



Royal Marine Commander Patrick Dalzel-Job

Patrick Dalzel-Job was born near London in 1913. He suffered ill health as a child and his widowed mother took him from Hastings to Switzerland, to regain his strength. Here, Patrick became accomplished at cross country skiing and then ski jumping and taught himself to sail on a lake near the French border whilst studying navigation by correspondence course. He returned to Britain in 1931, built his own schooner, the *Mary Fortune*, and spent the next two years sailing around the British coast with his mother as his crew.



Patrick Dalzel-Job

In 1937, they crossed the North Sea to Norway and spent the next two years making studies of the west coast and the fjords, channels and islands. The Norwegians were most hospitable and Patrick soon became fluent in their language. In late August 1939, a radio broadcast persuaded them that war was imminent and they returned to England.

Patrick was commissioned into the Royal Navy on 8 December 1939, and requested a posting as far north as possible. He was appointed navigating officer on a target towing tug working from Scapa Flow in Orkney.

Two days after the German invasion of Norway, Patrick was ordered to report on board the cruiser *HMS Southampton*, which carried an expeditionary force who were to lay a British minefield off the Norwegian coast. They sailed from Scapa Flow on 12 April with an escort of destroyers and it soon became evident that Patrick's knowledge of the area and weather conditions was invaluable.

The initial plans to land the troops had to be cancelled due to deep snow, for which the expeditionary force had no suitable equipment. The Chief of Staff on board one of the destroyers asked Patrick's advice. He suggested the 10,000 soldiers could travel ashore by local fishing boats called *skøyter* (which were referred to as 'puffers') and the men were taken ashore by local fishermen in these boats on 14 and 15 April 1940.

I called them puffers because as a child in the West Highlands, all our goods used to come up from Glasgow in little round ships called puffers. They were built like that to come through the Grand Canal and the Norwegian word for these boats was *skøyter*. Well, of course, no British people would say *skøyter* so I called them puffers and the British authorities thought that was the Norwegian name and official reports said 'local boats called puffers' - they were called puffers by me.

Patrick oversaw the disembarkation of thousands of soldiers, and campaigned for better equipment for them. He was very aware of the hardships faced by the Norwegian people, helping to evacuate women and children from Boden, a town expecting heavy Axis shelling and arranging for pay and leave for his flotilla of puffer fishermen.



Patrick returned to England on 12 June 1940, as yet unaware of Dunkirk and the progress of the war. He spent the next two years at sea, by November 1941 he had covered more than 27,000 miles of the Western Ocean on HM ships, but he still yearned for a posting to the seas of Norway.

In January 1942, Patrick was due to sail to the Far East when he was instructed to report to the Admiralty in London. He was duly sent to a Fairmile Motor Launch working out of Kirkwall, Orkney gaining experience of coastal forces working in Northern waters.

In June he was appointed to the staff of Admiral Sir Lionel Wells, the Admiral commanding Orkney and Shetland and worked tirelessly collating all available information about the west coast of Norway.

In September Patrick was summoned to see Lord Louis Mountbatten at Combined Operations Headquarters. He was requested to run the special motor torpedo boat operations, known as VP Operations landing commandos, by puffers, in Norway.

During a lull in the VP Operations, which ran from late Autumn 1942 to Spring 1943, Patrick went to London to receive the Ridderkors (Knights Cross) of St Olav from King Haakon in recognition of his services to the Norwegian people.

The VP Operations came to a close, and were considered a success. The constant commando raids compelled the Germans to keep large forces of troops, patrol craft and fighters on the west coast of Norway, and many German ships were sunk.



German Junkers 88 fished up from fjord.

Patrick began training on Welman midget submarines, so called as they were manufactured at Welwyn Garden City and carried one man. He could not hope to complete his training in time to participate in the attack on *Tirpitz*, but thoroughly enjoyed his training.

In the autumn of 1943 Patrick undertook intelligence work, attempting to locate enemy submarine defences from the Norwegian island of Atleø. This was to be his last contact with the Norwegian flotilla.

Back in Britain, he was accepted on a four week Army parachute training course in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, designed for the Airborne Divisions. He was very impressed by the standards of training and the enthusiasm of his fellow trainees, and returned to 12th Submarine Flotilla in Scotland with his parachute wings. It was certain that there would be no more work for him on the Norwegian coast and so transferred to 30 AU (30th Assault Unit). The Unit was a combined force of naval officers and Royal Marine 30 Commando, answerable to Commander Ian Fleming in the Admiralty.

30 AU worked in an underground room in the Admiralty, London collating all available information as to where the enemy's secret installations were thought to be in France and



Germany. They knew almost all of the plans for the D-Day landings well in advance, this information was classed as 'Bigot', a stage higher than 'Top Secret'.

On 4 June 1944 the Unit moved into the 'Cage', a security camp near Cirencester. Part of the Unit went ashore with the British troops on D Day, but Patrick and his men were to work on the American sector in the early stages and landed near Varreville on 'Utah' beach on 10 June (D + 4). Their role was to gather intelligence on any new weapons, submarines and mines found on enemy sites.

After landing, the Royal Marines progressed to Ste Mère Eglise and began to bed down for the night. They were still some way from enemy troops and most of the passing aircraft was Allied.

Suddenly, there was an explosion like a bomb-blast immediately above us, followed by a peculiar fluttering noise in the air. For a while, nothing else happened then the whole field was lit by sharp flashes and explosions, like heavy machine cannons firing sporadically around us. The explosions did not last more than half a minute. In that time, the Unit lost thirty per cent of its strength in killed and wounded.

Patrick, acting on information from the Americans, took a Royal Marine patrol through a gap in the German lines in the hope of finding and examining a V1 Flying Bomb launching site. They passed through the American forward line and came to a wide, empty area of fields and woods.

I am bound to say that I found it tremendous fun, and to be honest it would not have been such fun had one not been aware that a German machine-gun might at any moment open fire. The last man in the patrol had orders to turn round and beckon to non-existent followers every time he came into open view... In late afternoon we came suddenly to the launching site, lying in eerie silence. The evening sunshine glinting through the trees lit a concrete blockhouse and 'J' shaped concrete runway, and all around were scattered hurriedly abandoned German equipment and belongings. I could see nothing that seemed of particular interest to my untechnical mind; however, the experts who were later guided to the site were very pleased, and especially so as the first V1 flying bomb fell on London that day.

Returning to the American Unit, Patrick continued with the advance on Cherbourg. It was slower than expected and he found the dust in Normandy a real problem. It got into eyes, ears and noses but also into carbines, rifles and machine guns which had to be cleaned several times a day to ensure they would be serviceable. The trails of dust behind vehicles could easily mark them as targets for enemy attack.

When the Unit reached its destination, Patrick moved across to Courseilles in a jeep. The battle for Caen was reaching its climax and he saw huge numbers of RAF bombers passing overhead. On 9 July, Patrick and his men advanced as far as they could in the jeep, but the rubble of bomb damage forced them to progress on foot, avoiding the areas where street fighting continued.



Approaching the Bassin St Pierre, we came across some Frenchmen among the ruins, and with them there was a British glider pilot in labourer's clothes. He was a Staff Sergeant, Bramah by name, and he told us he had been wounded in the first Airborne landings, when his glider had come down outside the intended dropping zone. After a remarkable series of fights and escapes, Bramah had joined the French Resistance movement in Caen; and at first sight he looked and talked more like a French peasant than a British soldier. He seemed very popular with the French and his assistance was just what I needed; his friends came out of cellars and ruined buildings everywhere we went, and they guided us delightedly to our targets at the harbour office and in other German buildings.



Staff Sergeant Bramah with Patrick in Caen.

After Caen he returned to the American sector and established Tactical Headquarters on the coast, opposite the island of Jersey. From here he investigated about twenty targets in Brittany before joining the British and Canadian advance north-eastwards towards the Channel ports.

At Dieppe Patrick learnt some useful new information about the methods of launching V.1 flying bombs towards London. On 2 September, Patrick arrived in Fécamp to find eight German midget submarines had been moved from the area just two days before his arrival. He learned how they had been transported - on long, low trailers concealed under canvas towed by heavy trucks. Patrick and his men managed to trace the submarines to Abbeville, and eventually discovered one on the Albert-Bapaume road.

It was almost an anti-climax after such a long search; there it was, off the side of the road where the towing lorry must have left it - a midget submarine, itself intact, on a burnt out trailer. It was indeed much more like a miniature of a normal submarine than were the British Welmans with which I was already familiar, and it carried two twenty-one-inch torpedoes instead of the Welman's delayed-action nose charge. Given the right circumstances and a skilful pilot, it could no doubt be a formidable weapon.



Patrick in the conning tower (the hunt for the midget submarine).

There were further routine targets in Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges before they headed for a short stay in Paris.

Patrick and his unit returned to England for reorganisation and further training which included another parachute course. The whole Unit went to Belgium in February 1945 and Patrick took a 'recce' group ahead of the Allies' front line into Germany to search areas in the Eifel Hills.



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Four days later they entered Köln, a city devastated by bomb damage, and investigated the Schmidding company there.

At the end of March, the Unit crossed the Rhine near Xanten, where they saw wreckage of many gliders that had crashed there during the airborne assault, and joined the Guards Armoured Division on the road to Bremen. The journey was arduous - many bridges had been destroyed and the approaches were usually covered by a German heavy machine gun or an anti-tank gun. Patrick's team then joined the 51st (Highland) Division. On 13 April, they discovered two farmhouses occupied by German troops.



Köln 7 March 1945 on the Hohenzollern Bridge.

The Royal Marines dismounted from their vehicles and attacked enthusiastically; one German soldier was killed and thirteen taken prisoner - they proved to be officer cadets...During the interrogation of the prisoners, it came out that we had earlier driven straight past their dug-in and camouflaged machine gun positions, at slow speed and within a range of a few yards. They said they had not opened fire because we looked dangerous.



Patrick counting prisoners near Vechta.



Bremen Team 4 Scout Cars at the Rathaus at 1030 hrs on 26 April 1945.

Early on Thursday 26 April, Patrick and his men entered Bremen. There had been fierce fighting and the team saw burning tanks in the streets but there was no gunfire or any sign of German troops. Patrick was approached by a policeman and asked to meet the acting Burgomaster to accept the formal surrender of the city of Bremen.

Patrick sent a message to 52nd Division Headquarters to inform them of the surrender, and they began to clear the city. There was still some enemy fire from the docks but Patrick managed to prevent any shell attack as he was sure they would find valuable intelligence in the shipyard and 30 AU were eventually able to examine the equipment and interrogate the technicians found there.

Three days after Bremen, the Unit joined the Irish Guards Armoured Division and headed northwards towards Bremerhaven. German resistance was collapsing.



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My team of 30 AU celebrated the German capitulation in very modest fashion. Truthfully but rather hard-heartedly, I told the Royal Marines that some of their most arduous and difficult work was still to come, and that discipline and attention to duty were now even more important, if that were possible, than they had been during open hostilities.

On 7 May Patrick entered Bremerhaven with 51st Division. They were astonished to hear cheers from the civilians as they entered the city. 30 AU made their way to the port area to take the German destroyer Z 29, still in commission.



Germans cheering at Bremerhaven.

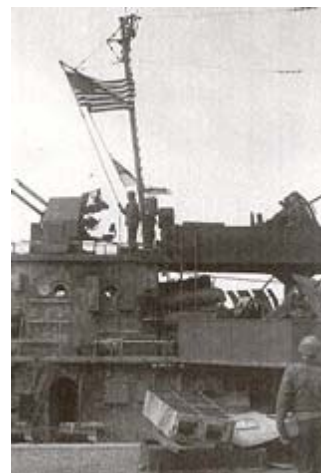
Patrick took a boarding party of five on a motor boat and he was informed that the destroyer's crew amounted to three hundred and twenty officers and men.

The crew was in a very dangerous mood, ranging from aggressive anger through sullen insolence to weeping hysteria. It was, as I have said, a fighting ship with an undefeated ship's company, and almost every man of them loathed this capitulation which had been imposed on them by the German authorities on the shore. Everywhere they went in the ship, (my) men were met with boos and hisses, threatening gestures, attempts to trip them in gangways, and the ominous bunching of German seamen behind their backs.

Soon, the ship was completely disarmed and secret signal documents and charts were removed from the wireless room. The German Captain was ordered to take it alongside the quay.



Taking over German Destroyer Z29.



Transfer of Z29 to US Navy



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On 8 May, VE Day, Patrick took Destroyer Z29 into Kaiserhaven inner harbour. The Royal Marines were to attend a formal ceremony the following day to transfer the ship to the United States.

Bremerhaven was the last of the official 30 AU operations in Germany. Other sites were still examined but the Germans had destroyed most of the documents and equipment that would be of interest to Allied Intelligence.

Patrick returned to England on 24 May and appealed to the Admiralty for an opportunity of returning to Norway. Roads had been built during the German occupation and the wreck of the *Tirpitz* was to be inspected. His real intention, however, was to find his sweetheart, Bjørg, and eventually they were reunited at Vestbane train station in Oslo. They were married on 26 June and returned to Edinburgh.

The full story of his wartime experiences, 'From Arctic Snow to Dust of Normandy' by Patrick Dalzel-Job is published by Nead-an-Eoin.