

SCU-NEWSLETTER No. 2-18
Tuesday, March 6, 2018

1. A watery grave in Calcutta - for 12 of our MkVII transceivers.

Tom Kennedy headed the SIS wireless station in Kunming, where he and Jock Leslie also trained Chinese agents to handle our MkVII transceivers. Following the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan and its subsequent surrender, we closed the station but first they packaged and returned eight crates to us - their base - in Calcutta. With not much for me to do - they had put me in charge of the wireless stores - a miniature version of my father's stores at MI6 (Section VIII) HQ at Whaddon Hall!

In the cases were 10 Smith and Wesson automatic pistols with their super leather holsters and loads of ammunition. In others were a total of 12 MkVII in leather cases and some B2 (SOE) sets. Mike Vivian told me to dump the wireless sets but to take their cases and the pistols to him in the morning.

Where in east Calcutta was it safe to 'dump' secret wireless sets still in working condition? As our base was beside the Dhakuria lake - it struck me that was an excellent dumping site. There was an old boat nearby and my pal Fred Stapley and I went for a trial 'run' that afternoon with another MI6 (Section VIII) member - 'Fergie' Ferguson as the photographer.

As soon as it was dark, we loaded the sets and Fergie and Fred rowed us into the middle of the lake where I proceeded to lower the sets gently 'overboard' one at a time.



By the way - I am the chap on the right without a hat (!) but the story of their cases is worth telling. These had come from my father's stores at Whaddon Hall - ended up in Calcutta before being flown over 'The Hump' both outwards to Kunming and later back over 'The Hump' and returning to our stores in Calcutta.

What is 'The Hump? Until 1942, we had had a land route into China from Burma but the Japanese conquest of Burma soon closed it - leaving air the only way of supplying Chiang Kai-shek's forces. Few people know of it today, but for a period of more than three years during World War II, a force of mostly American airmen undertook one of history's most complex and deadliest logistical operations, flying many thousands of tons of supplies (mostly arms) over the Santsung Range - technically part of the Himalayas - into China. To begin with they had to use rickety, wholly underpowered cargo planes such as the DC-3s, C59s and C47s, before the powerful Curtis-Wright C46 appeared but it was still hazardous.

At one stage, a plane was crossing this perilous route every two minutes. These flights over 'The Hump' were indispensable to China's war effort against the Japanese, and thus a major factor in the Allies' ultimate victory. *But at a simply tremendous cost!* No fewer than 700 Allied planes crashed or were shot down and 1,200 airmen died. The historian Francis Pike wrote: 'Every 340 tons delivered cost the life of a pilot.'

So Tom Kennedy and Jock Leslie made that perilous journey over 'The Hump' to Kunming and handled intelligence traffic out to our station in New Delhi. From there it went to our Main Line station in Whaddon and if appropriate - onto Bletchley Park.

A footnote: In the morning, along with my two ‘staff’ Achinta and Kanilall Dass, we took the pistols and ‘much-travelled’ leather cases to Mike’s office.

Oh! Perhaps I should add: I kept one of the MkVII cases for myself. For over fifty years it served as my camera case before presenting it to David White for the Bletchley Park Wireless Museum - now so sadly closed with the loss of many important artefacts.

David had put a MkVII transceiver into the case so it was shown - just as returned from Kunming to Calcutta before their watery grave. I never thought to ask Mike Vivian why these agents’ sets were to be dumped?



Perhaps, he already knew that the unit was to be closed down and no unnecessary baggage like ‘agents gear’ needed to be sent home or to our new SIS station to be built in the recently reoccupied Singapore.

2. Kim Philby, Dilly Knox at Bletchley Park and our RSS!

The traitor Philby was a member of SIS and at the same time - an operative in both the Russian NKVD and the later KGB.

In Philby’s book ‘My Silent War’ on page 53 he says: - *‘By early 1942, the trickle of intercepted Abwehr telegrams had become a flood. This was largely the work of Dilly Knox who had succeeded in penetrating the secrets of the cypher machine used by the Abwehr.’*

In referring to the work of MI6 ‘Section V’ he says *‘their efforts were supplemented by the Radio Security Service (RSS), which intercepted enemy intelligence signals and by GC&CS which read them.’* The intelligence gained by listening to the faint Abwehr wireless traffic by RSS was of immense value to Bletchley Park, the ‘Double X’ organisation and the successful prosecution of the war.

It will come as no surprise to you, to learn that this specialised wireless interception by the highly skilled wireless operators of RSS, were members of SCU3, a division of Richard Gambier-Parry’s empire.

Note: I refer to Philby as a ‘traitor’ but when he was first recruited in 1934 - it was as a member of the loathsome NKVD - an organisation that might well be regarded as more evil than the Gestapo. Indeed, its documented massacres both before and during World War II - makes quite sickening reading. I am certainly not suggesting that Philby took part in any of these but the OGPU was its earlier title and that name brought fear to millions in the Soviet Union *before* World War II.



Nevertheless, Philby knowing of their reputation was content to be an NKVD operative for Moscow. The KGB was not formed until 1954 - out of the earlier organisation but by then he had already done great harm to his country of birth - before being exposed in 1963 and living in Moscow. Forgive me, but I want to add that in no way should this man be regarded as other than a **Traitor** to his country and no doubt responsible for many deaths. In my book, a contemptible man - even in the end exposing his friend and fellow spy Guy Burgess - to deflect attention from himself.

With best wishes
Geoffrey Pidgeon
Richmond - March 2018.