

Ron Harvie's War

Controller of Double Agents for "A" Force



Research by Belinda Forster (nee Harvie, daughter of Ron, and Stephen Barraud, son of Belinda) at the National Archives revealed that towards the end of the Second World War Ron was working in an specialised unit known as "A" Force. "A" Force's task was to confuse and mislead German and Italian forces. The documents found at the National Archives were mainly Ron's instructions to double agents, stating what misinformation they should send to their Axis controllers.

Background

When I asked Mum what she wanted for her 80th, she asked that I find out what her father, Ron Harvie, had done during the Second World War. She knew that he worked in Intelligence, and had known about Mincemeat, but that was all.

So I Googled his name, without any great expectations of finding anything, but on about page 6 of the results he appeared, in a book Google had digitised. The book was called *The Deceivers*, by Thaddeus Holt, and describes a unit known as “A” Force. The book was about how the allies deceived (or attempted to deceive) Axis intelligence.

I bought the book and found that Ron had been running the Naples and Bari stations for “A” Force. However, there were only passing references to him.

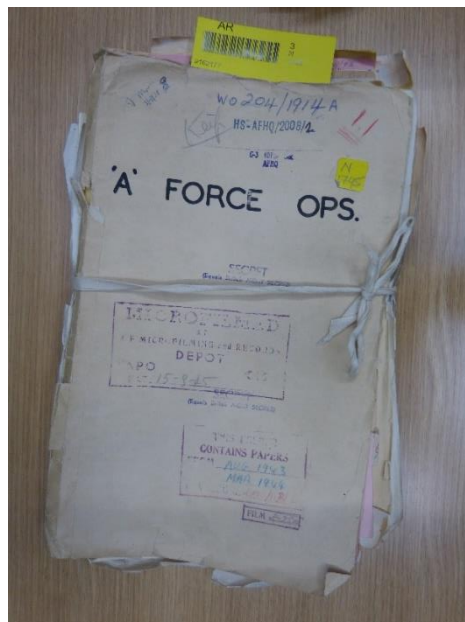
On a blustery November day in 2014, Mum and I went to the National Archives in Kew.

Before going I had searched through their online database of files to find what there was and chosen half a dozen that looked promising for them to have ready.

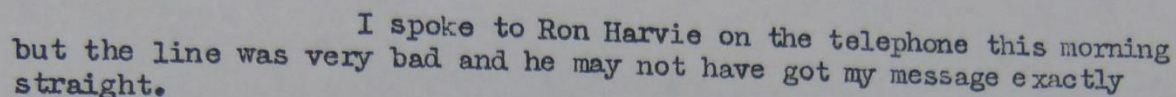
We left our coats and bags in the cloakroom (not just for convenience, they don’t want people with bags in the reading rooms), picked up our readers’ cards, which we had also pre-ordered, and went past the security guards to the reading rooms. Our files were in large pigeon holes with transparent doors.

We picked them up and went through to the reading room itself and sat at desk.

I picked one file at random, Mum another, and started reading. Mine was fascinating (propaganda to be distributed after the war) but irrelevant.

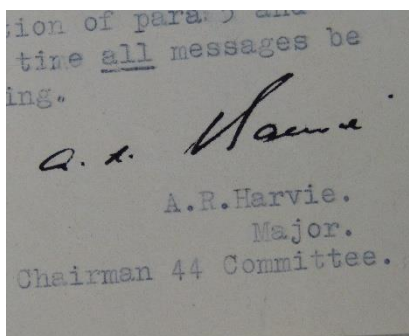


However, after about 5 minutes, Mum said “I’ve found him!” And she had. There was a reference to him in a letter.



I spoke to Ron Harvie on the telephone this morning but the line was very bad and he may not have got my message exactly straight.

Then we found a huge amount more in the same folder, including details of the double agents he had been controlling, a letter he had written to MI6 and even a reference to his batman. We had found exactly what we were looking for. We were absolutely delighted. We even had his signature on a letter.



tion of para. 3 and
time all messages be
ing.
A. R. Harvie.
Major.
Chairman 44 Committee.

We spent the rest of the morning going through that file (the others were also irrelevant), then had lunch, feeling, in my case, rather gobsmacked by our luck, spent the afternoon taking photos of the material, and then came home. The rest of the document describes what we found and my interpretation of it.



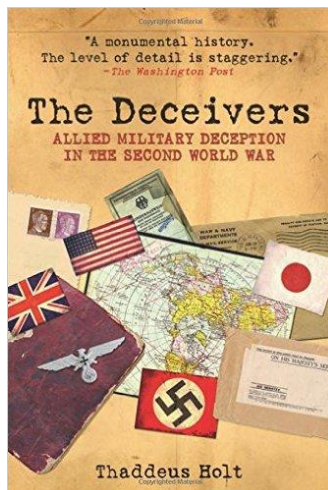
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September 2016

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“A” Force



This information about “A” Force comes from *The Deceivers* by Thaddeus Holt. A huge book. Presumably Holt’s researches at the National Archive included the file we found.

“A” Force were responsible for misleading the enemy about Allied Forces’ intentions.

Dudley Clarke had created and run “A” Force in Cairo¹, initially covering Montgomery’s war with Rommel and later the entire Mediterranean theatre, with other units in the UK and the Far East.

He worked closely with MI5, and several of the names (such as Tar Robertson, Guy Liddell and JC Masterman) familiar to other histories of espionage in the Second World War also crop up in the history of “A” Force.

After some false starts, “A” Force summarised deception as:

Persuading the enemy to do something that will strengthen your position and weaken his.

The most famous deception was Operation FORTITUDE, which persuaded Germany that the Allied forces were going to land at Pas de Calais, and the attack in Normandy was a feint. It is unlikely Ron had anything to do with this as he was in North Africa and Italy at the time.

Deception required several streams of work. There were dummy tanks, simulated radio transmissions, and soldiers walking around towns (where spies were known to operate) with regimental badges from notional units (*notional* in this context means fake, *actual* is a real unit).

Double agents working ostensibly for Axis forces, but in fact for Allied forces, were instructed to pass on messages about notional forces.

All this misinformation had to fit together. If a notional 15th Armoured Brigade was invented, then the radio signals had to sound like signals from an Armoured Brigade, the soldiers would walk around town wearing invented badges of the notional 15th



Armoured Brigade, and the double agents would be told to notify their enemy handlers that they had seen a lot of tanks heading north on a particular town, and near that town there would be what looked like an encampment of tanks (in fact inflated dummies) that would be seen by enemy observer planes. All this was fantastically detailed.

¹ Above a brothel, as seems to occur so often in these histories.

Ron's Position in Italy

One of the documents² we found shows the officers in place in Italy. Notable names include:

- Brigadier Dudley Clarke
- Major R F (Freeman) Thomas, mentioned below
- Major H D Niven (brother of the actor, known as Max)
- Major A R Harvie
- Lt Col R Bromley-Davenport

Both Thomas and Bromley-Davenport were friends of Ron before and after the war; one gets the impression of an old-boy network in place.

Another prominent member of "A" Force was Peter Fleming, brother of Ian, who managed "A" Force's operations in the Far East against Japan.

² To display the material we found at the National Archives I have altered the contrast in these images to make them more readable. The font is still rather small, and I need glasses to read the text, or zoom right in if reading on a screen. Contact me if you would like the original photographs.

SECRET

5 July 44.

SECRET

APPENDIX "A"

H.Q.	APPT.	HOLDER	APPT. IN WHICH CARRIED PENDING NEW WAR ESTAB.	REMARKS
Main H.Q. (CASERTA)	Comd. "A" Force Dep. Comd.	Brig. D.W. Clarke Lt.-Col. M.H. Crichton	Main H.Q. (Control)	-
	GSO.II (Ops)	Major R.F. Thomas	-de - (GSO.I)	-
	GSO.II ("I")	Major G.T. Kenyon	-do- (GSO.II)	See Note(a)
	GSO.III (Ops)	Capt. (Mrs) L.E. Laight	Adv(W) (GSO.II "O") "G" Sec.	See Note(a)
	GSO.III (Ops)	J/Cdr. P.C. Horton	Main H.Q. (Control)	-
	GSO.III ("I")	J/Cdr. H.M. Mason	Adv(W) (GSO.III "O") "G" Sec.	-
	GSO.III ("I")	Miss D. Llewellyn	Adv(W) (GSO.III "I")	-
	GSO.III ("N" duties)	J.C.A.	Adv(W) (GSO.III Control)	-
	Staff Capt.	J/Cdr. P. Stirling	Main H.Q. (I.O. "N" Sec.)	-
		Vacant	Adv(E) (GSO.III "I") "G" Sec.	-
MAIN H.Q. (Out-stations)	GSO.II ROME	Maj. P. Grandguillot	Adv(W) (GSO.II Control)	-
	GSO.II NAPLES	Major H.D. Niven	Adv(E) (GSO.II Control)	-
	GSO.II BARI	Major H.L. Gummer	Adv(W) (GSO.II Control)	-
	GSO.II ALGIERS	Major W.E. Rose	Adv(W) (GSO.II "I") "G" Sec.	-
	GSO.II ITALY	Maj. A.R. Harvie	Adv(E) (GSO.II "I")	See Note(b)
	GSO.II ITALY	Maj. P.D. Druff	Adv(E) (GSO.II Control)	See Note(c)
REAR H.Q. (CIRO)	GSO.I	Lt.-Col. R.M. Hamer	Rear H.Q. (Control)	-
	GSO.II	Maj. P.E. Phillips	Rear H.Q. ("G" Sec.)	-
	GSO.III	J/Cdr. L.F. Lassetter	Adv(E) (GSO.III "O")	See Note(d)
	D/L & QMG.	Major D.G. Flynn	Main H.Q. (Control)	-
	I.O.	J/Cdr. Hon. P.M. Agar-Robartes	Main H.Q. (Control)	See Note(d)
	I.O.	Vacant	Rear H.Q. (Control)	Accountant officer
REAR H.Q. (Out-stations)	GSO.II BEIRUT	Maj. D.A. Mure	Adv(E) (Control)	-
No. 1 TAC H.Q. (A...I.)	GSO.I	Lt.-Col. R...	Tac H.Q. (W) (Control)	-
	GSO.II	Bramley-Davenport	Tac H.Q. (W) ("G" Sec)	-
	GSO.III	Maj. J.D. Elkington	- do -	-
		Capt. C.L. van Bergen		-

No. 2/.....

Chairman of the Committee

Ron was chairman of the 44 Committee, having taken over from Max Niven. This was responsible for activities in Naples.

The committee numbering systems originated in the Twenty Committee in London, concerned with double cross (XX being Roman 20), and covered in many books such as Ben Macintyre's *Double Cross*.

Bletchley Park and Decryption of German Signals

It was important to verify that the enemy was acting on the false intelligence supplied by "A" Force. This could be supplied by Allied's own spies, observations from air or by decryption of German radio transmissions at Bletchley Park.

It is almost certain that Ron knew about Bletchley; it would have been difficult to run double agents without access to such information. Belinda says that he was worried about talking in his sleep about certain matters. Perhaps the existence of Bletchley Park was one of them.

Had Ron lived a few more years it is possible that he might have been able to tell this part of his story. His wife, Bet, lived until 1990, and never mentioned it, so it is quite likely Ron never even told her.

There are two hints in the material we found that Ron knew about the decryption of German radio traffic at Bletchley Park: missing pages from the record, and a mention of a "Certain something"; these are discussed below.

Ron's Job.

Ron's job, as identified in the files we looked at, was to control the double agents. He may well have had other jobs; more time in the National Archives may well reveal more.

We found details of two spies in the file, codenamed APPRENTICE and PRIMO.

Agent APPRENTICE

According to *The Deceivers*:

"APPRENTICE was a White Russian, son of a Czarist officer, with Yugoslav loyalties but fiercely anti-Tito, who was parachuted in from Albania in May and promptly turned himself in. He wanted to serve in the Yugoslav Air Force but was persuaded to function as a W/T double agent instead; which he did from June to the end of the war, transmitting from Bari under the 42 Committee, again with Max Niven as "A" Force representative. He was a great success with the Germans, who not only multiplied the allowance they were paying his wife in Yugoslavia, parachuted in to him four thousand pounds, cognac and cigarettes, and a Christmas pudding."

It would appear that Ron took over from Max Niven in running the Bari station and inherited APPRENTICE with the post.

The following photographs are a record of the radio traffic between the double agent and his Axis controller.

Each page shows the date, time, outward traffic, inward traffic and any remarks for any transmission. Each page is usually covered in ticks in different coloured crayons (I have no idea what these mean) and a rubber stamp.

The outward traffic was what Ron was telling APPRENTICE to report to his Axis controller; the In Traffic was what the Axis controller was sending to APPRENTICE. The former was usually intelligence, presumably mostly false, the latter requests for intelligence.

In this first page (overleaf), Ron has instructed APPRENTICE to give his Axis controller information about Polish and British parachute forces.

The note in red crayon is by Major Freeman Thomas, who was a friend of Ron's before and after the war. Belinda can remember him visiting Ron when they lived in London in the Fifties.

QRX is a standard code (Q-code in the jargon) for details of the next transmission.

Just like any bureaucracy, everything has a file reference. In this case, Ron's initial – ARH (he never used his first name, Arthur) followed by a number, 7. This implies that Ron had at least 7 agents to look after, but probably not at the same time. It also has an "A" Force stamp.

		APPRENTICE		TRAFFIC	
		OUT TRAFFIC		IN TRAFFIC	REMARKS
DATE	TIME				
19.10.44.	0530 hrs.	<p>Polish acquaintance informs me that 7th. Polish Infantry Division is now non-combatant. Its personnel will be absorbed as replacements by 2nd. Polish Corps on Italian front.</p> <p>Am informed by source believed reliable that 2nd British Parachute Brigade is in Greece. 5th. Airborne Division and 57th. Infantry Division are still in same places as reserve for operations in Greece. Commander of Forces in Greece is Lt. Gen. SCOBIE.</p> <p>M. le Professeur. Very many thanks for everything. I shall work three or four times a week. Greetings to you and my friends.</p> <p>QXX at 0500 hrs. on 21st. October on frequencies 1 and 1.</p> <p>ARM/7a. 19.10.44.</p>		<p><i>Long 7.T. This is very similar to what we said for American!</i></p> <p>HQ "A" FORCE DATE 21/10/44 FILE COMD GSO 1 "I" Section "O" Section G II G II G HRN G HRN G III G II G I (N) 6015</p>	

(K 2 (b))

THIS MARK

DATE		FILE	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC	REMARKS
21.10.44.	0500 hrs.	86 DIP	<p>Have received following information from Polish acquaintance. 2nd. Polish Armoured Brigade has been detached from 2nd. Polish Armoured Division and is now independent. The remainder of the Division has been absorbed by 7th. Polish Infantry Division. Source therefore thinks 2nd. Polish Armoured Division has ceased to exist.</p> <p>Have identified green fig leaf on white background as BRITISH 3rd. Corps</p> <p>Q.R.X. at 0530 hours on 25th. October on frequencies 1 and 1.</p> <p>ARH/7. 24.10.44.</p>	<p>ROUTED TO 21/10</p> <p>86</p> <p>21/10</p> <p>6016</p>	

This is the next communication, on the 21st October 1944, as promised in the previous message. More information on the Poles.

The next communication is for the 25th October, but the next file entry is dated 30th November.

APPRENTICE.		TRAFFIC	
DATE	TIME	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC
30.11.44.	0600 hrs	<p>No indication of ITALIAN Divisions in BARI area. Rumours, not confirmed, that they are in NAPLES area. There are conflicting opinions as to the composition of this Army. So far have confirmed the existence of only Cremona and Friula Divisions. Continued.</p> <p>Continuation. Have not yet discovered details of command. Am informed that these Divisions are being trained and equipped by the BRITISH. Am still enquiring. BARI harbour normal activity. Will try to cover FOGGIA and BRINDISI shortly.</p> <p>Q.R.X. at 0530 hours on 1st. Dec. on frequencies 1 and 1.</p> <p>ARH/7. 1.12.44. No.51.</p>	<p>Urgent task to be carried out. Where is the 3 POLISH Corps and the divisions under its command. Please try to get exact information. Hearty greetings from us all.</p> <p>What is known of the landing of about one thousand YUGOSLAWS in the DUBROVNIK area? Details of place embarkation, when, and composition of unit please.</p> <p>We agree the standard time 0530 hours C.M.T. for December.</p> <p>Referred to Bary.</p>

3/12	
FILE	
COPY	
CLASS	
action	
GU	GU
GI	GI
GU	GU
B.C.	7194

6 p.m. X for 29th
has arrived through
failure of current.
also the above happen
has passed on 30th

Unlike the previous communications, there are instructions from APPRENTICE's Axis controller to find out information.

I guess that CMT stands for Central Mediterranean Time, but Google could find no such acronym.

APPRENTICE		TRAFFIC	
DATE	TIME	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC
14.12.44.		<p>Reference questions. Can find no trace of other Polish forces in this area. 7th Polish Infantry Division said to be in same location. It is a non-operational division providing replacements for 2nd Polish Corps. Can learn nothing recent landing 1000 Partisans in DUBROVNIK area.</p> <p>BARI harbour 13/12. Old port, seen fifteen cargo ships discharging Bren carriers, twenty-ton tanks, cement. Five small escort vessels type PT and one T.232. Continued.</p> <p>Continuation, BARI old port. Names seen, William D. Hoxie, Empire Southey, Brighto Ambrose E, Burnside, Pinzon, Campidoglio Continued.</p> <p>Continuation. BARI new port 13/12. Seen sixteen escort vessels, twelve L.C.T.s, one Minesweeper, three small Yugoslav sailing vessels. QRM at 0500 hours on 17th December on frequencies 1 and 1.</p>	<p>(Repeat of 262 message of 4/12) First. In what harbours have the bulk of transport convoys arrived (Southern France, Eastern Mediterranean, Suez Canal?) Second. Is the transfer of British naval war forces in (sic) the Pacific taking place through the Mediterranean?</p> <p>What is known of the landing of Canadian and Australian troops? At Taranto probably twenty thousand boys. We are specially interested in Polish units, numbers of the Divisions under whose command the divisions are and above all the aims of the Poles. (Note: not intentions) Can you find out anything about the intentions of the Allies in the Istria area. We ask for precise enquiries. The matter is urgent. We wish you further successes and personally all the best. Many greetings. Your friends.</p> <p>Are Greek, Yugoslav and other foreign units excluded from the British Army? (Alternative rendering: are Greeks, Yugoslav and other foreigners excluded from the union of the British Army?) Can you find out whether there are 6th and 7th Parachute Brigades? Where are they and to which airborne division are they subordinated? How many supply planes fly from Italy to the Balkan Area? Where in Italy do Tito's troops embark for Vis and other Dalmatian Islands? How many recently? What is known further about it?</p>
15.12.44.		<p>ARR/7. No.57.</p>	

Another gap in comms, then more unreliable information out, and requests coming int.

I don't know what the difference is between an "Aim" and an "Intention" requested halfway down the IN TRAFFIC column.

APPRENTICE		TRAFFIC	
DATE	FILE	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC
25.1.45.		<p>Observed in bar English officer wearing sign of 57 Infantry Division with initials D.L.I. over it. Heard him say he had just returned from Greece, where his company had suffered heavy losses. Expressed very strong opinions against E.L.A.S.</p> <p>Seen in Bari three Italian soldiers and one lorry carrying sign blue blade of carn in centre of Italian Tricolour. Learn this is Cremona Division which is under command of 8th Army. Drivers also report seeing this sign recently on vehicles travelling North through RIMINI to RAVENNA. Also seen in BARI two Italian soldiers with sign black figure of a man in centre of Italian Tricolour. Will try to identify.</p> <p>Reference 5th Airborne Division. Learn that Liaison Officers no longer in BARI, and this has started rumour that Division is changing location. Exact information difficult to obtain, but am working on it.</p> <p>Q.R.X. on 27th January at 0115 hours on frequencies 1 and 1.</p> <p>ARR/7. 25.1.45. Page 1 No. 72.</p>	<p>Dear Friend, we all thank you for your many good items of information. The information that has come through your drivers is interesting but does not agree with the determination (Location) of badges on vehicles. We suspect that this is the enemy's deception, therefore be careful, but all the same give us all the news from the drivers, but never forget to state the source, if it is not an observation you have made yourself. Information from newspapers and information about morale can be dropped completely in future, because we are very well informed about that. The most important for us is always news of the enemy Continued.</p> <p>Continuation. From our hearts we wish you all the best and greet you in faithful friendship. Your friends.</p> <p>Can you identify by means of the drivers who drive on the route ROME-FIENZA (FIENZA) -TERNI, which are the units whose badge is white diamond on red diamond?</p>

In this transmission, the Germans seem to be getting a little uncertain over the accuracy of the reports they are receiving.

		APPRENTICE	TRAFFIC																					
DATE	TIME	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC	REMARKS																				
2-4-45		<p>Have not yet been able to obtain from Kinema Officer disposition of Kinema sections in forward area. Learn that four sections only are reserved for base areas. No. 31 at TARANTO, No. 41 at NAPLES, No. 33 at BARLETTA, No. 52 at ROMA. Listening carefully for any moves.</p> <p>BARI 1/4 at 1500 hours. Wind two metres per second, direction 300 degrees. Clouds nil. Visibility very good. QRI on 4th April at 0230 hours M.E.T. on frequencies 1 and 1.</p> <div> <table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">HQ "A" FORCE</td></tr> <tr><td>DATE</td><td>8/4/48</td></tr> <tr><td>FILE</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>COMD</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>GPO I</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>"I" Section</td><td>"C" Section</td></tr> <tr><td>GU</td><td>GU</td></tr> <tr><td>GU</td><td>GU</td></tr> <tr><td>GU</td><td>GU</td></tr> <tr><td>S.C.</td><td>116</td></tr> </table> </div> <p>ARH/7. 5-4-45 No. 97.</p>	HQ "A" FORCE		DATE	8/4/48	FILE		COMD		GPO I		"I" Section	"C" Section	GU	GU	GU	GU	GU	GU	S.C.	116	<p>In the message of 31st March you have asked for confirmation of new standard time for April. You have however forgotten to communicate it. We propose that until you communicate the new, the old one should remain 0600 hours m.e.t. Greetings</p> <p>NOTE: Today's traffic suggests that APPRENTICE'S control may have been changed to another station, possibly in Northern Italy, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The station was much stronger than usual; (b) The operator gave the signal "TU ASP" for "WAIT" instead of the usual "ASP"; (c) The above message appears to show that the transmitting station is not in possession of traffic earlier than 31st March, i.e. the message of 26th March fixing 0615 hours M.E.T. as the standard time for April. <p>L.N.M.N.</p>	
HQ "A" FORCE																								
DATE	8/4/48																							
FILE																								
COMD																								
GPO I																								
"I" Section	"C" Section																							
GU	GU																							
GU	GU																							
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S.C.	116																							

This one has a different time zone acronym: MET. I have no idea what this might be. Middle European Time?

DATE		TIME	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC	REMARKS
5.4.45			<p>Old friends, I have heard the news, and as a soldier, I understand. I will remain at my post until ordered to leave it. I know that only Germany can save my country from the Communist terror, and I shall always be ready for your call to duty. When my work here is done, I suggest I should go to ROME, where I can obtain a letter addressed to my name Antonio DESANTI, Poste Restante, Ufficio Centrale, without difficulties. Continued.</p> <p>Continuation. Have you any instructions for me? Please tell me my wife's and my parents' addresses, and how I may find them. I shall listen for you each day at 2330 and 0515 hours M.E.T. Comrades in the battle, I send you my heartfelt greetings. I believe that our day will come. J - W.</p> <p>Drivers just returned to BARI report seeing in ANCONA area vehicles with signs white diamond on red diamond, and black wolf's head with tongue out on white square. Am trying to identify. Also vehicles with sign of 57th British Infantry Div.</p> <p>Squadron leader source discloses that 8th British Parachute Brigade is no longer in MALTA. Am enquiring further. QRX on 7th April at 0130 hours on frequencies 1 and 1.</p> <p>I propose 0615 hours M.E.T. as the standard time for April in the last week in March. Having experienced difficulties at this hour I now propose 0515 hours M.E.T. Please confirm.</p>		

AMH/7.
6.4.45.
No. 98.

8/4/45

1107

UP DOCUMENT
NTIAL TO ALLOW
TER SHOULD YOU
DOCUMENTS FOR
TO ALLOW US TO
OULD YOU NEED
NTS FOR COPY

HIS MARKER. THIS
FROM THE

It's not clear what the news was, but it was probably the Allied forces entering Germany and crossing the Rhine, which occurred during the last two weeks of March.

APPRENTICE		TRAFFIC		REMARKS
DATE	FILE	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC	
10.4.45.	10	<p>Drivers just returned report seeing fairly large American camp on RIMINI-FORL road south-east of FORL. They speak of an unusually large movement of vehicles at this point. No further details.</p> <p>Please let me have urgently the answer concerning my wife. I shall be listening for you twice every day at the fixed times. QRM at 0040 hours on 11th April on frequencies 1 and 1.</p> <p>In BARI old port at 1200 hours on 9/4 two tankers and one ammunition ship blew up. Widespread damage and casualties. At 1800 hours the two tankers were still burning. Not permitted to approach harbour area. Will report later.</p> <p>Reference question. The badge represents a wolf's head with tongue hanging out all in black, on a white square. Have been informed that this badge belongs to the 14th British Corps. Consider reliable. Your messages of 91 and 114 letters were badly enciphered and gave me many hours of unnecessary work.</p> <p>ARR/7. 14.4.45. No. 100.</p>	<p>Dear good friend. We are soldiers. The hardships of the war can never shake us. Fighting in itself is for us a natural thing. Belief in victory is unshaken. We know that you, dear friend, are fulfilling your duty in an advanced post, with devotion to and complete belief in Germany, and in that way you ally yourself to us with body and soul. Remain at your post.</p> <p>Continuation. Accept our sincere thanks for all you have done for us and will do in the future. Very soon better times will come for us and for you. Yours are all healthy and alive. Be sure that your interests here are looked after in the best possible way. We shall soon be able to give you new addresses. We greet you heartily in sincere friendship. Your friends.</p>	

HOA 100

DATE 16/4

FILE

COMM

CODE 107A

SECTION

1531

APPRENTICE is concerned about his wife. There is what sounds like a sign-off message from his German controller.

Belinda would have been 11 on the 13th April. I wonder where Ron's thoughts were.

The following table summarises the messages that are preserved in the National Archives:

Date	Number
19.10.44	No number
24.10.44	No number
30.11.44	51
14.12.44	57
25.1.45	72 (Page 1)
2.4.45	97
5.4.45	98
10.4.45	100
18.4.45	104

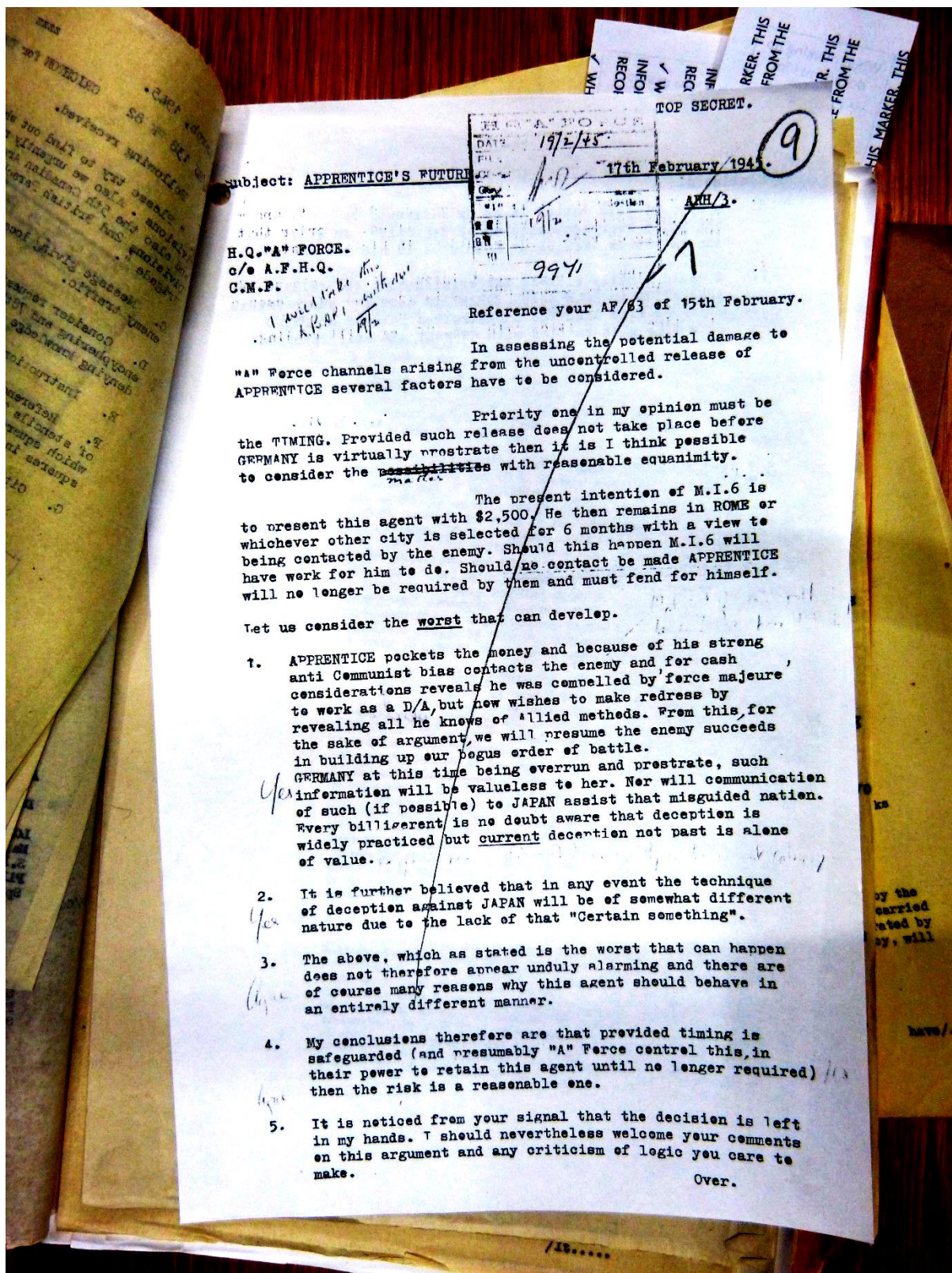
From the gaps in the numbers and the dates, it would appear that APPRENTICE broadcast every couple of days or so. This is supported by the statement in the first broadcast.

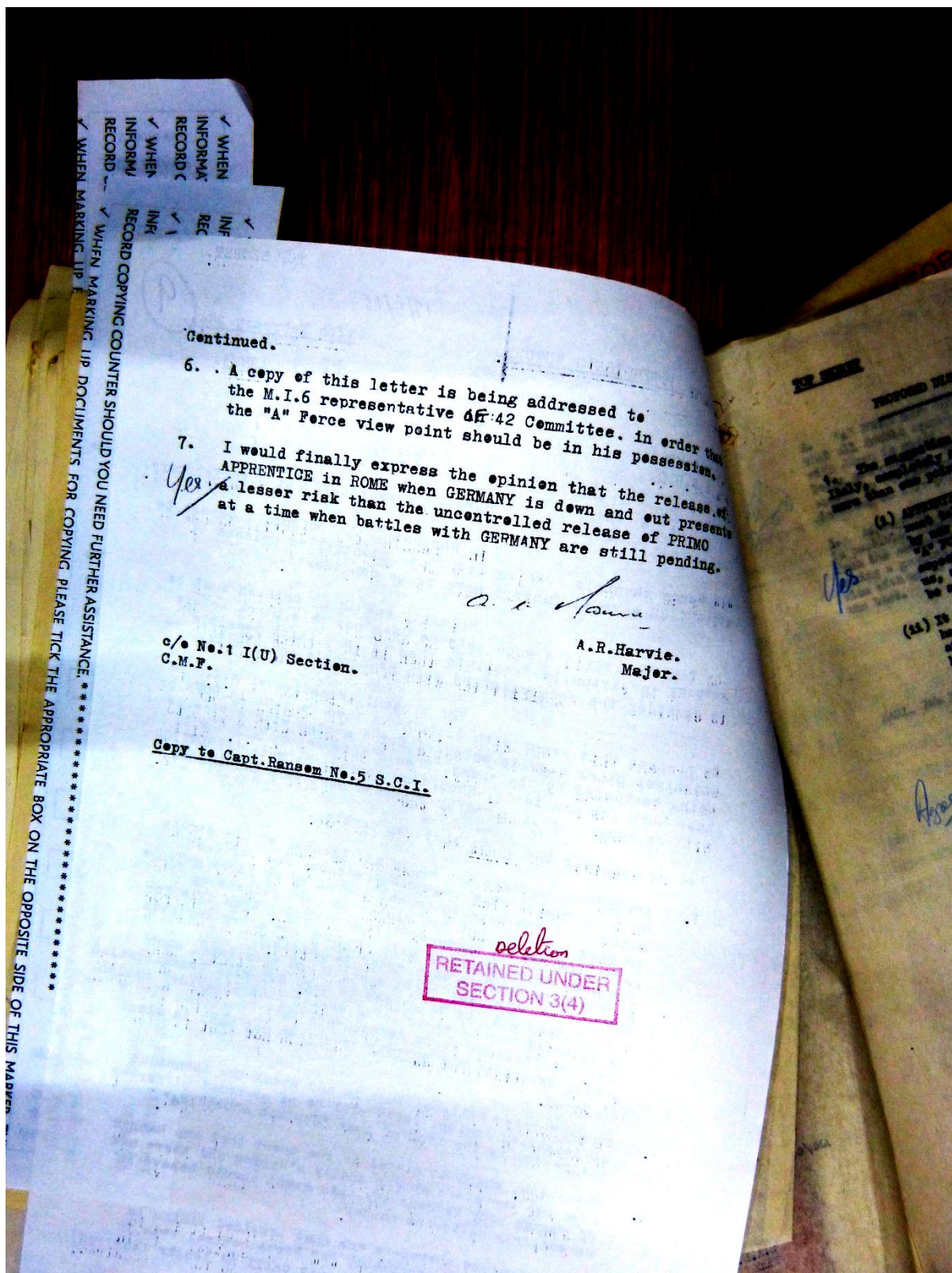
I imagine the gaps in the record are either due to poor filing storage or release. My guess is that the missing pages contained references to Bletchley Park decrypts and were therefore removed, and probably destroyed.

APPRENTICE'S Future

The following two photographs show a letter Ron sent discussing APPRENTICE's future as the war drew to an end.

I believe the statement in paragraph 2 the about absence of a "Certain something" in Japan is a reference to Bletchley decrypts. In Europe they could verify whether Axis forces were taking action by reading the messages the Axis forces transmitted; in the absence of such decrypts, verification would be much harder.





Agent PRIMO

From *The Deceivers*:

"PRIMO was a former airline pilot and radio operator, caught with two helpers behind the Allied lines in January. His helpers were sent to prison in Algeria while he operated a transmitter from a flat in Naples from February to September. Managed by 44 Committee - Max Niven, who after a brief time with Tac HQ³ moved to Naples to establish the first "A" Force outstation in Italy, was its "A" Force representative - PRIMO was useful for deceptions involving alleged assault forces gathering in Naples harbor""

As with APPRENTICE, Ron presumably took over PRIMO from Max Niven. In the next photograph Ron presents the information about the two helpers described above in a letter. PRIMO has another codename: TAU. PRIMO continues to report intelligence from the two captured agents (ALFA and CARRARA) but they are in fact in prison.

³ "Tac HQ" stands for Tactical Head Quarters, a deliberately vague name.

TOP SECRET

PRIMO ORGANISATION.

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HEADQUARTERS "A" FORCE.
Force Headquarters,
PO. 512 - U.S. Army.

Ref your Main "A" F/40/31.
of 24th August.

1. Herewith location chart and employment detail of PRIMO organisation.
2. TAU alone is factual.
3. ALFA notionally lives in NAPLES.
4. CARRARA notionally lives in SALERNO.
5. Both factually are in H.M. care.
6. TAU (PRIMO) now resides factually in NAPLES with his wife.

A.R. Harvie.
Major.

c/o S.C.I.
57. Area
C.M.F.

27th August 1944.

ARR/5A.

Copy to Captain Matthews, S.C.I., Naples.

TOP SECRET

PRIMO TRAFFIC

DATE	TIME	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC	REMARKS
Aug. 12 1944	1525 hrs	<p>Nr. 128.</p> <p>Due to recent departure of his family from ROME, TAU arrived here on the 8th. on his way to SICILY. He asserts that he was unable to go to the NETTUNO area. (He reports having met between VALMONTONE & CEPERANO, on the 7th. inst. a large number of vehicles carrying troops of the 57th. Brit. Inf. Div., as well as about 50 medium calibre guns and about 80 light vehicles on tracks called "Brenocarris". He further learned that these convoys came from CASTELLANARE and were proceeding North to join main battle area.) ALFA.</p>		
Aug. 12	1245 hrs	<p>Nr. 129.</p> <p>NAPLES port situation 11th. - 1 heavy British cruiser, 5 destroyers and 4 escorts. 1 USA cruiser, AUGUSTA, 9 destroyers of which 7 heavies. 2 Italian cruisers DUCA d'ABRUZZI and GARIBALDI and 9 escorts. 2 Hospital ships, 63 cargo vessels, MT, and about 30 balloons, low altitude. BACOLI, at quay - 2 LST, at anchor - 15 LCVF, 1 LST, 2 escorts, 1 cargo vessel, MT. From TARANTO, GAMMA reports on 8th. that embarkation is proceeding without pause, loaded vessels remain at anchor in Mare Grande. Another 10 transports have arrived during the last days. ALFA.</p>		

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PRIMO's messages seem more complex than APPRENTICE's. Here PRIMO is submitting a notional report from TAU, and his own report.

ARW/S/A

PRIMO TRAFFIC

DATE	TIME	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC	REMARKS
Aug. 13	1030 hrs.	W 765 DD.		
		<p>Nr. 130. (Ref. your 40. French troops at present in this area belong to the 2nd. Div. Moroccan Inf. and 4th. Div. Moroccan Mountain. These divisions are at the moment encamped at CAIVANO and CARDITO, about 10 Kms. North of NAPLES on Caserta road. There appears to exist another division but this has not been identified so far. All these divisions are under the command of Gen. BERTUAT (note: Gen. BERTHOUE), and form an Army Corps included in Seventh USA Army. This Corps is earmarked for imminent operations outside the Mediterranean. This inference receives confirmation by SIGMA to whom a French Officer declared categorically that their destination is BRITTANY (Bretagna). This may perhaps mean St. Britain ? (Gran Bretagna). In addition, personnel of Seventh Army H.Q. and French personnel have been wearing winter clothing for the past 4 days.)</p> <p>ALFA.</p>		

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A rather confusing report, no doubt deliberately. There is the vagueness about Britain/Brittany and the mention of winter clothing, which in August would imply relocation to somewhere like Norway.

IN TRAFFIC

W 331.

With pride and emotion, I thank you for the unshakeable faith and affection for the person of the Fuehrer, saved miraculously by Fate. We are now entering the last, hard and decisive phase of the war, which the Fuehrer, with the help of us all, will win for Europe. Love war, love your country, love your mission. Everything will be ours. My thoughts are daily with you. Your chief, EMILE.

W 113.

Nr. 44. Please give us soon news of SALERNO sector, as well as port situation of this town. EMILE.

Q. 104

EMILE, PRIMO's Axis controller, thanks PRIMO, most likely for some message from PRIMO about the failed assassination attempt by Claus von Stauffenberg on Hitler on the 20th July.

ARH/SA

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		PRIMO	TRAFFIC	
DATE	TIME	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC	REMARKS
5.9.44.	0907 hrs	W 69 DD No. 135. Emile. Has courier left? ALFA TAU.		
5.9.44.	1405 hrs		W. 105 Nr. 49. As already communicated, courier left on 3rd; We await your further news. Regards. EMILE.	
6.9.44.	0835 hrs	W 119 Service message. EMILE. Ref. your 49. Good. We await courier. As requested by you we shall inform you of his arrival. ALFA TAU.		(Note: Latter part of message is a deliberate misunderstanding of EMILE'S request in order to show preoccup- ation over arrival of courier to the exclusion of any other matter.)

ARH/SA
6.9.44.

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The note is revealing. PRIMO wants more money and EMILE says he has sent a courier. EMILE also asks for more "news", presumably intelligence, and Ron has decided that PRIMO should deliberately misunderstand that as a request for news about the courier's arrival.

PRIMO		TRAFFIC		REMARKS
DATE	TIME	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC	
12.9.44.	09.16.Hrs	<p>W.499</p> <p>Mr.137. EMILE. Having realised immediately on my return from SICILY that it was imperative to safeguard my dependents,I requested urgently financial aid. This arrived yesterday. By means of a mortgage on property,my mother-in-law has succeeded in raising a loan of 100.000 lire. While awaiting arrival of courier,I have satisfied SIGMA temporarily. It remains understood, however, that this amount will be deducted from your funds,as soon as they arrive,together with interest at nine per cent. I would appreciate your approval of my initiative. Obediently, TAU.</p> <p>ARR/5A. 14.9.44.</p>	<p>W.160.</p> <p>50. Thanks for the news. Courier should be with you soon. We will get in touch with CARRARA'S mother. Please send us further news. Your chief EMILE.</p>	

19/9/44

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6.9.44.

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More requests for money, and a decision to take out a mortgage while waiting for the money to arrive. I can find no reference to SIGMA in *The Deceivers*.

PRIMO		TRAFFIC		
DATE	TIME	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC	REMARKS
15.9.44.	0913.hrs.	W.93. Nr 138. Emile. Up to now no indication of arrival courier. Advise us urgently. ABFA TAU.		
17.9.44.	1440.hrs.		W 230. No 51. Ref your 137. Very pleased at your initiative on financial question and we are absolutely in agreement with it. The courier must arrive within the next few days so that the loan can immediately be repaid. Cordial wishes. Your Emile.	
17.9.44.	1455.hrs.	W 608 No 139. EMILE. We have decided to maintain cover address as long as considered safe for us, refusing to admit that in four months your promises should really fail twice. Port sit: 16th. Naples 2 light cruisers, 7 destroyers & 1 escort- English. 1 Cruiser 1 Destroyer & 1 escort - Italian 2 Light Cruisers 2 Destroyers & 1 LSD - USA. 1 French Escort. 3 Hospital ships. 43 Cargoes of which 3 of 8000 tons, 17 of 6000 tons and 23 of 4000 tons. 27 balloons low altitude. Bagnoli. At moleloading (Over)		

19/9/44

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ARM/SA.
15.9.44.

ARM/SA.
16.9.44.

PRIMO is getting desperate. EMILE offers nothing but promises, but does approve the mortgage. Not much intelligence, notional or actual, being passed.

OM 197

PRIMO. TRAFFIC

DATE	TIME	OUT TRAFFIC	IN TRAFFIC	REMARKS
21.9.44.	11.27 hrs	W 625. No 140. EMILE. News of courier - nil Port situation 20th. NAPLES. 2 Light cruisers & 2 Escorts - English. 2 Light Cruisers & 3 Destroyers - USA 2 Light Cruisers & 3 Escorts - Italian 2 French Destroyers. 3 LSD. 2 Hospital Ships. 20 cargoes of 6000 tons and 13 of 4000 tons. 24 Barrage balloons low altitude. BACNOLI. At quay 1 Cargo of 6000 Tons discharging. At anchor 2 Cargoes respectively of 4000 and 6000 tons. Meteo 20th. Rain. Visib- ility 1 1/2 Kms. Tentenths overcast. Wind from WNW - 40/50 Km per hour. Sea - choppy to rough. Further outlook unsettled. ALFA TAU.		
21.9.44.	11.32 hrs.		W 197 No.52. We have made and always will make every effort to help you. Courier left on 4th. September as you have been informed. We are awaiting daily your news of his arrival. Thanks for the intelligence. Your EMILE.	
21.9.44.	11.37 hrs.		W 231 No.53. Ref your No:123. Where at present are the 42nd and 57th English Inf Divs? Ref your No.136 What troops are doing landing exercises near SALERNO? EMILE.	
		ARM/5A. 22.9.44.		

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Still no courier and some intelligence, and a request for information about troops exercising near Salerno.

Letter discussing whether PRIMO is blown

Two days after the last message, Ron writes a letter to Freeman Thomas suggesting that Primo was blown (e.g. the enemy had decided that he was a double agent).

It is annotated by Thomas with a message to Dudley Clarke.

Ron says that the Case Officers responsible for PRIMO believe him to be blown, but that nevertheless MI6 wish to continue to use PRIMO for the transmission of military information. Ron clearly does not believe that they will do the job competently and may compromise "A" Force.

According to *The Deceivers*, he was closed at the end of September.

Subject PRIMO.

Main H.Q. "A" Force.
c/o Force H.Q.
APO. 512 U.S. Army.

Your Reference MAIN "A" F/39/51H dated 23rd. September 44.

With further reference to my ARH/16 dated 27th. Sept. 44.

1. There is an additional contingency affecting "A" Force which is not covered by the safeguards requested in your letter under reply and on which I would like your direction.
2. Since I assumed chairmanship of 44 Committee the two case officers have never failed to express the opinion:
(a) That PRIMO is blown. If not completely, then certainly as far back as EMILE who continues to support him only to safeguard his (EMILE's) own position.
and/or
(b) Each requested transmission of "A" Force material would undoubtedly complete the exposure
3. In spite of all this gloom, when I returned PRIMO to M.I.6. they were sufficiently happy about his credibility to decide to run him for penetration.
4. M.I.6. are at present committed to submitting military information only, for vetting before transmission.
5. At present M.I.6. are sole judges as to any potential threat to "A" Force channels contained in non-military traffic they pass.
6. In view of the confusion indicated in paras. 2 and 3 I am not happy as to their implementation of para 5 and consider it advisable that for a time all messages be submitted to Main H.Q. for checking.

c/o S.C.I.
57. Area.
C.M.F.

A.R. Harvie.
Major.
Chairman 44 Committee.

Subject PRIMO.

Main H.Q. "A" Force.
c/o Force H.Q.
APO. 512 U.S. Army.

Your Reference MAIN "A" F/39/61H dated

With further reference to my ARH/16

1. There is an additional contingency which is not covered by the safeguard your letter under reply and on which direction.
2. Since I assumed chairmanship of 44 case officers have never failed to
 - (a) That PRIMO is blown. If not come as far back as EMILE who continue only to safeguard his (EMILE) and/or
 - (b) Each requested transmission of would undoubtedly complete the
3. In spite of all this gloom, when I M.I.6. they were sufficiently happy to decide to run him for penetration
4. M.I.6. are at present committed to information only, for vetting before
5. At present M.I.6. are sole judges threat to "A" Force channels contain traffic they pass.
6. In view of the confusion indicated in paras. 2 and 3 I am not happy as to their implementation of para. 5 and consider it advisable that for a time all messages be submitted to Main H.Q. for checking.

c/o S.C.I.
57. Area.
C.M.F.

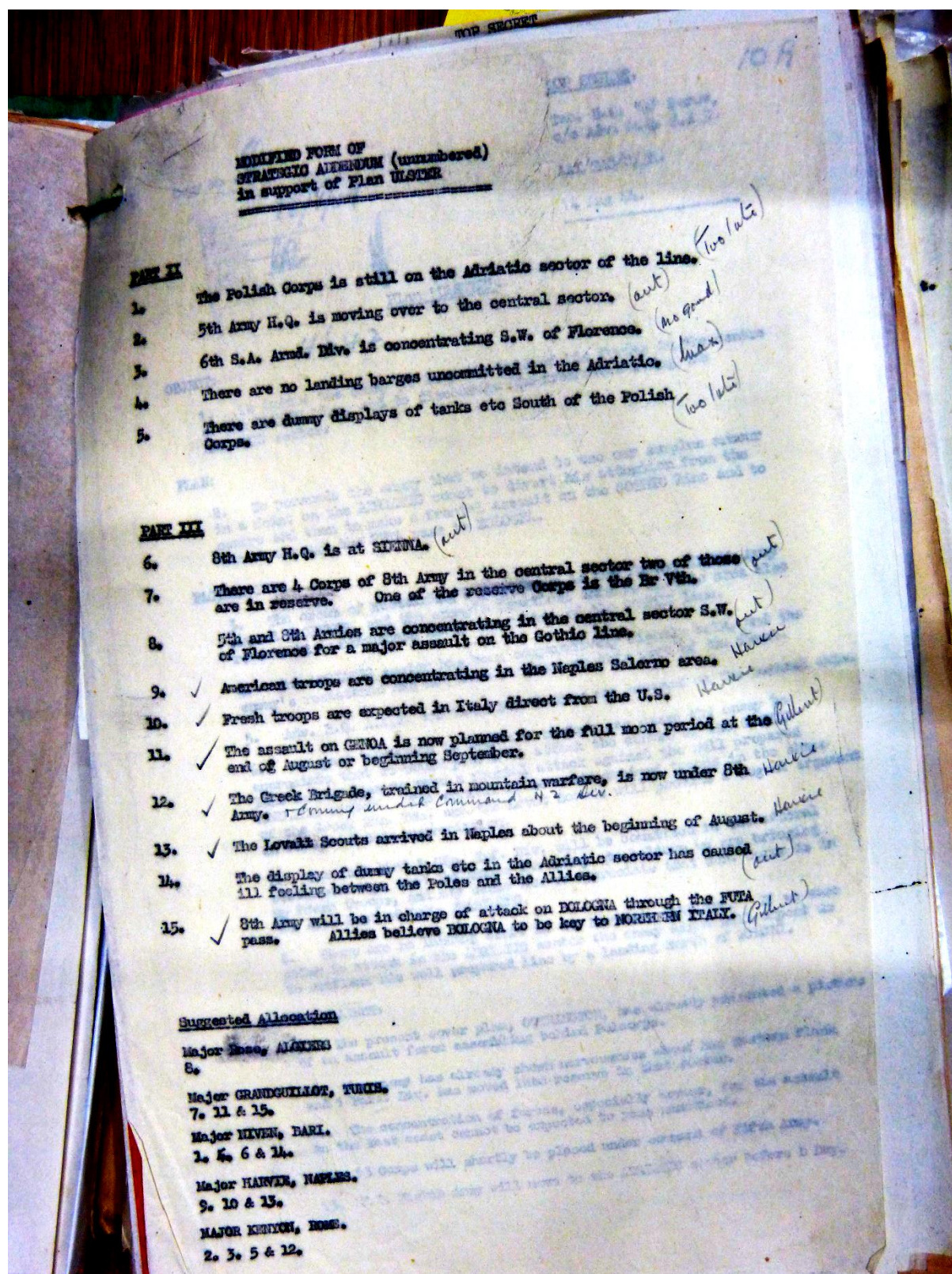
A.R. Harvie.
Major.
Chairman 44 Committee.

*Brigadier, Army showed
I think Gen. to instruct M.I.6
he asked to instruct M.I.6
to clear Primo for his return
this letter & for these attached
30/9.*

*30. 9. 44.
I tried to know's letter,
with which I connect,
Capt. Francis asked
me to vet a post
Situation report for
Primo. I said that
I didn't want Primo
to put out post-
situations of hapless
for the following
reasons.
a) He would have
to exaggerate them
by at least 100 %
and if there was
a recession he would
be blown.
b) It was decided to
allow Akmal in Rome
to obtain a sub source
to do this and the
two reports might
conflict.
Primo, to remain
in character should
put out a report &
put situation reports,
it was, because of this
we wanted to clear
him down. # 30/9.*

Notional Deployments described in Operation ULSTER

The following photograph shows the state of various notional deployments for operation ULSTER, with names pencilled against each:



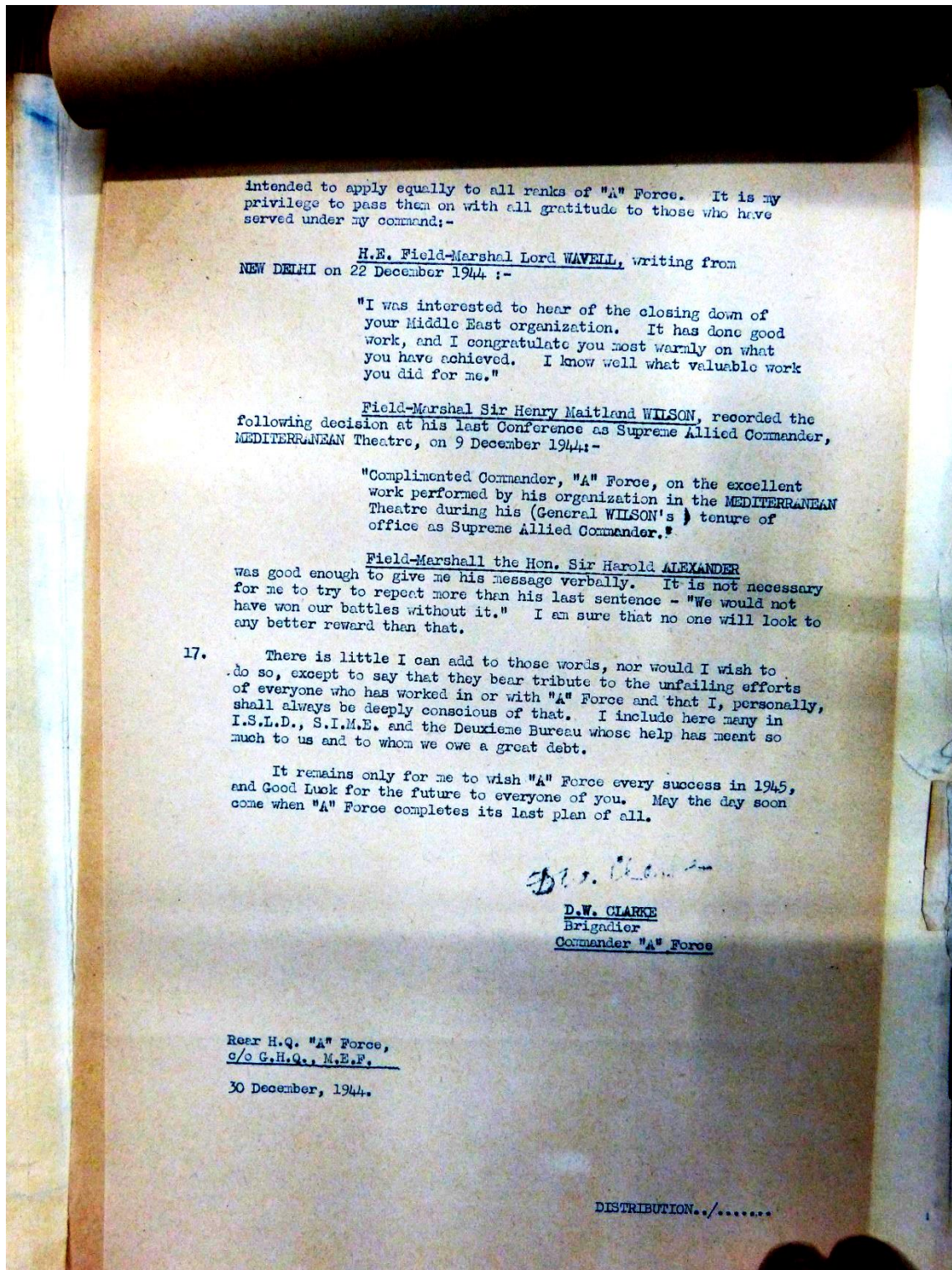
Sedgely

Belinda says that when Ron returned from the war, he drove bored his family stiff with tales of the excellence of his batman, Sedgely. He appears in the list of other ranks in the following photograph.

HEADQUARTERS "A" FORCE o/o Allied Force Headquarters C.M.F. Telephone - Valley Forge 20		
<u>HQ "A" F/1/24</u>		21st. January 1945
<u>NOMINAL ROLL OF O.Rs.</u>		
5439608	D/Mech. Anderson	C.V.
110323	Dvr. Beswick	H.
10686964	" Butt.	J.
249816	" Cr awford	J.
10694692	" Drewry	E.A.
6353116	Pte. Eburn	E.
10668389	" Glazer	P.
6970291	Rfm. Grundy	W.
57692	S/Sjt. Hardy	E.W.M.
203111	Dvr. Jenkins	L.
6288600	Pte. Jones	R.
6095980	Sjt. Lewis	R.M.
144719	Dvr. Ludlow	P.
272805	L/Cpl. Painter	L.
6915532	L/Cpl. Payne	W.N.
10631209	Pte. Rapps	E.J.
10578017	" Sedgely	D.E.
834949	" Sims	J.W.A.
7650110	Dvr. Statham	H.
82269	" Stewart	P.
11008084	Cpl. Tate	M.
1727408	Pte. Borley	F.G.

Thanks

The following photograph is of a letter to "A" Force from Dudley Clarke quoting thanks from Field Marshalls Wavell, Wilson and Alexander.



Other Operations

Belinda says Ron was also involved in an operation to send Gold to Tito, and he certainly knew about MINCEMEAT, the operation to tip a dead body dressed as a marine with false intelligence about an invasion of Sardinia out of a submarine near Spain.

There was nothing about either of these in the files we examined.

Bari Explosion

In December 1943 the Germans bombed the harbour at Bari, sinking 28 ships and causing two ammunition ships to explode.

Belinda says Ron claimed to have been blown through a glass window. He brought back from the war a piece of glass which looked like it had been dipped in red ink, which Ron claimed was glass taken out of his leg following the explosion.

Future Investigations

More time at the National Archives would have revealed more, I am sure. The personal files are still closed; if opened they may tell us more about Ron.

Ron also spent time elsewhere in North Africa, but not, it appears for "A" Force. It would be interesting to find out more.