11 (Scottish) became 'C' Battalion and No. 50/52 became 'D' Battalion. (Note: as 'D' Battalion they fought in the battle of Crete and were disbanded after the survivors returned to Egypt.)

From "Greece and Crete 1941" by Christopher Buckley:

G&C 1941 P165

General Wavell visited Crete on Nov 13 1940, accepting the withdrawal of the Greek troops (to reinforce the Albanian front). 2nd Bn Black Watch were sent from Egypt, along with 50 ME Commando. It was considered that in Crete this Unit would be well placed for raids on the North African coast & Dodecanese islands.

G&C 1941 P168

Castellosso Island near Rhodes (200 miles NE of Crete) was occupied for a few days (25th-28th) at the end of Feb 1941 by 50 ME Commando and others as part of Operation Abstention, to destroy the Italian wireless station and secure the island for British naval use. They were, however, obliged to withdraw in the face of a strong Italian counter-assault (much more detail on this action can be found on Wikipedia under the operational codename). 50 ME Commando were then immediately recalled back to Egypt.