

25. NAN 'N' RN Commando, after they left Nisida, in June 1944, would travel through, be billeted in, went on leave in or were in action in, many locations. They first left the sea, and travelled across the bottom of Italy towards Campobasso and on to Termoli, where they found the sea once again. They travelled northwards from Termoli, with the sea on their right, up to and crossing the River Sangro, on up to Ortona, and to Pescara which was to be the proposed NOIC Adriatic Front, but was abandoned for another location.
26. On up to Porto San Giorgio/River Tenna. The Commandos made their camp here in the grounds of a pre war orphanage (Ospizio Marino di Fermo, Orfaneggio) that had been closed down for the war, between the sea and a railway line, with good access to the main north-south highway. They also had the opportunity to visit Fermo, when on leave.
27. Their first mission at the River Tenna, was to seek out German Snipers from the 167<sup>th</sup> Turkoman Division, who though being an unreliable lot were being stiffened up by the quick retreating Germans, who were planning to make a stand at the Gothic Line/River Po, further north. This was all in June 1944.
28. By August 1944, Ancona was reached, and hear facilities were set up for NOIC, and a Military Hospital, plus a useful airfield at Falconara.
29. Marotta on the coast, and Mondolfo a town inland, were both being reached between August and September 1944.
30. By September 1944, Pesaro and Riccione was reached.
31. In October 1944. While at Riccione, NAN 'N' RN Commando were able to use some captured German transport. Rimini was entered at this time as well.
32. By early December 1944 Ravenna was reached and the River (Canal) Uniti was crossed. The Germans were retreating fast, but still able to hold up the rapid movements of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Front Line. This was buying the Germans time, to establish the Gothic Line and their defences on the River Po, before the Winter set in.  
SEE FOOTNOTE 6.
33. By mid December Porto Corsini was reached. This small port to the north of Ravenna, was heavily damaged towards the end of the war, so much so that after the war it was rebuilt by the Italians, and with the post war expansion of Ravenna into the surrounding countryside, Porto Corsini was subsequently renamed Marina di Ravenna. NAN 'N' Commando had to clear mines out of the mouth of the River (Canal) Lamona which flowed out into the Adriatic Sea, at this location, and also to keep the port open for supply purposes. 'N' found themselves here up against the remnants of the SS Battalion which had a week or so earlier caused Popski so much trouble in Ravenna. Once the Front Line had settled down for the Winter, some of NAN 'N' Commando were able to return back to Porto San Giorgio for Christmas 1944.
34. In March 1945, NAN 'N' RN Commando began to hear news of another big operation.

35. In early April 1945, 8<sup>th</sup> Army and 5<sup>th</sup> Army recommenced their Spring campaign to crack the Gothic Line and cross the River Po, but that was inland. NAN 'N' RN Commando did not have to bother with that, as being on the coast at the seaward end of the front line, they could use their DUKW's and go round the end of the Front Line and out into the Adriatic Sea, swinging north and then landing far behind the enemy to establish a beachhead. The mission was to be the lagoons at Comacchio. Again landings were to be made using DUKW's.  
SEE FOOTNOTE 7.
36. Operation 'Fry' started as raids on Lake Comacchio itself in early April 1945, this was followed by operation 'Roast' again on Lake Comacchio in early April 1945. Operation 'Cinderella' was to be next. This was to be a projected or simulated landing north of Porto Garibaldi, but due to heavy defences and the fact that operation 'Impact' was scheduled to start at the same time of 10/11 April 1945, operation 'Cinderella' was cancelled. Instead operation 'Impact' started on 10/11 April 1945 and was the capture of a bridge over the Menata Canal. The final job was operation 'Impact Royal' which was the capture of a bridge over the Fossa Canal on 13/15 April 1945.
37. Following Comacchio, 8<sup>th</sup> Army crossed, the River Adige. It was crossed inland, but the Commandos were located, where it flowed into the Adriatic Sea, so again the Commandos did not have to cross the River, they travelled around and on up by Sea.
38. Chioggia was reached by 8<sup>th</sup> Army about, the fourth week of April 1945. Again the Commandos bypassed and travelled around by Sea.
39. By late April 1945, the south of Venice was in sight and then quickly, north east of Venice to Jesolo (today known as Lido di Jesolo) was reached by the end of April 1945.
40. The Armistice came into force in Europe in May 1945. (It was not known at that stage whether or not the Germans would recommence the war from Norway and Austria, also the Russians were moving ever closer to Yugoslavia). However NAN 'N' RN Commando were to be denied Austria and Yugoslavia, for they received orders to pack up and travel in a convoy, by road, back to Naples.  
SEE FOOTNOTE 8.
41. Once they arrived in Naples. NAN 'N' RN Commando were then embarked for the return journey by sea to the River Clyde. As NAN 'N' RN Commando travelled back home to England, they and other highly trained service personnel, who had been 'freed up' by the end of the war in Europe were beginning to become aware that the war in the far east was still continuing.  
SEE FOOTNOTES 9 AND 10.
42. From the Clyde NAN 'N' RN Commando proceeded back to HMS Armadillo and from whence they came.
43. In August 1945, (and while still at HMS Armadillo) they heard the news that the war in the Far East was over.

44. While NAN 'N' RN Commando were at HMS Armadillo, Alec Varley and Brian Wallace were in close touch with Roger Wake, over the preparations for the disbandment of NAN 'N' RN Commando. Roger Wake was at this time also dealing with the preparations for the disbandment of the other remaining RN Commando Parties.

SEE FOOTNOTE 11 AND 12.

43. Some of NAN 'N' Commando remained in the Royal Navy, Royal Navy Reserve or Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve post war, but many were subject for demob, and finally NAN 'N' Commando was disbanded in November 1945.

#### FOOTNOTE 1.

From logic, it can be assumed that on completion of Tom Turton's RNVR Officer training at HMS Royal Arthur he was posted to HMS Quebec/HMS Copra in Scotland. On arrival, as a General Duties Officer, he was sent on to HMS Armadillo, where he met Bill Redshaw, and together they found themselves in GEORGE 'G' Naval Beach Party, then preparing for the landings in Algeria, North Africa.

#### FOOTNOTE 2.

Bill Redshaw confirmed on his visit to Guildford in the late 1980's that the plans for the beach landings on Sicily had been changed at the last minute, which meant all the maps had to be quickly altered by hand and all the air reconnaissance photographs were nearly all useless, no time to get all new decent replacements, as the planning had been going on for months with the cooperation of the RAF in the air and Combined Operations Pilotage Parties at Sea and on the beaches.

#### FOOTNOTE 3.

Many PRIVATE PHOTOGRAPHS were taken of this exercise, which was frowned upon by the Navy, as taking personnel photographs could cause a security breach should individuals later, along with their kit, become prisoners of war, the enemy could obtain information that should have remained secret. However, a blind eye, was often turned. 8<sup>th</sup> Army News had been very active in the North African, Western Desert Campaign of October 1942 to May 1943, they were popular with Montgomery, who took them to Sicily in July 1943 and to Italy in September 1943, so it is very much a possibility that they took the OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHS of this exercise, while waiting, like the RN Commandos, for the next operation.

#### FOOTNOTE 4.

Alec Varley confirmed on his visit to Guildford in the mid 1980's that while they were at Nisida, he was sitting in a room, at a table, with Tom Turton, when a Naval Officer (not a Commando), came into the room and threw a small package onto the table. The package, on being opened, contained two small bronze Oak leaves. One for Tom and one for Alec. These were mentioned in dispatches regarding: T/Lieutenant Thomas J Turton RNVR 'N' Commando (Sicily), London Gazette 21/12/1943 and T/Lieutenant Alec Varley RNVR 'N' Commando (Anzio), London Gazette 9/5/1944. (Tom Turton's award had come through for his work on Roger, beach at Pachino in Sicily. The awards for Roger, beach appeared to be the only ones, made and relate to 'N3'. Those recommendations made for 'N1' and 'N2' were apparently, not signed for by Russell/Redshaw respectively for their own reasons, especially as they had been

much rivalry back at HMS Armadillo between the regular RN Officers and the reserve Officers).

#### FOOTNOTE 5.

Alec Varley also confirmed that while they were at Nisida, they shared their accommodation with OBOE 'O' RN Commando. Another mission was to take place, and either 'N' or 'O' was to join ABLE 'A' RN Commando in Corsica, but not both. It was decided to toss a coin and Tom and Alec represented 'N'. The outcome was 'O' went off to Corsica, joining 'A' for the worst mission and the worst number of casualties to affect the whole of the Royal Navy Commandos in the entire war. It was, operation 'Brassard' the invasion of Elba on 17 June 1944.

#### FOOTNOTE 6.

Vladimir Peniakoff (POPSKI of Private Army fame) had his base at Rimini. He was involved in action on a bridge, during the capture of Ravenna in early December 1944. At the same time the Germans knew that 8<sup>th</sup> Army had Special Forces operating in this area, so they moved in their own crack SS Battalion. Some of PPA were to cross the River (Canal) Uniti by putting their Jeeps over the DUKW's they had, but some of PPA had found a bridge crossing, which a German SS Battalion had not yet blown up, so it was decided to capture the bridge intact. The slight problem that Popski had was the medieval towers in Ravenna, where being used by the SS Battalion as observation towers to spot for their Artillery, but at the same time they could also see down onto the bridge that Popski wanted. Popski was told by 8<sup>th</sup> Army to use our Tanks (The Lancers) to Blow up the towers, but Popski for his own personal reason wanted to preserve the historical architecture of Ravenna, so he managed to persuade the gunners to hold fire, until he captured and crossed the bridge. However, the Germans noticed the lack of shelling from the English, and this gave the SS Battalion the opportunity to counter attack back across the bridge, and led to Popski being wounded and evacuated. NAN 'N' RN Commando had been briefed about their next mission, which was to be the capture of Porto Corsini which would help 8<sup>th</sup> Army to then make a dash to cross the River Lamona, before the onset of Winter. Porto Corsini was just up the coast from Ravenna, but just south of Comacchio and the German Gothic Line, about half way. 'N' knew about the DUKW's that Popski would be finishing with at the end of his mission so Tom Turton and Hugh Birley (ex 'D' Commando) went along and were supposed to see Popski, but he had by then been evacuated, so they spoke to Jean Caneri (Major Canary who was Popski's 2<sup>nd</sup> I/C. The DUKW's were secured and duly used for the capture of Porto Corsini. However, NAN 'N' could not exploit their victory and cross the River (Canal) Lamona, because the SS Battalion started to float mines down the River and out into the small port area, which 'N' were then told to deal with.

#### FOOTNOTE 7.

Syd Kipling could recall that the DUKW's they used were very good in deep water such as on the Sea or in Canals, you could travel quite fast in them. However, the wheels when wet or in shallow water could get stuck easily on sandbars or on the muddy earth banks (dykes) that surrounded the Lagoons at Comacchio. It was then impossible to dig them out, or place mats under the wheels, and this was made worse by constant shelling and small arms fire. The only way out was to be towed out by a chum, but of course he could end up stuck just like you.

#### FOOTNOTE 8.

It is likely that just prior to receiving the order to pack up, that Tom Turton had his accident and broke his leg in his Jeep and ended up in a Military Hospital, which in all probability was in Ancona. It must be noted that in June 1944, the command (probably by seniority) changed from Tom Turton to Alec Varley, and there is no other logical explanation for this change, other than Tom's accident, but immediately after Tom's accident Alec Varley received the pack up order, which he (the new Commanding Officer) had to deal with.

#### FOOTNOTE 9.

ALL RN Commando Parties on their return to HMS Armadillo from Europe, and where appropriate ie those who had not already been disbanded, were to be bought up to strength as quickly as possible, and then sent out to the far east to fight against the Japanese. NAN 'N' Commando was chosen to go, and therefore put on standby to join 'Tiger Force' in the Pacific for operation 'Downfall' the invasion of the Japanese mainland. This force was split between operation 'Olympic' the invasion of the southern Island of Kyushu set to begin in November 1945 and the later operation 'Coronet' the invasion of the main Island of Honshu, near Tokyo, scheduled for the spring of 1946. However, other events in the far east brought the Second World War to an end by late August 1945.

#### FOOTNOTE 10.

Syd Kipling had married Loreta (Leda) at the end of May 1945. They could not both return with NAN 'N' Commando to Naples in June 1945, because the necessary paperwork had not been prepared for Syd to bring his Wife home to England. The delay cost them five weeks. Syd and Loreta (Leda) arrived in Naples in July 1945, by which time NAN 'N' Commando were back in England and back at HMS Armadillo. Syd and Loreta (Leda) travelled back from Naples, along with other service married couples in the troopship Duchess of Richmond, which docked in Liverpool, August 1945. From Liverpool, Syd went straight in to 'end of war leave' and took his Wife to his home town of Brighton in Sussex.

#### FOOTNOTE 11.

After Syd Kipling finished his 'end of war leave' he proceeded back to HMS Victory at Portsmouth, his home port, for a draft. He was told they did not want him as he was a Commando, under Combined Operations. He was to proceed to HMS Copra at Southend. On his way through London, Syd stopped at the Combined Operations Headquarters in Whitehall, he was told, do not bother to go to Southend, they had closed down and moved up to Scotland and had become part of HMS Quebec in August 1943. Syd was not to know all of this, as at that time (1943) he was with NAN 'N' Commando overseas in the Mediterranean with all the others in NAN 'N' Commando. He was told in London to proceed to HMS Quebec in Scotland. On arrival at HMS Quebec, he was told to proceed to HMS Armadillo. On arrival at HMS Armadillo he reported to Roger Wake to enquire about NAN 'N' Commando, Roger Wake was very busy preparing for the final decommissioning of HMS Armadillo, but told Syd, 'N' had been disbanded the previous November (1945). However, Roger Wake confirmed, that a few of his old chums were still in the area on 'care and maintenance' of Landing Craft, and Syd soon found his old chum Ray Bromley was one of them. Syd was also told by Roger Wake that an Officer from 'N' was still around, and Syd soon found it was Brian Wallace. Brian was busy INCINERATING information and documents concerning 'N' and Brian told Syd, that on their return from Italy in September/October 1945 Alec Varley and Brian Wallace had

gone to see Roger Wake to prepare for disbandment. Alec Varley asked Roger Wake what he was to do with the information and documents concerning 'N' from January 1944 to July/August 1945, as they should be passed on to Admiralty Records Section, for archiving. Roger Wake was equally very busy at the time preparing for the first phase of the decommissioning of HMS Armadillo, and said he would keep a few documents, but the rest were to be destroyed. Roger Wake stated there was an old incinerator in HMS Armadillo and they could use that. When Syd met up with Brian Wallace, the incinerating job was complete, and apart from personnel private information or documents that were kept by individuals we now know, today, why very few official pieces of information and documents have survived.

#### FOOTNOTE 12.

Syd Kipling moved from Brighton, Sussex, up to the Guildford Area of Surrey in 1947. Even though everybody was moving around, Syd Kipling knew about Tom Turton's connection with the Public House known as the 'Black Bull' at Whetstone, along with the fact that Tom had moved to Kent to live, post war. Syd Kipling had found this out by trying to trace old comrades through the Admiralty, but they were not very helpful. Syd Kipling did not know the name of Tom's new Public House or which Town in Kent, Tom was living in. Syd Kipling only found out the details in the late 1980's, from Bill Redshaw while they were all in the RN Commando Association then in existence. Bill Redshaw confirmed at that time that he had been lucky to visit Tom post war at the 'Black Bull' at Whetstone and the 'Duke of York' in Tunbridge Wells, in Kent, but again at that time Bill Redshaw had lost contact with many of the old members of NAN 'N' RN Commando, who themselves had moved on around England and were difficult to track down, many however were traced in the late 1980's when the RN Commando Association was formed, but more recently, many have now passed away.