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1. A Happy New Year to you all.

Bletchley Park now, has just about said - *all that could be said* - about the 'Code breakers' without giving space telling the public more about Bill Tutte, Max Newman, Tommy Flowers and Colossus. The famous author and historian Sir Max Hastings described 'The Imitation Game' as a 'silly film' and its clear inaccuracies may finally slow down interest in just 'code breaking' - even in the brilliant Turing.

However, there is a vast untapped source of public interest in the up-coming work at Bletchley Park showing how ULTRA actually benefitted the war effort on the ground. Starting with the campaigns in North Africa, Sicily and Italy - leading to 'D-Day' and ULTRA's greatest success - decisively winning the war for the Allies against Germany by providing such precious intelligence out to the Allied Commanders in the Field.

Since 1948, some of my SCU-Newsletters have contained fresh facts about Bletchley Park and the work of MI6 (Section VIII). However, a few are more important than others and this contains a significant message the about myths still arising, especially when Bletchley Park come to record the work of the MI6 (Section VIII) Signals Liaison Units - **the voice of ULTRA.**

2. Myths!

Since I started writing these Newsletters I have been intolerant of myths associated with either Bletchley Park *or* Whaddon Hall. Many have been dropped but the best result for me was to see the end of the repeated myth of 'Captain Ridley's Shooting Party.' It was frequently alleged that he took a number of 'code breakers' down to Bletchley Park from MI6 (SIS) HQ in Broadway Westminster as a trial run before the outbreak of war. They were certainly *not* all 'code breakers' but a cross section of all the staff at Broadway - both MI6 and GC&CS (the code breakers). That myth has fortunately now died a death!

3. Another massive myth - just waiting in the wings!

This is in '**Ike's Spies**' by Stephen E. Ambrose. This famous author wrote about 20 books - many about World War II - including 'Band of Brothers' - Pegasus Bridge' - 'The Supreme Commander' and 'The Wild Blue'! In 'Ike's Spies' - he makes many references to SLUs and the accomplished US Army Officers - chosen by Colonel Telford Taylor to be their SLO (Signals Liaison Officer). I seldom recommend a book but this one is quite special in its references to ULTRA and is a fascinating story - where the author had privileged access to Eisenhower's personal papers, his diaries and even interviews with the great man.

However, another extreme myth is created when Ambrose erroneously says: "*If the security of ULTRA was a first objective, the question arises, how was ULTRA information relayed to the field commanders safely and swiftly? The British had worked out a system of Special Liaison Units (SLUs) to speed the intercepted messages from Bletchley Park (BP), where the decoding and translating took place, to Churchill and the generals. In 1943 the United States began to create its own SLUs. The result was a huge success and an extraordinary achievement, showing Americans at their best.*" [My bold print]

Pardon me! '*...an extraordinary achievement, showing Americans at their best*' ? I am sorry to tell you that *all* the SLUs relaying ULTRA out to *all* Allied Commanders in the Field - with the British, Canadian and United States forces, were the creation of Richard Gambier-Parry's MI6 (Section VIII) based in Whaddon Village - some five miles west of Bletchley Park. Starting with two cars sent to the BEF in France in 1940, then more sophisticated vehicles in the North African theatre, then onto Sicily and Italy.

As for the United States armies after ‘D-Day’ and on into Germany, their SLUs were in two parts. The all-important wireless vans receiving ULTRA from Bletchley Park, via the MI6 (Section VIII) wireless station in Whaddon, were converted US Army Dodge Ambulances. I know, because I was one of the Mobile Construction team of seven at Whaddon Hall - who fitted them with wireless gear!



The wireless operators were all men from the Royal Corps of Signals, trained by MI6 (Section VIII). The cypher van was also a converted Dodge Ambulance and its cypher team were selected from trained specialist RAF personnel.

By the way, whilst there were still Red Crosses on them as we fitted them at Whaddon Hall, they were painted over before the SLU reached France.

If it was indeed - **“an extraordinary achievement”** – it was due to MI6 (Section VIII) under our boss Richard Gambier-Parry. All this is in Chapter 19 - ‘Mobile Construction’ - in my book ‘The Secret Wireless War.’ However, I had not then read ‘Ike’s Spies’ and seen this travesty of the facts.

This is just to show you a typical complete Signals Liaison Unit (SLU) - this one was with General Patton’s 3rd US Army. It shows the wireless van in one of our converted Dodge Ambulance - first in the row. Further down there is another Dodge Ambulance, containing the cypher unit manned by the RAF. My friend Wilf Neal from MI6 (Section VIII) - was one our wireless operators receiving ULTRA for General Patton’s use.



Finally, I would add that I have always had the highest regard for the US Military both back then and now - but I could not allow the statement by Stephen Ambrose go unchallenged.

5. The Thomas Crapper Myth!

Perhaps my aversion to ‘myths’ of all kinds - arises from my family’s 100-year battle with the Thomas Crapper Myth? I finally expunged that with the publication of my most recent book.

Busted Flush! The Thomas Crapper Myth. ‘My Family’s Five Generations in the Bathroom Industry’

It was launched in November 2014 at the Science Museum in South Kensington in front of my family, the press and some senior members of the bathroom industry. You can see a synopsis by looking at my website (above). This book and **‘The Secret Wireless War’** - are available from Amazon worldwide.

6. Another thing!

Ambrose also lists some of the US Army Officers who worked at Bletchley Park - variously expressed as numbering 23 to 28. However, it was agreed by the US Army that ULTRA would only be passed to US Commanders by the British system of Signals units (the SLUs) but *'where an American officer is Commander-in-chief, an American will be attached to the unit to act as liaison officer 'to overcome difficulties that may arise in regard to differences in language.'* That now causes some amusement but perhaps it helped make it acceptable to the British Signals Liaison Officers at the time - who might otherwise have expected to complete the entirely British nature of the unit.

These chosen men soon fitted in with one notable exception (see below). Group Captain Frederick Winterbotham in his sensational book **'The Ultra Secret'** (1974) - makes special reference to appointing an American Army officer to be in charge of the *whole* SLU unit attached to the 9th TAC (Tactical Air Command) under Major General 'Pete' Quesada.



Left: Major General 'Pete' Quesada C.O. 9th US TAC.

Right: Group Captain Frederick Winterbotham who, in writing his book 'The Ultra Secret' in 1974, gave the world its first knowledge of ULTRA.



Otherwise, for example with General Patton's 3rd US Army, Captain 'Hutch' Hutchinson of the Royal Corps of Signals, commanded the SLU itself. Whereas its SLO (Signals Liaison Officer), was US Army Major Melvin Helfers - in line with the US Army's Agreement with Winterbotham. It was the American SLO who was responsible for taking the deciphered ULTRA message to the Army Commander - in this case General Patton. My colleague Wilf Neal was one of our wireless operators with the 3rd US Army in France and went all the way with General Patton - on into Germany.

All this contradicts Abraham's comment about US Army's having US Army Officers in charge - yes they were the SLOs - because that is what General Marshall wanted but they did not run our SLUs!

Apart from Wilf Neal, the only remaining colleague from the US Army SLUs is Bernard Gildersleve. He was with the 9th US Army TAC (Tactical Air Command) where they had the only US Army Officer in total charge - see above. Bernard tells me Captain R. T. Hoopes was a humourless man who did not like the 'Brits' in the SLU and they did not like him! Perhaps the 9th TAC decision was not a good idea after all? The others - like the 3rd US Army SLU - worked very well together, where MI6 (Section VIII) men were often referred to as - the 'Secret Limeys!'

I find Abraham's comment - that the British SLO's were just 'messengers' taking the ULTRA message to their Army Commander very demeaning - as well as inaccurate. He goes on to seemingly imply superior intellect by US Army SLOs who could evaluate the ULTRA message for *their* Army Commanders. We had been doing this work since 1940, then across North Africa, into Sicily and onto Italy. Our SLOs knew exactly what to do - to evaluate as necessary - and how to present the ULTRA!

Adolph Rosengarten - was one of the eminent US Army SLO (Signals Liaison Officers) mentioned by Abrahams as one of ten - who became famous and/or very wealthy in their later careers. He was a Princeton Lawyer but after the war was a director of the giant Merck Chemical and Pharmaceutical Company.

Rosengarten wrote his wartime story **“With Ultra From Omaha Beach To Weimar, Germany – A Personal View.”** He was the SLO for the United States 1st Army - first of all commanded by General

Omar Bradley then General Courtney Hodges. I will quote a passage from it

“My intended function was to receive and evaluate the ULTRA produced by the specialists at Bletchley Park and then radioed the material deemed pertinent to First Army’s present and future operations to the Signals Liaison, or SLU attached to its headquarters.

This unit, composed of English personnel, used the ‘One time pad’ and wrote out the ULTRA on slips of paper which had to be destroyed within 24 hours.”



You will have noticed that he says the SLU was composed of ‘English’ personnel and knowing at least one Scot who was with SLUs - I trust that was just a slip of the tongue! (Picture by courtesy of David Hamer).

In reporting his death in 1990 – Princeton University Alumni Weekly said:

“During WWII Dolph assumed a role that was long unknown even to his relatives and friends. He enlisted U.S. Army intelligence officer, especially for generals Hodges and Bradley, particularly for intercepted messages in the German Enigma Signal Code. He participated in the invasion of France, won a Bronze Star and five battle stars, and rose to Lt. colonel. The experience aroused an intense interest in military history, in which he earned a doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania.”

Essential reading for all historians concerned in any way with Bletchley Park – is **‘ULTRA Goes to War’** - by Ronald Lewin. It is quoted by so many authors and I found it (*and still find it*) invaluable reading. Indeed in ‘The Secret Wireless War’ - it is the first listed in my Bibliography! Incidentally, this famous book is dedicated:

**‘To the Poles who sowed the seed and
to those who reaped the harvest’**

I will later have more news about the importance of the Polish mathematicians. They gave us the precious gift of an Enigma model - from which Bletchley Park and the Allied cause - reaped the harvest!

8. At long last!

The realization of the great part played by Richard Gambier-Parry’s MI6 (Section VIII) team based at Whaddon Hall is at long last being acknowledged. The story of the Bletchley Park success is in three parts. The ‘Y’ Service who collected the German Enigma, then the brilliant code breakers but they needed to put their vital ULTRA intelligence where it could be utilised.

There was an umbilical cord (or rather a landline!) between Bletchley Park to Whaddon Village and the MI6 (Section VIII) wireless station at 'Windy Ridge' from where the ULTRA - intended for Allied Military Commanders in the Field - was disseminated.

So reversing the process - with Bletchley Park telling the (long neglected) story of Richard Gambier-Parry's MI6 (Section VIII) and Whaddon Hall - the resulting publicity feeds directly back to Bletchley Park - thus further enhancing its incredible tale.

9. Perhaps I ought to add - for new readers.

All the SLUs mentioned above are, of course, mobile vans to enable the ULTRA to be received right in the heart of Military Commanders camp - on the move. However, there were fixed SLUs such as in Cairo but they were few and far between. Even in the drive across North Africa – Montgomery and his G2 (Chief Intelligence Officer) Brigadier 'Bill' Williams – depended on his mobile SLUs. We provided SLUs in major towns once they were fully under Allied control.

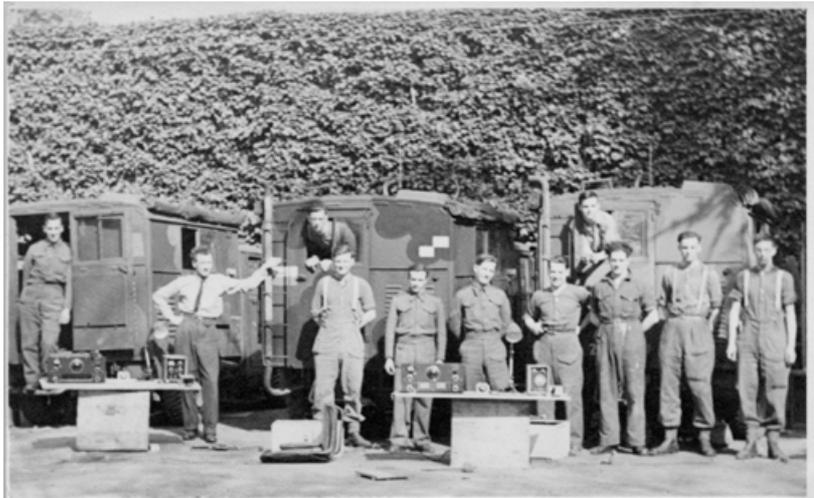
For example, a friend, Ray Small was a wireless operator in Station 'Sybil on the 6th floor of the King George V Hotel in Algiers and he moved on to Lord Tedder's Desert Air Force in Tunis. Here they were in a 'lovely villa' just outside the city and near Carthage.

In both cases, the equipment was a National HRO receiver and our own MkIII transmitter. It should be noted that it was common practice in France - if the army stayed for any period - to lift the table out with all its gear - and 'set-up-shop' in suitable premises. Both Bernard Gildersleve with US 9th TAC and Wilf Neal with 3rd US Army did just that on occasions..

These tables can be seen during fitting out at Whaddon Hall in front of three British Army wireless vans - intended for the British and Canadian Sectors.

There are a few members of Whaddon's Mobile Construction team and some army wireless operators from SCU8 here familiarising - themselves with the vans - prior to taking them to France.

Your truly - *with hair* - is leaning out of the right hand wireless van!



10. Thank you!

I have had a considerable 'feed back' about SCU-Newsletter 5-15 and I know that it is being copied and widely circulated. If you lost it - then send me an e-mail and I will send a further copy to you. I know I keep on asking you to print them out as hardcopy. However, for those interested in our history, some are a quite fresh look at the 'story' and - may I suggest - possibly worth keeping? I have recently been asked if the earlier more important ones could be made into a 'collection' in book form? I will look at that - just as soon as I can find the time!

With warm regards and best wishes,

Geoffrey

Richmond - January 2016.