Report on a visit to the Liddell Hart Centre in London on September 22, 2010 to read the 4 boxes of papers of Brig GCS Montanaro.

Lt. Montanaro served in the RE (Royal Engineers) in France and was evacuated from Dunkirk.

In November 1940 as a Captain he took command of 101 Troop from the injured Capt Woolett.

101 Troop was a special independent troop of Number 6 Commando.

The idea of using canoes was sold to Sir Roger Keyes by Roger Courtney of 8 Commando at Inverary in the autumn of 1940.

Courtney set up the SBS (Special Boat Section) using Folboats aka Cockles.

Initially each Commando would establish its own canoe section, but in the event only 6 Commando did so.

Training in canoe raiding by 101 Troop lasted until 1942 on the West Coast of Scotland with two objects; 1) attack enemy shipping with limpet mines, and 2) perform limited recce of the enemy coast, landing for the purpose.

Montanaro's address in 1941 was 101 Troop HQ, Salen Hotel, Acharacle, Argyll.

The war establishment of 101 Troop was 80 men in three sections:

A. Landing Force of 46 men;
   Subalterns 1
   Sergeants 4
   Corporals 8
   Lance Corporals 12
   Privates 20

B. Troop HQ, of 6 men;
   Captain 1
   Troop Sergent Major 1
   Signallers 2
   RAMC (medics) 2
C. Canoeing Detachment of 28 men;
   - Subalterns 2
   - Lance Sergeants 4
   - Corporals 8
   - Privates 12
   - Signallers 2

Montanaro issued the following Standing Order from his HQ in the Salen Hotel on June 17, 1941.

Here is part of it;

"Copies to Mr Edgar (Factor-Dorlin), Mr Mackenzie (Keeper-Shielbridge)

1. **Shooting** is prohibited at any time except ....

d. The following areas & targets are allotted. Only on these will any firing take place;

   - **Dorlin Estate**: Crows, young rabbits, but not on the farm land unless permission is asked of the tenant on the spot.

   - **Shielbridge Estate**: Exactly as above.

   The exact areas concerned will be ascertained before any firing takes place.

   e) It must be clearly understood that the above concessions have been very kindly made by the owners concerned for the dual purpose of offering practice and recreation, asnd to assist in the problem of local food supply.

2. **Fishing**

By kind consent of the estate concerned, the following fishing may take place.

   - **River Shiel**: A permit is required in order to fish the stretch from the new bridge Acharacle to the old bridge. Two such permits are held at Troop HQ.

   - **Loch Shiel**: A permit is required in order to fish the stretch from the bridge Acharacle to a point 12 miles up Loch Shiel. Four such permits are held at Troop HQ.

   - **The Sea Below HWM (High Water Mark)** is Crown Land and may be presumed free for fishing."
The training programme for 101 Troop in July 1941 was as follows:

14th Sunart and Ben Resipol - all day landing and re-section exercise

15th Salen – PT, canoe overturning with weapons & equipment, signalling, canoe make & mend

16th Glencoe – visit of Brigade Commander (Haydon)

17th Salen – inspection, demonstration: handling 18 Set in canoe, navigation, raid on coastal road

18th Salen – anti-tank gun instruction and drill, swimming

19th Salen – PT, lecture on demolition, weapon training with Bren and SMG, swimming

20th Central Ardnamurchan – individual cross-country, compass only, no maps, map memorisation

24th to 27th Loch Sunart – 42 mile canoe march, including encirclement of Ardnamurchan, bivouac in sea caves en route

28th Ardnamurchan – PT, fire control, shooting, grenade

Loch Sunart – swimming, towing and overturning canoe

29th to 30th Loch Sunart – canoe long-distance scheme, experiments with comproations

31st Resipol – PT and Judo, infantry assault tactics, practice of control by junior NCOs, advance in close country.

In 1942 101 Troop operated out of Dover doing some recces of the French coast and raiding Boulogne Harbour where it sank an oil tanker.

The papers contain a hand-written letter to Brigadier Haydon stating that some of his men would prefer RTU (Return To Unit) to returning to 6 Commando if/when 101 Troop were to be disbanded.

Courtney, however, returned from the Middle East in 1942 to form No. 2 SBS by absorbing personnel from 101 Troop.

Montanaro then transferred to the RN and became a Lieutenant Commander commanding the MF Flotilla of submersible craft designed for anti-submarine work.

He kept this command until the end of hostilities.

Postwar he served in Korea where he was appointed Brigadier.
Montanaro was a voluminous photographer, and his papers contain hundreds of them, both loose and stuck into albums, of:

- Wrens and civilian women, including presumably his wife and children. He liked women.
- Canoe operations in places in the Highlands which I cannot recognise but which could possibly be shortlisted or identified by reference to his diaries if anyone were interested.
- A new submersible craft for anti-submarine work.
- Dorlin. There is an album in Box 3 of 4 of his papers that contains, amongst many other pictures, 23 photographs that I can positively identify as taken in and around the grounds of Dorlin House. Four of the photographs show Castle Tioram (14.35, 14.37, 14.38, 15.6) and these include the attached photograph that came from the book on Special Forces.
- All of the photographs are copyright, and permission to obtain copies must be obtained from the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, Archives and Corporate Records Services, King's College London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS. Tel: 020 7848 2015 Fax: 020 7848 2760 E-mail: archives.web@kcl.ac.uk Website: www.kcl.ac.uk/lhcm.
- I do not intend to take any further action regarding Montanaro's papers, but suggest that anyone interested and familiar with the Western Highlands might find these photographs to be a treasure trove. Few wartime photographs of this area seem to exist.