

COMBAT ART



PRESS RELEASE:

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Combat Art – Personal Reflections from Afghanistan

The Market House (West Wing), Taunton, Somerset. 9th – 23rd Nov, Wed to Sat, 11am – 5pm.

A groundbreaking art exhibition opens in Taunton, Somerset this autumn documenting **40 Commando, Royal Marines'** last tour of Afghanistan and for the first time they had access to an extra piece of military kit – the **Combat Art Kit**.

The bespoke camouflaged kit, distributed to 500 Marines from all ranks, fits neatly into a combat trouser pocket and contains high quality art materials. The kits acted as a vehicle for personal expression - a document of experience as it happened.

The resulting exhibition showcases the usually unseen creativity of Royal Marines whilst on active service. A number of Royal Marines have generously chosen to share the contents of their kits with the wider public. These smaller drawings and paintings are complimented by larger works; including photography, objects and film, all made in the field.

The exhibition can be seen at the West Wing of the Market House Building in the centre of the 40 Commando's hometown of Taunton from 9th – 23rd Nov, Wed to Sat, 11am – 5pm.

The Combat Art Kit is the brainchild of Royal Marine widow Anita St John Gray who together with curator Tim Martin, artist Jon England and arts educator Stuart Rosamond developed the project. A variety of people from the Royal Marines including the former Commanding Officers at 40 Commando, Col M.J.A Jackson RM, recently awarded the DSO, and Col Alan Hooper RM, have advised on the project.

The benefits of using creativity and art to support physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing have been well documented over the past 30 years. The effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, currently receiving extensive media coverage, makes this project even more important, and timely. It is hoped that the kits can have a positive effect on individual's wellbeing and will ultimately become standard issue for the military.

The project could not have gone ahead without funding from the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund, Go Commando, Pardoes Solicitors, Brewin Dolphin Investment Management and further support from Project Taunton.

ENDS

25th October 2013