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1. Sad News.

In line with all SCU-Newsletters, I start with the news of colleagues who have sadly passed away. I am sorry to say we have now lost Martin Shaw. After education at Halesowen Technical College, he became a jig and toolmaker at the Accles and Pollack factory - making tools for the aircraft industry. It was a reserved operation but he joined the local Air Training Corps, where he studied Morse code and other RAF trades.

He later volunteered for the RAF but finding the only vacancies at the time were for air gunners - he declined the invitation and instead joined the army. On learning he knew the Morse code they sent him to the Royal Corps of Signals and eventually he ended up at SCU7 our training wing for wireless operators at Little Horwood - being trained to be an operator in our SLUs (Signals Liaison Units) made ready in SCU8 to supply ULTRA to the Allied Commanders in the Fields on 'D-Day' and beyond.

He trained and met the basic requirement of 15 words per minute, meaning he could send the five figure groups at around 20. Unfortunately, on a training exercise he lapsed into plain language - an unforgiveable sin! He was not put through all the rigmarole of a Court Martial but dismissed from the training programme.

Due to his knowledge of the unit - he had to be 'kept on' and so was posted to our SCU3 at Hanslope about nine miles north of Bletchley Park. There his other skill as a toolmaker caught up with him and he was put onto its very secret **Rockex** production line.

The Rockex was an offline one-time tape cipher machine.

This was intended to replace Typex. Only 12 Mk1 Rockex cipher machines were built but one of the earliest Mk2 machines was used in 'E' Block at Bletchley Park in the late stages of World War II. This was under strict SIS control with civilian operators - instead of the usual WAAF operators there - using Typex machines.

It might be interesting to those few - still unaware (*Or perhaps choosing to ignore?*) the importance of Richard Gambier-Parry - that all of SCU3 at Hanslope with its RSS Abwehr traffic, Rockex production - and much more besides - was under his control.

One tends to forget his full title was Controller of SIS Communications - known during World War II - as MI6 (Section VIII) - and recruited by Admiral Sir Hugh Sinclair *before* he went on to purchase Bletchley Park!

This is just another indication of Gambier-Parry's importance to every aspect of the success of the Bletchley Park story. The quote from the War Report of the OSS below - might well echo the point I am making here!



2. 'OSS Station 'Victor' a new book on OSS wireless in World War II - by Phillip Williams.

"The importance of communications to secret activities cannot be overstated. It is the efficiency of the communications systems which make rapid intelligence, procurement and dissemination possible"

The above is from the War Report of the OSS [The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was a wartime intelligence agency of the United States during World War II, and the forerunner of the modern CIA]

I reproduce part of Phil's synopsis as follows:

"We are all aware of Bletchley Park and it's wireless operations but there was a US wireless organisation running in England during World War II, receiving and sending Morse traffic to field agents for the OSS - the forerunner to the CIA.

Between 1943 and 1945 the ancient village of Hurley in Berkshire became the site of a top secret US communication station known as Station VICTOR. It grew to become an essential communication link between "Secret agents" working in Nazi occupied Europe and Allied Command.

It served as a clandestine communications base for Secret Intelligence (SI) and X-2 counter intelligence units, also serving as a base station for nearly 200 agents parachuted into the Reich itself.

This is the 'Olde Bell Inn' - dating from AD 1135 in Hurley village - itself an ancient site close to the River Thames.



It is said that Eisenhower stayed at Hurley whose residents were totally unaware of its military importance. VICTOR was so secret that historically it has been overlooked. No publications on VICTOR exist, but thanks to the declassification of a comprehensive operational diary with over seventy unpublished photos, the story of OSS-Station VICTOR has now been written and can be told."

You will notice the sign "American Bar" on the right of the Inn but that bar was for US Army officers and distinguished guests only. Uniformed doorkeepers kept the young enlisted men away.

Although General Eisenhower stayed at Hurley's 'Olde Bell Inn' - Phil reports *'..it wasn't the General who got all the attention; it appears the servicemen were more interested in seeing his driver - Kay Summersby - than the General himself.'*

Readers of SCU-Newsletters and historians will not be surprised that Richard Gambier-Parry was also involved in station 'VICTOR'! At their request, he had sent our Captain Albert 'Bert' Gillies (MI6 (Section VIII) to ensure the highest standard of Morse was achieved. Gillies, was one of our training officers for agents at 23 Hans Place, just behind Harrods. (See 'The Secret Wireless War' page 307) and referred to in Phil's book as 'an SIS officer' and he also records that some training was at 23 Hans Place.

I thoroughly recommend Phil's book - especially to those interested in the work of the OSS who acted in a similar way to our own SOE - the Special Operations Executive - set in motion by Winston Churchill in early 1941. SOE was featured in my last SCU-Newsletter 4-16.

Incidentally, Dennis Smith and I were once returning from Hartford Bridge (now Blackbushe) in a Packard after test flights on 'Ascension' in B25 North American Mitchells, when we were ordered to one side in Staines-upon-Thames to make way for General Eisenhower's Cadillac staff car - complete with US Military Police outriders and a vehicle escort. Only now as I write, I cannot help but wonder if they were going to Hurley - some thirty miles away alongside the Thames?



Eisenhower's Cadillac staff car and Kay Summersby - his driver whilst in Europe.



Both the SHAEF HQ in Bushy Park and residence in Telegraph Cottage close to Richmond Park - are just a few miles further east of Staines.

3. My 'scruffy' method of research for 'The Secret Wireless War' and other books!

I have to look into at my 'library' from time to time. Most of it is packed away in boxes in the garage but looking at some reference books - I am astonished how many 'flags' were used.

Since I was a boy (a long time ago!) I objected to books with the corners turned down or with comments in the margin. However, I suppose my method is equally untidy - as you can see from the picture.

They are supposed to be 'sort of' colour coded but sometimes the 'system' failed and that is very clear. Incidentally, you may be interested in the title of these particular three books?

Easily the most flagged is Ronald Lewin's 'ULTRA Goes to War - The Secret Story' and both the others are by Nigel West. Sadly, I have others just as bad! Of course, I write research notes on pads - but then find myself 'flagging' those, so they look equally 'scruffy'!



The next SCU-Newsletter is being planned and hopefully it will include pictures of reproductions of our MkVIIIs and MkIIIs - and other things. Watch this space!

With my warm regards and best wishes,
Geoffrey
Richmond - August 2016.