

# **BSODR 2017 ANNUAL MEETING CONFERENCE DINNER - THURSDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

## **WELCOME TO THE HOME OF THE ROYAL MARINES and the THE COMMANDO FORCES OFFICERS' MESS, ROYAL MARINES BARRACKS STONEHOUSE**

When Stonehouse Barracks was built between and occupied in 1783, the British Marines became the very first complete British Corps to be provided with their very own accommodation barracks and three were built consecutively at Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth. Stonehouse Barracks is the only one still surviving and is now the oldest and most important military barracks in the country not forming part of a fortification. It is a rare example of 18<sup>th</sup> century military planning and architecture and is of great historic value to the City of Plymouth and more importantly, the Royal Marines Commandos.



You will be having your event in the stunning and most historic part of the barracks, The Commando Forces Officers' Mess which boasts a Grand Dining Room which displays many rare and valuable regimental paintings and pieces of 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> century silver. It also holds a large Victorian Mahogany dining table which was built in 1848 and is still in use today and at which, many of you will be sitting.

On the evening of 27/28<sup>th</sup> November 1941, the South West corner of the this

Dining Room took a direct hit from a German 500lb bomb causing extensive damage to the historic room and destroying many valuable paintings and antiques, including a Chinese Ming Dynasty Vase 'taken' by the Royal Marines during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. The bomb also killed three Royal Marines who were working in the Dining Room at the time and who are now said to haunt this building!

So, you will be dining in a very special and unique venue surrounded by a tremendous wealth of history and artefacts dating through its 234 year existence. The Royal Marines are incredibly proud of Stonehouse Barracks and it is a rare privilege, not offered to many outside the Royal Marines family, to be allowed to dine within the hallowed walls of the Commando Forces Officers' Mess.



I hope you are looking forward to your visit as much as we are looking forward to hosting you.