

# No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando

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**No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando** was a [commando](#) unit of the [British Army during the Second World War](#). The first No. 10 Commando was proposed in August 1940, using volunteers from [Northern Command](#), however there was such a poor response that No. 10 Commando was disbanded and the men that had volunteered were posted to other commando units.

In early 1942 the commando was raised again, this time as No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando. By the end of the war the commando had become the largest commando in the [British Army](#) and included volunteers from France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Poland and Yugoslavia. There was another group of volunteers in X Troop which contained enemy aliens, Germans and Austrians who had escaped from [Nazi Germany](#).<sup>[1]</sup> Men from the No. 10 Commando served in the Mediterranean, Scandinavia, Burma and Western Europe during the Second World War, mostly in small numbers attached to other formations, never as a complete unit



**No. 8 French Troop**

The No 8 French Troop was formed in 1943 from 45 men of the disbanded 2nd Naval Infantry Battalion which had been stationed in the [Lebanon](#) and men who had been interned and released in Spain. The two French troops were combined under command of Kieffer and called the *1er Bataillon de Fusiliers Marins Commandos* ("1st Naval Rifles Commando Battalion").<sup>[12]</sup>

## Operations

The men from No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando were usually attached to other units who used their knowledge of the area of operations and the language to their advantage as interpreters and interrogators.

The first action men from the Commando took part in was the Raid on Dieppe ([Operation Jubilee](#)) on 19 August 1942.<sup>[20]</sup> Men from No. 3 ("British") Troop were tasked with gathering German documents from the town hall and distribute [French Francs](#) to the local [French resistance](#). The No. 1 (French) Troop were attached to [No.3](#) and [No. 4 Commando](#), to act as interpreters, gather information, and also to persuade Frenchmen to return with them and enlist in the [Free French](#) forces.<sup>[21]</sup> The men attached to No. 4 Commando assisted them in the capture of the Hess gun battery.

Most of the men from No. 3 Commando were captured during the landings. The men from No. 10 Commando / No. 3 Troop had one killed and two captured and never heard of again.<sup>[21]</sup> Among the Frenchmen of No. 10 Commando / No. 7 Troop captured were [Sergeant Major](#) Montailleur and [Corporal](#) Cesar. Montailleur was executed under the [Commando Order](#) issued by [Adolf Hitler](#), but Cesar managed to persuade the Germans he was a French Canadian and eventually escaped and returned to England.

## 1943

In early 1943, No. 5 Norwegian Troop worked with [No. 12](#) and [No. 14 Commando](#) raiding the Norwegian coast from their base in [Lerwick](#) in the [Shetland Islands](#)<sup>[21]</sup> and No. 3 Troop were involved in the [Sicily](#) landings ([Operation Husky](#)) attached to [No. 40 \(Royal Marine\) Commando](#) and [No. 41 \(Royal Marine\) Commando](#) and later the landings on mainland Italy.<sup>[22]</sup>

Starting in September a series of raids were carried out, by men from the two French troops and No. 3 Troop, on the French and [Low Countries](#) coastlines. These raids under the code names of [Operation Hardtack](#) and [Operation Tarbrush](#) were for beach reconnaissance, for the purpose of bringing back photographs and examples of mines and obstacles that had been laid.<sup>[23]</sup> In one of these raids Hungarian born [Lieutenant George Lane](#) (real name Dyuri Lányi) was captured and taken to see [Field Marshal Erwin Rommel](#) to be questioned, Lane believed he was not executed under the Commando Order because of his meeting with Rommel.<sup>[24]</sup> In total 12 men were reported missing during the Hardtack raids and only five were later accounted for.<sup>[25]</sup> The commando also took over responsibility for small scale parachute operations together with 4 (PARA) Troop, No. 12 Commando in September.<sup>[25]</sup>

In November No. 4 Belgian and No. 6 Polish Troops joined the [2nd Special Service Brigade](#) in Italy.<sup>[26]</sup> Notably the Poles captured a German occupied village alone when the 2/6th Battalion [Queen's Regiment](#) failed to reach a rendezvous on time.<sup>[27]</sup> Later in the year No. 2

Dutch Troop was sent to the Far East to work with [No. 44 \(Royal Marine\) Commando](#) and [No. 5 Commando](#) behind the Japanese lines in the Arakan in [Burma](#).<sup>[28]</sup>

## 1944

In January 1944 the Belgian No. 4 Troop and the Yugoslav No. 7 Troop attached to the 2nd Special Service Brigade were sent to the [Adriatic](#) to assist the [Yugoslav Partisans](#). Political differences in the Yugoslav troop and hostility from the partisans led to its disbandment. No. 4 Troop then worked with the [Vis Motor Gun Boat](#) flotilla boarding enemy shipping.<sup>[26]</sup> In April 1944, the commando lost No. 6 Polish Troop which was transferred to the [II Polish Corps](#) and later took part in the Polish assault on [Monte Cassino](#).<sup>[26]</sup>

By the time of the [D Day](#) landings the commando had lost the Yugoslav, Polish troops and the two French troops were attached to [No. 4 Commando](#) in the [1st Special Service Brigade](#) and landed on [Sword Beach](#). No. 3 Troop was divided by sections between the other eight commando units involved in the landings.<sup>[29]</sup>



Commandos engaged in house to house fighting with the Germans at Riva Bella, near Ouistreham

The French troops of 185 men in total landed on the left flank of Sword Beach during the second wave, of these only 144 managed to reach the assembly point half a mile inland. Their objective was the [Riva Bella Casino](#) in [Ouistreham](#). When they reached the casino the lightly armed French commandos were unable to break into the fortified building and called upon a [Sherman tank](#) to assist and soon captured the position.<sup>[30]</sup> In another sector of the landings Working Corporal Peter Master of No. 3 Troop attached to [No. 6 Commando](#) was ordered to walk down the main street of what seemed a deserted village. The intention was to draw fire and identify where the Germans were hiding.<sup>[17]</sup> By the night of D Day 1st Special Service Brigade, including No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando elements had crossed the [River Orne](#) and were dug in guarding the left flank of the [6th Airborne Division](#).<sup>[31]</sup>

For the next three months No. 3 Troop carried out patrols in advance of the British lines. These patrols were not without loss. The troop commander Captain Bryan Hylton-Jones was captured trying to lead resistance fighters through the lines. Some of the men captured would become prisoners of war while others were never heard of again.<sup>[32]</sup> Hylton-Jones was later released from captivity by [No. 46 \(Royal Marine\) Commando](#) when they captured a German field hospital at [Pont-l'Évêque](#).<sup>[33]</sup>

By the time the [Allies](#) reached the [River Seine](#) the original 185 French troops, had been reduced to only 40 unwounded. The numbers in the French ranks were quickly filled by men

who had started training as a new No. 7 French Troop using the number left vacant when the Yugoslav troop was disbanded.<sup>[34]</sup>

In mid 1944 No. 2 Dutch Troop returned to Europe their first mission on the European mainland was [Operation Market Garden](#) 17 September 1944. The troop was divided between the three parachute divisions, 12 men were assigned to [1st British Airborne Division](#), 11 were assigned to [82nd Airborne Division](#), Five were assigned to [101st Airborne Division](#) and three were assigned to 1st Airborne Corps headquarters. Another five were assigned to [52nd \(Lowland\) Division](#), which was to have been flown into the area when Deelen Airport was captured, eventually they ended up in the Staff of 1st British Airborne Corps.<sup>[35]</sup>

The Belgian No. 4 Troop had returned to England in June and were selected to capture the French island of [Yeu](#) only to find during a reconnaissance that the Germans had already left. They moved to the European mainland and were attached to the [4th Commando Brigade](#) for the amphibious assault on the island of [Walcheren](#) ([Operation Infatuate](#)).<sup>[36]</sup>

The [assault on Walcheren](#) saw the largest concentration of No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando men since their formation parade in 1943. Under command Lieutenant Colonel Laycock the commando was deployed; Headquarters and a section from No. 3 Troop and No. 2 Dutch Troop with Headquarters 4th Commando Brigade. The French No. 2 and No. 8 troops with a section from No. 2 Dutch Troop with No. 4 Commando. While with [No. 41 \(Royal Marine\) Commando](#) were No. 4 Belgian and No. 5 Norwegian Troops.<sup>[37][38]</sup> In December the new No. 7 French Troop having completed training joined the other two French Troops still serving with No.4 Commando.<sup>[39]</sup>

## 1945

In January to March the three French troops carried out raids on the island of [Schouwen-Duiveland](#) to prevent the Germans using the Island to mount operations against [Antwerp](#).<sup>[39]</sup> In February the Norwegian High Command requested No. 5 Norwegian Troop take part in the Liberation of [Norway](#). The troop was transferred to the [Norwegian Army](#) at the end of April and then flown to [Sweden](#) dressed as civilians to join the Free Norwegian Brigade which was ready to cross the border if the German garrison refused to surrender.<sup>[40]</sup>

The next major operation involving men from No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando was the crossing of the [River Rhine](#) ([Operation Plunder](#)) and then crossing the [River Weser](#). The main commando force was [1st Commando Brigade](#) with men from No. 3 Troop attached.<sup>[41]</sup>

Also in 1945 two new Belgian troops had gone through the commando school and now formed No. 9 and No. 10 Troops. Together with No. 4 Troop they came under command [80th Anti-Aircraft Brigade](#) to provide local security. No. 10 Belgian Troop went onto liberate [Neuengamme concentration camp](#).<sup>[42]</sup>