



## Newsletter of the FRIENDS OF THE INTELLIGENCE CORPS MUSEUM

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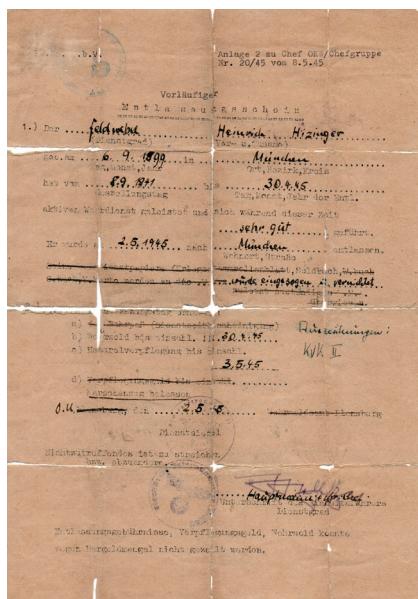
### HIMMLER'S FALSE IDENTITY PAPERS NOW WITH THE MUSEUM

By Bill Steadman, Curator



#### 'Hoist by his own petard'

The war in Europe ended on 8 May 1945 with allied forces intent on capturing high-ranking Nazis responsible for war crimes. On 22 May, SS chief Heinrich Himmler, along with two other SS officers was at Bremervörde, a small town between Hamburg and Bremerhaven, an area controlled by British forces. Two men of military bearing and wearing long, green overcoats were walking ahead of a third person (Himmler) who looked far less impressive in an odd selection of civilian garments under a blue raincoat. The front two glanced back from time to time, seemingly to ensure that the third man was still with them. This odd-looking trio was picked up by an alert British infantry patrol, not knowing who they were, and brought to the checkpoint.

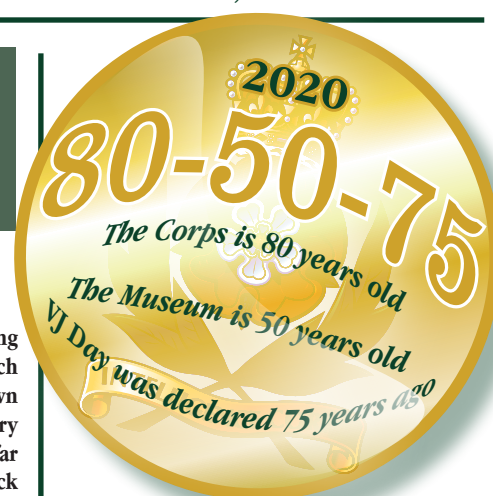


Here, Sgts Arthur Britton and Ken Baisbrown, Intelligence Corps, of 45 Field Security Section, and SSgt John Hogg of 1003 Field Security Reserve Detachment made a quick scrutiny of their identity papers and realised that all were in an automatic arrest category. Without giving the prisoners any clue that they would be sent for interrogation, Sgt Britton then made out the arrest documents using the information contained on the *Entlassungsschein*, identity papers made out by the German Army for soldiers leaving service at the end of the conflict. Himmler's disguise – he had shaved his moustache, wore an eyepatch and was dishevelled – still held and as *Feldwebel* (Sgt) Heinrich Hizinger, he fell under British military control.

The group was driven by Sgt Britton to No. 031 Civil Internment Camp at Barnstedt. At 7 p.m., Himmler asked for an interview with the camp commandant, Capt Thomas Selvester, Intelligence Corps for some reason revealing his true identity. An intelligence

officer was quickly sent by HQ 2nd Army bearing a specimen of Himmler's signature; checked against the prisoner's, identification was complete.

Two body searches and a complete change of clothing failed to reveal poison and at 9.45 p.m., Col Michael Murphy, Chief of Intelligence at HQ 2nd British Army, arrived to take personal charge of the prisoner. He immediately arranged for a medical search to be carried out by Capt Wells, Royal Army Medical Corps. Searching the prisoner thoroughly, Capt Wells came to the mouth where he noticed a small blue object secreted in Himmler's left cheek.

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#### TEASER

#### What Scottish general wrote this?

'The ideal General Staff should, in peacetime, do nothing! They deal in intangible stuff called thought. Their main business consists in thinking out what an enemy may do and what their commanding generals ought to do, and the less they clash their spurs, the better.'

*Answer on p.6*

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# INTERVIEW

## *The Corps Colonel, Col Melissa Emmett MBE ADC*

*By Chris Yates*

On May Day 2020, Sub Rosa interviewed Col Mel Emmett, Corps Colonel since December 2019. Of her early life, she tells that in the mid-90s she tried to follow her brother into the army cadets, but they did not take females in those strange, far-off days, so she tried the air cadets. Despite wearing the blue, her interest in the army remained undiminished: 'People seem to be drawn to one service.' On graduating from the University of Wales in English and Philosophy, she went to Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, where, after some early 'misconceptions of the Corps' it 'became of interest.' Commissioned into it in 1999, she now loves the Corps 'like a sort of dysfunctional relationship'.

Mel has served in many army locations, highlights being the High Readiness Section in Kabul and the Australians in Kandahar, with Special Duties in Kosovo, adjutant of 4 MI and at Sandhurst as a platoon commander, 'One of the best jobs I've had'. Not quite so satisfying was teaching intelligence to the Iraqis: 'A real cultural challenge.' Then there was twice in Australia with a four-month exchange in Brisbane and a two-year assignment to Canberra, and three years at the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow. Her MBE was awarded in 2015/16 as MA to the three-star commander, deployed with the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

She has picked up specific skills in training which have stood her in good stead as Corps Colonel and, in truth, for her lesser involvement in intelligence and rather more in the variety of tasks that HQ Int Corps is expected to manage. Typical of all ranks of the Corps, she has had extensive networking exposure with non-army institutions compared with other soldiers and officers in the British Army who may be, she says, 'Steeped in a regimental environment.'



(We were not alone. Picked up snuffling by the microphone was Olla, a Polish dachshund: 'Old and batty, often forgetting she has eaten'. The Corps Colonel gently ushered Olla into the garden.)

*Does the skill that members of the Corps have in outside-networking work for networking within the Corps?*

'Our Vision & Plan has helped with this Achilles Heel. One person working on a capability has to bring others into it. Our empowered but widely spread



people must not undermine our networking within the Corps. We are so externally focussed, supporting so many parts of the MoD and government, that it will always be a problem.'

*Can I now bring you to Corps heritage?*

'As I reflect on my operational experience, I have noticed a change in how we collect experiences. We are not recording or capturing as we used to and we must make sure that for contemporary operations, artefacts and the written word, are captured as our predecessors did. People wrote letters, diaries, brought back bits of kit from the battlefield, but I don't see that as much in the current generation. But let's do it legally and not denude an already damaged group of people by taking their own heritage.'

*What does this battlefield look like for the Corps?*

(Laughing) 'For many, our battlefield is our office or a dark room with no windows, no physical contact. On my first tour of Afghanistan we drove everywhere but in the second, IEDs drove us into barracks. How then can you bring back kit? Intelligencers can't get onto the ground and can't see the nuances of the environment. How do you tell the intelligence story from the inside of a camp? How can we show the story of that kind of warfare?'

*Is this just a responsibility of the job or do you have a personal interest in it?*

'A bit of both. I'm required to play a part in caring for the heritage of the Corps. I also feel a personal responsibility that we do not lose sight of our history.'

*What can you say about the museum at Chicksands?*

'Soldiers need a physical space where they feel imbued and inspired by bravery, skill and insight. To go to a physical space, smell and have all senses engaged not just in a classroom and you feel you are part of it ... got to keep on capturing the imagination of our soldiers. The museum has a moral purpose.'

*For young people who come into the Corps, do they lack a collective commitment?*

'I see young men and women at all levels feeling a real sense of belonging as our reputation is on the ascendancy with a greater sense of pride. I see the Strong Corps Family being much stronger than when I joined ... am struck by some of them defending their Corps. Museums have to cater for the old and the young. Would fiercely defend our people against that they are not committed. The armed forces have a moral purpose that other organisations cannot supply.'

When asked to reflect on her philosophy studies at university and how they might inform her thinking today, she said, 'Reading the Australian moral philosopher, Peter Singer [b. 1946]: He writes that it's important to do what is empirically right rather than culturally correct; in the end, individuals have to make decisions themselves be it end-of-life, abortion or soldiering. The right judgement at the time.'

*Looking back on your career, what's next?*

'I'm very interested in how we look after our people. Can't do it unless you ask what attracts them to the Corps, what helps them and their families flourish, what keeps them in and how we look after them in good times and when things go wrong. Then I want to look at all that on a scale larger than the Corps, taking into account the wider Defence.' (Along the way she has managed to squeeze in an MA in Defence Studies.) Finally, Col Mel says, 'I wish I had more hours in the day to engage with the Friends more; I am glad that you really care and are guardians of our heritage. I offer my thanks and respect to good people doing good things.' ■

*(Since this interview took place, Col Emmett has been reassigned to career manage the General Staff at the Army Personnel Centre. We wish her well.) Ed.*

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# FIGHTING HEROES OF THE INTELLIGENCE CORPS NO. 8

## *Lt Col John Edward Haselden MC & Bar*

*By Harry Fecitt MBE TD*

**B**ill Kennedy-Shaw, Intelligence Officer, Long Range Desert Group: 'Haselden was the outstanding personality of the dozen odd men who worked with the tribes in Cyrenaica behind the Axis lines. Untiring, strong, courageous, never without some new scheme for outwitting the enemy, yet with a slow and easy-going way of setting about a job which was far more successful with the Arabs than the usual European insistence on precision and punctuality which they neither like nor understand'.

John Haselden was born in Ramleh, Egypt, in 1903, to an English father and an Italian mother. He grew up to speak fluent Italian, French and Arabic. After an education at The King's School, Canterbury, Kent, he worked in the Egyptian cotton industry where he became well known in many Arab areas of eastern North Africa.

On the outbreak of war, he volunteered for the British Army in Egypt and was posted to the Libyan Arab Force, which trained Senussi tribesmen to be irregular fighters in Italian-occupied Cyrenaica. On 15 July 1940 he was commissioned as a second lieutenant into the Intelligence Corps.

At first John was employed with HQ Middle East, concerned with special raiding forces and the recovery from the desert of escaped Allied prisoners of war. Then he became Western Desert Liaison Officer with the Eighth Army where his job was to gain information from the Arab population living under Axis domination in Cyrenaica. He spent much of his time behind enemy lines dressed either as an Italian or an Arab, and he was often accompanied by Senussi former members of the Libyan Arab Force. Most of his entrances into and exits from his operational areas were provided by Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) trucks, but on at least one occasion he landed from the sea. The citation for his first Military Cross describes his actions:

*Captain Haselden was landed from a submarine behind the enemy's lines on 10 October 1941 to reconnoitre for a possible operation in conjunction with local Arabs. In order to decrease the risk to the boat crew, this officer swam ashore in the dark and, after reconnoitring, signalled that it was safe for the boat to come ashore. He remained in enemy territory until picked up by one of our patrols at a given rendezvous on 19 October. During this period, in which he was in constant danger of being arrested and shot, he collected valuable information regarding the local Arabs and the movement of enemy troops. The success of the reconnaissance was largely due to the high degree of courage, determination and clear-thinking possessed by this officer.*

The following month, John was in action again on the commando raid against the supposed residence and HQ of Gen Erwin Rommel. The raid was not a success but John's part in it definitely was, as the citation for a Bar to his Military Cross describes:

*Captain Haselden was dropped by the Long Range Desert Group in the area of Slonta prior to the raid carried out by a detachment of the Middle East Commandos on General Rommel's H.Q. at Sidi Rafa. Capt Haselden was dressed in British battledress but wearing a djard (robe) and Arab head-dress walked a distance of nearly 100 miles through the heart of the enemy territory, in order to make certain reconnaissance prior to the landing of the detachment. After ascertaining the situation regarding enemy and friendly Arab forces in the area he made his way to the selected beach and there awaited our landing which he guided in by prearranged signals. Having passed on vital information about the enemy, which was immediately transmitted by the Royal Navy to Cairo, and having explained the situation ashore to our raiding party and guided us towards our objective, Capt Haselden again made his way through miles of enemy territory to his appointed rendezvous with the Long Range Desert Group.*

*On his journey back he succeeded in disrupting vital enemy (telephone) communication. I consider that Capt Haselden's fearless action is worthy of the highest praise. Such success was achieved in the operation was solely due to information which Capt Haselden had gained during his reconnaissance. I cannot recommend too highly Capt Haselden's outstanding endurance, his cool and calculated bravery, and his unswerving devotion to duty.*

After more desert reconnaissance missions, John, now a lieutenant colonel, was appointed in September 1942 to command Force B in the impressive but unsuccessful British raid on Tobruk. The vehicle-borne Force B contained 81 men posing as prisoners of war being guarded by Palestinian Jewish German-speaking guards wearing German uniforms. All of these men came from the former Middle East Commando.

Small specialist artillery, engineer, signals and medical groups accompanied the Force, which was guided to Tobruk from Kufra Oasis by the LRDG. The task of Force B was to bluff its way

inside the Tobruk perimeter, capture an enemy artillery battery, and hold a stretch of shoreline east of the town upon which Force C, comprised of 180 Scottish infantrymen and Northumbrian machine-gunners, would land in small boats. Important enemy-held installations would then be demolished, and all troops would withdraw by the way that they had arrived. Concurrently Force A, 11 Battalion Royal Marines, would land from the sea further west and conduct demolitions.

The entry into the perimeter went without a hitch and the artillery battery was captured intact, allowing the British gunners to control the guns. But the Italian defenders in the locality fought back well and contacts continued. Force B occupied the landing beach but all the attempts to land by sea failed disastrously; enemy coastal defence batteries used searchlights to illuminate and destroy many of the British ships and small boats. Then the enemy mounted a ground attack on Force B. John Haselden ordered the destruction of the captured guns and tried to get his wounded men back by vehicle to their desert rendezvous with the LRDG. An Italian machine-gun group blocked the route and whilst leading an attack on the enemy position the Force B commander was killed in action by a stick grenade. He later received a posthumous Mention in Despatches: 'For gallant and distinguished service in the Middle East during the period May to October 1942'.

John Haselden MC, Intelligence Corps, is commemorated on Column 85 of the El Alamein Memorial. Only six men from Force 'B' returned to the British lines. ■

### Sources

*The best two books that describe John Haselden's exploits are Special Forces in the Desert War, 1940-1943 (2001) and Damien Lewis's SAS Ghost Patrol: The Ultra-Secret Unit that posed as Nazi Stormtroopers (2017).*



## *Working with St James Garlickhythe*

*By Chris Yates*



A copy of the Corps Roll of Honour is held at the 17th-century church of St James Garlickhythe, City of London. The links between this church – locally through 3 Military Intelligence Battalion – and the Intelligence Corps are strong, with a page of the Book of Remembrance being turned on the first Sunday of every month. Recently, the church contacted the Intelligence Corps Association and subsequently the archive asking for information about 50 men of the Corps who died in the Far East in WWII.

The church is planning a quarterly newsletter linking the 80th anniversary of the Intelligence Corps, the 75th anniversary of VJ Day and the formal closing of the Burma Star Association.

Archivist Joyce Hutton, Senior Researcher Fred (roused-from-his-lockdown) Judge and Harry Fecitt have been supplying information. One of the 50 men on the Roll is Lt Col George Steer and members of ICA might recall that Harry Fecitt wrote of him in *The Rose and The Laurel* that came out this year. The church will publish Harry's article in their forthcoming newsletter.

It's a good example of the continuing relationship between the Intelligence Corps and this beautiful church. ■

*(For more on St James Garlickhythe, see 'Epiphany Sunday and Remembering the Corps' in Sub Rosa, spring 2019, by Lester Hillman; download from website at [www.intelligencemuseum.org/library.php?LID=3](http://www.intelligencemuseum.org/library.php?LID=3))*



## MI9: Lessons in Escape, Evasion and Intelligence-Gathering

By Helen Fry

**M**I9 is famous for the daring exploits of escape and evasion in the Second World War, but has not so far received assessment for its importance as a branch of military intelligence engaged in intelligence-gathering. Formed by special charter on 23 December 1939, MI9 was the organisation responsible for gaining intelligence from prisoners, whether enemy prisoners-of-war or Allied airmen and soldiers returning from behind enemy lines.

It began as two branches: the first was MI9(a) which dealt with enemy prisoners who were taken to special sites after capture and their conversations bugged for intelligence (later as MI19). The second was MI9(b) which aided British personnel to evade capture in enemy territory or escape from German POW camps (this later became simply MI9). Stories like Airey Neave's escape from the infamous Colditz Castle in Germany – from which the Germans believed it impossible to escape – have become legendary. Historical examples of escapes, like the prisoners tunnelling out of Stalag Luft III near Sagan, have been immortalised in big-screen films like *The Great Escape*. Underpinning MI9's raison d'être was a philosophy of 'escape-mindedness', a term first coined by MI9's chief, Brig. Norman Crockatt. He knew that techniques in escape and evasion might not come naturally in the moments after capture and disorientation, so prior to going into action, personnel were trained by MI9 in aspects of escape and evasion. The organisation's role was broader and included the collection and distribution of information to British and Allied prisoners in POW camps via clandestine means, such as coded messages and smuggling escape and evasion devices into the camps. MI9 officer Christopher Clayton Hutton designed many of the ingenious gadgets in which silk maps and miniature compasses could be hidden. The MI9 gadgets were an extraordinary success story. Between 1942 and 1945, MI9 organised the manufacture and issue of 1.3 million round brass compasses, 1.6 million maps concealed in purses and pouches, and over 7,000 flying boots that converted into civilian shoes for personnel on the run. The rapid production of devices in such large quantities was essential to successful escape and evasion and survival.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill, himself a POW and escaper in the Boer War, understood the difficulties which prisoners had to bear. He sent a rallying message to British POWs to boost their morale: 'In this great struggle in which we are engaged, my thoughts are often with you who have had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the Nazi. Your lot is a hard one ... never has the country been so completely united in its determination to exterminate Nazidom'.

If there is a strong theme which emerges in MI9's history, it is about the commitment and courage of thousands of helpers, couriers and guides across Europe who worked for the clandestine MI9 escape lines. They were prepared to work in secret for an unnamed organisation in Britain whose name they did not discover until after the war. All were united in their efforts to free Europe from Nazi occupation. Through simple and ordinary acts of resistance, they made a crucial contribution to saving Allied airmen and soldiers, often at great personal risk and with severe

consequences if betrayed. The risks were increased if they smuggled intelligence to MI9's agents or officers from behind enemy lines. Although the escape lines were controlled by MI6's Claude Dansey, the daily coordination was delegated to Jimmy Langley and Airey Neave. But as they later admitted, the real risks were taken in occupied Europe, the Middle East or Far East. Men like Harold Cole and Christiaan Lindemans ('King Kong') sabotaged the escape lines for their personal gain, often for money, which led to helpers and guides being betrayed, tortured and sent to concentration camps or shot by the Gestapo.

Traditionally, MI9 has been seen as an organisation that solely ran escape lines and agents, and this was indeed a large part of its work. But new research has revealed that MI9's role went beyond escape and evasion to engage in intelligence and counter-espionage, some of it along the lines traditionally MI6's. MI9's intelligence-gathering included debriefing returning airmen and soldiers and interrogating members of the escape lines who had to be exfiltrated by MI9 back to Britain. They all provided a vast amount of information from enemy territory that could be used in future training and printed in the MI9 bulletins. Amongst examples of intelligence gathered was that of a military nature on enemy defences, ports and sea defences, Axis fighting units, and general life and circumstances behind enemy lines. There had been no precedent for escape work combined with intelligence in the First World War. The official declassified history of MI9 in the National Archives states that 'clandestine escape work as a specialist form of intelligence was an entirely new development'. Thousands of interrogation reports of returning escapers and evaders survive in the archives. No two escape stories were the same; each had a unique set of circumstances and useful information for MI9.

The history of MI9 was as much about those who made up this highly secret branch of military intelligence as the daily workings and structure of the organisation itself. Its success was largely due to the diversity of people who came together by chance in wartime and who would probably never have crossed paths in peacetime. From its beginnings in 1939, the organisation evolved into a highly efficient branch of military intelligence. The success of the escape lines would only be realised at the end of the war when it became known that, in spite of the dangers and difficulties of German occupation, around 35,000 Allied soldiers and airmen made it back to Allied lines because of MI9. New research now shows that MI9's legacy deserves recognition as an intelligence organisation and should be placed alongside the wider intelligence operations of WWII. ■

Helen Fry's new book, *MI9: The Secret Service for Escape and Evasion*, comes out on 8 September.



## CAN YOU HELP FIND THESE FORMER CORPS MEMBERS?

Can you help in tracing former members of Williams Platoon, A Company, RAOC Apprentice College who were badged



Intelligence Corps? Next year is the 50th anniversary of Williams Platoon and there will be a reunion dinner on 8 May 2021 in London. Eight Intelligence Corps Junior Leaders passed out into the Regular Army about 1972/3: Daniel Clelland, David Riley, 'Winnie' McGregor, Steven Hilton, Hugh C Coyle, Malcolm Vodden, David V Anley and Brian J Aitkin.

If you know the whereabouts of any of them, please ask him to contact me, Aidan Handyside ex-RAOC, at: [aidan.bandyside@bigpond.com](mailto:aidan.bandyside@bigpond.com)



## VETERAN OF WWII SPECIAL OPERATIONS BECOMES 100

### *Sgt James Edgar MiD, Croix de Guerre, Légion d'Honneur*

*By Col (retd) Nick Fox OBE, Deputy Col Comdt*

**J**ames Edgar was born in May 1920 in Pietersburg, South Africa, to a Scottish father, veteran of the Boer wars. In 1927, the family moved to Britain and in August 1940 James volunteered for the army. After three months in the Gordon Highlanders, he transferred to the Intelligence Corps, probably due to his French and German language ability.

He served initially in one of the Intelligence Corps' field security sections supporting SOE, escorting potential agents through their training for the French Section. James was then posted to STS 62, Anderson Manor in Dorset, to join SOE's Small Scale Raiding Force, also known as 62 Commando. In 1942, he participated in two raids against the Channel Islands. One of these, Op Basalt, was against German installations on Sark. Led by Maj Geoffrey Appleyard, its aim was to undertake reconnaissance and capture prisoners; it gained notoriety, however, as some of the German prisoners, despite having their hands tied, tried to flee. During attempts to stop them and prevent them raising the alarm, three were killed; it's believed that one of the consequences of this was Hitler issuing his infamous Commando Order leading to the death of many Allied captives undertaking special operations.

After serving as an instructor training agent in Morse code, James joined SOE's Inter-Allied Mission 'Tilleul'. On the night of 7 July 1944, codenamed 'Crétois', he parachuted into the Haute-Vienne area of France with the team as its radio operator, assisting with the coordination of local resistance groups and arranging parachute drops of arms and equipment. In the summer of 1944, anything over three-weeks survival by a radio operator in occupied France was considered a 'life well done'; despite this, James chose not to accept his 'L' (or lethal) pill but did have silk escape maps sewn into his epaulettes, and an escape route planned through the Pyrenees in case things went wrong. He and the team survived, however, and James was Mentioned in Dispatches and awarded the Croix de Guerre for his service in France.

After the team returned to the UK, James volunteered for special operations in the Far East; in April 1945, he parachuted into Burma as the



*Sgt Edgar receives the Croix de Guerre in September 1944 in Limoges (from a film by Marcel Denichoux via 'Secret WW2 Learning Network')*

radio operator for the Jedburgh 'Giraffe' team, part of Op Nation. He subsequently caught dysentery but recovered in hospital in Ceylon before volunteering for peacekeeping duties in Sumatra.

James was demobbed at the end of 1946 and qualified as a vet in Edinburgh where he had a practice for several years. After marrying Valerie, the couple emigrated to Australia, where James later became the Chief Veterinary Surgeon for Western Australia's Department of Agriculture and

Food. They live in a suburb of Perth. In September 2019, James Edgar was awarded the Légion d'Honneur by a representative of the Embassy of France in Australia.

On 21 May, James Edgar celebrated his 100th birthday. The current restrictions meant a large party (to have included Capt Derek Anderson of 5 MI Bn, who is related to James!) had to be postponed, but close family and friends made sure he enjoyed the day in style. The local Returned and Services League posted birthday congratulations:

'You're a hero in our eyes, Sir, and we salute you!'. Valerie Edgar said James wouldn't like being called a hero: 'Jim often said he was a small cog in a big wheel who was just doing what he had to do for the war effort at the time. He had friends who were killed in the war and anyone he knew from that era is now gone. We know he is very lucky to have made it to 100.'

James received many cards and greetings, including a letter on behalf of the Col Comdt and all members of the Intelligence Corps, serving and retired, sending him our best wishes along with an Intelligence Corps 80th Anniversary coin. ■



*Sgt Edgar in Corps beret celebrating his 100th birthday (from his family, via Capt Derek Anderson)*

## HIMMLER'S FALSE IDENTITY PAPERS

*Continued from front page*

He slipped a finger into the prisoner's mouth to sweep out the object, but Himmler immediately clamped down on the doctor's finger, they struggled, Himmler wrenched his head away, crushed the glass capsule between his teeth and the cyanide did its work in ten minutes. He was buried unceremoniously in an unmarked grave outside Lüneburg on 25 May 1945.

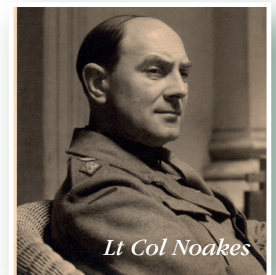
Himmler's *Entlassungsschein* was made out to another Heinrich but one apparently named Hizinger. Bearing in mind the vast numbers of ex-forces personnel, refugees, displaced people and other travellers on the roads at this time, Himmler and his cronies might have felt some confidence in their false identities carrying them through cursory inspections. It is also likely that German preconceptions based on their own military hierarchy led them to consider that the Allies would be uninterested in a mere sergeant. What proved to be his undoing, was that whoever completed his false document used a unit stamp unaware it made the holder automatically susceptible to arrest and interrogation. British intelligence recognised the stamp and unit details as being of interest, as many other fleeing SS had similar documents with the same or similar unit details and unit stamp. It is a pleasing twist to the story that by using this stamp the Germans themselves made Himmler's unmasking inevitable, hoist by his own petard!

### *'Lost and found'*

In the aftermath of the capture, identification and suicide of arguably the second most infamous mass murderer of all time, a bout of military souvenir-hunting took place and Himmler's personal belongings were eagerly snapped up. Sgt Britton got his slippers and, some years later, the Military Intelligence Museum were gifted Himmler's shaving foam tube and some razor blades! (see *Sub Rosa* No. 10 by Dan Francis)

As soon as Himmler's true identity became known, any military interest in his false identity document became superfluous. So, amidst the souvenir-hunting free-for-all, the *Entlassungsschein* was snapped up by persons unknown and effectively disappeared until 2019, when it was donated to the Military Intelligence Museum, along with the braces worn by Himmler at his capture, by the great-niece of Lt Col Sidney Noakes, Intelligence Corps. Noakes, a lawyer, was seconded to MI5 during the war. Although we cannot be 100 per cent certain, it is likely that Noakes was an MI5 officer who interrogated Himmler, giving him the opportunity to 'acquire' both the *Entlassungsschein* and the braces. ■

*(This story bit national headlines, for example, see Gordon Carera's BBC article at [www.bbc.com/news/amp/uk-52755565](http://www.bbc.com/news/amp/uk-52755565))*



*Lt Col Noakes*

***By Lester Hillman, Sub Rosa's Theatre Critic***

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**N**ot exactly something to be welcomed with unalloyed joy but it seems to be with us. May 2019 could go down as the moment 'Intelligence Corps – the Musical' arrived.

Military logistics are recurring themes in playful nursery rhymes such as seventeenth century artillery observation in 'Humpty Dumpty'. Dark anti-Catholic, Jacobite and Georgian political tensions lurk beneath familiar sing-song lines. 'For want of a nail', explicitly extols battlefield planning; its origins could stretch back to the fourteenth century. Traditional folk songs have for centuries drawn upon tales of asymmetric warfare and clandestine initiatives – cabin boys jumping overboard and drilling holes in enemy vessels or deceptions in the quest for truth and allegiances. Disguise and cross-dressing feature in heroic efforts to seek out battlefield spouses. Well-known music hall songs incorporate unexpected lyrics. 'Let's all go down the Strand' includes reference to Ernest Shackleton's expedition to the Pole. (Anyone who knows that, 'have a banana'.)

Lines about early aviation pilot training feature in 'If you want to know the time ask a P'liceman'.

Former members of the Corps or associated trades have carved out careers in literature, comedy and wider popular culture.

## John Buchan's legacy,

*The Thirty-Nine Steps* and related novels, now stretches back more than a century. Actor Joe Melia and writer Michael Frayn are more recent examples whilst Arnold Ridley in *Dad's Army* is one of the most obvious. Today's explosive growth of modern entertainment platforms has led to frenetic demand for material with weird takes on science, political, personality and lifestyle issues. Bletchley has offered rich pickings. Two radio comedy series drawing upon WWII intelligence, *Hut 33* and *Dot*, might be worth hunting down in Radio 4 and Extra repeat schedules.

The more quirky, original and unexpected these takes are the better, but this is often at a price of trivialisation and mockery. A stroll down the Royal Mile in August at the height of the Edinburgh Festival readily demonstrates how new aspiring writers and performers are hungry for Fringe material. Often as not, it translates into music and comedy stories with a shadowy great uncle Cedric who was 'something in intelligence'. The Festival is of such importance that drill halls in Edinburgh are used as venues with performances featuring army subjects and serving personnel promoting the shows. However,

this is not particularly new. Int & Sy Gp (V)'s Drill Hall at Handel Street London was hired out in the 1980s for Hot Gossip dance rehearsals. Fourth April 2020 marked 25 years since the death of Kenny Everett.

Recent interest in a remake of the film *The Man Who Never Was* has been linked to actor Colin Firth. Could the museum be well placed to bid for a fee-earning advisory role? FICM is to the fore in preserving and enhancing Corps heritage, including Sir John Masterman's links – securing his medals, enhanced Museum display and exploration of the work of the XX Committee and individual operations. The 75th anniversary of Operation Mincemeat, 'The Man Who Never Was', in 2018 offered opportunities for guided walks around St Pancras Churchyard, highlighting the

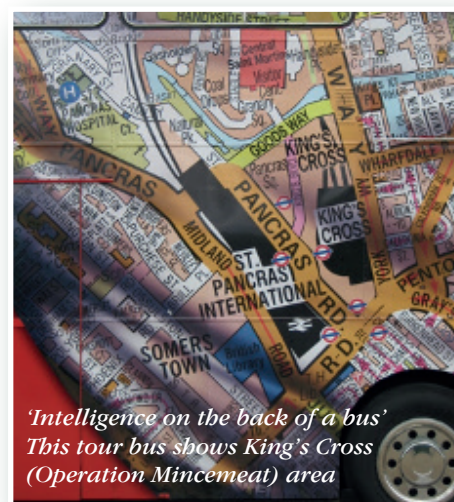
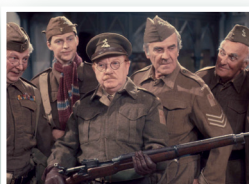
events of 1943 and local institutions, coroner, mortuary, undertaker and hospital. Theatre, book, film and other platforms

such as *The Goon Show* (step forward Michael Bentine, another link) now form

part of the drama. But there is a much longer back story. In the nineteenth century, Mary Shelley, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy and Conan Doyle were finding resurrectionist inspiration in the same locality. The 'XX' Double Cross even has early eighteenth-century roots in the Churchyard. On 24 May 1725, Jonathan Wild, thief and fence, was hanged at Tyburn and buried

at St Pancras. His cheeky bookkeeping famously included 'XX' annotations to record his multiple linked crimes. Reputedly, his body was discreetly acquired for the Royal College of Surgeons, so maybe it had a walk-on part in the training

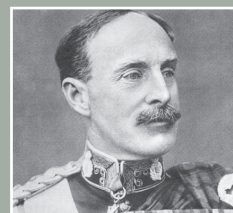
of Bentley Purchase, the Operation Mincemeat coroner. 14 May 2019 saw the arrival of a West End production value, two-hour plus, all singing and dancing, take on *The Man Who Never Was*. 'Operation Mincemeat' complete with John Masterman, opened at the New Diorama Theatre. This purpose-built venue across the road from Warren Street Underground Station is 800 yards from where the 1943 real-life drama played out. After performances, there were opportunities to meet the cast including 'Masterman'. The theatre is within



'Regent Place' a business quarter that includes a 140,000 sq ft Google transit camp for staff who will move into their new UK HQ, presently under construction where Operation Mincemeat took place. January 2020 saw a further run of the SpitLip production in London at Southwark Playhouse.

*For Queen and Country* is a recent example of a theatre dramatisation of a colourful WWII individual. *The Story of Denis Rake MC*, written and directed by Paul Stone, was set to open in London at the King's Head Theatre, Islington. The scheduling, late March early April, at this niche theatre with a long tradition of edgy productions, has been scuppered by Covid-19. The late Lt Col John Woolmore, editor of the 2005 *The Rose and The Laurel*, paid tribute (p. 34) to wireless operator Capt Denis Joseph Rake who survived the war and was awarded the Military Cross, Croix de Guerre with Palm and Legion of Honour. Rake, who made no secret of his homosexuality, produced an autobiography *Rake's Progress: The Gay and Dramatic Adventures of Major Denis Rake MC* (1968) published by Leslie Frewin. ■

*From front page TEASER:*  
**WHAT SCOTTISH GENERAL  
WROTE THIS?**



**Answer:**

*Gen Sir Ian Hamilton, in The Soul and Body of an Army (1921)*

(As a bonus, he also advised: 'A soldier has no business to be married')



## POEM

### 1944 and After

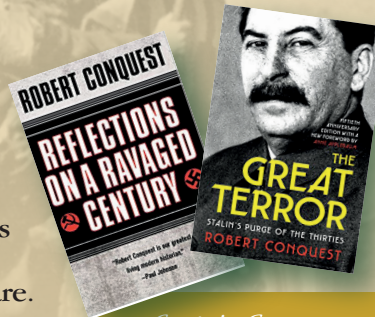
Pinned down in the little valley – in its way  
A trap, or would be if they had the strength.  
No not very dangerous, with a little care.  
Still, a long day  
Pressed into hollows in the rocky, bare  
Untrenchable soil, without food or drink  
Or anything much to think  
About, damp, coldish shiny air ...  
Until, near dusk, at length  
A few guns, manhandled across the bridgeless  
Black ravine, suppress  
The enemy strong-points, in a thundering glare.

Later, lost love pinned him down for years  
But the relief came up at last – again  
Covered the breakthrough to the warm, wide plain.

Life itself, some say, is just such waiting  
Hemmed in a closed cirque of one's own creating  
As cramped decade after decade runs  
Towards the dusk. But where are the guns?

**Robert Conquest (1917-2015)**

In *Forays* Chatto & Windus, 1979



Captain George  
Robert Acworth  
Conquest CMG OBE  
US Medal of Freedom  
(1917–2015),  
historian, poet, and  
in WWII, Intelligence  
Corps liaison officer  
with the Bulgarian  
forces. Formerly a  
communist, he  
became a  
speech-writer for  
Margaret Thatcher.

## BOOK REVIEW

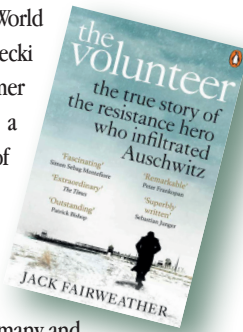
by Nick Fox OBE,  
Deputy Col Comdt

### *The Volunteer: The True Story of the Resistance Hero who Infiltrated Auschwitz*

by Jack Fairweather

At the outbreak of World War II, Witold Pilecki was a gentleman farmer and junior officer in a reserve cavalry unit of the Polish Army. At the end of September 1939 Poland was a defeated nation, occupied by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union; Pilecki joined the Polish underground. In November, he helped to form the *Tajna Armia Polska* (Secret Polish Army) ...

So opens Nick Fox's captivating review of this Costa Book of the Year in 2019, sadly too long for *Sub Rosa*, but waiting on the website, for your reading delight. ■



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### *From the Three Wise Chairmen*

Congratulations! As we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Corps, albeit of necessity in muted fashion, I suggest that a little of the light generated should illuminate the achievements of FICM and especially should mark the 26th edition of *Sub Rosa*. For each of the eight years of full operation of FICM, this excellent publication has regularly informed, amused and jogged the memories of its privileged readership while maintaining the highest possible standards. Thus, my first congratulations are to you, the editor, for your skilful efforts in achieving this excellent position!

As for FICM itself, the trustees (all honorary volunteers) are to be wholeheartedly congratulated on the very substantial and worthwhile support provided to the Corps museum and archive throughout that period. Also the importance of the social glue created through the organisation of focal events such as the London Lunch with Lecture cannot be overstated nor the tireless attention to detail behind the scenes underestimated.

The origins of a museum 'friends' organisation date back to pre-FICM days and much credit is still due to John Condon, John Muckler, Ken Hefferman and many others for their roles in identifying the need and working to satisfy it.

My congratulations all round to those involved past and present, and my best wishes for continuing success in the future! ■

*John Quenby (Chair 2011–2015)*

When I attended the reopening of the Intelligence Corps Museum in 2011, after some refurbishment of the premises and displays, I meant it to be a one-off visit, a pleasant evening of drinks and conversation. I was wrong. One phone call later, followed by lunch at a pizza place in Bedford, and I found myself Secretary of the Friends. John Quenby could be persuasive! And when John retired as Chair in 2015, I succeeded him.

My term in office was, let's say, interesting. Highlights included the annual lunch at the Special Forces Club, when just before I introduced her to the audience, guest speaker Ann Widdecombe whispered: 'I know nothing about intelligence and security!'. She was no less entertaining for that. Over the years, FICM has raised tens of thousands of pounds which has been spent on museum and archive improvements and, more publicly, we launched the Alan Edwards Award to encourage any form of work by serving people that contributed to Corps history and heritage.

The Corps is now 80 years old. It has a history. It has heritage. And this year the museum itself marks its 50th anniversary. The welcome decision by the museum trustees that if they open a broader Intelligence museum elsewhere, they will still keep the existing museum at Chicksands, means that there will continue to be a need for the Friends. Long may it be so. ■

*Tony Hetherington (Chair 2015–2019)*

There will be many reasons for 2020 to be remembered but, undoubtedly, all events will be eclipsed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, this year our intelligence community will mark two significant milestones in the history of the Intelligence Corps.

The 80th anniversary of the Corps will not be celebrated in the way many would have wanted but we should still take the opportunity to reflect on the achievements of Corps personnel during that period. At the forefront of every British military conflict and discreetly embedded throughout the intelligence world, our Corps and its personnel continue to contribute to the well-being and security of our nation. All those associated with the Corps should stand proud at this time.

Perhaps there is no better platform on which to celebrate the Corps' rich heritage and to tell its story than the museum, which brings me to the second milestone – the 50th anniversary of the museum, now at Chicksands. With detail and style, it reminds us all just how vital, comprehensive and diverse Corps activity has been throughout its eighty years.

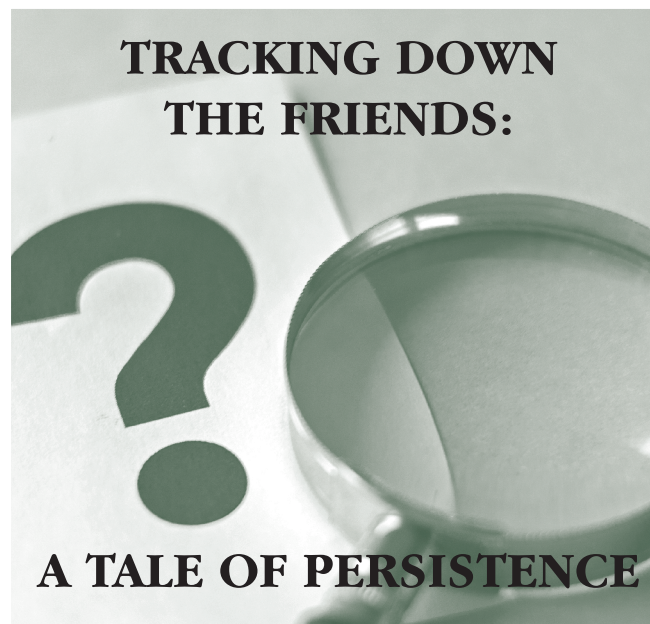
As Chair, this is a particularly poignant time for me. It was in July 1970 that I passed out in Squad 29 and Field Marshall Sir Gerald Templer officially opened the museum in Ashford. A comment was made at the time that the Corps did not have much significant history. My goodness, how things have changed! ■

*Mike Palmer (Chair 2019–)*

## NOTICES AND NOTES FOR MEMBERS

### Trustee Matters

- Third FICM objective added:  
'To support the heritage of the Intelligence Corps'
- Trustees met by Zoom, in May
- Next meeting 20 October
- Continuing work on the website
- Becoming GDPR compliant
- ICA and FICM to work closer on Corps heritage
- Improving admin with members (see article this page)



*By Richard Harper,  
Membership Secretary*

At a recent trustee meeting, a vital question was asked: 'How certain are we that our membership details are correct and, therefore, that all members receive written and electronic communications?' The only way to check was using existing contact details. After an email elicited around 90 replies from the membership of 200, responses dried up. Clearly, a further attempt had to be made and I posted 105 letters to those who had not responded to the email campaign. The mailshot met with some success, thankfully; on one day alone there were 39 replies. It became clear that a large number of our members had changed email addresses or, as in one case, had moved house several times since providing their original contact address. Sadly, two had died. After three weeks awaiting letters, there were 12 members who had not responded, so as a last resort I made telephone calls. At the time of writing there are still four members with whom I have not made contact. Are you one of them?

So, dear members, I beg you to let me know of changes to your home address, email address or telephone number. Receipt of your *Sub Rosa* may depend on it! ■

### EDITORIAL

FICM's trouble with a newsletter that comes out every four months, is that between issues an awful lot of news of one kind or another accumulates. Fitting all of it into eight pages is not possible, so if we merely allude to some news we apologise. Consequently, we wish thoroughly happy anniversaries for the Intelligence Corps' eightieth, the museum's fiftieth, and within a few weeks of them the seventy-fifth anniversary of V-J Day, but mention in passing only, Covid-19.

To celebrate these anniversaries is to honour them with a special place in the world at large and also to honour them within one's own mind so that they occupy mental space in our heads. It's a very human and personal thing and the presence of the mentioned-in-passing-only virus does not stop us exercising the rite and right of commemoration in that space.

What was the world like, 80, 75 and 50 years ago? Here are a few random events that loosely characterise those worlds. Around the re-formation of the Corps in July 1940, the Battle of Britain begins, Hitler makes a peace appeal to Britain; Lord Halifax rejects it in a broadcast; the SOE is formed, Ringo Starr and Tim Brooke-Taylor are born; preparations to invade Britain (Operation Sea Lion) begin; Soviet Union annexes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania. About the time of V-J Day in August 1945, Animal Farm is published; Churchill speaks of an 'Iron Curtain' descending in Europe; the US drops two atomic bombs on Japan; Viet Minh capture Hanoi; Indonesia declares independence. When the museum is established in July 1970, a UK state of emergency is declared to deal with the dockers' strike; Sir John Barbirolli dies; top of the UK hit parade for seven weeks is Mungo Jerry's 'In the Summertime'; and after 120 years comes the end of the rum ration in the Royal Navy.

What of today's world will be remembered in another 80, 75 and 50 years' time? Whatever the case there is an awful lot of news that will never appear in *Sub Rosa*. ■

### THE ALAN EDWARDS AWARD 2020

*Goes to Antony Baxter*

Recently decided by HQ Int Corps, the Alan Edwards Award for 2020 was made to Antony Baxter for his stalwart contribution to the Secret Soldiers research project over two years (2017–2019). A collaboration between the University of Northampton and the Military Intelligence Museum, the project sought to investigate thoroughly the British Army's Intelligence Corps (pl) during WWI. Of the project's personnel spreadsheet, which has 60,000 lines, two thirds of the data entries were recorded by Antony, resulting in a truly remarkable contribution to Intelligence Corps history. Furthermore, Antony engaged in other research activities, especially medal cards, and has written short analytical pieces. Congratulations to Antony (who is also a Friend), for winning £100 and an inscribed memento!

*Antony contributed 'The Zimmermann Telegram' article to Sub Rosa in 2017; it is available for download at*

[www.intelligencemuseum.org/library.php?LID=1&page=2](http://www.intelligencemuseum.org/library.php?LID=1&page=2)