

## **STURGIS, JOHN**

**RANK:** MAJOR

**DECORATIONS:** MC

**YEARS OF SERVICE:** 1939-1946 ?,

**SHIPS:** HMS MANCHESTER & HMS WARSPITE

**OPERATIONAL SERVICE:**D-DAY, WALCHEREN

**UNITS:** 41 COMMANDO

Joined Royal Marines from school in 1939, completed 18 months officer training and joined HMS *Manchester* which moved to Greenland waters to block the passage of German battleship [*Bismark*]. Sailed with a Malta Convoy; hit and badly damaged by torpedo. Joined HMS *Warspite* in Esquimalt and sailed for Australia, Madagascar and Mediterranean in support of Anzio landings. German radar-guided bomb destroyed the engine-room. Towed to Malta; not without incident.

To Achnacarry for Commando training and then to 41 Commando as a Section Commander. Describes Commando structure, D-Day planning at Eastbourne and situation at Southampton loading area. Landed from LCI(S) at junction between Sword and Juno Beaches at H-Hour+1. Kit described. Officer casualties caused Sturgis to become 'B' Troop Commander. Recce patrols and capture of Douvres-la-Delivrande radar station.

In first wave at Walcheren, his QMS was killed and batman wounded alongside him. Gun emplacements attacked from rear and captured. Attack described. After patrolling River Maas area he attended an Intelligence Course then re-joined 41 on the Rhine. Discusses training, experience and Commando camaraderie - and gives his views of the German soldiers.

Memorial Bridge for access to Walcheren fortifications was built by locals and opened by Sturgis.