

MCGRATH, PAUL

RANK: SERGEANT

DECORATIONS: DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL

YEARS OF SERVICE: 1941 – 1945

SHIPS:

OPERATIONAL SERVICE: DIEPPE, NORTH AFRICA, ITALY, SICILY, GERMANY

UNITS: A COMMANDO, 40 COMMANDO, 30 ADVANCED UNIT

This is the narrative of a founding member of Ian Fleming's Intelligence Commando, later to become 30 Advanced Unit. McGrath joined the Royal Marines in December 1941 aged 18 years. After attending OCTU (which he failed), he joined the RM Commando, latterly 'A' Commando and then 40 Commando RM.

In 40 Commando he was a member of 10 platoon commanded by Lieutenant Peter Huntingdon-Whitely charged with an intelligence snatch operation at Dieppe. He describes the raid on Dieppe where he was on HMS Locust and then, when the Commando was ordered to reinforce the Canadians on White Beach, was in an LCM which struck an obstacle. Swimming for his life he was eventually rescued. He has forthright views on the reasons for the Jubilee failure.

With five others from 10 Platoon he volunteered for the Ian Fleming's Intelligence Commando. He was involved in various personal adventures in North Africa in 1942 where he learned to parachute as a prelude to an abortive operation in Italy. He escaped from hospital in Tunisia to return to his unit in Sicily and was involved early intelligence exploitation operations.

On return to the UK he rejoined a reformed 30 Advanced Unit at Littlehampton and then in the early days after D day operating with the Americans on the Cherbourg peninsula where he describes in detail their operations and other escapades in the vicinity of Cherbourg and Brittany for which he was awarded the DSM. The narrative ends in Kiel where 30 Advanced Unit were tasked with exploiting the large naval installations. A tough uncompromising man, he tells his story without pulling punches and there are many anecdotes of his service in 30 Advanced Unit which will reward any listener.