OLLI Presents
Women Spies and Code Breakers
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Women Spies and Code Breakers

1840: Augusta Ada King

WWI: Elizbeth Smith Freedman  **Code Breaker**

WWII: Bletchley Park  **Code Breakers**

WWII: Agnes Meyer Driscoll  **Code Breaker**

WWII: Virginia Hall  **Spy**

WWII: Madame Fourcade  **Spy**

WWII: Odette Sansom  **Spy**

Post Cold War: Amaryllis Fox:  **CIA Agent**
Women Spies WWII

• Virginia Hall.
  • American born.
  • Artificial left leg below the knee.
  • Escaped through the Pyrenees in waist deep snow.
  • Imprisoned in Spain for six days.

• Madame Fourcade.
  • French born.
  • French citizen.
  • Two children.
  • Captured twice.
    • Escaped through bars naked with dress in teeth.

• Odette Sansom.
  • French born.
  • British citizen.
  • Three children.
  • Severely brutalized by the Gestapo.

• **WHO WAS ODETTE SANSOM?**
Week 4- Odette Sansom

- Reminders
  - SOE vs MI6
    - MI6—Spymasters.
    - SOE—Masters of Mayhem. Trained killers.
  - Nazi’s called them terrorists.

- Mother of three young girls.
  - Why would she risk her life?
  - 25% survival rate for female agents. Men 33%.
  - Average survival time in field-6 months. Captured after just six weeks.
  - Mediocre performance in SOE training.

  - Why did SOE head Buckminster still send her in?

- Hitler announced new edicts.
  - Spies. Regardless of sex, would be treated as traitors.
    - Imprisoned, most likely killed.

  - Geneva Convention for prisoner of war would NOT apply.
WWII French Zones
SPINDLE Circuit

SPINDLE Circuit (Special Operations Executive, or SOE)

Marie-Lou Blanc (field name, Suzanne)—local operative

Lieutenant Francis Cammaerts (Roger)—head of JOCKEY circuit, replacing SPINDLE circuit

Captain Peter Churchill (Michel, Raoul)—head of SPINDLE circuit Jean and Simone Cottet (Jean and Simone)—operators of Hôtel de la Poste
Jacques Latour (Jacques)—local operative, courier

Baron Henri de Malval (Antoine)—local operative, owner of HQ Villa Isabelle Adolphe (“Alec”)

Rabinovitch (Arnaud)—radio operator

Odette Sansom (Lise)—courier
Carte Circuit (French Resistance)

**CARTE Circuit Roger Bardet** (Chaillan)—Major Frager’s lieutenant and courier, also of DONKEYMAN circuit

**Louis le Belge** (Le Belge)—courier Major Henri Frager (Paul, Louba)—André Girard’s lieutenant; later, chief of DONKEYMAN circuit after termination of CARTE circuit.

**André Girard** (Carte)—head of CARTE circuit.

**Lejeune** (Lejeune)—local operative.

**André Marsac** (End, Marsac)—Marseille chief, Frager’s deputy.

**Jacques Riquet** (Riquet)—courier.

**Suzanne** (Lucienne)—Marsac’s secretary, courier
British Special Operations Executive (SOE), French Section

Vera Atkins—assistant to Maurice Buckmaster; intelligence officer.

Major/Colonel Maurice Buckmaster—F Section head.

Captain Selwyn Jepson—F Section recruiting officer.

Pierre de Vomécourt (Lucas)—agent.

British Intelligence

Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)
German Intelligence and Others

**German Intelligence**

*Abwehr* (Military Intelligence Service).

**Sergeant Hugo Bleicher** (Monsieur Jean, Colonel Henri)—field security policeman working under supervision of the Abwehr.

**Major Hans Josef Kieffer**—Paris chief of Sicherheitsdienst.

**Colonel Oscar Reile**—Abwehr III F Paris chief (Hugo Bleicher’s supervisor).

**Sicherheitsdienst (SD)**—Nazi Party intelligence

**Others**

**Gestapo** (Nazi Secret Police).

**Jean Lucien Keiffer** (Kiki, Desiré)—agent for INTERALLIÉ and DONKEYMAN circuits.

**Father Paul Steinert**—chaplain, Fresnes Prison.

**Fritz Sühren**—commandant of Ravensbrück concentration camp.

**Trude**—female guard at Fresnes Prison.
Special Office Executive (SOE)

- **November 1940** – SOE set up first headquarters in two family flats off Baker Street.

- **007 Factor** – devised multiple types of secret weapons for espionage.
  - Single shot cigarette pistol.
  - Created carborundum – an abrasive grease smeared on the right spot could bring a locomotive to an immediate standstill.
  - Deadly illusions of paper mache or plaster that exploded.
    - Camouflage section run by film make Elder Willis.
    - A army of ex-prop makers.
  - False documentation section.

- **Behind enemy lines.**
  - 1941 – blew up Pessac power station in France with a few well placed explosive charges.
  - Crippled work at a vital U-boat base in Bourdeaux.
  - All electric railways cam to a halt.

- **Greece** – 1942 Blew up Gorgopotamos rail bridge. Vital supplies to Rommel’s deseart army.
- **Czechoslovakia** – 1942 assisnated Hinnler’s deputy Reinhard Heydrich.
- **Norway** 1943 -- destroyed heavy water plant at Vemork affecting Nazi bomb programs.

- **Local populations suffered heavily for SOE actions.**
  - 5,000 civilians killed after
Special Office Executive (SOE) F Section

• Buckmaster stumbled into being the head

• Reported to duty – no one seemed to know anything about SOE.

• Made head of French section.
  • Spoke fluent French.
  • Knew locations of factories and businesses.
  • Good judge of people.

• Sense to let Vera Atkins oversee day-to-day operations.

• Always accessible to agents.

• Allowed Oddette Sanson to continue to France.
Maurice Buckmaster—Vera Atkins Team

Buckmaster’s assistant. Brains behind SOE F Section.

Head SOE F Section
Maurice Buckmaster

- Thirty seven at beginning of the war.
- Teacher, banker.
- Head of the first French office of Ford Motor Company.
  - Promoted to head of European operations.
- In Navy scheduled to go to Libya.
  - Asked to be transferred to where he could use his French.
- 1941 – Made head of SOE’s F Section (France)
- Cared about his agents.
  - Always in office to take messages.
- “They Fought Alone” by Maurice Buckmaster.
Vera Atkins

• Vera Maria Rosenberg. Born June 16, 1908 Galati, Romania.

• German father—Jewish mother.

• Studied languages at the Sorbonne in Paris.
  • Finishing school in Switzerland.
  • Secretary in London.

• Father went bankrupt in 1932. Died shortly afterward.
  • Returned home from London.

• 1937 – Romania’s new government markedly pro-German and anti-Semitic.

• Background enabled Vera to mingle with upper-crust, including several European diplomats.

• 1940 – traveled to Netherlands to bribe an Officer of the German military intelligence (Abweher).

• 1941 – Joined SOE as a secretary. Became Buckmaster’s assistant.

• Actually ran things.
Odette Sansom: Code Name Lisa

- Born April 28, 1912 Odette Marie Celine. Amiens, France.
- Died March 13, 1995-age 82.
- Married with three young daughters.
- Responded to a British Army appeal for photos of the French coastline, Odette mailed a set of old holiday snapshots to the War Office.
  - When asked to appear in person, she went to the office of the SOE by mistake.
- SOE head Maurice Buckminster reluctant to pass Odette, felt not qualified.
  - He was struck by her determination.
- Under the guidance of Capt. Peter Churchill and French resistance soldier Arnaud, Odette's ability to blend in as a typical French citizen was put to excellent use by Allied intelligence.
- Odette was eventually captured and subjected to brutal torture by Gestapo.
- Odette never gave up any information on her work.
Odette Overcame Obstacles

• Sickly as a youngster.

• Bad first marriage.

• Struggled during SOE training.

• Took four attempts to get into France for first mission.
  • Including a plane crash.
  • Chauvinist Polish boat captain.

• Fearless and very principled.

• Jepson returned to his desk and made a final notation at the bottom of Odette’s dossier: “Direct-minded and courageous. God help the Nazis if we can get her near them.”
Odette Capture and Interrogation

- 1942 -- Joined the French Resistance
  - May 26 -tourtured by the Gestapo.
- 1944 -- May 12. Transferred to Karlsruhe prison.
- 1944 – July 18. Brought to Ravensbruck concentration camp for women in Germany.
  - Under sentence of death.
- 1945 – April 28 – Released from Ravensbruck.
- 1946 – Received George Cross from King George VI.
- 1946 – Testified for the prosecution at the War Crimes Court in Hamburg, Germany.
Odette Capture and Interrogation-2

• Continually refused to give information of other agents.
  • Wireless operator.
  • Other high ranking British officer.
  • Agents in network could continue throughout the war.

• A specially trained inner core of Nazi’s repeatedly interrogated her.
  • Hand-picked by Heinrich Himmler.

• Odette’s survival credited to her unassailable dignity.

• When a red-hot poker has applied to her spine.
  • Asked where is Arnaud? (radio operator).
  • I have nothing to say.

• Toe nails.
Odette Sansom and Peter Churchill

- Peter Churchill was Odette Sanson’s first group leader.
  - Instant chemistry.
- Did not have a happy marriage with first husband Roy Sanson.
- Odette and Roy Sansom divorced.
- She married Peter Churchill.
  - A Hollywood type ending.
  - Marriage also ended in divorce.
- Odette later married Geoffrey Hallowes.
  - A former SOE agent.
Sergeant Hugo "Colonel Henri" Bleicher

- Recruited by Abwehr (German military intelligence) during WWII for his knowledge of French and Spanish.
  - Referred to as Colonel, but never rose above rank of sergeant.
- Ruthlessly pursued anyone who opposed German domination or teachings.
- Bleicher disabled the Franco-Polish "Interallie" spy network.
  - Bardet betrayed SOE agents Peter Churchill and Odette Sansom.
    - Arrested in April 1943.
- Sansom was brutally treated. Saved because Germans believed Peter was a relative of British PM Winston Churchill.
- Bleicher betrayed many French agents, many who died in German concentration camps.
Sergeant Hugo "Colonel Henri" Bleicher-2

• Hugo Bleicher, together with two of his French Abwehr agents Jean Rocquefort and Francois Barbier, was arrested in Amsterdam on 15 May 1945 by the Dutch NBS (intelligence).

• Interrogated him for two weeks and handed over to the first Canadian Army.
  • Interrogated him for a further period, also on his operations in the Netherlands;
  • Then handed to the British authorities.

• October 12 1945 -- handed over to the French government.
  • Placed on trial and imprisoned.

• Met Bardet in Paris prison.
  • Bardet knew too much against him.

• In 1954, he published his memoirs, Colonel Henri's story.
Q & A
Noor Inayat Khan

• Khan was a wartime British secret agent of Indian descent.
• First female radio operator sent into Nazi-occupied France by the Special Operations Executive (SOE).
• She was arrested and eventually executed by the Gestapo.

• 1914-1944 Born in Moscow to an Indian father and American mother.
• Direct descendant of Tipu Sultan, 18th century Muslim ruler of Mysore.
• Father was a musician and Sufi teacher.
  • Moved family to Paris, then London after the fall of France.
• November 1940—joined the WAAF (Women’s Auxiliary Air Force).
• Late 1942—joined SOE (Special Operations Officer)
  • Some questioner her stability. (Not uncommon among recruits).

• June 1943—flown to France as a radio operator in “Prosper” resistance network. (highest mortality rate of any category). Code name Madeleine.
  • Many network members arrested shortly after, but Khan elected to stay in France.
  • October 1943—betrayed by a French woman and arrested by Gestapo.
    • Unwisely kept copies of her secret signals. Germans were able to trick London into sending new agents directly into German hands.
• Captured, escaped many times. Finally sent to Pforzheim prison in Germany. Tortured and kept in chains.
  • Transferred with three other female SOE agents to Dachau and executed.
• For her courage, Noor Khan was posthumously awarded the George Cross in 1949.
Amaryllis Fox-CIA

• Oxford undergraduate studying theology and international law.
  • Mentor Daniel Pearl was captured and beheaded in Afghanistan.
  • Galvanized by this—applied to Georgetown's School of Foreign Service.
    • Master’s program in conflict and terrorism.

• As part of the program, Ms. Fox designed an algorithm (“ratio of hookah bars to madrassas and percentage beneath livable wage a border guard gets paid”) to identify likely terrorist safe havens. The C.I.A. headquarters in Langley, Va., heard about “the algo” and recruited Amaryllis, who at 22 became one of the youngest female officers.

• The agency assigned her to “nonofficial cover,” meaning an agent must live abroad “in the most dangerous places the planet has to offer” under a false identity with no diplomatic protections or official passport.

• When Amaryllis’ first daughter, Zoe, was born, she was living undercover with her husband, both of them pretending to be art entrepreneurs in Shanghai.

• The Chinese spied on the couple, including installing a live-in housekeeper who was an informant.
  • The C.I.A. spied on the Chinese spying on their spies.
  • Amaryllis commented “The only way to handle being watched is to give the watchers nothing to see,”

• The C.I.A. even briefed the couple to have “sex regularly, but not too regularly, keep it hot but not too hot.”
Amaryllis Fox: Human Compassion

Amaryllis was a tough field operative, but she specifically chose interactions that were very calm and soulful.

Leader of a Qaeda terrorist cell planted a bomb in London.

A meeting of the principle players was held in a building near by. Amaryllis, holding her 2-year old daughter Zoe, who had a runny nose. His infant daughter wheezes in the background.

Amaryllis recommended clove oil, a home remedy that worked for Zoe.

He gives Amaryllis a look of knowing sympathy, parent to parent.

Amaryllis offers some of her daughter’s medicine. Samples it to show it is safe.

The attack never happens.
Amaryllis Fox and Spy Craft

• Purpose is not to defeat the enemy, but to understand them.

• Spy tricks have been updated for the 21st century.

• Forget archaic methods such as writing chalk on brick walls.

• Real spies carry “Rolaids to make signal marks on bricks.
  • It’s less incriminating than chalk, in case of capture and search.

• In successfully recruiting a source or convincing terrorists to call off an attack, Amaryllis recognizes that “everybody believes that they are the good guy.”

• Signal a meeting by giving a Starbucks gift card to an asset.
  • If you need to see me, buy a coffee.
  • The agent then checks the balance on the card online.
  • If it’s depleted, goes to the meeting.

• Befriends a Yakov, Hungarian arms dealer.
  • He agrees she can contact him at anytime.
Amaryllis had followed Yakov as she was hoping to stop an arms sale.
   She was struck by his beautiful voice.
   Had a melancholy feel.

She learned about Yakov’s anger, love and respect for his grandfather, who was killed fighting for his beliefs.
Once Amaryllis got to know Yakov, she turned him to spy for her.

Arranges meeting with terrorist cell in Karachi Pakistan jungle to avert a major attack.
   Suspected of preparing to unleash a radioactive, or “dirty” bomb.

He agrees to a one hour window for the meeting.

   • Requires proof of who she is.
   • Can call someone for confirmation.

   • Calls Yankov, a Hungarian arms dealer she met and befriended in London.
     • Luckily, he answered.
     • If not, she would probably have been killed.
Amaryllis Fox Meets Aung San Suu Kyi

- Amaryllis, at age 19, had secret meeting Aung San Suu Kyi that was arranged by the democracy movement.

- Aung San Suu Kyi was under house arrest. Amaryllis had been carried in and out in a rug or large bag.

- Smuggled out a film and had it aired in Thailand.
  - Warned that Amaryllis would be detained and then deported. It happened.

- Started to wrap film around Bic pens to be placed in a concealment device.
  - Fine for the film you want them to find.
  - Kyi wrapped the film up smaller than a tampon and told Amaryllis that the bathroom was down the hall.

- This tiny woman used the truth to bring the entire military dictatorship to its knees.

- Tape was broadcast by the BBC back into Burma.

- It was the idea that truth can be more powerful than military force.

- Helped shape Amaryllis' aspirations in the world.
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Amaryllis Fox’s Husbands

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Amaryllis Fox Interview

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUZvS4sX0kM

- This is an hour long interview with Mina Kim of World Affairs.

- It gives excellent incite into how she combined a sense of humanity with her dangerous career as a spy master for the CIA.