

Colonel Richard Preston RM

Born 27 July 1936 in Ruthin, Denbighshire and grew up on the Welsh border where his father was a Headmaster who later was ordained into the Cof E. Educated at the Priory School, Shrewsbury and Bishop's Stortford College where he represented the school at Rugby, Hockey, Cricket and Athletics.

Entered Infantry Training Centre RM on 12 May 1954 as a Probationary 2/Lt.

Under training 1954-58 which included a year in 40 Commando on operations in Cyprus (EOKA) and then in Malta to prepare for the landings at Suez.

45 Commando as Vickers Machine Gun Platoon commander 1959-61 in Malta, Libya and from April 1960 in Aden and the Aden Protectorate. 43 Commando on formation as Mortar Troop commander (Commando organisation changed from Troops to Companies in 1961) 1961-63. The Commando took part in the Norwegian annual mobilisation exercise in late October 1962 when winter arrived early and they found themselves inside the Arctic circle in snow with no winter clothing or training.

Trained as a FAC to join HMS Albion but the post was abolished. HMS Ashanti as OCRM for Gulf commission 1964-65. Deployed ashore during Radfan campaign with ship's Wasp helicopter to direct strikes by Hunters from Khormaksar. HQ Plymouth Group as Staff Captain Q (Ops) 1965-67. Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham and then Staff College Camberley 1967-8. Directing staff of Officers' Training Wing Lympstone under Jeremy Moore 1968-71. First course at the National Defence College 1971-2. Department of CGRM as G2 (Ops/SD) 1972-74. Responsible for setting up team to form and train an Imperial Iranian Marine Corps and for the establishment of security for the nuclear submarine base at Faslane, road convoys of nuclear material and the security of offshore oil installations. Second in command of 40 Commando 1974-76. Deployed to Cyprus when the Turkish Army invaded in July 1974. Two deployments in HMS Bulwark to the Mediterranean and the West Indies/USA. Tour of West Belfast 1975. Fort Bragg for Psychological Operations course at the Special Forces School 1976. D Ops (PsyOps) and AD Ops (Rest of the World) on staff of ACDS (Ops) in MoD 1976-79. Desk Officer for evacuation from Iran following the 1979 revolution and for the plan to evacuate 170,000 British "belongers" from Rhodesia in the event of the Smith regime being unable to maintain law and order. This plan led to the enhancement of facilities on Ascension island that proved vital in 1982. CO Royal Marines Poole 1979-81. Developed plans to deal with maritime terrorism and to deploy a landing craft base in Norway to support 3 Commando Brigade. Chief of Staff (CoS) to MGRM Commando Forces (Jeremy Moore) 1981-84. Acted as military adviser to Admiral Woodward from April to end of May 1982 when he reverted to being CoS to General Moore as Commander Land Forces Falkland Islands. Final appointment Director of Manpower and Personal Services to CGRM in MoD.

Played Rugby for Devonport Services 1961-63 and Hockey for RM and in Welsh squad. Hunted with Spooners and West Dartmoor, East Devon, Portman and Dartmoor Hunts.