

COMMANDO MEN

(Working title)

Screenplay by Si Biggs

A Synopsis & Treatment



The story of British Commandos at War

Live, fight and die with the men of Able Troop 45 Commando drawn from the destruction of wartime Britain through selection and training for their Green Berets, landing in the lethal cross fire of D Day, then fighting through the bleak winter of Holland and burning hell of Germany 1942 - 1945

How Will You Die Today?

COMMANDO MEN - SYNOPSIS & TREATMENT

Commando Men

The story of British Commandos at War

OVER VIEW:

You asked for it, yes you did!

A British Private Ryan and Band of Brothers (at last!)

COMMANDO MEN is the story of men at war, the Second World War but it could be any war.

Thrown together out of patriotism, circumstance, peer pressure or fear of missing out, they are all from very different social backgrounds:

Career soldiers fresh from the fight and volunteers from a blitzed burnt out city they are melded together and transformed into Chuchills 'Hunter Class' and 'Leopards' trained to 'Butcher and Bolt' and 'Set Europe Ablaze'.

Now the Officers and Men of a newly formed Commando Unit they will have to learn on the job, learn to fight and die.

We follow our Band of Brothers on their real war time journey fighting the Nazi's through Normandy, Holland and then Germany between 1943 - 1945.

This story is based on real characters and events.

We watch our men, they could of been our Grandfathers, Husbands, Fathers, Brothers and boys, we know them,

They live with humour and love for each other, in fear before an action, with senses heightened in the heat of battle, in sadness at the senseless waste of fallen comrades

Their lives change daily with each new challenge, as they watch the body count rise as the enemy becomes more fanatical by the day.

Written as a 10 episode series but could be condensed or rewritten into a Movie and sequel.

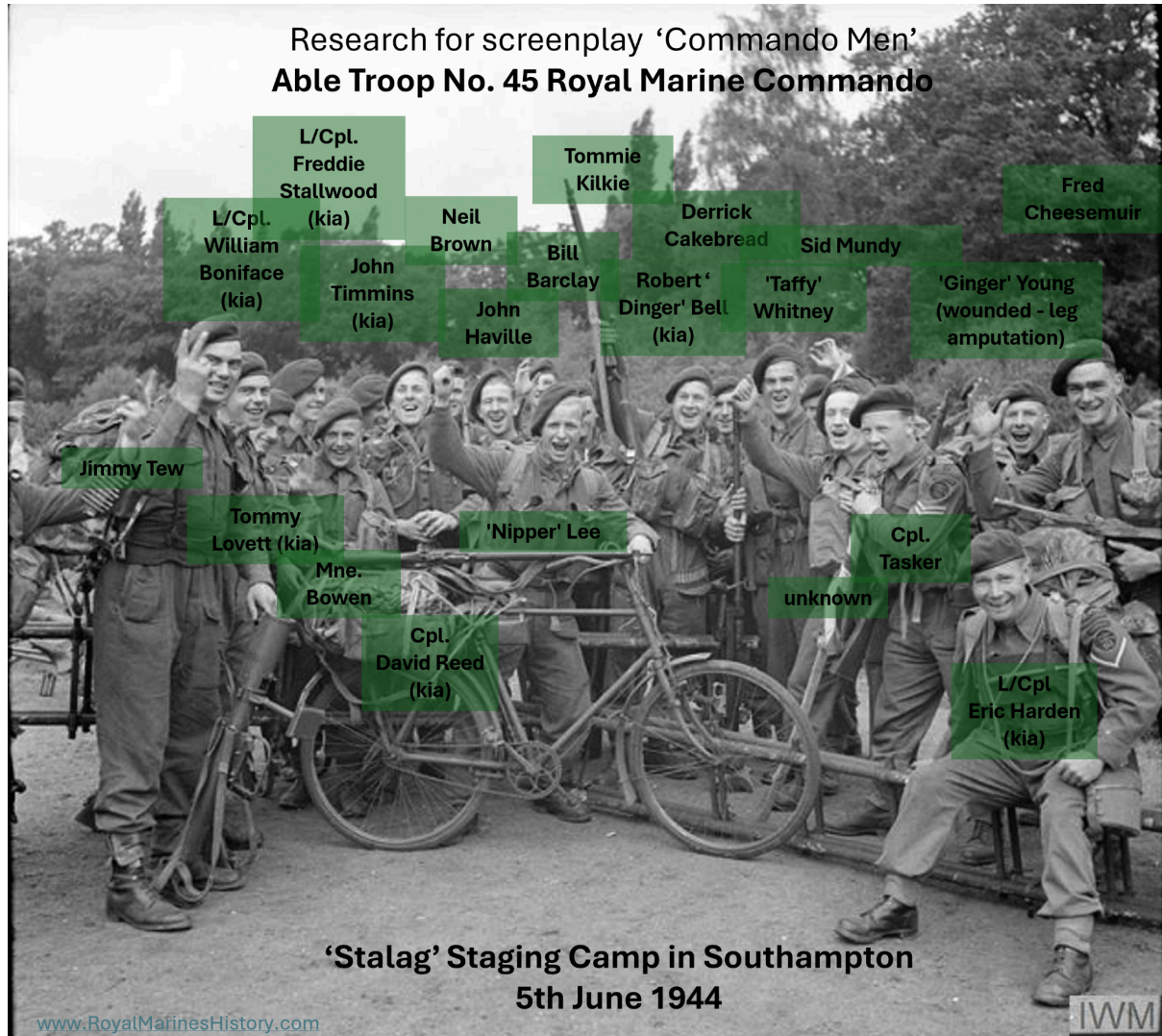
Most characters are based on real members of the wartime Unit, a few fictional characters are sewn in to join up the dots.

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THE COMMANDO MEN:

MAIN CHARACTERS:

(In general order of appearance)



First the Men of Able Troop;

(Single character names are rank and file, full names are officers)

WALTER

We first we meet Walter Bigland in his Dads pub, he is just 17, we learn that they are a close family, he is loved by his Mum and Dad, they know he is ready to take risk and will soon join the war and they fear for him.

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We learn from the memorabilia on the walls that his Father had fought in the First World War, now the Landlord of a once popular pub where until the bombings his Mother would sing at the piano, during raids rather than go to the basement shelter Nan stays in the attic she is happy and believes the bangs and flashes are fireworks.

Walter is a young volunteer and goes out every night with his friend Lenny to help during the Liverpool Blitz, looking for unexploded bombs, helping the ambulances and firemen, they are knocked off their feet when an ammunition ship explodes in the Docks.

A car with a young couple narrowly missing them as it careers into a wall killing the young occupants.

That was the last night Walter wanted to be on the blunt end and not the sharp end of the sword,

Walter will take us through every key moment of our journey and will wonder at the end why anyone had to die.

LENNY (Fict.)

Lenny Jones (17) has been raised by his Grandmother, he is mild and kind, he is not as robust as his friend Walter, we start to imagine his feelings for Walter are deeper than just friendship and if he could he would be in love with him.

When Walter announces he is joining up and not wanting to be left alone without his companion he joins the Marines with him.

We will join him on his journey and just as we think the two friends have survived the Cauldron of death together he will be shot by a friendly aircraft and yearning to be in his Grandmas comforting arms he will die in Walters.

TOMMY (Sniper)

Edward 'Tommy' Charles Treacher [17] was working in a timber yard when he volunteered and was expecting to serve the war in the engine room of a Battleship with the Royal Navy, he is a little surprised and considers turning down the offer of a place in the Royal Marines, but his Father tells him to just get on and serve, they toast the offer with a beer, and worry about how to break the news to Mother.

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We will join him as he becomes, along with his partner Derek Cakebread, one of the best Commando Snipers of the war.

FRED (Bren Gunner - A Troop)

We meet Fred Harris on a rainy night in East London where he works in a light engineering company, he has been called up to serve but his date was deferred due to the companies war work. His supervisor tells him that he will soon have to train up a young lady who will replace him.

He lives in a terrace house in London with his Mum, his Sister is married and lives close, his Father we learn is a Merchant Sailor and away on the convoys, which are still running the gauntlet in the Atlantic Ocean hounded by U Boats.

We accompany Fred on his journey through the medical and selection process, to infantry training in Devon where he meets some of our main characters.

They are sent to 5th Battalion where they are told they will convert to Commando's, Fred is a steady professional and we watch him learn to be a commando before going to war.

As a Bren Gunner Fred is in action right from the start and we will follow him all the way from the beaches of Normandy, through Holland to Germany and finally England.

BUZZ GREWCOCK (Troop Officer - TO - A Troop)

Buzz Grewcock [25] is a leader of men, men that he loves to lead, he is brave and strong, and has a sly wit.

He dies leading his men on a night that has become legend for the Paratroopers but history has forgotten it was Grewcocks Marines that led the way.

SCOUSE (Rifleman - A Troop)

Scouse Ord [23] is a typical working class boy from Liverpool. He has a sharp wit, he is happy to banter with all ranks we laugh with him as he teases and tells jokes not only to keep up moral but probably to cover up for his own fears.

We will cry as still trying to make light of his unfortunate fate he dies slowly and needlessly in Germany.

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FRANK (Radio Operator - RO/ Signaller - Commando HQ)

Francis Gerrard Burton [20]

As the Signaller in the CO's Rover Gp he is the first to hear what is planned, and as he is privy to all the conversations in the Commando Headquarters he is a fly on the wall who sees and hears the decision making before during and after the battles and some of the frustrations felt at the nerve centre of the Unit.

NIPPER (Tommy Gunner - A Troop)

Edward James 'Nipper' Lee [19] is a good Marine, he looks after his friends and it is a sad loss when he is killed only 5 days after D Day.

"News has reached Mrs. T. Lee, 25 John Street, Leamington, that her son, Edward (Ted) James Lee has been killed in action. He was serving with the Royal Marine Commandos. Educated at St. Peter's R.C. School, New Street, he was always a keen and fine swimmer, and he held several certificates. On leaving school he secured employment with Messrs. F. Warner & Son grocers, High Street, and later with Messrs. G. Bradford builders. 'Ted' was also member the First-Aid Post and Civil Defence for the Warneford Hospital. Mrs. Lee has two more sons serving in the Forces—one with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the other with the Royal Artillery. Her husband, who died 12 months ago, had served In the Worcestershire Yeomanry during the 1914-18 war. "

JIMMY (PIAT Anti Tank Man)

Jimmy Tew [25] is a gentle giant, a soft spoken Geordie, he is big and strong and protective over his fellow marines.

He has already seen action in North Africa and is happy to share his experiences and give advice where needed.

He has 4 brothers serving in the War, one of which is also a Royal Marine and dies in Normandy.

Jimmy is wounded by a mine and ends up in a Scottish hospital.

Five Shields Brothers In the War

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Mr and Mrs H. Tew, of 40, East Avenue, Cleadon Park Estate, South Shields had five sons in the Services. James, aged 25, a Royal Marine Commando, wounded in France, is now in a Scottish hospital. He has served four years overseas and took part in the fighting in the Middle East. Another son, Joe, served with the R.A. through the desert campaign and now in France. The youngest of the family is Arthur, 15. who is the only son stationed in England. Thomas, who is in the Marines and Harry Tew who is, in the R.A., are serving abroad. Four of the sons were employed by Bailey and Anderson, contractors before the war. Joe was a driver employed by Hann and Newby. All the boys were educated at Cone Street School.

DIED IN HOSPITAL

After fighting in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, Marine Thomas B. Tew, son of Mrs Tew, of 40 East Avenue, South Shields, has died in a Welsh hospital. He leaves a widow and three children. Educated at Cone Street School, Marine Tew was employed by Perdrie Lumsden, Newcastle contractors, before the war. He was called up in 1941 and went abroad the following year.

Marine Tew comes from a well known South Shields family and has four brothers serving with the forces, one in the Marines, and three in the Royal Artillery. He returned from Italy three months ago. and was home on leave three weeks ago.

DONNY (NO2 Bren Gun - A Troop)

We meet Don Winters [19] at the start of Episode 2, Don becomes good friends with Fred and his No.2 on the Bren, he falls ill and will not make D Day, but will join us in Holland.

WIGGY (Sergeant Major - A Troop)

Wiggy Bennet [28] is Able Troop Sergeant Major, he is the steadfast kingpin who keeps his Troop in line, pushes them when they need it and makes sure they get their rum, ammunition and mail.

He logs the dead and picks up the pieces when his men are low.

He supports the Troop Officers, Able troop has 3 replacements, and leads his men when he needs to.

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DEREK (Sniper - A Troop)

Derek Cakebread [19] imagines joining the Navy and when his card says Royal Marines he is unsure, his Father reminds him, you go where you are needed son.

He turns out to be one of the finest Commando Snipers of the War.

ERIC HARDEN (Medic - Royal Army Medical Corps - RAMC - Commando HQ) - Victoria Cross

Eric Harden [34] is from the Army, a mild mannered loving family man who plays the violin.

He is very popular with the troop and enjoys the comradery of Commando life.

In Holland against the advice of his superior he insists on taking volunteers to rescue wounded men pinned down before they freeze to death in the snow.

On his last run he is shot dead by a sniper and awarded the Victoria Cross for his selfless bravery.

ROBERTS (Fict.)

We don't know Corporal Roberts [26] first name until the end, he could be any Marine.

He is a tough character born in Belfast and raised in Liverpool to a poor family.

We first see how tough he can be in an interservice boxing match, where he ensures with some dirty tricks that he is not going to lose.

Roberts is a machine and in Normandy clears an underground bunker with a shovel, later it is only an intervention by the Padre that saves some POW's from his sub machine gun.

In 1988 with foreign voices arguing outside his window and the invitation to the D Day reunion on his coffee table he thinks back over his life and how he turned from a caring husband into a callous killer and how the affect it had on his family and married life after the war.

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As the reunion is underway attended by his estranged Wife hoping to meet him again a black and white Wedding Photograph falls from his fingers as he takes his own life.

He was not an awful person, he just did some awful things.

45 COMMANDO HEADQUARTERS

Lt Col REISE (Commanding Officer - CO - Commando HQ)

Lt Col Reise [37] is the driving force of the Commando

He is wounded on D Day a few hours after landing and replaced by Dolly Gray.

RSM GRIMSLEY (Regimental Sergeant Major - RSM - Commando HQ)

John Henry Grimsley [33] a large man from Kent, with a long career in the Royal Marines, he is LT Col Reise right hand man and we watch as he and the CO help to mould the Unit in to a elite fighting force.

We watch as he interacts with the men of the unit, inspiring them to take one step further, to be better, on the second day he goes forward to help take out a bunker and is killed.

DOLLY Gray (2i/c then CO - Commando HQ)

Dolly Gray [36] is thrust into command on the first day of battle, loved and respected by his men, he does not waste lives willingly and feels every one that is.

He leads them until the last day of the war.

BRYAN Samain (Intelligence Officer - IO - Commando HQ)

Bryan Samain is brought in a few days after D Day and was not expecting to be the Intelligence Officer, he excels in his role as the eyes and ears of the unit and is the strong and steady advisor to the CO.

He will write about his experiences with 45 Commando after the war.

The DOCs (Doctor - Commando HQ)

The two doctors one in France, the other in Holland & Germany are surrounded by a brave group of medics who will make many

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hard decisions, including volunteering to stay with wounded men knowing they will be captured.

Historical Cameos:

Brigadier The Lord Lovat

Admiral Lord Mountbatten

Bill Millen Lord Lovats famous piper who played the pipes as the Commandos landed.

War reporter

Winston Churchill

Brigadier Durnford-Slator who breaks the jaw of a German General

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THE EPISODES:

Episode 1 - Hunting the Leopards

Walter and Lenny are best friends.

They are 17 year old Volunteers during the Liverpool blitz they are thrown to the floor when an ammunition ship explodes in the docks, when flying shrapnel decapitates a newly wedded couple next to them, they decide it is time to take the fight back to the enemy.

Everyone's motivation is different, Derek imagines joining the Navy and when his card says Royal Marines he is unsure, his Father reminds him, you go where you are needed son.

He turns out to be one of the finest Commando Snipers of the War.

Episode 2 - The Tip of the Dagger

Proud of the new opportunity our Commanding Officer and RSM will mould our Royal Marines into Commandos, neither will make it past the first day of battle.

Their first challenge is to make it through at the famous Commando Training Centre in Scotland their instructors are as infamous as their methods.

Officers and men face the same hardships and have the same pride in receiving their Green Berets.

Episode 3 - Training for the Fight

How do you prepare young men for war, some have not started to shave, some are still virgins.

Walter meets his first American, and she is a tall blond Texan.

They box, play football, and learn of their mission.

Then after an inspirational briefing from the enigmatic Lord Lovat a passing photographer asks the men to stand.

Then we hear the trucks.

Come on men, look sharp, we are off to war!

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Episode 4 - Into the Fire

The landing craft that will take them to war are flimsy, wooden affairs.

Where are the real bleedin boats, I thought these were just training craft?

We see the mighty flotilla in Southampton and follow their rough crossing of the English Channel, with songs and rum and exploding soup.

Off shore we see the battleships bombarding the coast as our matchwood boats approach the beach.

All hell breaks loose as our small flotilla is smashed by German guns and our boys slip on blood as they struggle to get clear of the landing craft, over broken ramps and often into deep water struggling onto an equally dangerous beach, they won't all make the first 12 minutes let alone the next 11 months.

Episode 5 - March to the Bridges

Mustered by a hunting horn and carrying rubber boats and bicycles they advance through French villages to the bridges.

Here the Paras have landed over night in a Coupe de Main, green and red berets welcome each other with jest and teasing.

Late as usual then Royal we've done the hard work for you. So needn't have got your feet wet

I see you crashed your little Aeroplanes again, aren't you supposed to use parachutes?

You won't be needing your little boats now we have a bridge or two for you. Just don't forget to pay the toll!

You paid it here boys. We paid it on the beach

The next few days are intense, as the tempo builds, as the young Marines, many too brave, are bloodied.

Episode 6 - The Thin and Green Red Line

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The German counter attacks are ferocious. Sniping and aggressive patrolling are the order of the day.

It is time to take the fight back to the enemy, but at what cost?

What is the butchers bill Dolly?

Nearly 50% Sir.

1 in every 2 men, for 6 days fighting!?

*Yes. 6 days fighting(he whispers almost to himself)
or 6 days dying?*

Episode 7 - The Devils Cauldron

Expected to remain ashore for a few days the men of our Commando spend over a 3 months.

They dig in, deep! Get shelled, conduct raid's, snipe, milk cows to keep them quite and swim on the beach.

They learn to fight at close quarters, yards from an offensive enemy who attacks with ruthless vigour, an enemy that taunts them and pretends to surrender but continues to kill, no wonder some POW's have a lucky escape.

Even here there are moments of humour, humanity and understanding, interspersed with the moments of sudden violent death.

Minutes before the end we cry as we lose our best friend. Maybe he should not have been here at all, he should have stayed with his Grandmother.

Episode 8 - VC At The Windmill

They were expecting to go to the jungles of the Far East, instead they are thrown into the bleakest winter and the ice and snow of Holland.

Eric Harden, the Medic who has looked after his fellows like his own children will not see young men left wounded on the battle field to die on the freezing ground. He returns three times under fire to ensure they live, but he does not, his

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Victoria Cross is guaranteed for his family by a slight of hand from his grateful Commanding Officer.

Episode 9 - Crossing the Rhine

Like Hanibal on his Elephants, you will be able to tell your Grandchildren you crossed the Rhine on a Buffalo!

Wesel is a dangerous place, and here we lose one of our favourite characters.

There is a gap in moral and Fred will never forgive himself.

Episode 10 - A Tough Finish

As the men go through a devastated Germany they see the smoke from the camps, the roads full of refugees but still the Nazi's cling on.

There is conflict as the Command tries to decide whether to recognise the white flags, who will miss a few more SS, a couple of German cottages, maybe they are better off dead.

The last man to die a veteran is killed accidentally by a very young face, just a few days from the end of the war and is buried next to another veteran and the last German they will see killed.

EPILOGUE:

Walter stands on the beach, behind him the black and white shadows of the past, he walks past the bodies, ahead of him the colourful flags and poppy wreaths of a memorial service and those that are left.

They move into the cafe bar at the top of the beach.

Today we also remember those that made the next dawn.

But not today's.

Without them all, none of us would be here now.

As we leave they sing their favourite song, the memory of a smoky pub 44 years ago.

Hundreds of poppies thrown from a landing craft wash up on the beach.

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The chorus of 'Goodbye Dolly Gray' fades as we leave them to remember.

FADE TO WHITE

I hope this synopsis and treatment has excited you to know more.

I would be delighted to share the full script with you which is around 70% finished with some rewrites completed. It is segregated into 10 episodes below is Episode One please feel free to ask for the full script or a specific episode.

Lets roll!

Si Biggs

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s.biggs.sb@gmail.com

00971585992539

<https://www.royalmarineshistory.com/commando-men-tv-film-movie>