Intelligence Officer’s Bookshelf

Compiled and reviewed by Hayden Peake

CURRENT TOPICS

Al-Qaeda’s Revenge: The 2004 Madrid Train Bombings, by Fernando Reinares


Practise to Deceive: Learning Curves of Military Deception Planners, by Barton Whaley

Whistleblower at the CIA: An Insider’s Account of the Politics of Intelligence, by Melvin A. Goodman

HISTORICAL

Special: Five Books on the British Special Operations Executive During World War II

Churchill’s Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare: The Mavericks Who Plotted Hitler’s Defeat, by Giles Milton

SOE’S Mastermind: An Authorized Biography of Major General Sir Colin Gubbins, KCMG, DSO, MC, by Brian Lett

Agent Michael Trotobas and SOE in Northern France, by Stewart Kent and Nick Nicholas

Codenamed DORSET: The Wartime Exploits of Major Colin Ogden-Smith, Commando & SOE, by Peter Jacobs

RAF and the SOE: Special Duty Operations in Europe During WW2, edited by John Grehan

Agent M: The Lives and Spies of MI5’s Maxwell Knight, by Henry Hemming

The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War, by Sarah Harris

Inventing Loreta Velasquez: Confederate Soldier Impersonator, Media Celebrity, and Con Artist, by William C. Davis

LORENZ: Breaking Hitler’s Top Secret Code at Bletchley Park, by Captain Jerry Roberts


A Matter of Honor: Pearl Harbor, Betrayal, Blame and a Family’s Quest for Justice, by Anthony Summers and Robbyn Swan

Three Minutes to Doomsday: An Agent, A Traitor, and the Worst Espionage Breach in US History, by Joe Navarro

War in the Desert, by T. E. Lawrence, edited by Jeremy and Nicole Wilson

Fernando Reinares is the director of the Program on Global Terrorism at the Elcano Royal Institute and professor of political science and security studies at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, both in Madrid. The focus of his research is on individual jihadists, their motivations, and the networks that link them. In Al-Qaeda’s Revenge, he tells how those responsible for bombing commuter trains near Madrid on 11 March 2004, killing 191 people and wounding 1841, were identified as part of the global threat from al-Qa’ida’s jihadist terrorism.

Immediately after the 3/11 bombings, the government blamed ETA (Euskadi ta Askatasuna), the Basque separatist organization in Spain. An investigation soon discredited this conclusion and blamed the attack on local radicals who had little or no connection to an outside organization. Mr. Reinares’s analysis, however, disproved this result and established that the attacks were conducted by a coalition of several terror groups under al-Qa’ida’s direction.

The original al-Qa’ida cell in Spain was created in 1994 (8) and it helped the 9/11 attackers in the planning phase. Most but not all of them were arrested by Spanish authorities after 9/11; the group’s leader, Abu Dahdah and at least four others remained at large. (9) In the first part of Al-Qaeda’s Revenge, Mr. Reinares shows how the remnants formed links with groups from Algeria and Morocco to create the 3/11 network. Part 2 discusses why Spain was selected, the decisionmakers—Abu Dahdah and others—involved, the connection between the 3/11 network and the al-Qa’ida command center in Pakistan, why the 3/11 bombings did not constitute a suicide attack (though some involved later martyred themselves) and the social and political consequences of the bombings.

Al-Qaeda’s Revenge also describes the bombers’ connections in London, Milan, Belgium, and Indonesia, as well as what happened to those who left Spain after 3/11. The intent of al-Qa’ida’s global ambitions and the complexity of its worldwide structure becomes apparent as Mr. Reinares names the many participants and examines their relationships. He also discusses the intelligence exchanges between US and Spanish authorities as each worked to track the terrorists involved. (91–92)

In his foreword to Al-Qaeda’s Revenge, former CIA officer Bruce Riedel, now with the Brookings Institution, characterizes the book as “one of the most important . . . written on the subject of radical Islamic terrorism in Europe and North America since 9/11.” (xiv) Riedel gives it high marks for the depth of research, the quality of analysis, and the accuracy of its often complex results. Right on all counts.


Of the 15 contributors to this volume, 11 are lawyers, all are academics, and none claim any professional experience in the intelligence profession. They come from seven countries: Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Israel, Canada, and the United States. Oversight in each nation is discussed, and one contribution considers it in the “Five Eyes” context. In her preface, former Congresswoman Jane Harmon writes that “the world wants to know . . . who is watching the watchmen?” Oversight is her answer. (xiv) To illustrate that oversight works, she cites “the inspiring example” of the Senate Intelligence Committee’s report on CIA interrogation techniques. (xv) She admits that “Congress can do better,” suggesting that “members ask spies the tough questions every chance we get.” (xvi, emphasis added)

Global Intelligence Oversight gives an overview of how oversight has developed and how it is currently working. Compared to the United States, “parliamentary oversight across the liberal democratic world is not as robust,” (xix) the
editors assert. Several contributors expand on this point. More generally, they “offer insights into the purposes intelligence oversight may serve beyond legal compliance.” (xxvi)

As might be expected from lawyers, the descriptions and recommendations concerning oversight are not always expressed in simple declarative sentences. For example, in an otherwise informative study, on “Oversight Through Five Eyes,” the author argues that “the similarity of intelligence structures and oversight across the Five Eyes states is neither coincidental nor unintentional. Rather it is the result of a phenomenon of isomorphic ‘institutional convergence’ that results in homogenization of state practices across a wide variety of contexts . . . .” (38) He argues that the process of isomorphic convergence has resulted in a model that could become an “international norm for intelligence oversight.” (70)

In addition to chapters on oversight in the countries named above, other topics include global technical changes under way in government and industry, the legal aspects of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, and the challenging issues associated with oversight within the European Union. The chapter entitled “The President as Intelligence Overseer” surprises no one by concluding that “the White House ought to be an object, not a source, of intelligence oversight.” (235)

Global Intelligence Oversight does leave some issues for the future. For instance, the term oversight is never defined, which makes it difficult to identify the line between oversight and management. Likewise, there is the implicit assumption that the legislative branch of government is the proper body to conduct oversight, as opposed to an independent joint commission of experts. Finally, one may reasonably ask whether the conference from which the book emerged would have benefited from the contributions of an experienced, career intelligence officer.


Denis Clift, president emeritus of the National Intelligence University, writes in the book’s introduction that “the most important readings” in advanced denial and deception are the writings of Barton Whaley. One of the teaching techniques Whaley employed involved practical exercises, using actual case studies. Practise to Deceive contains 88 of those studies with detailed analysis of their objectives and application.

The case studies are typically one to five pages in length and contain examples from Sun Tzu to the first Iraq war in 1991. They are arranged in four categories: the first three consider learning, planning, and seeking approval for specific operations from the working level; the fourth looks at these factors from an institutional point of view. Cases are presented chronologically within each topic.

For example, case #2 deals with tactical deception measures employed by Gen. Lord Roberts, when his army relieved the siege of Kimberley during the second Boer War. Whaley notes that Roberts’s intelligence officer, Lt. Col. G. F. R. Henderson, based his recommendations for deception on lessons drawn from his study of Stonewall Jackson’s operations during the US Civil War. Operation ERROR (case #15, 39–42) is concerned with deception operations in the India-Burma theater—planned and conducted by Col. Peter Fleming (Ian’s brother).

Three interesting cases (numbers 19, 52, and 53) involve British scientist R. V. Jones, including his discussion of the “Theory of Practical Joking and the Theory of Spoof,” and his contribution to defeating the Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain.

Whaley also includes two controversial cases. The first concerns “Maj. Meinertzhagen and the Haversack Legend, Palestine 1917.” Meinertzhagen was Gen. Allenby’s intelligence officer, “who plagiarized a real plan and pretended to
carry it out—thereby fabricating the celebrated legend of the ‘Meinertzhagen Haversack Ruse.’”¹ (75–76)

The second and even more controversial case involves Lawrence of Arabia’s exploits, that Whaley labels “a myth.” (80) But he doesn’t stop there. “Simply put,” he writes, “Lawrence was a con man whose deceptions were directed more against allies than foes.” (81) Curiously, one of his sources is the unreliable Meinertzhagen. Thus readers are cautioned against accepting these views without consulting the great volume of evidence to the contrary.

The more recent case studies include “General Schwarzkopf’s Deception Planners, Iraq 1991” and “Jody Powell and the Iranian Rescue Mission, 1980.” (245–246)

Two of four appendices examine the deception planning for Operation Barbarossa, Hitler’s preparation for invading the Soviet Union. Another examines Operation Cloak, the British deception plans against the Japanese in Burma. The fourth lists other important operations—for example, Operation Bodyguard, prior to the invasion of Europe in World War II, and source material for further study.

Overall, Practise to Deceive is an interesting and valuable account of deception theory in practice.

Whistleblower at the CIA: An Insider’s Account of the Politics of Intelligence, by Melvin A. Goodman. (City Lights Books, 2017) 421, endnotes, glossary, index.

The writings of former senior intelligence officers deserve special attention particularly when they are also teaching intelligence-related courses at prestigious institutions. Whistleblower at the CIA is an important example. Retired CIA senior analyst Melvin Goodman claims whistleblower status “because of [his] revelations before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence during confirmation hearings for Bob Gates [as DCI].” (9) In his final chapter, he adds, “I wish I had gone further as a whistleblower.” (379) Whistleblower at the CIA can be seen as an attempt to fulfill that wish.

After a few words about his background and why he joined the CIA in 1968, Goodman launches a relentless and spirited attack on the Congress, the Defense Department, the State Department, the Intelligence Community—including the DNI—the media, and most of all the CIA. His concerns range from corrupt behavior to politicization in intelligence matters.

Following up on a theme of his 2008 book, Failure of Intelligence: The Decline and Fall of The CIA (Rowman and Littlefield), he writes in Whistleblower, “The CIA’s decline over several decades was marked by mediocre leadership, particularly by directors such as William Casey, Robert Gates, Porter Goss, and George Tenet, who tailored intelligence to satisfy the neoconservative biases” of presidents Reagan and George W. Bush. And “Tenet and Goss, as well as Michael Hayden and John Brennan, endorsed barbaric interrogations methods, and Brennan tried to block the Senate Intelligence Committee’s investigation of torture in secret prisons.” (21) Later, Goodman returns to the topic of CIA directors, labeling Generals Hayden and Petraeus “unsuited to lead the CIA,” adding that John Brennan “lied to the chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee,” and then criticizing President Obama for “selecting CIA chiefs, considering the disappointment of Panetta, Petraeus, and Brennan.” (270–271).

Other topics subjected to Goodman’s hostile scrutiny include the chapter on “CIA’s Double Standards and Double Dealing,” a discussion on the “lack of internal oversight . . . [and] the demise of the Office of the Inspector General and

¹. In his published post-war diaries, Meinertzhagen claimed to have placed false war plans in a haversack that successfully deceived the Turks as to the location of the main attack into Palestine. Lockman showed that to be a false claim, but the myth has persisted. See J. N. Lockman, Meinertzhagen’s Diary Ruse: False Entries on T. E. Lawrence (1870; reprinted by Cornerstone Publications, 1995).
the virtual disappearance of the statutory inspector general” (214); the myth that the Intelligence Community functions like a community (230); the unwillingness of the press “to adequately question and investigate government” (313); the preferential treatment given some members of the press (324–327); and the willingness of some in the media to succumb to CIA pressure. Even Steven Colbert—“(or his lawyers)”—is included. (332)

But Goodman reserves most of his bitterness for Bob Gates, to whom he gives indirect credit for his whistleblower status. This criticism of Gates is focused in Chapter Eight, where he explains how the two met in 1968 and why they drifted apart. Goodman depicts Gates as complicit in CIA’s institutionalized politicization of intelligence, fueled internally by corrupt officers from the top, down—a harsh judgment, coming from an “insider” who left the agency over three decades ago.

What has been quoted above is but a small sample of the Goodman’s explicit dissatisfaction with the Intelligence Community, its elements, its personnel, and its performance. The only personnel who are uniformly praised are his fellow whistleblowers, from Ellsberg to Snowden. Goodman concludes with the unsupported comment that “as long as the secret government manages to operate beyond the law and allows former officials such as Mike Morell, Jose Rodriguez, and John McLaughlin to lie about illegalities and abuse, the Agency will remain an enemy of democracy—and I will champion the path of dissent.” (379)

Readers who encounter Goodman’s doggedly negative opinions of the CIA and the Intelligence Community should note the absence of any contrary views.

**HISTORICAL**

**Special: Five Books on the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) During World War II**


Unlike the Ministry of Truth in George Orwell’s 1984 and Graham Greene’s *Ministry of Fear* (Viking, 1943), Giles Milton’s *Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare (MUW)* referred to a real but secret organization, Britain’s unconventional warfare agency during World War II, the Special Operations Executive (SOE). Since hundreds of books have been written about SOE operations, the first question that comes to mind is, “What more is there to say?” The short answer is, “Not much.” *MUW* does add some new detail about the organizations that preceded SOE, how the key personnel were recruited, and more about their personal careers. The operations it describes, for example those in France, Norway, and Czechoslovakia, have all been well covered elsewhere. Regrettably, there is no mention of “der England-
spiel” (“England game”), the term used by the Germans for the operation that captured and doubled team after team of SOE agents sent to Holland—all but two of whom died. Likewise, operations in Burma and Indo-China are ignored, while the Jedburghs receive only brief mention. References to operations in Yugoslavia are oblique—though not included in the index. Even the source of the title is dubious: according to Milton, it was Churchill himself who coined the phrase “ungentlemanly warfare”—but he fails to provide adequate proof for this assertion (he cites the British National Archives Cabinet Paper Collection, but there are 785 files and volumes reposited therein, rendering his claim impossible to verify). Finally, a central thread of the book is the role played by Colin Gubbins, who became the head of SOE, but his story is more completely covered in the second book listed above.

SOE’S Mastermind: An Authorized Biography of Major General Sir Colin Gubbins, is the second and more recent biography of Gubbins (the first, Peter Wilkinson and Joan Bright Astley’s Gubbins and SOE, was published in 1993 by Leo Cooper, Ltd.). The adjective “authorized” does not designate official sponsorship; rather, it derives from the cooperation extended to author Brian Lett by Gubbins’s grandson, which included access to family papers.

Colin Gubbins was born in Tokyo in 1896, where his linguist father was serving with the Foreign Office. When World War I began, he was on vacation from Royal Military Academy Woolwich, studying German in Heidelberg. Due to be interred as an enemy alien if caught, Gubbins’s escape makes interesting reading in Lett’s account.

Gubbins was commissioned in 1914 into the Royal Field Artillery and served the entire war on the western front, where he was “shot, gassed, and suffer[ed] from trench fever.” (42) After the war, he served with Gen. Edmund Ironside in Russia, where he learned guerrilla warfare fighting the Bolsheviks. He would go on to serve in Ireland, India, Czechoslovakia, and the War Office before and while assigned to MI(R), a predecessor unit of SOE. It was while in MI(R) that he wrote a handbook on irregular warfare that became part of SOE training. (89) After service in Norway, he returned for domestic duty, but in 1940 was seconded to SOE as director of operations and training.

SOE’S Mastermind describes how Gubbins rose to become head of SOE and the many successful operations he conducted throughout the world in this role. Curiously, however, Lett does not mention the failure of the SOE attempts to send agents to the Netherlands and how the Germans doubled all the agents dispatched (for an account of that disaster, see Nigel West, Secret War: The Story of SOE, Britain’s Wartime Sabotage Organization (Hodder & Stoughton, 1992) and Pieter Dourlein, Inside North Pole: A Secret Agent’s Story (William Kimber, 1953). Lett does comment on Gubbins’s relationship with William Donovan and his view of the Jedburgh teams whose delayed insertion into France before D-Day led Gubbins to tell historian M.R.D. Foot that “they had been absolutely wasted by not being pushed in at once.” (229)

Operations were not the only problems Gubbins had to confront: Lett describes the attacks on SOE’s autonomy and its very existence by the Foreign Office and the Secret Intelligence Service. Gubbins survived only with the support of Roundell Cecil Palmer, Third Earl of Selborne, then serving as Britain’s minister of Economic Warfare, and that of Winston Churchill, as Churchill moved to expand SOE operations worldwide.

In the concluding chapter of SOE’S Mastermind, Lett dons the robes of “professor hindsight” and raises a provocative conspiracy theory. While most authors record that SOE was abolished in January 1946 when its mission was absorbed by MI6, Lett challenges that version: “The author believes that Colin, the expert on cover resistance, ensured that, from January 1946, SOE simply went underground.” (256) The key word here is “believes,” as Lett offers no source; in fact, there are no source notes in the book—a major deficiency. Well written, but more entertainment than history.

The story told in Agent Michael Trotobas and SOE in Northern France takes a tack that is very different from the top-down and overview approaches of the two previous books. Here we encounter an SOE team in the field and one that has not previously received book-length treatment. In his foreword, Imperial War Museum historian Mark Seaman writes that “it is perhaps surprising that it has taken so long for a biography of Michael Trotobas, one of F Section’s [a
Major Trotobas was an atypical officer in many respects. His working class French parents decided to emigrate to America and left France for London in 1912 on their way to Southampton. At Waterloo Station, they took the wrong train and missed their ship, the *RMS Titanic*, which was embarking upon its maiden voyage. They decided to seek their fortune in England instead. Michael Trotobas was born in 1914 and lived a working class life playing rugby; boxing at school; and traveling in France, where he perfected his French. In 1933, he joined the Army and by the time World War II started, was a senior sergeant with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in France. Wounded during the withdrawal at Dunkirk, Trotobas returned to Britain, was commissioned, and was then seconded to the SOE. After training, he was assigned to set up a resistance circuit in France. The team parachuted in during the late fall of 1941. Within weeks, nearly all had been captured and imprisoned. As one SOE officer later reported, the arrests “almost cleaned up our organization in the unoccupied zone. The opening of 1942 therefore found us without radio contact . . . except Miss Virginia Hall established in Lyon . . . and keeping more or less an open house for F Section agents.” (48) (Hall was an SOE asset at that time.)

Trotobas and his colleagues did manage to escape with the help of the resistance, including Hall, and after a lengthy, convoluted series of events, reached England by the end of the year. Two months later, in early 1943 he was back in occupied France heading up the FARMER circuit that operated out of Lille, 40 miles south of Dunkirk.

The authors devote extensive attention to FARMERS’s daily existence, the persistent frustrations with communications and coordinating supply drops, personnel problems, helping downed airmen escape, sabotage operations, (135) and the ever persistent threat of betrayal that limited FARMER operations. One such betrayal has a special relevance for coauthor Stewart Kent and involves two resistance members, a mother and daughter, Jeanne and Yvonne Pachy—Kent’s grandmother and mother. The women were betrayed to the Gestapo and subsequently imprisoned; Trotobas organized Yvonne’s escape, but Jeanne had already been sent to Ravensbruck, where she perished.

It was also a betrayal that led to Trotobas’s own dramatic death on 27 November 1943. The authors relate those circumstances and their consequences during and after the war.

Agent Michael Trotobas and SOE in Northern France gives a glimpse of SOE field special operations during World War II. It is well documented and, where gaps exist, they are noted. The FARMER operations have resonance today.

Codenamed DORSET: The Wartime Exploits of Major Colin Ogden-Smith, Commando & SOE depicts another side of SOE operations in World War II. Ogden-Smith came from a well-educated, middle class British family. With his two brothers, he joined the army as war loomed in 1939. Ogden-Smith served first with the commandos and then with the Small Scale Raiding Force before joining SOE, where he became the leader (codename DORSET) of Jedburgh team FRANCIS. Author Peter Jacobs, himself a retired RAF navigator, gives Ogden-Smith’s former service some attention, but concentrates on SOE and FRANCIS.

According to Jacobs, the Jedburgh team concept “was the brainchild of SOE.” (91) Each team was to consist of an SOE and an OSS officer (one fluent in French), and a radioman (usually enlisted). Exceptions to this staffing arrangement occurred due to personnel availability; FRANCIS was affected by such constraints and was made up of two Brits and a Frenchman. Their mission was to serve as a link with the local resistance and the invasion forces, to coordinate supply drops, and to conduct sabotage. They were not spies and they wore their national uniforms.

Jacobs reviews the Jedburghs’ training, mainly at Milton Hall, the ancestral home of the Fitzwilliam family. It was here that the other members of FRANCIS—Guy Le Borgne, the French member, and Arthur Dallow, a Brit radioman—were added to team. (105) Their particular mission was to support a Maquis cell in Brittany. On 9 July 1944, team FRANCIS, led by now Major Ogden-Smith, was dropped near the small town of Meslan, southeast of Brest, an area full of Germans. The team landed safely but miles apart, and it was four days before they were reunited. By the
end of July, after only brief contact with the Maquis, Ogden-Smith was dead and the FRANCIS mission ended. Le Borgne and Dallow survived, saved by Ogden-Smith’s firing on the attacking Germans while they escaped. Jacobs gives a detailed account of the battle at a farmhouse near the town of Kerbozec where the team had been hiding from the enemy. They had been betrayed to the Germans by a Belgian collaborator, his wife, and son. Le Borgne reported to London that they had been “executed on my orders . . . two days later.” (169)

_Codenamed DORSET_ is well documented with interviews, archival documents, and Ogden-Smith’s personal diary. Jacobs reveals what it was like at the action-end of SOE, and reiterates that betrayal by putative allies is nothing new.

_RAFT and the SOE: Special Duty Operations in Europe During WW2_ is a report prepared by the Air Ministry staff at the end of World War II. It provides a chronological account of how the RAF worked with SOE to supply the weapons, radios, funds, and personnel required to conduct and support operations in the European and Mediterranean theaters during World War II. It was frequently a contentious relationship, since satisfying SOE requests meant diversion of aircraft resources from their traditional RAF mission, and not-infrequent losses only complicated matters. (12) The alternative of letting SOE have its own aircraft was never seriously considered. The report tells how this mission was accomplished with help from the US Air Force, using mostly unarmed single engine aircraft operating to and from makeshift airfields at night, behind enemy lines. Converted bombers were employed to drop supplies and teams of agents. Communication with ground staff was always risky.

The overall numbers are impressive. From 1942 to 1945, “6,700 personnel of 18 different nationalities” were landed or parachuted to the resistance behind enemy lines. Some 33,000 sorties were flown, of which “22,000 were successful and nearly 11,000 were failures.” (105) The report details the flights made to each nation, the relationship with the reception committees, the amount of supplies and personnel delivered or recovered, any difficulties encountered, and the reasons for failures and successes.

The difficulties often resulted from team penetration by the Gestapo. For example, the report discusses actions taken when it was discovered that the “whole SOE organization in Holland was penetrated by the Germans and had been run by the Germans for the last year.” This resulted in the suspension of sorties to Holland. Suspension was also considered for flights to Poland, but for “operational flight hazards” as well as security issues. (50–51)

The concluding chapter assesses the value of the RAF support to resistance, guerrilla, and sabotage operations as expressed by the resistance movements and the allied commanders they supported. _RAF and the SOE_ is the only authoritative account of air support to the SOE. The issues of planning and coordination it discusses remain relevant today.

_Argent M: The Lives and Spies of MI5’s Maxwell Knight_, by Henry Hemming. (Public Affairs, 2017) 354, endnotes, bibliography, photos, index.

Maxwell Knight was a tad eccentric. After WWI naval service he was a jazz musician, worked for a private intelligence agency, offered his services to the British fascists, and ran a pub. He would later host BBC nature broadcasts (300 for radio, 40 for TV) for young people, all the while keeping as pets mice, a baboon, a mongoose, a parrot, and a bear—a small one—in his apartment. He wrote more than 20 books on natural history, attended séances held by a spiritualist, and after two years of marriage had not consummated the relationship. (57) He also served briefly with MI6, where his unconventional methods were not appreciated. Then, in 1931, he joined the Security Service (MI5) and found a home. In _Agent M_, author Henry Hemming tells the story the man known within MI5 as “M.”

Knight’s eccentricities were not confined to his personal life. He was self-taught in the field of counterintelligence and security, and he trained each of his agents personally, especially well-educated young women, whose employment, other than as secretaries, was very unusual at the time. His MI5 mission to penetrate the fascists and the Communist
Party produced important results, and Hemming gives several examples. One involved H. G. Pollard, whom Knight recruited to work for the *Daily Worker*—heretofore unreported, and the details of which Hemming discovered in recently released MI5 files.

The Woolwich Arsenal operation where M used his best female agent, Olga Grey, to penetrate the communist NKVD ring working there, is the best known. The principal Soviet agent, Percy Gladding, was caught, but his NKVD handlers escaped; here, Hemming adds nothing new. In the Tyler Kent case, Knight’s agents developed evidence that led to the arrest and conviction of Kent, who had worked as a code clerk in the American embassy, and that of his fellow conspirator, Anna Wolkoff.

Of course the NKVD had recruited agents in MI5, and during World War II, one of Knight’s agents provided clues that led to the identification of a secretary who confessed to “passing on classified information to the Party.” According to Hemming, Knight’s nephew told him that his uncle even suspected Anthony Blunt, but lacked the evidence to raise the issue formally, and never mentioned it to superiors. (277) Whether Knight was just commenting for history after Blunt’s exposure isn’t discussed.

Knight continued to run penetrations of left wing organizations after World War II, but his operations gradually diminished. He retired in 1961 and pursued his many other interests. Hemming concludes that, despite his agent handling skills, his eccentricities assured he would never advance within MI5. (280)

When Ian Fleming published his James Bond books and called the head of the service “M,” there was press speculation that “M” was based on Fleming’s wartime boss, Adm. John Godfrey. Hemming, however, concludes that it was “most likely a nod to Max.” (294) He doesn’t consider another more likely candidate—Stewart Menzies, head of MI6. Fleming never revealed who inspired his choice. Another comparison with a fictional character is true: David Cornwell (later John le Carré) was one of Knight’s promising young officers and also illustrated two of Knight’s books. Citing John le Carré’s biographer, Adam Sisman, Hemming notes that Knight was, however, the inspiration for Jack Brotherhood in *The Perfect Spy*. (81)

There are several flaws in *Agent M* worth noting. First, the title is inaccurate, though this is not the fault of the author: Knight was no agent; he was simply a case officer who called himself “M.” Second, Hemming is also prone to using too many distracting “may haves”, “it is possibles”, “in all likelihoods”, where circumstances are unknown. Finally, not all significant details are sourced. (157) Still, *Agent M* celebrates the unique Maxwell Knight and his agents and is a story well told.

---

**The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War**, by Sarah Harris. (Routledge, 2016) 193, end of chapter notes, index.

“The Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) is widely considered one of CIA’s most daring and effective Cold War covert operations,” wrote Michael Warner, then a CIA historian, in a 1998 article.² The following year, British scholar Frances Stonor Saunders took a less positive view in her book, *Who Paid The Piper* (Granta Books, 1999). She argued that secret CIA funding and manipulation of the CCF was, in the long run, a detriment to the liberal left in countering Soviet cultural propaganda, while contaminating the reputations of the authors, artists, scientists, and philosophers whose works the CCF had promoted. Joel Whitney, in his book *Finks: How the CIA Tricked the World’s Best Writers* (OR Books, 2016), takes a similar position. In 2002, Pierre Grémion, while not mentioning CIA’s role, wrote that he “considered the Congress as an important semi-autonomous transnational organization that contributed a great deal to

---

the intellectual debates of the time. In 2008, Hugh Wilford concluded that “the implication that the CIA exercised complete control over the recipients of their covert largesse” was inaccurate and neglected a more complex reality.

The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War analyzes these interpretations and complexities from a different perspective. Author Sarah Harris, a Cambridge lawyer with a PhD in international relations, focuses on the contribution of “the man who helped found the Congress, became its de facto manager, and ensured its survival,” Michael Josselson. It was Josselson’s personal contacts with the “intellectuals who flocked” to the CCF and his relationship with the CIA that explain the “positions the Congress took,” and were the “key to the Congress’s successes.”

Josselson had initiated several actions, the most important of which was recommending the CIA provide for a stand-alone “Congress for cultural freedom” in June 1950. The result was a conference, to be held in Berlin, that would “feature non-communist intellectuals, who would hopefully champion Western cultural and political ideals, denounce totalitarianism” and signal to the world that “a critical mass of Western intellectuals adamantly opposed the Soviet system.” Covert funding was also being used by the Soviets for their already-extensive series of front organizations supporting “hundreds of prominent artists writers and scientists . . . dedicated to championing the Soviet Union as the world’s best chance for world peace and its paramount defender of culture.” Curiously, this fact never was accepted by participants as normal.

The Berlin conference was the scene of much controversy between East Germans and the Western attendees—that included Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Hugh Trevor-Roper, Nicolas Nabokov (author Vladimir Nabokov’s cousin), and Arthur Koestler—and among the attendees themselves. As Harris reveals, many of the delegates had participated in previous conferences with the same objective. The best known was sponsored by the Soviets in New York, where communists had dominated the scene. But in the end, the Berlin delegates voted to establish the CCF.

The CCF went on to sponsor more conferences, concerts, books, travel, and magazines all over the world. Its most famous magazine was the British Encounter, co-edited by Bertrand Russell, Stephen Spender, Nancy Mitford, and Isaiah Berlin, among others. The Encounter experience was typical of CCF-supported publications: it sided with the West in the Cold War, and it criticized the United States during the McCarthy era and on other policies.

But the CCF was never a smoothly running organization, and Harris examines this aspect in detail in order to show how Josselson struggled to keep it functioning. There were turf battles within elements of CIA when management changed, and disputes among editors and authors. The most significant, prolonged, and unsuccessful effort to shape CCF policy came from the American Congress of Cultural Freedom, an offshoot of the CCF, led by an ex-communist turned right-wing CIA contractor.

Harris ends her study with an account of the 1967 scandal that exposed the CIA covert funding in the midst of the Vietnam War. She quotes Josselson as he answered the question, “Does the end justify the means?” His response was that the “record of accomplishment does seem to me . . . to justify the means in this case . . . the only thing wrong in the means was the deception I was obliged to practice about the source of funds.”

Harris concludes that the value of the CCF is not just “a question of history, but a moral and political judgment.”

---

3. Quoted in Giles Scott-Smith, The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress of Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and the Post War American Hegemony (Routledge, 2002), x.

In his bibliographic essay, “Companions of Crisis: The Spy Memoir as a Social Document,” former OSS officer and CIA analyst Curtis Carroll Davis, while discussing Civil War espionage, observes that “sooner or later some of its wartime practitioners are constrained, for a variety of reasons, to tell their stories.” He notes 19 autobiographical narratives that appeared after the Civil War, two of which were written in the first person. The first was *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army*, by Sarah Emma Edmonds—a somewhat embellished account of a woman who posed as male soldier and spy. The second, *The Women in Battle*, by Loreta Janeta Velazquez “made similar claims on the part of the Confederacy.” It is the latter that intrigued Civil War historian William Davis.

While in his 1964 article Curtis Carroll Davis accepted *The Women in Battle* as a genuine expression of Velasquez’s experiences, William Davis’s thorough and scholarly review of the book identified “obvious errors and impossibilities” in her account that sent him to the archives. (1) It is from these records—mostly press accounts from interviews she frequently gave—that Davis concludes, “we may never know her real birth name, or the true name or the true number and names of all her husbands and her children.” (3) Of her early life, little is known—Davis discusses the speculation to which she contributed—though court records and press stories reveal she was a teenage prostitute and minor criminal who spent time in prison under a variety of names.

A few of the episodes in *The Women in Battle* that could not be substantiated include claims that she fought with her slave, Bob, in the major battles of 1861 and 1862; her role as a blockade runner and courier; her marriage to a Confederate officer who left her a widow; and her tales of being wounded at Shiloh, where she had a chance to kill Ulysses S. Grant. (165)

It was in September 1861, writes author William Davis, that Velasquez “decided to leave the brothels behind” and become Confederate Lt. Harry Buford, though she seldom hid her femininity from her colleagues. (16) The account of her espionage while “married” to a Confederate officer occupy several chapters in the book and, absent evidence of authenticity, are the basis for much of her post-war reputation. (51ff) And, as Davis points out (probably because *The Women in Battle* is a singular account), her reputation remains positive to this day. He describes several contemporary social scientists who willingly ignore the story’s false claims and see great value in it as a model for opening dialogue around gender identity issues. (245)

For those who wonder what happened to Velasquez after the war, Davis says she remained a “confidence woman . . . and pioneering female swindler” as she schemed to survive. (3) In 1911, she announced plans for a new edition of *The Women in Battle* and a book on US-Mexico relations, but neither was to be: suffering from dementia, she was admitted

---


7. Inconsistent spellings of both her given name and surname are documented in *Inventing Loreta Velasquez* (e.g., Loreta and Lauretta, and Velasquez and Velazquez).

to St. Elizabeth’s mental hospital in Washington, DC, where she died in 1923. (234)

_Inventing Loreta Velasquez_ should relieve any doubts about the authenticity of Velasquez and her book.


With the publication of _The ULTRA Secret_ by F. W. Winterbotham in 1974 (Harper and Row), the British acknowledged that the cryptographers at Bletchley Park had successfully decrypted the German military signals encrypted by the Enigma machine and transmitted using Morse code, during most of World War II. The decrypted Enigma material was eventually assigned the codename ULTRA. Winterbotham notes that ULTRA messages “carried the very highest command traffic from Hitler . . . to his High Command, the Chiefs of the Army, Navy and Air Staffs.”

But the material processed through Enigma still required manual encryption and decryption.

By 1941, a new machine was in use: the Lorenz, named for the German company that manufactured it, simultaneously enciphered and transmitted the text as it was typed; likewise on the receiving end, decipherment was automatic. The Lorenz replaced the Enigma as the preferred German Geheimschreiber (secret writing) machine during the war, but Bletchley was able to break this system, too. _LORENZ_ tells how they did it.

Author Jerry Roberts worked at Bletchley Park in what was called the Testery, named after British major Ralph Paterson Testery, who headed the team. The intercepted Lorenz traffic was initially codenamed FISH, later TUNNY. The Testery quickly realized this system was far more complicated than Enigma. Gradually they worked out that the Lorenz encoding machine had 12 rotors, compared to Enigma’s four. Roberts’s teammate, Bill Tutte, broke the system in 1942 without ever having seen the Lorenz machine itself. (72) The initial decryption work was done by hand, and Roberts devotes two chapters (Chapters 9 & 10) to explain how that was done. Later, a machine called COLOSSUS was constructed to determine the rotor settings necessary for automatic decryption, and Roberts discusses that, too. (Chapter 11)

_Lorenz_ also has a chapter on the impact of the decrypts on World War II. Roberts credits Lorenz decrypts with alerting the Allies to the upcoming Battle of Kursk. He also comments on their contribution to D-Day preparations. This is of interest since these feats have previously been attributed to Enigma traffic. (129)

The details of the Lorenz device (and at least one variant) were declassified in 2002, and other authors have made reference to its contribution. But Jerry Roberts, the last surviving member of the Testery team, provides the only firsthand account of the team’s work at Bletchley. He also provides biographical details of his pre- and post-war life.

_Lorenz_ fills gaps in the history of Bletchley Park and provides material for future historians who seek to establish more precisely the contribution of codebreaking during World War II.


On 2 January 1943, the Japanese army occupied Manila, unopposed. Most of the American and Filipino troops surrendered and some survived the notorious Bataan death march to prison camps. But a few escaped into the hills and formed resistance units that harassed the Japanese. Several civilians remained in Manila and built a network of agents who smuggled supplies to prisoners in POW camps. Both groups collected intelligence for MacArthur.

---


Positive publicity notwithstanding, Eisner spotted inconsistencies in her book, plus obvious embellishments in the movie and her interviews. Curious, he went to the National Archives in search of the facts. *MacArthur’s Spies* is the story of what he found.

The archive files were sparse, but in a bit of scholarly luck, Eisner found Phillips’s handwritten diary of her wartime life. From this and other clues, he learned that Claire Phillips was born Clara Mabel De La Testa, just one of multiple names she would adopt—not all associated with her many marriages. Eisner traces her path to Manila, where she met and later claimed to have married Army private John Phillips, 10 years her junior, shortly before the war. Eisner found no record that she did.

Claire remained in the Manila area after the invasion and, with the help of friends, she began a double life—in more senses than one. One part involved the nightclub, called the Tsubaki, that she did, in fact, operate. It was staffed by young female entertainers who catered to Japanese officers, businessmen, local Filipino collaborators, and—unknown to the Japanese—members of the underground. Eisner tells how she and selected colleagues began intentionally acquiring useful military information from the club’s Japanese patrons that was then passed to the Americans, one of whom was Corporal (later Captain) John Boone, a leader of a guerrilla unit in the mountains. Another was an US Navy officer, Charles Parsons, who lived clandestinely in Manila and maintained contact with MacArthur’s headquarters in Australia. *MacArthur’s Spies* tells their stories in some detail.

It was the second half of Phillips’s double life that led to her nickname “High Pockets.” Her putative husband was said to be in a POW camp, and with the help of the Red Cross she attempted to locate him to deliver allowable convenience items. She never found him, though, and gave the items to other prisoners; in the process, as she would later claim in her book, she would accept messages from POWs for delivery to the Army, and these she often stuffed in her brassiere, thus expanding her silhouette. The POWs dubbed her “High Pockets,” and she adopted the nickname. (120) Eisner records another, less colorful version of how the nickname originated, given by one of her colleagues, but can’t confirm either story. (286)

The Japanese military security service, the Kempeitai, eventually discovered Phillips’s networks. She, along with her Filipino colleagues, was imprisoned in May 1944. Eisner records the appalling details of their confinement. She was released in February 1945 upon MacArthur’s return.

After her return to the United States and the publication of her book, Phillips’s celebrity status gradually diminished and she sued the government for the expenses she incurred in the operation of her club. Although she won the case, the amount awarded was insufficient to sustain her and she took odd jobs before lapsing into alcoholism, succumbing on 22 May 1960—“almost sixteen years after she was dragged into a dungeon by the Kempeitai.” (288)

*MacArthur’s Spies* doesn’t totally set the record straight; Claire Phillips told too many variations of her life story for that. But it does establish that she was a loyal American who risked her life for her country during World War II.
To most citizens in 1942, “Remember Pearl Harbor” was a patriotic slogan and a song—but not to Adm. Husband E. Kimmel, commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet, and LTG Walter C. Short, commander of the US Army, Pacific (Hawaiian Department). Blamed for “dereliction of duty,” they were forced to retire at reduced ranks. They became the focus of public controversy and the objects of several investigations that sought to explain how the disaster could have happened. Courts-martial was considered but ultimately rejected because of the risk of exposing the MAGIC secret (the United States had broken Japan’s diplomatic codes).

A Matter of Honor presents a chronological examination of events in Hawaii, Washington, and Japan that involved—or should have involved—Kimmel and Short from before and just after the attack to the present. They do not absolve Kimmel of responsibility, a position Kimmel himself acknowledged, but they do raise doubts about the treatment Kimmel and Short received, especially from the CNO, Admiral Stark, and question whether others should have shared in the blame—a position Kimmel held.

Some historians and journalists have long speculated on the reasons for surprise at Pearl Harbor, and conspiracy theories emerged early on. Even President Roosevelt was suspect: some claimed the president knew the attack was coming and “ordered that no timely warning be sent to those defending Pearl Harbor.” (26) Others suggested “high officials in Washington knew, before the attack, that Japanese warships were steaming toward Hawaii.” (26) Still others charged that British double agent Dusko Popov had warned the FBI that an attack on Pearl Harbor was coming, and that the Bureau took no action. The authors dismiss these and similar theories for lack of conclusive evidence. The book presents a long list of books and articles about these and other conspiracy theories that have been found wanting. (477)

Adm. Kimmel testified at a post-war investigation and argued he had not been provided with crucial MAGIC intelligence, such as the November 30 message that instructed the Japanese embassies to destroy their codes and files. Still, the Navy did not alter its decision and has not done so to this day.

Three generations of Kimmels have since attempted to correct the record and restore the ranks of both officers (Gen. Short died in 1949). Authors Anthony Summers and Robbyn Swan present a long list of very distinguished naval officers, who with the 10,000-member Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, petitioned the Navy Department and the president to take that action—but no avail.

A Matter of Honor does not provide a reason for the Navy’s adamant opposition (which was supported by several presidents), but it does hint that if changes are made, reputations of other distinguished wartime officers would be damaged, necessitating a correction of their testimony and reassessment of their performance, and thus a revision of history. Whether that is a price too high is a decision left to the reader.


Clyde Conrad was a US Army sergeant and classified document control NCO serving in West Germany in the mid-1970s when he began selling the Top Secret war plans in his vault to the Hungarian security service. It wasn’t long before CIA sources behind the Iron Curtain reported that sensitive military secrets were being delivered regularly to the Hungarians, and the Army CI element was notified. It took years to track down Conrad and assemble the evidence required to arrest him in 1988. The story of how they accomplished this is told by Col. Stuart Harrington in his book, Traitors Among Us (Presidio Press, 1999).

In describing some significant breakthroughs in the case, Herrington mentioned FBI agent Joe Navarro, who inter-
viewed former Army sergeant, Rod Ramsay, who had worked for Conrad and succeeded him as Top Secret control officer when Conrad retired. Ramsay eventually provided much confirmatory evidence concerning Conrad’s operations and, to everyone’s surprise, added details that were until then unknown.10 *Three Minutes To Doomsday* tells that story.

Joe Navarro was something of a maverick FBI agent serving in Florida. A Cuban émigré with a degree from Brigham Young University, he had applied to the Bureau at the suggestion of one of his professors. In 1988, he was assigned to the field office in Tampa, Florida, where he became a member of the SWAT team and a pilot who conducted aerial surveillance. On 23 August 1988, he was tasked to accompany a visiting officer from the Army’s Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) while he interviewed Roderick James Ramsay about his time working for Conrad.

During the interview, Navarro noticed how Ramsay’s body language suggested he knew something that bothered him, but that he was reluctant to reveal. After the INSCOM officer concluded that there wasn’t much more to learn from Ramsay and returned to Washington, Navarro mentioned his concerns to his supervisor and asked for permission to follow up. His request was approved, but not without an encounter with FBI bureaucracy—the first of many throughout the case that illuminates internal turf wars, centered on credit-sensitive careerists seeking to protect prerogatives.

*Three Minutes To Doomsday* follows Navarro over the next 20 months as he and two gifted female special agents slowly establish an extraordinary relationship with Ramsay that capitalized on Ramsay’s genius IQ, his photographic memory, and his need for an understanding friend besides his mother. Through a carefully orchestrated series of interviews, they develop such a deep bond of trust and friendship with Ramsay that he unburdens himself about his traitorous behavior without fearing arrest. At the same time, Navarro observes the legal constraints that will permit prosecution if Ramsay confesses. In the end, Ramsay gives up details Conrad had withheld, including the location of Top Secret documents in a secret house, some of which involved nuclear war plans given to the Hungarians and shared with the KGB.

Once the information Ramsay provides is verified, he is arrested. His first response to the arresting officer is, “Does Joe Navarro know about this?” (303)

The bureaucratic and psychological strain on Navarro was severe and he was forced to take sick leave before he could return to work. Curiously, before Navarro put a stop to further communication, Ramsay continued to write and call him from prison, where he was serving a 36-year sentence. An informative, instructive, and valuable counterintelligence contribution.


*War in the Desert* has an unusual history. Its author, T. E. Lawrence, was an eccentric young Oxford archeologist who was commissioned as an intelligence officer at the start of World War I. Sent to Cairo, he served in the Arab Bureau until 1916, when he was designated liaison to the Arab leader who was fomenting a revolt against Turks. Having arranged British support for the Arabs, Lawrence ended up leading the revolt that contributed to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. He returned to Britain as a colonel and a reluctant celebrity known as “Lawrence of Arabia,” thanks to the stories American journalist Lowell Thomas wrote about him. After declining a knighthood, he participated in the Paris Peace Talks, then left the Army and returned to Oxford to write a book about his adventures. Before it was finished, he was tasked to become an advisor to the colonial secretary, Winston Churchill, and he served on the Foreign Office commission that created the Arab countries in the Middle East, which exist in various forms today.

By 1922, Lawrence had returned to Oxford and had finished his book, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Eight draft copies were printed as proofs in August 1922, and he sent copies to his literary friends Edward Garrett and George Bernard Shaw, asking for their opinions. Two weeks earlier, Lawrence—for reasons still a puzzle—had joined the RAF as an enlisted man. A short time later Lawrence received an offer to publish an abridgement for £7000.00, equivalent to more than £300,000 today. Shaw opposed any abridgement. Garrett proposed to undertake the task and Lawrence agreed, though he made multiple changes. By November 1922, *War in the Desert* was complete—160,000 words—and Lawrence contemplated leaving the service and devoting himself to other pursuits. Then in January 1923, Lawrence wrote to his publisher withdrawing the book. He gave no reason, though Shaw’s opposition may have been a factor. *War in the Desert* would wait 93 years before publication.

The idea of an abridged version did not disappear when Lawrence abandoned *War in the Desert*. Encouragement from friends resulted in a 100-copy, fine press, abridged subscription edition—80,000 words fewer than the Oxford edition of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*; in 1926, that edition sold for £30.00 (about £1500.00 today). A year later, an abridged trade edition entitled *Revolt in the Desert* was published. Despite his need for funds to augment his anticipated retirement from the RAF, Lawrence decided not to accept any royalties.

*War in the Desert* has now been rescued from oblivion. The first seven chapters—omitted from *Revolt in the Desert* and other abridgments—tell how he wrote his story of the Arab Revolt. The editor’s introduction adds further detail about its origins and disagreements over topics; a table of contents compares the *War* chapters with those in the Oxford edition, so one can see which have been omitted. However, even if *War in the Desert* had appeared when originally planned, its publication would probably not have materially influenced subsequent critiques of Lawrence and his writings. For more on this aspect, see Jeremy Wilson’s biography of Lawrence,¹¹ and Barton Whaley’s assessment in *Practise To Deceive*.¹²

*War in the Desert* adds to the Lawrence lore and will be of interest to those who have followed his legendary life. Copies can be obtained from the publisher.

---
