

3, Arundel House, Courtlands,
Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 5AS.
Telephone: 020 8940 3223 email: geoffey@geoffreypidgeon.com

A Special SCU-NEWSLETTER (No. 2-21)
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HRH Prince Philip - Duke of Edinburgh.

Dear Friends,

Like millions of others around the world, I am deeply saddened by news of the death of HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh. Since his marriage to the then Princess Elizabeth - he has seldom been out of the news. A hugely talented man who played his role as her Consort magnificently. I heard him speak at two charity luncheons. He was clearly very knowledgeable on the subjects but witty and kept us all amused - *and interested*.

Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh visited Bletchley Park in 2011 to unveil its new Memorial. The Bletchley Park Trust asked me to explain to the Royal party how the German Enigma was collected and the ensuing ULTRA disseminated.

Sir Francis Richards - the Chairman of the Bletchley Park Trust - introduced me to the Royal couple. He had earlier been Director of GCHG (Government Communications HQ) 1998 - 2003 and then Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Gibraltar from 2003 - 2006.

I explained how the German Enigma wireless traffic was collected in 'Y' Stations run by the Services in many parts of the country. The ensuing ULTRA emanating from the code breakers in Bletchley Park was disseminated to Military Commanders in the Field in Morse - from our MI6 (Section VIII) wireless station in nearby Whaddon Village.



Left to right: Me, HRH Prince Phillip, Her Majesty, Sir Francis Richards then Chairman of the Bletchley Park Trust and Simon Greenish then CEO of Bletchley Park Trust.

Knowing of his great connection with the Royal Navy I told him that however, all ULTRA involving naval matters simply had to be sent *directly* from Bletchley Park to the Admiralty in London.

Nevertheless, there was one break with that almost 'sacred' protocol and that concerned an ULTRA message about the Italian fleet having put to sea off Cape Matapan in Greece. The Head of Bletchley Park was Commander Alastair Denniston at the time and a team of cryptographers under Dilly Knox had broken the Italian coded message.

Under that strict protocol, Denniston should have passed the information straight away to the Admiralty. However, he was aware that the First Sea Lord - Admiral Sir Dudley Pound had a growing reputation for delay and Denniston knew that action was needed immediately. He took the unprecedented step of informing Admiral Cunningham C in C of the Mediterranean Fleet *directly!*

That involved our boss Richard Gambier-Parry Head of MI6 (Section VIII) and he agreed to send the message directly to Cunningham through our wireless station in Whaddon Village. There it went out in Morse, via our station in Egypt to Admiral Cunningham commanding the Mediterranean Fleet in Alexandria. It led to the Battle of Matapan that Winston Churchill proclaimed as our biggest Naval victory since Trafalgar.

His Royal Highness then leant forward and told us - ***'I was only a Midshipman then!'***

As you will know from the TV programmes - Prince Phillip was on the Battleship HMS Valliant during the Naval battle that ensued against the Italian fleet at Cape Matapan. He was 'Mentioned in Dispatches' as a result of his part in the action - an unusual event for such a junior officer.

Thousands of others have stories about Prince Phillip but I was lucky having my late wife Jane on hand - standing alongside all the press photographers - to get a photograph of that ***never to be forgotten*** moment for me.

I sent two of my books about the work of MI6 (Section VIII) in World War II to HRH Prince Phillip for his 90th birthday. They were 'The Secret Wireless War' and my book about Edgar Harrison - Churchill's wireless operator on many occasions.

Edgar was of course, a member of our unit and although very senior to me (*everybody was!*) we later became good friends and he asked me to write his story.

This is the reply from Dame Anne Griffiths his librarian at Buckingham Palace,

HRH Prince Phillip - Duke of Edinburgh was a truly great man.

Geoffrey

Richmond Monday, April 12, 2021

