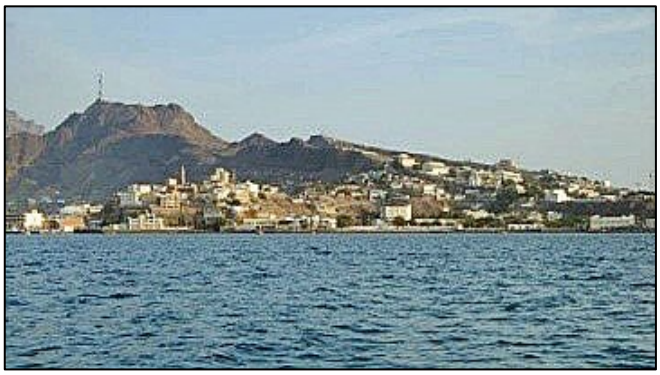
Aden, In Which we Served

For the thousands of us who served in Aden, especially in the 1960's, it was an experience never to be forgotten, many sad ones remembering those we left behind, the hardship and horror of the hatred generated by Yemen, Egypt supported by Russia. If we pause and reflect, we find after almost sixty years throughout the world nothing has changed.

Most of us arrived by sea, in the later years by air. As a nineteen-year-old Royal Marine I had embarked on the newly converted Helicopter/ Commando Carrier HMS Bulwark with 42 Commando Royal Marines on our way to our new operating base in Singapore. Having sailed across the Mediterranean visiting Gibraltar, Malta and a run around in North Africa we transited the Suez Canal with a mixed feeling of the unknown. For most of the ships company a visit to the beginning of the Far East was exciting but uncertain, this destination, with its history was going back in time. What were we going to see and experience no-one seemed to know.



After the passage through the canal these expectations began to rise and early one morning before parade we crowded on the port side, on the left facing to the bows. For myself as we approached Aden, seeing the landscape I thought, this is going to be a rubbish run ashore.



As Bulwark rounded the headland, we could see the harbour itself, which at first sight appeared to be a much better proposition.

Having spent time in Gibraltar and Malta and this being an Arab country, rules and conditions were to say the least slightly different as we soon found out. After a few days ashore the unit transferred to the desert west of Little Aden for training with 45 Commando Royal Marines, the resident unit.



Me on the left out in the desert

And that is the first of many more stories, having returned to Aden about six times before I returned in 1963 as part of 45 Commando Royal Marines.

Dennis Sparrow
Royal Marine Commando