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SCU-NEWSLETTER No. 4/09
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1. The next DWS/SCU Meeting takes place at the Conservative Club, Stony Stratford on **Monday 14th December 2009**. If you are attending, remember this is the Christmas Lunch Meeting so will those involved (as SCU or DWS) and wanting lunch, please let Phillip Canale know. Telephone: **01908 511 164**. Please telephone Phil in the *evening* – but book early.

2. Patton, and his use of ULTRA.

You will have seen the article about Patton and his use of ULTRA in the **3/09 'Special Edition'** SCU-Newsletter. I am given to understand that it is going to be published in the prime journal we chose but I have not yet been given the date. As soon as I know I will circulate you.

I have sent out copies to historians in a variety of colleges and military establishments and this continues. There is more to say so watch this space.

3. Major 'Jack' Saunders.

In the last SCU-Newsletter I included a passage from Richard Gambier-Parry's Christmas Message for 1944. In this, he referred to the loss of Major Saunders in an aircraft returning from France to London. I also mentioned his two daughters Tessa and Celia – both of whom worked at Whaddon Hall. However, the family did not know what happened to him or any details of the flight. As part of my research for 'The Secret Wireless War' I found an entry for the flight from France. Sadly, I was unable to say what happened to the plane but at least the family had some information regarding the flight itself. The entry records:

On 29/30 September 1944 Lysander V9749 MA-M was lost on a flight between France to Tempsford. It lists the Pilot as F/O J. A. Lamberton and the three passengers [two of them RAF Officers] and the third was Major J. W. Saunders MBE.

Squadron 161 was the famous squadron based at Tempsford, carrying agents SIS and SOE into and out of occupied Europe. Mobile Construction, under my boss Dennis Smith (one of the 'Ascension' designers), were responsible for the installation, maintenance and updating of the equipment of the 'Ascension' agent-to-ground equipment on aircraft – most of which were based there. I went to Tempsford with Dennis on a number of visits and worked on the Hudsons and Venturas that were held there for this purpose. Flying in them afterwards to test our installation was always very exciting for a young man.

These aircraft were, of course, also employed in landing agents and dropping their equipment. So far as landing into occupied territory, this was mostly left to the Westland Lysanders with their short take-off and landing capability.

4. Wilf Neal and me in Singapore.

I was not aware that as Patton's 3rd Army SCU/SLU was disbanded, Wilf returned to Little Horwood and then – on being posted to 'The Far East' – found himself at the awful Nash Camp. This was a tented camp in the fields that still contained the Nash Wireless station that had handled our SIS Agent traffic – mostly to France and Belgium.

It also handled Norway – until Forfar opened. The station at Forfar in Scotland was necessary, due to the limited range of the MKVII & MKVII/2 (The Paraset') later supplied in fair quantities to Norway. However, it was from Nash that Edgar Harrison first made contact with the agent he had taken to Norway in 1940. That is described in Chapter 31 of 'The Secret Wireless War.'

Wilf has just written a most graphic piece about the horrors of Nash Camp with the appalling sanitary and ablution provisions. Later I might put a small section in the Newsletter as a reminder of how grim army life could be – even in a home posting.

Though one might certainly expect such conditions 'in the field' remember this was a long established unit closely connected with MI6 (Section VIII) where money was not a problem. Whilst I went off by BOAC to Delhi in July 45 – Wilf with a number of other operators – followed by troop ship in October taking nearly three weeks. The rest of his journey to Delhi was a nightmare. I will leave the details until later. However, a party of them was later posted to **No. 4. Wireless Regiment** in Singapore, arriving there 10th October 1946.

Already in Singapore with SCU11/12, I was a member of the 'Special Commissioners Cricket Team.' The Special Commissioner to Singapore was Lord Killearn. He had earlier been in Cairo and 'asked' Edgar Harrison to go with the 'Way Mission' to Georgia and the Ukraine. His task was ostensibly to show the Russians how to install the wireless gear into the British and Canadian tanks that were now arriving up from the South. However, Colonel Way also happened to be Deputy Director of Intelligence in HQ Cairo. Major John Bruce Lockhart of ISLD (MI6) accompanied Edgar – himself in Section VIII. No prizes for guessing the underlying role of the Mission. However, why they risked Edgar Harrison with his intimate knowledge of ULTRA operations near the front line in the Ukraine, seemingly to train Russian wireless engineers, remains a real puzzle to me.

I thought some 'Old Hands' amongst you would like to see a picture of Lord Killearn's cricket team and that is below. I am seated far left and Ferguson is seated far right. I flew out to India with 'Fergie' in mid-45 and came home with him in early 47. The team included Harland (seated on the ground) and Forrester both of whom had played for Kent Colts, Mattock had played for Gloucester in some capacity. Most of those shown were wireless operators and perhaps will be recognized by those who were out there at the time. Bert Fry, Maurice Richardson – and I am sure Wilf – will know some from their SCU days. Let me know if you have news of any of them.

We were playing **4th Special Wireless Group** and I hope Wilf was amongst the spectators. I note "G. Pidgeon scored 3." I should like to report I had better scores in our other matches – but sadly the records are missing !



COMMISSIONERS GAIN 10th WIN

ON Thomson Road Police ground, on Sunday the Special Commissioner's C.C. recorded their tenth successive win in a game of cricket against 4th Special Wireless Group. Scores were:

S.C.C.C.

R. G. Harland b Brown 3. J. Mattock b Brown 19. R. Clough c Davis b Brown 13. A. Parthasarathy b Ryles 0. J. G. Reeves b Brown 3. D. Forrester b Ryles 7. J. Bunker b Ryles 0. R. H. G. Combs b Ryles 1. G. Pidgeon b Ryles 3. A. C. L. Ferguson not out 0. Extras 5. Total 57.

Bowling: Ryles 15-6-20-5; Brown 14-0-34-5.

4th SPECIAL WIRELESS GROUP

Lambert c Harland b Mattock 0. Parfit b Forrester 0. Freeman b Mattock 0. Brown run out 0. Ferrell c Forrester b Ferguson 8. Ryles run out 4. Evans b Mattock 3. Davis c Ferguson b Clough 14. Ostler c Sunderland b Mattock 0. Hayward b Clough 1. Haddenett not out 1. Extras 1. Total 32.

Bowling: D. Forrester 6-3-4-1; J. Mattock 13-7-9-4; A. C. L. Ferguson 5-2-15-1; R. Clough 3-1-4-2.

5. SCU/RSS Meeting.

As some of you already know from Bob King, the next meeting is on Sunday 25th April 2010 at Bletchley Park. I am sure we are all grateful to Bob and to Jean for all their hard work on our behalf. It is now up to as many as possible to turn up with family and friends. It seems that Bob did receive considerable support for our meetings to continue and so we go on one more year at least. However, it is up to us to find ways of continuing and perhaps that can be a discussion item on your programme Bob ?

6. Finally, I have had a few medical problems this year but happily all sorted. Now we are off for a couple of months or so to Tenerife to enjoy the sunshine. See you at Bletchley Park in April.

**Meanwhile, warmest good wishes for Christmas and the New Year
– to you and yours – from Jane and from me.**

Geoffrey Pidgeon