

RECLAIMING THE UNGENTLEMANLY ARTS:
THE GLOBAL ORIGINS OF SOE AND OSS

A Dissertation

by

AARON RAY LINDERMAN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2012

Major Subject: History

Reclaiming the Ungentlemanly Arts: The Global Origins of SOE and OSS

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ABSTRACT

Reclaiming the Ungentlemanly Arts:

The Global Origins of SOE and OSS. (May 2012)

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Sir Colin McV. Gubbins, former director of Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE), explained in 1966 to a Danish audience that it is much easier to pronounce a new organization than to actually create it. This dissertation examines the processes whereby SOE was created, including how its doctrine was formulated and subsequently disseminated, both to its own agents and to its American counterpart, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Traditional narratives, which imply that SOE had no precedents, fail to appreciate that Gubbins and his colleagues consciously looked to past and contemporary examples for inspiration. This dissertation follows Gubbins's career, examining his experience of unconventional warfare in the Allied Intervention in Russia, in Ireland during the Irish Revolution, and in India. To personal experience was added the experience of colleagues and the knowledge he gained by study of several other historical and contemporary conflicts. Pragmatically synthesizing this information, Gubbins authored two brief guides in 1939: the *Art of Guerilla Warfare* and the *Partisan Leader's Handbook*. In 1940 Gubbins joined the new SOE and was given charge of

both operations and training, allowing his ideas to shape SOE's agents and form their thinking. Even before the entry of the United States into the Second World War, OSS turned to Britain for training in intelligence and sabotage. SOE played a substantial role in this process, propagating Gubbins's ideas even further. Although the Americans drew upon their own sources of inspiration as well, SOE and Gubbins's doctrines were significant, arguably central, to American thinking.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Glynnis, my best friend and constant companion.

And to Lazarus Innocent Linderman. Please pray for us.

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Countless other people have assisted me and deserve recognition; I regret that I can only draw attention to a few. The staff at Texas A&M's Sterling C. Evans Library and Cushing Memorial Library & Archives have worked wonders on more than one occasion; particular thanks are deserved by the interlibrary loan staff here and at libraries around the world who have made my research possible. I would also like to thank the administrative staff of the History Department, especially Rita Walker and Barbara Dawson, who cut through several Gordian knots of paperwork on my behalf, and Prof. David Hudson, who deserves far more credit than I can give for his many labors at the service of our Department's graduate students. Thanks too to the many people at Texas A&M and elsewhere who read drafts or shared their expertise: Dr. William Collopy, Francis Grice (King's College London), Prof. Eunan O'Halpin (Trinity College), Brian Hilton, Prof. Brian M. Linn, Jill Russell (King's College London), Micah Wright, as well as anonymous journal reviewers and various conference participants. Two colleagues in particular, Nathaniel Weber and Blake Whitaker, suffered through years of commentary about SOE and OSS, with good humor, keen insights, and unfailing

friendship. Paul and Alicia Fraser provided friendly accommodations for all my visits to Kew.

I would also like to thank the helpful staffs at the Bodleian Library, the Imperial War Museum, and the National Archives in Kew and College Park, and Rosalie Spire, who assisted me with documents at Kew. I am indebted to all those who helped fund my research: the Texas A&M History Department, the Melbern G. Glasscock Center for Humanities Research, the Smith Richardson Foundation, and Florence and Bookman Peters.

Finally, Boniface, Clare, Thomas, and Thomas have my eternal thanks for assistance I can only begin to appreciate.

NOMENCLATURE

ADC	Aide-de-camp
AGW	<i>Art of Guerilla Warfare</i>
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BSC	British Security Coordination
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
COI	Coordinator of Information
CS	Alternative name for Electra House
DCIGS	Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff
DDMI	Deputy Director of Military Intelligence
DMI	Director of Military Intelligence
DMO	Director of Military Operations
EH	Electra House
FANY	First Aid Nursing Yeomanry
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FSR	Field Service Regulations
GHQ	General Headquarters
GSO2	General Staff Officer, Grade II
GSO3	General Staff Officer, Grade III
GS(R)	General Staff (Research)
IRA	Irish Republican Army

IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
ISSB	Inter-Services Security Board
IWM	Imperial War Museum
MEW	Ministry of Economic Warfare
MI3(a)	France / Spain section of the Military Intelligence Directorate
MI3(c)	Soviet section of the Military Intelligence Directorate
MI5	Alternative name for the Security Service
MI6	Alternative name for the Secret Intelligence Service
MI9	War Office's escape and evasion service
MI(R)	Military Intelligence (Research)
MP	Member of Parliament
MT1	Planning section of the Military Training Directorate
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NKVD	Soviet People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
OG	Operational Group
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
OWI	Office of War Information
<i>PLH</i>	<i>Partisan Leader's Handbook</i>
PRO	Public Record Office
PWE	Political Warfare Executive
RA5D	Royal Artillery, 5 th Division
RADD	Royal Artillery, Dublin District

RAF	Royal Air Force
RFA	Royal Field Artillery
RU	Reserve Unit
SA	<i>Sturmabteilung</i>
SA/B	Secret Intelligence Branch of OSS
SA/G	Special Operations Branch of OSS
SD	<i>Sicherheitsdienst</i>
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service
SMP	Shanghai Municipal Police
SNS	Special Night Squads
SO1	Propaganda branch of SOE
SO2	Operations branch of SOE
SO3	Research and planning branch of SOE
SOE	Special Operations Executive
S&T	Schools & Training
<i>SWM</i>	<i>Small Wars Manual</i>
TA	Territorial Army
TNA	The National Archives
WO	War Office

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
NOMENCLATURE.....	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xi
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Writing about SOE.....	6
Introducing Colin Gubbins.....	9
II BAPTISM BY FIRE	12
World War I	12
Russia	15
Ireland.....	34
India.....	50
Conclusion.....	59
III FORMULATING A DOCTRINE: LEARNING FROM THE PAST.....	61
The 1930s	61
<i>The Art of Guerilla Warfare</i> and <i>The Partisan Leader's Handbook</i>	82
The Second Anglo-Boer War.....	86
T. E. Lawrence and the Arab Revolt.....	105
Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck and the <i>Schutztruppe</i>	116
Conclusion.....	122
IV FORMULATING A DOCTRINE: CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES.....	124

CHAPTER	Page
The Spanish Civil War	125
The Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-1939	133
Irregular Warfare in China	151
German Subversive Forces.....	174
Conclusion.....	182
V GESTATION OF GUBBINS’S THINKING AND THE CREATION OF SOE	184
No. 4 Military Mission	184
The Coming of War in Britain	188
The Independent Companies	193
The Auxiliary Units.....	199
Creation of SOE	206
SOE Training.....	224
Promotion.....	239
Conclusion.....	245
VI OSS AND ITS DOCTRINE	246
The Origins of OSS	246
Uniquely American Sources of Doctrine	259
British Influence.....	272
The JEDBURGH Teams	283
VII CONCLUSION	288
Normandy.....	290
Burma	294
Gubbins after the War	300
BIBLIOGRAPHY	305
APPENDIX A: <i>THE ART OF GUERILLA WARFARE</i>	326
APPENDIX B: <i>THE PARTISAN LEADER’S HANDBOOK</i>	362
VITA	400

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Speaking to a group of Danes after World War II, Sir Colin McV. Gubbins, former director of Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE), commented that, "It is all very well to 'decree' an organization, but then someone has to create it."¹ This work examines the processes whereby SOE was created, including how its doctrine was formulated and subsequently disseminated, both to its own agents and to its American counterpart, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

The question of precedents has received some attention – if only in passing – in the scholarship of SOE. A lecture detailing the history of SOE may be taken as representative of a common view: "When war broke out the art of underground warfare was unknown in England. There was nothing to build on, no past experience and no precedents."² Such a narrative makes all the more glorious the subsequent successes of SOE and its colleagues in OSS and the various Resistance movements, and plays to certain stereotypes of the British amateur jack-of-all-trades gentleman.

This essay argues that that narrative is wrong, however engaging it may be. There *were* precedents upon which SOE could, and *did*, draw. It was not created *ex*

This dissertation follows the style of *The Journal of British Studies*.

¹ Gubbins address to the Danish/English Society [elsewhere given as "Anglo/Danish Club"], Copenhagen, 29 April 1966, 4, Gubbins papers 4/1/20, Imperial War Museum (IWM).

² "Brief History of SOE," 1, The National Archives (TNA): Public Record Office (PRO), HS 7/1. This anonymous document is marked "1st Draft used on 1st Course" though its purpose remains obscure, since it appears to have been written in 1946, too late to be utilized in one of SOE's many wartime training schools.

nihilo. Gubbins and his colleagues consciously looked to past and contemporary examples for their inspiration.

This essay relies heavily on the pioneering research of M. R. D. Foot and the impressive work of Peter Wilkinson and Joan Bright Astley. Journalists sometimes claim to write the first draft of history; in the case of SOE, however, there was no such journalistic account. As a secret organization, it had very little meaningful history available to the public before Foot's *SOE in France*, published in 1966. Thus, he, Wilkinson, Astley, and other members of the first generation of SOE historians have had to do the difficult but very necessary task of accurately establishing basic facts: who did what, when and where. Their work has not only added to the historical record, but has done so with insightful comment, lively writing and patriotism of the truest sort, a patriotism which is not blinded by pride but which rejoices in its service of fellow man.³

With the broad outlines of SOE's history already traced, the current writer has the luxury to step back and ask more analytic questions. Who were the men and women of SOE? Where did they come from? What ideas underlay their strategy and tactics? How did they learn to do the things they did? These questions, which may appear deceptively simple at first glance, point us toward more intellectually complex questions: What was SOE's doctrine, and where did it come from?

SOE was created by the merger of two earlier organizations, Section D, a branch of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS or MI6) and General Staff (Research) (GS[R]), a

³ Regarding *SOE in France*, Gubbins wrote to Foot: "May I say at once that I was immensely impressed by the way you have marshaled the multiplicity of events and evidence into a continuous narrative which reads so convincingly and – if I may so presume – by the balanced judgment you have achieved and given from a welter of conflicting opinions." Gubbins to Foot, 1 January 1964, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM.

branch of the War Office. As historian Simon Anglim observes, “The historians of SOE, William Mackenzie, M. R. D. Foot and Mark Seaman, all discuss [GS(R)] summarily and in terms of its input into SOE.”⁴ The story of these agencies and their leading light, Colin Gubbins, must be told. This essay follows Gubbins’s career from 1914 onward, examining his experience of unconventional warfare, first in the Allied Intervention in Russia (1919), most importantly in Ireland during the Irish Revolution (1919-1922), and then, to a much lesser extent, in British India (1923-1930). To this personal experience was added the experience of colleagues who served in these same places and also in Iraq. Gubbins’s knowledge of unconventional warfare was further augmented by study of several other conflicts: the Second Anglo-Boer War, the Arab Revolt led by T. E. Lawrence, the German guerrilla war in East Africa, the Revolt in Palestine between the World Wars, the Spanish Civil War, and the Second Sino-Japanese War.

With this knowledge at his disposal, in 1939 Gubbins authored two brief guides, the *Art of Guerilla Warfare* and the *Partisan Leader’s Handbook*.⁵ The approach in both is pragmatic, only venturing into theory when necessary. Gubbins wanted to create “how-to guides,” works “intended for the actual fighting partisans, tactical and not strategic.”⁶ One writer describes the *Art* as “the first synthesis of British unconventional warfare doctrine, or at any rate the first codification of irregular experience. The work is

⁴ Simon Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army, 1922-1944* (London, 2010), 105.

⁵ Note that Gubbins spells “guerilla” with only one “r”, whereas the accepted spelling today is “guerrilla.” However, his original spelling will be preserved in this title and in quotations.

⁶ Gubbins, quoted in Peter Wilkinson and Joan Bright Astley, *Gubbins and SOE* (London, 1997), 34.

bold, original and arguably unique; an incisive summary of lessons learned from Russia, Ireland, Arabia and elsewhere.”⁷

The fruits of the various conflicts which Gubbins studied may be found throughout these two works: the centrality of the local population; the collection, protection and use of intelligence; the necessity of cooperating with conventional forces; and the use of speed, surprise and escape in carrying out ambush operations. The historian Józef Garliński, who fought with the Polish Resistance, argues that “before the outbreak of war, before mobilization, when no one knew what turn events would take or how the Germans would overrun Europe, preparations were already in hand for underground warfare in territories that might fall under their control. In this field, Britain was better prepared for war than any other country.”⁸ That preparation was the result of early planning by Gubbins and a handful of colleagues.

Having formulated his ideas regarding guerrilla warfare, these ideas were given time to gestate while Gubbins liaised with the Poles in 1939, commanded troops in Norway in 1940, and made plans for the use of guerrillas in Britain itself, should it be invaded by the Germans. Though of some significance, none of these actions would have earned the place that Gubbins deserves in history; that came in 1940, when he was invited by Minister Hugh Dalton to join the new Special Operations Executive, an organization within the Ministry of Economic Warfare tasked with supporting resistance and subversive activities in Nazi-occupied Europe. Upon his arrival at SOE, Gubbins

⁷ William Cassidy, introduction to Colin McV. Gubbins, *The Art of Guerilla Warfare* (San Francisco, 1981), vi. The 1981 reprints by Interservice Press of Gubbins’s pamphlets should not be taken for books in the ordinary sense; they are pages stapled together between construction paper covers. The author observed them in the Rare Books, Manuscripts & Archives section of the Georgetown University Library.

⁸ Józef Garliński, *Poland, SOE and the Allies*, Paul Stevenson, trans. (London, 1969), 25.

was not only given charge of operations, but also training. Thus, it was his ideas that shaped SOE's agents and formed their thinking on irregular warfare. When he was promoted to be Deputy Director and then Director of SOE, the significance of his thinking – and the many years of irregular conflict which informed it – only became more acute. In 1942 Lord Selborne, then Minister of Economic Warfare, explained to Prime Minister Churchill: “There is perhaps no officer, other than the Chief of S.O.E., who is more vital to the continuance of the work of this organisation than Brigadier Gubbins. He has seen the growth of S.O.E. from its early beginnings, and... has acquired a technique, a knowledge and experience which are really irreplaceable.”⁹ If the story of SOE's doctrinal origins is to be told, Gubbins must be its central character. This essay is thus part biography, part intellectual history, and part organizational history; SOE cannot be understood apart from the ideas that animated it, nor can those ideas be understood apart from the life of Colin Gubbins, who did so much to shape them.

The United States turned to Britain for training in intelligence and sabotage, even before the formal entry of the US into the Second World War. SOE played a significant role in this training process, which rapidly blossomed after the formal entry of the US into the war. As the British lent instructors and their training syllabus to the Americans, Gubbins's ideas were propagated even further. The Americans had their own sources of

⁹ Selborne to Churchill, 13 May 1942, Gubbins papers 3/1/8. Churchill eventually replied: “I am glad it has been possible to meet your wishes in this matter and that Brigadier Gubbins will be able to continue on the important work on which he is now engaged.” Churchill to Selborne, May 1942, Gubbins papers 3/1/9.

inspiration to draw upon when formulating ideas about irregular warfare, but SOE and Gubbins's doctrines played a key role.

Writing about SOE

On 7 November 1949, Gubbins visited Roger Makins, of the Foreign Office, to discuss the possibility of writing a book about his experiences during World War II. The following month he received a letter from another Foreign Office official, William Strange. "The proposal has now been fully discussed by all the authorities concerned," Strange explained. "The publication even of such a sober and balanced review as you would write would be undesirable on security grounds.... The technique of organising resistance movements does not alter greatly with the passage of time and we could not be sure that your book might not give valuable assistance to a future enemy."¹⁰ But following the publication of a series of unauthorized memoirs and Foot's authorized *SOE in France* in 1966, the climate began to shift. By 1970, Robin Brook – who had served in SOE's Western Europe section and went on to become a director of the Bank of England – explained to the Foreign Secretary that "the techniques of subversion and sabotage have been so largely transformed since SOE's day that a mild office censorship on the final text [of a new book on SOE] could exclude anything in the least harmful."¹¹ With the passage of time, many of SOE's secrets lost their deadly associations.

If security is no longer a major concern when writing about SOE, there remains the problem of sources. It has been suggested that a fire in early 1946 destroyed a

¹⁰ William Strange (Foreign Office) to Gubbins, 10 December 1949, Gubbins papers 3/2/48, IWM.

¹¹ Robin Brook to Foreign Secretary, September 1970, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM.

significant quantity of documents relating to SOE.¹² Gubbins strenuously denied this, explaining,

The suggestion of a fire in the small remaining office in Baker Street in January 1946 destroying any important files is absolutely wide of the mark. I returned from the Far East... about the end of December, 1945 to find nothing remained of S.O.E. except this little remnant. Everything else... had been transferred to 'C' [the director of the Secret Intelligence Service] including all operational files.... There have been suggestions ever since the War, rather nasty ones, that S.O.E. destroyed material that would have incriminated itself. This is absolutely false, as the Historical Section was formed long before the end of the War, and worked independently under the War Cabinet Historical Section, which neither I nor any other Offices in S.O.E. had any control.¹³

In spite of this insistence, a number of writers have commented on the famous fire of February 1946. C. B. Townshend, the first professional archivist to attempt an organization of the SOE papers after the war, noted that the fire “destroyed an unknown quantity of records the subject of which it has been impossible to trace.”¹⁴ Duncan Stuart, former SOE Advisor at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, observes that several independent sources of evidence confirm the damage to the Belgian files, which still bear the burn marks.¹⁵

Apart from the state of the SOE archives generally, there is the problem of sources regarding its earliest days. Section D, one of SOE's two predecessor agencies, belonged to the Secret Intelligence Service, which as a rule does not release documents. Likewise, Gubbins himself noted that “there are no records that I know of on the matter”

¹² M. R. D. Foot, *SOE in France: An Account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France, 1940-1944* (London, 1966), 450.

¹³ Gubbins to Foot, 31 January 1964, 2, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM.

¹⁴ C. B. Townshend's report of 17 December 1974 held by SOE Advisor; quoted in Duncan Stuart, “‘Of Historical Interest Only’: The Origins and Vicissitudes of the SOE Archives,” in *Special Operations Executive: A New Instrument of War*, Mark Seaman, ed. (London, 2006), 222.

¹⁵ Stuart, “‘Of Historical Interest Only,’” 222-23.

of GS(R), the other predecessor.¹⁶ In spite of the fact that GS(R) kept a war diary, it has not survived among the SOE papers held in Britain's National Archives.¹⁷ This paucity of sources is not entirely the product of secrecy. Section D and GS(R) were both quite small when compared to SOE at its wartime height; thus, the number of documents produced by SOE dwarfs that of either of its predecessor agencies. Moreover, as is the case with any wartime organization, records from the end of the war are simply more plentiful, due to the frequent practice of throwing out old papers in a bid to save space.

Finally, when discussing SOE, one is bound to run into the question posed by Foot: "Was SOE any good?" There are certainly critics who insist it was not. The military historian John Keegan concludes that SOE was costly, misguided, and pointless.¹⁸ In contrast, Foot argues that SOE did a great deal of good, providing considerable support to the Allied war effort at a relatively low cost.¹⁹ The overall value of SOE and irregular warfare will be considered briefly in the conclusion of the present work. However, this ongoing debate about SOE's success or failure can sometimes obscure other questions about what SOE and OSS actually did and why they did it. Should sabotage officers work alone or in conjunction with local populations? How closely should their activities be coordinated with military operations? And how much

¹⁶ "CG's Comments on Foot's Book," nd, 1, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM.

¹⁷ On the existence of this war diary, see Joan Bright Astley, *The Inner Circle: A View of War at the Top* (Durham, 2007), 42. GS(R) was followed by MI(R), whose war diary is extant, though it begins only with the outbreak of war in September 1939. It may be found in the TNA: PRO, HS 8/263.

¹⁸ John Keegan, *The Second World War* (London, 1989), 483-85. It should be noted, however, that Keegan's criticism of SOE is part of his larger argument – found across numerous works – that "victory is... bought with blood rather than brains." Thus, in addition to criticizing SOE, he also qualifies the utility of intelligence, calling it "the handmaiden, not the mistress, of the warrior." Keegan, *Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy from Napoleon to al-Qaeda* (New York, 2003), 6.

¹⁹ M. R. D. Foot, "Was SOE Any Good?" *Journal of Contemporary History* XVI, no. 1 (January 1981): 167-81.

should be expected from them? Gubbins engaged with these questions as he sifted the experience of four decades of unconventional warfare.

Introducing Colin Gubbins

Who was this Colin Gubbins? William Stevenson, author of the *New York Times* bestseller, *A Man Called Intrepid*, describes him as

an unusual man-at-arms.... Gubbins dressed immaculately, wore a red carnation in his buttonhole, and carried kidskin gloves. One acquaintance remembered him as “an amiable, rather vague sort of chap with no particular talents and some sort of desk job in the War Office.” His middle name was McVeagh, and deep in his ancestry had been planted the instincts of a buccaneer. Years of practice had taught him to conceal this, along with fluency in Slavic languages and a most curious record of travel that one did not associate with officers of the regular army.... His instructions for blowing up tanks by filling bottles with gasoline and rags became known later, when the Russians adopted them, as “Molotov cocktails.”²⁰

Unfortunately, only bits and pieces of Stevenson’s account are true; it is – at best – a dim reflection of historical events. Of *A Man Called Intrepid*, Hugh Trevor-Roper wrote in the *New York Review of Books*, “This book... is, from start to finish, utterly worthless.”²¹ Likewise, Foot has said *A Man Called Intrepid* is “historically worthless.”²² Who, then, was the real historical Colin Gubbins? His life was every bit as exciting as Stevenson’s pulp fiction account, perhaps more so for having actually happened.

Certain details of Stevenson’s description quoted above are copied without attribution from an account written five years earlier by Gubbins’s one-time secretary,

²⁰ William Stevenson, *A Man Called Intrepid: The Secret War* (New York, 1976), 46. Stevenson misspells “McVean.” Throughout this essay, all spellings within quotations are reproduced from the original.

²¹ Quoted in David Stafford, “‘Intrepid’: Myth and Reality,” *Journal of Contemporary History* XXII, no. 2 (April 1987): 303.

²² Quoted in Stafford, “Intrepid,” 305.

Joan Bright Astley: the carnation in the buttonhole, the smooth suède gloves, and the use of the terms “man-at-arms” and “buccaneer.”²³ But Astley does not misspell his middle name, nor attribute the Molotov cocktail – likely invented in Spain in the autumn of 1936, and given its present moniker in Finland – to him.²⁴ She does, however, describe Gubbins as “quiet-mannered, quiet-spoken, energetic, efficient and charming. A ‘still waters running deep’ sort of man, he had just enough of the buccaneer in him to make lesser men underrate his gifts of leadership, courage and integrity.... He was dark and short, his fingers square.”²⁵

In studying Gubbins, one is struck by his incredible balance. He was a man of creativity and intellectual power; after the war he occupied much of his time visiting art galleries, reading novels, and watching ballet.²⁶ However, he never attended university, and his writing always remained accessible to the common man, even if it contained a few romantic flourishes. Gubbins possessed considerable belief in the importance of ungentlemanly warfare; his zeal for his work made him “the driving force behind SOE.”²⁷ But Gubbins was no wild-eyed fanatic. When in the mid-1950s the future historian M. R. D. Foot and a group of his fellow Oxford students decided to attack a railway bridge in Hungary, in support of that country’s anti-Soviet aspirations, he looked

²³ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 21-22.

²⁴ Anthony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (New York, 2006), 78; Eloise Engle and Lauri Paananen, *The Winter War: The Soviet Attack on Finland, 1939-1940* (Mechanicsburg, PA, 1973), 39; William Trotter, *A Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940* (Chapel Hill, 1991), 72.

²⁵ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 21-22.

²⁶ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 242.

²⁷ Seaman, “A New Instrument of War,” in *Special Operations Executive*, Seaman, ed., 17.

up Gubbins's address in *Who's Who* and wrote to him for advice. Gubbins prudently advised them to abandon the idea.²⁸

Gubbins was certainly hard working, and proud in his way. Leo Marks, an SOE cryptographer, describes Gubbins as an intense and sometimes inscrutable man of great intelligence and exacting standards.²⁹ Lord Selborne acknowledged after the war that "Gubbins is not universally popular in all other Departments, and I believe he has his critics in some parts also of the War Office." However, he insisted "that no Minister was served more loyally by a subordinate than I was by him, and that when a strong man is fighting to create a new Organisation, which is to be carved out of the three Services and other Departments, it is not unnatural that he sometimes trod rather badly on people's toes."³⁰ Sir Frank Nelson, Gubbins's first boss at SOE, echoed these sentiments, describing him as a man who provided "ever genial, calm and brilliant help, loyalty and support."³¹

How Gubbins came to be SOE's intellectual wellspring is a tale that is both fascinating and illuminating for a full understanding of the Second World War and the role clandestine service.

²⁸ M. R. D. Foot, *Memories of an SOE Historian* (Barnsley, UK, 2009), 125.

²⁹ Leo Marks, *Between Silk and Cyanide: A Codemaker's War, 1941-1945* (New York, 1998), 222-28, 362, 380-82, 406, 453, 562-63, 593.

³⁰ Lord Selborne to the Rt. Hon. J. J. Lawson, PC, MP, 17 October 1945, 2, Papers of Roundell C. Palmer,

³¹ Earl Selborne, MS Eng. Hist. c. 1002, fol. 10, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

³¹ Sir Frank Nelson to Gubbins, 5 May 1942, Gubbins papers 3/2/5, IWM.

CHAPTER II

BAPTISM BY FIRE

World War I

The account of Gubbins's service in the First World War provided by Wilkinson and Astley is fairly complete, leaving little to conjecture. In any event, given that all of Gubbins's comrades in that conflict are dead, there are limits to how much might be added to their account. For the purposes of this study, Gubbins's service in the Great War is less significant, his single large conventional experience in an otherwise unconventional career. A brief overview of this time should suffice to demonstrate that he saw combat fairly typical of the war (Second Ypers, the Somme, and Cambrai) and that he served with distinction, receiving a Military Cross, numerous promotions, and additional training. Moreover, he was also wounded in combat.

In the summer of 1914, Colin Gubbins, the son of a British consular official and a cadet at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, was innocently trying to study in Heidelberg. Having shown "a certain inherited predilection for foreign language, it occurred to my father that it might give me a leg-up if I learnt German."³² Instead, his plans were cut short by the advent of the Great War. He quickly made his way back to Britain, arriving in Dover on 3 August, the day before the British declaration of war.

³² Gubbins, quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 14.

Three other Woolwich cadets had been in Germany at the time; all three were arrested and interned for the duration of the conflict.³³

Although only halfway through his course of studies at Woolwich, Gubbins was commissioned a second lieutenant on 15 September 1914 and posted to 126th Battery, XXIX Brigade, 4th Division, III Corps, arriving in France in early November 1914.³⁴ Gubbins and his brigade participated in the Second Battle of Ypres in April and May, 1915, and in June he was promoted to lieutenant. His brigade saw action in the Battle of the Somme, in which Gubbins was awarded a Military Cross “for conspicuous gallantry. When one of his guns and its detachment were blown up by a heavy shell, he organised a rescue party and personally helped to dig out the wounded while shells were falling all round.”³⁵ In August (about a month after his 20th birthday) he was made an acting captain and served for a short time on the staff of the General Officer Commanding, Fourth Army; this would be the first of several stints of staff work.³⁶ “Refus[ing] to stay at GHQ when the battery came into action” again at the Somme, Gubbins rejoined his unit and was wounded on 7 October 1916.³⁷ Discharged from the hospital after eleven days, Gubbins commanded the battery while his major was on leave in January 1917, was sent to a Battery Commander’s Course at Larkhill in February, and attended a

³³ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 15.

³⁴ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 16.

³⁵ Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 22 September 1916, 9275. See also Letter from Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General, 4th Division to commander of the 4th Division Artillery, n.d., Gubbins papers 3/1/1, IWM.

³⁶ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 17. Wilkinson and Astley record that the promotion happened on 16 August, though this is likely a scribal error, arising from the fact that the abovementioned form generally gives only months and the last two digits of the year, e.g. “August 16.”

³⁷ Edward Beddington-Behrens, letter to his uncle, date unknown, quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 18. See also *Times* wounded list, 26 October, 1916, and Telegram of 9 October 1916, Gubbins papers 3/1/2, IWM.

Cooperation with Aircraft Course at Arras, France, in March.³⁸ The future looked bright for young Gubbins.

At the Battle of Arras, which lasted for most of April and into May, 1917, Gubbins first met Adrian Carton de Wiart, whose infantry brigade Gubbins's battery was supporting. Gubbins was sent as liaison to Carton de Wiart, who was already something of a living legend. Wounded a seven times in the course of the war – having already lost an eye in Somaliland – Carton de Wiart won a Victoria Cross in the summer of 1916. “After three other battalion Commanders had become casualties, he controlled their commands, and ensured that the ground won was maintained at all costs. He frequently exposed himself in the organisation of positions and of supplies, passing unflinchingly through fire barrage of the most intense nature. His gallantry was inspiring to all.”³⁹ Reflecting on his experience afterward, Carton de Wiart commented, “Frankly I had enjoyed the war.”⁴⁰ Gubbins recalled,

He was already a legendary figure with his Victoria Cross, his black eye patch, his stump of an arm and his formidable bearing. When the divisional orders for next days' attack reached him – long and voluminous – he read these through twice, questioned me on one or two gunner matters, then deliberately tore up the orders and sent for his battalion commanders; a ten-minute conference; a few clear verbal orders from him; and it was all over.⁴¹

In the summer of 1939 their paths would cross again.

On 1 November 1917 Gubbins was made an acting major, with temporary command of 125th Battery and then two other batteries within the brigade.⁴² That same

³⁸ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 18.

³⁹ Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 9 September 1916, 8869.

⁴⁰ Adrian Carton de Wiart, *Happy Odyssey* (London, 1950), 89.

⁴¹ Gubbins, note for a book by Peter Fleming [never finished], n.d., 1 & 3, Gubbins papers 5/11, IWM.

⁴² Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 5 April 1918, 4113; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 20.

autumn he was gassed, “but fortunately not badly.”⁴³ XXIX Brigade participated in the Battle of Cambrai, where tanks made their first significant appearance, with limited success. On 12 February 1918 Gubbins was promoted to substantive captain and given command of 126th Battery.⁴⁴ When the Germans launched Operation Michael, the opening phase of the Spring Offensive in March 1918, XXIX Brigade was in the thick of it.⁴⁵ After “handling his battery with skill and authority,” Gubbins contracted trench fever and was evacuated to England in May.⁴⁶ After recuperating he served as an instructor at No. 3 Royal Artillery Officer Cadet School in Weedon, and attended courses at the School of Education at Oxford and the School of Instructors at Bockhampstead.⁴⁷

Russia

Background

In April 1918 a small body of British Marines was landed at Murmansk, followed on 23 June 1918 by a mixed force of Royal Marines, Canadian, Australian and American soldiers. This force intended to secure the stores at the port of Archangel and defend the rail line to Murmansk, then being threatened by a Finnish-German offensive. However, the Bolshevik Revolution and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk caused many Russians to abandon the fight against the Germans; moreover, Czech troops who had

⁴³ Jack Gubbins [Colin’s father], date unknown, quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 20.

⁴⁴ Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 17 May 1918, 5839; Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM.

⁴⁵ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 20-21.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 21; Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM.

⁴⁷ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE* 24. The RA Cadet Officer School is referred to as a “College” in some documents.

once fought alongside the Russians now had nowhere to go. Thus the Allied force at Archangel hoped to meet up with, train, and equip those Czechs, while also recruiting and training local Russians to continue the fight against the Germans.⁴⁸ In this way, the project was originally conceived of as a part of the broader Great War campaign against Imperial Germany. But when Germany agreed to an armistice on 11 November 1918, the Allied forces did not leave Russia.

In July 1918, Allied forces made an initial landing at the port of Archangel. The politics of the place were difficult, to say the least. When Captain Georgi Chaplin, whose coup had preceded the Allied landing in Archangel and put the Chaikovsky government in power, decided the new government was not to his liking, he staged a second coup, backed by Tsarist officers.⁴⁹ General Frederick Poole, the British commander at Archangel, was sacked for his passive participation in the coup, and was replaced with Major General Edmund Ironside.⁵⁰ Matters were further complicated by the fact that, on his arrival, “Ironside... found a disturbing number of his British officers openly sympathetic with the most reactionary monarchists among their Russian counterparts.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Edward Ironside, *Archangel, 1918-1919* (London, 1953), 17; Clifford Kinvig, *Churchill's Crusade: The British Invasion of Russia, 1918-1920* (London, 2006), 23-24.

⁴⁹ Kinvig, *Churchill's Crusade*, 41.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 43. General Ironside, reflecting on this matter in his memoirs more than 30 years after the fact, comments, “It was thought that the coup should have been detected and prevented, and in Russian quarters General Poole was accused of having favoured it. There was, of course, no truth in such a stupid accusation” (Ironside, *Archangel*, 21).

⁵¹ Kinvig, *Churchill's Crusade*, 46.

Gubbins's Experience of Russia

On 22 February 1919, Gubbins was appointed aide-de-camp (ADC) to General Ironside.⁵² Ironside commanded a mixed force of British, French, American, Italian, Polish, and Russian troops, now actively aiding the White Russians against the Bolsheviks.⁵³ Ironside spoke a number of European languages, including Russian, and had previously operated with Canadian forces, an advantage when commanding a multinational force. He possessed considerable energy and was keen on details and meeting his men. But his most notable quality was his overwhelming size: he was six foot four and weighed nearly 280 pounds. "One sergeant in the force recalled... that he required two ordinary sleeping bags sewn up to make one which would accommodate him."⁵⁴ His nickname was "Tiny."⁵⁵

Gubbins landed in Murmansk, since the frozen port of Archangel did not open until June 1919.⁵⁶ He spent only six months in Russia before the British withdrew, but it was a formative experience. There was no continuous front, as there had been in France; instead, the Allies occupied only certain strongpoints, while vast stretches of terrain were left unoccupied.⁵⁷ The conflict was one characterized by espionage and propaganda, where events behind the lines occupied leaders as much as the enemy

⁵² Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 28 March 1919, 4139. Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM, gives his date of appointment as March 1919. Prior to Gubbins's appointment, Ironside had no ADC; see Ironside, *Archangel*, 61.

⁵³ Ironside to Secretary of State War Churchill, 1 November 1919, 1, TNA: PRO, WO 32/5705.

⁵⁴ Kinvig, *Churchill's Crusade*, 44n.

⁵⁵ Ironside, *Archangel*, 170.

⁵⁶ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 25; Ironside to Churchill, 1 November 1919, 2, TNA: PRO, WO 32/5705.

⁵⁷ Benjamin Rhodes, *The Anglo-American Winter War with Russia: 1918-1919: A Diplomatic and Military Tragicomedy* (Westport, CT, 1988), 57.

before them.⁵⁸ Ironside complained, “It is extremely hard to know whom to employ as Head Russian Agent because, as soon as I have chosen someone, the secret service come and tell me that he is a German spy.... Everyone distrusts everyone else and denouncements are taking place every day.”⁵⁹ And this view may have been merited; an Anglo-Polish-Russian attack on the village of Kuliga, for example, was spoiled when a Bolshevik spy apparently warned the defenders of the impending attack.⁶⁰ (Ironside also made use of the conflict’s extensive espionage, ordering his intelligence personnel to send false information to the enemy, and thereby deceive them about impending operations.⁶¹)

Moreover, historian Clifford Kinvig notes that the Bolsheviks “showed themselves to be masters of propaganda.”⁶² Ironside later reflected that “propaganda... is a very difficult [weapon] to employ, especially against troops on active service. It is a long-term weapon and like advertising it must be repeated over and over again to produce any effect. No soldier picks up a pamphlet and at once becomes infected by it.”⁶³ However, his wartime correspondence was less confident, recording that “the most active propaganda was carried out amongst the rank and file of all the Allied Contingents by the enemy, and [as a result] discontent showed itself in many places.”⁶⁴ In particular he worried about the impact of Bolshevik propaganda on Russian-speaking

⁵⁸ Andrew Soutar, *With Ironside in North Russia* (London, 1940), xi.

⁵⁹ Northern Russia Expeditionary Force to Director of Military Operations, 9 December 1918, quoted in Michael Occleshaw, *Dances in Deep Shadows: Britain's Clandestine War in Russia, 1917-20* (London, 2006), 281-82.

⁶⁰ Rhodes, *Anglo-American*, 59.

⁶¹ Ironside, *Archangel*, 174.

⁶² Kinvig, *Churchill's Crusade*, 48.

⁶³ Ironside, *Archangel*, 58.

⁶⁴ Ironside to Churchill, 1 November 1919, 2, TNA: PRO, WO 32/5705.

American troops, many of them recruited from Detroit.⁶⁵ Enemy propaganda distribution was virtually impossible to control, since “there was no continuous line of defence between the enemy and ourselves which could prevent the passage of individuals, and we had not sufficient police or troops to patrol the crowded town in a proper manner.”⁶⁶

We do not know precisely what Gubbins did in his six months as ADC to General Ironside. We do know, however, that he later reflected that “to anyone who had studied the Russian revolution... the crippling effect of subversive and para-military warfare on regular forces was obvious.”⁶⁷ (Gubbins complained, however, that the Russian Revolution was “not studied at any of the higher colleges of War – [it was] ‘Irregular’ and not deemed worthy of serious attention.”⁶⁸) In one episode he is remembered as safeguarding the kitchen on Ironside’s private river steamer, fairly mundane work.⁶⁹ More interestingly, he likely saw many of the reports coming to and going from Ironside’s office. We know that the ADC’s of Lord Rawlinson, who

⁶⁵ Rhodes, *Anglo-American*, 61. See also Ironside to War Office, 6 and 8 November 1918, TNA: PRO, WO 158/714/HMO6495. In his memoirs, however, Ironside writes that, “Soldiers can only be affected by whispering campaigns conducted from inside, and the Allies had no subversive elements in their ranks in Russia. I never found the British soldier touched by foreign-made propaganda. His kindly but marked contempt for all ‘foreigners’ provides him with an armour which is difficult to pierce. The Bolshevik propagandists certainly had no sort of idea how the ordinary Britisher lived and worked” (Ironside, *Archangel*, 58).

⁶⁶ Ironside, *Archangel*, 58. The conflict involved a variety of other quirks as well. Allied forces at Pinega, for example, “had been unpaid for some time owing to the lack of currency and they had very naturally protested. The wretched pay officer had been sent up with nothing lower than 1,000 rouble notes, in the hope that he might be able to exchange them in the villages. The supply of smaller notes had run out.... A wire to [Governor-General] Miller soon brought up a plane with the requisite small notes and all was peace once more” (Ironside, *Archangel*, 138).

⁶⁷ Gubbins, “Regular and Irregular Warfare: Problems of Co-Ordination,” lecture at University of Manchester, 29 November 1967, 4-5, Gubbins papers 4/1/27, IWM. This lecture was part of the Military Studies public lecture series, “Subversion, Intelligence, Resistance.”

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁶⁹ Letter to J. B. Astley from Major General Douglas Wimberley, 8 July 1977; quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 25.

assumed overarching command of both Archangel and Murmansk in August 1919, “were always busy collecting the necessary material for his reports.”⁷⁰ Gubbins may have done the same for Ironside. He may even have authored some of the documents that bear Ironside’s signature, since generals rarely write their own reports. But this is slipping from evidence into speculation. All we can say with certainty is what Ironside did while Gubbins was in Russia, and assume that, in its general outlines, Gubbins’s experience was similar.

Ironside faced a variety of challenges as he negotiated with the White government in Archangel, tried to shift troops between Finland, Russia and Estonia, and navigated the complexities of ethnic troop compositions.⁷¹ The intricacies of operations were only increased by the use of ground, air, and river forces.⁷² But it was the social and cultural issues, the intangibles, which may have been most difficult for the British to master. At one point Ironside records that Russian and American troops at Shenkursk – an Allied outpost nearly 200 miles south of Archangel – “were, from a military point of view, too far advanced, but it was decided for political reasons to maintain them there during the winter.”⁷³ Elders in one village outside Archangel did not even know of the White Russian Provisional Government there and could not understand why the British wanted them to join the conflict against the Bolsheviks.⁷⁴ In spite of his efforts at accommodating the local politics – and Ironside had no inconsiderable political ability –

⁷⁰ Ironside, *Archangel*, 173.

⁷¹ Appreciation of the Situation in Archangel, Murmansk and the Baltic, 24 March 1919, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1174.

⁷² Ironside to War Office, 19 June 1919, TNA: PRO, WO 32/5693.

⁷³ Despatch No. 3, Ironside to Churchill, 1 November 1919, published in the Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 6 April 1920, 4117.

⁷⁴ Ironside, *Archangel*, 66.

an American observed: “There was a sad failure to realize that an expedition of this sort is bound to run into social and political problems that are quite as important, perhaps more so, than mere military practice.”⁷⁵ Such problems were not unique to the British forces, however; Ironside noted that “the Archangel officials were... completely out of touch with the people they were controlling.” As a corrective, Ironside records, “I urged them to get civilian officers out into the country at once, to get into touch with the people.”⁷⁶

Recruiting for the Russian forces of Chaikovsky’s Provisional Government was highly problematic. Regarding leaders, Ironside complained, “I searched everywhere for news of a local leader who might be able to lead a guerrilla movement against the Bolsheviks, but without success. It was curious how no Russian I met had any desire to lead any movement against the enemy.”⁷⁷ Recruiting the rank and file was no easier:

The Archangel bourgeoisie were unlikely to furnish recruits, while the Tsarist refugees were unwilling to serve in the Socialist government’s army. The Solombola dock workers were not willing to join what they regarded as the forces of reaction. Among the peasants of the occupied villages and hamlets further south... there was no desire to serve in the new army.⁷⁸

Even when sufficient numbers could be found, their commitment to the cause was weak, as Ironside himself admitted: “The efforts of the British training staff had organised and trained a Russian force of between 20,000 and 30,000 men of all ranks, sufficient in themselves to continue the defence but in my opinion it was doubtful whether they had

⁷⁵ Ralph Albertson, *Fighting without a War: An Account of Military Intervention in North Russia* (New York, 1920), 77. Cf. Rhodes, *Anglo-American*, 48.

⁷⁶ Ironside, *Archangel*, p. 71.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁷⁸ Kinvig, *Churchill’s Crusade*, 47.

sufficient moral to stand by themselves.”⁷⁹ Even during peak recruiting times, “discipline in the barracks was still doubtful.”⁸⁰ Russian officers were not seen joking with their men, as British officers did; in fact, the Russian officers feared their own men would shoot them.⁸¹

Mutiny was a constant problem. In December 1918, a Russian unit mutinied, only being brought to heel by a mortar team. In February 1919, a British unit refused to fight and the ringleaders were sentenced to death (though their sentences were commuted to life imprisonment); a short time later a French unit mutinied. In April 1919, there was another Russian mutiny, with seven Russian officers murdered and 300 men joining the Bolsheviks; in July 1919 a group of Russians mutinied and turned their positions over to the Bolsheviks.⁸² But the episode which most upset the British psyche was the mutiny of C Company, 1st Battalion (Dyer’s Btn.), Slavo-British Legion. Around 2:30 a.m. on 6 July 1919, the mutineers ‘murdered three of their own British officers and four Russian officers in cold blood in their billets and then intimidated a certain number of the rank and file to desert and join the Bolsheviks.’⁸³ An unknown writer described three of the ringleaders as “guilty of the blackest treachery conceivable.”⁸⁴ Although “all ranks from the Colonel downwards had great faith in the Battalion and in its loyalty,” the British may have had cause to suspect these men, since

⁷⁹ Ironside to General Lord Rawlinson, ADC General Commanding-in-Chief, North Russia, 1 November 1919, 1, TNA: PRO, WO 32/5705.

⁸⁰ Ironside, *Archangel*, 68.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 68-69, 112-14; 126-27; 161-62.

⁸³ T. Harrington to Maj. Gen. Neil Malcolm, 1 October 1920, TNA: PRO, WO 32/9545; cf. Lt. Col. Barrington C. Wells to Maj. Gen. Edmund Ironside, 8 July 1919, TNA: PRO, WO 32/9545. The battalion was initially commanded by Capt. Royce Coleman Dyer; even after his departure it was known as “Dyer’s Battalion.”

⁸⁴ Unidentified letter, 10 August 1919, TNA: PRO, WO 32/9545.

all eight of the alleged leaders of the mutiny were Bolshevik deserters.⁸⁵ In any case, “the Regiment was disbanded and turned into a labour unit forthwith in which capacity it... rendered useful service.”⁸⁶ But as late as 1921, the British government was trying to hunt down the mutineers, who had become international fugitives.⁸⁷ Mutinies are not unknown in conventional conflicts and had occurred on the Western Front. However, the mutiny of Dyer’s Battalion was different, involving no mere discontent with conditions, but desertion to the enemy. The men’s motive may well have been political, and their presence among the Allied forces may well have been a counterintelligence failure. Ironside complained that the episode highlighted how “one propagandist can make [the Russians] do anything.”⁸⁸ From his vantage point as Ironside’s aide-de-camp, Gubbins witnessed much of this, a rude introduction to the labyrinthine character of irregular warfare.

In Russia Gubbins also experienced the difficulties of working with allies who were not only foreign, but often unprofessional. In the aftermath of the mutiny of Dyer’s Battalion, Ironside complained that

the Russian officers did practically nothing to quell the mutiny. They did not use their revolvers, or give orders to the men who were running about not know that to do. Many simply ran away and deserted their posts. The mutiny was quelled by the British officers. I interviewed the Russian officers a few hours after the event, and found them in a state of panic, and quite useless for any military purpose.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Ironside to Secretary of State for War Winston Churchill, 17 July 1919, TNA: PRO WO 32/9545. Cf. Lt Col Barrington C. Wells to Ironside, 8 July 1919, TNA: PRO WO 32/9545.

⁸⁶ Notes on Administration since Arrival of Relief Brigades in May, 1919, 2, TNA: PRO, WO 32/5705.

⁸⁷ Napper Tandy to Maj. Gen. Neil Malcolm, British Military Mission Berlin, 1 January 1921, TNA: PRO, WO 32/9545.

⁸⁸ Ironside to Churchill, 17 July 1919, TNA: PRO, WO 32/9545.

⁸⁹ Ibid..

Frustration with the Russian indecision is easily heard in a report from the same period.

July. Concentration of Russian troops at MORJEGORSKAYA, and subsequent abandonment of plan by the Russians as soon as concentration was carried out. August. Lack of decision by the Russians as to whether they would stand or not after our withdrawal, causing a great many administrative difficulties: it was assumed they would not.... August 18th. Complete reversal of administrative policy owing to Russians deciding to stand.⁹⁰

Lionel Sadleir-Jackson, one of Ironside's subordinates, "wanted to have done [with the Russian troops] and to trust to his own men."⁹¹ Whether or not British criticism of the Russian forces may not be relevant; what is important here is that relations between the allies were far from easy, a situation Gubbins no doubt observed. But if he learned that foreign allies are not always reliable or agreeable, he also may have also come to appreciate their real potential. One British report noted,

Force Commanders have been unanimous in their appreciation of the energy, loyalty and adaptability of the Russian Engineer units, which have not only gained credit by the speed and thoroughness with which the men, many of them old soldiers, have performed their work, but also by the high stamp and powers of leadership displayed by many of the officers.⁹²

That irregular fighters often lack training and discipline is a reality with which Gubbins would have to come to grips by the time of his World War II service.

Ironside and Small Wars

On his arrival Ironside found that neither he nor the Russian officers with whom he worked knew much about North Russia or river or forest fighting. However, Ironside was happily able to turn to "the old and well-tried textbook, 'Small Wars,' which was

⁹⁰ Notes on Administration since Arrival of Relief Brigades in May, 1919, 1-2, TNA: PRO, WO 32/5705.

⁹¹ Ironside, *Archangel*, 161.

⁹² Royal Engineers, Allied Forces, Archangel, Report for Period: May 27th, 1919 to Evacuation [Sept. 27th], 2, TNA: PRO, WO 32/5705.

found an infallible guide.”⁹³ Col. Charles E. Callwell’s *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, was first published in 1896 and revised and republished in 1899 and again in 1906. Callwell’s experience was typical of officers serving in the Empire: having been educated at Haileybury, he fought in the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1880), the First Boer War (1881), the Greco-Turkish War (1897) and the Second Boer War (1899-1902) and also served in the intelligence branch of the War Office (1886-91).⁹⁴

Ironside would have found much in *Small Wars* that paralleled his experience in Russia. Battling the Russian winter as often as the Bolsheviks, Ironside would have appreciated Callwell’s comment that “it is perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of small wars... that they are in the main campaigns against nature.”⁹⁵ More specifically, Callwell noted that poor climate affects the health of troops, difficult communications slows their movements, and uncultivated land requires more complex supply systems.⁹⁶ Two of the most elaborate arrangements with which Ironside had to deal were the annual freeze and thaw. In summer time the Dvina River or the regional rail lines were the primary lines of communication. But in winter sleighs became the major mode of transit, often allowing very different routes from those determined by the river or railway. Further complicating matters were incomplete knowledge of the Russian weather. Callwell cautions that “the resources of the theatre of war in supplies,

⁹³ Ironside “Notes on Operations... to accompany despatch,” Appendix C, Report on Operations Covering Period 1st October 1918 to 26th May 1919, 11, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1164. In his memoirs Ironside does not explicitly mention Callwell’s book, though he notes that “The strategy and tactics employed [at Archangel] were those of ‘small wars,’ which have played such an important part in the history of the British Empire” (*Archangel*, 192). On the lack of interest in northern Russia, see also Ironside, *Archangel*, 23.

⁹⁴ Douglas Porch, introduction to C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles & Practice*, 3rd ed. (Lincoln, NE, 1996), v-vi.

⁹⁵ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 44.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

in water, and in transport may not be properly estimated.”⁹⁷ This is precisely what happened to Ironside in late 1918, when the British flotilla on the River Dvina, fearing the river would soon freeze over and trap the vessels, returned to Archangel, leaving the Allies’ forward positions without support. The move was at least a month premature, and the Bolsheviks took the opportunity to send their own flotilla down the still ice-free river, attacking and capturing the isolated outpost of Seltso.⁹⁸ The Bolshevik, Ironside concluded, “was better in his information... and caused us considerable annoyance and losses.”⁹⁹

In words that could describe the Archangel Expedition, Callwell observes that in campaigns against insurrections, “the regular army has to cope not with determinate but with indeterminate forces.... Such campaigns are most difficult to bring to a satisfactory conclusion, and are always most trying to the troops.”¹⁰⁰ One of the greatest burdens the Allied forces faced was settling on a clear objective. What were they trying to capture? Who were they supposed to fight? Callwell notes,

When there is no king to conquer, no capital to seize, no organized army to overthrow, and when there are no celebrated strongholds to capture, and no great centres of population to occupy, the objective is not so easy to select. It is then that the regular troops are forced to resort to cattle lifting and village burning and that the war assumes an aspect which may shock the humanitarian.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Ibid., 45.

⁹⁸ Rhodes, *Anglo-American*, 58.

⁹⁹ Ironside to War Office, 6 November 1918, TNA: PRO, WO 158/714/HMO6495, quoted in Rhodes, 58.

¹⁰⁰ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 27.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 40.

Though he does not write of cattle lifting or village burning in his memoirs, Ironside does observe that “a blow in the air would yield us nothing.”¹⁰² Advancing into empty space was virtually useless; Ironside had to wait for the enemy to coalesce before he could strike a meaningful blow. But victory on the battlefield was not the only matter at hand. Though Allied defeats were few, the withdrawal from Archangel on 27 September 1919 was followed by the collapse of the Provisional Government in February 1920.¹⁰³ Politics, in the British cabinet and across Russia, were as important as military might. Or, as Callwell put it, “The beating of the hostile armies is not necessarily the main object even if such armies exist.... Moral effect is often far more important than material success.”¹⁰⁴ It was, perhaps, the bitterest lesson.

There are parallels between Callwell’s *Small Wars* and Gubbins’s thinking which deserve consideration; Gubbins may have read Callwell while in Ironside’s service, or may have encountered it at another time in his career. Nevertheless, no evidence has yet been found that Gubbins read Callwell in Russia or elsewhere.

Judging Callwell’s opinion of guerrillas is often difficult. On the one hand, his writing regularly displays the racism and condescension common in 19th century imperialism; on the other hand, that irregular forces merited a handbook of over 500 pages suggests the power Callwell believed they could wield. Indeed, he warned that guerrillas are “very troublesome” to regular troops, since they avoid direct conflict and

¹⁰² Ironside, *Archangel*, 165. The phrase “a blow in the air” is repeated again on 173. One ought not, of course, assume that the war was civil just because Ironside excludes its darker elements. He makes no mention, for example, of the fact that the British utilized poison gas against their Bolshevik enemies. See Kinvig, *Churchill’s Crusade*, 244-47.

¹⁰³ John Silverlight, *The Victor’s Dilemma: Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War* (London, 1970), 256, 352.

¹⁰⁴ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 42.

favour “protracted, toilsome war.”¹⁰⁵ Elsewhere Callwell made clear that guerrilla warfare is the least favourable kind of campaign regular troops can face.¹⁰⁶ Gubbins, later considering the possibilities of fielding or supporting guerrillas, would have found this assessment affirming.

Callwell and Gubbins agree that guerrillas can possess an advantage by fighting on terrain they know well. In the *Partisan Leader’s Handbook*, Gubbins demands that a partisan leader must be intimately familiar with the area in which he operates.¹⁰⁷ When trying to break through an enemy sweep, Gubbins confidently asserts in the *Art of Guerilla Warfare* that “to men who know the country and can move freely in the dark there is little risk of failure.”¹⁰⁸ Callwell sums up this state of affairs quite succinctly: “The enemy [i.e., the guerrilla force] is generally operating in a theatre of war with which he is familiar.”¹⁰⁹ Moreover, this condition yields the guerrilla intelligence benefits, allowing him almost immediate knowledge of his enemy’s movements.¹¹⁰ This is particularly important because it deprives the counter-guerrilla force of the possibility of surprise.¹¹¹ Recognizing this, Gubbins writes that “the advantage of superior information is the guerillas’ greatest asset.”¹¹² He explains in another passage that local

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 32.

¹⁰⁶ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 99.

¹⁰⁷ Colin Gubbins, *The Partisan Leader’s Handbook*, Gubbins papers 6/2 (hereafter *PLH*), 2 § 3. The full text of the *PLH* may be found in Appendix B.

¹⁰⁸ Gubbins, *Art of Guerilla Warfare*, Gubbins papers 6/1 (hereafter *AGW*), 16 § 58. The full text of the *AGW* may be found in Appendix A.

¹⁰⁹ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 53.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 53-4.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 242.

¹¹² *AGW*, 12 § 43.

support allows guerrillas knowledge of enemy movements, while helping mask the guerrillas' own intentions.¹¹³

Callwell observed that collecting intelligence on guerrillas could be very difficult. "It may... be accepted as a general rule – and the reason why this is so need no demonstration – that the less organized the forces of the enemy are, the more difficult is it to form any estimate of their strength or their quality."¹¹⁴ But what to Callwell was a vice was a virtue to Gubbins: "The organization of guerillas must not be of a higher degree than circumstances will, with reasonable safety, and a view to efficiency, permit. The factor of 'safety' concerns possible enemy counteraction; the closer and higher the organization, the more easily can it be broken up and become ineffective."¹¹⁵

Callwell, discussing how guerrillas may be defeated, contends that "it is not a question of merely maintaining the initiative, but of compelling the enemy to see at every turn that he has lost it and to recognize that the forces of civilization are dominant and not to be denied."¹¹⁶ Elsewhere he writes that counter-guerrilla forces must appear in total control of the war's direction, never showing weakness, but instead causing the guerrillas to lose heart.¹¹⁷ It is precisely this kind of strategy that Gubbins knows his guerrillas must defeat, and therefore he emphasises moral and the human spirit. He notes in the *Art of Guerilla Warfare* that,

the immunity of partisans from enemy action is a most valuable moral factor; to inflict damage and death on the enemy and to escape scot-free has an irritant and depressing effect on the enemy's spirit, and a correspondingly encouraging effect

¹¹³ AGW, 4 § 12.

¹¹⁴ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 47.

¹¹⁵ AGW, 2 § 5b.

¹¹⁶ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 76-77.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 72-73.

on the morale, not only of the guerillas but of the local inhabitants, a matter of considerable moment; in this sphere of action nothing succeeds like success.¹¹⁸

Thus, guerrilla actions must have not only a military dimension, but also a moral one; remaining in the field proves that anti-guerrilla forces, however successful elsewhere, have not yet defeated the people of the occupied nation.¹¹⁹

Callwell admits that complex organization, extensive armament, and excessive equipment hinder regular troops.¹²⁰ In contrast, Gubbins encourages his guerrillas, observing that they should enjoy superior mobility due to local knowledge and lighter equipment.¹²¹ Callwell further admits that anti-guerrilla forces are limited by their supply lines. In contrast, “the adversaries with whom the regular troops... have to cope depend on no base and have no fixed system of supply. They are operating in their own country.... [The enemy] does not need communications as a channel for replenishing

¹¹⁸ AGW, 5 § 15. Years later, Gubbins commented, “Countries may be technically defeated, their Governments compelled by lack of means to accept the enemy’s presence, or to seek temporary exile in friendly territory: but *peoples* do not necessarily surrender, do not accept the technical situation, when they have the heart and will to continue the struggle for their homeland, though maybe momentarily stunned by the cataclysm that has struck them and left them in disarray” (Address to the Special Forces Club on the occasion of their Silver Jubilee dinner, 21 April 1965, 2, Gubbins papers 4/1/16, IWM).

¹¹⁹ This approach is echoed by the historian M. R. D. Foot, who himself served in the Special Air Service during World War II, in which capacity he rubbed shoulders with SOE; after the war he became SOE’s first – and arguably still greatest – historian. Ralph White, writing of Foot, explains: “A propos its contribution to the military and economic side of the Allied war effort, the scholar acknowledges the difficulties in making final or unequivocal judgments, and comes to his measured conclusions as to its real but limited role – with the important proviso that more could have been made of it. A propos the political, psychological and moral dimension, his conclusions are more confident and emphatic. At their core is the conviction that resistance ‘gave back to people in the occupied countries the self-respect that they lost in the moment of occupation’.... The greatest value of resistance was, therefore, moral and exemplary” (Ralph White, “Teaching the Free Man How to Praise: Michael Foot on SOE and Resistance in Europe,” in *War, Resistance and Intelligence: Essays in Honour of M. R. D. Foot*, ed. K. G. Robertson [Barnsley, UK, 1999], 113; internal quotation from M. R. D. Foot, *Resistance: An Analysis of European Resistance to Nazism, 1940-1945* [London, 1976], 319).

¹²⁰ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 85.

¹²¹ AGW, 6 § 16d.

food or warlike stores.”¹²² Gubbins insists that guerrillas recognize and protect this strength. He encourages them to avoid

wild [areas], with little cultivation or pasture land for carrying stock or feeding the guerillas’ animals, [where] supplies would have to be brought in specially. At once the guerillas would begin to be dependent on communications, a situation cramping their mobility and exactly opposed to the characteristic which constitutes their chief military value.¹²³

Freedom from a supply tail is one of the defining characteristics of a guerrilla. The absence of such freedom is one of the weaknesses of regular forces which guerrillas can exploit. Callwell observes that long lines of communication are exposed to guerrilla attacks, while “their protection absorbs a large proportion of the forces in the theatre of war.”¹²⁴ Gubbins too recognized that extended communications create opportunities to “strike at many points... in order to harass the enemy and keep him always on the alert.”¹²⁵ Indeed, Gubbins admonished guerrillas to strike “where [the enemy] least expects it... where he is most vulnerable.”¹²⁶ Like Callwell, Gubbins perceived such attacks compelled the enemy to spread thin his forces to guard a variety of potential targets.¹²⁷ Even if such a tactic, alone, cannot win a war, it can change the number of regular troops available for offensive operations.

The battlefield superiority of regular troops makes avoiding pitched battles crucial for guerrillas. “On the battlefield the advantage passes over to the regular army,” notes Callwell. “Superior armament, the force of discipline, a definite and

¹²² Callwell, *Small Wars*, 86.

¹²³ *AGW*, 8 § 25.

¹²⁴ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 115.

¹²⁵ “Minor Tactics” (G.1), in Denis Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus: Lessons in Ungentlemanly Warfare, World War II* (Kew, UK, 2004), 248.

¹²⁶ *AGW*, 3 § 8.

¹²⁷ *AGW*, 1 § 1; cf. *PLH*, 2 § 2, 12 § 14.

acknowledged chain of responsibility, esprit de corps, the moral force of civilization, all these work together to give the trained and organized army an incontestable advantage from the point of view of tactics.”¹²⁸ Thus, regulars actively seek battle against guerrillas.¹²⁹ Gubbins, recognizing this reality, insisted that partisans avoid prolonged battles.¹³⁰ Lest they be crushed in the kind of battle Callwell hoped for, Gubbins advised partisans to “break off the action when it becomes too risky to continue.”¹³¹

Callwell devotes a number of pages to the discussion of flying columns, which he sees as a key part of a counter-guerrilla strategy.¹³² If Gubbins read Callwell, he may have taken this to heart, assuming as he does in the *Art of Guerilla Warfare* that flying columns will be part of any anti-guerrilla action.¹³³ But like most of the matters discussed in *Small War*, flying columns were a regular feature of the Irish Revolution, in which Gubbins fought shortly after Russia. He may have been influenced by both Callwell and his own experiences, but if one had to choose between them, it seems likely that his lived experience had a greater effect than any reading of *Small Wars*, whose popularity was beginning to wane by 1919.

Nevertheless, it is somewhat curious that this is the only occasion on which Callwell’s *Small Wars* intersects with Gubbins’s story. As historian Simon Anglim explains, “this work seems to have influenced not only at least two generations of colonial soldiers... but also approved Army ‘doctrine’: it formed part of the curriculum

¹²⁸ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 90.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹³⁰ *AGW*, 5 § 15; *PLH*, 2 § 2f.

¹³¹ *AGW*, 6 § 16b.

¹³² Callwell, *Small Wars*, 135-43.

¹³³ *AGW*, 15 § 55-56.

of the Army Staff Colleges and the RAF Staff College at Andover, and the chapter on ‘Warfare in Undeveloped and Semi-Civilised Countries’ in the 1929 edition of *FSR* [*Field Service Regulations*], appears to be an unattributed summary of Chapters VI-VIII of the 1906 edition of Callwell.¹³⁴ Put simply, *Small Wars* was almost omnipresent. If Gubbins did not encounter it while in Ironside’s service, one would expect him to have seen it in his time in Ireland, at Staff College, with GS(R), or elsewhere. But Gubbins never mentions *Small War*, nor do any of the leading historians of SOE. The most likely explanation for this lacuna is three-fold. In the first place, as Callwell himself admits, “the subject [is] discussed merely from the point of view of the regular troops,” not from that of the partisans.¹³⁵ This alone, however, could be overcome with a small dose of imagination. Indeed, some passages, such as those on ambushes, would seem to be directly useful to guerrillas.¹³⁶ On closer examination, however, these turn out to be inappropriate for use by Gubbins’s prospective partisans. The ambushing forces are sometimes fairly large in size and usually include both cavalry and infantry. While the Boers on the veldt (see Chapter 3) could field horsemen, most 20th century guerrillas – particularly those Gubbins imagined in Europe – would not include cavalry forces.

But the third and deepest problem with *Small Wars* is that it fails to engage with the inner workings of guerrilla movements. It treats the symptoms but not the disease itself. As Douglas Porch explains, “a primary weakness of *Small Wars*... is its over-

¹³⁴ Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army*, 31. Cf. T. R. Moreman, “‘Small Wars’ and Imperial Policing: The British Army and the Theory and Practice of Colonial Warfare in the British Empire, 1919-1939,” in *Military Power: Land Warfare in Theory and Practice*, ed. Brian Holden Reid (London, 1997), 110.

¹³⁵ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 23.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 230-34, 248-55.

reliance on operational solutions to political problems.”¹³⁷ Rightly or wrongly, the star of *Small Wars* began to wane as T. E. Lawrence’s began to rise; whereas Callwell had argued that guerrillas and rebels could be put down, Lawrence seemed to have proved their success.¹³⁸

Gubbins relinquished his position with General Ironside on 6 October 1919 and left Russia having obtained a passing knowledge of Russian, the Order of St. Stanislaus (3rd class), “a deep hatred of Communism and all it stood for,” and an introduction to less-than-conventional warfare fought by international allies.¹³⁹

Ireland

Gubbins’s Experience

After leaving Russia, Gubbins reported for duty in Ireland in late 1919. It was, in historian David Fitzpatrick’s words, a war involving “flying columns, raids, ambushes, slaughter of ‘informers,’ cutting of communications, destruction of property, looting (‘requisitioning’), and bullying of opponents.”¹⁴⁰ These elements may be “familiar” in retrospect, but at the time they were quite disorienting to the British Army. Gubbins complained that he was “shot at from behind hedges by men in trilbys and mackintoshes

¹³⁷ Porch, introduction to Callwell, *Small Wars*, xv.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, xvi. As it turned out, guerrillas in Lawrence’s day and after had a weapon those facing Callwell often did not: unity. “In the pre-1914 era, native resistance usually failed because it lacked a common ideology or sense of self-interest... [Post-1914,] nationalism, Marxism or Islam supplied ideologies that rationalized and focused discontent” (xvi).

¹³⁹ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 25; Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 28 October 1919, 13229; Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers, 3/1/6. His Russian language skills likely came about from dealing directly with Russians. General Ironside had a Russian groom named Piskoff and a Russian driver, Kostia. See Ironside, *Archangel*, 61, 67.

¹⁴⁰ David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands, 1912-1939* (Oxford, 1998), 132-33.

and not allowed to shoot back!”¹⁴¹ But rather than despairing at the disarray into which this well-organized guerrilla resistance threw the British, he set about learning about irregular warfare and its handmaiden, intelligence.¹⁴²

Peter Wilkinson and Joan Bright Astley’s *Gubbins and SOE* is regarded as the most complete and authoritative account of Gubbins’s life, though even they acknowledge that “this book has no academic pretensions” and relies heavily on “personal knowledge.”¹⁴³ In it they comment that “there is no open page relating to Gubbins’ sojourn in Ireland.”¹⁴⁴ While there is less readily available information about this period of his life than other periods, a good deal more can be said than the two pages Wilkinson and Astley devote to Gubbins’s service in Ireland. Indeed, it is essential to say more if we are to properly understand the context in which Gubbins’s doctrine of irregular warfare germinated.

Gubbins was initially posted to 47th Battery, 41st Brigade at Kildare, one of the artillery elements of the 5th Division, the unit responsible for much of central and western Ireland.¹⁴⁵ He was in Kildare for two years before assuming temporary duties as Brigade Major at Division Headquarters at the Curragh in November 1921. He briefly rejoined 47th Battery from January until March 1922, but returned to Division Headquarters as temporary Brigade Major, remaining in this position even as

¹⁴¹ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 26.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 26-27.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, Acknowledgements (no page number).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁴⁵ Sources disagree on the exact date of his arrival in Ireland. One letter states that he joined 47th Battery on 2 December 1919. See Vera Long to Eric Mockler-Ferryman, 9 January 1978, Gubbins papers 12/2, IWM. However, his Army Form B 193A states that he joined 47th Battery in November. See Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM.

Headquarters moved to Dublin at the end of April 1922.¹⁴⁶ On 30 September 1922 Headquarters Royal Artillery, Dublin District, was dissolved and its last remaining personnel withdrawn to Britain.¹⁴⁷

At first glance one might wonder how much of the messy guerrilla war an artilleryman actually saw. Though artillery hardly played the role in Ireland that it had on the Western Front, it would be misleading to think of Gubbins's service as strictly artillery, for it was much more diverse than that. Gubbins sent artillerymen to act as guards of both military supplies and soldiers' families at such locations as the Newbridge Train Station, the Dublin shell factory and the magazine fort in Phoenix Park.¹⁴⁸ Prior to January 1922, 30th and 36th Brigades – the bulk of 5th Division's artillery – were organized as Royal Artillery Mounted Rifles or Composite Batteries combining infantry and artillery, a status to which they reverted in April 1922.¹⁴⁹ In a similar manner, the 1st Brigade Royal Horse Artillery was reorganized into Royal Artillery Mounted Rifles.¹⁵⁰ Plans were drawn up to convert all of 5th Division's dismounted artillery units to infantry, "should urgent evacuation be ordered" in the

¹⁴⁶ War Diary, Headquarters, Royal Artillery, 5th Division (hereafter War Diary, RA5D), April 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁴⁷ War Diary, Headquarters, Royal Artillery, Dublin District (hereafter War Diary, RADD), September 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A. On 1 October 1922 Gubbins relinquished his position as temporary Brigade Major. See *London Gazette*, 6 October 1922, 7044.

¹⁴⁸ Gubbins to General Staff 5th Division, 9 April 1922 and Gubbins, order Z/298, 17 May 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁴⁹ War Diaries, RA5D, January and April 1922; and Gubbins, order CA/301/21, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁵⁰ 5th Division Letter 13990-G, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

spring of 1922.¹⁵¹ By June 1922 one artillery unit, 33rd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, was operating armed cars and foot patrols, but no artillery.¹⁵²

William Cassidy claims Gubbins also served as an intelligence officer, and Wilkinson and Astley confirm that he “had all the instincts of a good ‘I’ officer” who “set out to learn all he could about... intelligence,” though they do not explicitly state that he served as such, nor has Cassidy’s claim been confirmed elsewhere.¹⁵³ Indeed, Peter Hart observes that many regiments, unwilling to part with good officers, assigned the expendable to intelligence duties.¹⁵⁴ Thus, the quality of Gubbins’s “instincts” may not have been terribly relevant. Nevertheless, even if Gubbins was never an intelligence officer *per se*, in his role as Brigade Major he certainly saw plenty of intelligence.

The guerrilla war in Ireland was a complex one. In early 1920 the army had the rebels on the run, utilizing police information, captured documents and Irish informers. However, a hunger strike by captured Irish Republican Army (IRA) leaders caused the British administration at Dublin Castle to capitulate and release them. Such releases of the enemy for political reasons were a recurring feature of the conflict, happening almost annually from 1916 to 1920.¹⁵⁵ Gubbins notes in the 5th Division artillery’s war diary

¹⁵¹ Gubbins, orders of 16 April 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A. On 29 April Gubbins issued orders transferring all of the artillery from 5th Division to the Dublin District; in these orders, only about half of the artillery was converted to infantry. See Gubbins, orders CA/385/34, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁵² Gubbins, orders Z/298/1, Table A, 24 June 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁵³ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 26-27; Cassidy, introduction to Gubbins, *Art of Guerrilla Warfare*, v.

¹⁵⁴ Peter Hart, *British Intelligence in Ireland, 1920-1921: The Final Reports* (Cork, 2002), 12-3. Kenneth Strong recalled that “my first Intelligence appointment was accidental.... Largely because I had recently attended a seemingly irrelevant education course, I found myself appointed Detachment Intelligence Officer.” Kenneth Strong, *Intelligence at the Top: The Recollections of an Intelligence Officer* (London, 1968), 1.

¹⁵⁵ Hart, *British Intelligence*, 10-11; Peter Hart, *The IRA and Its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923* (Oxford, 1998), 74-75.

that “all internees in Ireland were released” on 8 December 1921, just two days after the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed.¹⁵⁶ Gubbins’s reaction to this move is not recorded, but whatever it may have been, this event marked an intersection of political and military policy, the likes of which had not occurred on the Western Front, but Gubbins would come to know well by the time of the Second World War.

Although much of Gubbins’s time as Brigade Major came after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921, and all of it after the suspension of hostilities between Crown forces and the Irish rebels on 11 July 1921, this state of truce should not be confused with peace. In January 1921 intelligence was received that “the IRB [Irish Republican Brotherhood] intended to attack troops while evacuation was proceeding,” and in February Gubbins received orders “warning all officers to be prepared to defend themselves against sudden attacks.”¹⁵⁷ The very next day one Lt. J. H. Wogan Browne, Royal Field Artillery, was killed at 11:20am, while returning to his barracks in Kildare, Gubbins’s old post. In a separate incident three more soldiers were wounded in Kildare that evening. Two days later the evacuation of British troops from 5th Division was temporarily suspended, not to be resumed until 15 days later.¹⁵⁸ In May Gubbins wrote about “uncertainty as to the nature and duration of operations,” and June saw another attack on his artillerymen, as well as reports of further threats.¹⁵⁹ That same month he issued contingency plans for the defence of Phoenix Park, Dublin in the event of major

¹⁵⁶ War Diary, RA5D, December 1921, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A. This document is incorrectly marked “December 1922” on the top, but the entries below begin with “5.12.21” and make clear that Headquarters is located at the Curragh, which was true in December 1921; by December 1922 British forces had left Ireland.

¹⁵⁷ War Diaries, RA5D, January and February 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁵⁸ War Diary, RA5D, February 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁵⁹ Gubbins, orders 3542, 20 May 1922; War Diary, RADD, June 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

trouble: “All ranks must be prepared against a sudden outbreak of hostilities without warning.” That these plans included measures for aerial re-supply by the RAF indicates how dangerous Gubbins thought the situation.¹⁶⁰ Into August the War Office was still holding units in Britain in readiness, should the situation in Ireland deteriorate.¹⁶¹ The operations Gubbins experienced remained dangerous and complicated all the way to the end. The *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland* describes the conflict as “a curious mixture of peace and war.”¹⁶²

In early 1922 Gubbins began dealing with the security implications of the fall-out between the pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty factions of the IRA. In March he was warned that “attempts would probably be made by mutineers [i.e. anti-Treaty forces] to steal or buy arms”; before the end of the month the “mutinous IRA” were disrupting traffic on the Naas-Dublin road, had stolen the private car of the General Officer Commanding, 5th Division, and opened fire on a group of artillery officers.¹⁶³ By April Gubbins had reports that “the mutinous IRA intended to attack British soldiers” in the near future.¹⁶⁴ On 22 June Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson was assassinated and troops in Ireland confined to their barracks as a result.¹⁶⁵

Meanwhile, the anti-Treatyite Rory O’Connor’s occupation of the Four Courts in Dublin was undermining the Free State government, and Gubbins found himself drawn

¹⁶⁰ Divisional Artillery Operation Order No. 1, 3 June 1922, TNA: PRO WO 35/93A. See especially Appendix VI, “Co-operation with Royal Air Force.”

¹⁶¹ War Diary, RA5D, August 1922, TNA: PRO WO 35/93A.

¹⁶² *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland*, Vol. IV: Record of the 5th and 6th Divisions and Dublin District, Part I: 5th Division, Chapter III: Introduction of martial law in the South, June 1920-December 1920, 35. TNA: PRO WO 141/93.

¹⁶³ War Diary, RA5D, March 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁶⁴ War Diary, RA5D, April 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁶⁵ War Diary, RA5D, June 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

into the matter. On 27 June Gubbins noted that at 11:59am “two 18-pdrs of 17th Battery RFA and 20 rounds of ammunition [were] handed over to the Provisional Government.” The following day at 4:00am “P.G. Troops commenced the attack on the Four Courts. Two more 18 pdrs of 17th Bty RFA & 20 rounds of ammunition handed over to the Provisional Government.”¹⁶⁶ Gubbins watched from just across the River Liffey.¹⁶⁷ On 29 June the withdrawal of artillery to Britain was halted, in response to the situation, though on the following day O’Connor gave himself up unconditionally.¹⁶⁸ On 1 July 1922 Collinstown Camp was attacked by “irregulars,” likely anti-Treaty forces trying to draw Britain back into the conflict as a means of uniting republican factions.¹⁶⁹ On 22 August, less than two months after his victory at the Four Courts, Michael Collins was killed in an ambush by anti-Treaty forces. On 25 August “6 Horses of 17th Bty RFA were lent to PG for funeral of Michael Collins,” and returned on 4 September.¹⁷⁰ “I did not like... having to provide a gun carriage and six black horses for the funeral,” noted Gubbins.¹⁷¹

As Peter Wilkinson, his SOE colleague and biographer, later explained, Gubbins “experienced at first hand the disadvantage felt by regular troops when attacked by well

¹⁶⁶ War Diary, RA5D, June 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁶⁷ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 27.

¹⁶⁸ War Diary, RA5D, June 1922, TNA: PRO WO 35/93A.

¹⁶⁹ War Diary, RADD, July 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A. Although the War Diaries are not explicit on this point, as early as December 1921 Gubbins mentions “the possibility of Extremists causing a rupture by attacking British Troops.” At least some of the anti-Treatyites may have hoped that drawing the British back into the conflict would unit the rival factions of the IRA. See Francis Costello, *The Irish Revolution and its Aftermath, 1916-1923* (Dublin, 2003), 293, 298.

¹⁷⁰ War Diaries, RADD, August and September 1922, TNA: PRO, WO 35/93A.

¹⁷¹ Quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 27. They cite the Gubbins papers, though this author could not locate it among the papers at the Imperial War Museum.

organised terrorists and guerrillas.”¹⁷² His service was certainly not peaceful, nor was it limited strictly to irrelevant artillery duties; he made use of intelligence reports, navigated political issues such as prisoner releases and the split in the IRA, and coordinated with law enforcement, such as the Royal Irish Constabulary. Finally, it is worth noting that the removal of British forces from Ireland, in which Gubbins played a major role, was an operation of considerable logistical difficulty. His ability to carry out both unconventional and conventional functions appeared throughout his life, and may account for his general success in the field as well as in the meeting room.¹⁷³

The Doctrinal Significance of Ireland

Of all the conflicts which inspired Gubbins’s thinking on unconventional warfare, Ireland surely comes first, for several reasons. Firstly, the parallels between the Irish conflict generally and Gubbins’s writings are many. A few examples illustrate the point. In Ireland, British intelligence officers relied on informers and captured documents.¹⁷⁴ Gubbins later warned that letters and other documents seized from guerrillas pose one of the gravest threats to an insurgent cause.¹⁷⁵ The significance of informers is clear as well: “The most stringent and ruthless measures must at all times be

¹⁷² Peter Wilkinson, lecture titled “Gubbins: A Resistance Leader,” given at Cambridge on 28 April 1990, Gubbins papers 4/1/50, 2, IWM.

¹⁷³ “He was not one of those who yearned to follow in the footsteps of Colonel T.E. Lawrence” (Wilkinson, “Gubbins: A Resistance Leader,” Gubbins papers 4/1/50, 1, IWM).

¹⁷⁴ Hart, *British Intelligence*, 11, 13.

¹⁷⁵ AGW, 11 § 38.

used against informers; immediately on proof of guilt they must be killed, and, if possible, a note pinned on the body stating that the man was an informer.”¹⁷⁶

When the IRA was hit hard by the British counter-offensive that followed Bloody Sunday, historian Peter Hart explains, “activists still at large went on the run..., arms were moved and better hidden, [and] larger and more vulnerable flying columns were broken up.”¹⁷⁷ Gubbins’s comments to partisans in 1939 could have been descriptions of Ireland: “Searches, raids... curfew, passport and other regulations” will eventually force guerrillas to abandon their homes and “go on the run,” that is “live as a band in some suitable areas where the nature of the country enables them to be relatively secure.”¹⁷⁸ Likewise, he recommended that guerrilla parties be kept small, to improve mobility and secrecy, and that supply of weapons be given very careful consideration.¹⁷⁹ These and other parallels between Gubbins’s GS(R) writings and the Irish war may be coincidence, reflections of universal guerrilla principles discerned elsewhere, though such an explanation strains Occam’s Razor.

Secondly, the existence of the 5th Division Guerrilla Warfare Class provides a concrete instance of the collection and dissemination of irregular warfare knowledge. Conceived in October 1920, the three-day course was designed “to enable [officers and

¹⁷⁶ *PLH*, 11 § 12. Two months before Gubbins penned these words, a report by Section D (see Chapter III) included a passage on organization of Romanian guerrillas. “Where possible they would endeavour to execute members of the Gestapo with as much show as possible, in order to produce in the minds of the local inhabitants that the guerillas were more to be feared than the occupying secret police. In this way, (a technique which was learnt from the Irish in 1920) the business of collection of intelligence would become more and more difficult for the enemy.” See Untitled, 20 March 1939, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256.

¹⁷⁷ Hart, *British Intelligence*, 12.

¹⁷⁸ *AGW*, 15 § 54. Confusingly, the Irish Republican Army used the term “flying column” to refer to bands out in the wilds trying to avoid capture, rather than for the mobile columns hunting them. Gubbins notes that the size of parties on the run will vary on the terrain, more rugged terrain able to conceal larger parties. See *PLH*, 8 § 10.

¹⁷⁹ *PLH*, 3 § 3; *AGW*, 10 § 33.

NCOs] to deal with the peculiar type of guerrilla warfare in which they were becoming more and more engaged.”¹⁸⁰ Though designed to teach *counter*-guerrilla tactics, the course included “practical tactical exercises carried out *by the class itself* in ambushes on lorry parties and cyclist patrols.”¹⁸¹ This is an important psychological shift, moving from the mind-set of a status-quo imperial power to that of a revisionist insurgent. If Gubbins attended the course, this may have been his first introduction to the idea of playing the role of the guerrilla, rather than the occupier. Even if he did not personally attend, the lessons from these classes were printed and distributed to every unit of the 5th Division, as well as to the Royal Irish Constabulary, the Auxiliaries, and to other divisions as well.¹⁸² In the initial ten iterations of the course, 280 officers and NCOs were trained, and when reinforcements began arriving in Ireland in January 1921, all officers and NCOs of arriving battalions underwent the course. Thus, the question of his attendance is moot: if Gubbins himself never attended the 5th Division Guerrilla Warfare Class, he most probably would have read its lessons and frequently interacted – particularly when serving as brigade major at the Curragh – with men who had attended.

The parallels between Gubbins’s experiences in Ireland and his later writings can be discerned. An IRA memorandum from September 1920, captured and quoted in the *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland*, argues that “our troops must not be drawn into an operation or into a general engagement with large bodies of military.” The *Record* goes

¹⁸⁰ *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland*, Vol. IV: Record of the 5th and 6th Divisions and Dublin District, Part I: 5th Division, Chapter VI: Training, sport and education, 68, TNA: PRO, WO 141/93.

¹⁸¹ *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland*, Vol. IV: Record of the 5th and 6th Divisions and Dublin District, Part I: 5th Division, Chapter VI: Training, sport and education, 68, TNA: PRO WO 141/93. Emphasis added.

¹⁸² *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland*, Vol. IV: Record of the 5th and 6th Divisions and Dublin District, Part I: 5th Division, Chapter VI: Training, sport and education, 69, TNA: PRO WO 141/93.

on to quote a similar piece of advice from the Commandant Mid-Clare Brigade, IRA, from February 1921: “A little action wisely and well done must be our motto at present.”¹⁸³ Likewise, the *Notes on Guerrilla Warfare in Ireland*, the printed lessons learned from the Guerrilla Warfare Class, dismissively explain that “the rebels [have] small stomach for fighting at close quarters or suffering heavy casualties.”¹⁸⁴ Gubbins writings echo the tactics advocated by the IRA. In the *Art of Guerilla Warfare* Gubbins admonished partisans to “avoid prolonged engagements” or “being pinned down,” instead “break[ing] off the action when it becomes too risky to continue.”¹⁸⁵ The *Partisan Leader’s Handbook* expresses the same sentiments, arguing that partisans should not fight pitched battles but disengage when risks become too great.¹⁸⁶

The *Notes on Guerrilla Warfare in Ireland* insist that no party should ever leave barracks without a precise plan, and that officers and NCOs should practice giving orders before conducting an operation.¹⁸⁷ This emphasis on sound preparation, always important in the chaos of war, but particularly so in the confusions of irregular warfare,

¹⁸³ *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland*, Vol. IV: Record of the 5th and 6th Divisions and Dublin District, Part I: 5th Division, Chapter IV: January 1921 to date of “The Suspension of Activities,” 40, TNA: PRO, WO 141/93. The *Record of the Rebellion in Ireland* has a curious history; William Sheehan claims it was never published or even completed, while Peter Hart contends that it was printed, but with an unknown run. The memoranda and letters in the National Archives suggest that the project was scaled back while in progress, but in April 1923 the chief of the Imperial General Staff made clear that “Vols. I & II have already been printed and a very limited issue has been made.” Discussion was underway regarding the printing of a final volume, containing unit histories; the chief recommended that it be printed “as a secret document.” See War Office, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 18 April 1923, TNA: PRO WO 141/93; Hart, *British Intelligence*, 16; William Sheehan, *Hearts & Mines: The British 5th Division, Ireland, 1920-1922* (Cork, 2009), xvi. Sheehan and Hart agree that officers in Ireland collaborated on the project. It is unlikely, though not impossible, that Gubbins was so involved. More probable is that these and similar pieces of intelligence crossed his desk while in Ireland.

¹⁸⁴ *Notes*, § 3.

¹⁸⁵ *AGW*, 5 § 15, 6 § 16g, 6 § 16b.

¹⁸⁶ *PLH*, 2 § 2f, 1 § 2b. Cf. *AGW*, 5 § 15, 6 § 16f; *PLH*, 1 § 2b; *PLH*, (Appendix I: Road ambush) § 2d.

¹⁸⁷ War Office, *Notes on Guerrilla Warfare in Ireland* (hereafter *Notes*), § 1, TNA: PRO WO 35/182A.

is also found in Gubbins's writings, such as the *Partisan Leader's Handbook's* comment that "every operation must be planned with the greatest care."¹⁸⁸

The *Notes* also observe that "the leakage of information in Ireland is very great, and it may be generally accepted that no inhabitant or civilian employee is to be trusted."¹⁸⁹ Nearly three decades later, Gubbins the guerrilla organizer advocated utilizing the local population as the best source of information, since occupying troops are must necessarily brush elbows with the inhabitants, to some extent.¹⁹⁰ Locals, Gubbins says, may passively obtain information by keeping an open ear, or more actively by questioning soldiers and "purloining letters."¹⁹¹ He lists people who might make suitable agents: waitresses, domestic servants, priests, doctors, barbers, telephone and telegraph operators, postmen, "camp followers," etc.¹⁹² Such people, he insists, must be trained to know what sort of information will be valuable and to keep an eye out for traitors in their own midst.¹⁹³

These same *Notes* observe that

the tactics employed by the rebels are those of ambush. These ambushes are dependent on secrecy, which is easily obtainable owing to the fact that they are dressed as civilians and move amongst a population of sympathizers similarly

¹⁸⁸ *PLH*, 1 § 2c. Cf. *AGW*, 6 § 16b.

¹⁸⁹ *Notes*, § 2.

¹⁹⁰ *AGW*, 11 § 37.

¹⁹¹ *AGW*, 11 § 37

¹⁹² *AGW*, 11 § 37; *PLH*, 10 § 11, 37 (Appendix VII: Guerilla Information Service) § 1. Gubbins never mentions prostitutes; either he considered them ineffective or his sense of decorum caused him to include them among "camp followers," rather than giving them their own category. However, Gubbins does note that "Domestic servants and café attendants are particularly valuable agents; they must be encouraged to gain the confidence of the enemy soldiers, and be on easy and intimate terms with them. Suitable agents of this type should be introduced into houses where enemy officers are billeted, etc. It is a natural weakness of soldiers in a hostile country to react favourably to acts of courtesy and kindness from women; such men will frequently drop unsuspecting hints that they are shortly going on patrol, etc." (*PLH*, 37 [Appendix VII] § 2.)

¹⁹³ *PLH*, 10 § 11.

attired. These ambushes are dependent for their success on surprise. . . .
Individuals cutting peat in a bog may not be as harmless as they appear.¹⁹⁴

Here we see three items, all of which can be found in Gubbins's writings: the centrality of the ambush, the importance of secrecy and surprise, and the role of the local population. Ambushing appears in both the *AGW* and *PLH*, the latter of which includes an appendix each on road and rail ambushes.¹⁹⁵ With regard to secrecy and surprise, Gubbins explains that surprise has two components, "finding out the enemy's plans and concealing your own intentions and movements,"¹⁹⁶ while elsewhere he insists: "Surprise is the most important thing in everything you undertake."¹⁹⁷ The local population helps ensure such secrecy. Thus, partisans should work hard not to aggravate the people, but instead foster their hatred of the enemy and their sense of resistance.¹⁹⁸ The population's cooperation may be active – "providing information for the guerrillas" – or passive – "withholding it from the enemy."¹⁹⁹

The countermeasures Gubbins expects guerrillas to encounter are generally found in the *Notes* as well: raids, lorry patrols, armoured cars, etc.²⁰⁰ Whether Gubbins personally attended the Guerrilla Warfare Class or simply read about it, many of his recommendations to guerrillas correspond to its prescriptions. The *Notes* detail nine different places to check a man for concealed documents.²⁰¹ Gubbins observes that "it has been proved over and over again in guerilla warfare that it is the capture of guerilla

¹⁹⁴ *Notes*, § 3.

¹⁹⁵ See *PLH*, 13-20 (Appendix I: Road Ambush) and 20-27 (Appendix II: Rail Ambush).

¹⁹⁶ *AGW*, 5 § 16a.

¹⁹⁷ *PLH*, 1 § 2a.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4 § 6.

¹⁹⁹ *AGW*, 4 § 12. Cf. *PLH*, 4 § 6.

²⁰⁰ *Notes*, § 4-11. Cf. *AGW*, 14-16 § 53-60; *PLH*, 11-12 § 13.

²⁰¹ *Notes*, § 11.i.a-i.

documents that has helped the enemy the most in his counter-measures,” while also noting that “lack of communications” should be seen by guerrillas as an “inherent advantage.”²⁰² He advised that messages should be verbal whenever possible, and that the level of documentation should not exceed guerrillas’ ability to ensure its security.²⁰³ Nevertheless, if written messages must be used, Gubbins observes that “it is often better to use women and children who are less suspect and probably could enjoy greater immunity from search.”²⁰⁴

The *Notes* insist that counter-guerrilla forces fighting off an ambush should always attack the enemy’s flank and rear.²⁰⁵ Gubbins counters by insisting that sentries be posted to prevent guerrillas waiting in ambush from becoming the ambushed.²⁰⁶ (“Women and children, who are less likely to be suspected,” may be utilized in this role.²⁰⁷) The *Notes* observe that most rebels, being poorly trained, are likely to break if their line of retreat is threatened; Gubbins answers that a “*secure* line of retreat,” which “will give all the men a safe and sure way of escape,” is essential for any ambush position.²⁰⁸ The *Notes* point out that successful searches, raids and drives all require surprise; in response, Gubbins advises guerrillas that fostering the local population as

²⁰² *PLH*, 10 § 11; *AGW*, 3 § 6.

²⁰³ *AGW*, 12 § 38. Likewise, Gubbins insists that enemy documents found during ambushes should always be taken and examined. See *PLH*, 16 (Appendix I: Road ambush) § 4.

²⁰⁴ *AGW*, 13 § 45. Cf. *PLH*, p. 37 (Appendix VII: Guerilla information service) § 4.

²⁰⁵ *Notes*, § 12.

²⁰⁶ *PLH*, 5 § 7; 15 (Appendix I: Road Ambush) § 4b.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Notes*, § 12; *AGW*, 6 § 16c; *PLH*, 13 (Appendix I: Road ambush) § 2a. Emphasis added. The same point is stressed again in *AGW*, 5 § 15; *PLH*, 1 § 2c; and *PLH*, 7 § 9.

intelligence gatherers “will ensure that the guerillas are kept au fait with the enemy’s movements and intentions, whereas their own are hidden from him.”²⁰⁹

Finally, we can say with confidence that Ireland influenced Gubbins’s thinking because he and so many of his colleagues said just that. In a memo describing the requirements for the *Art and Handbook*, Gubbins’s supervisor at GS(R) explains that “there is little doubt that the Irish made guerrilla warfare into a science, which has been followed since.... *It is proposed to base this present study on such information as can be obtained of Irish principles and their application by other revolutionaries* subsequently.”²¹⁰ Likewise, when describing his writings decades later, Gubbins commented that “we had only our own experience to go upon,... in Ireland 1919-1922 and... in North Russia at the end of the First World War.”²¹¹ These were not romanticized accounts of SOE’s origins, but honest assessments which are borne out by a careful consideration of the strategy and tactics in question.

Eunan O’Halpin, one of the few authors to comment on the IRA-SOE connection at any length, contends that the influence was minimal. He acknowledges that Gubbins and his colleagues studied the IRA, but highlights the fact that other conflicts – including the Boer War, the Russian Revolution, and the Arab Revolt in Palestine (1936-1939) – were also studied. Moreover, he contends that “the Chinese and Spanish wars provided

²⁰⁹ *AGW*, 4 § 12. Cf. Notes § 12. As the Troubles in Ireland were winding to a close, the War Office had instructed its various unit commanders to compile detailed reports of their time in Ireland, reports which would then become the raw material for a brief work on partisan warfare. Thomas Mockaitis writes that ‘such a worthwhile manual seems never to have been written.’ It is possible, however, that GS(R) had access to these reports and that the manual was indeed written by Gubbins, though no evidence of this has yet been found. Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-60* (New York, 1990), 180.

²¹⁰ J. C. F. Holland, “Duties of the New Branch,” 3 April 1939, 2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256. Emphasis added.

²¹¹ Gubbins, “The Underground Forces in Britain 1940-1944,” lecture given to the Cerne Abbas Discussion Club, Dorchester, April (?) 1973, Gubbins papers 4/1/42, IWM.

more recent and larger scale examples of the use of irregular warfare.”²¹² O’Halpin is right to insist that Ireland be placed alongside other sources of inspiration (see Chapters III and IV), but this does not *ipso facto* mean that Ireland was insignificant. While China and Spain provided recent examples, neither Gubbins nor his superior, J. C. F. Holland, participated in or directly observed either conflict. Both men, however, fought in Ireland, where Gubbins served far longer than he had served in Russia. O’Halpin further observes that one knowledgeable figure, Guy Liddell, claimed that Gubbins’s organization was modelled not on the IRA but on the Arab Bureau that supported the Arab Revolt of 1916-1918.²¹³ Although Liddell may have known a great deal about both Ireland and intelligence, his position was with the Security Service (MI5), not with SOE or any of its predecessors. Moreover, the parallelism is complicated: Gubbins saw himself supporting foreign guerrillas, rather than becoming a guerrilla himself. Thus the Arab Bureau may have been a major inspiration with regard to advising, while the IRA or other partisans were the preeminent model of guerrilla tactics. Finally, O’Halpin contends that there is no evidence Section D, SOE’s other progenitor, looked to Ireland.²¹⁴ True though this may be, it does not affect Gubbins’s own work. His time spent in Ireland, coupled with the strong parallels between the Irish experience and his later writings, argues strongly in favour of the contention that Ireland played a crucial role in the formation of Gubbins’s thinking.

²¹² Eunan O’Halpin, “The Irish Experience of Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency since 1919,” *An Art in Itself: The Theory and Conduct of Small Wars and Insurgencies*, ed. Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (Canberra, 2006), 70.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 71.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

India

In early 1923, while in London, Gubbins took a Russian course at King's College London, earning himself a second Interpretership, having already earned one in French in 1921. That spring Gubbins was posted to India. It was an interesting time to be there; Mohandas Gandhi led a growing resistance movement to British rule, Japanese agents were active in India and Southeast Asia, the Bolsheviks had designs on India and the Afghans had invaded as recently as 1919.²¹⁵ Although the invasion had been quickly defeated, it caught the British by surprise, was an embarrassment to local intelligence, and was followed by tribal revolts which were not so easily put down.²¹⁶

On March 1923, Gubbins was appointed to Lucknow, northern India, with 15th Battery, Royal Field Artillery. He was at Lucknow for nearly a year until appointed officiating General Staff Officer, Grade III (GSO3) for intelligence in the Central Provinces District, working out of the major military installation at Mhow, south of Indore in modern-day Madhya Pradesh.²¹⁷ “Here he was able to indulge his passion for mounted sport.”²¹⁸ After eight months as GSO3 (Intelligence), he returned to 15th

²¹⁵ Richard J. Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire, 1904-1924* (London, 1995), 297.

²¹⁶ T. R. Moreman, *The Army in India and the Development of Frontier Warfare, 1849-1947* (London, 1998), 103-20; Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, 303.

²¹⁷ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 27-28. Wilkinson and Astley record that he sailed for India on 2 March and arrived at Lucknow on 1 April.

²¹⁸ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 28. It was around this time that Gubbins was inducted into the Masons, a source of some concern when Foot was writing *SOE in France*. The initial draft was to include mention of the fact that Gubbins was a mason, but Gubbins strongly objected to this inclusion. “I was initiated into the craft in about 1923,” he wrote to Foot on 27 January 1964, “but have taken no active part of any kind since then, and am not even able to recognize fellow members of the Craft. If you mention it in your book nobody would believe that it did not effect my policies in some way or another.... Further I have no desire to be approached again by other Free Masons, which will surely happen if this point is mentioned.” Foot replied two days later: “My dear Sir Colin, Thank you very much for your letter of the 27th. I quite see your point, and the passage shall be deleted. Yours sincerely, Michael Foot.” See Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM. This author mentions this detail in the hope that modern readers will not

Battery, which was now at Jubbulpore (modern-day Jabalpur, also in Madhya Pradesh).²¹⁹

In January of 1925 he was appointed Adjutant to XXIII Field Brigade, Royal Artillery, in Nowshera, just outside Peshawar near the eastern end of the Khyber Pass.²²⁰ Not long after he arrived in Nowshera the Royal Air Force began a series of operations a couple hundred miles southwest in South Waziristan. These strafing runs against Wahsud tribesmen became known as Pink's War, after their architect, Wing Commander R. C. M. Pink. This conflict may have shaped Gubbins's thoughts on air power (see below), but it certainly did not destroy his confidence in the abilities of guerrillas. He later commented that "it is undeniable that in certain campaigns in the past the activities of guerillas have had a marked influence on the operations of regular armies." Among the examples he cites are "the continual small wars on the North West Frontier of India."²²¹ He was not alone in his observation of irregular warfare on the North West Frontier; historian Chaz Bowyer calls the locals "the finest guerilla fighters in the world."²²²

Gubbins did not stay in Nowshera long, attending the Northern Command's annual Intelligence Course in Murree, east of Peshawar, from May to June, 1925.²²³ Col. Reginald Hillyard recommended Gubbins in the strongest terms, noting that he

jump to conclusions or weave silly conspiracy theories. Moreover, Sir Colin, now in the grave, is beyond the pesterings of his fellow masons.

²¹⁹ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 28.

²²⁰ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 28.

²²¹ Gubbins, "The Underground Forces in Britain 1940-1944," lecture given to the Cerne Abbas Discussion Club, Dorchester, April 1973, 4, Gubbins papers 4/1/4, IWM.

²²² Chaz Bowyer, *RAF Operations, 1918-1938* (London, 1988), 156.

²²³ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM.

“worked with the greatest keenness throughout the class and is suited in every way for Intelligence work especially in the Far East.”²²⁴ That year Gubbins, ever the linguist, also passed a preliminary Urdu exam.²²⁵ From October 1925 to February 1928 he served as GSO3 (Intelligence) at Army Headquarters at Simla, the summer capital of the Raj. There he spent much of his time reading and translating secret Soviet communications, making use of his facility in Russian.²²⁶

Soviet premier V. I. Lenin made no secret of his hatred for the British Empire, annulling the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which had ended the Great Game, the 19th century struggle for mastery of Central Asia.²²⁷ In 1920, Lenin declared that “England is our greatest enemy. It is in India that we must strike them hardest.”²²⁸ This open hostility must have lent a certain edge to the intelligence work of Gubbins, a man who already loathed Communism from his first-hand experience in Russia. Historian Peter Hopkirk notes that “from remote listening-posts far beyond India’s frontiers, British Indian intelligence officers monitored every Bolshevik move against India and reported these back to their chiefs in Delhi and London.”²²⁹ Within India itself, the

²²⁴ Col. Hillyard, 23 June 1925, Gubbins papers 3/1/4, IWM.

²²⁵ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM. Wilkinson and Astley contend that he took his Urdu exam in the summer of 1924. If that is correct, the date on the form is either a scribal error or the official date on which the results of his exam were officially processed. His SOE personnel file refers to this as an Army Proficiency Exam in Hindustani. See SOE Record of Service, TNA: PRO, HS 9/630/8.

²²⁶ Peter Wilkinson, “Gubbins: A Resistance Leader,” lecture given at Cambridge on 28 April 1990, 2, Gubbins papers 4/1/50, IWM; Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 29.

²²⁷ Peter Hopkirk, *Setting the East Ablaze: Lenin’s Dream of an Empire in Asia* (Oxford, 1986), 3-4, 15; Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, 306.

²²⁸ Quoted in Hopkirk, *Setting the East Ablaze*, 1.

²²⁹ Hopkirk, *Setting the East Ablaze*, 2. In January 1918, for example, the British consulate in Kashgar, in far western China, acquired a wireless set which it used not only to communicate with the British government, but also to listen in on radio traffic from Moscow going out to Tashkent and other posts in Soviet Central Asia. See Hopkirk, *Setting the East Ablaze*, 96.

British carried out “the discreet reading of suspects’ mail, the interception and decoding of Bolshevik wireless messages, and the penetration of Indian nationalist groups suspected of having links to Moscow.” Likewise, Richard Popplewell notes that “from 1920 to 1927 [the British] were able regularly and extensively to read Soviet codes, including those of the Comintern,... [gaining] detailed insights into Soviet policy at the highest levels.”²³⁰ When Gubbins wrote in 1939 that “ALL [guerrilla] MESSAGES IN WIRELESS MUST BE IN CODE OR CIPHER,” he wrote from a personal experience of just how damning intercepted signals could be.²³¹ He also learned, however, the potential usefulness of wireless in a “whispering” campaign aimed at galvanizing the discontent of a war-weary enemy population.²³² Although the future SOE would be a sabotage and subversion agency, not an intelligence one, it made considerable use of intelligence in its operations, many of which, in turn, generated intelligence. Thus, Gubbins’s time with intelligence in India, both studying it at Murree and practicing it at Simla, offered useful experiences for the future SOE leader.

Gubbins left Simla when sent to the Staff College at Quetta, whose course of study he completed in December 1929. There he studied a variety of topics including military history, air power, combined operations with the Royal Navy, signals

²³⁰ Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, p. 312. Cf. Christopher M. Andrew, *Her Majesty’s Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (London, 1985), 259, 269. Unfortunately, the leading works on the Comintern and India, by Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, are histories of the Comintern as an organisation and its internal intellectual debates. *Comintern, India and the Colonial Question, 1920-37* (Calcutta, 1980) and *Comintern and the Destiny of Communism in India, 1919-1943: Dialectics of Real and a Possible History* (Calcutta, 2006) give virtually no details on actual subversive efforts in India.

²³¹ AGW, 13 § 47.

²³² *Ibid.*, 18 § 67.

intelligence, and the political and military challenges of frontier warfare.²³³ Among Gubbins's colleagues at Quetta was Frederick William "Nick" Nicholls, who had managed to establish wireless communications with the British Embassy in Kabul during the Third Anglo-Afghan War. During World War II, Nicholls would serve under Gubbins as Director of Signals at SOE.

Gubbins was often awake until 2:30 or 3:00am, laboring over his studies.²³⁴ "The one ambition of all the students now," he wrote to his cousin Helen, "is not to get a 1st class report but just to get thro' safely and get it over."²³⁵ Gubbins finished fourth in the class, with his commander-in-chief, Field Marshal Sir Ian Birdwood, commending him for "an excellent performance."²³⁶ Having completed his studies, Gubbins was back in Britain by the end of January 1930.²³⁷

Air Power

Gubbins first saw combat in the first conflict to feature any significant use of air power, the Great War, and attended the Cooperation with Aircraft Course in 1917. The Archangel Expeditionary Force made the first air-supported landing in world history,

²³³ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM; Moreman, *The Army in India*, 125; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 29-30. In the preceding years, there had been intense debate about the provisional 1920 *Field Service Regulations*, various textbooks on irregular warfare and the role frontier training in military education. The basic argument centered on whether military men needed specific training to meet the needs of the North West Frontier – as the recent war against the Afghans and Waziri tribesmen suggested – or whether emphasis should be placed on more general skills of universal application. See Moreman, *The Army in India*, 123-4.

²³⁴ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 29-30.

²³⁵ Gubbins to Helen, 16 May 1929; quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 30.

²³⁶ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, p. 29.

²³⁷ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM.

covered by Fairey Campania biplanes from HMS *Nairana*.²³⁸ The RAF contingent of the Archangel Force also brought eight DH-4 biplanes, two Sopwith Baby floatplanes and a Sopwith Camel, and on arrival discovered RE-8s, Nieuport 17s, Sopwith 1 ½ Strutters among the supplies which had been sent to Russia. Just as important, the RAF discovered 27 veterans of the Russian Flying Corps, to add to the thirty pilots and observers they had brought.²³⁹ Gubbins's presence alongside General Ironside meant he would have brushed elbows with some of the RAF personnel, among whom Ironside praised Lt. Col. Robin Grey "for his direction of the Royal Air Force and for his courage and determination."²⁴⁰ In Ireland the RAF dropped propaganda leaflets, conducted reconnaissance, escorted convoys to deter and detect ambushes, and carried out both bomb and strafing attacks against IRA guerrillas.²⁴¹ In India, Air Force Headquarters were located in Simla, alongside Army Headquarters, where Gubbins was stationed, and among the topics he studied at the Staff College in Quetta was the role of air power.²⁴² Thus, although Gubbins records in his SOE Record of Service that he flew an aeroplane "only once!" he had considerable familiarity with aircraft and had numerous occasions on which to consider their role in guerrilla warfare.²⁴³ Thus, it comes as little surprise that air power figures in a few significant passages of Gubbins's 1939 writings.

²³⁸ Kinvig, *Churchill's Crusade*, 34. Cf. Nick Baron, *The King of Karelia: Col. P.J. Woods and the British Intervention in North Russia 1918–1919: A History and Memoir* (London, 2007), 185.

²³⁹ Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 38; Rhodes, *Anglo-America*, 53.

²⁴⁰ Ironside to Gen. Lord Rawlinson, Commander-in-Chief, North Russia, 1 November 1919, TNA: PRO, WO 32/5705.

²⁴¹ William Sheehan, *A Hard Local War: The British Army and the Guerrilla War in Cork, 1919-1921* (Stroud, UK, 2011), 88, 113, 145, 181.

²⁴² Government of India, *The Army in India and its Evolution, Including an Account of the Establishment of the Royal Air Force in India* (Calcutta: 1924), 177; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 29. In the 1920s RAF Squadron 5 was stationed at Quetta; see Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 154.

²⁴³ SOE Record of Service, TNA: PRO, HS 9/630/8.

One can speculate as to why Gubbins' writings display a considerable fear of air power. Although air power played small roles in Russia and Ireland, in neither theater could it be called decisive. Gubbins was certainly aware of the role of air power in the Chinese Civil War and the Spanish Civil War, both raging as he wrote the *Art of Guerilla Warfare* and the *Partisan Leader's Handbook* (see Chapter III). However, the most unambiguous uses of air power in the interwar period involved Britain's own Royal Air Force. In 1919, the RAF deployed to British Somaliland to put an end to the rebellion of Mohammed bin Abdullah Hassan, known to his British opponents as the "Mad Mullah." The RAF contingent, "Z Force," was used to bomb rebel strongholds – very nearly killing the rebel leader in the process – as well as performing reconnaissance and communications functions.²⁴⁴ Contemporary assessments of the RAF's operations in Somaliland were quite positive, concluding, in the words of the Governor, that "threats from the air offer the surest guarantee of peace and order."²⁴⁵ In 1919 a series of rebellions broke out in Mesopotamia, and the RAF once again conducting ground attack and communications operations, as well as dropping propaganda leaflets, attacking Turkish incursions into Mesopotamia, and engaging in air mapping.²⁴⁶ As the regional situation worsened in the coming years, overall command in the recently-renamed Iraq was invested in an RAF officer, while "air control" of certain territories was substituted for army control.²⁴⁷ Conflict, much of it centred around Sheikh

²⁴⁴ Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 60.

²⁴⁵ Undersecretary of State's report on Somaliland, 17 February 1920, TNA: PRO, AIR/9/12; quoted in Philip Anthony Towle, *Pilots and Rebels: The Use of Aircraft in Unconventional Warfare, 1918-1988* (London, 1989), 12. Cf. Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 62.

²⁴⁶ Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 65-72; Towle, *Pilots and Rebels*, 16-17.

²⁴⁷ Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 75; Towle, *Pilots and Rebels*, 13-16.

Mahmud's rebellion, continued until 1932, the same year Iraq officially received independence. In spite of more than a decade of irregular warfare, many viewed the RAF's experiment in air control as a success; upon his surrender in 1931, Sheikh Mahmud himself described the RAF as "the people who have broken my spirit."²⁴⁸ As the Palestinian Revolt broke out in 1936 (see Chapter IV), the RAF coordinated with police and army forces, conducting reconnaissance, distributing propaganda and carrying out strafing and light bombing against Arab mobs, criminal gangs and Arab and Jewish terrorist groups.²⁴⁹ It was in Palestine that the RAF began the tactic of "air cordons," in which entire villages or cities – such as Jerusalem on 18 October – were surrounded by aircraft flying around the perimeter to prevent anyone from entering or leaving, while the army then searched the location for rebels or arms caches.²⁵⁰

Gubbins would have only learned about the above conflicts at a remove, but India was also a significant scene of air operations against irregular forces. In the tribal rebellion in Waziristan which followed the Afghan invasion, the RAF engaged in both close air support and independent bombing, often at great peril.²⁵¹ Its work was praised by the official historian of the conflict, who argued that "officers of the land forces would find their labour well repaid if they undertook the study of this important auxiliary to the art of tactics."²⁵² But the most striking use of air power came during Pink's War, operations against a few tribes on the North West Frontier which chose not to accept the British' terms, as their neighbours had, but launched a fresh rebellion in

²⁴⁸ Quoted in Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 120.

²⁴⁹ Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 135; Towle, *Pilots and Rebels*, 49-51.

²⁵⁰ Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 142.

²⁵¹ Moreman, *The Army in India*, 130; Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 161, 167.

²⁵² *Operations in Waziristan, 1919-20*, 2nd ed. (London, 1924), quoted in Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 154.

1925. These actions – by both day and night – were not simply led by the RAF, as was the case in Iraq or the earlier conflict in Waziristan, but were exclusively conducted from the air.²⁵³ When the rebels were foolish enough to move through open country, considerable casualties were inflicted from the air. Perhaps more importantly, neighbouring tribes began refusing the rebels sanctuary, having been warned by the RAF that their villages and flocks would be bombed if they did. That the rebels came to terms after only 54 days of RAF operations suggested the stunning possibilities of air power against unconventional forces.²⁵⁴

Gubbins advises in *The Art of Guerilla Warfare* that “partisan leaders must impress on all their men that the surest way of attaining success in their operations is by remaining undetected, and that detection will always be followed by enemy action against them.” Such detection can come with very little warning from the air. Thus, “concealment from aircraft is of the greatest importance, and men must be trained to take cover quickly, to lie face downwards, and to remain absolutely still until the aeroplane has passed.”²⁵⁵ Elsewhere in the *Art* he observes that of “the various weapons that the enemy may employ... the most dangerous to the partisans is the aeroplane.”²⁵⁶ Drives and other actions of enemy mobile detachments are made more dangerous by the fact that “aeroplanes are certain to co-operate.”²⁵⁷ In addition to simply posing a direct danger, aircraft also impose limits on partisans, forcing them to organize bands of twenty

²⁵³ Bowyer, *RAF Operations*, 170-72.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

²⁵⁵ *AGW*, 14 § 52.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 16 § 59.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 15 § 55.

five men or fewer; anything larger cannot be concealed.²⁵⁸ Because of the danger of being spotted from the air, partisans are advised to “move as much as you can by night.”²⁵⁹ When preparing an ambush site, arrangements should never be of the sort that can be spotted from the air.²⁶⁰

These are cautions the Irish would have understood. In May 1921 the Republican newspaper *an t-Ólgach* explained that “enemy aircraft were a factor which our troops had to give serious attention”; retreating guerrillas had to worry about “keeping in cover from the aircraft” since “the most dangerous thing was being observed by [British] aircraft.”²⁶¹ Gubbins’s partisans would be heirs to this important point.

Conclusion

By the dawn of the 1930s Gubbins had seen conventional warfare on the Western Front, where he served with distinction. He had participated in irregular conflict, first in Russia and then in Ireland, and had spent several years in India, where problems of intelligence, subversion and the irregular warfare of the North West Frontier occupied much of his time. Moreover, he had had occasion to reflect on guerrilla warfare, its methods and qualities, and how it intersects with intelligence, air power and larger strategy. He had certainly considered some of these matters at the Intelligence Course and at Staff College in India; he likely considered them in the light of the *Notes on Guerrilla Warfare in Ireland* while in Ireland and may have also examined them with

²⁵⁸ *PLH*, 3 § 3.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 35 (Appendix VI: How to Counter Enemy Action) § 1.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 14 (Appendix I: Road Ambush) § 2b.

²⁶¹ *An t-Ólgach*, May 1921; quoted in Sheehan, *Hard Local War*, 145.

reference to *Small Wars* while in Russia. Nevertheless, readers should be cautioned not to take too much of a teleological view; although Gubbins had considerable experience with irregular warfare, he did not yet see it as his particular vocation, nor did he single-mindedly seek it out, as if somehow consciously preparing himself for his future leadership of SOE.

CHAPTER III
FORMULATING A DOCTRINE:
LEARNING FROM THE PAST

The 1930s

Beginning of the Decade

Gubbins returned to Britain and spent nearly a year with 5 Light Brigade at Ewshot, Hampshire.²⁶² On 19 January 1931 he reported for duty at MI3(c), the Soviet section of the Military Intelligence Directorate.²⁶³ He had spent a great deal of time in India reading intercepted Soviet communications, but the new cipher pads adopted by the Soviets in 1927 proved much harder to crack. Thus, most of Gubbins's work involved reading open source material from the Russian press. This was his first experience at the War Office, and he enjoyed the cosmopolitan atmosphere he found in his new assignment, a welcome break the sometimes drab world of regular soldiering.²⁶⁴

In April 1933, he left MI3(c) when was appointed Brigade Major, Royal Artillery to 4 Division in Colchester.²⁶⁵ Here he was responsible for training artilleryman from the Territorial Army (TA), Britain's reserve force. Like his experience with Military Intelligence, Gubbins appreciated the wide variety of enthusiastic men the TA provided, as well as the constructive criticism they frequently brought to military practices. While

²⁶² Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM.

²⁶³ Letter from Major General D. Forster to General Officer Commanding, Aldershot Command, 19 November 1930, Gubbins papers, 3/1/5, IWM.

²⁶⁴ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 31.

²⁶⁵ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM.

many soldiers, skeptical of civilians, might have discouraged such comments, Gubbins encouraged them.²⁶⁶

His work in training continued when, in October 1935, he was appointed to the policy-making branch of the Military Training Directorate, MT1, where he served as a GSO2 and head of the artillery section. While working with MT1, he also doubled as personal staff officer to Major-General Alan Brooke, Inspector of Artillery and soon-to-be Director of Military Training.²⁶⁷ Brooke would later become General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Home Army and Chief of the Imperial General Staff, when his friendship proved valuable to Gubbins.

In October 1938 Gubbins was among the British military observers who watched the withdrawal of Czech forces from the Sudetenland. He considered Czechoslovakia “a thoroughly decent democratic little nation” and disapproved of the Munich Agreement, which he saw was a prelude to the war Hitler desired.²⁶⁸ Ever after, Gubbins was shamed that the Czechs had fallen victim to the Nazis by virtue of what he judged to be British and French weakness.²⁶⁹

Electra House

As the British government faced the possibility of that which they most dreaded, a European war, the Committee of Imperial Defence set up a small organization called the Department of Propaganda in Enemy Countries – known as EH (after its

²⁶⁶ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 31-32.

²⁶⁷ Army Form B 193A, Gubbins papers 3/1/6, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 32.

²⁶⁸ Gubbins, quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 33. There appears to be little other material available on this episode of Gubbins’s life.

²⁶⁹ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 33.

headquarters, the Electra House on the Thames) or CS (after its head, Sir Campbell Stuart) – with the purpose of influencing German opinion. Stuart, a Canadian, had been deputy head of the Crewe House organisation, Britain’s propaganda machine in the First World War, and was now chairman of the Imperial Communications Committee, whose offices were at Electra House.²⁷⁰

Authors disagree about when EH was established; M. R. D. Foot argues for late March 1938.²⁷¹ Charles Cruickshank contends that Stuart “was invited by the Prime Minister to set up a new propaganda department” in September 1938, though the Munich crisis delayed its actual operations until the following September.²⁷² William Mackenzie’s account is similar to Cruickshank’s, though he assigns the initiative to Admiral Hugh Sinclair, chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), and places the beginning of operations in January 1939.²⁷³ The differences between these accounts may be the result not of fact but of definition. What qualifies as establishment or constitutes an agency changes the “official” date of creation for EH.

EH was placed under the authority of the Ministry of Information, then the Foreign Office, and back again several times during 1939 and 1940. It would eventually become the Political Warfare Executive, an independent war-time propaganda agency.

²⁷⁰ Charles Cruickshank, *The Fourth Arm: Psychological Warfare, 1938-1945* (London, 1977), 10, 17; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 6.

²⁷¹ Foot, *SOE in France*, 1-2.

²⁷² Cruickshank, *Fourth Arm*, 17.

²⁷³ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 6.

Before such independence it would pass through the hands of SOE.²⁷⁴

Section D

In April 1938, a month after the Austro-German Anschluss was effected and around the time EH was proposed, the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) created a new section within its organization. This was the product of a joint assessment by Section III (Naval) and Section VI (Industrial) that SIS needed to consider the potential of sabotage operations. Thus Section D (originally known as Section IX) was established to study unconventional means of waging warfare or – in the words of the SIS chief – “to cogitate upon the possibilities of sabotage.”²⁷⁵

The first objects of study were the transportation of two key raw materials to Germany: iron ore from Sweden and oil from Romania.²⁷⁶ Section D also considered groups which might be induced to carry out sabotage, including Jews, Catholics and Communists.²⁷⁷ Like SOE, into which it developed, Section D aimed at utilizing anti-Nazi organizations already in Europe.²⁷⁸ It recommended deploying agents to the

²⁷⁴ Those interested in a broader treatment of the Political Warfare Executive should consult Charles Cruickshank, *Fourth Arm* and David Garnett, *The Secret History of PWE: The Political Warfare Executive, 1939-1945* (London, 2002).

²⁷⁵ “SOE Early History to September 1940,” Chapter 1: Early History, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3. (It appears that this history and all the items in HS 7/3 were written in July 1943, though this is not certain. See “Activities of the Section up to the Fall of France,” TNA: PRO, HS 7/3.) Cf. Foot, *SOE in France*, 2, quoting “a paper of recommendations on control of para-military activities, 5 June 1939, MIR file 3”; Foot, “Was SOE Any Good?,” 168; W. J. M. Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE: The Special Operations Executive, 1940-1945* (London, 2000), 4; Mark Seaman, “A New Instrument of War,” 8. Mackenzie’s *Secret History of SOE* is in fact the official history of SOE, completed in 1948, but withheld from the general public until 1998.

²⁷⁶ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 5.

²⁷⁷ “SOE Early History to September 1940,” Chapter 1: Early History, 3, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3; Foot, *SOE in France*, 2; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 5.

²⁷⁸ “SOE Early History to September 1940,” Chapter 1: Early History, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3.

countries on Germany's frontiers, both to intercept goods destined for Germany and to supply resisters within Germany.²⁷⁹ However, Section D recognized that such a deployment of agents would be too provocative in peacetime.²⁸⁰ Until the outbreak of war, it limited itself to research and preliminary organization, with a one-time appropriation of £20,000.²⁸¹

The new organization was led by Major Laurence Douglas Grand, Royal Engineers, who began work on 1 April 1938. He was tall and lean, described by one who knew him as having “all the paraphernalia of the ‘spy master’ of popular fiction”: civilian clothes (always with a red carnation in the buttonhole), a black homburg hat, dark glasses, and a tapered cigarette holder in his mouth.²⁸² Further matching the stereotypes of fiction, Section D had an “obsession with security.”²⁸³ Grand commanded great loyalty, but was said to be short on tact.²⁸⁴

Grand got off to a quick start, moving Section D from its original location in the SIS basement to a new location a couple hundred yards away on the 6th floor of No. 2 Caxton Street. Here its offices connected by various passageways to the neighboring St. Ermin's Hotel.²⁸⁵ In May 1938 Grand submitted a list of likely targets and methods of sabotage. According to an internal SOE history, other sections of SIS commented that

²⁷⁹ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 5.

²⁸⁰ “SOE Early History to September 1940,” Chapter 1: Early History, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3.

²⁸¹ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 5.

²⁸² Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 35. Cf. Bickham Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular* (London, 1965), 20.

²⁸³ Wilkinson and Astley, 35.

²⁸⁴ Lord Gladwyn, *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn* (London, 1972), 101; Obituary for Maj.-Gen. L. D. Grand, *The Times*, 28 November 1975, 19.

²⁸⁵ “SOE Early History to September 1940,” Chapter 1: Early History, 7, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3; Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 9; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 35. At this time SIS had its headquarters on Broadway. The St. Ermin's Hotel was utilized by part of the Ministry of Munitions during World War I and remains an operating hotel today at the same location on Caxton St.

the ideas were ambitious to the point of impracticality.²⁸⁶ Grand nevertheless pressed ahead. In the autumn of 1938 he traveled to Czechoslovakia, where he met with the Czech General Staff and considered the possibilities of sabotaging the Skoda Armaments works, should it fall into German hands; Grand even went so far as to organize a pyramidal network through the main Skoda factories themselves, to carry out such sabotage, although it never happened.²⁸⁷

Since Section D's original field of operations included "moral sabotage," it overlapped with EH's propaganda operations.²⁸⁸ Open broadcasts from Britain were unequivocally the BBC's responsibility, but Grand planned for extensive propaganda against Germany via neutral countries and was also interested in "black" radio, broadcasts claiming to come from within Germany, while really originating in Britain. Out of Section D's secret allocation he funded the Joint Broadcasting Committee, which carried out both black and white (avowed) broadcasts.²⁸⁹

With the outbreak of war, Section D no longer limited itself to planning; in 1939 and 1940 it ran operations in the Balkans. The Ploesti oilfield in Romania supplied Germany with 20% of its oil; Section D attempted attacks on the oilfield itself and the means of transport, but all efforts failed.²⁹⁰ Unsurprisingly, the British diplomats of the

²⁸⁶ "SOE Early History to September 1940," Chapter 1: Early History, 3, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3. These proposals were titled "Preliminary Survey of Possibilities of Sabotage."

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 4; Seaman, "New Instrument of War," 10.

²⁸⁸ Foot, *SOE in France*, 2; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 33-34.

²⁸⁹ Seaman, "New Instrument of War," 10; W. J. West, *Truth Betrayed* (London, 1987), 114-19.

²⁹⁰ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 23-30; Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, 22. Kim Philby, the Soviet spy, worked for Section D. Regarding the plans to sabotage the Iron Gates he writes, "I had seen the Iron Gates, and was duly impressed by the nerve of colleagues who spoke of 'blowing them up,' as if it were a question of destroying the pintle of a lockgate in the Regent's Canal. Such an attempt was hopelessly out of keeping with the slender resources of Section D in 1940" (Philby, *My Silent War* [New York, 1968], 12).

Balkans were squeamish about these clandestine operations, about which they knew little and over which they had no control.²⁹¹ Nevertheless, the failures themselves may have proved something to the diplomats: denying Britain's (unacknowledged) saboteurs the support of the (official) diplomatic staff only increased the likelihood of embarrassing failures. Cooperation, it appeared, might be mutually beneficial.²⁹²

At the same time Section D established contact with a host of Jewish, Catholic, labor, émigré and other anti-Nazi organizations. Its relationships extended to international groups with a presence in Britain, but also to organizations in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Italy, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Palestine and Egypt. Although Section D was not an intelligence organization *per se*, it was an extension of SIS, and so the various intelligence data which came from these sources – including a secret index of the Nazi hierarchy provided by a German émigré – was passed along in course. A few cases of explosives were distributed to would-be saboteurs in Germany, but the results were minimal: the reported – though unconfirmed – destruction of a single munitions dump.²⁹³

In the four weeks leading up to the outbreak of war, Section D delivered more than two tons of propaganda to Germany, Austria and the (former) Czechoslovakia, by

²⁹¹ Memo by Lord Hankey, 24 May 1940, TNA: PRO, CAB 127/375 [files retained in Cabinet Office]; George Rendel to Alexander Cadogan, 11 Feb. 1940, PUSD papers, FCO; both cited in Keith Jeffery, *The Secret History of MI6* (New York, 2010), 414. Cf. David Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance, 1940-1945: A Survey of the Special Operations Executive, with Documents* (Toronto, 1980), 22.

²⁹² "The Balkans," nd, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3. This document also argues that Section D's limited successes of this period "were sufficient to convince even the most conservative of diplomats that there were certain activities that it was necessary to undertake but which could not be undertaken by official missions."

²⁹³ "SOE Early History to September 1940," Chapter 1: Early History, 6-12, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3; "Activities of the Section up to the Fall of France," TNA: PRO, HS 7/3; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 30-33. While Section D provided intelligence, SIS provided Section D with most of its communications ("SOE Early History," Chapter 1: Early History, 20).

way of four courier lines running through Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands. These lines went dormant at the outbreak of war – both due to the arrest of key personnel and also because of the difficulty in securing transport from Britain to neutral countries in those busy days – but by October all original lines were operating again, and seven new lines had been added. As 1939 drew to a close, some lines were shut down, but even more new lines were opened.²⁹⁴ By the beginning of 1940 radio broadcasts could be heard in fourteen countries, with negotiations underway for broadcasts in several others. Hundreds of recordings and thousands of pressings – including special records that could be hidden inside rolled newspapers – were produced each month.²⁹⁵ Little, however, came of these efforts, in part because commercial radio stations in neutral countries would only broadcast material too mild to be effective.²⁹⁶

In addition to examining external possibilities for employing sabotage and subversion against Britain's enemies, Section D also worried about the possible uses of sabotage and subversion against Britain. It produced directions for anti-sabotage precautions which were approved by MI5, the Security Service, and circulated not only

²⁹⁴ Two of the new lines in October came from Yugoslavia and one from Sweden. The receiving end was also broadened, with lines now extending to Italy and Latvia. By the end of the year Section D also had courier lines into Hungary, occupied Poland and neutral Norway, as well as new lines into Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. See "SOE Early History to September 1940," Chapter 1: Early History, 14, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3. Much of Section D's propaganda centered on "self-generating material, such as chain letters," allowing the organization to sidestep the "volume of output" ("SOE Early History to September 1940," Chapter 3: Propaganda, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3).

²⁹⁵ "SOE Early History to September 1940," Chapter 3: Propaganda, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3. The document indicates that broadcasts were made to fourteen countries, though it lists only thirteen: "Sweden, Estonia, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Greece, Roumania, Bulgaria, Turkey, France, Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay." Britain itself may be the missing fourteenth country. Negotiations were underway "in Spain, Norway and various South American States (where there were definite expectations that services would shortly be started) and in Iceland and Italy (where a formal offer of programme had been conveyed by an Italian official to the Italian Broadcasting Service)."

²⁹⁶ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 35-36.

throughout Britain but also to the Empire. Moreover, Section D also documented the allegedly pro-Nazi activities of the “Oxford Group,” and studied the potential value of secret censorship (i.e., reading mail, not censoring the press).²⁹⁷

General Staff (Research)

In 1936, the Imperial General Staff set up a small section in the War Office called General Staff (Research), or GS(R), reporting directly to the Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff (DCIGS). This office was really more of a fellowship, extended to a single officer for one year, in which he would “research into problems of tactics and organisation under the direction of the DCIGS.” He would “liaison with other branches of the War Office and with Commands in order to collect new ideas on these subjects.”²⁹⁸ Put simply, the fellowship holder could study any topic of interest to him, so long as it was acceptable to the DCIGS. The first holder of the office considered army education; the second examined military medicine.²⁹⁹ Nevertheless, GS(R)’s clandestine potential was suggested by the DCIGS in a minute: “This section must be small, almost anonymous, go where they like, talk to whom they like, but be kept from files, correspondence and telephone calls.”³⁰⁰

²⁹⁷ “SOE Early History to September 1940,” Chapter 1: Early History, 12, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 34-35. The Oxford Group, a conservative evangelical organization, was led by Dr. Frank Buchman, who had ties to Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler and sometimes made statements praising the anti-Communism of the Nazis. As part of its censorship operations, Section D also inserted propaganda into mail going to Germany via Britain from neutral countries such as the United States. See “SOE Early History to September 1940,” Chapter 2: Censorship, HS 7/3. This chapter has no pagination.

²⁹⁸ GS(R) charter, quoted in Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 8.

²⁹⁹ “CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” nd, 1, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM; Foot, *SOE in France*, 2; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 33.

³⁰⁰ DCIGS, quoted in Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 8. Mackenzie cites the “MI(R) War Diary ‘Introduction’, (MI(R) File 3).” Alas, as Foot observes, “an extra difficulty awaits those who try to take

In 1938 the position passed to Lt. Col. J. C. F. Holland, a Royal Engineer who had attended Woolwich in the class behind Gubbins. In 1916, Holland had been attached to the Royal Flying Corps, serving in the Balkans and with T. E. Lawrence's irregulars in Arabia; for his service he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.³⁰¹ Holland had also served on the Northwest Frontier and during the post-war "Troubles" in Ireland, where – according to Foot – he befriended Gubbins.³⁰² Gubbins described Holland as intelligent, imaginative and practical.³⁰³ He was "completely unselfish... [and] had no intention of building an empire for himself," Gubbins explained.³⁰⁴ Holland's secretary described him as a hardworking chain smoker with a fiery temper ("I can feel now the quick downward movement by which I ducked the impact of a book flung at my head one day on opening the door of his office"), a man both feared and loved.³⁰⁵ Finally, in contrast to Grand, Holland loathed pretense.³⁰⁶

up Mackenzie's references to SOE papers. He complained himself of the troubles of trying to cope with 'two superimposed systems of filing, both radically imperfect': a third system has been imposed even on them. In the early 1970s, the surviving operational and headquarters files were all gone through by Mr. Townsend of the PRO and reduced to what that office regarded as a sensible arrangement. Townsend's index to them did include cross-references to the original file numbers, where they survived, but it will be a nightmare task to try to fix which of the AD/S.1 files to which Mackenzie so often refers have survived" (M. R. D. Foot, Forward to Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, xiv-xv).

³⁰¹ M. R. D. Foot, "The IRA and the Origins of SOE," *War and Society: Historical Essays in Honour and Memory of J. R. Western, 1928-1971*, ed. M. R. D. Foot (New York, 1973), 68; M. R. D. Foot and J. M. Langley, *MI9: The British Secret Service That Fostered Escape and Evasion, 1939-1945, and Its American Counterpart* (London, 1979), 31; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 33-34.

³⁰² M. R. D. Foot, *SOE: An Outline History of the Special Operations Executive, 1940-1946* (London, 1984), 14. Wilkinson and Astley, writing after Foot, note that Holland, "served for some months in Ireland during the 'troubles' but, if he and Gubbins met, there is no record that they discussed irregular warfare" (34).

³⁰³ Gubbins, "The Underground Forces in Britain 1940-1944," lecture given to the Cerne Abbas Discussion Club, Dorchester, April (?) 1973, 4, Gubbins papers, 4/1/42, IWM.

³⁰⁴ "CG's Comments on Foot's Book," nd, 2, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM.

³⁰⁵ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 19, 30.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

In the autumn of 1938 the General Staff was prohibited from even considering the possibility of deploying a British expeditionary force to the Continent in a future war. However, as Gubbins explained, Holland had been impressed by the hit-and-run tactics of guerrillas in China and Spain.³⁰⁷ Thus, Holland took guerrilla warfare as his topic of study, officially seeking lessons for British colonial operations. In secret, however, Holland was ordered by the DCIGS to examine ways in which Britain might support guerrillas in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe.³⁰⁸

In January 1939, on the strength of a preliminary report, Holland received authorization to expand GS(R) by adding two general staff officers, second grade (GSO2), one a demolitions expert, the other to be in charge of organization, recruitment and training. For the demolitions post he selected the ruddy-faced Millis Jefferis, another Engineer, who was described by Joan Bright Astley as “an inventive genius.”³⁰⁹ For the position overseeing organization, recruitment and training, Holland chose Colin Gubbins, at least in part because of his service in Russia and Ireland.³¹⁰ On 4 April 1939 Gubbins joined Holland as his assistant, and that spring they authored papers on the

³⁰⁷ “CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” nd, 1, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM.

³⁰⁸ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 34; Astley, *Inner Circle*, 20.

³⁰⁹ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 22. For more on Jefferis and his wartime work, see Patrick Delaforce, *Churchill’s Secret Weapons: The story of Hobart’s Funnies* (London, 1998), 16-47.

³¹⁰ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 34. Jefferis arrived in May 1939, after Gubbins, and after the transformation to D/M Section (see below). See “CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” nd, 1, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM. Jefferis had already been attached to Section D’s technical branch. Holland may have known Jefferis from earlier work, or he may have met him while working under Section D’s umbrella. Whether Jefferis transferred from Section D to GS(R), or worked for both, is unclear. See Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 35. On Jefferis’s subsequent career with MD1 – the Ministry of Defence’ research and development agency, a spin-off from MI(R) – see R. Stuart Macrae, *Winston Churchill’s Toyshop* (New York, 1971).

theory and practice of guerrilla warfare.³¹¹ Their source material came from the conflicts in which they had fought – the Arab Revolt, the Russian Civil War and the Irish Revolution – as well as from the earlier Anglo-Boer Wars, the guerrilla campaign of Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck in East Africa and such recent affairs as the Spanish Civil War, the Sino-Japanese Wars and the Palestinian Revolt.³¹²

In addition to the officers, Holland also had a secretary typist, Joan Bright. She was a sort of genuine Miss Money Penny, holding together the office with diligent work and keen wit.³¹³ She was born in Argentina and served as a typist with the British delegation in Mexico.³¹⁴ After the war Gubbins described her as professional and a “great personal friend.”³¹⁵ Two other early members of the organisation were Norman Crockatt and Eddie Combe; of these, together with Holland, Gubbins and Bright, Dennis Wheatley wrote, “It would have been difficult to find five people better qualified to run such a ‘free-lance’ department with vigour and imagination.”³¹⁶

³¹¹ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 35. Here William Stevenson’s *A Man Called Intrepid* is again in error, when it suggests that, in this period, Gubbins was in charge, rather than Holland. Some other extraordinary claims are made in the same passage: “Those backing Gubbins were formidable, if eccentric. They had a trained eye, exotic experience, a common sense so uncommon as to seem lunatic. Through their friends at Scotland Yard, some knew the practitioners of crime – illusionists who propagated themselves into all forms of the human comedy with the aid of masks, false faces, hallucinations, and the tricks of magicians – useful to know in times of trouble” (47-48).

³¹² Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 11-12. Cf. Gubbins, “The Underground Forces in Britain,” lecture to Cerne Abbas Discussion Club, Dorchester, April (?) 1973, 4, Gubbins papers 4/1/42, IWM.

³¹³ David McKittrick, “Joan Bright Astley: Secretary to Winston Churchill’s War Cabinet,” *The Independent*, 28 January 2009.

³¹⁴ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 3, 8-12.

³¹⁵ Gubbins to Foot, 28 April 1964, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM. He explained that she was “a woman of considerable culture and great verve, working really as a GSO2 not as a Secretary.... We shared some tough times.” Eric Mockler-Ferryman worked in the Military Intelligence directorate of the War Office and later at SOE; having recently met her for the first time, he commented, “I can well imagine that you ruled visiting generals and admirals with an iron hand in a velvet glove.” Eric Mockler-Ferryman to Joan Bright Astley, 7 December 1976, Gubbins papers 12/2, IWM.

³¹⁶ Dennis Wheatley, *The Deception Planners: My Secret War* (London, 1980), 18.

GS(R), Section D, and Electra House are proof that British foreign policy in the 1930s was not simply inactive; the War Office, the Secret Intelligence Service, and the Committee on Imperial Defence *were* thinking about the conflict to come and were taking creative – albeit limited – steps to prepare for that conflict.

Section D and GS(R)

In March 1939 a series of important meetings took place. On 20 March Grand submitted a joint paper to W. E. van Cutsem, Deputy Director of Military Intelligence (DDMI).³¹⁷ Mackenzie comments that “the basic ideas of this paper are recognizably those of Colonel Holland; its style and its unquenchable optimism are certainly Colonel Grand’s.”³¹⁸ The report emphasized lessons from “experiences which we have had in India, Irak, Ireland and Russia.”³¹⁹ With regard to present applications of guerrilla warfare it advocated

- (a) Creating the maximum of insecurity to occupying troops and occupying Gestapo:
- (b) Creating the maximum of insecurity on the lines of communication:
- (c) Encouragement of local desire for independence;
- (d) Making any fresh adventure, and the most recent in Czecho-Slovakia and Austria, as expensive as possible.³²⁰

³¹⁷ Grand, “Scheme D,” 12 April 1939, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256. Mackenzie, claims the paper was submitted to Sir Stewart Menzies, the acting SIS Chief. See Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 8-9. Foot claims that the report was first sent to Viscount Gort, CIGS. See *SOE in France*, 3. Seaman asserts that on 20 March Grand *alone* submitted the report to Sir Hugh Sinclair, head of SIS, a copy of which was also sent to Major-General F. G. Beaumont-Nesbitt, Director of Military Intelligence (DMI). See Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 11.

³¹⁸ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 8.

³¹⁹ Grand, “Scheme D,” 20 March 1939, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256. “Irak” was the standard British spelling at the time.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

Among other things, the report proposed the elimination of Gestapo agents in occupied countries, the fostering of Romanian, Danish, Dutch and Polish guerrillas, and the fomenting of insurrection in Italian Libya and Italian-occupied Abyssinia.³²¹ The Czechs were to be armed and encouraged “to commence operations on the lines of the Irish Terror in 1920-21.”³²² To do all this, Grand requested Holland, along with 25 other officers and a budget of half a million pounds.³²³

On 22 March, Good Friday of that year, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), Viscount Gort, was briefed on the proposals, along with R. H. Dewing, the Director of Military Operations (DMO); DDMI Cutsem was again present.³²⁴ On 23 March the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax; the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, Sir Alexander Cadogan; the acting SIS Chief, Sir Stewart Menzies; Gort; and Grand met to discuss the paper of 20 March. Halifax was concerned about funding a sabotage organisation which might be traced back to His Majesty’s Government; Grand convinced him that plausible deniability could be maintained. Someone also asked why the paper proposed only to tell the prime minister and foreign secretary about subversive operations; why was the chancellor left off? Grand explained that fewer people reduced the chance of leaks. Halifax said he understood, but pointed out that it would be hard to obtain funding while the chancellor was partly in the dark. Finally, the matter of Romania came up; Grand explained that the Romanian oil fields were certainly important, but only one piece of the larger plan. Halifax suggested that he be given a

³²¹ Grand, “Scheme D,” 20 March 1939, 1-4, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256.

³²² *Ibid.*, 3.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 9.

letter which could then be passed to King Carol II of Romania “to raise the matter” of the oilfields.³²⁵ Thus, the assembled leaders agreed that, with Prime Minister Chamberlain’s approval, some preparatory work could be done by Section D, with an emphasis on counteracting the Nazis in the small countries Germany was threatening.³²⁶ Holland, in turn, followed up this meeting by securing Gort’s approval for the expansion of his work.³²⁷ Since the approval came from Gort, in the War Office, and not from someone in the Foreign Office, this suggests that Holland and GS(R) were still distinct from Section D; however, the funds for the expansion came from the SIS budget.³²⁸

As part of the change, GS(R) was redesignated “D/M Section” and authorized to expand.³²⁹ To limit costs and attention, however, D/M Section received only a small number of regular officers; most of its staff came from the ranks of Reserve or Territorial Army officers.³³⁰ Given the secrecy surrounding the task Holland and his small staff were performing, it was decided that they should work along side Section D, since it was making similar plans and could more easily divert the Treasury’s prying eyes.³³¹ As part of this cooperation, Holland and his personnel moved from the War

³²⁵ Exactly what this letter would say is unclear. In all likelihood it began to broach the awkward topic of destroying infrastructure, something every country is reluctant to do, though Britain would certainly desire, should the country in question be overrun by the enemy.

³²⁶ Grand, “Scheme D,” 12 April 1939, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256; Foot, *SOE in France*, 3; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 9; Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 11; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 21. This meeting does not appear in Cadogan’s diary, nor is there even an entry for that day. See Sir Alexander Cadogan, *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, O.M., 1938-1945*, ed. David Dilks (New York, 1972), 265.

³²⁷ Foot, *SOE in France*, 3.

³²⁸ Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 11.

³²⁹ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 10.

³³⁰ “Duties of the New Branch,” 3 April 1939, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256. This document, approved by the CIGS and DCIGS on 13 April, referred to the desirability of “officers in the Reserve, or in the Territorial Army, possessed of means, who are not tied to civil jobs, who are keen for active work now, and who are sufficiently experienced already.”

³³¹ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 20; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 34.

Office to Section D's offices at No. 2 Caxton Street in April 1939.³³² In June 1939 D/M Section was moved from the DCIG's jurisdiction and placed under the Director of Military intelligence (DMI), General Frederick George Beaumont-Nesbitt, and again renamed, this time MI.1(R), though MI(R) is the name that stuck.³³³

Thus in the spring of 1939 MI(R) and Section D began a relationship which would eventually result in their merger into SOE. In retrospect, the precise parameters of that relationship in 1939 are confusing and at times unclear; the same was true for the participants then. Peter Fleming, having been recruited by MI(R), recorded his confusion with a biblical turn: "I seem to be under but not of the War Office."³³⁴ Likewise, Joan Bright Astley records that in April 1939 she joined "Section 'D/MI(R),'"³³⁵ though all the superiors she lists were from the MI(R) side of things.³³⁵ This confusion regarding the relationship between the two organizations is only heightened by later attempts to establish the primacy of one or the other in the historiography. An internal SOE history, for example, written from the perspective of Section D, was likely authored by a veteran of that organization or by someone utilizing documents from it. This history claims that "M.I.R., an organisation... initiated by Colonel Grand, was

³³² "CG's Comments on Foot's Book," nd, 1, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 35.

³³³ "Record of Meeting Held in the War Office on June 27th, 1939, To Settle the future of G.S.(R) and Certain Connected Questions," No. M/I.7, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256. Unfortunately this change of name creates some confusion in the period of transition in the spring of 1939, as the terms GS(R) and MI(R) are used loosely and interchangeably by many participants and historians. The term D/M Section (or Branch) is rarely used, and will generally be avoided in this work. Beaumont-Nesbitt "was tall and polite, an erect, good-looking man, his crisp moustache brushed up. In his bearing he was a typical Guards officer, in his actions perspicacious and far-seeing" (Astley, *Inner Circle*, 23-34).

³³⁴ Peter Fleming, quoted in Duff Hart-Davis, *Peter Fleming: A Biography* (London, 1974), 215.

³³⁵ Astley, *Inside Circle*, 19.

established as a branch of the War Department.”³³⁶ While Grand may have shepherded its development into a guerrilla agency, its existence as a kind of research fellowship undeniably antedates the creation of Section D or Grand’s arrival on the scene.

Attempts by historians to identify a division of labour between the two organizations have been inconclusive. Seaman contends that Section D provided wartime contingency plans while the more “visionary” MI(R) contributed “thoughtful development of the theory and practice of guerrilla warfare.”³³⁷ However, Foot appears to contradict this directly, noting that Holland “seems to have believed [Section D’s] head to be too visionary and impractical to suit the exigencies of the war that both he himself and Gubbins regarded as imminent.”³³⁸ On 11 February 1940, DMI Beaumont-Nesbitt attempted to delineate the boundary between the two organizations: activities which could be acknowledged would be handled by MI(R); those that could not, by Section D.³³⁹

Perhaps the best distinction comes from a memorandum of 4 September 1940, in which MI(R) clarified that Section D would focus on “action [which] must be sub-

³³⁶ “SOE Early History to September 1940,” Chapter 1: Early History, 12, HS 7/3. In a similar manner, another document titled “SOE in Europe, 1938-1945,” claims that Section D was “divided into civil and military branches.... The Military Branch of ‘D’ Section was transferred to the War Office where, as M.I.R., it became responsible for para-military operations, while the Civil Branch continued in the Secret Service and organised subversive operations” (1, HS 7/1).

³³⁷ Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 13, 11.

³³⁸ Foot, *SOE in France*, 4. Cf. “CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” nd, 1, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM. Joan Bright Astley clarifies, or perhaps confuses further, these claims when she comments, “Grand was a volatile dreamer, Holland an unsmiling visionary” (*Inner Circle*, 20).

³³⁹ “Suggested line of demarcation between War Office and ‘D,’” 25 August 1940, TNA: PRO, HS 8/258. The same text is quoted in quoted in Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 11; there it is attributed to Beaumont-Nesbitt, 11 February 1940. The date written on the copy in HS 8/258 appears to be incorrect, since SOE had been created by August 1940. Mackenzie’s date makes more sense.

terranean, i.e., in countries which are in effective occupation,” while MI(R) would focus on “action [which] is a matter of military missions, whether regular or irregular.”³⁴⁰

The parallels between MI(R) and Section D are considerable: Holland, like Grand, was an engineer; both, like Gubbins, studied at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. Grand and Gubbins both had served in France, Russia, and India, though Grand had also served in Iraq. Just as his counterparts at MI(R) looked to the Irish Republican Army, the experience in Russia, and the experience of imperial policing for lessons, so too did Grand.³⁴¹ That Grand, Holland and Gubbins all had similar experiences and ended up in subversive warfare in the late 1930s attests to the fact that there existed a circle of men who had cut their teeth on the same irregular conflicts in the years before the Second World War.

In spite of the similarities, there was a basic difference in temperament between the two organizations, a difference which explained Gubbins’s mixed feelings toward Section D. As seen during his experiences with Military Intelligence and Military Training, Gubbins opposed bureaucratic thinking and appreciated alternative views, particularly from civilians. In Section D he encountered risk-taking businessmen and generous budgets to finance innovative ideas. However, he was aghast at some of

³⁴⁰ MI(R) memorandum, 4 September 1939, quoted in Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 13. Assuming this memorandum is an accurate depiction of the situation at the time, it is a complete reversal of Section D’s earlier peacetime vision, which was to operate in *neutral* countries. An internal SOE history explains that in this pre-war conception, MI(R) would “undertake sabotage and guerrilla warfare in countries after their occupation by the enemy, when D section would cease to operate” (“SOE Early History to September 1940,” Chapter 1: Early History, 1, HS 7/3).

³⁴¹ “SOE Early History to September 1940,” Chapter 1: Early History, 1-2, HS 7/3; Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 11.

Section D's more grandiose projects and the amateurish way they were executed.³⁴² MI(R) was creative, but it also remained realistic.³⁴³ A single example of MI(R)'s hard-headedness may suffice: Holland explained in April 1939 that MI(R) would focus on defending countries which remained unoccupied. Those which had already fallen to the Germans were beyond its modest abilities.³⁴⁴ Holland's decision was simple, clear, practical, and quite unlike the empire-building so often found within government bureaucracies.

From June 1939 onward, the tone at MI(R) changed, as Holland explained in a memo to his subordinates: "from now until the middle of August we must aim primarily at getting anything ready that we can in the time."³⁴⁵ Under orders from the DCIGS, MI(R) operated "on the assumption that war might occur in August/September."³⁴⁶ For the time being, however, MI(R) remained in the same building as Section D, in spite of the concerns of Holland and Gubbins that Section D might be too impractical for the coming conflict.³⁴⁷

As part of the new growth GS(R) experienced when it evolved into MI(R), the agency was permitted to earmark and train British personnel for special work in sabotage and guerrilla warfare. When necessary, they could be commissioned in the Officers'

³⁴² Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 35. Among Section D's more creative projects was the development of balloons – several kinds, including hydrogen, hot air and a combination of hydrogen and ammonia, were tried – to carry incendiary devices to Germany. See "SOE Early History to September 1940," Chapter 1: Early History, 18, HS 7/3. It should be noted that the Japanese tried something similar, achieving very limited success. See Bert Webber, *Retaliation: Japanese Attacks and Allied Countermeasures on the Pacific Coast in World War II* (Corvallis, OR, 1975).

³⁴³ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 38.

³⁴⁴ Holland, "General Instructions," 13 April 1939, 3, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256.

³⁴⁵ Holland, "Memorandum," No. M/I.6, June 1939, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256.

³⁴⁶ "Record of Meeting Held in the War Office on June 27th, 1939, To Settle the future of G.S.(R) and Certain Connected Questions," No. M/I.7, 2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256.

³⁴⁷ Foot, *SOE in France*, 4.

Emergency Reserve.³⁴⁸ If, up to this point, there had continued to be a pretext of broad research at GS(R), it was dropped. Holland focused on producing reports for the DDMI on irregular warfare and Gubbins prepared a syllabus for three MI(R) training courses in the theory of elementary guerrilla warfare, held in late June at Caxton Hall – next to the St. Ermin’s Hotel, on the other side from MI(R) headquarters at No. 2 Caxton St.³⁴⁹ For these courses he recruited explorers, linguists, international businessmen and regular officers with special skills.³⁵⁰ Classes were kept small for security reasons; everyone, civilians and officers alike, wore civilian dress.³⁵¹ Holland hoped these men could accompany future military missions sent abroad, making “contact with any elements that might be able to operate behind the Germans.”³⁵²

Meanwhile, Gubbins traveled to connect Britain’s potential agents with potential guerrillas abroad. In May he traveled to Poland, the three Baltic republics and Romania, meeting with the British military attachés in each country. He concluded that the Poles possessed a “natural aptitude... for guerilla activities... fostered by the national spirit during a century of oppression by Russia and Germany.”³⁵³ The British ambassador in

³⁴⁸ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 35. Cf. Gubbins to Foot, 24 January 1964, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM.

³⁴⁹ Likewise, the old practice of a one-year appointment for the head of GS(R) now passed from the scene.

³⁵⁰ “CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” nd, 1, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 36.

³⁵¹ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 25; Peter Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields: The Story of an SOE Operative* (London, 1997), 63. Wilkinson’s personal assessment of the first MI(R) courses is mixed: “Colin Gubbins gave a good but somewhat superficial lecture on the principles of guerrilla warfare.... I enjoyed the two lectures given by the head signal officer of MI6.... I cannot say that I learned very much from the course and remember remarking to Alan Brown that we might have been more profitably employed spending a weekend re-reading T. E. Lawrence’s *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.”

³⁵² Holland, quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 36.

³⁵³ Gubbins, “Report for D.C.I.G.S. No. 8 – Investigation of the Possibilities of Guerilla Activities, Appendix I: Preliminary Report on a Tour to Poland, Baltic States, and Roumania,” 1 June 1939, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260.

Warsaw informed him that the Polish General Staff had been very frank; the ambassador insisted that the Poles “could be trusted to the hilt” and hoped that MI(R) would match their candor.³⁵⁴ On two later trips to Poland, the Baltic and the Balkans, he contacted the Polish General Staff and its intelligence service and again met with the British military attachés.³⁵⁵ In his meetings with the Poles, Gubbins discussed guerrilla warfare only generally, without making any joint plans, though he and Colonel Stanislaw Gano of Polish military intelligence, met at this time and become friends.³⁵⁶ However, very little is known of these travels, since, as Gubbins himself admitted years later, they “were so secret that even the D.M.I. was not informed and was very angry when he discovered.”³⁵⁷

In addition to the information and relationships Gubbins acquired in Poland, he also brought home a device called a “time-pencil,” a time-delay fuse capable of

³⁵⁴ Gubbins, “Report for D.C.I.G.S. No. 8 – Investigation of the Possibilities of Guerilla Activities, Appendix I: Preliminary Report on a Tour to Poland, Baltic States, and Roumania,” 1 June 1939, 9, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260. Emphasis in original.

³⁵⁵ Garliński, *Poland, SOE and the Allies*, 24; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 44-45; Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 11-12; Wilkinson and Astley, 36. Garliński writes that, “In spring 1939 Colonel Gubbins... paid a number of secret visits to the Baltic States, Poland and the Danubian countries.” Similarly, Mackenzie writes that Gubbins visited “all the Balkan countries except Bulgaria” (45). This would certainly have included Romania and Yugoslavia (the capital of which, Belgrade, was central to Section D’s Balkan operations), though it is unclear if Hungary was visited as well. Albania was under Italian occupation. After the war Gubbins told one audience “I myself had done two reconnaissances through the Balkans and Eastern Europe between June and August, 1939.” It is unclear, however, if he visited both locations on both trips, or why he omitted mention of the trip in May. See Gubbins address to the Danish/English Society [elsewhere given as “Anglo/Danish Club”], Copenhagen, 29 April 1966, 2, Gubbins papers 4/1/20, IWM.

³⁵⁶ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 46-47. Gano had studied in Moscow and served as Chief of the East Section of the Intelligence Department, military attaché in Helsinki, and Head of the Independent Technical Section of II Bureau before World War II; in November 1939 he became head of the Chief of the Intelligence Department as the Poles reorganized themselves in exile. See Andrzej Pełoński and Andrzej Suchcitz, “Organisation and Operations of the II Bureau of the Polish General Staff,” *Intelligence Co-operation between Poland and Great Britain during World War II*, Vol. I: The Report of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee, ed. Tessa Stirling, Daria Nałęcz, and Tadeusz Dubicki (London, 2005), 81, 102; Eugenia Maresch, “SOE and Polish Aspirations,” *Intelligence Co-operation between Poland and Great Britain*, 212 n5.

³⁵⁷ “CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” nd, 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM.

detonating plastic explosives up to 30 hours after activation. It had been invented by the Germans during World War I and was improved by the Poles; SOE would subsequently improve the device further and manufacture them in the millions.³⁵⁸

The Art of Guerilla Warfare and The Partisan Leader's Handbook

In April 1939 Holland sent a memo to his subordinates, explaining that the organization had permission to act on three items:

- (a) To study guerilla methods and produce a guerilla "F.S.R" [Field Service Regulations], incorporating detailed tactical and technical instructions, applying to each of several countries.
- (b) To evolve destructive devices for delaying and suitable for use by guerillas, and capable of production and distribution on a wide enough scale to be effective.
- (c) To evolve procedure and machinery for operating guerilla activities, if it should be decided to do so subsequently.³⁵⁹

Holland envisioned an easily-translated pamphlet to explain the general principles of guerrilla operations, "followed by chapters or sections dealing with the detailed application to each country."³⁶⁰ Gubbins answered this call, completing in May two brief but significant pamphlets: *The Partisan Leader's Handbook* and *The Art of*

³⁵⁸ Christopher Andrew, "British-Polish Intelligence Collaboration during the Second World War in Historical Perspective," *Intelligence Co-Operation between Poland and Great Britain*, Vol. I: The Report of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee, ed. Tessa Stirling et al, 56; Gubbins, "The Underground Forces in Britain," lecture given to the Cerne Abbas Discussion Club, Dorchester, April (?) 1973, 12a, Gubbins papers 4/1/42, IWM.

³⁵⁹ Holland, "General Instructions," 13 April 1939, 2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256. Holland explained: "I took a paper over recently to the War Office to secure the C.I.G.S.'s approval for the objects of this branch. In the prevailing excitement C.I.G.S. could not give the attention merited to this paper, but D.C.I.G.S. told me that it could be taken as approved."

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

Guerilla Warfare.³⁶¹ Gubbins also co-authored with Jefferis a third work, *How to Use High Explosives*.³⁶²

For unknown reasons, Gubbins's works are general guides and not country specific. In passing, we have already seen many of these principles: the potential strength of guerrillas, particularly when possessed with quality intelligence; the need for guerrillas to maintain mobility; the psychological or moral effect of guerrillas simply remaining in the field; the danger guerrillas can pose to extended lines of communication; and the threat posed to guerrillas by extended engagements. It may be useful, however, to pause and briefly consider these works in their own right, rather than in relation to other ideas.

The Art of Guerilla Warfare, though completed second, is logically the senior of the two works, since it covers "the organisation of guerilla warfare generally," while *The Partisan Leader's Handbook*, as the name implies, is "of the 'Section Leading' type, for the leaders of partisan parties."³⁶³ The *Art* is broken into seventeen sections, covering: (1) The object of guerrilla warfare ("to harass the enemy in every way possible"³⁶⁴); (2) Its "objectives" or targets, such as supply depots, communications, etc.; (3) Its methods and asymmetric tactics utilizing mobility, initiative, information and morale, including the so-called "nine points of the guerilla's creed"³⁶⁵; (4) Its leadership and organization; (5) The Guerilla Bureau; (6) Arms and equipment; (7) Information and intelligence; (8)

³⁶¹ "G.S.R.," 18 April 1939, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 39.

³⁶² Astley, *Inner Circle*, 23.

³⁶³ GS(R), "Report for D.C.I.G.S. No. 8 – Investigation of the Possibilities of Guerilla Activities," 1 June 1939, 5, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260.

³⁶⁴ AGW, 1 § 1.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 5 § 16.

Communications; (9) Training; (10) Enemy counter action; (11 & 12) Planning; (13) Friendly populations; (14) Hostile populations; (15) Neutral countries; (16) Geography; and (17) The organization of individual partisan bands. The *Handbook*, divided into seven sections, covers similar topics: principles of guerrilla warfare and sabotage, types of operations, organization, information, informers and enemy countermeasures. These sections are then augmented by eight appendices deal with practical matters: road ambushes, rail ambushes, the destruction of an enemy post, concealment and care of arms and explosives, countering the enemy's information system, countering enemy action, the guerrilla information service, and miscellaneous sabotage methods.

Learning from the Past

Although Gubbins and Holland had both experienced irregular warfare themselves, particularly in Ireland, they were also inspired by historical examples. Indeed, as Foot observes, their “subject’s importance should have been obvious to the British, for in 1899-1902 it had taken a quarter of a million men to put down an informal Boer army less than a tenth as large.”³⁶⁶ There is no doubt about GS(R)’s interest in history; its Report No. 2 considered “The Employment of Historians by the War Office in a consultative capacity.”³⁶⁷ Even before Gubbins joined GS(R), Holland had argued in his first joint proposals with Grand that irregular warfare “must be based on the experience which was have had in India, Irak, Ireland and Russia, i.e. the development

³⁶⁶ Foot, *SOE in France*, 2.

³⁶⁷ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 8 n2.

of a combination of guerilla and IRA tactics.”³⁶⁸ An examination of these and other conflicts known to have been studied by Holland and Gubbins reveal several things. At the most general level, such an examination shows that these men were very much products of their time. This is not to say that all military men in 1939 were interested in irregular warfare or believed in the usefulness of partisans. Nevertheless, we discover the decades preceding the authorship of the *Art* and the *Handbook* were filled with irregular conflicts about which a great deal of information was available – in public books and articles and also in government memoranda – to those who were willing to look. And that was the crux of the matter. For although virtually every element of Gubbins’s writings had precedent somewhere else, his claim that “there was not a single book to be found in any library in any language which dealt with this subject” should not be dismissed as mere hyperbole.³⁶⁹ Works on guerilla warfare certainly existed, but they were few. Moreover, most were historical, even anecdotal; a few were theoretical. Systematic tactical considerations were unusual. In addition, most works that seriously considered guerrilla warfare as a military phenomenon did so from the *counter-*guerrilla’s perspective, not from the guerrilla’s own. Thus, we see that Gubbins’s genius lay in synthesizing existing ideas into a brief and usable form.

³⁶⁸ Holland and Grand, quoted in Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 9. Other conflicts were also discussed at various times. One report, for example, cites the Cossack guerrillas who harassed Napoleon in Russia and the *franc-tireurs* who harassed German communication lines in France in 1871. (See GS[R], “Report for D.C.I.G.S. No. 8 – Investigation of the Possibilities of Guerilla Activities,” 1 June 1939, 2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260.) Hugh Dalton, SOE’s future boss at the Ministry of Economic Warfare, mentioned in a letter to Lord Halifax “the Spanish Irregulars who played such a notable part in Wellington’s campaign” during the Napoleonic Wars. (See Hugh Dalton, *The Fateful Years* [London, 1953], 368.) In spite of these occasional allusions, conflicts prior to the Second Anglo Boer War appear to have had little real influence on Gubbins, MI(R) or Section D; inspirational though they may have been, society, technology and warfare had changed too much for many lessons to be learned from these earliest guerrilla conflicts.

³⁶⁹ Gubbins, quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 35.

At a more specific level, a careful consideration of the conflicts examined by GS(R) reveals parallels between specific tactics seen on the battlefield and also in Gubbins's thought. The extant documentation is rarely sufficient to definitively prove that on a particular point Gubbins was inspired by a single particular example. Nevertheless, by constructing a picture of irregular conflict in the decades before GS(R) came into existence – a picture informed by contemporary accounts, the later writings of participants, and the known interests of GS(R) – one can better understand the context of Gubbins's work and draw probable, if not always certain, conclusions.

The Second Anglo-Boer War

Holland and Gubbins were certainly inspired by the example of the Boers in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1903. In a report to the DCIGS on 1 June 1939, GS(R) argued that

guerilla warfare, when carefully planned and conducted with skill, can have a marked influence on a campaign, out of all proportion to the numbers of guerillas actually engaged. Examples from our own history give adequate proof. In the Boer War, the number of Boers in the field probably never exceeded 25,000, while our own army was fully ten times as large before success was ultimately achieved.³⁷⁰

The precise details of their study of the Boers we do not know; however, a careful consideration of the Boers' conflict with the British, alongside Gubbins's later writings, reveals likely areas of inspiration.

³⁷⁰ GS(R), "Report for D.C.I.G.S. No. 8 – Investigation of the Possibilities of Guerilla Activities," 1 June 1939, 1, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260.

The Second Anglo-Boer War was Britain's largest conflict between the defeat of Napoleon and the Great War. Gubbins's interest in the Boers may have been further piqued at an early age by his aunt Susie's service as a nurse in the conflict.³⁷¹ He continued to concern himself with the Boers after World War II, as well. In a lecture in 1973, for example, he observed that Britain's many irregular campaigns of the late 19th and early 20th centuries had seen a "marked influence on the operations of regular armies."³⁷² Likewise, an article in *Chamber's Encyclopedia* explains the advantages of mobility that the Boer commandos had over the British forces.³⁷³ The original draft adds that British regulars were "cumbersome and... unsuited" to unconventional war, having to change their methods to achieve victory.³⁷⁴ It is unsurprising, then, that Gubbins was inspired by the Boers and their irregular tactics.

Dutch refugees from British Cape Colony – known as *Voortrekkers* – established the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (colloquially known as the Transvaal) in the 1850s. The Boers' first experience of guerrilla warfare likely came in the *Voortrekker* wars of expansion, when both the agrarian Boers and the neighboring peoples utilized nocturnal raids to capture and recapture cattle; it comes as little surprise

³⁷¹ Unfinished Gubbins memoirs, quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 8. A draft of this chapter, "The Schools 1902-1913," including the quotation from Gubbins's unfinished memoirs, may be found in the Gubbins papers, 12/2, IWM. The passage is found on p. 28 of the draft manuscript.

³⁷² Gubbins, "The Underground Forces in Britain," lecture given to the Cerne Abbas Discussion Club, Dorchester, April (?) 1973, 14, Gubbins papers 4/1/42, IWM. "In our own history we have the Boer War, troubles in Ireland in 1919-1922, the continual small wars on the North West Frontier of India, the great Resistance movements & secret armies built up in the occupied countries from the North Cape to Burma, etc: and since the last war the examples in the world as a whole are innumerable: there is no need to specify them."

³⁷³ Gubbins, "Guerrilla," *Chamber's Encyclopedia* (London, 1968).

³⁷⁴ Gubbins, "GUERRILLA or, more commonly GUERILLA," n.d., Gubbins papers 5/8, IWM.

that both sides also utilized the raid in open warfare.³⁷⁵ In 1881 the Transvaal fought an inconclusive war against Britain. Gold was discovered in the Transvaal in 1886 and war returned thirteen years later. Boer troops rapidly struck into Cape Colony and Natal, but these gains were reversed by Field Marshall Lord Roberts, who captured the Boer capitals of Bloemfontein in March 1900 and Pretoria in June. Many in London and elsewhere assumed the war was over. Instead, Lord Kitchener, successor to Roberts as commander of the British forces, faced a guerrilla war against Boer commandos for another two years until the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging in May 1902, ending the conflict.

The parallels between Gubbins's writings and the Boer experience are many. In the first instance, the counter-guerrilla environment was similar. Writing four decades after the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Boer War, Gubbins was keenly aware of the enemy countermeasures guerrillas would face. He expected the enemy to be much better armed and equipped with all the technological advances of recent decades.³⁷⁶ The enemy would likely employ raids, traps, regulations such as the use of identity cards, agents recruited from the local population, imported agents, captured prisoners, and press and mail censorship.³⁷⁷ Such measures not only echo the British actions Gubbins had seen in Ireland, but also parallel conditions in South Africa at the turn of the century. Byron Farwell, the eminent historian of the Second Anglo-Boer War, explains that when martial law was imposed across Cape Colony in 1901,

³⁷⁵ Janis Cakars, "Koos de la Rey in the Transvaal," *Great Raids in History: From Drake to Desert One*, ed. Samuel A. Southworth (New York, 1997), 128. In these conflicts the Boers also honed the horsemanship and marksmanship already present in their rural culture and wedded it to adept scouting

³⁷⁶ *AGW*, 4 § 10, 8 § 24; *PHL*, 3 § 3.

³⁷⁷ *PLH*, 11 § 13, 32-33 (Appendix V: The Enemy's Information System and How to Counter It) § 1-6.

Passes were required...; a curfew was imposed; ...bicycles were registered; neutrality became unacceptable and farmers were ordered to give information and actively aid British columns; ...the licences of travelling pedlars were suspended; hotels had to file daily reports on their guests; and there were harsh restrictions on a long list of “prohibited goods.”³⁷⁸

Gubbins was fully aware that if a guerrilla movement could not contend with countermeasures such as these, it would fail.

A second parallel is the importance of survival, something the Boer guerrillas understood well. So long as they remained in the field, the British could not claim victory; thus, a skillful retreat was often more useful than bold actions. The Boer General Christiaan de Wet commented that “it was impossible to think of fighting – the enemy’s numbers were far too great. Our only safety lay in flight.”³⁷⁹ Recognizing the importance of survival, Boer commandos often fled when British reinforcements arrived at an engagement, much to the British’ chagrin. Roberts complained to war minister Lord Lansdowne, “They slip away in the most extraordinary manner.”³⁸⁰

Moreover, the Boers also excelled at ambushing their pursuers, further allowing escape. At the Battle of Belmont (23 November 1899), the Boers not only inflicted significant losses and made a successful retreat, but then ambushed the lancers and mounted infantry who followed them.³⁸¹ After engagements Boers frequently disappeared into the veldt, knowing “the principle that best ensures survival:

³⁷⁸ Byron Farwell, *The Great Anglo-Boer War* (New York, 1976), 329.

³⁷⁹ Christiaan Rudolf de Wet, *Three Years’ War* (New York, 1902), 141.

³⁸⁰ Lord Roberts to Lord Lansdowne, 29 April 1900, Home & Overseas Correspondence of Lord Roberts, War Office Library, London, vol. I, 107-8; quoted in Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (New York, 1979), 445.

³⁸¹ Cakars, “Koos de la Rey in the Transvaal,” 133.

invisibility.”³⁸² General Koos de la Rey usually “vanished in the darkness with exhausted cavalry in weary pursuit,” wrote one Kitchener biographer in 1920.³⁸³

Gubbins followed the pattern of his Boer predecessors by arguing that survival is key for guerrillas. As we have seen in the case of the Irish context, he admonishes partisans to “avoid prolonged engagements”³⁸⁴ and “never get involved in a pitched battle.”³⁸⁵ Direct action should be utilized only by guerrillas “in such overwhelming strength that success can be assured.”³⁸⁶ A “secure line of retreat” is essential for any ambush position; “speed and aggression in the attack” are needed, Gubbins writes, “followed by [a] quick get-away.”³⁸⁷

In a third parallel, both Gubbins and the Boers emphasized stretching the enemy thin. The Boers were vastly outnumbered, and could not hope to equal the resources of the British Empire. However, by striking unexpectedly, first at one place and then another, they could force the British to guard vast tracks of territory, tying down enemy forces. In this they were highly effective. On 19 June 1901, Kitchener had approximately “164,000 men, of whom, however, nearly 100,000 were scattered along

³⁸² Pakenham, *The Boer War*, 589. “Many soldiers spent their entire tour of duty in South Africa without ever seeing a hostile burgher. This lack of activity made for a relaxation of vigilance that often enabled the Boers to slip through” (Farwell, *The Great Anglo-Boer War*, 352). The term “burgher,” originally referring to one who dwelt in a town or city, came to be applied to all Boer citizens, although most were farmers.

³⁸³ Sir George Arthur, *Life of Lord Kitchener*, vol. I (London, 1920), 298-99. Another biographer explained in 1916: “It would be an endless task to describe in detail the efforts to find and engage in a vast territory bands who were bent on nothing so much as avoiding battle” (E. S. Grew, *Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener: His Life and Work for the Empire*, vol. II [London, 1916], 120).

³⁸⁴ *AGW*, 5 § 15.

³⁸⁵ *PLH*, 2 § 2f.

³⁸⁶ *AGW*, p. 5 § 15. Emphasis added. Cf. *AGW*, p. 6 § 16f; *PLH*, p.1 § 2b, p. 14, Appendix I (Road Ambush) § 2d.

³⁸⁷ “Minor Tactics” (G.1), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 248.

the lines of rail, and were almost wholly upon the defensive.”³⁸⁸ The Boer General Louis Botha told an American observer, “Should we gather all our fighting men together into one force we could undoubtedly make some very pretty fights; but there would be only a few of them... and there would be an end to our cause.” The Boers could not allow the British such a concentration of forces. “As it is, we will split up into four or five commands, [and] continue operations independently of each other.”³⁸⁹ Busy trying to defend *everything*, the British had trouble collecting forces for offensive operations. The same elements appear in Gubbins’s writings, which advocate harassing the enemy and forcing him to disperse his forces until he could not effectively wage war.³⁹⁰

A fourth parallel concerns mobility and initiative. In peacetime the Boers were a nation of horsemen; in war, consequently, one of their chief advantages was mobility.³⁹¹ The use of small groups maximized this advantage.³⁹² A number of means were employed to further improve the Boer horsemen’s mobility. Several of de Wet’s patrols “were forbidden to use waggons; thus, if the enemy should appear in overwhelming

³⁸⁸ Arthur, *Life of Lord Kitchener*, vol. II, 2.

³⁸⁹ Louis Botha, quoted in James F. J. Archibald, *Blue Shirt and Khaki: A Comparison* (New York, 1901), 139. Alan R. I. Hiley and John A. Hassell, who served with the Boers, note how “for two years [de Wet] has harassed the British with success, inflicting tremendous losses with a minimum to himself. He changes his field of operations whenever hard pressed or the country fails to support him, forcing the English to continually extend the area of their activities until their operations have degenerated into a round of hurried visits, no place being effectively occupied outside the principal depots. He reduced the enemy’s garrisons over an enormous territory to the point of a nervous tension which precluded anything but the necessity of defense” (*The Mobile Boer: Being the Record of the Observations of Two Burgher Officers* [New York, 1902], 251-52. Arthur explained that the Afrikaners “realized that the power of the British did not extend beyond the range of their rifles and guns, and was in effect confined to a narrow strip of country on either side of the railway line, leaving to them by far the greater part of their territory and sufficient resources to keep them in the field for many a long day” (Arthur, *Life of Lord Kitchener*, vol. I, 309).

³⁹⁰ AGW, 1 § 1; PLH, 2 § 2, 12 § 14. Cf. “Minor Tactics” (G.1), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 248.

³⁹¹ Ironically, the Boers squandered their mobility early in the war by besieging Mafeking, Kimberly and Ladysmith, engaging in static warfare. This was arguably the greatest Afrikaner mistake of the conflict.

³⁹² Pakenham, *Boer War*, 348. Cf. de Wet, *Three Years’ War*, 79-80, 85.

numbers, it would always be possible for them to escape across the mountains.”³⁹³ Late in the war de la Rey began adopting very swift surprise attacks, in which he ordered his men to fire from the saddle; they would strike where the enemy was weak, but would not stay long enough even to dismount and fire.³⁹⁴

Like the Boers, Gubbins prized mobility as one of a guerrilla’s key advantages.³⁹⁵ He argued that they should strike the enemy and then quickly withdraw, only to attack again at a different location.³⁹⁶ Further paralleling the Boers of South Africa, Gubbins noted that a guerrilla’s mobility could be enhanced by the use of lighter equipment.³⁹⁷

The Boers found that small groups could best employ their mobility, while also minimizing the constant problems of ill-discipline. In a similar way, Gubbins advocates autonomy for partisan bands: “self-contained, acting under their own leader’s initiative... obtaining their own information by the most direct and simplest means (usually word of mouth) and maintaining the loosest organization compatible with

³⁹³ De Wet, *Three Years’ War*, 125. This light mobility contrasts sharply with early British efforts. “Our speed on this trek was necessarily slow,” writes one trooper, “being limited by the progress of our ox teams” (Frank Perham, *The Kimberley Flying Column: Being Reminiscences of Service in the South African War of 1899-1903* [New Zealand, n.d.], 19). By the end of the war, however, even Gen. Jan Smuts acknowledged that “the mounted columns of the enemy were about as mobile as the Boer commandos,” though the British possessed a “hesitation... to come to the final grip with us” (Jan Smuts, “Memoirs of the Boer War,” *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, ed. W. K. Hancock and Jean van der Poel, vol. I [Cambridge, 1966], 628).

³⁹⁴ Cakars, “Koos de la Rey in the Transvaal,” 139-40.

³⁹⁵ *AGW*, 3 § 6, 4 § 11; *PLH*, 1 § 2e.

³⁹⁶ *PLH*, 2 § 2.

³⁹⁷ *AGW*, 6 § 16d. Cf. Hiley and Hassell, *Mobile Boer*, 269.

effective action.”³⁹⁸ A central authority should provide only general oversight indicating ends, for which the individual bands supply the means.³⁹⁹

Mobility, however, was only one means by which the Boers retained initiative in combat. Even before the dawn of the 19th century, the Boers, in their wars with neighboring peoples, began the practice of seizing a defensive position near to the enemy, provoking an attack that favored the Boer defenders; in this way they could enjoy the benefits of defense while still retaining the initiative. When war broke out with the British in 1899, the tactic was employed yet again.⁴⁰⁰ Surprise and deception were frequently utilized as well. When President Martinus Steyn of the Orange Free State decided to risk crossing the Pietersburg Railway in order to visit the Transvaal government, de Wet intentionally made his presence known elsewhere, distracting British forces from the presidential party.⁴⁰¹ At the Battle of Modder River (28 November 1899) the Boers hid themselves behind the forward bank of the river, surprising Lord Methuen’s men, who expected to meet the enemy on the *far* side.⁴⁰² On another occasion two squadrons of the 19th Hussars were surrounded when Boers “laid a bait for them with some cattle.”⁴⁰³ At the Battle of Blood River Poort (17 September 1901), Colonel Hubert Gough attacked a body of dismounted Boers, caught – he believed – unprepared. In fact it was a trap, with Botha’s main force flanking Gough and

³⁹⁸ AGW, 3 § 5b. Cf. “Street Fighting” (G.6), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 284.

³⁹⁹ AGW, 3 § 5b.

⁴⁰⁰ Cakars, “Koos de la Rey in the Transvaal,” 128.

⁴⁰¹ De Wet, *Three Years’ War*, 144.

⁴⁰² Cakars, “Koos de la Rey in the Transvaal,” 134.

⁴⁰³ Sir Percival Scrope Marling, *Rifleman and Hussar* (London, 1931), 284.

roll[ing] over the British line from right to left in ten minutes. Six officers and 38 men of the Mounted Infantry were killed or wounded, and 6 officers and 235 men taken prisoners. After searching inquiry, the Commander-in-Chief [Kitchener] exonerated Gough: “Gough’s affair might have happened to any one. He fell into a carefully-prepared trap in very difficult ground. The bait was 200 men of the enemy off-saddled, and the whole force of the enemy carefully concealed.”⁴⁰⁴

Likewise, during his raid into Cape Colony, General Jan Smuts divided his forces, for easier provisioning, but also to keep the British in a state of confusion.⁴⁰⁵

Gubbins argues that among the principles of guerrilla warfare, “Surprise [is] first and foremost.”⁴⁰⁶ The later SOE syllabus – on which Gubbins had considerable influence (see Chapter 5) – clearly echoes this idea: “SURPRISE IS ESSENTIAL.”⁴⁰⁷ In order to achieve surprise, Gubbins advised “finding out the enemy’s plans and concealing your own intentions and movements.”⁴⁰⁸ Although Gubbins writes little about actual deception as such – as opposed to mere concealment – Britain’s efforts at strategic deception during the Second World War are well documented.⁴⁰⁹ It is worth mentioning, however, that the Inter-Service Security Board (ISSB), which coordinated

⁴⁰⁴ Arthur, *Life of Lord Kitchener*, vol. II, p. 48. Internal quotation from Lord Kitchener to William St. John Brodrick, 20 September 1901. On yet another occasion the British surrounded de Wet’s forces and waited for him to attack their positions in the middle of the night, in an attempt to break out. They could hear his wagons and artillery moving about in his camp all through the night, but at dawn found it empty. He had taken all his men and equipment through a path deemed impassible by the British. And all the noise in the camp? “Two wagons had been loaded with sheet-iron and scraps to make a noise in imitation of artillery, and had for the benefit of the English watchers been industriously driven around the camp all night by two faithful Kaffir servants.” Hiley and Hassell, *Mobile Boer*, 243-44. The term “kaffir” was used in the 19th century to refer to black Africans. Today it is considered a derogatory racial slur.

⁴⁰⁵ Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 346.

⁴⁰⁶ AGW, 5 § 16a.

⁴⁰⁷ “Minor Tactics” (G.1), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 248. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁰⁸ AGW, 5 § 16a.

⁴⁰⁹ Some leading texts on the topic include Sir Michael Howard, *Strategic Deception* (Cambridge, 1990); Jon Latimer, *Deception in War* (London, 2001); J. C. Masterman, *The Double-Cross System in the War of 1939 to 1945* (New Haven, 1972); and Ewan Montagu, *The Man Who Never Was* (Philadelphia, 1954).

many of the nation's deception activities, began as an MI(R) project, though one Holland was happy to spin off when it grew beyond MI(R)'s scope.⁴¹⁰

Information was a key part of the Boer approach to warfare, a fifth parallel with Gubbins's writings; intelligence on the enemy allowed the Boers to retain the initiative and strike the enemy where he was weakest. Even before the conflict with the British, the Boers possessed fine scouting skills.⁴¹¹ Men were selected for certain operations precisely because "they belonged to the district, and thus were well acquainted with every foot of the rough and difficult country."⁴¹² Moreover, "every [Boer] farm was both an intelligence agency and a stores department."⁴¹³ The Boers collected additional information on British military movements by simply tapping the British telegraph lines.⁴¹⁴ The Boers seem, however, to have been uninterested in gleaning information from the enemy's mail.⁴¹⁵

The SOE training syllabus explains that "the secret of every successful operation is detailed and accurate information."⁴¹⁶ "The advantage of superior information is the guerillas' greatest asset," writes Gubbins; "it must be used to the fullest extent possible.... in order to counteract the enemy's superior armament and equipment."⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁰ Holland, "Duties and Activities of M.I.R.," 22 July 1940, 2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256. Cf. Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 48-49.

⁴¹¹ Cakars, "Koos de la Rey in the Transvaal," 128. Cf. Smuts, "Memoirs of the Boer War," *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, vol. I, 633; Archibald, *Blue Shirt and Khaki*, 129.

⁴¹² De Wet, *Three Years' War*, 125.

⁴¹³ Arthur, *Life of Lord Kitchener*, vol. II, 11.

⁴¹⁴ Pakenham, *Boer War*, 498.

⁴¹⁵ At Roodewal in June 1900, de Wet told a group of British prisoners that "as far as their private belonging were concerned, they were welcome to keep them.... But I told them that the letters were a different matter, and that I could not allow them to reach their destination – unless they were directed to a bonfire!" (De Wet, *Three Years' War*, 101).

⁴¹⁶ "Street Fighting" (G.6), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 284.

⁴¹⁷ AGW, 12 § 43; 11 § 36.

As noted in the Irish context, information may pertain to “the offensive aspect” – useful for planning guerrilla operations – or “the defensive aspect” – ensuring that the enemy cannot undertake raids of suspected houses or other operations without the guerrillas’ prior knowledge.⁴¹⁸

The local population, frequently rubbing elbows with occupying troops, is the best source of information; locals may passively obtain information by keeping an open ear, or more actively by questioning soldiers and intercepting mail.⁴¹⁹ Gubbins explains: “The proper encouragement of [the local population’s support] and the development of the system of obtaining information will ensure that the guerillas are kept *au fait* with the enemy’s movements and intentions, whereas their own are hidden from him.”⁴²⁰ The partisan has the added advantage of blending in with the local population, while the enemy’s activities, in uniform, are more conspicuous.⁴²¹

Information collection and utilization is only one half of the intelligence battle; information must also be denied to the enemy. Those who collaborate with the enemy are a frequent source of information, either in the form of particular operational plans or more general insights into culture and tactics. During the guerrilla phase of the Boer War, the British employed the National Scouts, a group of Boers, many of whom had previously served the republics before surrendering to the British. De Wet complained that these deserters – “hands-uppers” – were the Boers’ “undoing,” as they provided the

⁴¹⁸ AGW, 11 § 36. Cf. PLH, 4 § 6, 9 § 11, 11 § 13.

⁴¹⁹ AGW, 11 § 37.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 4 § 12.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 9 § 10.

British with native scouts.⁴²² Boers who surrendered and subsequently tried to convince their comrades to do likewise found no welcome; those who collaborated with the British were court-martialed and sentenced as traitors. When he became Assistant Commandant-General, Smuts not only appointed new leaders, but also expelled those suspected of disloyalty and executed those found guilty of treason.⁴²³ The families of those who surrendered were also driven from their homes by Botha, Smuts and de la Rey, and had to be protected by Kitchener.⁴²⁴

In addition to those who openly went over to the British, the Boers had spies and informers in their own midst. In the Western Cape Smuts faced a grave problem when betrayed by a bogus “Colonel Lambert Colyn,” who deserted the Boers to lead a British column on a dawn raid against them. When Colyn was captured, Smuts had him shot (the man’s desperate pleas for mercy notwithstanding).⁴²⁵ Thus, scouting or spying for the British “was dangerous work for the boys, as the Boers killed any they caught and we found their bodies left as warning on the veldt.”⁴²⁶ Farwell records that one Boer commander “freely admitted that he had flogged ‘kaffir spies’ and... executed Boer

⁴²² De Wet, *Three Years’ War*, 18. For more thoughts on those who surrendered, see de Wet, *Three Years’ War*, 127, 137.

⁴²³ Pakenham, *Boer War*, 504, 517. He cites the *Secret Journal of the Principal Events etc.*, War Office Library, London, 8 & 10 January, 13 February and 15 April 1901 for examples of surrendered Afrikaners who tried to make peace.

⁴²⁴ Pakenham, *Boer War*, 523. However, British prisoners of war were treated well by the Afrikaners. Kitchener wrote, ‘The Boers treat them very well as prisoners and I believe they are not always pleased when they are released’ (Kitchener to Brodrick, 1 February 1901, in papers of Lt.-Gen. Lord Kitchener, National Archives [UK], 30/57, Y/19; quoted in Pakenham, *Boer War*, 525).

⁴²⁵ Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 346.

⁴²⁶ Bruce Hamilton, quoted in B. A. H. Parritt, *The Intelligencers: The Story of British Military Intelligence up to 1914* (Ashford, UK, 1972), 198.

‘traitors.’⁴²⁷ Similarly, de la Rey ruthlessly cleared the eastern region of Transvaal of native African families, in a bid to protect himself against British spies.⁴²⁸

As we have already seen in the context of his Irish experience, Gubbins recommends the severest measures for those who collaborate:

In every community will be found certain individuals so debased that for greed of gain they will sell even their own countrymen. Against this contingency close watch must be set, and wherever proof is obtained of such perfidy, the traitor must be killed without hesitation or delay. By such justifiably ruthless action others who might be tempted to follow suit will be finally deterred.⁴²⁹

In addition, Gubbins argued that partisans must convince the people that the enemy will soon be expelled, and when he is, those who have aided the resistance will be rewarded, but those who have collaborated “will be ruthlessly punished.”⁴³⁰

The practice of raiding for supplies is yet another parallel between the Boer experience and Gubbins’s writings. The Boers received only minimal material support from abroad. Limited domestic production was further curtailed after the British occupation of the Boer capitals in 1900. Thus the commandos relied heavily on captured equipment and supplies. By 1901 many of the Mauser rifles with which the Boers began the war had worn out and been replaced with captured British Lee-Enfield. Guerrillas made use of clothes captured from the British, and also took the clothes off British prisoners’ backs before releasing them. Clothing was in such short supply that de la

⁴²⁷ Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 333.

⁴²⁸ Col. I. Hamilton to Roberts, 18 May 1902 (Hamilton papers, King’s College, London); cited in Pakenham, *Boer War*, 590.

⁴²⁹ *AGW*, 12 § 40. Cf. “Objects and Methods of Counter-Espionage” (A.6), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 62; “Agent Management – Handling” (A.14), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 95. “If a person is suspected of being an informer, he can be tested by giving him false information, and then seeing if the enemy acts on it. If the enemy so acts, such evidence is sufficient proof of guilt, and the traitor must be liquidated at the first opportunity” (*PLH*, 11 § 12).

⁴³⁰ *PLH*, 5 § 6.

Rey's daughters wore dresses made of captured Union Jacks. Captured wagons, boots and other supplies were also utilized.⁴³¹

When the British made a regular habit of burning farms in the occupied Boer republics, Smuts invaded Cape Colony in September of 1901, hoping to find supplies there.⁴³² Sometimes the supply situation became quite desperate. In one engagement Smuts had to attack, knowing that without fresh supplies captured from the enemy he could not carry on; his men literally fired their last rounds and then took up the weapons of the fallen British.⁴³³

Surviving off enemy goods had its advantages: wearing the enemy's captured uniforms proved invaluable at the Battle of Elands River (17 September 1901), when British forces were confused by the guerrillas' khaki uniforms.⁴³⁴ Likewise, Deneys Reitz avoided capture or death at least twice by pretending to be a British soldier.⁴³⁵ This was, of course, a violation of the accepted norms of warfare.⁴³⁶ The Boer

⁴³¹ De Wet, *Three Years' War*, 102; Cakars, "Koos de la Rey in the Transvaal," 139; Pakenham, *Boer War*, 504, 551.

⁴³² Pakenham, *Boer War*, 501.

⁴³³ Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 341.

⁴³⁴ Pakenham, *Boer War*, 555-6.

⁴³⁵ Hiley and Hassell, *Mobile Boer*, 60; Kitchener, telegraph to unspecified recipient, quoted in Arthur, *Life of Lord Kitchener*, vol. II, 44; Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 342-43.

⁴³⁶ Although international law was in its infancy, what written protocols existed at the time confirm this understanding of accepted norms. The Hague Convention of 1899 on The Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague II) prohibits the "improper use of a flag of truce, the national flag, or military ensigns and the enemy's uniform" (James Brown Scott, ed. *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907* [New York, 1915], 116, Article 23f). However, the Convention did not enter into force until 4 September 1900, after the war had already begun, nor were the Boer Republics party to it. In a similar manner, General Orders 100, first issued during the American Civil War, state that "Partisans are soldiers armed and wearing the uniform of their army.... If captured, they are entitled to all the privileges of the prisoner of war" (War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* [Washington, 1899], 148ff, Article 81). However, "Scouts, or single soldiers, if disguised in the dress of the country or in the uniform of the army hostile to their own... if found within or lurking about the lines of the captor, are treated as spies, and suffer death" (Article 83). Moreover, "Troops who fight in the uniform of their enemies, without any plain, striking, and uniform

guerrillas' dependence on captured goods also made them prone to looting, particularly problematic when they should have been fighting.⁴³⁷

Similarly, Gubbins insists that logistics are of the utmost importance for guerrillas.⁴³⁸

When operating behind the enemy's lines, the maintenance of supplies from outside will be a matter of the very greatest difficulty...; it is most important therefore that every opportunity to *seize arms and ammunition from the enemy* should be grasped.... It will sometimes be necessary to organize raids whose primary object is the seizure of arms; every partisan must always have this matter uppermost in his mind, and be prepared to grasp any opportunity that offers.⁴³⁹

The SOE syllabus also discusses the details of looting supplies from an ambushed convoy, including the need to hide the stores and “the likelihood of the party leaving tracks in soft ground,” on account of the supplies' weight.⁴⁴⁰ Nevertheless, SOE was far less dependent on raiding than the Boers had been, since arms and equipment could – with difficulty – be supplied to occupied areas from Britain; as Gubbins explained after the Second World War, the Resistance movements had “a secure and accessible base

mark of distinction of their own, can expect no quarter” (Article 63). “While there was some justification... for wearing the [British uniforms],” notes Farwell, “there was no excuse for not removing the badges and insignia, and there was no excuse for not discarding the uniforms altogether when... [civilian] clothing became available” (Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 343). In spite of all this, the Boers were willing to make use of international norms when it suited their purposes. Percival Marling recalls, “I rode up to a house with a big red cross painted on the door, and an old woman sitting outside. I asked if it was the hospital. She could only speak Dutch, and handed me a piece of paper on which was written: ‘This is to certify that Anna Sauerkraut is a qualified midwife, and as such is under the protection of the Geneva Convention [of 1864]’” (Marling, *Rifleman and Hussar*, 275).

⁴³⁷ Hiley and Hassell blame the foreign volunteers serving with the Afrikaners for the looting: “The foreign element saw their first opportunity to loot [at Dundee] something legitimately belonging to the enemy, and some of their Boer companions, unable to resist the view of wealth and splendor in the officers' quarters ran him a close second” (Hiley and Hassell, *Mobile Boer*, 21). Cf. Pakenham, *Boer War*, 508.

⁴³⁸ *AGW*, 10 § 33.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 § 35. Emphasis added. Cf. *PLH*, 16 (Appendix I: Road Ambush) § 4.

⁴⁴⁰ “Ambushes” (G.4), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 271.

from which [they could] be nourished.”⁴⁴¹ Moreover, Gubbins nowhere recommended posing as enemy soldiers; instead, he seems committed to upholding international norms and conventions.⁴⁴²

A final parallel between the Boers and Gubbins concerns the role of civilians. The Boers made not infrequent use of civilians, particularly women. On one occasion, Percival Marling, a British officer, recalled, “When we started to search the house the old woman stood in front of a door and said we couldn’t enter, as her daughter was in bed going to have a baby, so we sent in Hardy, our doctor. The girl was in bed all right, and a Mauser [rifle] under the mattress, and her Boer lover under the bed.”⁴⁴³ The entire guerrilla effort depended upon support from the Boer civilian population; when Smuts pushed for the invasion of Cape Colony, he did so in part because he hoped the ethnic Boers, who represented the largest white minority there, would rise against the British and support the invaders.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴¹ Gubbins, “The Underground Forces in Britain,” lecture to Cerne Abbas Discussion Club, Dorchester, April (?) 1973, 15, Gubbins papers 4/1/42, IWM.

⁴⁴² Not only does Gubbins not mention posing as the enemy in either the *AGW* or the *PLH*, but the lecture in the SOE syllabus on Cover, Make-up & Disguise (A.4) makes no mention of disguising oneself as an enemy soldier or police officer; all occupations mentioned are civilian (Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 46-58).

⁴⁴³ Marling, *Rifleman and Hussar*, 275. Hiding guns and men under women in bed was quite common. On another occasion Marling records that “a party went out to surround a farm about 3 a.m. We put sentries all round it and rushed into the house, and found two girls aged about twenty-one and twenty-two in a huge bed. The girls were given five minutes to dress whilst our party explored the rest of the building. On their return they found the girls nearly dressed and, on looking under the mattress, found two Mauser rifles and a lot of ammunition, and beneath the bed two Boer men” (*Rifleman and Hussar*, 277). Yet another occasion: “On bursting into a room we found two girls in bed and two Boers under the beds” (285).

⁴⁴⁴ Jan Smuts to L. Botha, 23 January 1901; Smuts to J. H. de la Rey, 17 February 1901; Smuts to L. Botha, 27 February 1901, *Smuts Papers*, 363, 378, 383. Cf. Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 326; Pakenham, *Boer War*, 551. “There was some comfort to be found at the occasional farmhouse they came upon where they were sometimes given bread and coffee. At one large farm they were even able to build fires and eat a hot meal, unimaginable luxuries both.... Although unwilling to leave their farms and fight, many Cape farmers were willing to help the ragged, harried band with information or to act as guides. Near Dordecht a young farm boy led them expertly on a 30-mile march around the flank of a threatening

This inclusion of Boer civilians in the war effort was not without cost. Women and children were rounded up and placed in concentration camps where they died in appalling numbers. Burning farms was a routine British practice. In the brief period from 15 April to 17 May 1901, Colonel Marling reports burning 22 farms on six different occasions. Afterward the pace quickened: “For the next two weeks we were engaged in burning farms and rounding up Boers, but a daily account of our movements would become monotonous.”⁴⁴⁵ Before the end of the war in 1902 he reports another 41 farms destroyed on seven occasions, along with an entire town and a region where “we have removed all the Kaffirs, destroyed all the Boer farms, and the occupants have been taken to Concentration Camps; [we] knocked down all buildings, and bagged all the sheep and cattle and nearly every living animal.”⁴⁴⁶ Another British officer saw all this as necessary, explaining that the Boers used “their women and children as cover and their farms as arsenals.”⁴⁴⁷

Botha had read a fair amount of military history, Smuts even more; both had good reason to understand the price civilians pay in a guerrilla war. Sherman’s march

British column.... All day long [Smuts and his men] fought skirmishes and beat hasty retreats. Dusk found them stranded at a small farmhouse.... Short of a miracle the next day’s sun would see their surrender. But the Boers believed in miracles and what men believe in often happens. As Smuts stood in the farmyard with his lieutenants, Van Deventer and Bouwer, a hunchback on crutches came out of the house. He hardly looked like their deliverer as he hobbled up to Smuts, but he was. He knew a way out over a bog-like area that was unlikely to be guarded, and he offered to guide them” (Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 338).

⁴⁴⁵ Marling, *Rifleman and Hussar*, 276. Cf. Marling, *Rifleman and Hussar*, 272-75.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 295. Cf. Marling, *Rifleman and Hussar*, 276-95.

⁴⁴⁷ “Experiences at the Front,” *Cornish Guardian*, 30 August 1901, 3; quoted in Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa* (Manchester, 2004), 171. This may not be true in the strictest sense; Farwell contends that “there is no evidence of burghers deliberately hiding behind women to shoot, but there were ‘women’s laagers’ on the veld and occasionally women with commandos; sometimes they did get in the way of the fighting males” (Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 373). Archibald, an American observer, notes that “there are even women who have followed their husbands or brothers through it all, attending the wounded, and cooking when necessary, but often going into the fighting line and matching the men with a rifle” (Archibald, *Blue Shirt and Khaki*, 228).

through Georgia and the Prussia capture of French *franc-tireurs* were not so distant. “In short, here was a daunting moral problem. Was it fair to the folk (women and children, as well as the menfolk) to involve them in such a savage kind of war? ... Women and children [were] pressed into service,... their homes looted and burnt, then forced to choose between going as refugees to the cities, or following the laagers into battle.”⁴⁴⁸ Smuts took consolation in the stern morale of the Boer civilians who endured tremendous suffering.⁴⁴⁹ It was, however, a high price that they paid.

Like the Boers before him, Gubbins concluded that the inclusion of women and other civilians in a guerrilla war effort was worth the costs. He advocates the use of women and children, “who are less suspect” for conveying messages and sentry duties.⁴⁵⁰ Indeed, every man, woman and child, should be trained as an intelligence collector.⁴⁵¹ If the enemy is searching for weapons, “as a last resort, give them to your women if caught unexpectedly,” he advises.⁴⁵²

In spite of these similarities, Gubbins departed from his Boer inspiration on several points. As we have seen, Gubbins did not encourage or even condone the use of enemy uniforms. A second departure concerns organization. Discipline was a constant problem for the Boers; this ill discipline among the rank and file was mirrored by poor

⁴⁴⁸ Pakenham, *Boer War*, 500.

⁴⁴⁹ Jan Smuts to F. W. Reitz, 29 November 1900, *Smuts Papers*, ed. Hancock and van der Poel, vol. I, 346.

⁴⁵⁰ *AGW*, 13 § 45. Cf. *PLH*, 37 (Appendix VII: Guerilla Information Service) § 4. Cf. *PLH*, 5 § 7, 15 (Appendix I: Road Ambush) § 4b.

⁴⁵¹ *AGW*, 11 § 37.

⁴⁵² *PLH*, 32 (Appendix IV: Concealment and Care of Arms and Explosives) § 4.

coordination at higher levels, with each commando operating autonomously. The Boers often lacked a coherent strategy.⁴⁵³

They had no overall strategy, no master plan for winning the war. The activities of the various commandos were not coordinated, and there was not even a statement of policy regarding purposes or objectives. From first to last the Boers were always long on tactics and short on strategy. Each independent commander was left to harass the British as he thought best.⁴⁵⁴

To rectify this kind of problem, Gubbins proposed the creation of a Guerilla Bureau, “either an individual of the country concerned located with his small staff in the area of guerilla activities, or a section of the General Staff (Intelligence Branch) of the Army concerned, and located at its General Headquarters, or even a military mission from a third party,” i.e., Britain.⁴⁵⁵ Among such a bureau’s responsibilities would be formulating and coordinating plans, compiling intelligence and providing arms and ammunition to guerrillas. “When a large operation is planned, he will frequently direct and lead it in person.”⁴⁵⁶

Finally, Gubbins was pragmatic enough to only conduct a guerrilla campaign with hope of success; SOE was not interested in romantic resistance simply to make a point. “Sporadic risings are useless,” says the SOE syllabus.⁴⁵⁷ To justify inevitable reprisals against the civilian population, partisan activity needed to be of well-considered military value. “SOE agents strove to ensure that all irregular warfare served the

⁴⁵³ Pakenham, *Boer War*, 508.

⁴⁵⁴ Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 324.

⁴⁵⁵ AGW, 9 § 28.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 9 § 31. “As, however, the organization is purposely loose, it is important that ‘The Chief’ should not be exposed to unnecessary danger. Much of his plans and intentions for future action, his knowledge of the country and of his assistant-chiefs will not have been committed to paper nor can be, but are stored in his brain; his loss might be irreparable” (AGW, 9 § 31).

⁴⁵⁷ “Opening Address: Objects and Methods of Irregular Warfare” (A.1), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 35.

strategic aims of the Allied leaders”⁴⁵⁸ Farwell offers a scathing critique of the Boers in this regard:

Their struggle was indeed without hope of success, at least of the kind they could imagine. Their deliberate, hopeless prolongation of the war resulted in the deaths of additional thousands of brave men. It resulted in the destruction of their farms, which they and their fathers and grandfathers had worked so hard to build, and in the slaughters of their herds of cattle and sheep on which their future existence and way of life depended. Worst of all, it resulted in the decimation of their women and children. These proud, stubborn men had much to answer for.⁴⁵⁹

Insofar as possible, Gubbins would keep his hands free of these charges.⁴⁶⁰

T. E. Lawrence and the Arab Revolt

In October 1916, in the midst of World War I, a well-educated young British officer named T. E. Lawrence joined the Arabs then revolting against Turkish rule. The forces he led or advised attacked the Medina railway, captured Akaba and ultimately Damascus as well. Even after they linked up with the regular forces pushing east out of the Sinai, Lawrence’s irregulars continued to operate as the right wing of the British army.⁴⁶¹

Lawrence not only helped lead the Arab Revolt, but he also reflected on this group of irregular soldiers and their guerrilla campaign.⁴⁶² Whereas other campaigns,

⁴⁵⁸ Rigden, introduction, *SOE Syllabus*, 1-2.

⁴⁵⁹ Farwell, *Great Anglo-Boer War*, 325.

⁴⁶⁰ One of Gubbins’s more controversial actions was giving only limited support to the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. For an excellent discussion of the matter, see E. D. R. Harrison, “The British Special Operations Executive and Poland,” *The Historical Journal*, vol. 43, no. 4 (December 2000): 1071-91. Harrison makes clear that there is plenty of blame to go around, though it appears Gubbins was motivated in large part by the belief that the Poles could not succeed, and therefore ought not hazard a rebellion.

⁴⁶¹ T. E. Lawrence, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (New York, 1962), 8-18.

⁴⁶² “As a boy, T. E. always thought that he was going to do great things, both ‘active and reflective’ – ‘I hadn’t learned you can’t do both’” (Note by B. H. Liddell Hart on a conversation with Lawrence, 1 August

such as those fought by the Irish or Boers, are remembered through a variety of memoirs, government reports and histories both official and scholarly, Lawrence own writings were – and in many respects still are – the most important sources regarding the Arab Revolt. His volume of memoirs, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, first published in 1926, was a bestseller. Less well known is his pithy distillation of guerrilla theory, published in *Army Quarterly* in 1920/21 as “The Evolution of a Revolt,” and republished with minor variation by *Encyclopædia Britannica* in 1929 as “The Science of Guerrilla Warfare.” Until the advent of the Cold War, when he was eclipsed by Communist thinkers, Lawrence was probably the most oft-cited practitioner of guerrilla warfare. He was the writer who came to Wilkinson’s mind when he attended MI(R)’s training school, and Lawrence was read and cited by MI(R).⁴⁶³ But in addition to their different spellings of “guer[r]illa,” Lawrence and Gubbins offered different approaches to both the study and execution of guerrilla warfare. Nevertheless, similarities exist as well, suggesting the debt Gubbins may have owed to what he called “Lawrence’s epic guerrilla campaign.”⁴⁶⁴

T. E. Lawrence organizes his thoughts on guerrilla warfare into three “elements, one algebraical, one biological, a third psychological.”⁴⁶⁵ In the case of the first, Lawrence notes that “perhaps a hundred and forty thousand” square miles of territory lay open to the Arabs in the southern Turkish empire. “How would the Turks defend all

1933; quoted in Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: The Authorized Biography of T. E. Lawrence* [New York, 1990], 19).

⁴⁶³ Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 63; Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army*, 17, 53, 109.

⁴⁶⁴ Gubbins, “GUERRILLA or, more commonly GUERILLA,” n.d., Gubbins papers 5/8, IWM. The editors reduced this choice phrase to the much more prosaic “Lawrence’s guerrilla campaign.” See Gubbins, “Guerrilla,” *Chamber’s Encyclopedia* (London, 1968).

⁴⁶⁵ T. E. Lawrence, “The Evolution of a Revolt,” *Army Quarterly*, vol. I (Winter 1920/21): 59.

that...?”⁴⁶⁶ The numbers favored the Arabs: there was simply too much space for the Turks to protect.

Lawrence’s second element, the “biological,” concerns the components of war, “sensitive and illogical” human beings. Because of unknown human factors, commanders are forced to hold a body of men in reserve as a safeguard, thus stretching thin their other human resources. Lawrence worked to magnify his enemy’s ignorance: “We were to contain the enemy by the silent threat of a vast unknown desert, not disclosing ourselves till the moment of attack.”⁴⁶⁷ Lawrence employed “a highly mobile, highly equipped type of army, of the smallest size... [used] successively at distributed points of the Turkish line, to make the Turks reinforce their occupying posts beyond the economic minimum.”⁴⁶⁸ Ignorance would cause the Turks to array their forces in a disadvantageous way, a weakness Lawrence was happy to exploit.

The third element, the “psychological,” was of particular importance to Lawrence considering the Arabs’ relative inferiority. “We were so weak physically that we could not let the metaphysical weapon rust unused.”⁴⁶⁹ He explains, “We had to arrange [our Arab soldiers’] minds in order of battle, just as carefully and as formally as

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 59.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 59-61. Lawrence also extends this “biological” notion of ignorance and scarce resources to material as well. Although the Turks had relative abundance of manpower, they faced a relative shortage of equipment. “The death of a Turkish bridge or rail, machine or gun, or high explosive was more profitable to us than the death of a Turk.” Thus attacks were directed “not against his men, but against his materials.... In railway cutting this would be usually an empty stretch of rail” (61).

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 63. Lawrence’s forces were indeed highly equipped: “In his operative bodyguard, normally about thirty men, every other man was armed with a light automatic, so that his handful possessed more firepower than battalions of a thousand men in 1914” (B. H. Liddell Hart, *T.E. Lawrence’: In Arabia and After* [Westport, CT, 1979; reprint of 1935 revised edition], 471). Liddell Hart exaggerates somewhat: assuming 550 rounds/min. for a light automatic and 25 rounds/min. for a trained rifleman, the battalion could fire 25,000 rounds/min., while Lawrence’s bodyguard only about 8,625. Still, that it is even worth making the comparison proves Liddell Hart’s general point.

⁴⁶⁹ Lawrence, “Evolution of a Revolt,” 62.

other officers arranged their bodies.”⁴⁷⁰ For Lawrence, the use of psychology is primarily strategic, concerned with an individual or group’s commitment to the war at large. He describes this element as “the adjustment of spirit to the point where it becomes fit to exploit in action, the prearrangement of a changing opinion to a certain end.... We had won a province when we had taught the civilians in it to die for our ideal of freedom: the presence or absence of the enemy was a secondary matter.”⁴⁷¹

To a considerable degree, Gubbins follows two of Lawrence’s three conceptual elements, though without the pseudoscientific language. With regard to Lawrence’s second element, the “biological” quality of ignorance, Gubbins is in full agreement. He argues in *The Art of Guerilla Warfare* that the enemy may be incapacitated by “compelling [him] to *disperse* his forces in order to guard his flank, his communications, his detachments, supply depots, etc.”⁴⁷²

Gubbins also follows Lawrence regarding the importance of psychology or morale. Lawrence considers the psychological element primarily with regard to *his own* Arab forces and with an emphasis on the strategic. Gubbins recognizes this application, noting that, “Successful action by the guerillas... will awaken in the people the spirit of revolt, of audacity and of endurance, and make them foresee and assist towards the

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 62.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 61-62.

⁴⁷² *AGW*, 1 § 1. Emphasis added. Cf. *PLH*, 2 § 2; 12 § 14. Like Lawrence, Gubbins appreciated that destruction of enemy equipment could be as at least as important as killing enemy soldiers; among Gubbins’s suggested targets are supplies (*AGW*, 3 § 8; *PLH* 3 § 4; 4 § 5e; 7 § 8c-e), roads (*AGW*, 3 § 8; *PLH*, 1 § 1; 3 § 4; 3 § 5a; 7 § 8b), rail lines (*AGW*, 3 § 8; *PLH*, 1 § 1; 3 § 4; 3 § 5a; 7 § 8a-b), canals (*AGW*, 3 § 8; *PLH*, 3 § 5a; 7 § 8b), postal systems (*AGW*, 3 § 8; *PLH*, 1 § 1; 4 § 5b; 7 § 8f) and telegraphs (*AGW*, 3 § 8; *PLH*, 1 § 1; 7 § 8b). The detachments forced to guard all these things, because of guerrilla attacks, become targets as well (*AGW*, 4 § 8; *PLH*, 4 § 5c)

victory that will be theirs.”⁴⁷³ However, Gubbins also gives extensive consideration to *enemy morale*, seeing it as a weak point which guerrillas might attack. “To inflict damage and death on the enemy and to escape scot-free has an irritant and depressing effect on the enemy’s spirit.”⁴⁷⁴ Indeed, Gubbins even advocates very tactical and intimate ways to maximize the psychological impact of attacks on the enemy. When “sniping and killing sentries, stragglers, etc.... use a knife or noose when you can. This has a great frightening effect.... Night-time is best and has the best effect on enemy nerves.”⁴⁷⁵ Likewise, he advocates the “burning of soldiers’ cinemas... *during a performance*,” an attack calculated to strike terror.⁴⁷⁶

There are other similarities as well. Both writers place considerable emphasis on the local population and the need for its sympathies. Lawrence insists that guerrillas “must have a friendly population, not actively friendly, but sympathetic to the point of not betraying rebel movements to the enemy. Rebellions can be made by 2 per cent. active in a striking force, and 98 per cent. passively sympathetic.”⁴⁷⁷ Gubbins likewise recommends that guerrillas should “endeavour not to offend the people... but to encourage their patriotism and hatred of the enemy.”⁴⁷⁸ However, the population’s role may be active – such as “providing information for the guerillas” – or passive – “withholding it from the enemy.”⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷³ *AGW*, 22 § 82.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 5 § 15. Cf. *PLH*, 4 § 6.

⁴⁷⁵ Gubbins, *PLH*, 39 (Appendix VIII: Sabotage) § 7.

⁴⁷⁶ *PLH.*, 40 (Appendix VIII: Sabotage) § 12. Emphasis in original

⁴⁷⁷ Lawrence, “Evolution,” 69.

⁴⁷⁸ *PLH*, 4 § 6.

⁴⁷⁹ *AGW*, 4 § 12. Cf. *PLH*, 4 § 6.

Likewise, the two authors share mixed feelings about regular officers serving with guerrillas. Lawrence notes that there were “officers and men of Arab blood who had served in the Turkish Army,” who could form “the beginning of an Arab regular army,” but he downplays their importance, given the limited relevance of regular forces to an irregular war.⁴⁸⁰ Gubbins notes that “any guerilla who has a background of military training is *ipso facto* a better partisan;”⁴⁸¹ moreover, “it may... frequently be advantageous to appoint certain serving army officers for duty with guerillas”⁴⁸² However, Gubbins argues that leaders of partisan bands should ordinarily come from among the people they lead; if regular officers serve as “assistants to guerilla commanders,” a division of labor should result, with the leader “ensuring the cohesion of his guerillas” while the officer “supplies... the technical knowledge.”⁴⁸³ Gubbins even goes so far as to say that regular officers must “clear their minds of all preconceived ideas regarding military procedure.... Training in the full military sense is not applicable to guerillas.”⁴⁸⁴

In spite of the many similarities, Gubbins is no mere disciple of Lawrence, replicating his ideas. With regard to Lawrence’s first element of guerrilla warfare, the “algebraical,” we see significant difference in the thought of Gubbins. Lawrence argued that success was highly likely given the vast areas which the Turks could not possibly hold. Gubbins, in contrast, assumes an enemy presence. This leads to divergence on

⁴⁸⁰ T. E. Lawrence, “Guerrilla,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (London, 1929).

⁴⁸¹ *AGW*, 13 § 48.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 7 § 18.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 7 § 18.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 7 § 19; 13 § 48.

three points: the likelihood of enemy countermeasures, the plausibility of an unassailable base and the relation of guerrillas to conventional forces.

The greatest point of departure between Lawrence and Gubbins concerns enemy countermeasures. Although Lawrence mentions the sudden advance of Turkish forces at Rabegh which threw the Arabs into disarray, his account generally assumes a static enemy.⁴⁸⁵ Arab forces could sweep out of the desert, strike the Turkish foe and return to the desert without fear of being followed. Lawrence is little concerned with enemy spies or long range patrols hounding his forces. In stark contrast, Gubbins insists that “the enemy will institute counter-measures as soon as guerilla activities against him commence,” deploying flying columns, “detachments... mobile by means of horses, lorries, etc.,” to sweep the countryside, looking for guerrillas.⁴⁸⁶ Gubbins expresses great concern about the way “modern developments, particularly in aircraft, mechanized forces and wireless, have profound influences on guerilla warfare, enabling the enemy rapidly to concentrate in opposition to any moves of guerillas that have been discovered.”⁴⁸⁷ Gubbins expects raids, traps, censorship of letters, interrogation of prisoners and enemy infiltration of partisan bands.⁴⁸⁸

Lawrence does, however, give a nod to the problem of enemy countermeasures when he writes in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* version of his essay that, “Diversity threw the enemy intelligence off the track. By the regular organization in identical battalions and divisions information builds itself up, until the presence of a corps can be

⁴⁸⁵ Lawrence, “Evolution of a Revolt,” 56.

⁴⁸⁶ *AGW*, 2 § 5a, 15 § 55. Cf. *PLH*, 12 § 13.

⁴⁸⁷ *AGW*, 8 § 24. Cf., *PLH*, 3 § 3.

⁴⁸⁸ *PLH*, 11 § 12-3, 32-4 (Appendix V: The Enemy’s Information System and How to Counter It) § 1-7.

inferred on corpses from three companies.”⁴⁸⁹ Enemy intelligence could not discern Arab organization because there was so little. Likewise, Lawrence does reference “security (in the form of denying targets to the enemy),” but does not mention most of the tactics which concern Gubbins.⁴⁹⁰

In a second point of divergence, Lawrence writes that “rebellion must have an unassailable base, something guarded not merely from attack, but from the fear of it.”⁴⁹¹ For Lawrence, this base was the desert, adjacent to the more populated areas where the fighting occurred. Gubbins, however, was less sure about such a base. As we have already seen in relation to the Boers, he argued after the war that in Britain the Resistance forces had “a secure and accessible base from which [they could] be nourished.”⁴⁹² Nevertheless, the very geographic separation from the Continent which made Britain secure also militated against its accessibility. This was particularly the case with regard to Eastern Europe, especially in the early days of the war when the RAF possessed limited resources. Thus, it was not a contradiction of his later thinking, but a practical complement to it when he wrote in 1939 that “searches, raids... curfew, passport and other regulations” will eventually force guerrillas to abandon their homes and “go on the run,” that is to “live as a band in some suitable areas where the nature of

⁴⁸⁹ Lawrence, “Guerrilla.” Gubbins concurs. “Over-organization is more dangerous and detrimental to guerilla operations than too loose an organization.... To err on the side of over-organization... is to court disaster” (AGW, 8 § 22, 12 § 38). “It is valueless and dangerous prematurely to organize partisan bands, acting independently as they normally should, into platoons, companies, squadrons, etc. and then into regiments or brigades, with nominated commanders, skeleton orders of battle, intelligence services, etc.; such organization necessitates documents, written orders, files, etc. all or any of which, falling into the enemy’s hands, may enable him to destroy the guerilla movement at a blow” (AGW, 2-3 § 5b).

⁴⁹⁰ Lawrence, “Evolution of a Revolt,” 69.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁹² Gubbins, “The Underground Forces in Britain,” lecture to the Cerne Abbas Discussion Club, Dorchester, April (?) 1973, 15, Gubbins papers 4/1/42, IWM.

the country enables them to be *relatively* secure.”⁴⁹³ Not everyone would have the liberty of fleeing to Britain’s secure shores, nor could the underground war be carried on if everyone did. Unfortunately, “areas which offer good opportunities for concealment are usually just those areas where the maintenance and supply of large guerilla forces becomes difficult. They are usually wild, with little cultivation... and supplies have to be brought in specially.”⁴⁹⁴ This creates a supply tail which ruins the guerrilla’s advantage of mobility.⁴⁹⁵

Finally, in a third area of divergence, Lawrence suggested that guerrillas might succeed alone:

By careful persistence, kept strictly within our strength and following the spirit of our theories, we were able eventually to reduce the Turks to helplessness, and complete victory seemed to be almost within our sight.... The experiment was a thrilling one.... We believed we would prove irregular war or rebellion to be an exact science, and an inevitable success, granted certain factors and if pursued along certain lines.⁴⁹⁶

Such success requires, however, that a guerrilla force face an “army of occupation too small to fulfill the doctrine of acreage: too few... to dominate the whole area effectively.”⁴⁹⁷ Gubbins, on the other hand, is not interested in discerning the circumstances in which guerrillas can win by themselves; instead, he is concerned with

⁴⁹³ *AGW*, 15 § 54. Emphasis added. Confusingly, the Irish Republican Army used the term “flying column” to refer to bands out in the wilds trying to avoid capture, rather than for the mobile columns hunting them. Gubbins notes that the size of parties on the run will vary on the terrain, more rugged terrain able to conceal larger parties. See *PLH*, 8 § 10.

⁴⁹⁴ *AGW*, 8 § 25.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8 § 25.

⁴⁹⁶ Lawrence, “Evolution of a Revolt,” 68-69. Lawrence unhappily concludes, “We did not prove it, because the war stopped” (69).

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

drawing enemy forces away from the main front of a conventional conflict and pinning them down. Therefore the goal of guerrilla warfare

is to harass the enemy... to such an extent that he is eventually incapable either of embarking on a war or of continuing one that may already have commenced... The culminating state of guerilla warfare should always be to produce in the field large formations of guerillas, well-armed and well-trained, which are able to take a direct part in the fighting... in *direct conjunction with the operations of regular troops*.⁴⁹⁸

With both convergence and divergence present between the works of these two thinkers, an interpretive framework may help explain Gubbins's relationship to his intellectual forbear.

During a pause in the fighting in Arabia, Lawrence sought "the equation between my book-reading and my movements," a reconciliation of theory and practice.⁴⁹⁹

Gubbins's work can be seen as something similar, a refinement of Lawrence's theory to fit a new practice. Even when not writing explicitly about Arabia, Lawrence's works make the most sense in a context of open and desolate geography; for all his universal insights – and they are not inconsiderable – his vision sometimes remains bound to the particular location of his experience. Gubbins had a different set of experiences against which to measure Lawrence's thinking, notably the Irish Revolution. Moreover, although the Second World War had not yet occurred, Gubbins could foresee some of its basic contours, including European geography and society; he had to find a form of guerrilla warfare which could interact closely with the civilian population and nearby

⁴⁹⁸ AGW, 1 § 1, 1 § 4. Emphasis added.

⁴⁹⁹ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 191.

conventional forces, and which could endure the repeated pressures of enemy countermeasures made possible by air power and other technological changes.

Thus, Gubbins transformed Lawrence's "algebraical" element – inapplicable to Ireland or anticipated operations in Poland and Czechoslovakia – and changed its emphasis on space into an emphasis on people. If the land itself is not of overwhelming size, the occupied population is nevertheless too large and complex to be controlled by a foreign army. In one of his more colorful passages, Gubbins insists that, "Given the leadership, the courage, the arms and the preparation... there is one thing... that [aggressor nations] cannot break, and that is the spirit of the people whose territory has been over-run, a spirit expressing itself in uncompromising and steadfast resistance."⁵⁰⁰ Yet even this transformation of Lawrence's "algebraical" element must be qualified: the population's size alone is not sufficient; leadership, courage, arms and preparation are also required.

In his original article, Lawrence called irregular warfare "an exact science."⁵⁰¹ The *Encyclopædia Britannica* utilized the term as well. However, Lawrence wrote elsewhere that "handling Hejaz Arabs is an art, not a science, with exceptions and no obvious rules."⁵⁰² In the midst of this apparent contradiction, Lawrence perhaps best explains himself when he writes that "irregular war is far more intellectual than a

⁵⁰⁰ AGW, 22 § 83.

⁵⁰¹ Lawrence, "Evolution of a Revolt," 59, 61, 69.

⁵⁰² T. E. Lawrence, "Twenty-Seven Articles," in Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia*, Appendix IV, 960. Lawrence penned the "Twenty-Seven Articles," in August 1917; this collection of suggestions explains how to deal with Bedouins. Although Lawrence insists that "they are meant to apply only to Bedu: townspeople or Syrians require totally different treatment," (960) many of the points are of broader consideration for officers operating with foreign guerrillas.

bayonet charge,” a comment with which Gubbins would likely agree.⁵⁰³ But whereas Lawrence looked for “pure theory and... the metaphysical side, the philosophy of war,” Gubbins’s approach is more pragmatic.⁵⁰⁴ This may best explain the differences between the two thinkers. Gubbins kept those elements of Lawrence’s work which he deemed relevant, while transforming or qualifying those he did not. This approach might seem commonsensical, even obvious, but it was an approach which a genius of Lawrence’s stripe might not choose.

Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck and the *Schutztruppe*

When the Great War broke out in the summer of 1914, young Colin Gubbins made his way out of Germany and back to Britain. Meanwhile, Colonel Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck found himself commander of the *Schutztruppe* (colonial force) in German East Africa. He defended the colony by conventional means until the spring of 1915, when events compelled him to adopt guerrilla tactics.⁵⁰⁵ Even after he was driven from German East Africa in November 1917, Lettow-Vorbeck waged his guerrilla war, tying down vast numbers of Allied soldiers who might otherwise have participated in the fighting on the Western Front.⁵⁰⁶ Undefeated, he surrendered on 25 November 1918, two weeks after the armistice in Europe.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰³ Lawrence, “Evolution of a Revolt,” 68.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁵⁰⁵ Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences of East Africa*, trans. unknown, introduction by Thomas P. Ofcansky (Nashville, 1990), 63-64. Lettow-Vorbeck’s memoirs were originally published in 1920 in Leipzig under the title *Meine Erinnerungen aus Ostafrika*.

⁵⁰⁶ Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences*, 229.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 317-21.

Mackenzie's official history of SOE argues that Gubbins drew inspiration from the activities of Lettow-Vorbeck.⁵⁰⁸ Historian Simon Anglim likewise contends that Holland read Lettow-Vorbeck's memoirs.⁵⁰⁹ In *My Reminiscences of East Africa* the men of GS(R) would have found confirmation of many of the lessons already seen. This comes as little surprise, since Lettow-Vorbeck studied German and foreign colonies for the German General Staff (1899-1900), saw action in the Boxer Rebellion in China (1900-1901), served for several years in German South-West Africa against the Herero rebels (1904-1906) and, most notably, discussed guerrilla warfare with Louis Botha.⁵¹⁰ Lettow-Vorbeck writes little in his memoirs about the Second Anglo-Boer War, merely commenting that he "gained abundant personal experience" and that "the excellent qualities of [the Boers]... commanded my respect."⁵¹¹

Even before the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, Lettow-Vorbeck recognized the importance of attacking the enemy, since the *Schutztruppe*'s purpose was to tie down Allied forces which might otherwise deploy against the Fatherland. "Hostile troops would allow themselves to be held only if we attacked, or at least threatened, the enemy at some really sensitive point."⁵¹² A prime example was the Uganda Railroad: The British could only protect it with extreme difficulty, tying down troops along its entire

⁵⁰⁸ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 39.

⁵⁰⁹ Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army*, 106.

⁵¹⁰ It is unclear from Lettow-Vorbeck's memoirs of East Africa precisely when this happened. His more general memoirs, *Mein Leben* (Biberach an der Riss, 1957), do not discuss the matter. But Edwin P. Hoyt argues that Lettow-Vorbeck met various Boers when he was in South Africa, on his way home to Germany after having been wounded in South West Africa in 1906. See Edwin P. Hoyt, *Guerilla: Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck and Germany's East African Empire* (New York, 1981), 10.

⁵¹¹ Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences*, 16.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, 4.

length of 440 miles.⁵¹³ Likewise, German patrols attacked transport columns behind Allied lines, slowing their resupply, inflicting casualties and tying down additional troops.⁵¹⁴

In spite of his emphasis on the attack – or at least threat thereof – Lettow-Vorbeck was not indiscriminate with his forces; instead, he carefully maximized every advantage. Surprise was one of the most useful tools. Even before the onset of guerrilla operations, Lettow-Vorbeck utilized night marches and rapid concentration to take his opponents by surprise, as at the Battle of Jassini (18-19 January 1915).⁵¹⁵ The beaten enemy was sometimes pursued at night as well.⁵¹⁶ On other occasions he used the vegetation for cover to achieve surprise.⁵¹⁷ German and British uniforms looked fairly similar, even more so after each had been weathered in the field; Lettow-Vorbeck's men magnified this similarity by wearing only their shirts – and not their coats – when in areas where the locals reported troop movements to the British.⁵¹⁸ Night marches and other ruses were also employed defensively, to escape envelopment by the numerically superior enemy.⁵¹⁹ Lettow-Vorbeck was firmly convinced that “there is almost always a

⁵¹³ Ibid., 4.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 142, 187. Cf. 170.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., 58. At the same battle he attempted an ambush of British columns, though the Arab troops tasked with the operation failed to spring it properly (59). The village is today called Jassin.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., 114.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 167. “The dense bush and high forest in which our camps were hidden” made aerial reconnaissance by the enemy of little value (ibid, 120; cf. 152).

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 137. Since the enemy's uniform was not worn or directly imitated, and since the British were not made to believe they had rights or privileges which the Germans did not intend to honor, this would not appear to be a case of the war crime of perfidy, although that is open to debate.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 110-11.

way out, even of an apparently hopeless position, if the leader makes up his mind to face the risks.”⁵²⁰

Lettow-Vorbeck’s troops were further aided by their mobility and minimal logistics. As the war progressed, his European troops learned to get along with less, discarding many items they had previously considered necessities.⁵²¹ Fat was obtained from elephant hunting and sugar replaced with wild honey; quinine was produced from one kind of local bark, while another was used for bandages. Lettow-Vorbeck personally learned rudimentary boot-making from antelope hide.⁵²² Jan Smuts, who had fought against the British more than a decade before and now commanded South African forces on their behalf, admitted that Lettow-Vorbeck’s troops were “very mobile and able to live on the country, largely untroubled by transport difficulties.”⁵²³ Unencumbered by elaborate supplies, German forces moved faster than the Allies and across terrain considered impassible. “Increased independence and mobility,” Lettow-Vorbeck explained, “used with determination against the less mobile enemy, would give us a local superiority in spite of the great numerical superiority of the enemy.”⁵²⁴

⁵²⁰ Ibid., 188.

⁵²¹ Ibid., 78.

⁵²² Ibid., 192-95. In January 1917 Lettow-Vorbeck put strict controls on bearers and attendants who accompanied the *Schutztruppe*, to reduce its need for food. Starvation was a real threat at this time: hunting became a major source of food and experiments began involving ways to make unripe maize edible. However, his decisions were not simply measures of desperation; keeping his numbers to a minimum, and living off the land made him less vulnerable to attacks on food-producing regions. Ibid., 175-77.

⁵²³ J. C. Smuts, introduction to J. H. V. Crowe, *General Smuts’ Campaign in East Africa* (Uckfield, UK, 2004; originally published London, 1918), vi-vii. Emphasis in original. The tone of Smuts and Crowe stand in marked contrast to that of Lettow-Vorbeck. As is typical in war writing, both sides claim brilliance and victory at every turn. Since Lettow-Vorbeck, though vastly outnumbered and cut off from outside support, remained in the field – indeed, in British territory – at the end of the war, the balance of truth appears to rest with his account.

⁵²⁴ Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences*, 222. Cf. 141, 145, 172.

Throughout the war, Lettow-Vorbeck relied on captured weapons, both out of necessity and to reduce dependence on supply lines.⁵²⁵ Before the war began he planned on capturing weapons, since his native soldiers, known as “askaris,” were armed with 1871 pattern rifles which used smoky powder, obsolete in modern warfare.⁵²⁶ Most of the explosives used against the Uganda Railroad were captured from the British,⁵²⁷ while captured horses and mules were also utilized.⁵²⁸

Even before war broke out, Lettow-Vorbeck planned for battle, since its basic contours could be discerned in advance. While he traveled extensively, his friend and subordinate officer Tom von Prince organized the Volunteer Rifle Corps. Likewise, Lettow-Vorbeck tried to arm all the Europeans of the colony with rifles of uniform military design.⁵²⁹ Gubbins may have learned his emphasis on early planning from this German guerrilla. He argues that “a careful study must be made *as early as possible* of the territories concerned, so as to determine for what methods of warfare each territory is suited, and to make the necessary preparations *in advance*.”⁵³⁰ Likewise, the problem of supplying arms “is immensely simplified... if adequate supplies can be obtained *before hostilities commence*.”⁵³¹ Finally, “the selection and training of regular army officers in

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 166, 186, 199, 211, 217-18.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 67.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 64-65, 112. On at least one occasion German askaris charged the enemy crying “Wahindi, kameta frasi!” (“They are Indians, catch the horses!”). See Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences*, 106.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., 4-6.

⁵³⁰ AGW, 2 § 5a. Emphasis added. Cf. AGW, 21 § 77a.

⁵³¹ Ibid., 10 § 33. Emphasis added. Cf. AGW, 21 § 77b; PLH 31 (Appendix IV: Concealment and Care of Arms and Explosives).

the art of guerilla warfare” should begin in peacetime; preferably their “training should include a period of residence in the territory concerned.”⁵³²

Lettow-Vorbeck absolutely understood the importance of the local population; with only 3,000 Germans at his disposal, nearly 80% of his force consisted of askaris.⁵³³ Even most of the Germans in Lettow-Vorbeck’s army were not regular soldiers at the outbreak of the war, but local settlers enlisted in a Volunteer Rifle Corps. From among these came some of Lettow-Vorbeck’s finest officers.⁵³⁴ Native Africans were an excellent source of intelligence, as the German commander very quickly discovered, noting that “in their interchange of information the inhabitants tell each other everything that happens in their vicinity. Calls, fire signals, and the signal drums serve to exchange and quickly spread all news.”⁵³⁵ Likewise, natives aided Lettow-Vorbeck with their knowledge of local features such as fords.⁵³⁶ Other sources of intelligence included radio intercepts and captured enemy papers.⁵³⁷

Although the war in East Africa has been called a gentlemen’s war, and in some ways was, Lettow-Vorbeck faced stiff countermeasures.⁵³⁸ In March 1915, for example, “the Belgians made arrests on a large scale in Ubwari, the inhabitants of which had

⁵³² AGW, 21 § 77c.

⁵³³ Thomas P. Ofcansky, introduction to Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences*, no pagination.

⁵³⁴ Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences*, 4-5, 8.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 132, 201.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, 34-35, 61, 63, 104. Intelligence could be exploited to improve ambushes: “Small detachments of eight to ten men, Europeans and Askari... made use of telephones we had captured at Tanga, tapping in on the English telephone-lines; then they waited for large or small hostile detachments or columns of ox-wagons to pass. From their ambush they opened fire on the enemy at thirty yards’ range, captured prisoners and booty, and then disappeared again into the boundless desert” (64).

⁵³⁸ Thomas P. Ofcansky, introduction to Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences*, no pagination. One example of gentlemanly behavior is found in the case of Maj. Buller and Lt. von Ruckteschell: the former, a British officer, put a bullet through the latter’s hat, but the German returned fire, wounding Buller, who was then nursed in captivity by von Ruckteschell’s wife. See Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences*, 147.

shown themselves friendly to us, and hanged a number of people.”⁵³⁹ Later on spies, drawn from native populations, were sent among the German forces.⁵⁴⁰ Allied armies pursued Lettow-Vorbeck continually across German East Africa, Portuguese Mozambique and into Northern Rhodesia. Unlike Lawrence, Lettow-Vorbeck could never assume the enemy’s inaction.

Reading Lettow-Vorbeck’s memoirs, one quickly notices the strong leadership of the *Schutztruppe*. The commander himself demonstrated unbounded energy, creativity and selfless determination throughout the war. Moreover, Lettow-Vorbeck had a strong group of subordinate officers, and records that “the long war had produced a large number of capable leaders, and their example... roused unbounded enterprise and daring.”⁵⁴¹ Such men were the kind Gubbins hoped would lead his new guerrillas. “In guerilla warfare, it is the personality of the leader that counts,” Gubbins writes in the *Art*. “He it is who has to make decisions on his own responsibility and lead his men in each enterprise. He must therefore be decisive and resourceful, bold in action and cool in council, of great mental and physical endurance, and of strong personality.”⁵⁴²

Conclusion

In the late 1930s the British government established several organizations to study and plan subversive warfare. Two of these – Section D and MI(R) – not only undertook this mission, but did so with varying degrees of cooperation. Among the most

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁵⁴² *AGW*, 8 § 17.

important developments of this era was the formulation of a doctrine, most cogently expounded in Gubbins's *Art of Guerilla Warfare* and *Partisan Leader's Handbook*. Gubbins drew upon his own personal experiences of unconventional warfare, but also extended his vision to encompass lessons learned from the Boers, from T. E. Lawrence and from the German commander, Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck.⁵⁴³ As we shall see in Chapter 4, however, Gubbins did not limit his vision to historical case studies of guerrilla warfare, but also drew inspiration from conflicts raging around him at the time of writing in 1939.

⁵⁴³ Mackenzie, author of the official history of SOE, claims that "it is plain... that the doctrine" contained in the *Art* not only came from the examples already mentioned, but also "from the German experience of Wassmuss" (*Secret History of SOE*, 39). Wilhelm Wassmuss, a German diplomat in Persia during the Great War, attempted to bring Persia into the war on the Axis side, or at least lead a revolt against British occupation of a portion of the country. While he succeeded in fomenting revolt among several tribes, the hoped for Lawrence-esque conflagration, tying down British troops, never came. The limits of Wassmuss' success, combined with the fact that no other source mentions him as an inspiration to Gubbins, make it unlikely – though not impossible – that Mackenzie's claims are true. For more on Wassmuss see Christopher Sykes, *Wassmuss: "The German Lawrence"* (New York, 1936) and Peter Hopkirk, *Like Hidden Fire: The Plot to Bring Down the British Empire* (New York, 1994).

CHAPTER IV
FORMULATING A DOCTRINE:
CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES

When J. C. F. Holland was appointed to GS(R), he chose to study irregular warfare because he was impressed by contemporary fighting in Spain and China.⁵⁴⁴ Conflicts of the past, examined in Chapters II and III, certainly provided valuable lessons to Britain's embryonic forces of subversive warfare. However, changed conditions often limited the utility of lessons from these earlier conflicts. Warfare in 1938 or 1939 did not look the same as it had in 1902 or 1918 due to technological changes – most notably the widespread introduction of air power. Moreover, with the exception of Lawrence's Arabian activities, all the conflicts heretofore examined saw the role of counterinsurgent played by Britain. Several conflicts in the 1930s provided more up-to-date lessons in guerrilla warfare, with the added advantage that Britain's future opponents – Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan – often fought on the counterinsurgent side, making the lessons more directly applicable.

The analysis which follows not only draws on contemporary accounts and later scholarship, but also on British Military Intelligence reports, to which MI(R) – as a component of the Military Intelligence Directorate – had at least limited access and to which it sometimes contributed. Making full use of such a variety of sources, we can complete our picture of irregular warfare in the years before the Second World War. In

⁵⁴⁴ Foot, *SOE in France*, 2.

some cases we can directly observe the ways in which Gubbins drew upon and synthesized existing models into one which fit Britain and its future needs. In other cases the extent information from Gubbins, Holland and MI(R) is too thin to posit definitive conclusions, though we can draw parallels speculate upon likely or possible influence.

The Spanish Civil War

In the summer of 1936, years of political unrest in Spain came to a head when tit-for-tat violence created an opening for an attempted coup by members of the military.⁵⁴⁵ Gens. José Sanjurjo, Emilio Mola, Francisco Franco, and Manuel Goded argued that the military had to save Spain from a left-wing government and impending anarchy. The coup failed to seize control of the government or many of the major cities apart from Seville. Nevertheless, the rebels – known as the Nationalists – quickly captured large swaths of León and Old Castile, the more conservative regions of the country.⁵⁴⁶ With Spain divided roughly in half between the Nationalists and the Republican government, or “Loyalists,” civil war followed.

The conflict quickly attracted international involvement. Germany and Italy airlifted Nationalist troops from Morocco to mainland Spain, the first major airlift in

⁵⁴⁵ Lt. José Castillo Sería – a member of the Assault Guards police formation, the Socialist Party and a left-wing militant secret society – was shot by right-wing Falange gunmen. In response, the Assault Guards detained and killed without trial a conservative member of parliament, José Calvo Sotelo. See Anthony Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 50-51; Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, and Revenge* (New York, 2006), 98-99; Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York, 2001), 196-98.

⁵⁴⁶ Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 55-70; Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, 100-8; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, 204-20.

history.⁵⁴⁷ Both nations subsequently provided combat forces. Although the Soviets withheld major combat forces, they supplied planes, tanks, and artillery pieces to the Republicans, along with large numbers of advisors, including an NKVD contingent.⁵⁴⁸ Lesser material support was also provided by Portugal and Mexico to the Nationalists and Republicans, respectively. In spite of the official policy of non-intervention by most foreign countries, large numbers of international volunteers fought on both sides.⁵⁴⁹

The Spanish Civil War has been remembered by military historians primarily as a testing ground for the weapons and tactics of the Second World War, particularly in regard to the mobile warfare of German armored columns backed by close air support.⁵⁵⁰ However, the Spanish Civil War also provided a venue for guerilla operations. In Andalucia a guerrilla brigade was organized by a partisan with the *nom de guerre* of Maroto; meanwhile, the Soviet NKVD sent *aktivki*, small sabotage units, behind Nationalist lines.⁵⁵¹ Indeed, the conflict gave us the very term “fifth column,” used to describe subversive forces. Nationalist Gen. Emilio Mola famously commented that he had four columns converging on Republican-held Madrid, but the assault would be led

⁵⁴⁷ Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 73; Preston, *Spanish Civil War*; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, 357.

⁵⁴⁸ Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 163, 174, 198-200; Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, 154-58; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, 427-34, 455-56; 937-41, 943 n7.

⁵⁴⁹ Thousands of Portuguese and hundreds of Irish and Romanians fought for the Nationalists; the International Brigades, composed of men and women from across Europe and North America, fought for the Republicans. See Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 139-40, 157-63, 198, 427; Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, 170-76; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, 378, 438-47, 939, 941-43.

⁵⁵⁰ An early example of this view may be found in A. C. Temperley, “Military Lessons of the Spanish War,” *Foreign Affairs* XVI, no. 1 (October 1937): 34-43. More recently, see James S. Corum, *The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War, 1918-1940* (Lawrence, 1997), 200; Roger Edwards, *Panzer: A Revolution in Warfare, 1939-1945* (London, 1998), 25-26.

⁵⁵¹ Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 205.

by a “fifth column” of Nationalist supporters already inside the city.⁵⁵² However, Mola’s boast led to a brutal effort to root out right-wing sympathizers in Madrid, demonstrating the phenomenon Gubbins had witnessed first-hand: the destruction of partisan forces acting prematurely against overwhelming force.⁵⁵³ It is uncertain whether Gubbins specifically studied the “fifth columnists” of Madrid, though it seems likely given the wide circulation of Mola’s new phrase in the press and Gubbins’s own use of the term; if Gubbins indeed examined this episode, it doubtless confirmed his careful approach to utilizing irregular forces.⁵⁵⁴

More generally, Gubbins commented that Spain was an “obvious” example of “the crippling effect of subversive and para-military warfare on regular forces.”⁵⁵⁵ The war likewise inspired Holland with its use of “gym-shoes, light equipment, evasive tactics,... mobility, etc.”⁵⁵⁶ Outside MI(R) others noticed the lessons of resistance as well. Dennis Wheatley, a British writer, explained in 1940: “In the Spanish Civil War

⁵⁵² Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, 181. Louis de Jong comments, “I have not been able to trace the exact date nor the precise text of General Mola’s words. An examination of all the works by him and about him remained without result. From Spain I have received information that no positive indications could be found in the nationalist press of those days either. Spanish experts, however, believe that there is little reason to doubt that General Mola – who died on June 3, 1937 – uttered words of the above mentioned purport” (Louis de Jong, *The German Fifth Column in the Second World War*, trans. C. M. Geyl [New York, 1973], 3).

⁵⁵³ Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 172-4; Preston, *Spanish Civil War*, 181-6; Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, 473.

⁵⁵⁴ For an example of Gubbins’s use of the term “fifth column,” see his address to the Danish/English Society in Copenhagen, 29 April 1966, 2, Gubbins papers 4/1/20, IWM.

⁵⁵⁵ Gubbins, “SOE and the Co-Ordination of Regular and Irregular War,” *The Fourth Dimension of Warfare*, Vol. I: Intelligence, Subversion, Resistance, ed. Michael Elliott-Bateman (Manchester, 1970), 86. This is a reprint of Gubbins’s lecture, “Regular and Irregular Warfare: Problems of Co-Ordination,” given at the University of Manchester, as part of the series, “Military Studies: Subversion, Intelligence, Resistance,” 29 November 1967. The original text may be found in the Gubbins papers 4/1/27, IWM. Cf. Gubbins, “Guerrilla,” *Chamber’s Encyclopedia* (1968). The original text, with the title “GUERRILLA or, more commonly GUERILLA,” can be found in the Gubbins papers 5/8, IWM.

⁵⁵⁶ Gubbins, “CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” n.d., 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM. Cf. Gubbins, “The Underground Forces in Britain 1940-1944,” lecture given to the Cerne Abbas Discussion Club, Dorchester, April (?) 1973, 3, Gubbins papers 4/1/42, IWM.

villagers often held up well-trained troops, and even tackled tanks, although in most cases they had only the most rudimentary arms.... Skillful planning, quick action and resolution can often offset superior arms.”⁵⁵⁷ There were, however, voices of caution as well. The Assistant Military Attaché in Paris, who visited Spain during the conflict, argued that, due to its various abnormalities, “the greatest caution must be used in deducing general lessons from this war: a little adroitness and it will be possible to use it to ‘prove’ any preconceived theory.”⁵⁵⁸ Moreover, neither the Republican General Staff nor their Soviet tutors ever fully embraced guerrilla warfare, even when the conventional conflict was lost; thus, unconventional warfare was the exception, not the rule, in Spain.⁵⁵⁹

Although largely focused on other issues, the reports of MI3a – the section of Military Intelligence responsible primarily for France and Spain – suggest the possibility of guerrilla warfare early on, since the Nationalist army, “on occupying any large town... send out columns to dispose of any opponents in the neighbourhood.”⁵⁶⁰ If partisans could succeed in avoiding these sweeps by mobile columns, they might be able to resist for some time.⁵⁶¹ One report describes the region of Asturias in northern Spain as “an amazing country. More difficult for an offensive than anything I have seen on the North West Frontier or in Abyssinia. From a guerilla point of view it looks as if it could

⁵⁵⁷ Dennis Wheatley, “Village Defence” (6/7 July 1940), reproduced in *Stranger than Fiction* (London, 1959), 78-79. Wheatley later served with the Joint Planning Staff and London Controlling Section.

⁵⁵⁸ Major C. A. de Linde, “Report of the Assistant Military Attaché (Paris) on his visit to Nationalist Spain,” 26 April 1938, 2, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1588.

⁵⁵⁹ Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 314, 429.

⁵⁶⁰ “The Spanish Civil War: Summary of Information received 8th-10th August, 1936,” § 4, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1576.

⁵⁶¹ Cf. *PLH*, 11-12 § 13.

be held for ever.”⁵⁶² Another report noted that even after the loss of Asturias by the Republicans, “scattered bands of fanatics” took to the mountains.⁵⁶³

Gen. J. F. C. Fuller, one of the British officers who observed the war in Spain, described it as “quite unlike any war I have so far taken part in.”⁵⁶⁴ Britain’s Assistant Military Attaché in Paris concurred, describing it as

a war in which the majority of the participants are almost entirely untrained, a war in which comparatively small forces are strung out on a vast length of front, a war in which modern weapons are used but not on the modern scale, and, finally, a war in which there have been more assassinations than deaths in battle.⁵⁶⁵

Fuller went on to observe that the front “is it in no way continuous, but... hard to discover.” Battles “appear to be quite small affairs.”⁵⁶⁶ The partisan warfare he described was much more urban than rural. He explains,

It is in no sense a great war, a trench war or even a guerilla war. Instead, if I may give it a name, it is a city war.... [Franco] can fight only where the Reds are, and as they dare not enter his area,... and as they are supported by the rabble in the towns... they are compelled to hold on to the cities, consequently it is there that Franco has to attack them.⁵⁶⁷

Though Fuller resists use of the term “guerilla,” his description leaves open the possibility of partisan warfare within the cities.

Spain certainly provided examples of subversion as well as guerrilla warfare.

Every Nationalist battalion had “a loud speaker squad... which accompanies the unit

⁵⁶² Maj.-Gen. J. C. F. Fuller, Report on a Visit to Nationalist Spain, October 1937, 7, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1579.

⁵⁶³ Sir Henry Chilton, 29 October 1937, 1, TNA: PTO, WO 106/1580. Cf. Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 302.

⁵⁶⁴ Maj.-Gen. J. F. C. Fuller, Report on Visit to General Franco’s Army in Spain, March 1937, 1, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1578.

⁵⁶⁵ Maj. C. A. de Linde, Report of the Assistant Military Attaché (Paris) on his visit to Nationalist Spain, 26 April 1938, 2, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1588.

⁵⁶⁶ Fuller, Report on Visit to General Franco’s Army in Spain, March 1937, 4-5, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1578.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1-3.

into the line for the purpose of disseminating propaganda to the enemy.”⁵⁶⁸ Likewise, radio stations routinely broadcast propaganda, to friendly populations and also to the enemy.⁵⁶⁹ The combatants, as observed by the British, were certainly aware of the effects of eroding morale on their troops. After one of his later visits, Gen. Fuller commented that Republican will to resist only held because “there is generally a firing squad at hand ready to restimulate it. In Barcelona, unless you do as you are told, you become a Trotskyite, and are liable to be shot on sight. This is not a normal war.”⁵⁷⁰ Likewise, he notes elsewhere that “so far as literature goes, the Red retiring forces were amply provided. Everywhere one moves a truly amazing number of pamphlets, leaflets and newspapers is to be found.... From what I picked up, one hundred per cent. was political.”⁵⁷¹ Though commanders in all ages have to concern themselves with the morale of their troops, Holland and Gubbins may have seen in Spain new proof that the loyalty of soldiers – for or against their leaders – cannot be assumed, but is open to manipulation. One very common method of controlling men had been seen by Gubbins in Ireland a decade and a half before: killing suspected traitors and leaving their bodies about with an attached explanatory note. Republican placards accused the dead of being fascists; Nationalists pinned their victims’ union membership cards to their chests as a sign of their perceived treachery.⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁸ Interview between Wing-Commander A. James, MP, and MI3 (colonel), 8 October 1937, 2-3, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1581.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., 3; Beevor, *Battle for Spain* 248; Emeterio Diez, “La censura radiofónica en la España nacional (1936-1939),” *Zer: Revista de Estudios de Comunicacion* XIII, no. 24 (May 2008): 103-24.

⁵⁷⁰ Fuller, Report on Visit to Spain, April 1938, 2, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1585.

⁵⁷¹ Fuller, “Rag-Picking on the Spanish Battlefields,” article manuscript, 20 April 1938, 1, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1585.

⁵⁷² Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 84, 88. Cf. *AGW*, 12 § 40; *PLH*, 11 § 12.

The Nationalist cause in Spain inherited the bulk of the pre-war military, and with it its leadership, support services and organization.⁵⁷³ Republican forces, on the other hand, consisted of civilian volunteers and paramilitary formations, the kind of men and women Holland and Gubbins expected to mold into partisans. While both men were impressed by the possibilities of partisan warfare, the problems the Republicans faced in Spain were similar to those faced by the Boers and the IRA: poor discipline, disorganization and factions. In August 1938 British Military Intelligence reported that Republican forces were in a state of “confusion and indiscipline,” with “a complete absence of co-ordinated supply and medical organisation, each unit being fed by its own political organism regardless of others.”⁵⁷⁴ It was reported that the Republican war effort “is being carried on in separated districts by small parties, who are fighting each other for their political ideals independently of their respective acknowledged Governments.”⁵⁷⁵ If the South African and Irish examples had not already demonstrated the need for coordination – such as that provided by the *Art of Guerilla Warfare*’s Guerrilla Bureau – study of the Spanish Civil War drove home the point once again.

The war provided other notes of caution as well. Fuller, for example, reported that he observed tanks which had been destroyed; “it was claimed that these machines... were put out of action by throwing bottles of petrol on them followed by a hand grenade. This I do not believe. They obviously were put out of action by A. P. [armor piercing] bullets.... I am of [the] opinion that this petrol tactics has been purposely exaggerated to

⁵⁷³ Fuller, Report on a Visit to Nationalist Spain, October 1937, 5, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1579.

⁵⁷⁴ “Spain,” 23 September 1936, no. 12, § 3, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1576.

⁵⁷⁵ “Spain,” 14 September 1936, no. 11, § 7, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1576.

give confidence to the troops.”⁵⁷⁶ To would-be partisans, this is a sobering reminder that not all accounts of bold action by para-military irregulars are true; to act as though they were and to encourage others to do so would be dangerous. In 1939 Gubbins would encourage partisans by reminding them that “guerilla warfare is what a regular army has always most to dread. When this warfare is conducted by leaders of determination and courage, an effective campaign by your enemies becomes almost impossible.”⁵⁷⁷ In spite of this optimism, caution of the sort that Fuller provided led Gubbins to temper his comments. The same passage in the *Partisan Leader’s Handbook* warns that “the enemy will become more and more ruthless in his attempts to stop you,” while the subsequent SOE Syllabus explained that “sporadic risings are useless.”⁵⁷⁸ Fuller noted in 1938 that “battles are not won by clichés (slogans) or Liddell-Hartisms. That has been the Red mistake.”⁵⁷⁹ He and the men of MI(R) would have likely disagreed about the potential value of irregular operations or the indirect approach; however, they may have heeded his cautions to some extent, holding them back when others, like Hugh Dalton, were more enthusiastic.

⁵⁷⁶ Fuller, Report on Visit to General Franco’s Army in Spain, March 1937, 7, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1578. To say that these tactics were exaggerated does not mean they were not used; other sources clearly attest to them. See, for example, Lt. Col. A. F. G. Renton, “Some Impressions of the Nationalist Army in Spain,” May 1938, 5, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1583.

⁵⁷⁷ *PLH*, 13 § 14.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 13 § 14; “Opening Address: Objects and Methods of Irregular Warfare” (A.1), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 35.

⁵⁷⁹ Fuller, Report on Visit to Spain, April 1938, 4, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1585. Basil Henry Liddell Hart was a major British military theorist of the interwar period. A strong supporter of Lawrence and indirect warfare, Hart published a biography in 1934.

The Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-1939

Following the British conquest of Palestine during the Great War, the territory was given to Britain as a League of Nations mandate. Even before the creation of the mandate many Zionists eyed the ancient home of the Israelites as a future Jewish state; an influx of Jewish immigration in the interwar years created difficulties between the resident Arab population and the growing Jewish population.⁵⁸⁰ These communal tensions came to a head in a particular way when, on 15 April 1936, three Jews on the Nablus-Tulkarm road were shot by a group of Arab assailants.⁵⁸¹ Riots broke out at one of the funerals and two Arabs were killed in a Jewish revenge attack; on 18 April the Arabs called a national strike and the following day an Arab mob – driven on by rumors of wholesale murder by Jews – rampaged, engaging in “violent and indiscriminate attacks on every Jew or European, regardless of age or sex.”⁵⁸² The British had a full-

⁵⁸⁰ The year 1929 saw communal violence, though significant conflict was limited. For an account of these riots which would have been available to Gubbins, see Sir Charles W. Gwynn, “Palestine, 1929,” *Imperial Policing* (London, 1934), 221-52. As the subsequent *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion in Palestine* explained, in October 1935 “an abortive attempt was made to smuggle a large quantity of arms and ammunition through the Port of Jaffa, and every Arab firmly believed that these were intended for Jews for purposes of aggression.” See General Staff, Headquarters, British Forces Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion in Palestine, 1936*, 7, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70. In 1936 tensions again rose when plans for a legislative council – which the Arabs would have dominated – were scrapped. See Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*, 88. As of June 1936, the population of Palestine, excluding His Majesty’s Forces, consisted of nearly 1 million Arabs (of whom about 87,000 were Christians), approximately 370,000 Jews and 24,000 of other backgrounds. See General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 4, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁵⁸¹ Such incidents were not uncommon; this one was only notable for its consequences. The motive of the attack appears to have been apolitical. See Edward P. Horne, *A Job Well Done, Being a History of the Palestine Police Force, 1920-1948* (Sussex, 2003), 206. Accounts of the number killed vary. *Al-Jami’a al-Islamiyya* reported on 16 April that three Jews were killed; *el-Carmel* reported on 18 April only two killed. See Matthew Hughes, “Lawlessness was the Law: British Armed Forces, the Legal System and the Repression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-1939,” in *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, ed. Rory Miller (Farnham, UK, 2010), 141. The likely explanation is that three men were shot but only two died of their injuries.

⁵⁸² General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 7, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

fledged revolt on their hands.⁵⁸³ The author of one staff college text concluded from the Arab Revolt that “modern rebellion has assumed a form which makes its prompt suppression essential.”⁵⁸⁴ Gubbins himself argued that “it has been shown countless times in history that where firm enemy action has been taken in time against small beginnings, such action has always met with success.”⁵⁸⁵ Palestine was not, however, such a case. One GS(R) report observed that “in Palestine, the active insurgents are believed never to have exceeded a total of 1,500,” but they exerted influence far beyond their numbers.⁵⁸⁶

Counterinsurgency was not new to the British military; it had faced such conflicts throughout the Empire and recently in Ireland. Indeed, as historian Rory Miller explains, “many of those serving in the civil and military wings of the Palestinian administration in the late 1930s had served in Ireland or worked on Irish issues.... Many of the security tactics first applied in Ireland were used to respond to the revolt in Palestine.”⁵⁸⁷ However, Tom Bowden argues that “those who transferred to Palestine appeared not to have retained any of the politico-military lessons taught by the course of

⁵⁸³ By 1938 two infantry divisions, comprising some 25,000 men, were deployed to put down the rebellion, which lasted until 1939. See Matthew Hughes, “Lawlessness Was the Law,” 141.

⁵⁸⁴ H. J. Simson, *British Rule and Rebellion* (London, 1938), 60; quoted in Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*, 26.

⁵⁸⁵ AGW, 2 §5a. Cf. Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 11-12. See also Gubbins’s post-war comments about the Arab Revolt in Gubbins, “SOE and the Co-Ordination of Regular and Irregular War,” 84; Gubbins, “Guerrilla,” *Chamber’s Encyclopedia*. The conflict was known at the time in semi-official circles as “The Arab Troubles,” though it became a full revolt. Today the term “Arab Revolt” is usually used, though this is often followed by the dates 1936-1939, to distinguish this conflict from the “Arab Revolt” in which T. E. Lawrence participated. See Horne, *A Job Well Done*, 205.

⁵⁸⁶ GS(R), “Report for D.C.I.G.S. No. 8 – Investigation of the Possibilities of Guerilla Activities,” 1 June 1939, 1-2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260.

⁵⁸⁷ Rory Miller, “‘An Oriental Ireland,’ Thinking about Palestine in Terms of the Irish Question during the Mandatory Era,” in *Britain, Palestine and Empire*, ed. Rory Miller (Farnham, UK, 2010), 164.

the Irish War of Independence.”⁵⁸⁸ Moreover, Philip Anthony Towle contends that “the Palestinian revolt resembled the post-1945 guerrilla uprisings much more closely than any other insurgency with which the British had to deal between the World Wars.”⁵⁸⁹ It was both rural and urban, motivated by nationalism and ethnic hatred as well as other issues; Arab operations were directed by a religious leader, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who fled to Lebanon in 1937, and received propaganda support via radio from both Italy and Germany.⁵⁹⁰ The rebels captured some of their weapons – notably Lewis machineguns – from their British opponents, while other weapons were smuggled in through French Syria or British Trans-Jordan.⁵⁹¹

British forces faced an escalating series of challenges, from civil disturbances and rioting to “arson, sniping, bombing and attacks on motor cars,” as well as assassination of police and security personnel.⁵⁹² Attacks against bridges, rails, and the trains that traveled on them were frequent.⁵⁹³ The rebels certainly demonstrated Gubbins’s claim that a rail ambush requires “some plan to wreck the train, either by derailing it, by blowing a mine under the engine, or other means.”⁵⁹⁴ In addition to

⁵⁸⁸ Tom Bowden, *The Breakdown of Public Security: The Case of Ireland, 1916-1921, and Palestine, 1936-1939* (London, 1977), 1.

⁵⁸⁹ Towle, *Pilots and Rebels*, 46.

⁵⁹⁰ The Grand Mufti conferred with Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, chief of German military intelligence, on the topic of sabotage. See David Kahn, *Hitler’s Spies: German Military Intelligence in World War II* (New York, 1978), 233. One farmer in Palestine complained he was “constantly watched by a net of spies and Nazi officials” (*Palestine Post* [Jerusalem], 17 August 1939, quoted in de Jong, *German Fifth Column*, 21).

⁵⁹¹ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 21, 23, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70; Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 203. Trans-Jordan was not in rebellion and therefore had fewer restrictions in place.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, 9. Cf. Charles Townshend, *Britain’s Civil Wars: Counterinsurgency in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1986), 104; Horne, *A Job Well Done*, 211.

⁵⁹³ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 9-11, 15-16, 19, 23, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70; H. J. Simson, *British Rule, and Rebellion* (Edinburgh, 1938), 196-7, 215-6.

⁵⁹⁴ *PLH*, 20 (Appendix II: Rail Ambush).

outright explosion, the Arabs “could spread or lift a rail” to derail a train. “There was no doubt about the Arabs being expert. Once, hidden beside a damaged piece of line, were found, neatly laid out, all complete to nuts and screws, the things required to mend it. The platelayers were Arabs.”⁵⁹⁵ Telephone communications, oil pipelines and the Jerusalem water supply were also attacked, as were mail vans.⁵⁹⁶ To the men of MI(R), studying the revolt, these tactics looked familiar. “It is believed,” Holland wrote, “that the Mufti’s instructions to the Palestine rebels are, to some extent, based on Irish practice.”⁵⁹⁷

Taking a page from South Africa, Sir Charles Tegart, the special advisor to the Palestine Police, ordered the construction of blockhouses in the most rebel-infested areas.⁵⁹⁸ British sources do not directly address the motive behind Arab attacks on railroads; the suggestion is often that they were attacked simply because they were there. But a history of the Palestine Police Force observes that “railways had to be placed under constant guard, and *this drained men from other important tasks*. In the end, to keep the railways running, an intolerable strain was placed upon the security forces.”⁵⁹⁹ A keen military observer would have perceived the potential value of guerrilla attacks to a larger conventional effort.

⁵⁹⁵ Simson, *British Rule, and Rebellion*, 242.

⁵⁹⁶ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 11, 19, 23, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70; Christopher Sykes, *Orde Wingate: A Biography* (New York, 1959), 151. “Night sabotage was chiefly favoured [by those attacking the oil pipeline] as darkness not only made the saboteur’s work safer but also contributed to the spectacular effect.” General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 131, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁵⁹⁷ Holland, “Duties of the New Branch,” 3 April 1939, 2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256.

⁵⁹⁸ Townshend, *Britain’s Civil Wars*, 111.

⁵⁹⁹ Horne, *A Job Well Done*, 213, emphasis added.

The Arab rebels did not limit their attacks to cities or infrastructure; vehicles on rural roads were ambushed as well. The *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion* explain that

the great majority [of these attacks] bore the same characteristics: most of them started with an attack on a convoy and ended with the arrival of aircraft and reinforcements rushed to the scene in response to a call from the wireless lorry of the escort. Where the enemy managed to escape heavy casualties it was usually due to darkness overtaking the action before the reinforcing aircraft and troops could strike.⁶⁰⁰

On many occasions the road was “heavily blocked by huge boulders rolled down from the hillside.”⁶⁰¹ A second line of stones was often deployed before a vehicle could get turned around, and mines were also used to destroy vehicles.⁶⁰² In the city of Jaffa, “nail-strewing in the main streets” was employed to support a strike of the city’s buses and taxis by keeping other traffic off the roads. The same tactic was later employed on rural roads to stop British patrols.⁶⁰³

Most guerrillas were not foolish enough to remain engaged against superior forces, but escaped to the safety of nearby caves or slipped among the civilian population.⁶⁰⁴ The *Military Lessons* explain that

⁶⁰⁰ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 15, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 11. Cf. 134.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*, 20, 23, 75, 135; John Bierman and Colin Smith, *Fire in the Night: Wingate of Burma, Ethiopia and Zion* (New York, 1999), 109; Horne, *Job Well Done*, 214; Simson, *British Rule, and Rebellion*, 261; Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 168. “For some reason, not much had been done to remove and drop into the Mediterranean the large dumps of shells left over from the [First World] war. If nobody else knew where to find these shells, the Arabs did, because they made skilful use of them on roads as well as on the railway. As a rule, these land mines were laid on soft roads where they were more easy to conceal than on tarmac.... Sometimes obstructions were put down to make vehicles go where the traps had been set.” Simson, *British Rule, and Rebellion*, 250-51.

⁶⁰³ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 8, 133, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁶⁰⁴ Simson, *British Rule, and Rebellion*, 235.

ambush parties would consist of anything from seven to twenty men fairly widely scattered, who often wore black cloaks and when stationary were almost invisible.... They always chose their positions well as being easy to evacuate, while any approach from the road, either frontally or from a flank, would involve a difficult climb. They were seldom prepared to stand and fight, and took care not to stage an ambush at the same place more than once on any one day. Generally they retired in haste as soon as the troops had debussed and started to attack, so that by the time the attackers gained their [the rebels'] position the late occupants were several hills away.⁶⁰⁵

The British typically pursued ambushers, first with “light fast motor transport” on the roads and then with “motor-borne pack donkeys” once the pursuit moved “off the roads.”⁶⁰⁶ The objective for the British – and the situation to be feared by the rebels – was “to get to grips with the hostile elements and bring them into subjection.”⁶⁰⁷ Sustained contact was always a one-sided affair.⁶⁰⁸

Attacks were not limited to lines of communication. On 16 May 1936 unidentified gunmen (presumably Arabs) entered a cinema in Jerusalem’s Jewish quarter and opened fire.⁶⁰⁹ In September 1937 the Nazareth District Commissioner was assassinated by guerrillas.⁶¹⁰ As had happened in Dublin, murder was committed in broad daylight on the streets of Jerusalem.⁶¹¹ The security forces and Jewish civilians were attacked by the rebels, but so too were Arabs who worked for the government,

⁶⁰⁵ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 136, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁶⁰⁷ *Field Service Regulations* (1935), quoted in General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 128, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁶⁰⁸ Cf. AGW, 5 § 15, 6 § 16; PLH 1-2 § 2, 14 (Appendix I: Road Ambush) § 2d, 30 (Appendix III: The Destruction of an Enemy Post) § 5.

⁶⁰⁹ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 10, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁶¹⁰ Townshend, *Britain’s Civil Wars*, 108.

⁶¹¹ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 10, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70. Cf. Joice M. Nankivell and Sydney Loch, *Ireland in Travail* (London, 1922), 60.

refused to participate in the strike, or were otherwise deemed unacceptable to the rebel cause.⁶¹²

The rebels began the conflict with fairly large bands of partisans, but “these became split up owing to our [British] activities and owing to the fact that a large armed band is difficult to conceal and is liable to suffer heavy casualties.”⁶¹³ This may have alerted Gubbins to the fact that “the speed of modern communications, i.e., motor, wireless, etc., and the presence of aeroplanes make it very difficult for a large party to remain concealed for any length of time.”⁶¹⁴ In later stages of the Arab Revolt partisan bands sometimes coalesced together and operated as a single unit, but in so doing they decreased their mobility and increased their chances of being identified by the British; in due course severe defeats followed.⁶¹⁵ Gubbins’s guerrillas would not commit the same error, as he warned them time and again that “the organization of guerillas must not be of a higher degree than circumstances will, with reasonable safety, and a view to efficiency, permit.”⁶¹⁶

Among the problems faced by British forces in Palestine was the heavily Arabic composition of the police. While many Arab policemen served with impartiality and devotion to duty, others betrayed details of future operations to the rebels, as had been the case with the Royal Irish Constabulary in Ireland. This was not only the result of

⁶¹² Horne, *Job Well Done*, 211. “The disciplining and terrorizing psychological effects upon the Arab community of the assignation of community leaders was traumatic. If not moved as a result actually to participate, Palestinian Arabs at least ceased to display openly any disaffection towards the Arab cause.” Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 180.

⁶¹³ 8th Division, *Notes on Lessons of Arab Rebellion, 1938-39*, 10, TNA: PRO, WO 201/326.

⁶¹⁴ *PLH*, 3 § 3.

⁶¹⁵ Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 204.

⁶¹⁶ *AGW*, 2 § 5b.

divided loyalties, but also assassination of Arab policemen and threats to their families.⁶¹⁷ So serious was the problem that the British worried about the “risk of [Arab police] going over to the rebels with their arms.”⁶¹⁸ Intelligence collection among the general Arab population was even more difficult, confirming Gubbins’s later observation that a hostile population “will actively co-operate in providing information for the guerillas” or at the least “withholding it from the [occupying] enemy.”⁶¹⁹

Apart from outright treasonous passage of information, the rebels also benefitted from “unguarded telephone conversations, discussion of operations in public places, and carelessness in handling secret documents in offices.... Information regarding the movement of troops was transmitted by inhabitants, who watched camps and roads and sent their messages by means of lights in houses, bonfires and smoke signals.”⁶²⁰ One contemporary account explained that rebel villages were “undisturbed unless a temporary military invasion burst suddenly upon them. As a rule, they had ample warning and could move out of the way till the activity died down and the troops went back to their camps.”⁶²¹ Gubbins, recognizing the source of the guerrillas’ strength and information, pointed out to his partisan leaders that “military action is greatly facilitated

⁶¹⁷ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 45-6, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70; Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 157, 171; Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*, 93.

⁶¹⁸ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 13, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70. There were also concerns about Arabs employed on the telegraph lines and at the various pump stations of the pipeline which brought water to Jerusalem; in the event, however, they caused no trouble. See General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 131, 133, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁶¹⁹ AGW, 4 §12. Cf. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*, 93-94.

⁶²⁰ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 51, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70. Cf. 8th Division, *Notes on Lessons of Arab Rebellion*, 16, TNA: PRO, WO 201/326.

⁶²¹ Simson, *British Rule, and Rebellion*, 240-41.

by the support of the local population. By this means, warning can be obtained of all hostile moves, and it will not be possible for the enemy to carry out surprise action.”⁶²²

In light of the rebels’ “all-seeing” intelligence, British forces in Palestine attempted to

deceive it. Many expedients were tried, but nearly all failed – however well executed – because of a leakage of plans almost at the source. Ruses tried included the spreading of false news, dropping troops quietly from moving vehicles at night, the use of “Q” buses containing troops disguised as Jewish passengers or workmen, and the adoption of circuitous routes by M.T. [mechanical transport] columns.⁶²³

“Road traffic was used... often as a bait with which to draw out armed bands and bring them to action.”⁶²⁴ In July 1936 the British attempted a major sweep of the Nablus area, hoping to encircle and capture some rebel bands. “Like most drives under such conditions,” write Charles Townshend, this effort was “a failure.”⁶²⁵ The 8th Division’s summary of the conflict concurred that drives always failed.⁶²⁶ As a result, later efforts involved occupying villages in an attempt to force rebels away from their usual sources of food and shelter and into the open, where they could more easily be engaged.⁶²⁷

Searches became a routine part of the British effort. Ambushes or firefights with the rebels were plotted on maps, allowing authorities to make an educated guess at which villages harbored rebel fighters. Such locations were usually cordoned off at

⁶²² *PLH*, 4 § 6.

⁶²³ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 52, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁶²⁵ Townshend, *Britain’s Civil Wars*, 106.

⁶²⁶ 8th Division, *Notes on Lessons of Arab Rebellion*, 9, TNA: PRO, WO 201/326.

⁶²⁷ Townshend, *Britain’s Civil Wars*, 108.

night and searched at dawn, in accordance with the principles laid out in a 1934 military handbook, *Notes on Imperial Policing*.⁶²⁸ A contemporary account explains that

arms were usually well hidden at some distance from the houses. On one occasion, a group of women were seen seated on a rug near a village.... Someone had the bright idea of looking under the rug. The ladies at first failed to understand, and then combined protest with loud lamentation when they saw that bluff was useless. Under the rug the earth had been newly dug. The earth was dug up again, and in a narrow trench was found a little arsenal of arms ammunition.⁶²⁹

Although viewed by British commanders as punitive measures aimed at “regaining the initiative,” these searches generally strove to be civil and disciplined, and were therefore broadly cautious in their approach.⁶³⁰ The same could not be said of the Special Night Squads organized by Orde Wingate in 1938.

Wingate graduated from Woolwich in 1923 and came to Palestine in late 1937; he was soon posted to General Headquarters as an intelligence officer.⁶³¹ Wingate was a distant cousin of T. E. Lawrence, whom he studied in some detail. Although Wingate became known as a practitioner of unconventional warfare and is often placed alongside Lawrence in this regard, Wingate was highly critical of his relation, both as a soldier and as a man. Biographer Christopher Sykes explains, “He believed that Lawrence’s military ideas were fallacious and he deplored the cult of which he was the centre.”⁶³²

Most specifically, Wingate quibbled with Lawrence’s total reliance on native forces. In

⁶²⁸ Thomas Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*, 33.

⁶²⁹ Simson, *British Rule, and Rebellion*, 196-97, 227. This tactic was not new to observant British forces. In Ireland “it was nothing strange to be stopped by the military in the street and searched for arms, and the custom was growing to let women carry the guns until they were wanted and receive them again afterwards, for women were not allowed to be searched except in emergency by women searchers. The British Government was paternal in some things to the end, and earned the righteous scorn of Loyalist and Republican alike” (Nankivell and Loch, *Ireland in Travail*, 248).

⁶³⁰ Townshend, *Britain’s Civil Wars*, 104. Cf. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*, 34.

⁶³¹ Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army*, 1; Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 120.

⁶³² Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 133. Cf. Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army*, 48-49.

one episode which took place in Abyssinia a few years after the Arab Revolt, Wingate initially rebuffed the advances of a local chieftain who wanted to fight alongside him. Wingate only accepted his offer after the chieftain agreed to provide his own arms and Wingate had forced the chieftain into a subordinate position.⁶³³ Wingate would utilize local forces only if he was certain he could retain control of their activities and would not be fleeced in the process. Otherwise he would rely on his own men.

Organized in 1938, the Special Night Squads (SNS) consisted of British soldiers and members of the Jewish Supernumerary Police, most of whom were also members of the unofficial Jewish defense militia, the Haganah.⁶³⁴ These small mobile units engaged in aggressive patrolling and counter-ambushes against the rebels.⁶³⁵ The SNS certainly satisfied one British report's contention that "the secret of success in operations is always to retain the initiative and to do something new. The rebels soon get to know about a particular method and take steps to defeat it. They should be kept continually guessing."⁶³⁶ In order to achieve the element of surprise, the SNS first made use of excellent intelligence, possibly from within rebel bands, which was always carefully

⁶³³ Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 291.

⁶³⁴ Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 245.

⁶³⁵ According to historians Thomas Mockaitis and Tom Segev, torture was not beneath the SNS. See Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*, 34; Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate*, trans. Haim Watzman (London, 2000), 430-31. Biographer Christopher Sykes takes issue with this kind of claim, writing: "If it seems undeniable that some bad things to the contrary happened in the S.N.S., it is equally undeniable that Wingate, except on this occasion [of one engagement near Beisan in the summer of 1938, when civilian bystanders were killed], was throughout an influence of restraint on the more reckless spirits among his squadsmen, and insisted, even at peril, on humane conduct. Many allegations were made against him, sometimes by shocked Jewish followers who came from the decency of civilian surroundings. None of the allegations, except those regarding the indiscriminate shooting south of Beisan, can withstand scrutiny, and experience shows that unidentifiable events are usually imaginary ones. Wingate had many enemies in Palestine who (not without goading from him) tried to discredit him. But when they came to make definite accusations they made none of the kind indicated here" (Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 170, cf. 107). Simon Anglim is likewise cautious about claims of torture. See Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army*, 59.

⁶³⁶ 8th Division, *Notes on Lessons of Arab Rebellion*, 9, TNA: PRO, WO 201/326.

checked to weed out double agents.⁶³⁷ Wingate's forces then moved by circuitous routes, operating under the assumption that "in Palestine someone is always watching you."⁶³⁸ In the approach to the Battle of Dabburiya (11 July 1938) the SNS "left their stations in the short twilight, some travelling east, and Wingate's party travelling north... with a party of girls in the car as further cover for his intentions. Then after dark all the lorries travelled along the Nazareth-Tiberias road, some going east, some west, dropping men off at prearranged intervals, the lorries never slowing down."⁶³⁹ Just as Holland had been impressed by the use of rubber-soled shoes in Spain, so too in Palestine the SNS used the same, to make themselves both lighter and quieter.⁶⁴⁰ By hook or crook, Wingate would have his surprise.

The stations operated by the SNS were unlike ordinary British military installations. On parade or operations Wingate was an autocrat, but the stations were democratic with elected committees of grievances.⁶⁴¹ This may seem like an odd approach to leadership, but the SNS's unusual composition – including both civilians and soldiers – and unconventional operations required a special arrangement. Wingate's leadership style is not so distant from Gubbins's description of a guerrilla leader, who must be able "to control his followers and win their unquestioning obedience without the

⁶³⁷ Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army*, 80; Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 245-46; Efraim Dekel, *Shai: Exploits of Haganah Intelligence* (New York, 1959), 328.

⁶³⁸ Wingate, quoted in Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 151.

⁶³⁹ Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 156-57.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 150. Wingate was not entirely unique in this; elsewhere in Palestine British forces wore "P.T. shoes" for quiet at night, though the same report concluded that "it is necessary for boots to be worn for rough work and fighting." See 8th Division, *Notes on Lessons of Arab Rebellion*, 17, TNA: PRO, WO 201/326. On Holland's interest in light shoes, see Gubbins, "CG's Comments on Foot's Book," n.d., 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM.

⁶⁴¹ Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 154. Simon Anglim suggests that the grievance committees were not to Wingate's liking and that his occasional authoritarianism was an attempt to enforce discipline which was lacking elsewhere. See *Orde Wingate and the British Army*, 82.

close constraints of military organization and discipline which are the antithesis of guerilla action and a drag on its efficiency.”⁶⁴²

Wingate also held unique ideas about training. Like many of Gubbins’s writings, Wingate’s surviving lecture notes “are precise, brief, to the point, and mainly technical.”⁶⁴³ But Wingate also commented on more general matters, arguing, for example, that “great soldiers were serious and diligent in their youth... and many of them were people of outstanding moral character.” He was also critical of the professional soldier, admonishing his men to “learn his discipline and calmness... but don’t imitate his brutality, stupidity and drunkenness.”⁶⁴⁴ Gubbins too questioned the usefulness of professional soldiers, though never in such strong language; likewise he could write with a flourish now and again, reaching beyond the details of guerrilla warfare to the heights of the human spirit.⁶⁴⁵

As Sykes explains, “training and operation were not sharply divided, indeed to a large extent the squadsmen were trained through taking part in operations.”⁶⁴⁶ This contrasts both with Gubbins’s 1939 publications and his subsequent work with SOE. In the *Art of Guerilla Warfare*, Gubbins writes that “the narrow limits of the training [a guerrilla] requires... and the careful, detailed rehearsal of projected coups should enable him... to match even the best trained troops.”⁶⁴⁷ Thus, while Gubbins suggests that

⁶⁴² AGW, 6 § 17.

⁶⁴³ Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 174. The surviving notes from eight lectures are held in the Israeli Ministry of Defence Records.

⁶⁴⁴ Wingate, quoted in Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 174.

⁶⁴⁵ On the limited utility of regular soldiers see AGW, 7 § 19. For examples of Gubbins’s brief literary flourishes, see, for example, AGW, 2 § 4, 5 § 13, 12 § 40, 22 § 82.

⁶⁴⁶ Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 151.

⁶⁴⁷ AGW, 5 § 13.

guerrillas need little training, he also calls for “detailed rehearsal,” something Wingate’s fast tempo may have left out. Likewise, Gubbins insists that “a few rounds spent on perfecting shooting, and testing of rifles, will be amply repaid.”⁶⁴⁸ While Wingate appears not to have objected to using “a few rounds” in training, such an allotment would be much scarcer for a guerrilla force than for the SNS; one can question what Wingate’s priorities might have been under other constraints. In another departure between the SNS and the *Art*, Gubbins insists that guerrillas be trained in the “use of the various destructive devices such as bombs, road and rail mines, etc., which are such a special and useful feature of guerilla warfare.”⁶⁴⁹ While the roles of Gubbins’s forces as guerrillas and Wingate’s as counter-guerrillas easily explain the absence of this element in the latter’s training regime, this all-important matter highlights the imperfections of the parallel between the two thinkers. Finally, any notion of training through operations was undermined by the very existence of SOE’s system of schools, which thoroughly trained agents before inserting them into occupied territory (see Chapter V).

Wingate’s operation was not all quirks and idiosyncrasy; he insisted on inspecting weapons-cleaning after returning in the dawn hours from a long night of patrolling.⁶⁵⁰ If perhaps a touch obsessive, this is simply good soldiering, though it too is paralleled in Gubbins’s observation that weapons “must be protected against damp, rust, etc.; remember that your life and that of your friends may depend on a weapon in

⁶⁴⁸ *AGW*, 14 § 51.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 14 § 48

⁶⁵⁰ Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 155.

good order.”⁶⁵¹ Such fundamentals, though not unique to unconventional warfare, can take on special importance, particularly when the supporting services enjoyed by many regular troops are absent.

The SNS were an aggressive anti-guerrilla force, but also functioned as a semi-guerrilla force of their own. Wingate eventually worked for MI(R)’s Middle East branch in 1940; it was their idea, not Wingate’s, to operate native forces behind enemy lines in Abyssinia. By this time Gubbins was busy liaising with the Poles and Czechs and then commanding the Independent Companies in Norway (see Chapter V). However, MI(R)’s doctrine, crafted by Gubbins, had already been set in place, and served as Wingate’s guidelines in Abyssinia. Anglim explains:

Wingate inherited an existing operation applying Gubbins’ recommended operational procedures faithfully, and produced afterwards a set of operational procedures of his own derived partially from Gubbins’ as shaped by his [Wingate’s] own experiences in Palestine and Ethiopia.⁶⁵²

Thus, we know Wingate followed Gubbins’s ideas; it is less clear if influence went the other way. Anglim continues:

Perhaps the biggest difference [between the two] was that Wingate insisted, increasingly, on concentration of force and resources, rather than the dispersal and economy of effort that was the hallmark of other MI(R) operations, and his moving away from subversion and partisan warfare – about which he seems never to have been enthusiastic – towards use of purpose-designed regular forces to menace enemy lines of communication, with occasional support from local irregulars provided they didn’t get in the way.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵¹ *PLH*, 31 (Appendix IV: Concealment and Care of Arms & Explosives) § 2. Arab weapons, in contrast, were almost always old and frequently unreliable. See Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 204.

⁶⁵² Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army*, 102.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, 102.

In short, Wingate was a commando; he was not a true guerrilla in Abyssinia, and probably had not been in Palestine either.⁶⁵⁴

Wingate's aggressive patrols did, however, confirm Gubbins's experience in Ireland that guerrillas will be hounded by anti-guerrilla forces. These examples led him to conclude that only for a time could partisans live "in their own homes" before "this will soon be rendered impossible by the searches, raids, etc." Indeed, Gubbins expected "detachments... [to] be sent out to search the country, moving by circuitous and haphazard routes, employing scouts and advance guards, and probably assisted by aircraft."⁶⁵⁵ While aircraft played only a supporting role in Ireland, they were a key part of the counterinsurgency effort in Palestine; Gubbins's description points to the new lessons learned from this conflict.⁶⁵⁶

Other aggressive actions by the British authorities likewise confirmed the dangers that irregular warriors are apt to face. *The Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion* observes that "the best deterrent [against bombing of British vehicles] would probably have been the carrying of hostages." This is qualified, however, with a caveat

⁶⁵⁴ Interestingly, Wingate and Sir Edmund Ironside, Gubbins's superior in Russia, were friends, first meeting in Palestine when Ironside was Governor of Gibraltar and Commander-in-Chief Designate of the Middle Eastern Theatre. The occasion came at Tiberias in the aftermath of a fire. "Near the top of the hill leading out of Tiberias [Ironside] encountered a grim-looking man in an antique sun-helmet superintending the laying-out of robed corpses and the piling of captured weapons.

"And who are you?" asked General Ironside.

"I'm Wingate," was the reply.... The younger man had spoken as though his name must inevitably be known to the other as that of a famous person.... Wingate told him about the S.N.S. and explained how he had laid the ambush and collected six bodies, adding that he calculated that he must have accounted for forty.... When he was back in Gibraltar Sir Edmund... retained a lasting memory of the grim Captain on the heights over Tiberias. He noted that he had commanded the only force to meet, fight and punish the assassins on that night of slaughter. He decided that his name was not one to forget" (Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 180).

⁶⁵⁵ AGW, 15 § 54-55.

⁶⁵⁶ Other elements in Palestine were not new: passes, identity cards, traffic regulations, curfews and the detention of suspected rebels under emergency regulations. 8th Division, *Notes on Lessons of Arab Rebellion*, 1, 4-8, TNA: PRO, WO 201/326; Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 249-50.

of lamentation: “had it been permitted.”⁶⁵⁷ Other measures were, however, permitted.

At 4:00 am on 18 June 1936 the Royal Engineers entered the Old City of Jaffa, which had been evacuated of its inhabitants.

Demolition work was started at once. By nightfall a road ten metres wide had been driven right through from one side of Jaffa to the other.... Later... a north and south circular road was blown through the Old City.... At about the same time a notorious quarter of tin shanties, known as “Tin Town”, was demolished amid a deafening clatter by the simple process of driving tanks across it after its occupants... had been deported to their native Syria.⁶⁵⁸

If this was how Britain dealt with rebellion, could anti-Nazi partisans expect lesser measures at the hands of the Third Reich? Gubbins’s many cautions were not idle.

Any consideration of the lessons learned by MI(R) from the Arab Revolt must be qualified by the generally low opinion the British held of their Palestinian opponents.

The *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion* described “the Palestinian Arab” as

not a fighting man: even when led and reinforced by trained and experienced individuals from Iraq, Syria and Trans-Jordan, the rank and file still retained their characteristics of carelessness, lack of enterprise, and a wholesome regard for their own skins. They had none of the military qualities of, for instance, the tribesmen of the North-West frontier of India.⁶⁵⁹

The 8th Division’s summary of the conflict notes that, “on the whole the enemy have been most unenterprising in their methods. They have not evolved any new tactics of note. They open fire from ambush and usually withdraw as soon as attacked.”⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁷ General Staff, Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 135, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 15. The actions described were apparently successful: “The Jaffa operations put an end forever to the use of the Old City as a citadel of lawlessness and refuge of fugitives of justice.”

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1. Cf. Bierman and Smith, *Fire in the Night*, 85. The same document explained that “so far as the bridges were concerned the most surprising thing is the small success achieved by rebels in this direction in spite of the many opportunities resulting from a widespread use of explosives for civil purposes all over the country. In no case was traffic ever stopped for more than 24 hours on account of damaged bridges” (134).

⁶⁶⁰ 8th Division, *Notes on Lessons of Arab Rebellion*, 10, TNA: PRO, WO 201/326.

Throughout the fighting, both leadership and training were in short supply among the rebels.⁶⁶¹ Indeed, Fawzi al-Qawuqji, the Lebanese Druze who was arguably the single most important military leader among the rebels, explained to the radical Syrian newspaper *Al Kabas*: “I started to constitute an Iraqi band of young men who were trained in the Army, in order that the ‘expedition’ should be organised in military methods, in order not to repeat the anarchy that had prevailed in the Syrian revolt” of 1925-1927.⁶⁶² The *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion* admits that “after Fauzi’s arrival the [rebel] bands soon demonstrated more effective leadership and organization, while the extension of their sphere beyond the areas of habitual activity showed that their numbers had increased.”⁶⁶³ Nevertheless, Fawzi never enjoyed leadership of *all* the rebels, who were divided by tribal loyalties and by goals; some fought for political liberty, while others were mere thieves or unemployed opportunists. Under such conditions, it is unsurprising that the rebels fought piecemeal and ineffectively.⁶⁶⁴ Someone studying the conflict, as MI(R) did, might draw the conclusion that in order to be effective guerrillas must be organized by a single leader or a coordinating agency, the precise conclusion to which Colin Gubbins came.

In July 1939 the military commander in Palestine – by then Major General Bernard Montgomery – declared that the rebellion was “now definitely and finally smashed.” It was certainly winding to a close, though Townshend comments that “few observers would have shared Montgomery’s conviction it was the outcome of his

⁶⁶¹ Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 192-93.

⁶⁶² Fawzi al-Qawuqji, quoted in Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 198.

⁶⁶³ General Staff, Headquarters, British Forces Palestine & Trans-Jordan, *Military Lessons of the Arab Rebellion*, 21-22, TNA: PRO, WO 191/70.

⁶⁶⁴ Bowden, *Breakdown of Public Security*, 192-93.

actions. Rather it seemed that... the insurgency had died away – in the nick of time for Britain, as international tension screwed up to the pitch of imminent European war.”⁶⁶⁵

Irregular Warfare in China⁶⁶⁶

The Second Sino-Japanese War

Relations between the ambitious Empire of Japan and its Chinese neighbor were poor for decades. Japan defeated China in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), annexing the island of Taiwan and gaining hegemony over Korea.⁶⁶⁷ The transformation of China from a monarchy to a republic in 1912 did little to improve relations or strengthen China’s ability to resist aggression. During the Great War Japan seized the German concession of Shandong; though it was eventually returned to China in 1922, Japanese designs in the region were obvious. In 1928 Japanese and Chinese troops came to blows in Shandong Province.⁶⁶⁸ Moreover, China’s internal situation was by no means pacific, a situation Japan exploited.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁵ Townshend, *Britain’s Civil Wars*, 112.

⁶⁶⁶ There are several methods of Romanizing Chinese names; both the primary sources and recent scholarship are at odds with themselves on this matter. I have simply taken the spellings as given in the various sources, rather than entering the debate by choosing one system over another.

⁶⁶⁷ E. Krueger, “Sino-Japanese Relations Reviewed,” *China Quarterly* (Fall 1937): 578-86, reprinted in *Chinese-Japanese War, 1937-*, ed. Julia E. Johnsen (New York, 1938), 49; Mark R. Peattie, “The Dragon’s Seed: Origins of the War,” in *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945*, ed. Mark Peattie, Edward J. Drea, and Hans van de Ven (Stanford, 2011), 48.

⁶⁶⁸ Edward L. Dryer, *China at War, 1901-1949* (London, 1995), 46-7; Peattie, “Dragon’s Seed,” 65; Dick Wilson, *When Tigers Fight: The Story of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* (New York, 1982), 5-6.

⁶⁶⁹ In 1926 the Kuomintang (KMT), the Chinese Nationalist Party, launched the Northern Expedition to defeat regional warlords and unite the country; in 1928 this goal was nominally achieved, though success was short-lived. That same year Zhang Zuolin, a warlord once backed by the Japanese, was deemed no longer reliable and was assassinated by the Imperial Japanese Army. See Dryer, *China at War*, 117-69; Peattie, “Dragon’s Seed,” 65. Meanwhile, in 1927, in the midst of the Northern Expedition, the KMT also began purging its membership of Communists, opening the Chinese Civil War. See Samuel B. Griffith, Introduction to Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (New York, 1961), 15. Mao later recalled, “From

In September 1931 elements of the Japanese Army perpetrated a small explosion against a Japanese rail line in Manchuria and blamed the event – known as the Mukden Incident – on Chinese troops. Under the pretext of defending its interests, Japan invaded Manchuria on 19 September; the area was quickly overrun and the puppet state of Manchukuo was established. Additional clashes continued for several years.⁶⁷⁰

On 7 July 1937 Japanese troops stationed at the Marco Polo Bridge, which provided access to Beijing, staged nighttime maneuvers. One of the Japanese soldiers went missing, possibly spending the night in a brothel. The Japanese commander insisted on searching the nearby town of Wanping; the local Chinese garrison commander refused. Shots were exchanged and by the morning of 8 July open fighting occurred between the two sides. Over the course of the next month Japanese forces pushed deeper into China, capturing Beijing in early August. A few days later the fighting spread to Shanghai. This was not simply another “incident,” but a full-scale conflict, the Second Sino-Japanese War.⁶⁷¹

In spite of the Japanese onslaught, the Chinese learned to resist in various ways. One MI(R) officer argued that “the value and function of the guerillas was not recognised by the Chinese until after the fall of Nanking in December 1937. Since then, considerable attention has been paid, not without success, to increasing their sticking-

1927 to 1936, the Chinese Red Army fought almost continually and employed guerrilla tactics constantly.... There are many valuable lessons we can learn from the experience of those years” (62-63).

⁶⁷⁰ Krueger, “Sino-Japanese Relations,” 55-60; Dryer, *China at War*, 170-81; Peattie, “Dragon’s Seed,” 66-67.

⁶⁷¹ Krueger, “Sino-Japanese Relations,” 61-62; Dryer, *China at War*, 210-13; Dick Wilson, *When Tigers Fight*, 14-26, 34-46.

power and effectiveness.”⁶⁷² Chinese guerrillas harassed lines of communication and supplies.⁶⁷³ They made use of speed and surprise, employing ambushes and other tactics which allowed them to bring superior numbers to bear against small isolated units. When large attacks could not be conducted, so-called “sparrow war,” characterized by small pricks with sniping, landmines, or even firecrackers, was utilized.⁶⁷⁴ Such operations were frequently carried out by the Eighth Route Army, the Communist formation of the tentative anti-Japanese army of national unity.⁶⁷⁵ Guerrilla operations were, however, also in accordance with the plan announced by Chiang Kai-shek, the Nationalist leader, who exhorted his commanders “to use special operations units and plainclothes agents, scattering them everywhere, to deal with the enemy rear areas.”⁶⁷⁶

British Military Intelligence believed the Chinese turned to irregular warfare not on ideological grounds or out of a Lawrence-esque belief in the efficiency of guerrillas,

⁶⁷² Peter Fleming, “Notes on the Possibilities of British Military Action in China,” August 1939, 1-2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260. One pro-KMT account explains somewhat differently: “With the outbreak of full-scale war in 1937, our country adopted the strategy of attrition which employed guerilla operations to supplement regular operations. Accordingly, guerilla warfare manuals were published and guerilla cadres trained. Elements of regular force and local militia were dispatched to conduct guerilla operations... Had the Chinese Communists not taken advantage of this opportunity to swallow local forces and attack guerilla forces, the effectiveness of our guerilla warfare would have been much greater” (Hu Pu-yu, *A Brief History of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945* [Taipei, 1974], 128).

⁶⁷³ Hu, *Brief History of the Sino-Japanese War*, 131. Cf. 129-30.

⁶⁷⁴ Yang Kuisong, “Nationalist and Communist Guerrilla Warfare in North China,” in *The Battle for China*, ed. Mark Peattie, et al (Stanford, 2011), 310.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

⁶⁷⁶ Quoted in Yu Shen, “Juntong, SACO, and the Nationalist Guerrilla Effort,” in *China in the Anti-Japanese War, 1937-1945: Politics, Culture, and Society*, ed. David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu (New York, 2001), 136. Cf. Henri Johan Diederick de Fremery, Report No. 16, c. 1938, in *A Dutch Spy in China: Reports on the First Phase of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1939)*, ed. Ger Teitler and Kurt W. Radtke (Leiden, 1999), 245. On attacking the enemy’s rear areas, see also Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 67. Neither the Nationalist nor Communist Chinese seem to have been particularly concerned with uniforms or the laws of war. Mao offhandedly comments that, for men “in subordinate groups, uniforms are unnecessary” (*On Guerrilla Warfare*, 84). The garrison of the small town near Paotingfu was captured when members of the “*Pien I Tai* (plain clothes detachment) entered the town disguised as hawkers and established confidence with the troops by producing goods at under the market prices.” The town was eventually taken by guile, not force. See Col. V. R. Burkhardt, “Report on a Visit to North China,” 4, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5576.

but out of necessity. One British report explains that the Chinese, lacking adequate shells, could not return fire against Japanese artillery.⁶⁷⁷ Edgar Snow, an American who interviewed Mao in 1936, confirmed this view, observing that

Both the air force and such mechanization as has taken place... are looked upon by many as costly toys... quite incapable of retaining a rôle of initiative after the first few weeks, since China is almost utterly lacking in the basic war industries necessary to maintain and replenish either an air force or any other highly technical branch of modern warfare.⁶⁷⁸

This use of irregular forces in China did not go unnoticed by MI(R). Studying China was a significant part of Holland's task when he took his post.⁶⁷⁹ Among the *Notes on the Sino-Japanese War* assembled by British Military Intelligence may be found the cover page of a report by GS(R) titled "Considerations from the wars in Spain and China with regard to certain aspects of Army Policy."⁶⁸⁰ Sadly, the remainder of the report has been shorn from the cover and does not reside in the same part of the National Archives, if at all. Nevertheless, the report confirms that GS(R) produced analysis of the war in China, analysis which was circulated beyond the doors of Holland's office to a wider audience in Military Intelligence and perhaps throughout the War Office. Some of the other documents within the *Notes on the Sino-Japanese War* are clearly not from

⁶⁷⁷ "Notes on the Sino-Japanese War," 17 February 1938, 1, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5572. Edward Dreyer takes an even more cynical view: "Fighting withdrawal' meant rout and 'guerrilla warfare' meant disintegration in the Chinese communiqués of this time [c. May 1938]." "A declared strategy of guerrilla warfare may often be merely a rationalization for the desire to avoid battle. Preserving one's forces by not fighting and 'harassing' the enemy by following at a safe distance without actually making contact, were consistent with the warlord-derived vices of most Chinese military units, but were not really guerrilla warfare" (*China at War*, 228, 238-9).

⁶⁷⁸ Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (New York, 1938), 90-91.

⁶⁷⁹ "CG's Comments on Foot's Book," nd, 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM; Astley, *Inner Circle*, 20; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 34.

⁶⁸⁰ GS(Research) – Report for DCI, GS No. 7: "Considerations from the wars in Spain and China with regard to certain aspects of Army Policy," TNA: PRO, WO 106/5572.

GS(R)/MI(R), but other portions have ambiguous authorship and may come, in part or in whole, from Holland and his men.

The elements of Chinese guerrilla warfare mirror earlier conflicts and the ideas espoused by Gubbins in his 1939 writings, in which he argued that guerrilla warfare succeeds by “compelling the enemy to disperse his forces” to guard his communications and supplies.⁶⁸¹ Japanese lines of communication were hit hard. One “Japanese telegraph official,” who spoke to the British, admitted that “the lines were still frequently cut” by the Chinese, while foreign missionaries and Chinese chauffeurs reported that in some areas only “strongly protected convoys of 50 cars or more” were capable of traversing key roads, while railroad “track is frequently damaged,” with the result that “the Japanese can no longer depend on [these] line[s] of communications.”⁶⁸² A British officer with a sense of humor reported that “the new [Japanese] Garrison Commander... was installed and on 10th April the guerillas celebrated his arrival by dismantling 6,000 feet of telephone wire.”⁶⁸³ Henri de Fremery, a Dutch observer, noted that guerrillas posed such a threat that the Japanese tried to time their maneuvers with extreme precision so as to avoid far-flung lines of communication whenever possible.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸¹ *AGW*, 1 § 1; emphasis added. Cf. *PLH*, 2 § 2; 12 § 14.

⁶⁸² Lt. J. H. G. Cooper, RA, “Report on visit to Shihchiachuang, Changteh, and Taiyuanfu,” c. May 1938, 7, 9, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5572. Poor road conditions hampered Japanese use of vehicles, causing one Japanese officer to explain that horse-drawn artillery was more useful than mechanized due to bad roads and wet weather; these limitations to Japanese mobility could only have improved the lot of Chinese guerrillas. See Cooper, “Report on visit to Shihchiachuang, Changteh, and Taiyuanfu,” 3. Elsewhere Military Intelligence observed that “the activities of Chinese irregulars were seriously hindering the movement of troops and supplies.” See Report No. 24, “Japanese intentions and prospects,” 21 February 1938, 2, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5572.

⁶⁸³ Col. V. R. Burkhardt, “Report on a Visit to North China,” 9, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5576.

⁶⁸⁴ De Fremery, Report No. 12, c. August 1938, in *A Dutch Spy in China*, 209. The original reports by De Fremery, a former colonel of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army, have been lost, though copies are

The Japanese resorted to holding village headmen responsible, on pain of death, for the integrity of telegraph and rail lines in their areas, in an effort to end the attacks.⁶⁸⁵ Moreover, along railways a blockhouse was constructed every three miles and security forces were raised to protect the lines. Such a strategy of blanketing lines of communication had barely worked in South Africa, where the Boers were so few in number; here in China, De Fremery observed that “despite [the Japanese defenses], a great many attacks are made against the lines.”⁶⁸⁶ All these reports find an echo in Gubbins’s observation that “modern large-sized armies, entirely dependent as they are on the regular delivery of supplies, munitions, petrol, etc., for their operations, present a particularly favourable opportunity for guerilla warfare, directed against their communications by road, rail or water, and against their system of internal postal and telegraph communications.”⁶⁸⁷

In addition, the Japanese suffered from the vastness of both the Chinese geography and the depths of popular opposition. The *North China Daily News* reported in 1939 that Chinese youths recruited to fight for the Japanese were mutinying and going over to the guerrillas.⁶⁸⁸ A British report concludes that “so long as the Chinese

preserved in the Dutch Colonial Archives. This history may explain why his reports, in this published form, are undated.

⁶⁸⁵ *New Statesman and Nation* (15 January 1938): 74, reprinted in *Chinese-Japanese War, 1937-*, Johnsen, ed., 140.

⁶⁸⁶ De Fremery, Report No. 17, c. 1938, in *A Dutch Spy in China*, 257.

⁶⁸⁷ *AGW*, 3 § 8. Cf. *PLH*, 1 § 1.

⁶⁸⁸ *North China Daily News*, 22 July 1939, quoted in Edna Lee Booker, *News Is My Job: A Correspondent in War-Torn China* (New York, 1941), 304. G. P. Young, a British observer, noted that “there... seems no reason why [the Japanese] should ever achieve the destruction of the guerrilla bands and, above all, of the Communist VIIIth Route Army operating from Shensi, now swollen by the masses of peasants drive by the destruction of their crops and the requisitioning of their cattle to seek in patriotic banditry an alternative to starvation” (G. P. Young to Viscount Halifax, 23 March 1938, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5574). De Fremery confirms this assessment, arguing that “as long as the main force [of the Chinese army] is not

continue their guerilla tactics ultimately they may be able to defeat the Japanese because, in order to cope with the guerilla tactics the Japanese will require a much larger force than they have at present in China.”⁶⁸⁹ In addition to the casualties suffered by the Japanese, the guerrilla war tied down Japanese troops which might otherwise have been employed at the front and imposed huge – and, in the long term, arguably unbearable – financial costs.⁶⁹⁰ Such a situation accords with Gubbins’s observation that an invader “will be working usually amidst a hostile populace; without their co-operation his task will be more difficult and will require a larger number of his own men to carry it out.”⁶⁹¹

As with other conflicts, however, there were notes of caution regarding China. Some irregulars were drawn from Shanghi’s notorious Green Gang; others were reported to be “quarrelsome,” requiring that a “small body of [regular] troops” be dispatched to “improve organisation.”⁶⁹² A British missionary, writing to the British ambassador, explained that the nearby guerrillas, though “a pretty harmless set of chaps [and] very

destroyed.... the guerrilla war, steadily supplied with new fighters, *can* likewise be kept up for a very long time.” Nevertheless, he also cautioned that, “on the other hand, there is... little justification in the claim that the guerrillas are threatening to put a stranglehold on the Japanese and will force them, albeit gradually, to reduce their area of operations. It seem highly unlikely that they will ever succeed in making the presence of the Japanese in North China or in any other part of the occupied area untenable” (De Fremery, Report No. 16, c. 1938, in *A Dutch Spy in China*, 249, 257-58.). China would need conventional troops to break the stalemate.

⁶⁸⁹ “Notes on the Sino-Japanese War,” 17 February 1938, 2, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5572. Although Chinese accounts should be read with caution, one observed that the Japanese “were only able to occupy major cities and a 10-km narrow corridor along their lines of communication, while our guerilla forces possessed the vast areas surrounding and harassing them” (Hu, *Brief History of the Sino-Japanese War*, 132).

⁶⁹⁰ De Fremery, Report No. 10, c. April 1938, in *A Dutch Spy in China*, 170; Peter Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution, 1895-1949* (London, 2005), 311.

⁶⁹¹ AGW, 12 § 39.

⁶⁹² British Consulate, Chefoo, “Chefoo Political Report for September Quarter, 1938,” 30 September 1938, 1, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5574. Cf. Yu, “*Juntong*, SACO, and the Nationalist Guerrilla Effort,” 137-38.

pleasant” in their relations with him, were “not popular with the people as they help themselves to what they want” and “the farmers have to supply them with food.”⁶⁹³

Although such actions made the guerrillas unpopular with the local population, the Japanese also worked to defame irregular forces of Chinese resistance through the use of *agents provocateurs*. On 13 August 1938, the first anniversary of hostilities in Shanghai, there were widespread fears of attacks by Chinese partisans; however, a British Military Intelligence report indicates that the only trouble came when members of the Japanese Special Service Section, operating in civilian clothes, attempted to intimidate and humiliate Chinese residents of the American and British sectors of the city, hoping to start incidents which might justify Japanese repression.⁶⁹⁴

Some members of British Military Intelligence did not subscribe to the implicitly pro-Chinese views expressed by their colleagues. Major-General F. S. G. Piggott, the military attaché in Tokyo, undertook a visit to Tientsin in April 1939. His report describes as “absolutely convincing” the Japanese “diagrams of [Chinese] terrorist

⁶⁹³ Arthur R. Kennedy to His Majesty’s Ambassador, 26 July 1938, 3, TNA: PRO, WO 106-5573. Cf. Yang, “Nationalist and Communist Guerrilla Warfare,” 316. Subsequent scholarship has confirmed that, particularly in the first years of the war, the guerillas “were not much more than bandit gangs preying on the peasantry” (Dreyer, *China at War*, 228). Mao gave special attention to this problem, insisting that his guerrillas should “not steal from the people,” but instead “be courteous, be honest in your transactions, return what you borrow, replace what you break... [and] do not without authority search the pocketbooks of those you arrest” (*On Guerrilla Warfare*, 92.) His efforts apparently paid off. “The Eighth Route [Army] always pays for its food and never abuses folks,” reported one old villager from Shanxi (Yang, “Nationalist and Communist Guerrilla Warfare,” 317).

⁶⁹⁴ “Shanghai Local Situation: 15 July – 15 August, 1938,” 43-44, WO 106/5573. A report by a British liaison officer explains the form that some such repression took: “When terroristic outrages occur in the Settlement which are suspected of being anti-Japanese, the [Japanese] Military police are very much in evidence. They usually co-operate with the Shanghai Municipal Police but sometimes refuse them access to such places as they think fit. They also conduct searches, make arrests and generally proceed with their investigations regardless of the consent or otherwise of the civil and military authorities of the area concerned.” Lt. P. Pender-Cudlip, RA, “Report on Attachment to British Military Headquarters, Shanghai as Liaison Officer to the Japanese Forces, November 1937 to July 1938,” 11, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5573.

organizations, statistics of outrages, [and] types of infernal machines.”⁶⁹⁵ Whether or not Gubbins shared Piggott’s assessment of the Chinese resistance as “terrorists” – and it is likely he did not, given the tone of his writings in 1939 and his subsequent support for resistance movements elsewhere – there was still useful information to be gleaned from the attaché’s reports. According to the Japanese briefings Piggott received, Chinese fighters were organized with a headquarters in the British Concession within Tientsin, a neutral territory where they could usually find safe haven. Three kinds of units operated in Japanese-occupied territory: “Army property destruction group[s]” which destroyed “stores, rations, ammunition, transport, etc.”; “Terrorist Group[s], composed entirely of girls between the ages of 20 and 24,” who utilized “inflammable and explosive substances... concealed in scent-bottles, cigarette cartons” and similar containers; and “Civil factory destruction group[s],” which targeted buses, rails and shops.⁶⁹⁶

In Ireland the rebels made use of resources from Germany and the United States, but lacking geographic proximity to a third party, did not make considerable use of neutral territory. Likewise, neutral neighbors did not play a major role in the Russian Civil War, nor in most of the conflicts Gubbins studied (the role of ostensibly neutral

⁶⁹⁵ Maj-Gen F. S. G. Piggott, “Report on Visit to Tientsin, by Military Attaché, Tokyo, 3rd to 9th April, 1939,” 7, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5584. The suspicions of Piggott and others who viewed the Chinese as terrorists were supported by a bomb attack carried out against the Japanese ship *Tazima Maru* while in the port of Bremen. Moreover, the Japanese consul told the British he had reports suggesting Chinese and foreign students at European universities would attempt subsequent acts of sabotage against Japanese ships in European ports. See “The following may be of interest,” 2 April 1938, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5572. The initial claims of damage to the ship were reported by the Japanese consul. British authorities confirmed the damage when the ship came through Port Said. While attacking Japanese ships in Europe may seem novel, it accords with the strategy – observed in China and espoused by Gubbins a short time later – of attacking enemy communications and transportation. Cf. AGW, 3 § 8; PLH, 3 § 4.

⁶⁹⁶ Piggott, “Report on Visit to Tientsin,” 7, 12, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5584. The “Resist Japan Assassination Society” was reported to have “a very similar system of control and administration, but works independently” (p. 8).

France in the Spanish Civil War excepted). But in China partisan forces made use of neutral territory in a way Britain certainly noticed, since it was her own. In the same year as Piggott's report, Gubbins wrote that the "field of action for guerilla warfare" includes "neutral countries," from which weapons and explosives may be run.⁶⁹⁷

Piggott does not explain why the Chinese utilized young women for their operations; these women may have operated where men would raise greater suspicions. This phenomenon would not have been foreign to Gubbins's experience in Ireland, where elderly women carried guns for the IRA, since they were usually exempt from searches.⁶⁹⁸ Moreover, Gubbins himself later argued that "women and children... are less suspect and probably could enjoy greater immunity from search."⁶⁹⁹ The female teams on which Piggott reported may have also used their feminine charms, another concept found in Gubbins's writings.⁷⁰⁰

Both praise and blame imply that Chinese operations were significant enough to merit notice. However, the majority of Chinese Nationalist Army officers lacked faith in guerrilla warfare and spent little time concerning themselves with its tactics. Even Dai Li, head of Nationalist intelligence and security, who organized one of the earliest Nationalist programs in guerrilla warfare, did so primarily to keep an eye on the

⁶⁹⁷ *AGW*, 17 § 64. Cf. *AGW*, 19 § 69. Most of Gubbins's comments about neutrals, however, pertain to neutral states from which an enemy receives supplies, making these states potential targets for partisans. See *AGW*, 19-20 § 71-73.

⁶⁹⁸ Nankivell and Loch, *Ireland in Travail*, 182, 248.

⁶⁹⁹ *AGW*, 13 § 45.

⁷⁰⁰ *PLH*, 37 (Appendix VII) § 2. A journalist operating in China at the time noted that "the only daughter of a wealthy Chinese firend ran away from home to join her brother, who was a guerrilla leader near Shanghai.... Girls from good homes, in fact it is these girls of education and means, who work with the guerrilla units both inside and outside the city" (Booker, *News Is My Job*, 304).

Communists, who depended heavily on guerrilla warfare.⁷⁰¹ This ambivalence on the part of certain Chinese leaders seems to have trickled down the ranks; De Fremery observed that “guerrilla troops themselves are easily satisfied with a minimum performance, and it is only owing to their great strength of numbers that anything at all is achieved.”⁷⁰² There were lessons to be learned in China, but it was hardly a perfect model for the future SOE.

Gubbins and Mao

Although Chiang Kai-shek spoke and wrote on guerrilla warfare, Mao Tse-tung eclipsed him in this field, not only during the decades of the Cold War, but even during the Second Sino-Japanese War, in which the Communists held substantial control of the guerrilla movement.⁷⁰³ Indeed, De Fremery, the Dutch observer, argued that “red troops... have applied the tactical concepts suggested by Mao Tse Tung with success.”⁷⁰⁴ In 1937 Mao authored *On Guerrilla Warfare (Yu Chi Chan)*, of which the first known English translation was made by Samuel Griffith of the US Marine Corps in 1940, the year after Gubbins authored his handbooks.⁷⁰⁵ There is no evidence that Grand, Gubbins

⁷⁰¹ Yu, “*Juntong*, SACO, and the Nationalist Guerrilla Effort,” 137. Yu notes that “Historians on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait give different accounts as to how and why the LPA [Loyal Patriotic Army, Dai Li’s guerrilla force] was formed. Nationalist historians in Taiwan insist on the anti-Japanese tradition of the LPA, while historians in mainland China have denounced it for its anti-Communist orientation. The Communists have largely denied any connection between the LPA and China’s resistance struggle” (137).

⁷⁰² De Fremery, Report No. 22, c. October 1938, in *A Dutch Spy in China*, 262.

⁷⁰³ Dreyer, *China at War*, 233; Yang, “Nationalist and Communist Guerrilla Warfare in North China,” 308.

⁷⁰⁴ De Fremery, Report No. 16, c. 1938, in *A Dutch Spy in China*, 246.

⁷⁰⁵ Ian F. W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750* (London, 2001), 76; Ann Marlow, *David Galula: His Life and Intellectual Context* (Carlisle, PA, 2010), 29. Evans Fordyce Carlson, US Marine Corps, spent a considerable amount of time with Mao’s guerrillas in 1937 and 1938. He resigned his commission in 1939 to take up public speaking and

or anyone else at MI(R) read Mao's work in the late 1930s; however, the points of convergence and divergence between Gubbins's and Mao's doctrine are worth considering for several reasons. Firstly, Mao's work was certainly widespread; even in Nationalist zones of China it was "widely distributed... at 10 cents a copy."⁷⁰⁶ Portions, the entirety, or a summary of *On Guerrilla Warfare* may have been available to MI(R). This could have come about through an unpublished (and presumably now lost) English translation, perhaps by one of the Chinese linguists in the War Office or SIS. MI(R) may have also come across a description or translation in a language other than English; after all, Gubbins was a qualified interpreter in both Russian and French, had passed the preliminary Urdu exam and had a passing knowledge of German and Italian.⁷⁰⁷ Secondly, apart from any knowledge of *On Guerrilla Warfare* itself, the men of MI(R) – though possibly ignorant of the text's existence – may have discerned some of its principles at work in the operations about which Military Intelligence reported.

While acknowledging Lenin's contribution to the development of guerrilla warfare, Samuel Griffith describes Mao's *On Guerrilla Warfare* as "the first systematic study of the subject."⁷⁰⁸ Whereas Gubbins's works are tactical, Mao's is mostly

published his memoirs in 1940. See Evans Fordyce Carlson, *Twin Stars of China: A Behind-the-Scenes Story of China's Valiant Struggle for Existence by a U. S. Marine who Lived & Moved with the People* (New York, 1940). Carlson may have read *On Guerrilla Warfare* or heard about it while in China; he may have lectured on its contents. However, he did not produce a public translation before Griffith.

⁷⁰⁶ Griffith, Translator's Note to Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 37.

⁷⁰⁷ "SOE Record of Service: Colin McVean Gubbins," TNA: PRO, WO 9/630/8. Marlow argues that Mao's *On Guerrilla Warfare* was only translated into French in 1950, though the possibility of unpublished translations remains. See *David Galula*, 27. Likewise, Walter Laqueur notes that the first Russian translation of *On Guerrilla Warfare* was published in 1952. See *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study* (London, 2006), 177.

⁷⁰⁸ Griffith, Introduction to Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 11. The Chinese approach to guerrilla warfare certainly had its connections to the Soviets. Instructors from the Soviet Union trained Chinese

theoretical. Nevertheless, the primary difference between the two authors concerns the role of ideology. Griffith observes that “the fundamental difference between patriotic partisan resistance and revolutionary guerrilla movements is that the first usually lacks the ideological content that always distinguishes the second.”⁷⁰⁹ The description is apropos. Gubbins – who acquired a fierce hatred of Bolshevism in Russia – wrote virtually nothing about ideology; the closest he came are a few passages about the ability of the human spirit to resist oppression. But Mao’s work is suffused with ideology, arguing that anyone who divides the political and military aspects of guerrilla warfare “must fail.”⁷¹⁰ Moreover, Mao places an extremely strong emphasis on the role of the people, contending, for example, that “the moment this war of resistance dissociates itself from the masses of the people is the precise moment that it dissociates itself from hope of ultimate victory.”⁷¹¹ Gubbins places a strong emphasis on the local population as well, but does not ascribe to it Mao’s pseudo-mystical significance.⁷¹²

Communist forces in guerrilla warfare and also advised them on operational planning. See R. S. Rose and Gordon D. Scott, *Johnny: A Spy’s Life* (University Park, PA, 2010), 184-86.

⁷⁰⁹ Griffith, Introduction to Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 27.

⁷¹⁰ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 43.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, 44. In 1936 he made similar comments to Snow, arguing that “the Red Army won its many victories – beginning with only a few dozen rifles in the hands of determined revolutionaries – because its solid base in the people attracted friends even among the White troops, among the civilian populace as well as among the troops” (Mao, quoted in Snow, *Red Star over China*, 87).

⁷¹² “The people will actively co-operate in providing information for the guerillas and withholding it from the enemy.” “Fighting in his own country, among his own people, against a foreign foe who has invaded his land, the justice of [the guerrilla’s] cause will inflame his embitterment.” *AGW* 4 § 12; 5 § 13. In spite of his emphasis on discipline, Mao also contends that “a primary feature of guerrilla operations is their dependence upon *the people themselves* to organize battalions and other units” (*On Guerrilla Warfare*, 51, emphasis added). Gubbins contradicts this in several places. After the Second World War, Gubbins wrote to Foot that, “I sincerely do not think that there would have been any possibility of significant resistance in France, unless there had existed an S.O.E. to spark it off and not only co-ordinate it” (Gubbins to Foot, 29 January 1964, IWM, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM). While his comments elsewhere demonstrate Gubbins’s belief in the power of popular resistance, he certainly also understood its frequent dependence on outside organization and support.

A more subtle point of departure involves the matter of organization. Mao argues that “guerrilla bands that spring from the masses of the people suffer from lack of organization,” and calls for the organizing of guerrilla units up to the level of brigades.⁷¹³ As we have seen in the Irish context, Gubbins warns about over-organization and the opportunities it creates for counter-guerrilla forces. The difference in views here may be explained by a difference in geography – large portions of China were never occupied by the Japanese, making organization less dangerous – or by Mao’s ideological interest in organization stemming from the Marxist tradition.

Along related lines, Mao’s organization looks surprisingly conventional, consisting of brigades with their own administration, engineers, and finance units; battalions include machine-gun and medical sections.⁷¹⁴ There is very little in the organization which suggests the need for clandestine or mobile operations, nor an emphasis on ambushes or other tactics favorable to guerrillas. Likewise, Mao calls for each guerrilla district to establish an armory to produce – among other things – bayonets, a weapon Gubbins warned was “quite unsuitable for guerillas and “only for use in shock action which should be eschewed.”⁷¹⁵ That Mao’s guerrillas would attempt shock assaults, which provide little chance of escape in the event of failure, and would not be concerned with concealment suggests a considerable degree of regular operations.⁷¹⁶ In

⁷¹³ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 45, cf. 79-80.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Appendix, Tables 2 and 4. This is in contrast to the organization Gen. Piggott described in Tientsin, which was clearly configured for guerrilla or terrorist operations.

⁷¹⁵ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 83; AGW, 10 § 34.

⁷¹⁶ Admittedly, Mao’s description of training and equipment includes the admonition that “for destruction of railway trackage, bridges, and stations in enemy-controlled territory, it is necessary to gather together demolition materials. Troops must be trained in the preparation and use of demolitions, and a demolition unit must be organized in each regiment” (*On Guerrilla Warfare*, 83).

this sense Mao's guerrillas represent a halfway house between true guerrillas – conceptually distinct from regular forces and operating under their own logic – and militia units which, though distinct from regular forces, strive to emulate them.⁷¹⁷

Gubbins recognized that partisans' first task is survival; Mao expresses a similar sentiment, arguing that “our strategy and tactics must aim to avoid great decisive battles in the early stages of the war.”⁷¹⁸ Instead, Mao argues that partisans should “exterminate small forces,... harass and weaken large forces,... attack enemy lines of communication,... establish bases... [and] force the enemy to disperse his strength.”⁷¹⁹ Gubbins concurs with regard to attacking supplies and communications, which force the enemy to disperse; however, he appears uninterested in establishing bases.⁷²⁰ That Mao wanted to occupy and control liberated areas of China, whereas Gubbins had no interest in seizing continental territory for Britain, may explain this different approach.

Both thinkers agree on the importance of preserving guerrilla forces from enemy actions. Mao observes that “the enemy, in an endeavor to consolidate his gains, will attempt to extinguish guerrilla bases by dispatching numerous bodies of troops over a number of different routes.”⁷²¹ This was a phenomenon with which Gubbins was familiar, having seen it in Ireland and written about it in 1939: “The commencement of offensive action by the enemy will be marked by the institution of ‘flying columns’ ...

⁷¹⁷ In one battle guerrillas literally filled such a middling role; Col. Burkhardt describes the Chinese as arrayed “in three echelons[:] Red Spears [a local militia], Guerillas and Regular troops.” “Report on a Visit to North China,” 10, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5576.

⁷¹⁸ Mao, quoted in Snow, *Red Star over China*, 91. He further explains that “we must not attack an objective we are not certain of winning” (*On Guerrilla Warfare*, 112).

⁷¹⁹ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 53. Cf. Mao, quoted in Snow, *Red Star over China*, 91-92.

⁷²⁰ AGW, 3-4 § 8.

⁷²¹ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 111.

which will be sent out to search the country.”⁷²² In spite of this similar assessment of the problem, the two diverge on its solution. Mao insists that enemy sweeps “must be anticipated and the encirclement broken by counterattack.”⁷²³ Gubbins is more humble about guerrillas’ chances in such an engagement: “It may... prove possible to combine several parties together and destroy [the enemy column]. If, however, the enemy’s measures are so comprehensive as to lead to unnecessary risk, it will often be better for the guerillas to lie quiet... or move to another district.”⁷²⁴

In spite of these divergences, Mao and Gubbins agree on a great many points. Like Gubbins and the Boers before them, Mao argues that the “retention of the initiative” is an “essential requirement” of guerrilla warfare. To this end he advocates “carefully planned tactical attacks” utilizing “speed” and “exterior lines.”⁷²⁵ Likewise, “the movements of guerrilla troops must be secret and of supernatural rapidity” to ensure surprise.⁷²⁶ Such mobility and surprise allow guerrillas to concentrate against weak enemy detachments and destroy them. At all times, the focus is on mobile attack, not static defense.⁷²⁷

Likewise, Mao and Gubbins both understood the importance of captured equipment from the enemy. While Gubbins expresses a preference for having weapons

⁷²² *AGW*, 15 § 55.

⁷²³ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 111-12.

⁷²⁴ *PLH*, 12 § 13.

⁷²⁵ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 96. Peter Fleming complained that “true guerillas should, ex officio, claim and retain the initiative. In some, though not by any means all, sectors in China, the initiative is claims and exploited by the Japanese garrisons.... The reverse (it is only fair to say) is sometimes true; but not often enough.” Peter Fleming, “Notes on the Possibilities of British Military Action in China,” August 1939, 1 n2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260.

⁷²⁶ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 97. To disguise movements they should be carried out at night. See Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 104.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, 101-5. Mao does permit temporary retreat for various reasons, among them military setbacks, encirclement or limited supplies. Cf. *AGW*, 5 § 14.

in place *before* the outbreak of hostilities, he freely advocates capturing weapons from the enemy.⁷²⁸ Mao is more coy in expressing this idea: “We have a claim on the output of the arsenals of London as well as of Hanyang, and what is more, it is to be delivered to us by the enemy’s own transport corps.”⁷²⁹

Both Gubbins and Mao acknowledged the significance of partisan leaders. “In guerrilla warfare,” writes Mao, “small units acting independently play the principal role,” and thus leaders must display a high degree of initiative and good judgment.⁷³⁰ Mao describes the model guerrilla leader as “well educated in revolutionary technique, self-confident, able to establish severe discipline, and able to cope with counterpropaganda.”⁷³¹ He “should have the following qualities: endurance... [the ability] to mix easily with the people; his spirit... must be one of strengthening the policy of resistance.... He must study tactics,” and he must possess “complete loyalty.”⁷³² Gubbins’s list is shorter, but not substantially different: “A leader must have courage and resource, he must be intelligent and a good administrator and be a man of quick decision. He must know intimately the country in which he is operating.”⁷³³

⁷²⁸ *AGW*, 11 § 35.

⁷²⁹ Mao, quoted in Griffith, Introduction to Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 24. Cf. Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 83: “The enemy is the principal source of [guerrillas’] supply.” Likewise, Col. Burkhardt observes the Chinese practice of capturing weapons for use. See “Report on a Visit to North China,” 4-5, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5576. Mao likewise told Snow that “the Red Army has equipped its present forces from the Kuomintang: for nine years they have been our ‘ammunition-carriers’” (Mao, quoted in Snow, *Red Star over China*, 87).

⁷³⁰ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 52.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, 85-86.

⁷³³ *PLH*, 2 § 3.

Mao recognizes the “lack of discipline, which at first prevails” among partisans, and prescribes stern leadership and political officers to strengthen that discipline.⁷³⁴

Gubbins writes nothing in either of his 1939 works about poor discipline in the sense of misbehavior by individual soldiers, but he does discuss the solution to overly-independent partisan bands: a Chief or Guerrilla Bureau responsible for “co-ordination of plans..., intelligence and planning,... [and] provision of such supplies as the guerillas may receive.”⁷³⁵ In due course, the country sections of SOE would fill much that role.⁷³⁶

Local circumstances were emphasized by both thinkers, with Mao noting that “guerrilla warfare, though historically of the same consistency, has employed varying implements as times, peoples, and conditions differ.”⁷³⁷ As we have already seen, Gubbins concurs that guerrilla operations are “dependent on the local conditions.”⁷³⁸ Foremost among local conditions, both thinkers recognize the importance of the local population. Mao famously observes that the people “may be likened to water and the [troops] to the fish who inhabit it”; elsewhere he insists that the people’s responsibilities include “local sentry duties, securing information of the enemy, arresting traitors, and

⁷³⁴ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 45. Other sources also commented on poor Chinese discipline, among regular as well as guerilla troops. General Alexander von Falkenhausen, a German advisor to Chinese forces in the 1930s, complained that officers were highhanded, irresponsible, idle, over-staffed and unfamiliar with the most general principles of combat. See Bernd Martin, “The Role of German Military Advisers on the Chinese Defense Efforts against the Japanese, 1937-1938,” in *Resisting Japan: Mobilizing for War in China, 1935-1945*, ed. David Pong (Norwalk, Connecticut, 2008), 70.

⁷³⁵ AGW, 9 § 29-30.

⁷³⁶ It should not be assumed, however, that these country sections perfectly corresponded to the Guerrilla Bureau of the *Art of Guerilla Warfare*. Gubbins explains that “when a large operation is planned,” the Chief, the leader and embodiment of the Guerrilla Bureau, “will frequently direct and lead it in person” (AGW, 9-10 § 31).

⁷³⁷ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 49.

⁷³⁸ AGW, 1 § 3.

preventing the dissemination of enemy propaganda.”⁷³⁹ As we have seen in earlier examples, Gubbins agrees on the importance of the local population, though he assigns them fewer duties, primarily intelligence collection.⁷⁴⁰

The propaganda value of guerrilla success is apparent in the writings of both Mao and Gubbins. Mao argues that the activities of Chinese guerrillas “hamper the Japanese and undermine their control in the northeast, while, at the same time, they inspire a Nationalist revolution in Korea.”⁷⁴¹ While this may have been a rosy assessment of Chinese successes and their impact, he hit upon an idea which Gubbins also took up: the ability of guerrillas to inspire resistance.⁷⁴²

In opposition to the ideas of T. E. Lawrence, Mao and Gubbins agree that guerrilla forces are but one component of a larger effort and cannot win without regular forces. Mao stresses that “in a war of revolutionary character, guerrilla operations are a necessary *part*.... This warfare... must coordinate with the operations of our regular forces.”⁷⁴³ He clearly argues that “the concept that guerrilla warfare is an end in itself and that guerrilla activities can be divorced from those of the regular forces is incorrect.”⁷⁴⁴ MI(R) was certainly aware of this strategy. One report noted that “Lawrence could not have won his war without [the regular forces of General] Allenby: Allenby could have won his war without Lawrence. Chinese high strategy recognises

⁷³⁹ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 93, 80.

⁷⁴⁰ AGW, 11§ 37.

⁷⁴¹ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 64.

⁷⁴² AGW, 2 § 4, 5 § 15, 22 § 82.

⁷⁴³ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 41. Mao was not the only leader in China to articulate such a view; he shared it with his Nationalist rival, Chiang, who also advocated coordination of guerrilla activities with regular forces. See Booker, *News Is My Job*, 329-30 and Yu, “*Juntong*, SACO, and the Nationalist Guerrilla Effort,” 136.

⁷⁴⁴ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 55. Cf. 57

that guerillas can only represent a subsidiary military effort.”⁷⁴⁵ Moreover, both Mao and Gubbins emphasized a kind of culmination of guerrilla activity in conventional warfare. Mao claims that guerrillas’ first function is “to conduct a war on exterior lines, that is, in the rear of the enemy.” However, as the war effort progresses guerrillas should also “establish bases” and eventually even “extend the war areas.”⁷⁴⁶ Gubbins writes that, “A population hostile to the enemy’s occupation” may engage in resistance “culminating in a general rising of the people against the enemy.”⁷⁴⁷

In spite of the emphasis found in both thinkers on coordination with regular troops, both also show reservations about their direct use with partisans. Mao notes that “orthodox armies may... temporarily function as guerrillas. Likewise, guerrilla units... may gradually develop into regular units.”⁷⁴⁸ Nevertheless, he cautions that “historical experience shows us that regular army units are not able to undergo the hardships of guerrilla campaigning over long periods.” Moreover, “leaders of regular units engaged in guerrilla operations must be extremely adaptable.”⁷⁴⁹ Gubbins, likewise, warns that “preconceived ideas of military procedure” need to be discarded by regulars serving with

⁷⁴⁵ Peter Fleming, “Notes on the Possibilities of British Military Action in China,” August 1939, 2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260. Gubbins similarly contends that “large groups of bands” should be organized “under central leadership on a semi-military basis” (AGW, 2 § 4). He insists that “guerilla warfare should... produce in the field large formations of guerillas, well-armed and well-trained, which are able to take a direct part in the fighting... in direct conjunction with the operations of regular troops” (AGW, 1 § 4). Gubbins’s comments were written about three months before Fleming’s; it is uncertain whether the parallels are the result of coincidence, Gubbins’s reading of earlier reports from China, or Fleming’s reading of Gubbins before authoring his report.

⁷⁴⁶ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 95.

⁷⁴⁷ AGW, 18 § 68.

⁷⁴⁸ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 54. Elsewhere Mao makes the same point, as when, for example, he contends that “guerrillas gradually develop into orthodox forces that operate in conjunction with other units of the regular army” (Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 42).

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

guerrillas; indeed, “the very fact of... being regular officers may prejudice their position in the eyes of the partisans.”⁷⁵⁰

Surprisingly, Mao and Gubbins’s stated policies are almost diametrically opposed on the question of traitors. While Gubbins calls for their ruthless and rapid elimination by death, Mao simply encourages “officers [to] continually educate the soldiers and inculcate patriotism in them. This will prevent the success of traitors. The traitors who are in the ranks must be discovered and expelled.”⁷⁵¹ This is a rather pacific penalty for betraying one’s comrades-in-arms in a wartime situation, one that certainly does not accord with Communist Chinese practice. But then, one must recall that Mao, who, in the words of historians Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, “offered [American journalist Edgar] Snow a mixture of valuable information and colossal falsification,” had a penchant for purposeful lying.⁷⁵² An alternative account of Communist treatment of traitors is given by De Fremery, who records that “every person who accepts... a puppet relationship [with Japan] is considered to be a traitor and the number of those who have already had to pay for their treason by death is large.”⁷⁵³ Likewise, one British officer observed that “any signs of trading with the enemy is certain death. Chinese travelling with Yen or Federated Reserve Bank notes [issued by the Japanese] are shot out of hand.”⁷⁵⁴ It seems unlikely anyone followed Mao’s mild advice regarding traitors.

In general, in spite of the geographic and ideological gulf separating Mao and Gubbins, an analysis of these contemporary thinkers reveals a surprising degree of

⁷⁵⁰ AGW, 7 § 19.

⁷⁵¹ Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 87.

⁷⁵² Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (London, 2005), 199.

⁷⁵³ De Fremery, Report No. 12, c. 1938, in *A Dutch Spy in China*, 253.

⁷⁵⁴ Col. V. R. Burkhardt, “Report on a Visit to North China,” 5-6, TNA: PRO, WO 106/5576.

affinity. In spite of their radically different backgrounds and political affiliations, both men made similar arguments about unconventional warfare from opposite sides of the globe. The extent to which Gubbins was inspired specifically by Mao or his writings awaits the revelation of new primary sources.

Early Operations in China

MI(R)'s interests in China were not simply academic. On 1 August 1939, Peter Fleming, who had traveled through much of Asia in the interwar years, was recruited by MI(R) "as the leader of a small party of officers whose mission would be to stir Chinese guerrillas into more effective action against the Japanese."⁷⁵⁵ At the request of MI(R) he also produced a paper titled "Notes on the Possibilities of British Military Action in China," in which he proposed a multi-pronged British Mission to China, consisting of a "Mission Headquarters at Chunking" to liaise with Chiang's headquarters, a propaganda component, technical training for the Chinese, advisory details in the field, and "submissions" including junior officers who would "organise and, where possible... *lead personally* local offensive action against the enemy."⁷⁵⁶ He also proposed the creation of a British, Indian or Australian cavalry force in the Mongolian Corridor northwest of Beijing, arguing that the terrain was ideal for irregular warfare, allowing for a small

⁷⁵⁵ Hart-Davis, *Peter Fleming*, 214.

⁷⁵⁶ Peter Fleming, "Notes on the Possibilities of British Military Action in China," August 1939, 3-5, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260. Emphasis in original. He suggests that the advisory "details (not more than 4 men, including one driver, per officer) might consist of British-trained Chinese, or of Indian troops, or of (non-Burmese) troops from Upper Burma," that is, Kachins (see Chapter VII).

force to make a great impact.⁷⁵⁷ Wherever British forces might serve in China, Fleming argued that the Chinese

would be pleurably surprised to find foreign officers coming with them under fire; and it would be the surest way to overcome the obstacles of pride, jealousy and “face” which will be encountered in local commands. The average Chinese general will not take kindly to foreign direction or control, however tactfully imposed on him; but he will view with gratitude, respect and astonishment a foreign officer who undertakes in person, and with success, the distasteful task of fighting.⁷⁵⁸

Fleming’s proposals were accepted by 8 August, when two MI(R) representatives met with him to discuss the plans, including his departure for China in the middle of November. Fleming was permitted to recruit his own force, made up of men such as Martin Lindsay, an Artic explorer who had served for ten years in the regular Army and had learned Chinese in Shanghai. These plans all came to naught in the third week of September when the Foreign Office vetoed even clandestine support to the Chinese, not wanting to exacerbate tensions with Japan, or find Britain in a second war, having recently acquired one in Europe. Fleming, however, stayed with MI(R), producing plans for anti-Japanese propaganda which effectively anticipated Japanese moves in 1941.⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁷ Peter Fleming, “Notes on the Possibilities of British Military Action in China,” Appendix B, August 1939, 1-2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260. Fleming also considered the possibility that a British cavalry force might lead a larger force of “Chinese Moslem cavalry... [who] are good fighters, with more dash and fanaticism than ordinary Chinese. Something (but probably not very much) might also be done with the Mongols, whose most valuable function would be as scouts” (2). Whether this proposal had any connection to Mao’s call for “guerrilla cavalry units” to be established in North China is uncertain. See Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 80.

⁷⁵⁸ Peter Fleming, “Notes on the Possibilities of British Military Action in China,” August 1939, 4, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260. William Donovan, Coordinator of Information and then director of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS – see Chapter VI), concocted a similar plan in December 1941. See Richard Dunlop, *Donovan: American’s Master Spy* (New York: 1982), 339-40.

⁷⁵⁹ War Diary, MI(R), September 1939, TNA: PRO, HS 8/263; Hart-Davis, *Peter Fleming*, 215-16.

German Subversive Forces

A final source of inspiration to Gubbins and the men at MI(R) was the enemy himself. In an address to the Cambridge University Officers Training Corps many years after the war, Gubbins explained how the British government was impressed by

the tremendous harvest that Germany had reaped through the use of these [unconventional] means, for example the subversion of Austria in 1939, the rape of Czechoslovakia in 1939 all without a shot being fired – and then in 1940 the elimination of France as a combatant, fundamentally attributable to the rot in Government circles achieved by German ‘5th Column’ activities before the War even began and the complete lack of confidence that ensued: subversion had won in the final round with a knock-out.⁷⁶⁰

In 1940, Hugh Dalton echoed this sentiment in a letter to Lord Halifax: “We have got to organize movements in enemy-occupied territory comparable to... – one might as well admit it – to the organizations which the nazis themselves have developed so remarkably in almost every country in the world.”⁷⁶¹ Not all the successes attributed to Nazi agents actually happened, but when understanding the thinking of Colin Gubbins, what matters was perception in Britain, not reality on the Continent. And the perception that the Allies had suffered at the hands of German fifth columnists is widely attested. It became dogma within SOE that “Britain and her Allies” had experienced “the strength and success of the enemy fifth column” before realizing that the Allies too could engage in subversive warfare.⁷⁶²

⁷⁶⁰ Gubbins address to Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, 26 October 1962, 1-2, Gubbins papers 4/1/6, IWM. The reference here to Czechoslovakia pertains not to the Munich agreement of 1938, which gave Germany control of the Sudetenland, but the subsequent German occupation of Prague in 1939.

⁷⁶¹ Dalton, *The Fateful Years*, 368.

⁷⁶² “Brief History of SOE,” 1, TNA: PRO, HS 7/1.

In 1934 the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD), the intelligence wing of the Nazi SS organization, sent its first spy abroad to Paris.⁷⁶³ That same year a court in Lithuania heard testimony that the *Sozialistische Volksgemeinschaft*, an organization of ethnic Germans, was prepared “to join up with the SA [*Sturmabteilung* – Nazi paramilitary] units which were expected from Germany within a few days.”⁷⁶⁴ In January 1935 an SD assassination team killed an anti-Nazi broadcaster in Czechoslovakia.⁷⁶⁵ Meanwhile, a well-known German refugee disappeared from the streets of Basle, Switzerland; the man arrested by authorities confessed to the crime, in collaboration with Germany’s Gestapo.⁷⁶⁶ In 1936 the Abwehr, German military intelligence, began forming war organizations (*krieg organisationen*) in most of the neutral states of Europe; these teams, which included personnel for both espionage and sabotage, were disguised as diplomatic staff.⁷⁶⁷

These and other activities, real and imagined, found their way into the press. In 1935 German refugees in Paris published *Das Braune Netz* (*The Brown Net*), an exposé of Nazi activities across Europe; the book estimated that Germany had 48,000 agents carrying out propaganda and espionage and coordinating 24,000 local groups of Germans abroad.⁷⁶⁸ In 1937 German anarchists published the *Schwarz-Rotbuch* (*Black-Red Book*), a collection of documents seized in Spain, detailing various subversive

⁷⁶³ Edmund L. Blandford, *SS Intelligence: The Nazi Secret Service* (Edison, NJ, 2000), 82.

⁷⁶⁴ *Vier Dokumente zum Prozess Neumann, Von Sass und Genossen* (Kaunas, 1934), 16; quoted in de Jong, *German Fifth Column*, 10

⁷⁶⁵ Blandford, *SS Intelligence*, 96-103.

⁷⁶⁶ De Jong, *German Fifth Column*, 10.

⁷⁶⁷ Franz Kurowski, *The Brandenburger Commandos: Germany’s Elite Warrior Spies in World War II*, trans. David Johnston (Mechanicsburg, PA, 2005), 15.

⁷⁶⁸ De Jong, *German Fifth Column*, 12-13.

activities. In London an English edition was produced. Dutch historian Louis de Jong explains, “The general public, perhaps, was not much roused, but in police and judicial circles and in the secret services of many countries the publications were seriously studied.”⁷⁶⁹ Further attention was drawn to German activities by actions of other governments. In 1938, eighteen Abwehr agents were arrested in the United States. When Abwehr activities in the Soviet Union came to light the German consulates in seven cities were closed.⁷⁷⁰ Likewise, in the spring of 1939 nine Nazis were deported from Britain.⁷⁷¹

Prior to the Anschluss, the annexation of Austria in 1938, Germany supplied arms to the Austrian Nazi Party, which attempted, through illegal propaganda and agitation, to topple the Austrian government. In 1934 Austrian Nazis assassinated Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss.⁷⁷² In January 1938 a raid on the Austrian Nazi headquarters revealed plans for armed insurrection.⁷⁷³ As de Jong explains, “Beyond the German frontiers people didn’t worry about whether the Vienna rebels... had acted on direct orders from Berlin.... The complicity of the German *Reich* was evident.”⁷⁷⁴ Dollfuss’ successor, Kurt Schuschnigg was forced from power when he postponed a promised plebiscite on union with Germany. Germany threatened Austria and told

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁷⁷⁰ Kurowski, *Brandenburger Commandos*, 12.

⁷⁷¹ De Jong, *German Fifth Column*, 20.

⁷⁷² R. J. Q. Adams, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement, 1935-1939* (Stanford, 1993), 82; Blandford, *SS Intelligence*, 81.

⁷⁷³ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London, 1961), 139-40. Taylor claims that “Hitler knew nothing of these plans, which had been prepared despite his orders” (140). However, Ian Westwell contends that the Abwehr’s II Department (Sabotage) was involved in the intriguing of Austrian Nazis, though he does not specify to what extent. See Ian Westwell, *Brandenburgers: The Third Reich’s Special Forces* (Surrey, 2003), 8. Whether or not Taylor is correct is largely immaterial here; an officer of MI(R), looking back from the following year, would see a clear line of Nazi intrigue and aggression.

⁷⁷⁴ De Jong, *German Fifth Column*, 5.

Schuschnigg to resign in favor of Arthur Seyss-Inquart, his minister of the interior and a Nazi sympathizer; on 11 March Schuschnigg left office, but Austrian President Wilhelm Miklas refused to appoint Seyss-Inquart chancellor. So Seyss-Inquart appointed himself, and— on the orders of his German masters – invited German troops into Austria, ostensibly to help restore law and order.⁷⁷⁵ Austria’s independence was over.

It is often remembered that Czechoslovakia’s dismemberment was permitted by the great powers of Europe at the Munich Conference. It is less often recalled that Adolf Hitler had in Konrad Henlein, leader of the *Sudetendeutsch Partei*, a voice willing to speak his propaganda and agitate for “rights” the Czech government could never grant its German-speaking minority. Meanwhile, Henlein’s henchmen, receiving support from the Abwehr, threatened armed insurrection.⁷⁷⁶ In the Asch-Eger district they made good on this threat, though the government declared martial law and quickly squashed the would-be revolt.⁷⁷⁷ The Munich Conference betrayed the Czechoslovak republic, but Henlein’s agitation made Munich possible.

Prior to the invasion of Poland, teams from the Abwehr’s II Department (Sabotage) were given the task of attacking specific Polish archives – notably those of Polish military intelligence – and securing them for German use. These men were no mere commandos, however; they operated in Polish uniforms.⁷⁷⁸ Other teams of *volksdeutsch* were infiltrated into Poland well before the invasion proper and given the

⁷⁷⁵ Adams, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement*, 82-83; Taylor, *Origins of the Second World War*, 147-48. Seyss-Inquart requested the troops in a telegram sent at 9:10pm; the order to the German military to deploy troops to Austria had already been at 8:45pm.

⁷⁷⁶ Adams, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement*, 91, 93-94; Westwell, *Brandenburgers*, 8.

⁷⁷⁷ Adams, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Appeasement*, 106.

⁷⁷⁸ Kurowski, *Brandenburger Commandos*, 17.

task of seizing such economic targets as iron and coal mines. Still other Abwehr teams were tasked with securing bridges and the Jablunkov Pass into Silesia.⁷⁷⁹ But it was the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) which dressed as Polish soldiers and attacked a German radio station at Gleiwitz, providing the ostensible justification for Germany's invasion.⁷⁸⁰

The Abwehr's II Department included the 800th Special Purpose Instruction Regiment Brandenburg, the brainchild of Hauptmann (Captain) Dr. Theodor von Hippel, a veteran of Lettow-Vorbeck's guerrilla campaign in Africa. Von Hippel envisioned a unit "to seize vital objects such as bridges, tunnels, crossroads and armaments plants and hold them until the arrival of the leading units of the German Armed Forces."⁷⁸¹ By design the new unit included men fluent in the languages of Germany's neighbors.⁷⁸² Although formed after the assault on Poland, the Brandenburgers saw plenty of subsequent action. During the invasion of Denmark they dressed as Danish soldiers or civilians and seized crossings over the Great Belt, the strait which divides the country in half.⁷⁸³ In the invasion of the Low Countries and France Brandenburgers seized river and canal crossings before the retreating Allies could destroy them. Again, enemy uniforms – this time Dutch – were used for surprise. In one instance German commandos posed as Dutch policemen escorting German Army deserters in order to clear a Dutch checkpoint. The Brandenburgers were further aided by local Dutch agents

⁷⁷⁹ Kurowski, *Brandenburger Commandos*, 41; Westwell, *Brandenburgers*, 13-14.

⁷⁸⁰ Westwell, *Brandenburgers*, 15.

⁷⁸¹ Theodor von Hippel, quoted in Kurowski, *Brandenburger Commandos*, 6.

⁷⁸² Kurowski, *Brandenburger Commandos*, 50.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, 52; Westwell, *Brandenburgers*, 15.

(known as V-Männer⁷⁸⁴), and volunteers from the Dutch National Socialists.⁷⁸⁵ In Reims, France, a truckload of secret files from the French Western Army was seized by a German agent posing as a French lieutenant. In Paris, Brandenburgers, posing as Belgian, Dutch and French refugees, seized the files of French military intelligence headquarters before they could be evacuated.⁷⁸⁶

In Ireland, fears of German agents and fifth columnists persisted throughout the war. In May of 1940, Sir Charles Tegart, who had previously advised the Palestine Police, stoked the fears of the new British prime minister, Winston Churchill, reporting that hundreds or even thousands of German agents were infiltrating Ireland to topple the Irish government in preparation for an invasion of Britain.⁷⁸⁷ It was not only the British who worried; following the fall of the Netherlands, Irish *Taoiseach* (prime minister) Éamon de Valera became anxious about German agents. So concerned was he that he appealed to Britain for arms against this potential threat.⁷⁸⁸ Worries that German U-boats were resupplying in the rocky bays of Western Ireland never seemed to go away, though they were never substantiated.⁷⁸⁹

German operations were noticed on both sides of the Atlantic. Col. William Donovan, of subsequent OSS fame, and Edgar Mowrer, a journalist, authored a short

⁷⁸⁴ Short for Verbindungs-Männer, literally “joining men.” The singular form is Verbindungs-Mann or V-Mann.

⁷⁸⁵ Franz Kurowski, *Brandenburger Commandos*, 26-28, 53, 59.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁷⁸⁷ Robert Fisk, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-45* (Dublin, 1983), 141-42; Eunan O’Halpin, *Spying on Ireland: British Intelligence and Irish Neutrality during the Second World War* (Oxford, 2008), 93-94. Tegart was but one member of a chorus of voices raising concerns about Ireland.

⁷⁸⁸ Fisk, *In Time of War*, 174. De Valera subsequently even asked Britain to come to Ireland’s aid if she were attacked by Germany. See Fisk, *In Time of War*, 186-87.

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 142-50; O’Halpin, *Spying on Ireland*, 42, 52-53, 57, 66, 73, 252.

work titled *Fifth Column Lessons for America*. They concluded that “no amount of genius would have accomplished what the Germans accomplished in so short a time without two [non-military] elements. These were the Germans abroad and sympathizers in the victim countries.”⁷⁹⁰ In both Czechoslovakia and Poland they saw the hand of the *volksdeutsch* community aiding the Nazis.

Directed by the German Gestapo... the minority leaders found means of terrorizing or otherwise inducing practically all the Germans to become spies and agents.... Some ten thousand of them were actually trained in special camps in Germany to be forerunners, agents and guides to the invading army columns when the time came.⁷⁹¹

Incredible actions were attributed to these German operatives: “Germans disguised as Polish soldiers spread panic through the villages. Germans speaking Polish issued false instruction[s] and orders to the people by wireless. Still others remained deep behind the lines and from there signaled objectives and instructions to German air men.” In Norway, they claimed that “air fields... fell to attacks by German soldiers hidden in the holds of merchant ships anchored in the fjords or moored of the quayside.” In Denmark, German agents “by their constant threats and interference with the Danish Government, had produced a state of mind bordering on terror that contributed to drive any thought of real resistance from the Danish mind.” Nor were the Low Countries spared this onslaught of saboteurs: “Germans hidden in barges seized the Moordyke Bridge in Holland.... The 120,000 [German residents of the Netherlands] occupied their leisure in propaganda and espionage for the Nazis.... When Hitler finally struck, the 120,000 turned on their placid hosts with the fury of dervishes and, where they could, shot them

⁷⁹⁰ William Donovan and Edgar Mowrer, *Fifth Column Lessons for America* (Washington, n.d.), 1.

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

down in cold blood.”⁷⁹² In Belgium “the thousands of dissatisfied Flemings and the Dinase (*Dietsche Nationals Solidaristen*) and members of Leon Degrelle’s Rex [fascist party] saw to” it that the bridges over the Albert Canal were not destroyed, as Belgian defense plans called for.⁷⁹³

Certainly not all of these allegations were true. As de Jong demonstrates, a great many of the reports of the German “fifth column” were bogus.⁷⁹⁴ But they remain significant for two reasons. Firstly, they inspired fear. If Britain was threatened – and by 1940 everyone agreed she was – some sort of response was needed. Irregular activities, ultimately centered in SOE, proved part of that response. Secondly, German subversion – real or imagined – provided an inspiration. “You will remember,” Gubbins reminded the Danish-English Society after the war,

in the years 1938 and 1939 and even earlier the success of the Nazi party and leaders in using unorthodox methods to subvert governments, to penetrate disputed territory, to created “fifth columns,” to attack their potential adversaries from within so as to weaken resistance to eventual aggression. We were late in Britain in appreciating the immense effect of these activities but just before the War a very small nucleus of people were taken aside and told to study what actions of this nature could be planned and undertaken to harass Germany in the event of War.⁷⁹⁵

Gubbins and the men of MI(R) indeed studied. Before long war would be upon them, and their ideas tested in practice.

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁹⁴ De Jong, *German Fifth Column*, 147-248.

⁷⁹⁵ Gubbins address to the Danish/English Society in Copenhagen, 29 April 1966, 2, Gubbins papers 4/1/20, IWM. Another copy of the address gives the group’s name as the “Anglo/Danish Club.”

Conclusion

Gubbins was most certainly a man of his times who drew upon lessons available from a variety of sources. That most of the ideas he propagated were not originally his own hardly detracts from the achievement of recognizing examples which proved useful in the near future and distilling them to a brief set of principles and guidelines. In spite of this achievement, it should be mentioned that several subjects are omitted from the *Art of Guerilla Warfare* and *The Partisan Leader's Handbook*. Nowhere does Gubbins mention the aerial re-supply of guerrillas, an essential aid to the resistance in both Europe and Asia during the Second World War; air power is only ever mentioned as a *threat* to guerrillas.⁷⁹⁶ Gubbins's gaze may simply have been too historical, looking only to existing examples.⁷⁹⁷ However, he or another member of MI(R) proposed in 1940 that "the ideal would be for the [guerrilla] force to... be supplied by air enroute, and... receive by parachute the explosives, special weapons, etc, which it requires."⁷⁹⁸ Thus, any deficiency in Gubbins's conception of supply was corrected.

⁷⁹⁶ Cf. Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 40.

⁷⁹⁷ In 1917 Germany attempted to resupply von Lettow-Vorbeck's guerrillas via zeppelin, though the plan was scratched while the airship was en route. With a little speculation, a soldier in 1939 might have imagined what *would* have happened if the supplies got through, or how aerial re-supply had become a more practical option in the two decades since this failure. But perhaps this was too speculative for Gubbins's tastes. For more on the attempted zeppelin operation see Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa, 1914-1918* (New York, 1986), 338-41; Rolf Marben, *Zeppelin Adventures*, trans. Claud W. Sykes (London, 1931), 168-85; Edward Paice, *Tip and Run: The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (London, 2007), 347-50; Douglas H. Robinson, *The Zeppelin in Combat: A History of the German Naval Airship Division, 1912-1918* (Seattle, 1962), 284-96.

⁷⁹⁸ "An Appreciation of the capabilities and composition of a small force operating behind the enemy lines in the offensive," 7 June 1940, 2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/259. Cf. MI(R) No. 283/40, "Irregular Tactics and Strategy," August 1940. This later document, likely authored by Holland, advocates the use of helicopters and autogyros to spearhead mobile forces, which would then be supported by parachute and glider-borne troops and supplies dropped on parachutes.

Secondly, Gubbins does not directly address the question of reprisals which partisans and civilians were likely to face. Mackenzie comments that “General Gubbins’s recollection is that this was deliberately omitted, as a point best passed by in silence.”⁷⁹⁹ A careful reading of the *Handbook*, however, reveals a clear, if understated, grasp of this problem; Gubbins reminds those resisting that “as your activities develop, the enemy will become more and more ruthless in his attempts to stop you.”⁸⁰⁰

In the late summer of 1939, Gubbins’s days with MI(R) were drawing to a close, having authored the *Art* and *Handbook*, leaving his intellectual stamp upon Holland’s young organization. Although formally remaining with MI(R) for a time, Gubbins spent nearly the first year of World War II serving elsewhere: with the Military Mission to Poland, leading an Independent Company in Norway, and then planning for the defense of Britain itself with guerrilla forces. By the time he returned to MI(R) in 1940 it had evolved into the new Special Operations Executive.

⁷⁹⁹ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 41 n1.

⁸⁰⁰ *PLH*, 13 § 14.

CHAPTER V
 GESTATION OF GUBBINS'S THINKING
 AND THE CREATION OF SOE

No. 4 Military Mission

Gubbins returned to London from his second trip to Warsaw on 19 August 1939; no sooner had he arrived than plans were being made for another trip. With intelligence suggesting that a German invasion of Poland would come by the beginning of September, military missions were being planned to Poland and Romania.⁸⁰¹ Holland wanted to make sure these had an MI(R) element, and he received permission from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to call up certain MI(R) personnel without waiting for a general mobilization.⁸⁰² Gubbins later explained, "My appointment to Warsaw in the event of War had been arranged in July with the D.M.I., so that I had two roles, the official one as Chief Staff Officer and the unofficial 'to stimulate and assist the Poles and Czechs in Guerilla warfare.'" ⁸⁰³ Gubbins was chosen for this unique role because he was one of the few who could fill it: he had the conventional credentials – including experience as an ADC and training at Staff College – to be a Chief of Staff, but was also an acknowledged guerrilla warfare expert who had been with Holland since GS(R) days.⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰¹ At the time Romania bordered both Poland and the German puppet state of Slovakia. Today it borders neither.

⁸⁰² Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 36. Cf. Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 67.

⁸⁰³ "CG's Comments on Foot's Book," nd, 2, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM.

⁸⁰⁴ Sir Peter Wilkinson, lecture titled "Gubbins: A Resistance Leader," given at Cambridge on 28 April 1990, 3, Gubbins papers 4/1/50, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 38.

The military mission – No. 4 by designation – was led by General Adrian Carton de Wiart, whom Gubbins had met in France. Never a man for peacetime service, Carton de Wiart had retired from the British Army and settled in eastern Poland, where he was a long-term guest on the estate of Prince Karol Radziwiłł. Thus, when war seemed imminent, he was already in Poland, meeting with the various Polish services in Warsaw before the military mission ever left.⁸⁰⁵

Gubbins and the rest of the party traveled the long way round Europe, across France, then to Alexandria, then Greece, and finally through Romania to Poland. They crossed the border on the night of 2/3 September, the Germans having invaded on the first.⁸⁰⁶ Earlier in the year Holland had written that “foreign General Staffs might be encouraged to leave behind selected and trained parties of troops to act as centres for local guerilla activities.”⁸⁰⁷ But Gubbins had highlighted “the importance to Poland of *preparations* for guerilla warfare,” in light of “the veritable withdrawals her armies will be compelled to carry out in the early stages of a war.”⁸⁰⁸ Now that Polish forces were collapsing around them, however, there was little the MI(R) contingent could do to organize guerrilla bands. Nor was there much the rest of the military mission could offer

⁸⁰⁵ De Wiart, *Happy Odyssey*, 122-23, 153-56; Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 78; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 38. Carton de Wiart may have been collecting intelligence for the British, even when he was not on the government payroll. See Andrzej Peplowski, Andrzej Suchcitz, and Jacek Tebinka, “Intelligence Co-operation during the Second Half of the 1930s,” *Intelligence Co-operation between Poland and Great Britain during World War II*, Vol. I: The Report of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee, ed. Tessa Stirling, Daria Nałęcz, and Tadeusz Dubicki (London, 2005), 171.

⁸⁰⁶ Maj.-Gen. Carton de Wiart, “British Military Mission to Poland,” 2, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1757; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 45; Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 68-71; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 39-40.

⁸⁰⁷ Holland, “Duties of the New Branch,” 3 April 1939, 4, TNA: PRO, HS 8/256.

⁸⁰⁸ Gubbins, “Report for D.C.I.G.S. No. 8 – Investigation of the Possibilities of Guerilla Activities, Appendix I: Preliminary Report on a Tour to Poland, Baltic States, and Roumania,” 1 June 1939, 2, TNA: PRO, HS 8/260. Emphasis added.

the Poles. The result was depressing. Gubbins describes the scene the day after arriving in Poland:

Lunch had been arranged for us at a hotel in Lyublin and we sat inside, still wearing our civilian clothes as our country was not at war. While having our meal we heard on the radio that Britain had declared war on Germany. I immediately ordered my officers and men to put on their uniforms and we went out into the town square to rejoin our buses. The square was completely filled by a huge crowd, cheering and shouting “England is beside us. Long live England.” We were each of us lifted bodily into the air and carried into our buses already loaded with flowers. My heart was filled with sadness and foreboding.⁸⁰⁹

Shortly thereafter Gubbins made contact with Carton de Wiart.⁸¹⁰ The Poles were in desperate straits, and with the fighting quite fluid there was little concrete information. Gubbins dispatched one of his men, Tommy Davies, via the Baltic States to London to personally explain to the CIGS just how bad the situation was.⁸¹¹ Gubbins and the men of MI(R) were unable to do much in the way of organising guerrilla activities. To have brought up the matter of stay-behind parties before the fall of Poland might have appeared defeatist; besides, the German campaign was unfolding far too quickly for any sort of joint planning.⁸¹² The speed of the German advance was helped by the drought conditions that summer, which meant that rivers ran quite low and did not provide the obstacles that Polish plans expected.⁸¹³ On the morning of 5 September the Polish General Staff – military mission’s counterpart for liaison activities – left Warsaw for Lukow, fifty miles to the southeast. Utilizing MI(R) money provided via the British embassy, the military mission was able to purchase two cars and a truck in which to

⁸⁰⁹ Gubbins, address to Anglo-Polish Society, 18 November 1972, 2, Gubbins papers 4/1/41, IWM.

⁸¹⁰ Carton de Wiart, “British Military Mission to Poland,” 2, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1757.

⁸¹¹ Nicholas Bethell, *The War Hitler Won: The Fall of Poland, September 1939* (New York, 1972), 166.

⁸¹² Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 46.

⁸¹³ Carton de Wiart, “British Military Mission to Poland, Part II: Lessons of the Campaign,” 7, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1757.

follow the rapidly-moving Polish General Staff. This was only the first of several moves by the General Staff; at each turn, the military mission struggled to find out where the General Staff was going next and to follow them.⁸¹⁴

At one point Gubbins was able to give a spare wireless set to General Waclaw Stachiewicz, the Polish Chief of Staff, who was out of touch with some elements of the Army. But by and large there was little Carton de Wiart or the Military Mission could do to stem the German tide.⁸¹⁵ Swift action by the Royal Air Force, the support Britain was best positioned to take at the moment, was beyond the authority of the military mission. Meanwhile, General Stachiewicz freely admitted he lacked knowledge of the battle; a Polish artillery major encountered by Gubbins admitted that his unit had no guns, only their side arms.⁸¹⁶ With the Red Army's crossing of the Polish frontier on 17 September, any hope of staving off defeat evaporated.⁸¹⁷ Peter Wilkinson, a member of the Mission, recalls that when Gubbins received official word from the Polish General Staff of the Soviet invasion,

he... made a moving little speech in French in which he expressed his sympathy for the Polish predicament and his admiration for the courage with which the army had fought against overwhelming odds. He promised that Britain would fight on until Poland was once more free and its territory restored. After this we shook hands and took our leave.⁸¹⁸

The No. 4 Military Mission stayed in Poland for a short while longer before making its way across the Romanian border, with countless Polish refugees. Most of the Mission's

⁸¹⁴ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 41-43. The official report places this move on 6 September. The discrepancy may simply cover the time it took for the General Staff and all its personnel to move. See Carton de Wiart, "British Military Mission to Poland," 2, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1757

⁸¹⁵ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 44.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

⁸¹⁷ Carton de Wiart, "British Military Mission to Poland," 10, TNA: PRO, WO 106/1757.

⁸¹⁸ Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 82.

members quickly returned to Britain by sea, though Carton de Wiart and Gubbins stayed in Bucharest for an extra week to write up the official report of the Mission.⁸¹⁹ The report's descriptions of blitzkrieg went unheeded and those mentioned in the despatch were ungazetted until the British Expeditionary Force was encircled by the Germans at Dunkirk in the following year.⁸²⁰

The Coming of War in Britain

Meanwhile, with the coming of war, Section D moved its headquarters to the countryside, fearing – like most organizations of the time – that London would soon be leveled by aerial bombardment. The Frythe, a Victorian neo-gothic private residential hotel near Welwyn, Hertfordshire, was requisitioned on 1 September, the very day the Germans invaded Poland. In spite of the war's advent, a spirit of amateurism, even levity, still prevailed at Section D. The entire section lived at the Frythe, with wealthy members supplying their own cars for transport. Darts and table tennis were common forms of diversion. The only security incident in the autumn of 1939 was a bizarre series of episodes involving “ghostly whistling, banshee wailing and stealthy prowling round the house.” At one point an armed sentry – provided by the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment – was assaulted by an assailant who “escape[d] down ‘spook alley’ with a gleeful cackle of eery laughter.”⁸²¹ The culprit? The hotel's manager, who

⁸¹⁹ Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 83-85; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 45.

⁸²⁰ Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 86.

⁸²¹ “SOE Early History to September 1939,” 8, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3.

had fiercely opposed the requisitioning of the property, and was trying to scare away his new guests. The involvement of the local police eventually ended the incidents.⁸²²

With the coming of war, Holland decided it was time to move himself and MI(R) back to the War Office. As Gubbins explained, Holland “had no faith in ‘D’ [Grand], with his wild cat and fantastical schemes, never getting down to brass tacks and specific achievements.”⁸²³ Nevertheless, cooperation continued between the two organizations. Wilkinson explains that, although he was employed by MI(R) in early 1940, he spent as much time at Section D, where he “was given a desk in their Balkan section and allotted the secret symbol DH/M.”⁸²⁴

In addition to the MI(R) component of the No. 4 Military Mission, Holland and his staff were busy elsewhere. As Gubbins put it, Holland believed his “function was to produce ideas, work them up to a practical stage and then cast them off to grow under their own steam under whomever in M.I.R. he had brought up for the purpose.”⁸²⁵ A prime example of this concept came in the autumn of 1939, with a “Prisoners of War” project. Even before there were any British prisoners, Holland recognized that, with the coming of war, there would be. And thus he began to consider how they might escape from the enemy and evade pursuers, making their way home. Norman Crockatt was brought on board as General Assistant; the project rapidly grew, until Holland cast it off all together to become an independent agency, MI9, the War Office’ escape and evasion

⁸²² “SOE Early History to September 1939,” 8, HS 7/3.

⁸²³ “CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” nd, 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM. Cf. Astley, *Inner Circle*, 27.

⁸²⁴ Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 87. “I was also given a special identity card which seemed of questionable value since I was instructed by the security officer to keep it in a sealed envelope and never show it to anybody. I never did.”

⁸²⁵ “CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” nd, 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM.

service.⁸²⁶ Similar schemes involving deception and raids into Italian-occupied Ethiopia were also spun off once they became too big for MI(R).⁸²⁷ In December 1939 plans were begun to send an MI(R) mission to Finland and some secret preliminary scouting was conducted in Norway and Sweden in February and March 1940; these efforts, however, ended when the Finns capitulated to the Russians in March and Germany invaded Norway in April.⁸²⁸ While Holland was thinking up clever projects and the men of Section D were chasing ghosts, Gubbins was soon back on the Continent. Although he and Carton de Wiart arrived in London on 4 October, there was no work for them there, the British Expeditionary Force's leadership already having been chosen. But Holland had other ideas: he sent Gubbins to Paris, as head of a reconstituted No. 4 Military Mission. The Polish and Czech General Staffs were both there, so it was the obvious place to establish contact with underground forces in the two occupied countries. Gubbins left for Paris on 20 November.⁸²⁹

In theory the reconstituted mission was in Paris to liaise with the General Staffs; in practice, it was there to coordinate partisan warfare, something about which their French hosts were rather more skeptical.⁸³⁰ Gubbins did not even try to visit the Polish or Czech training units under French command, nor did he visit the Polish divisions held

⁸²⁶ "CG's Comments on Foot's Book," nd, 2, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM; M. R. D. Foot and J. M. Langley, *MI9: The British Secret Service That Fostered Escape and Evasion, 1939-1945, and Its American Counterpart* (London, 1979), 31-34; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 42.

⁸²⁷ "CG's Comments on Foot's Book," nd, 2, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 46. The MI(R) Section in HQ Middle East became known as G(R) and was more integrated with Gen. Archibald Wavell HQ Middle East than with MI(R) back in London, though MI(R) continued to provide expert advice and a lobby in the War Office. See Anglim, *Orde Wingate and the British Army*, 107, 111.

⁸²⁸ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 30; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 48; Seaman, "A New Instrument of War," 14.

⁸²⁹ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 46.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

in reserve behind the Maginot Line; the French would not have been pleased.⁸³¹ Further complicating the Mission's work was the fact that Section D was also in Paris. A nominal division of labor was worked out between the two British agencies: MI(R) liaised with the French military, while Section D was responsible for work with the Deuxième Bureau, France's external intelligence agency.⁸³² This was quite natural, each working with the opposite of its own parent agency (though the Deuxième Bureau was under the auspices of the French military, unlike the civilian Foreign Office, which oversaw SIS). It was also, however, a gross oversimplification: Gubbins's primary contact was not a Frenchman at all, but his friend Stanislav Gano, who was now the deputy chief of Polish military intelligence.⁸³³

The Polish Home Army, the new underground army that was forming under Nazi occupation, had agents in Budapest and Bucharest. If MI(R) could get weapons and other forms of material aid to these agents, they could then get it into Poland. Alas, MI(R) had no means of getting material even to the Balkans. Section D, however, had numerous lines flung across the region; MI(R) would utilize these. At first, cooperation

⁸³¹ "The French insisted that all British liaison with the Poles must pass through French hands. See Gill Bennett, "Polish-British Intelligence Co-operation," *Intelligence Co-operation between Poland and Great Britain during World War II*, Vol. I: The Report of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee, ed. Tessa Stirling, Daria Nałęcz, and Tadeusz Dubicki (London, 2005), 159; Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 91-92; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 49. See "Activities of the Section up to the Fall of France," TNA: PRO, HS 7/3, for an example of an anti-Nazi French agent arrested by his own government because he worked directly for the British and not through a French intermediary.

⁸³² "Brief History of SOE," 2, HS 7/1. This document incorrectly identifies the Deuxième Bureau as the "Civilian Secret Organization"; in fact it was the Second Bureau of the General Staff, a military organization, though an autonomous one. The Second Bureau also gave birth to a smaller Fifth Bureau, specifically responsible for sabotage; Section D also liaised with this organization. See "Activities of the Section up to the Fall of France," TNA: PRO, HS 7/3.

⁸³³ Maresch, "SOE and Polish Aspirations," 199; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 47. Gubbins was also in touch with Wilfred "Biffy" Dunderdale, head of an SIS station in Paris, to whom he supplied intelligence received from the Poles, and to whom he introduced Gano. Dunderdale and Gano enjoyed a strong relationship throughout the war, as did SIS and the Polish Intelligence Services. See Bennett, "Polish-British Intelligence Co-operation," 160.

was difficult: Gubbins could not provide Grand with the precise details of what was to be shipped; Grand refused to go forward without such information and jealously guarded the details of Section D's capabilities. To break the impasse, Gubbins sent Peter Wilkinson, who had served with the No. 4 Military Mission in Poland, to work directly with the Balkan unit of Section D. MI(R) was able to make use of Section D's channels, but they could handle far less material than the Poles needed.⁸³⁴

Relations with the Czechs were also fraught, though for different reasons. The Czech government in exile – termed the Czech National Committee – resided in Britain, but was not yet recognized by the British government in late 1939. That made any contact problematic. But further complicating MI(R)'s efforts to work with the Czechs was the fact that the commander of their intelligence service, Colonel František Moravec, was working with SIS, which – for understandable security reasons – was not keen on sharing him. So in December 1939 Gubbins and Wilkinson simply got in direct touch with General Sergěj Ingr, Commander-in-Chief of the Czechoslovak Army, then resident in Paris. The Czech General Staff was in communication with the Czech Home Army via channels independent of Moravec, and so Gubbins was able to get in touch with the Home Army without infringing on SIS' authority.⁸³⁵

Gubbins's time with the No. 4 Military Mission came to an end once and for all on 23 March 1940, when he left Paris for London, to plead for a dramatic increase in the supplies given to the Poles; in his stead he left brevet Major Wilkinson in charge of the

⁸³⁴ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 47.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

Mission.⁸³⁶ Under Wilkinson the Mission grew, with representatives in Budapest, Belgrade, and Bucharest who reported directly to Wilkinson and met with Polish and Czech agents in the various Balkan capitals.⁸³⁷

The Independent Companies

On 9 April 1940, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. MI(R) was called upon to draw up plans for amphibious raids against Norway's western coast.⁸³⁸ Gubbins concluded that a typical infantry battalion was too large for such purposes, while a regular infantry company was too small; furthermore, neither was properly trained or equipped for autonomous operations.⁸³⁹ Thus he settled upon the concept of an "independent company," small enough to engage in mobile harassment action, but designed to operate on its own for up to a month, away from the ship that served as its floating base.⁸⁴⁰ Four days after the German invasion, Lt. Col. Holland submitted a proposal to the CIGS, recommending that elements of the Territorial Army should be

⁸³⁶ Maresch, "SOE and Polish Aspirations," 199; Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 90; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 49.

⁸³⁷ Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 91. Among the useful information received from Polish agents were reports of the planned German offensive in the Low Countries in May 1940. MI(R) passed the information to SIS, though it is uncertain what was done with it. See Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields*, 92.

⁸³⁸ Foot, *SOE in France*, 6. "It had been known for weeks that the Germans were preparing an invasion." See Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 50. This may have had to do with Gubbins's withdrawal from Paris not three weeks before. The involvement of the War Office (i.e., Army), rather than the Royal Marines, in these amphibious plans, stemmed from the fact that the Royal Marines were seriously under strength at this time. See Kenneth Macksey, *Commando: Hit-and-Run Combat in World War II* (Chelsea, Michigan, 1990), 5.

⁸³⁹ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 50.

⁸⁴⁰ Maurice Harvey, *Scandinavian Misadventure* (Tunbridge Wells, UK, 1990), 227; Macksey, *Commando*, 5. Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 50.

trained for raiding operations.⁸⁴¹ The demands of wartime led to the rapid realization of MI(R)'s vision.

Gubbins's experience with the Independent Companies was not exactly practice in guerrilla warfare. In their conception the Companies were designed "to act as guerillas and by successful action gradually to raise the morale of the local population and to organize from it local guerilla bands."⁸⁴² However, in practice they had no connection to the Norwegian Resistance, contrary to William Stevenson's claim that Gubbins "made a desperate attempt in Norway to organize an armed resistance."⁸⁴³ Indeed, once the Independent Companies were placed within a conventional formation midway through the campaign, even the mobility envisioned for them was lost. Nevertheless, Gubbins's Norwegian experience was significant in that it gave him additional battlefield experience, this time against the Germany's Wehrmacht. Moreover, his brief service broadened his base of knowledge regarding small-level irregular operations.

Holland's initial proposal of 11 April was quickly accepted and expanded. On 20 April the Independent Companies were formally approved: as many as ten Companies would be raised from volunteers in the UK who had completed their training and were awaiting deployment to France.⁸⁴⁴ Each company, composed of twenty officers and 270 other ranks, included its own engineers and signals, light machine guns,

⁸⁴¹ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 50.

⁸⁴² Maj.-Gen. Richardson, Director of Training, 24 April 1940, TNA: PRO, 106/1889.

⁸⁴³ Stevenson, *Man Called Intrepid*, 74. Stevenson goes on to make an even clearer claim, that Gubbins "left behind in... Norway, the nucleus of secret armies based on the stubborn courage of ordinary men and women" (74).

⁸⁴⁴ Eric Morris, *Churchill's Private Armies* (London, 1986), 18; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 50.

two-inch mortars and an anti-tank gun.⁸⁴⁵ As historian Eric Morris observes, “Gubbins was the obvious choice to command this scratch force.”⁸⁴⁶ By 25 April the No. 1 Independent Company had been filled out with volunteers from the 52nd (Lowland) Infantry Division and made its way to Scotland, where it met up with Gubbins and its new staff.⁸⁴⁷ Training was grueling, bringing TA soldiers up to regular infantry standards and then teaching them necessary skills for irregular operations: night marches by compass, slitting throats, and sabotage.⁸⁴⁸

The Independent Companies were not MI(R)’s only project in Norway. Four MI(R) officers had just arrived as “assistant consuls” when the Germans invaded; one was captured and the other three only escaped with difficulty.⁸⁴⁹ On 13 April an MI(R) party under Captain Peter Fleming – whose plans in China had been curtailed – landed in Namsos to conduct reconnaissance.⁸⁵⁰ A military mission to Norway – designated No. 10 – was organized and dispatched via Stockholm on 16 April. MI(R) officers were included in the mission, which had the task of liaising with Norwegian forces and encouraging guerrilla warfare. The mission harried the German invaders as best it could, but its remnants were forced to cross into neutral Sweden on 12 May.⁸⁵¹ Three days after the military mission was dispatched, Major Jefferis, Gubbins’s co-author on *How to Use High Explosives*, landed in Norway with a sergeant and 1,000 lbs. of explosives for

⁸⁴⁵ Jack Adams, *The Doomed Expedition: The Norwegian Campaign of 1940* (London, 1989), 72; Harvey, *Scandinavian Misadventure*, 227; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 51.

⁸⁴⁶ Morris, *Churchill’s Private Armies*, 30; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 50.

⁸⁴⁷ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 50.

⁸⁴⁸ Morris, *Churchill’s Private Armies*, 25-26, 28.

⁸⁴⁹ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 49.

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

demolition purposes. He was training Norwegians at Lillehammer in demolitions when the city was overrun; he fought as an infantryman with the retreating British until evacuation on 28 April.⁸⁵²

On 2 May Gubbins received orders from General Hugh Massy, Commander of the British Expeditionary Force going to Norway, to command SCISSORSFORCE, a formation composed of Nos. 1, 3, 4, and 5 Independent Companies, assisted by eight Indian Army officers with experience in mountain warfare on the Northwest Frontier.⁸⁵³ The Germans had captured the northern port of Narvik early in the campaign but, cut off by Britain's Royal Navy, this garrison was isolated from other German forces in Norway. Gubbins was given the task of keeping the Germans out of Bodø, Mo, and Mosjøen, three key towns straddling the Arctic Circle just south of Narvik, preventing the Germans from unifying their positions.⁸⁵⁴ His orders stated he was to "ensure that all possible steps by demolition and harrying tactics to impede any German advance [be taken].... Your companies... should not attempt to offer prolonged frontal resistance but should endeavour to maintain themselves on the flanks of the German forces and continue harrying tactics against their lines of communication."⁸⁵⁵ The commander of No. 1 Independent Company was specifically told to "get to know the country

⁸⁵² Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 49-50.

⁸⁵³ Gen. Hugh Massy, "Instructions to Lt.-Col. C. McV. Gubbins, M.C., Commander, Independent Companies," 2 May 1940, TNA: PRO, 106/1889; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 51. Morris claims that SCISSORSFORCE was composed of five companies, though the difference is explained by No. 2 Company, which was expected to join the others at a later date. See *Churchill's Private Armies*, 24, 32; cf. Adams, *Doomed Expedition*, 72.

⁸⁵⁴ Morris, *Churchill's Private Armies*, 34; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 51.

⁸⁵⁵ Gen. Hugh Massy, "Instructions to Lt.-Col. C. McV. Gubbins, M.C., Commander, Independent Companies," 2 May 1940, TNA: PRO, 106/1889.

intimately. Make use of locals but do not trust too far. Use wits and low cunning.”⁸⁵⁶

Two days after receiving orders, Gubbins and his men sailed for Norway.⁸⁵⁷

No. 1 Independent Company engaged in fierce street-by-street fighting against an unexpected German amphibious landing near Mo, but the British forces were repulsed. Mosjøen, the southernmost of Gubbins’s three charges, was cut off and Gubbins chose to withdraw Nos. 4 and 5 Companies to Bodø, rather than try to push the Germans back into the sea.⁸⁵⁸ This initial phase of fighting gave Gubbins new insight into the Independent Companies. The one action in which they were permitted to carry out their assigned mission of harassing German flanks and communications – an ambush organized by Captain J. H. Prendergast, Indian Army, and carried out by No. 5 Company and Norwegian forces on the morning of 9 May – had been a success.⁸⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the Germans advanced much more quickly than expected, covering 150 miles of difficult

⁸⁵⁶ Gen. Massy to Officer Commanding, No. 1 Independent Company, S. S. ORION, 30 April 1940, TNA: PRO, 106/1889

⁸⁵⁷ Gen. Massy, “Instructions to Lt.-Col. C. McV. Gubbins, M.C., Commander, Independent Companies,” 2 May 1940, TNA: PRO, 106/1889; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 51. No. 1 Independent Company had sailed ahead of the main force. The staff of SCISSORSFORCE mostly men with whom Gubbins was already familiar. Among their number were Captain Urquhart, a fellow Engineer, who functioned as brigade major; Captain Andrew Croft and Lieutenant-Colonel Quintin Riley, RNVR, both holders of the Polar Medal and previously recruited and trained by MI(R) served as intelligence officers; and Major Kermit Roosevelt, Scots Guards, a son of US President Theodore Roosevelt who had seen action with the British Army in Mesopotamia in World War I before the American entry.

⁸⁵⁸ Adams, *Doomed Expedition*, 73. Cf. Geirr H. Haarr, *The Battle for Norway: April-June 1940* (Annapolis, 2010), 282; Harvey, *Scandinavian Misadventure*, 230-31; Morris, *Churchill’s Private Armies*, 36-37. Many historians criticize Gubbins for this withdrawal. “Gubbins should have kept his nerve,” Morris writes. “Gubbins had surrendered 35 miles of most difficult mountain road.... It was perfect ambush country in a situation tailor-made for guerrilla warfare” (37). However, Nos. 4 and 5 Companies were already battered from trying to hold a snow-covered road against the advance of German alpine troops. They lacked the equipment necessary for a conventional defense and the ski equipment needed for mobile operations. See Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 53.

⁸⁵⁹ Adams, *Doomed Expedition*, 73; Harvey, *Scandinavian Misadventure*, 228; Morris, *Churchill’s Private Armies*, 36; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 52-53.

terrain in a single week.⁸⁶⁰ Moreover, the Independent Companies' intended role as harassing light infantry was compromised by the heavy ammunition and extensive food supplies they were expected to carry.⁸⁶¹ Finally, the collapse of organized Norwegian resistance cut short the opportunities for the Companies to play their harassing role.⁸⁶² Instead, the Companies were, as Eric Morris observes, mostly “squandered in main force operations.”⁸⁶³

Regrouping further north, SCISSORSFORCE was placed by General Massy under the command of 24th (Guards) Infantry Brigade and given an essentially conventional role.⁸⁶⁴ This organizational shift had major implications for Gubbins when 24th Brigade's commander was forced to withdraw the following day, due to an attack on his ship. This left acting Colonel Gubbins the most senior member of the unit, and he assumed command.⁸⁶⁵ The ensuing operations were not glorious. Gubbins was forced to relieve Lieutenant-Colonel T. B. Trappes-Lomax of his command of 1 Btn. Scots Guards for refusing orders and retreating before the enemy.⁸⁶⁶ The Guards and

⁸⁶⁰ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 53.

⁸⁶¹ Adams, *Doomed Expedition*, 72; Harvey, *Scandinavian Misadventure*, 227.

⁸⁶² Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 53.

⁸⁶³ Morris, *Churchill's Private Armies*, 34. Cf. Haarr, *Battle for Norway*, 277.

⁸⁶⁴ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 54.

⁸⁶⁵ Haarr, *Battle of Norway*, 289; Morris, *Churchill's Private Armies*, 41; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 54-55.

⁸⁶⁶ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 55-64. Trappes-Lomax receives kinder treatment in other accounts, such as Adams's *Doomed Expedition*, 77-78, and Harvey, *Scandinavian Misadventure*, 236, 240-42. Wilkinson and Astley provide an exhaustive blow-by-blow account of these events; while their narrative one-sidedly supports Gubbins's decision, it also gives a clear explanation for why he made it. Gubbins's reputation with the Scots Guards was not improved by the rumor that he “borrowed” a car used by one Major Graham. “In the boot of this car was the battalion's stock of precious Scotch whisky, which was never seen again,” or so the story goes. See Adams, *Doomed Expedition*, 77.

Independent Companies defended Bodø for a time, though they were hammered by German forces and evacuated before the city fell.⁸⁶⁷

On the night of 31 May/1 June, Gubbins and the last of the men under his command were withdrawn from Norway. In spite of the setbacks, Gubbins acquitted himself well, leaving him one of the few officers to come out of the campaign with his reputation intact.⁸⁶⁸ For his service he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. General Claude Auchinleck, who had overall command of the ground forces in Norway, commented in his final report that “the swiftness and efficiency with which the evacuation was carried out reflects great credit on Brigadier Gubbins and his staff.” In a private letter to the CIGS, Auchinleck gushed, “Gubbins has, I think, been first-class. Should be a divisional commander or whatever the equivalent may be in the New Army!”⁸⁶⁹ Such praise not only speaks to Gubbins’s abilities but also to the opportunities that likely awaited him in the wartime Army.

The Auxiliary Units

As Gubbins was evacuating his forces from Norway, a new problem arose: what if Britain itself was invaded? This question was answered, in part, by the Inter-Services Projects Board. Proposed in April 1940, the Board had members from the Admiralty, Air Ministry, War Office, Chiefs of Staff, and SIS. It was created with a four-fold purpose:

⁸⁶⁷ Adams, *Doomed Expedition*, 79-85, 89; Haarr, *Battle for Norway*, 297-98, 300.

⁸⁶⁸ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 67.

⁸⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 67. Internal quotations from Gubbins personal papers and Alanbrooke papers (Liddell-Hart Center, King’s College, London). Gen. Auchinleck’s report was written after Gubbins’s subsequent promotion to brevet brigadier.

- (1) To co-ordinate projects for attacking the enemy by irregular operations.
- (2) To prevent the lapsing of any project of value.
- (3) To provide Service planning staffs with advice and intelligence derived from the exchange of ideas between members of the Board.
- (4) To ensure that the operations of each service were complementary to the others.⁸⁷⁰

On 27 May the Inter-Services Projects Board agreed to raise a force which would operate in close cooperation with the military in order to resist an invasion of Britain.⁸⁷¹

Since Section D and MI(R) were the experts on sabotage and subversion, they were given the task of raising the nucleus of a resistance force, under the aegis of General Headquarters Home Forces.⁸⁷² A division of labor between MI(R) and Section D was agreed for the project: MI(R) would be responsible for those waging guerrilla warfare, while Section D officers would be attached to the dozen Regional Civil Commissioners or (once an area fell came under martial law) the local military commander. These Section D officers arranged headquarters storehouses and carried out a whispering campaign to encourage resistance among the general population.⁸⁷³

Separate plans for MI(R) and Section D elements of these home defense units were curtailed in July 1940. An internal SOE history, which appears to have its roots in Section D, argues that the merger of these elements resulted from a decision that civilians should not carry out sabotage, for fear of enemy reprisals.⁸⁷⁴ However, historian David Lampe contends, in agreement with Wilkinson and Astley, that Section D's overenthusiastic efforts raised the suspicions of local military commanders, who

⁸⁷⁰ "SOE Early History to September 1940," 9, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁷² Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 69.

⁸⁷³ "SOE Early History to September 1940," 16, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3, David Lampe, *The Last Ditch* (New York, 1968), 86-87.

⁸⁷⁴ "SOE Early History to September 1940," 16, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3.

complained to General Headquarters Home Forces.⁸⁷⁵ In either case, the Commander-in-Chief Home Forces, General Edmund Ironside – with whom Gubbins had served in Russia – decided that all guerrilla resistance in Britain should be under military control. Thus he created the General Headquarters Auxiliary Units and placed Colin Gubbins – recently returned from Norway – in command.⁸⁷⁶ As Gubbins explained, the new unit’s mission was “to act offensively on the flanks and in the rear of any German troops who may obtain a temporary foothold in this country.” Secondly, “the other role is Intelligence.”⁸⁷⁷ A handful of men from Section D’s operations were incorporated into the new “Aux Units,” as they came to be called, though most were “told simply that their organization no longer existed.”⁸⁷⁸

The Aux Units were anticipated somewhat by General Andrew (“Bulgy”) Thorne, commander of XII Corps in southeast England. Concluding that the German Navy would be able to carry out no more than large-scale raids, and not a full invasion, Thorne believed stout defense of England’s coasts could prevent the enemy from gaining a beachhead.⁸⁷⁹ In the summer of 1940 he requested from General Hastings Ismay at the War Office someone who could organize and train a group of men to stay behind enemy lines and cause havoc in the rear, should the Nazis invade.⁸⁸⁰ Accordingly, Peter Fleming, who had already done work for MI(R) and was recently returned from Norway,

⁸⁷⁵ Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 87; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 69.

⁸⁷⁶ “SOE Early History to September 1940,” 16, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3; Colin Gubbins to Rory Gubbins, 1970, Gubbins papers 3/2/69, IWM; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 69. Lampe contends that Gubbins was given charge of the MI(R) stay-behind operation and – seeing its limits – appealed to Ironside for assistance. In either case, the result was the same: Gubbins in charge, under Ironside’s authority. See Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 88.

⁸⁷⁷ Colin Gubbins, “Auxiliary Units, Home Forces,” 26 July 1940, 1, TNA: PRO, WO 199/738.

⁸⁷⁸ Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 91.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸⁸⁰ Hart-Davis, *Peter Fleming*, 233. Cf. Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 13.

was sent. Beginning with a handful of TA soldiers, two aviators with a wireless set, and sapper subaltern Mike Calvert, Fleming set out recruiting locals and organizing the XII Corps Observation Unit, a stay-behind resistance force. He and his men mined bridges, laid booby traps and constructed underground hide-outs for future resisters.⁸⁸¹ The XII Corps Observation Unit was eventually rolled into the Auxiliary Units, becoming its local branch in Kent.⁸⁸²

In organizing his small staff, Gubbins drew upon men he knew from Poland and Norway.⁸⁸³ These dozen men – known as Intelligence Officers to disguise the real nature of their work – were each responsible for a sector of the British coast, where they would organize cells of about half a dozen local men.⁸⁸⁴ Ironside gave Gubbins authority to draw personnel from regimental depots to assist in training the Auxiliary Units.⁸⁸⁵ Many members of the cells themselves came from the Home Guard, particularly veterans of the Great War. All were men who knew their area well and had extensive experience out of doors.⁸⁸⁶ Local constables conducted background checks on the Aux Units, but were never told the reason.⁸⁸⁷ All members had to sign the Official

⁸⁸¹ Michael Calvert, *Fighting Mad* (London, 1964), 47-48; Hart-Davis, *Peter Fleming*, 234-35; Peter Fleming, *Operation Sea Lion: The Projected Invasion of England in 1940 – An Account of the German Preparations and the British Countermeasures* (New York, 1957), 269-70.

⁸⁸² Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 107; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 70.

⁸⁸³ Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 89; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 70.

⁸⁸⁴ Gubbins, "Auxiliary Units, Home Forces," 26 July 1940, 2, TNA: PRO, WO 199/738; Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 89.

⁸⁸⁵ Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 90.

⁸⁸⁶ Calvert, *Fighting Mad*, 48; Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 91-92. Members of the Auxiliary Units were told they belonged to special battalions of the Home Guard, the 201st in Scotland, the 202nd in North England, and the 203rd in South England. No such units existed and the men's names were not enrolled in Home Guard files. Nevertheless, they were issued with uniforms which included lapel badges with the battalion's number. Lampe argues they would not have been eligible for Geneva Convention protections, though an enemy following the Convention would likely have honored the uniforms. See Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 92-93.

⁸⁸⁷ Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 94.

Secrets Act, and most kept to it with extreme rigor, even decades after the war.⁸⁸⁸

Organization was intentionally kept loose; although coordination would at times be useful, tight organization could have been exploited by the Nazis to roll up the entire organization.⁸⁸⁹

Training was carried out at Coleshill House, a manor located outside Swindon, in the Berkshire hills. Here new recruits were given intensive basic instruction, while some received specialized training in particularly tactics or weapons.⁸⁹⁰ Instruction was carried out under the sharp eye of an officer of the Indian Army, though Gubbins himself also took a direct part in training new recruits.⁸⁹¹ The Aux Units were given a variety of new weapons and sabotage devices, often before units in the Regular Army.⁸⁹² In addition, they were issued with rubber-soled agricultural boots, allowing for quieter operations, as Holland and Wingate had advocated.⁸⁹³

Although the Auxiliaries would have operated when the Allies were on the strategic defensive, whereas the Resistance ultimately participated in the strategic offensive, the tactics of both were quite similar. The Aux Units emphasized, for

⁸⁸⁸ Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 93-94; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 70.

⁸⁸⁹ Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 96. Cf. Gubbins, quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 69. In spite of this, Gubbins insisted, per his earlier teaching, that the Aux Units should operate “in co-operation with the regular forces.” See Gubbins, “Auxiliary Units, Home Forces,” 26 July 1940, 1, TNA: PRO, WO 199/738.

⁸⁹⁰ Gubbins, 11 August 1940, TNA: PRO, WO 199/2151; Lampe, *The Last Ditch*, 97-98.

⁸⁹¹ Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 105; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 70-71. Col. G. H. B. “Billy” Beyts of the 6th Rajputana Rifles had fought against the Burma Rebellion of 1937, earning a Military Cross.

⁸⁹² Lampe, *The Last Ditch*, 98.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*, 103. Cf. Gubbins, “CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” n.d., 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM; Sykes, *Orde Wingate*, 150.

example, night time movements, studying the habits of enemy posts, and the maintenance of silence, three topics later covered by the SOE syllabus.⁸⁹⁴

David Lampe claims that each Aux Unit cell had a camouflaged underground hideout, stocked with food, arms and ammunition, in which it would wait for German forces to pass over it before engaging in attacks behind the enemy lines. Following an invasion they would never return to their civilian homes until hostilities were over.⁸⁹⁵ However, Gubbins himself writes only that “*particular* units have the special role of occupying prepared ‘hide-outs.’”⁸⁹⁶ It is unclear if he means that only certain cells would ever utilize these hide-outs, or if various units took turns always being posted to their bases. In either case, Lampe’s description of the Auxiliaries as operating only after an invading army *had passed* is at odds with Gubbins’s own description of Intelligence Officers serving as a “liaison officer between the military Commander and the [Auxiliary] units,” in time of invasion. Likewise, his orders that “no demolition of installations, or of bridges and communications generally, are to be carried out except on the direct order of the military Commander,” suggests that he expected Aux Units to remain in frequent contact with regular British forces.⁸⁹⁷ This view is further reinforced by Gubbins’s suggestion that a “small nucleus of regular troops” in each sector would be

⁸⁹⁴ Gubbins, “Auxiliary Units, Home Forces,” 26 July 1940, 1, TNA: PRO, WO 199/738; Hart-Davis, *Peter Fleming*, 236. Night movement is discussed in “General Movement by Night” [Minor Tactics, Appendix III]; enemy posts in “Selection and Appreciation of Targets” [A.23], especially § 2-3; and silence in “General Movement by Day” [Minor Tactics, Appendix II].

⁸⁹⁵ Lampe, *The Last Ditch*, 95-96.

⁸⁹⁶ Gubbins, “Auxiliary Units, Home Forces,” 26 July 1940, 1, TNA: PRO, WO 199/738. Emphasis added.

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

useful not only for training and security but also for forming “special fighting patrols... if invasion comes.”⁸⁹⁸

Peter Fleming’s assessment of the Auxiliary Units was not particularly upbeat. Although they would likely have justified their existence, “reprisals against the civilian population would have put us out of business before long,” he later reflected. “In any case, we would have been hunted down as soon as the leaf was off the trees.... I doubt if we should have been more than a minor and probably short-lived nuisance to the invaders.”⁸⁹⁹ Gubbins concedes that “their usefulness would have been short-lived,” but he observes that “they were designed, trained and prepared for a particular and imminent crisis.”⁹⁰⁰ Besides, they cost practically nothing, a virtue SOE would also exhibit, relative to the total cost of the British war effort.⁹⁰¹

As the war continued and the likelihood of a German invasion receded, increasing numbers of the Auxiliary Units’ sharpest members left the organization to apply their expertise to more active work at the new Special Operations Executive.⁹⁰² Not least to make this move was Colin Gubbins. Lampe claims that Gubbins received “his first opportunity to test M.I.(R) theories about modern guerrilla warfare” at the Aux Units. While it is true that the Units’ function was properly guerrilla, unlike the Independent Companies, their lack of actual combat makes it difficult to call this a

⁸⁹⁸ Gubbins, “Auxiliary Units, Home Forces,” 26 July 1940, 5, TNA: PRO, WO 199/738. Peter Fleming may help clarify this debate; he explains that Auxiliary Units “would emerge from their hiding places and inflict as much damage on the enemy as they could before either being killed or making their way back to the British lines,” though he argues that this model was eventually exchanged for long-term operations behind German lines (*Operation Sea Lion*, 270).

⁸⁹⁹ Fleming, quoted in Hart-Davis, *Peter Fleming*, 237. Cf. Fleming, *Operation Sea Lion*, 272-73.

⁹⁰⁰ Gubbins, quoted in Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 74.

⁹⁰¹ Cf. Foot, “Was SOE Any Good?” 176-77.

⁹⁰² Lampe, *Last Ditch*, 144.

proper test of MI(R) theory. Nevertheless, Gubbins here organized and trained a guerrilla force, valuable experience he would finally put to full-fledged use at SOE.

Creation of SOE

In spite of intelligence received through the Poles, the German strike into the Low Countries and France in the spring of 1940 caught MI(R) and Section D almost as much by surprise as it did the War Office and SIS.⁹⁰³ As a result, Britain's clandestine response was not impressive. Officers from Section D managed to smuggle £500,000 of industrial diamonds out of Amsterdam and £84,000,000 gold out of Bordeaux; they failed, however, to evacuate Madame de Gaulle from France. MI(R) sabotaged the oil stocks at Gonfreville in Normandy, but did little more.⁹⁰⁴ Courier operations through the Low Countries, carrying propaganda or intelligence, became much less frequent; Italy likewise presented increasing difficulties. The Balkans alone remained open to courier lines, via Cairo, through the summer of 1940.⁹⁰⁵ Although Section D and MI(R) had not halted the Nazi drive west, the prospect of the entire European continent in Nazi hands – with Britain itself on the brink of invasion – was the impetus needed to bring about reform of the clandestine services.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰³ Seaman, "A New Instrument of War," 14. Indeed, Cadogan records that as late as 14 May Churchill himself was "still doubtful" that a "big attack [was] coming in [the] West" (*Diary of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, 283).

⁹⁰⁴ "SOE Early History to September 1940," 12, HS 7/3; Foot, *SOE in France*, 5; Seaman, "A New Instrument of War," 14.

⁹⁰⁵ "SOE Early History to September 1940," 14-15, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3. Flying boats were now sometimes used to deliver materials.

⁹⁰⁶ Gubbins address to Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, 26 October 1962, 2, Gubbins papers 4/1/6, IWM. Even as the need for reform grew, so did the sabotage services. In July 1940 Section D's officer strength reached 140. By August 1940 its personnel outnumbered all the rest of SIS. See Seaman, "A New Instrument of War," 17.

Churchill had long been intrigued by irregular warfare. As a young man he had observed the Cuban War of Independence and particularly admired the way the guerrillas used intelligence to enhance the effectiveness of their limited forces.⁹⁰⁷ He likewise observed the Second Anglo-Boer War at very close range – including capture by and escape from the Boers, giving him personal experience operating behind enemy lines.⁹⁰⁸ In parliament he was a regular supporter of intelligence, be it foreign (the Secret Service Bureau, which became SIS), domestic (MI5) or military (Naval Intelligence), even during periods when he otherwise supported cuts to the military budget.⁹⁰⁹

Others were certainly coming around to the position that sabotage and subversion might have a key role to play in the next stages of the war. On 25 May 1940 the Chiefs of Staff submitted to the War Cabinet an assessment that if France fell “Germany might still be defeated by economic pressure, by a combination of air attack on economic objectives in Germany and on German morale and the creation of widespread revolt in her conquered territories.” Stimulating revolt was “of the very highest importance. A special organization will be required, and plans... should be prepared, and all the necessary preparations and training should be proceeded with as a matter of urgency” since otherwise “we should have no chance of contributing to Europe’s reconstruction.”⁹¹⁰

⁹⁰⁷ Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life* (New York, 1991), 58-60; David Stafford, “Churchill and SOE,” in *Special Operations Executive: A New Instrument of War*, ed. Mark Seaman (London, 2006), 48.

⁹⁰⁸ Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life*, 107-31; Stafford, “Churchill and SOE,” 48.

⁹⁰⁹ Stafford, “Churchill and SOE,” 48.

⁹¹⁰ Quoted in Foot, *SOE in France*, 6-7. Cf. P. M. H. Bell, *A Certain Eventuality: Britain and the Fall of France* (Farnborough, UK, 1974), 50.

The Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW) had been created in 1939, with Ronald Cross, a Conservative MP, as its minister. It was initially seen as a revival of the First World War's Ministry of Blockade, concerned with the economic blockade of Nazi-occupied Europe.⁹¹¹ When Churchill came to the premiership, he asked Hugh Dalton to become Minister of Economic Warfare in his new coalition cabinet.⁹¹² Dalton had a high opinion of the ministry, believing it could win the war. However, he wanted to unite its economic work with a political role, creating a single entity conducting both political and economic warfare, which could bring down the Nazis. After all, Dalton, a Labourite steeped in international socialism, considered the purpose of economic pressure to be political change in the enemy state; thus, political and economic warfare should be coordinated by a single ministry.⁹¹³

It is unclear how Dalton found out about the existence of Section D and MI(R). Dalton biographer Ben Pimlott suggests that Gladwyn Jebb, then private secretary to Sir Alexander Cadogan (Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office) informed him. In any case, almost as soon as he became Minister, Dalton began planning how he might

⁹¹¹ E. H. Cookridge, *Set Europe Ablaze* (New York, 1967), 4. "E. H. Cookridge" is a pseudonym adopted by the author, Edward Sprio, a Viennese refugee. This work was originally published in Great Britain under the title *Inside S.O.E.* It should be taken with a grain of salt. "Unfortunately," comments Gubbins, "his book is full of the most fantastic factual mistakes, and it is not in any sense an history in the proper meaning of the word: he was of course never in S.O.E. but got most of his information I understand in Washington from files there which are open to the public" (Gubbins to Donald Hamilton-Hill, 13 December 1966, Gubbins papers 3/2/58, IWM).

⁹¹² Ben Pimlott, *Hugh Dalton* (London, 1985), 277. The specific request came on 14 May 1940. Gubbins later commented that Dalton's "most unique qualification in my mind... was his knowledge & interest in foreign affairs, arising to some extent from having been Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office in 1929-1930: our work in SOE was clearly going to be concerned wholly with the Occupied Countries whose leading politicians & governments were in temporary exile in Britain. Dalton knew many of them personally so that high level contact could be quickly established." Gubbins to John Peart-Binns, nd, c. April 1974, 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/76, IWM.

⁹¹³ Pimlott, *Hugh Dalton*, 282, 294.

bring them into his orbit.⁹¹⁴ On 1 June 1940 he noted cryptically in his diary, “The D plan is being concocted.”⁹¹⁵

Meanwhile, as the British Expeditionary Force was evacuated from Dunkirk, DMI Beaumont-Nesbitt put forward two papers from J. C. F. Holland, which proposed a Directorate of Irregular Activities within the War Office, which would have “a measure of control” over EH and the more secretive services (i.e., MI5 and SIS), and would also liaise with the Air Ministry, Admiralty, and Foreign Office.⁹¹⁶ Both MI(R) and Section D would be rolled into the new creation.⁹¹⁷ A week later War Minister Anthony Eden forwarded the plan to Churchill. The prime minister was no doubt keen on irregular warfare, but the opportunities open to such a single-service outfit were deemed too small; a larger organization was needed. Churchill pushed the problem onto Maurice Hankey, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.⁹¹⁸ On the evening of 13 June Hankey met with Grand and Holland “to discuss certain questions arising out of a possible collapse of France.” All agree on the need for the coordination of raiding and subversion under a single minister. Hankey agreed to informally sound out the Chiefs of Staff.⁹¹⁹ But the Chiefs were already working on other plans, and on 15 June they established Lieutenant-General A. G. B. Bourne, Royal Marines, as Commander of Raiding

⁹¹⁴ Pimlott, *Hugh Dalton*, 295.

⁹¹⁵ Hugh Dalton, *Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1940-1945*, ed. Ben Pimlott (London, 1986), 33 [1 June 1940].

⁹¹⁶ Foot, *SOE in France*, 7. One paper was put forward on 3 June, the other on 5 June 1940.

⁹¹⁷ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 39.

⁹¹⁸ Foot, *SOE in France*, 7. Unfortunately the third volume of Stephen Roskill’s biography *Hankey: Man of Secrets* (New York, 1974), covering the period 1931-1963, sheds no light on these matters.

⁹¹⁹ Foot, *SOE in France*, 7. Quotation from MIR file 6, reorganization. Seaman claims that Menzies, head of SIS, was also present. See Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 15.

Operations and advisor to the Chiefs of Staff on Combined Operations.⁹²⁰ Under pressure from Churchill, and against the wishes of the Chiefs, this post was superseded by the Director of Combined Operations, first filled by Vice-Admiral Roger Keyes.⁹²¹ Out of the Independent Companies Combined Operations built its signature force, the Commandos.⁹²²

Although Combined Operations took up some of the raiding duties which had been previously discussed, as a purely military organization, its role in subversion was limited. Thus did the need remain for something else. On 28 June Cadogan circulated a paper summarizing this state of affairs, echoing the proposals given by Holland and affirmed by Beaumont-Nesbitt earlier in the month. Most broadly, Cadogan insisted that sabotage and subversion “should be concentrated under one control.” More specifically, he argued that “they should probably be divorced from SIS, which is more concerned with intelligence, and has enough to do in that sphere.” Instead, these functions should be “placed under military authority as an operation of war . . . , the whole thus coming under control of the DMI. If possible, the staff should be housed in the War Office.” Thus, Section D and MI(R) would not officially be merged; rather, the former would be “amalgamate[d]” into the latter, with the final creation remaining under the authority of the War Office.⁹²³ There was little support for building a new organization around Section D; as Foot explains, “Even more than MI R it had managed to antagonise a

⁹²⁰ Adrian Smith, *Mountbatten: Apprentice War Lord* (London, 2010), 171-72; Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten* (New York, 1985), 153.

⁹²¹ Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, 154. In October 1941 Keyes was forced out of this position and replaced by Lord Louis Mountbatten.

⁹²² Smith, *Mountbatten: Apprentice War Lord*, 172; Ministry of Information, *Combined Operations: The Official Story of the Commandos*, with forward by Lord Louis Mountbatten (New York, 1943), 5.

⁹²³ Cadogan, quoted in Seaman, “A New Instrument of War,” 15. Seaman does not cite his source.

considerable number of established authorities, British and allied, whose help might have been of value had they been more tactfully approached.”⁹²⁴ Under Cadogan’s plan “the DMI would... be responsible for (1) sabotage, (2) subversive propaganda, and (3) to some extent, propaganda in all countries.” The funding, however, would have to remain secret, and so “would have to come from the SIS vote and could be paid through the Director of the SIS.”⁹²⁵ Cadogan recommended that the DMI should be *jointly* responsible for sabotage operations not only to the War Office, but also to the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Information.⁹²⁶ Nevertheless, it is worth noting that he – the Permanent Undersecretary of the Foreign Office – was willing to invest considerable authority in the War Office, and to fund it from the SIS, ultimately part of his own organization. Cadogan’s commitment to sabotage reform ran deep enough that he was willing to lose this inter-ministerial turf battle.

Dalton, on the other hand, was fiercely opposed to the plan. “It proposes to give too much to [the] D.M.I.,” he wrote in his diary.⁹²⁷ A few days before Cadogan’s proposal, he recorded his desire to have an organization with civilian and military branches, led by a soldier jointly responsible to the MEW and the War Office.⁹²⁸ Now he wanted it “under [Attlee], with me doing a good deal of it.”⁹²⁹ The consistent theme,

⁹²⁴ Foot, *SOE in France*, 5.

⁹²⁵ Cadogan, quoted in Seaman, “A New Instrument of War,” 15.

⁹²⁶ Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 15.

⁹²⁷ *Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton*, 50 [29 June 1940].

⁹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 45 [21 June 1940].

⁹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 51 [29 June 1940].

in spite of this vacillation, was Dalton's own role. Cadogan complained, "Dalton [is] ringing up hourly to try to get a large finger in the Sabotage pie."⁹³⁰

Cadogan's proposal for a combined organization with extensive purview, under the direction of the DMI, was discussed on 1 July at a meeting called by Halifax in his office at the Foreign Ministry. Present were Cadogan; Gladwyn Jebb, Cadogan's private secretary; Beaumont-Nesbitt; Dalton; Hankey; Lord Lloyd, the Colonial Secretary and an old friend of T. E. Lawrence's; Menzies; and Desmond Morton, from Churchill's private office. Lord Lloyd voiced the general feeling of support for a strong coordinating body.⁹³¹ In spite of broad agreement in favor of Cadogan's proposal, Dalton was adamant that while "war from without" could be waged by soldiers, subversive "war from within" would be "better conducted by civilians."⁹³² He was desperate to get the new organization within his ministry.

At the end of the meeting Halifax asked the participants to consider nominees to head the new organisation; the next day Dalton replied by letter that he proposed fellow Labourite Attlee, supported by Dalton and the MEW.⁹³³ First, he looked to past examples, as had Holland and Gubbins:

We have got to organize movements in enemy-occupied territory comparable to the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland, to the Chinese Guerillas now operating against Japan, to the Spanish Irregulars who played a notable part in Wellington's campaign or – one might as well admit it – to the organizations

⁹³⁰ *Diary of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, 308 [Friday 28 June 1940].

⁹³¹ Foot, *SOE in France*, 7-9. Quotation from "draft minutes approved by Halifax on 2 July 1940; when Cadogan sent a copy to Duff Cooper, with an apology for having forgotten to ask him to the meeting (MI R file 10)." Cadogan's diary does not include Jebb or Morton, though they may have been seen as mere observers. See *Diary of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, 309 [Monday 1 July 1940].

⁹³² Dalton, quoted in Seaman, "A New Instrument of War," 16.

⁹³³ Seaman, "A New Instrument of War," 16.

which the Nazis themselves have developed so remarkably in almost every country in the world.⁹³⁴

Dalton then goes on to argue that the organization under consideration must be civilian, and of a socialist bent:

This “democratic international” must use many different methods, including industrial and military sabotage, labour agitation and strikes, continuous propaganda, terrorist acts against traitors and German leaders, boycotts and riots.

It is quite clear to me that an organization on this scale and of this character is not something which can be handled by... either the British Civil Service or the British military machine. What is needed is a new organization to co-ordinate, inspire, control and assist the nationals of the oppressed countries who must themselves be the direct participants. We need absolute secrecy, a certain fanatical enthusiasm, willingness to work with people of different nationalities, complete political reliability. Some of these qualities are certainly to be found in some military officers and, if such men are available, they should undoubtedly be used. But the organization should, in my view, be entirely independent of the War Office machine.⁹³⁵

Dalton’s relentless lobbying, which exasperated so many of his colleagues, ultimately paid dividends. Hankey passed the conclusions of the 1 July meeting through Neville Chamberlain, Lord President of the Council, to Churchill. Meanwhile, Halifax met with the prime minister on 7 July; both agreed to the creation of a new sabotage and subversion organization, merging Section D and MI(R), under Dalton.⁹³⁶ When Halifax, Chamberlain, Atlee and Cadogan met four days later, Cadogan had come around to the idea of giving the new organization to the MEW.⁹³⁷ It only remained to ink the deal.

⁹³⁴ Foot, *SOE in France*, 8. Part of this passage is quoted, without a date, in Dalton, *The Fateful Years*, 368.

⁹³⁵ Foot, *SOE in France*, 8. Cf. Dalton, *The Fateful Years*, 368.

⁹³⁶ Foot, *SOE in France*, 8; Foot, “Was SOE Any Good?”, 169; Seaman, “A New Instrument of War,” 16. One Section D history argues that being directly answerable to a minister, rather than to C, would ultimately be advantageous to SOE, giving it a greater voice in the War Cabinet. This is true, though by early July the argument seems to have been whether Dalton or the DMI would take control; appears to have faded from the debate. See “Brief History of SOE,” 4, HS 7/1.

⁹³⁷ Seaman, “A New Instrument of War,” 16. Cadogan records that Churchill, under the influence of Morton, was opposed to the idea of Dalton controlling sabotage operations and favored placing them

A few days later a draft of a “most secret paper” was circulated to the people concerned regarding the new organization.⁹³⁸ On 16 July Churchill asked Dalton to take charge of sabotage and subversion.⁹³⁹ More formally, Chamberlain, Lord President of the Council, signed the “most secret paper,” which, on the prime minister’s authority, created “a new organization... to co-ordinate all action, by way of subversion and sabotage, against the enemy overseas.... This organization will be known as the Special Operations Executive,” or, as Churchill affectionately called it, the “Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare.”⁹⁴⁰ Dalton was specified as chairman, with Sir Robert Vansittart assisting him. They “will be provided with such additional staff as [they] may find necessary,” allowing them to pull officers from other services. All subversive policies had to be approved by the chairman, even if carried out by another department; in return, he required the approval of the Foreign Minister or other ministers when relevant. Moreover, Dalton was required to keep the Chiefs of Staff “informed in general terms of his plans, and, in turn, receiv[e] from them the broad strategic picture.”⁹⁴¹ The arrangement was finalized on 22 July when the War Cabinet approved the paper with only minor amendment. The meeting minutes noted that “it would be very undesirable that any Questions in regard to the Special Operations Executive should

under Viscount Swinton, the former Air Minister. But Cadogan and those assembled on 11 July agreed that Dalton was the man for the job, with Sir Robert Vansittart, Chief Diplomatic Adviser to His Majesty’s Government as his deputy. Any lingering doubts Churchill may have had appear to have been settled by this meeting. See *Diary of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, 312 [Thursday 11 July 1940]. The position of Chief Diplomatic Adviser to His Majesty’s Government had been created in 1938, after Vansittart was forced to give up his position of Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

⁹³⁸ Quoted in Foot, *SOE in France*, 8.

⁹³⁹ Dalton, *Fateful Years*, 336.

⁹⁴⁰ Quoted in Foot, *SOE in France*, 8-9; Carlo D’Este, *Warlord: A Life of Winston Churchill at War, 1874-1945* (New York, 2008), 456.

⁹⁴¹ Quoted in Foot, *SOE in France*, 8-9.

appear on the Order Paper” of the Commons.⁹⁴² The organization would remain entirely secret throughout the duration of the war.⁹⁴³

In the mythology that has grown up around SOE, Churchill’s role in its creation and his uttering – according to Dalton – of the famous phrase “set Europe ablaze” have taken on legendary proportions. The prime minister’s role was certainly important, but the original leadership came from Grand and Holland; Gubbins, Beaumont-Nesbitt and others provided assistance in the development of what would become SOE. Even so, serious historians continue to fall prey to the romance of Churchill as founder of SOE. John Keegan, for example, describes SOE as “Churchill’s scheme” and “his conception.”⁹⁴⁴ Credit where credit was due: SOE was not Churchill’s brainchild.⁹⁴⁵

In late July and into August, the workaday details of SOE began to fall into place. Halifax sent Dalton a pair of notes giving him control of Section D and the secret propaganda wing of EH.⁹⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the open propaganda wing of EH was left at the Ministry of Information, for the time being.⁹⁴⁷ The chief of SIS was apparently not even informed of the creation of SOE – and the removal of Section D from his sphere – until three weeks after the fact.⁹⁴⁸ For a time, MI(R) continued to live an independent

⁹⁴² Quoted in Foot, *SOE in France*, 9. Chamberlain entered the hospital a few hours later. In Foot’s words, “he never lived to do anything of importance again” (“Was SOE Any Good?” 170).

⁹⁴³ Foot comments: “Not only was SOE to be outside parliamentary control, it was to remain secret and inadmissible, while other departments were expected to assist it. With such a start, it could hardly fail to be unpopular” (“Was SOE Any Good?” 170).

⁹⁴⁴ Keegan, *Intelligence in War*, 308. Cf. Anthony Cave Brown, introduction to *The Secret War Report of the OSS* (New York, 1976), 2-3.

⁹⁴⁵ Stafford makes this point clearly when he argues that “Churchillian rhetoric and imagery is a misleading guide... to the strategy those actually involved in turning SOE into a functioning organisation envisaged for the resistance movements in Europe” (*Britain and European Resistance*, 27).

⁹⁴⁶ Seaman, “A New Instrument of War,” 17.

⁹⁴⁷ Cruickshank, *Fourth Arm*, 17.

⁹⁴⁸ Foot, forward to Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, xvii.

existence, though Holland was sent a new deputy, Brigadier Humphrey Wyndham, and MI(R)'s eventual inclusion in the new SOE was all but inevitable.⁹⁴⁹ Vansittart had been named Dalton's deputy to appease the Foreign Office. However, "nobody really expected the Chief Diplomatic Adviser to leave the Foreign Office," so Gladwyn Jebb, who held the post of Assistant Under-Secretary at MEW, was Dalton's *de facto* lieutenant for sabotage and subversion.⁹⁵⁰

By the end of July, SOE was organized into three branches. The secret propaganda operations of EH were established as SO1, responsible for propaganda, under the leadership of Rex Leeper, a civil servant born in Australia. SO2, created from Section D, was responsible for operations. Finally, SO3, under the leadership of Labourite Hugh Gaitskell, was responsible for research and planning. It was organized along regional and country lines, following the pattern of a similar MI(R) organization. It was quickly swamped with paperwork, however, and never functioned properly; it was soon absorbed into SO2.⁹⁵¹ SO1 was never an integrated part of SOE; Leeper was twelve years senior to Jebb, making oversight difficult. In November 1940 SO1 moved its headquarters from London to Woburn, Bedfordshire, creating a physical division in addition to the bureaucratic one. Thus, SOE was an organization with two separate functions: sabotage and propaganda. The unified concept of "subversion," encompassing both, had been vigorously promoted by Dalton, but was stillborn.⁹⁵² In December 1940 Hugh Dalton would demand that the Ministry of Information transfer

⁹⁴⁹ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 39; Seaman, 'A New Instrument of War,' 17.

⁹⁵⁰ *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, 100. Cf. *The Diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart*, Vol II: 1939-1965, ed. Kenneth Young (London, 1980), 68 [19 July 1940].

⁹⁵¹ Foot, *SOE on France*, 18.

⁹⁵² *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, 102.

the rump of EH – its open propaganda wing – to SOE. He would lose the battle that ensued, and in August 1941 EH's two branches were reunited as the Political Warfare Executive (PWE), under a committee composed of representatives of the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Economic Warfare, and the Foreign Office.⁹⁵³ SOE's active role in propaganda was over.

On 28 August 1940 Sir Frank Nelson was named first executive head of SOE by Dalton. A former Bombay merchant who had served with the Bombay Light Horse and as a military intelligence officer during World War I, Nelson then served in the Commons as a Conservative before also conducting intelligence work for SIS out of the Basle embassy at the beginning of the Second World War.⁹⁵⁴ When Nelson arrived, Grand remained within SOE as his deputy.⁹⁵⁵ Nelson said he was impressed by Grand; however, he complained to Jebb that the organisation he inherited had “no project anywhere near completion,” and needed a “radical overhaul” and “drastic reorganizing on economic grounds alone.” Not surprisingly, Nelson recommended that Grand be placed “outside the organisation.”⁹⁵⁶ Kim Philby contends that a purge of Grand's followers ensued, a claim which is confirmed by Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart's entry in his diary that he heard “MI6 [i.e., Section D] officers had preferred to resign rather than be under Dalton.”⁹⁵⁷ Jebb insists that veterans of Section D were incorporated into the

⁹⁵³ Cruickshank, *Fourth Arm*, 18, 31.

⁹⁵⁴ Rigden, *SOE Syllabus*, 27; Stafford, *Camp X*, 5-6; Bickham Sweet-Escott, “Nelson, Sir Frank” *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Howard Harrison, vol. 40 (Oxford, 2004), 393. Nelson was technically just the head of SO2 at first, but as the organization change, he soon found himself in charge of all that remained.

⁹⁵⁵ Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 17.

⁹⁵⁶ Nelson, quoted in Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 17.

⁹⁵⁷ Philby, *My Silent War*, 22; *The Diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart*, Vol. II, 74 [17 Aug. 1940].

new SOE, though apparently only in small numbers.⁹⁵⁸ Dalton referred to Grand in his diary as “King Bomba” and believed him disloyal to the new organization. Having had enough, Dalton decided to remove Grand on 18 September 1940.⁹⁵⁹ That same day Dalton sent the following message to Grand:

I have given further thought to the arrangements concerning the D organisation and have reached the conclusion, with regret, that, under the re-organisation on which I have now decided, there will be no further opportunity for the use of your services. I must, therefore, ask you to take such leave as is due to you as from September 20th, and to consider yourself, as from that date, no longer a member of the D organisation. I am sending copies of this letter to Sir Alexander Cadogan, General Beaumont-Nesbitt, CD and C.⁹⁶⁰

Jebb contends this was done with good reason, since, under Grand’s leadership, Section D had “spent much of its time conducting subversive operations less against the enemy than against... MI(R).”⁹⁶¹

Meanwhile, Dalton could not rest until MI(R) was firmly within his grasp. On 19 August he authored a secret paper titled “The Fourth Arm,” in which he argued that there was considerable overlap between the new SOE and MI(R), which still fell under the authority of the War Office. He called for cooperation from the Army, Navy, and RAF and contended that “subversion should be clearly recognised by all three Fighting Services as another and independent Service.” To soften the blow, however, he suggested that “I have no views on strategy as such, and I shall certainly not attempt to

⁹⁵⁸ *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, 101. Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 12. As of December 1939, Section D had forty three officers (plus secretaries, watchmen and other support personnel); by the time it was rolled into SOE the number of officers had risen to about fifty. Most, however, were let go from the new organization

⁹⁵⁹ *Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton*, 83 [18 September 1940].

⁹⁶⁰ Dalton to Grand, 18 September 1940, quoted in Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 19.

⁹⁶¹ *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, 101.

formulate any.”⁹⁶² His lobbying was probably unnecessary at this point. On 2 October 1940, MI(R) was officially dismantled, its assets migrating to SOE.⁹⁶³ Holland’s departure did not cause the fireworks that Grand’s did, as he went on to serve as a Major General in the Mediterranean Theater and was made a Knight of the Bath for his efforts.⁹⁶⁴

Gubbins at SOE

In November 1940 Gubbins, back from Norway, was seconded to SOE at the personal request of Dalton. His arrival was certainly significant; Jebb comments that “the real motive force in the machine [SOE] always seemed to me to be Colin Gubbins.”⁹⁶⁵ In fact, Wilkinson and Astley argue that “Jebb’s incisive mind and exceptionally wide inter-departmental experience, coupled with Gubbins’s tenacity and military experience, made them... a formidable combination” when it came to advancing SOE’s mission.⁹⁶⁶ Gubbins was offered a promotion to brigadier and higher pay at SOE than in the Army, but the new organization hardly offered him the prestige of commanding the brigade or even division which would have likely come to him by virtue of his performance in Norway. Wilkinson and Astley conclude that “his decision to join SOE can only be attributed to a conviction that, if properly coordinated with regular operations, guerrilla warfare on the mainlined of Europe might prove decisive in

⁹⁶² Dalton, quoted in Foot, *SOE in France*, 9.

⁹⁶³ Astley, *Inner Circle*, 40; Seaman, “New Instrument of War,” 17, 19. Stafford places this event in the following month; see Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 26.

⁹⁶⁴ “Holland, Major-General John Charles Francis,” *Who Was Who, 1951-1960* (London, 1961), 533.

⁹⁶⁵ *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, 101.

⁹⁶⁶ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 101.

what might otherwise be a single-handed struggle against Hitler.... Gubbins may well have believed that with his unique MI(R) background this is where his duty lay, at any rate for the time being.”⁹⁶⁷

On 18 November Gubbins arrived at SO2, bringing his secretary, Margaret Jackson, and his GSO2, Peter Wilkinson, with him from the Auxiliary Units.⁹⁶⁸ In December Gubbins was made Director of Training and Operations. Admittedly, there were rather few operations to direct at that time, since George Taylor, an Australian from Section D, had specific responsibility outside of Gubbins’s jurisdiction for most of the few projects that were actually up and running.⁹⁶⁹ Indeed, this was, in many ways, a rather depressing time to join the organization. Although the War Cabinet concluded at the end of September that “the stimulation of the subversive tendencies already latent in most countries” was “likely to prove a valuable contributory factor towards the defeat of Germany,” successes were few.⁹⁷⁰ A month before Gubbins arrived, SOE made its first attempt at smuggling an agent into France, in this case via torpedo boat. The attempt failed.⁹⁷¹ The first attempt to drop an agent by parachute into the same country also failed in November.⁹⁷² Indeed, SOE did not successfully insert an agent into France until 5 May 1941, more than nine months after its creation.⁹⁷³

⁹⁶⁷ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 76-77.

⁹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁹⁶⁹ Maj. G. M. Forty, “History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945,” September, 1945, 3, 6, 10, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 77-78. The Polish and Czech Country Sections (known as MP and MX, respectively) did, however, fall under Gubbins’s specific purview. By the end of 1941 additional country sections would be grouped under him. See Forty, “History of the Training Section,” 6. (Forty’s history may also be found in TNA: PRO HS 8/435.)

⁹⁷⁰ Foot, *SOE in France*, 9-10. Foot does not cite the internal quotation.

⁹⁷¹ “Brief History of SOE,” 5, TNA: PRO, HS 7/1.

⁹⁷² *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 5.

Gubbins explains that at this time “SOE was... under great pressure to commence operating as soon as possible in order to help maintain the morale of the occupied countries, to try and prevent the Germans making free use for war purpose of the rich countries they had over-run, and to hamper and delay their activities generally wherever possible.”⁹⁷⁴ “Speed was our guiding principle owing to the perilous position of our country. Improvisation had to be the order of the day.”⁹⁷⁵ The resources at his disposal were quite limited, however. With regard to his training duties, “there was... practically nothing existing, just one explosives school and a dozen officers and civilians.” Operations were no better: “There was no contact with anyone in the occupied countries, no wireless, no personnel, no special equipment, no aircraft – in fact – blank. All this had to be built up from scratch.”⁹⁷⁶ SOE’s small size did have its advantages, however. “In the early months of our existence,” he explained, “no one was much interested in our activities... except the Prime Minister – to spur us on.”⁹⁷⁷

In July 1941 SOE produced a paper which outlined the model for future operations, involving two distinct kinds of resistance groups. The first, sabotage groups, were to be quite small for security and were to be recruited and trained by SOE. These were a kind of elite force, and would operate in advance of imminent liberation. The second group, secret armies, would be much larger and supported through conduits by

⁹⁷⁴ Gubbins lecture titled “Special Operations Executive,” possibly for the Special Forces Club, June 1959, Gubbins papers 4/1/4, IWM.

⁹⁷⁵ Gubbins to the Bradford Junior Chamber of Commerce, 6 December 1961, 1-2, Gubbins papers 4/1/5, IWM.

⁹⁷⁶ Gubbins address to the Danish/English Society in Copenhagen, 29 April 1966, 4, Gubbins papers 4/1/20, IWM.

⁹⁷⁷ Gubbins address to Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, 26 October 1962, 24, Gubbins papers 4/1/6, IWM.

SOE; held in reserve until such time as Allied liberation forces were on the offensive, these forces would then attack communications, seize airfields and produce general disorder in the enemy's rear, forcing him to spread his forces across a wide area.⁹⁷⁸ This was a refinement and a natural development of Gubbins's earlier writings. Gubbins had recognized the importance of sabotage in maintaining morale in occupied nations and undermining the enemy occupation; on the other hand, he understood the danger of reprisals and of premature activity.⁹⁷⁹ This distinction allowed SOE to carry on a small amount of targeted sabotage without endangering all resistance assets by willy-nilly operations. The distinction does, however, introduce a degree of confusion into historical analysis: the natural inclination is to focus on the activities of the sabotage teams when measuring SOE's success, though support to resistance secret armies was every bit as much an SOE mission.

In his new work Gubbins was able to draw upon his past experiences, not only for concepts, but also for personnel. "I was fortunate," he recalled, "in being able to call in as my key men certain officers who had been with me in Poland at the war's beginning, others who had been with me in the brief Norwegian operations of my Independent Companies, and again others whom I had used to raise and train the Auxiliary Units."⁹⁸⁰ Although the new SOE was far more institutionalized than the little GS(R) operation Gubbins had run with Holland, the same spirit of irregularity prevailed.

⁹⁷⁸ "Brief History of SOE," 6-7, TNA: PRO, HS 7/1.

⁹⁷⁹ AGW, 2-3 § 5b-6, 5 § 15.

⁹⁸⁰ Gubbins to the Bradford Junior Chamber of Commerce, 6 December 1961, 2, Gubbins papers 4/1/5, IWM. In addition to Wilkinson, Gubbins also acquired Capt. H. B. Perkins, who had served on the No. 4 Military Mission to Poland. The deputy he inherited at Training, Major J. S. Wilson, was an MI(R) veteran. See Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 77.

Of the men Gubbins brought in as his lieutenants, “only two were regulars, and 3 or 4 territorials.” The rest had passed through MI(R)’s training program at Caxton Hall.

“They were business men with foreign languages and experience, explorers and mountaineers, lawyers with international experience, yachtsmen and even one novelist – but he knew his Europe backwards and was all out for blood.”⁹⁸¹

As SOE grew and Gubbins began to organize larger operations, new challenges arose:

As and when our operations began to impinge on those of the other services – e.g. ships seized by use in Norway – raids by us on the French coast – it obviously became necessary to co-ordinate our operations with all others. This was done through liaison officers at the three Ministries, and also finally by the Chiefs of Staff Committee where I frequently had to appear in some awe, and even the War Cabinet – when matters reached that level, which, of course, I always hoped they would not.⁹⁸²

Gubbins did not see much of Dalton, working more closely with the Chief of SOE, first Nelson and then his successor, Sir Charles Hambro. Nevertheless, from the interactions they had, Gubbins describes Dalton as a man with “immense enthusiasm, & determination to get things moving.”⁹⁸³ Gubbins recalled one occasion when he and Dalton inspected a school in Scotland, and Dalton suggested that, rather than taking cars, they walk from one facility to another, across the hills. Rain poured down as they ran the last mile and a half of their journey. In spite of temporarily losing a shoe in the mud, Dalton “talked without stopping as we splashed our way home; he had really enjoyed

⁹⁸¹ Gubbins to the Bradford Junior Chamber of Commerce, 6 December 1961, 2, Gubbins papers 4/1/5, IWM.

⁹⁸² Gubbins address to Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, 26 October 1962, 24, Gubbins papers 4/1/6, IWM.

⁹⁸³ Gubbins to John Peart-Binns, nd, c. April 1974, 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/76, IWM.

himself.”⁹⁸⁴ Although Gubbins admired this zeal, Dalton’s left-wing tendencies could be grating, as when he assumed that any skepticism from within SOE was the result of conservative bias against him. Nevertheless, while Dalton loathed businessmen and civil servants, he gave a pass to soldiers, since he had himself served on the Italian front during the Great War.⁹⁸⁵

SOE Training

The Schools

Both MI(R) and Section D had training schools before the establishment of SOE. MI(R)’s classes at No. 2 Caxton St. have already been mentioned. Section D’s school was established in June 1940 to train men of various nationalities who could then recruit and train others. A house in Hertfordshire was requisitioned and a commandant – Commander Peters, Royal Navy – was appointed. Among his four instructors were the Soviet spies, Anthony Burgess and Kim Philby. The program of training, lasting six weeks, covered both theoretical and practical matters, including explosives, cover, counter-espionage and the use of firearms. The first class, consisting of Norwegians, Belgians, Frenchmen and a Scot, completed their training on 12 October 1940. Discipline among the French was poor and the site’s security was found to be lacking.⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁸⁴ Gubbins to John Peart-Binns, nd, c. April 1974, 1-2. Gubbins papers 3/2/76, IWM.

⁹⁸⁵ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 80.

⁹⁸⁶ “SOE Early History to September 1940,” 21, TNA: PRO, HS 7/3; Maj. G. M. Forty, “History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945,” 2, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51. Burgess departed from the scene as Section D became SOE. Gladwyn Jebb (later Lord Gladwyn) records that “it was... on my recommendation that the decision was ... take to terminate the appointment of Guy Burgess. Not that I had any reason to suspect that Burgess was a Communist, still less a Soviet agent, but having met him

Initially, the new SOE obtained permission from the War Office to train its agents at Lochailort, in the wilds of Scotland's western highlands. The training school there had been established by MI(R) for the Independent Companies and now served the Commandos.⁹⁸⁷ The problem with this arrangement was that it was usually desirable for SOE to keep groups of different nationalities separated from one another, for security purposes; thus, what SOE needed was not a single school, but a network of them. Under Gubbins's orders, the use of a number of houses in the nearby Arisaig area was acquired.⁹⁸⁸ As seen in Section D's requisition of the Frythe in September 1939, government use of private residences during the war was common. With domestic help in short supply, traditional country house living became virtually impossible; the owners of many great houses found that having their home requisitioned for clandestine purposes was a blessing, since the government paid for up-keep.⁹⁸⁹

The system of schools that emerged was organized into several stages. Recruits first attended a Preliminary School, usually destination-specific, where they received two or three weeks of general military training, emphasizing physical fitness, map reading, and basic use of firearms.⁹⁹⁰ A well-stocked bar was always maintained, to test how much students did – or did not – reveal when beguiled by alcohol.⁹⁹¹ Those who

once or twice I had formed the opinion that he was quite exceptionally dissolute and indiscreet and certainly unfitted for any kind of confidential work" (*The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, 101).

⁹⁸⁷ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 85.

⁹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁹⁸⁹ Foot, *SOE: An Outline History of the Special Operations Executive, 1940-1946* (London, 1984), 63.

⁹⁹⁰ Maj. G. M. Forty, "History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945," 3, 14, 16-17, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51; Gubbins address to Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, 26 October 1962, 11, Gubbins papers 4/1/6, IWM; Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 63; Rigden, introduction, *SOE Syllabus*, 2. The Paramilitary Schools, numbered Special Training School (STS) 21 to STS 25c, are sometimes referred to as the Group A Schools. See Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 66; Rigden, introduction, *SOE Syllabus*, 4.

⁹⁹¹ Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 63.

passed this initial course then attended one of the Paramilitary Schools in the Arisaig area for three or four weeks. Here students were trained in mountaineering, small boat work, armed and unarmed combat, and raiding techniques. Weapons instruction included major British, German, Italian, and American weapons. Railway sabotage was practiced against actual tracks and trains.⁹⁹² As many as a third of the recruits would fail this course.⁹⁹³ Those who passed then attended Parachute Training School at RAF Ringway, outside Manchester. As Gubbins explained, “90% of our personnel went to their destinations in the field by air and parachute, hence the universal parachute training.”⁹⁹⁴ Although he recognized its necessity, SOE’s Director of Training was not enthusiastic about this component: “Parachuting was then in its infancy – not much fun about it. I never enjoyed it myself nor did the bulk of our personnel.” Nevertheless, it was important enough that Gubbins had all his staff jump.⁹⁹⁵

Only after these first three rounds of training were recruits asked if they would be willing to serve in an occupied country; prior to this point, the precise nature of SOE’s work was kept secret.⁹⁹⁶ Although, in theory, the recruit knew nothing of an essentially sensitive nature, those who failed their training or chose not to continue, were often sent to an “Inter-Services Research Bureau Workshop” at Inverlair, Scotland, until any secret

⁹⁹² Maj. G. M. Forty, “History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945,” 3, 25-28, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51; Gubbins address to Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, 26 October 1962, 12, Gubbins papers 4/1/6, IWM; Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 64.

⁹⁹³ Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 66.

⁹⁹⁴ Gubbins address to Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, 26 October 1962, 21, Gubbins papers 4/1/6, IWM. Cf. Maj. G. M. Forty, “History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945,” 30-31, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51; Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 69. Although SOE students jumped alongside paratroopers and others at RAF Ringway, they lodged in special SOE houses, designated STS 51a and 51b. See Rigden, introduction, *SOE Syllabus*, 5.

⁹⁹⁵ Gubbins address to Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, 26 October 1962, 21, Gubbins papers 4/1/6, IWM.

⁹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12; Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 64.

knowledge gained had become irrelevant. “The Cooler,” as this holding pen was known, implied no treason or moral failing, and students were held only as long as necessary, before being released back to their military units or the civilian world.⁹⁹⁷

Having completed their preliminary, paramilitary and parachute training, and having been told of their true mission, recruits were finally sent to Finishing Schools, located in Hampshire, near the village of Beaulieu. These were specific to the intended destination and mission.⁹⁹⁸ These month-long courses covered such topics as cover stories, codes, forgery of documents, safe-breaking, enemy uniforms, and other knowledge needed to survive under cover in Axis-controlled territory.⁹⁹⁹ Scotland Yard and MI5 assisted with some aspects of this training, explaining police and counterintelligence tactics.¹⁰⁰⁰ Students were never physically harmed, but they were awoken in the dead of night by men in Gestapo uniforms and cross-examined at length; an agent whose cover story could not hold up under questioning from instructors playing dress-up could hardly be expected to survive an encounter with the real enemy.¹⁰⁰¹ Graduation from the Finishing School usually involved a multi-day test. Students were organized into small teams and given some sort of mission in the local area, often the theft of military equipment or the placing of explosives. Often they had to rendezvous

⁹⁹⁷ Maj. G. M. Forty, “History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945,” 15n, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51; Rigden, introduction, *SOE Syllabus*, 4.

⁹⁹⁸ Maj. G. M. Forty, “History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945,” 3-4, 33, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51; Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 66; Rigden, introduction, *SOE Syllabus*, 5-6. In contrast to the Group A (Paramilitary) Schools in Scotland, the Finishing Schools, numbered STS 31 to STS 37b, were known as Group B Schools or the Beaulieu Area.

⁹⁹⁹ Maj. G. M. Forty, “History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945,” 35, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51; Gubbins address to Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, 26 October 1962, 13, Gubbins papers 4/1/6, IWM; Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 66, 68. By this time Kim Philby worked in the Finishing School which specialized in propaganda.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 67.

¹⁰⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

with a previously unknown accomplice, who would be known by certain signals. The local police were given rough descriptions of the students and told to be on the look-out. Before the exercise began, students were given a telephone number to memorize; if arrested, it would get them out of jail.¹⁰⁰²

Occasionally agents required additional specialized training, beyond the Finishing School. This was provided by Specialist Schools that taught technical matters such as wireless telegraphy, industrial sabotage, clandestine printing, and advanced boat work.¹⁰⁰³ To aid these schools, SOE drew on the knowledge of various experts. “Contact was made with the larger insurance companies,” Gubbins explains, “whence we gained invaluable insight and knowledge as to the really vital parts of all types of installations and plants, the parts whose destruction involved their highest loss of profit claims.”¹⁰⁰⁴

SOE’s network of schools began in Britain but came to straddle the globe, with facilities in Palestine, Egypt, India, Ceylon, Australia, and Canada (see Chapter VI). As territory was liberated, new schools were also established in Algeria and Italy.¹⁰⁰⁵ Gubbins frequently visited these schools, and when doing so often wore the Scottish kilt with his uniform, in defiance of Army regulations.¹⁰⁰⁶ In total, the SOE schools trained 6,810 students, of whom only 480 were British SOE agents; the rest were from sixteen

¹⁰⁰² Maj. G. M. Forty, “History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945,” 37-38, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51; Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 69.

¹⁰⁰³ Gubbins address to Cambridge University Officers Training Corps, 26 October 1962, 14, Gubbins papers 4/1/6, IWM; Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 69. The propaganda school, STS 39, commanded by Maj. J. W. Hackett, not only served SOE, but also the Political Warfare Executive (PWE). Cf. Maj. G. M. Forty, “History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945,” 77, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Gubbins to the Bradford Junior Chamber of Commerce, 6 December 1961, 5, Gubbins papers 4/1/5, IWM.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 70.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 80.

foreign nations, as well as 872 students from Britain's Secret Intelligence Service and 172 students from the Special Air Service.¹⁰⁰⁷

The People

The deputy that Gubbins inherited at SOE's training section proved invaluable. Jack Wilson had been Deputy Head of Police in Calcutta, where he had considerable experience in counter-subversion activities against nationalists and Communists, and served under Sir Charles Tegart, who later advised the British administration in Palestine during the Arab Revolt.¹⁰⁰⁸ In addition, Wilson was a friend of Robert Baden-Powell's and extremely active in the international scouting movement. He utilized the lessons of *Scouting for Boys* when training the Armed Police of India, and he later served as the Chief Instructor of the Boy Scout Training Centre at Gilwell Park, outside London.¹⁰⁰⁹ With such an obvious background he had been recruited into MI(R) in 1940, trained the Independent Companies, and then moved to SOE.¹⁰¹⁰

The instructional staff of the training section mirrored the early pioneers of GS(R) and Section D. Many of these men, though not all, had military experience. They came from all walks of life, often from the distant corners of the Empire. In many cases they brought with them lessons learned from foreign countries or irregular

¹⁰⁰⁷ Maj. G. M. Forty, "History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945," 206, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 85. In India Tegart was concerned with bombings, assassination, rebellion and propaganda. See Charles Tegart, *Terrorism in India* (Calcutta, 1983), 2-8, 14-21, 29-30, 33-37. This work is the printed form of an address Tegart gave to the Royal Empire Society in November 1932.

¹⁰⁰⁹ John S. Wilson, *Scouting Round the World* (London, 1959), 18-19, 49.

¹⁰¹⁰ Maj. G. M. Forty, "History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945," 3, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 85.

conflicts. As the war effort progressed, returned agents served as instructors, providing eye-witness descriptions of life in occupied territories.¹⁰¹¹

William E. Fairbairn was by far the most famous instructor, in his own day and in the present. Various known as Fearless Dan, The Shanghai Buster, or Deacon, he is described by William Cassidy as “a quiet man, with the manners of a priest.”¹⁰¹² Swearing and drinking were unknown to him; in his spare time he never read and appeared to have no intellectual concerns. George Langelaan, one of his students, describes him thus: “Off duty, his conversation was limited to two words: yes and no... All his interest, all his knowledge, all his intelligence – and he was intelligent – concentrated on one subject and one subject only – fighting.”¹⁰¹³

Born on 28 February 1885, in Surrey, W. E. Fairbairn was one of fourteen children; he was named for the four-time prime minister William Ewart Gladstone. With an elder brother in South Africa and two in the Navy, young Fairbairn left an apprenticeship as a leatherworker to join the Royal Marines, at the age of fifteen years and ten months.¹⁰¹⁴

While serving with the Legation guard in Seoul, Fairbairn got his first taste of Asian warfare. Since Britain and Japan were allied at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, celebrations were held for each Japanese success. These festivities were an excuse

¹⁰¹¹ Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 67.

¹⁰¹² William L. Cassidy, “Fairbairn in Shanghai: Profile of SWAT Pioneer,” *Soldier of Fortune*, no. 23 (September 1979): 71.

¹⁰¹³ George Langelaan, *Knights of the Floating Silk* (London, 1959), 65.

¹⁰¹⁴ Cassidy, “Fairbairn in Shanghai,” 66; Peter Robins, *The Legend of W. E. Fairbairn, Gentleman and Warrior: The Shanghai Years* (Harlow, UK, 2004), 9-12. At this time in history the Royal Marines were formally known as the Royal Marine Light Infantry. Fairbairn’s illegally young enlistment was only made possible with the help of recruiter willing to look the other way with regards to his age. His agreed enlistment was for twelve years, though he was eventually discharged after only seven.

for various competitions, including in bayonet fighting. The Royal Marines prided themselves on their team, of which Fairbairn was a keen member, until they met their Japanese opposite. The British were trounced. “For the first time,” he wrote, “we had been hit with the butt of the rifle, tripped and thrown and what was worse SHOUTED at by our opponents. This was not ‘cricket.’”¹⁰¹⁵ Fairbairn did not, however, take the loss sitting down. After a month of practice – using the Japanese methods – the British called for a rematch and won.¹⁰¹⁶

In 1907 Fairbairn, having left the Royal Marines, joined the Shanghai Municipal Police (SMP), which was responsible for law enforcement in the International Settlement.¹⁰¹⁷ After being beaten by criminals one day and left for dead, Fairbairn began the study of Asian martial arts; in the years ahead he studied under the leading instructors of the region, eventually becoming the first Caucasian to earn a Black Belt in jujitsu.¹⁰¹⁸ Moreover, Fairbairn created his own unarmed fighting system – “Defendu” – which drew upon jujitsu and boxing, and was intended for use by members of the SMP. Fairbairn described his new method as offering a “number of admittedly drastic and unpleasant forms of defense but all are justifiable and necessary if one is to protect

¹⁰¹⁵ Fairbairn, quoted in Cassidy, “Fairbairn in Shanghai,” 67.

¹⁰¹⁶ Cassidy, “Fairbairn in Shanghai,” 67. These techniques, borrowed from the Japanese, were later adopted by all British forces.

¹⁰¹⁷ Following their defeat in Russia, large numbers of White Russians, particularly Cossacks, came to Shanghai, where many were hired by the SMP. See Stella Dong, *Shanghai: The Rise and Fall of a Decadent City* (New York, 2000), 131. These men doubtless brought their experience of irregular warfare with them.

¹⁰¹⁸ Among his teachers were Tsai Ching Tung, martial arts instructor to the bodyguard of the Empress of China; Prof. Okada, a pupil of the Emperor of Japan’s bodyguard’s personal instructor; and Tamehachi Ogushi, officer-in-charge of the Japanese branch of the SMP. See Cassidy, “Fairbairn in Shanghai,” 68; Robins, *Legend of W. E. Fairbairn*, 88-95.

himself against the foul methods of a certain class.”¹⁰¹⁹ In addition to growing in his personal knowledge of Asian martial arts, Fairbairn’s position in the SMP also grew; in 1910 he was appointed Musketry & Drill Instructor, training all SMP recruits: European, Japanese, Sikh, and Chinese. In response to three months of intense rioting, Fairbairn created the Reserve Unit (RU), sometimes known as the Shanghai Riot Squad, a specially trained and equipped mobile unit. It was the first of its kind in the world, pioneering advanced methods of riot and crowd control, as well as handling armed robberies, criminal standoffs, and sniper situations.¹⁰²⁰

If serving in the police force of one of the world’s roughest cities was not experience enough, Sino-Japanese conflict created new difficulties for Fairbairn and the SMP. In 1932 the Shanghai Municipal Council was forced to declare a state of emergency and in 1937 the city experienced full-scale urban warfare between the Japanese and Chinese. By this time Fairbairn was Assistant Commissioner of the SMP and had a major role in trying to ensure safety in the middle of this warzone. In one instance he was single-handedly responsible for securing the release of 153 Chinese prisoners – men, women and children – slated for execution by the Japanese.¹⁰²¹

In 1940 W. E. Fairbairn reached fifty-five, the mandatory retirement age in the SMP. He left with full honors, but was not idle for long; within weeks of his arrival back in Britain he was recruited to train his fellow countrymen and commissioned as a

¹⁰¹⁹ W. E. Fairbairn, *Scientific Self-Defence* (London, 1931), vii-viii; originally published as *Defendu: Scientific Self-Defence* (Shanghai, 1926), by the North China Daily News & Herald. Cf. Langelaan, *Knights*, 66-67.

¹⁰²⁰ Cassidy, “Fairbairn in Shanghai,” 68; Robins, *Legend of W. E. Fairbairn*, 129-56.

¹⁰²¹ Cassidy, “Fairbairn in Shanghai,” 68-69.

captain in the secret service, training MI(R), MI9, the British Commandos, and (when it came into existence) SOE.¹⁰²²

Fairbairn taught unarmed combat, knife fighting, and pistol shooting. In the streets of Shanghai, he and his colleague Alan Sykes, who also came to work for SOE, developed a new shooting technique that forewent the old-fashioned and time-consuming methods of duelists in favor of a quick draw and a pair of shots fired from the waist, with the knees bent.¹⁰²³ Likewise, they developed the Sykes-Fairbairn fighting knife, adopted by SOE, the Commandos, the Special Air Service, and OSS.¹⁰²⁴ In addition to all these combat techniques, Fairbairn also taught the recruits a variety of clandestine skills, such as boarding and leaving moving trains, breaking into houses, and scaling cliffs.¹⁰²⁵ As William Cassidy explains, his methods were highly effective:

Stripped of all the unnecessary trappings, his system of unarmed combat made it possible for a person of average strength and skills to meet and win against an opponent trained in the martial arts. His unparalleled experience with knife attacks and attacks with blunt instruments – unlikely to be duplicated in this day

¹⁰²² Cassidy, “Fairbairn in Shanghai,” 70. As war escalated, the SMP was increasingly scattered to the four winds; however, Fairbairn was not its only member to find his way into Allied secret service. One man worked for SIS in China; three others ran counterintelligence operations for SOE in India. Robert Bickers notes, “Fairbairn called on other ex-policemen, such as Dermot ‘Pat’ O’Neil, to help him. Ex-boxer Jim Fallace got as far as Hong Kong, joining the Naval Volunteer Reserve there in February 1941. Captured when the city fell, he was one of 2,000 prisoners of war on the *Lisbon Maru*, torpedoed on its way to Japan. Their captors locked the men into the slowly sinking vessel. Fallace survived, and with two others made his way ashore, and then all the way to the nationalist capital Chungking and back to war” (Robert Bickers, *Empire Made Me: An Englishman Adrift in Shanghai* [New York, 2003], 319-20).

¹⁰²³ Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 64; Langelaan, *Knights*, 68-69. These ideas were later compiled into their book *Shooting to Live with the One-Hand Gun* (London, 1942), and adopted by police and military units around the world.

¹⁰²⁴ Patrick K. O’Donnell, *Operatives, Spies and Saboteurs: The Unknown Story of the Men and Women of World War II’s OSS* (New York, 2004), 4-5. The famed Fairbairn knife was “first developed from Boer War bayonets in the armoury of the Shanghai Municipal Police” (David Stafford, *Camp X: OSS, “Intrepid,” and the Allies’ North American Training Camp for Secret Agents, 1941-1945* [New York, 1986], 96).

¹⁰²⁵ Langelaan, *Knights*, 72-74; Stafford, *Camp X*, 94.

and age – provided a sound basis for instruction in the use of or defense against edge weapons, batons and clubs.¹⁰²⁶

Fairbairn – and others who served at the fringes of the Empire – brought to SOE a recognition of extreme circumstances and the extreme measures for which they call. In due time these lessons would be shared not only with SOE and other British clandestine organizations, but with the Americans as well.

The Syllabus

The SOE training syllabus, a collection of outlines and summaries of training lectures, was derived from *The Art of Guerilla Warfare*, *The Partisan Leader's Handbook*, and *How to Use High Explosives*, the work Gubbins had co-authored with Jefferis.¹⁰²⁷ The syllabus was, however, constantly in flux; as agents returned from the field, they were debriefed and the lessons learned incorporated into the training program.¹⁰²⁸ Nevertheless, its essential elements remained the same across the years of the Second World War, and its content, though differing somewhat from one school to the next, was centrally controlled by SOE's Training Section.¹⁰²⁹ The syllabus may be broken into five unequal sections: (1) techniques of clandestine life, (2) enemy countermeasures, (3) propaganda, (4) communications, (5) paramilitary fieldcraft.¹⁰³⁰

¹⁰²⁶ Cassidy, "Fairbairn in Shanghai," 71.

¹⁰²⁷ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 85.

¹⁰²⁸ Rigden, introduction, *SOE Syllabus*, 6.

¹⁰²⁹ Maj. G. M. Forty, "History of the Training Section of SOE, 1940-1945," 8, TNA: PRO, HS 7/51.

¹⁰³⁰ Denis Rigden describes a slightly different scheme, omitting paramilitary fieldcraft and describing instead "exercises related to the matters taught" in the first section (Rigden, introduction, *SOE Syllabus*, 6). Such exercises may have been frequent and organized separately, but they do not appear in the February 1944 syllabus which Rigden introduces, which can also be found in TNA: PRO, HS 7/55 and 7/56.

Each of these sections echoes Gubbins's own writings, though only the first need be considered, since the general overview it offers prefigures the other four sections.

The first section of the syllabus begins with a description of the “objects and methods of irregular warfare.” It notes that the Axis powers exploit “their own, . . . satellite and . . . occupied territories” politically, economically, and strategically. Thus the goal of irregular warfare is to coordinate “spontaneous resistance,” since “sporadic risings are useless.”¹⁰³¹ Those who participate in irregular warfare should see themselves as “a cog in a very large machine whose smooth functioning depends on each separate cog carrying out its part efficiently.”¹⁰³² Thus, just as the 1939 writings make clear that guerrillas must cooperate with regular forces as part of a larger effort, so too that same message was repeated to SOE agents from the very beginning of their training. The syllabus goes on to explain that the enemy must be fought politically, economically, and strategically, through espionage, propaganda, passive resistance, sabotage and guerrilla warfare. Targets include “the enemy’s morale and that of his collaborators . . . the enemy’s man-power and communications . . . [and] material profitable to the enemy.”¹⁰³³ Such widespread attacks would accomplish Gubbins’s stated goal of “compelling the enemy to disperse his forces in order to guard his flank, his communications, his detachments, supply depots, etc.”¹⁰³⁴

¹⁰³¹ “Objects and Methods of Irregular Warfare” (A.1), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 35.

¹⁰³² *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰³³ *Ibid.*, 35-36. On the question of morale, which also occupies the entire third section of the SOE syllabus, see *AGW*, 18 § 66; *AGW*, 18 § 67; *PLH*, 39 (Appendix VIII: Sabotage) § 7; *PLH*, 40 (Appendix VIII: Sabotage) § 12.

¹⁰³⁴ *AGW*, 1 § 1.

This first section of the syllabus then goes on to discuss seven sub-topics: (1) Self Protection, including such various issues as security for W/T, make-up and disguise, informants and cover; (2) Police Methods and Counter Measures, a matter more fully covered in the second section, but here discussing police techniques such as surveillance, searches, and interrogation; (3) Agent Management, including motives, recruiting and handling; (4) Organisation of agents into cells; (5) Communications, both within and outside a single Resistance unit; (6) Operations, from passive resistance and subversion of troops to selection of targets for attack; and (7) The Emergency Period, that is, when an agent first lands and must make contact with a reception committee.¹⁰³⁵ Some of these topics correspond to Gubbins's writings more closely than others. He wrote nothing in 1939, for example, about make-up or disguises. One could speculate why Gubbins omitted this topic. Perhaps he considered himself unqualified to write about it; perhaps he thought it would have little relevance for a military organization such as MI(R), which was bound, by the terms of the Hague Convention, to utilize uniforms. Whatever the reason, make-up and disguises do not appear in his 1939 writings, nor do management of individual agents, nor their organization into cells. One could see in these gaps a departure by the SOE syllabus from Gubbins's earlier writings. While the syllabus certainly represents development the ideas of the *Art* and *Handbook*, the case for continuity is easily seen when examining major topics from both periods: countermeasures, communications, and planning attacks.

¹⁰³⁵ Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 31.

As discussed earlier, Gubbins had a profound concern for enemy countermeasures, a worry shared by the SOE syllabus. Issues of particular emphasis are similar, including systems of control such as curfews and passports, raids and searches, and penetration by enemy agents.¹⁰³⁶ Gubbins observed in the *Art of Guerilla Warfare*, however, that the enemy “will be working usually amidst a hostile populace; without their co-operation his task will be more difficult and will require a larger number of his own men to carry it out.”¹⁰³⁷ The tension that he anticipated between the occupier and the occupied is more explicitly discussed in the syllabus: “There will always be a conflict... between the desire to achieve maximum security through efficient [counter-espionage] activity, and the need for the economic and politic life of the country to continue in as efficient and satisfactory a manner as possible. Recognition of this conflict is essential.”¹⁰³⁸ In other words, an occupier cannot lay down a perfect security net without angering the local population and making utilization of the region’s resources cumbersome; spies and saboteurs can exploit the resulting security gaps.

On the matter of communications, Gubbins warned in 1939 that “all means of communication that are open to interception by the enemy must be used with the greatest discretion – i.e. civil postal service, telephone and telegraphs, etc.”¹⁰³⁹ In contrast, “the passing of information verbally and direct is clearly the safest and in many ways the most reliable means.”¹⁰⁴⁰ The syllabus likewise cautions that the mail is “fairly easily

¹⁰³⁶ AGW, 12 § 41, 14-15 § 53-55; PLH 11 § 12-13; “Objects and Methods of Counter-Espionage” (A.6), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 61-62.

¹⁰³⁷ AGW, 12 § 39.

¹⁰³⁸ “Objects and Methods of Counter-Espionage” (A.6), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 61.

¹⁰³⁹ AGW, 13 § 44.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13 § 45.

investigated by police” and gives a range of measures that should be taken when using it, from codes and secret inks to varied addresses and nondescript paper. In the end, however, “if suspected, do not use [the] post for subversive correspondence.”¹⁰⁴¹ Likewise, the telegraph is “to be used sparingly.” Like Gubbins’s earlier writings, the syllabus concludes that couriers are “slow but surer than other methods.”¹⁰⁴²

One final parallel from this section may suffice to demonstrate the development from the *Art of Guerilla Warfare* and *The Partisan Leader’s Handbook* to the wartime training of SOE agents, with regard to both its continuity and changes. Appendix III to the *Handbook* – Destruction of an Enemy Post, Detachment or Guard – describes preparations for attacking a target and admonishes guerrillas that “you must get detailed information of the posts in your area.”¹⁰⁴³ Twenty three specific points to observe are listed. The syllabus, covering the same topic, likewise insists that good information must be acquired first, and lists nineteen points to consider.¹⁰⁴⁴ A majority of the points covered in the syllabus were anticipated in the *Art* and *Handbook*. The points unique to the syllabus fall into a handful of clearly defined topics. Point (o) asks whether “normal types of errors and accidents in [the target] factory... can... be reproduced artificially.” Point (p) similarly asks about the presence of bottle-necks: “At what point will damage do most harm?”¹⁰⁴⁵ These two clearly represent the kind of technical knowledge gained from insurance companies and manufacturers, knowledge which was conveyed at the Specialist Schools. Another departure is found in Point (r): “Can [landmarks for guiding

¹⁰⁴¹ “Communications – Internal” (A.19), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 115.

¹⁰⁴² *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁰⁴³ *PLH*, 28 (Appendix III: Destruction of an Enemy Post, Detachment, or Guard) § 3.

¹⁰⁴⁴ “Selection and Appreciation of Targets” (A.23), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 134-35.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 134.

aircraft] be created or found?”¹⁰⁴⁶ This interest in the use of airpower by forces friendly to partisans represents less a change in ideas and more a change in battlefield realities. When Gubbins wrote in 1939, the most probable resisters were Poles and Czechs. British air support to either nation was likely to be extremely limited, due to both the finite range of aircraft and the intense anti-aircraft defenses they would encounter while flying over long stretches of German territory. But by September 1943, when this particular lecture was written, British and American forces had captured Sicily (Operation HUSKY) and were landing on the Italian mainland (Operations AVALANCHE, BAYTOWN, and SLAPSTICK); thus northern Italy, as well as occupied France and the Low Countries, were now within operational range of Allied aircraft, making it plausible for partisans to call in air strikes. As the war progressed, SOE made small adjustments to Gubbins’s ideas, bringing them in line the latest developments; however, the essential concepts of his 1939 writings remained at the heart of the SOE syllabus.

Promotion

Reshuffles

In February 1942, following the fall of Singapore, the British government was reshuffled. Hugh Dalton, Minister of Economic Warfare, was moved to the Board of Trade. He was replaced at the MEW by Roundell Cecil Palmer, at the time Viscount Wolmer, though a few days later he succeeded his father as 3rd Earl Selborne.¹⁰⁴⁷ At the

¹⁰⁴⁶ “Selection and Appreciation of Targets” (A.23), Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 134.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton*, 374-75 [21 Feb. 1942]; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 100. Pimlott suggests that Dalton was removed from his post largely because of his private campaign to acquire the PWE. See Pimlott, *Hugh Dalton*, 319. Dalton’s diary, though certainly not

time Cadogan believed Selborne “would work” in the post, “but he’s not very inspiring.”¹⁰⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Gubbins and many others were relieved to see the departure of Dalton, always a micromanager of SOE and source of friction with Whitehall. Moreover, Selborne listened to Gubbins and was willing to champion his cogent and professional views on irregular warfare. Whereas Dalton had sometimes viewed SOE’s work as a rather melodramatic socialist crusade, Selborne was more practical and focused.¹⁰⁴⁹

A few months after Dalton’s departure and Selborne’s arrival, Sir Frank Nelson stepped down as the head of SOE. Nelson had performed the valuable but exhausting task of trying to check Dalton’s more extravagant plans, and in the process he had burned himself out.¹⁰⁵⁰ Decades after the war, Gubbins remained polite in his treatment of Dalton, though his assessment of the situation is clear:

[Dalton] drove himself hard & his leading figures in SOE equally hard, perhaps too hard in one or two cases as in that of Sir Frank Nelson our first Chief. Politically they were poles apart & I would say that neither of the two tried to hide the fact: further Sir Frank felt that Dalton was conducting affairs as if he, Dalton, were the Chief Executive... & interfering in the running of the show. There was considerable truth in Sir Frank’s complaints on this score.¹⁰⁵¹

Before their departures, Nelson and Dalton discussed the matter of SOE’s next director. Gubbins’s name was proposed; although Nelson suggested that Gubbins was “on his merits the best choice,” but cautioned, according to Dalton’s diary, that “he is [a]

explicit on this point, suggests the accusation may be true. On 4 February he alludes to his “M.P.E.W. [Ministry of Political and Economic Warfare] project,” his desire to unite pull the PWE under his umbrella; as late as 19 February, two days before his reassignment, he records that he was still advocating for the idea.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Diary of Sir Alexander Cadogan*, 437 [25 Feb. 1942].

¹⁰⁴⁹ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 100.

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁰⁵¹ Gubbins to John Peart-Binns, nd, c. April 1974, 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/76, IWM.

difficult personally and likes only to work with people whom he himself has picked.”¹⁰⁵² As it happened, Nelson was replaced by Sir Charles Hambro, a former Eton cricket captain and Coldstream Guard, and a prominent banker. Hambro had been Chairman of the Great Western Railway and had ties to Scandinavia. In November 1941 he was named a deputy to Nelson, while Gubbins had become responsible for Western Europe.¹⁰⁵³ Hambro was a brilliant amateur, a man Jebb said “lives by bluff and charm.”¹⁰⁵⁴ Gubbins was initially unsure of him, but under Hambro’s leadership SOE became a regular and respected element of the war effort. One of Hambro’s first acts upon arrival was to appoint Gubbins his Deputy for Operations; in recognition of this new position, Selborne managed to wrestle out of the War Office a brevet promotion to Major-General.¹⁰⁵⁵

Director of SOE

In September 1943 a fierce disagreement broke out between the Commander-in-Chief Middle East, General Sir Maitland Wilson, and SOE regarding Balkan policy. The Chiefs of Staff and Foreign Office were pulled into the squabble as well. The resulting compromise placed SOE’s operational activities under the relevant theater commander, an outcome unacceptable to Hambro and his Deputy for Administration, Sir John Hanbury-Williams. Both resigned. This left Gubbins, a man who had argued since his GS(R) days that irregular forces need to be closely coordinated with regular

¹⁰⁵² *The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton*, 363 [6 February 1942].

¹⁰⁵³ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 77, 113.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton*, 428 [10 May 1942].

¹⁰⁵⁵ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 120.

operations, the most senior SOE officer. Selborne had no difficulty obtaining Churchill's approval for Gubbins's appointment as Director of SOE.¹⁰⁵⁶ Gubbins would remain at the helm of SOE until its dissolution on 1 January 1946.

Gubbins's new position merely confirmed the central role he already played, as "the real motive force in the machine," to borrow Jebb's phrase.¹⁰⁵⁷ This final promotion allowed Gubbins to complete the work of creating SOE in his own image, according to the ideas he had first formulated four years before. Whereas Hugh Dalton had envisioned a "Fourth Arm" which would employ propaganda and subversion to foment a general rising of the working class, Gubbins was more realistic about what his agents might achieve, instead envisioning a paramilitary effort which would work alongside local resistance forces and in cooperation with the theatre commander. Having seen the potential effectiveness of indigenous resistance movements, and believing that resistance would have to be on a large scale to be effective and justify the inevitable reprisals against civilians, Gubbins concluded that success would necessarily come in cooperation with the governments-in-exile in London, many of which were in contact with – if not always in control of – resistance forces in their home countries. Perceiving the need for larger efforts and disciplined coordination, Gubbins shifted SOE away from its civilian past, creating a paramilitary organization capable of integrating with regular troops.¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁵⁶ Foot, *SOE in France*, 16; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 512; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 118; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 140-41.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, 101.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 512; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 118; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE* unpaginated introduction (i-ii)

Dennis Wheatley, who worked at the London Controlling Section devising deception operations, provides an unusual picture of Gubbins during his time as Director of SOE. Like earlier accounts, Wheatley describes Gubbins as having little interest in official dress: “[He was] a dapper little man. Instead of the slacks or battle-dress worn by the majority of Army officers employed in War Departments, he always wore beautifully cut Bedford cord breeches, highly polished field boots and spurs.” His parties were attended by officers of the Free Forces, the Poles and Czechs he so admired, as well as Frenchmen, Norwegians, Belgians and Dutch. They were, unsurprisingly, the kind of men SOE dropped behind enemy lines. But the most striking part of Wheatley’s description involves Gubbins’s relationship with women. He was a “man who excelled in surrounding himself with lovelies.... The hostesses [at his parties] were a score or more of beauties, mostly ex-débutantes, hand-picked by Gubby from the hundred or more girls that he employed in his office.”¹⁰⁵⁹ Wheatley provides few other details, but the suggestion is risqué.

Gubbins had been distant from his first wife, Norah (“Nonie”), for a long time – they eventually divorced in 1944 – and he certainly enjoyed the cosmopolitan life of intelligence.¹⁰⁶⁰ However, Wheatley’s picture should be taken with more than a grain of salt, not only because Wheatley was an author of pulp fiction in peace-time. SOE certainly employed a large number of women, something in the neighborhood of 3,200 of them, over half the total strength of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY). These

¹⁰⁵⁹ Dennis Wheatley, *The Deception Planners: My Secret War* (London, 1980), 134-35. Likewise, Wheatley observes that food and drink, paid for out of SOE’s generous budget, were always in ample supply.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 31, 241.

women served as wireless operators, drivers, secretaries, and domestic help at the country house schools.¹⁰⁶¹ Wheatley's suggestion of impropriety involving such women appears misplaced, however. After the war Donald Hamilton-Hill asked Gubbins to look over the manuscript of a novel about SOE. Gubbins replied:

I do not mind your "conversational details" [but]... I do think that you should be very careful in laying any stress on female relationships and luscious F.A.N.Y's and things of that nature.... I think you do want to avoid anything which would make your book a "succès de scandale" and would hope that you would not denigrate our own F.A.N.Y's in any way, who were of course as signal personnel at the core of our success: I would not like people to think that male/female relations entered into our daily tough work in any degree.¹⁰⁶²

Perhaps Gubbins was simply interested in preserving his good name or that of SOE, though this was only one of a raft of books that appeared about secret operations after the war, and a book with which he had no official connection. Indeed, Gubbins acknowledges in the letter that spies and sex was a theme that had "already been abused by cheap authors."¹⁰⁶³ After a survey of the surviving material, this defense rings true.

Joan Bright Astley, who herself worked for Gubbins, provides a considerably different take on a scene not so different from Wheatley's:

Whatever their rank or status, [the FANYs] looked to Gubbins as their patron. He, for his part, always took a personal interest in their welfare. To celebrate the New Year [in 1942] he organized at one of the training schools an all-ranks dance for members of his staff to which he invited the FANY drivers. Presided over by Mrs. [Phyllis] Bingham [Commander of the FANYs], it was as decorous as an end of term party at a girls' school; however, Gubbins wore the kilt and led the Scottish dancing until the small hours of the morning. At a time when senior officers were not expected to enjoy all-ranks dances, Gubbins proved an exception.... In staff relations, as in much else, he was ahead of his time.¹⁰⁶⁴

¹⁰⁶¹ Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 60-62; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 96.

¹⁰⁶² Gubbins to Donald Hamilton-Hill Esq., 13 December 1966, 1-2, Gubbins papers 3/2/58, IWM.

¹⁰⁶³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 96.

Conclusion

The four years from the outbreak of war in September 1939 to Gubbins's appointment as Director of SOE in September 1943 were significant and dynamic period, for the war generally and for SOE specifically. Likewise, Gubbins's time at the organizations helm, lasting two additional years, saw the zenith of SOE's operations. Nevertheless, as SOE grows this story tappers off, for two different reasons. Firstly, although the experiences of war led to innovations in irregular operations, SOE's basic doctrine became increasingly fixed. Gubbins's ideas were continually reinforced, as one layer was added to another: his significant contribution to the thinking of MI(R), itself a major component of the new SOE; his impact as SOE's first Director of Training, beginning in 1940, upon thousands of new agents; his increased influence when Selborne, a man willing to listen, became minister in 1942; and, finally, his leadership as Director after 1943. Thus, although the pace of sabotage only increased, the history of ideas settled down. The second reason our story begins to fade here is that this is where the existing body of literature takes up its account. General histories, usually short on SOE's origins, provide considerably more material on wartime operations. Likewise, a wealth of memoires and histories of particular operations flesh out some of the details.¹⁰⁶⁵ Nevertheless, one key element of our story remains: how SOE's intellectual patrimony was passed to the United States.

¹⁰⁶⁵ For general histories, see Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*; and Stafford, *Secret Agent: The True Story of Special Operations Executive* (London, 2000). For regional histories, see Louise Atherton, ed., *SOE in Eastern Europe* (London, 1995); Charles Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East* (Oxford, 1983); Cruickshank, *SOE in Scandinavia* (Oxford, 1986); Foot, *SOE in France*; Foot, *SOE in the Low Countries*; and Knud J. V. Jespersen, *No Small Achievement: Special Operations Executive and the Danish Resistance, 1940-1945* (Odense, Denmark, 2002). Of the

CHAPTER VI
OSS AND ITS DOCTRINE

The Origins of OSS

“Wild Bill” Donovan

On 11 July 1941 the euphemistically-titled Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) was created. Unlike SOE, the COI’s existence was not secret, though the new organization’s stated purpose was simply to collect and organize information, masking its true mission of espionage, propaganda, and subversion.¹⁰⁶⁶ In time this new organization, under the leadership of Bill Donovan, would become the Office of Strategic Services. At the beginning of its history, “Donovan was the OSS and the OSS was Donovan.”¹⁰⁶⁷

William Joseph Donovan was born in 1883 into an Irish-American family in Buffalo, New York. He studied at Niagara University, a Catholic university, with some

many memoirs and biographical works, see, for example, Marcus Binney, *Women Who Lived for Danger: The Agents of the Special Operations Executive* (New York, 2003); Patrick Howarth, *Undercover: The Men and Women of the Special Operations Executive* (London, 1980); Stella King, *“Jacqueline”: Pioneer Heroine of the Resistance* (London, 1989); Russell Miller, *Behind the Lines: The Oral History of Special Operations in World War II* (New York, 2002); David Nicolson, *Aristide: The Story of Roger Landes* (London, 1994); Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*; and Guido Zembsch-Schreve, *Pierre Lalande, Special Agent*, trans. John Brownjohn (London, 1996). On particular operations, see, for example, Knut Haukelid, *Skis Against the Atom* (Minot, ND, 1989) and Denis Rigden, *Kill the Führer: Section X and Operation Foxley* (Stroud, UK, 1999).

¹⁰⁶⁶ Kermit Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS* (New York, 1976), 5.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Brown, introduction to *The Secret War Report of the OSS*, 6. At the end of World War II, Kermit Roosevelt oversaw the writing of OSS’s official history. It was published in two volumes in 1976. The first volume, titled *War Report of the OSS*, covered its headquarters operations, and was edited with a new introduction by Roosevelt. It was published by Walker & Co. of New York. The second volume, similarly titled *The Secret War Report of the OSS*, covered the organization’s foreign operations, and was edited with an introduction by Anthony Cave Brown. This volume was published by Berkley Medallion, also of New York. The first section on Donovan’s early activities on behalf of the president may be found in both documents.

thought to entering the priesthood, before transferring to Columbia College in New York City, to finish his bachelor's degree and then attend law school. Though of only moderate size, he played football for Columbia.¹⁰⁶⁸

While practicing law in Buffalo he organized an Army National Guard cavalry troop. When General John Pershing was sent to pursue the Mexican bandit Pancho Villa in 1916, Donovan's unit was activated, though it saw little action. Returning to New York, Donovan joined the famed 69th Regiment, a New York National Guard formation primarily made up of Irish-Americans. He was given command of the 1st Battalion and served in France during the First World War, earning the Distinguished Service Cross (with Oak Leaf Cluster), the Medal of Honor, and France's Croix de Guerre for valor. He was wounded three times, and it was in battle that he was given the nickname "Wild Bill."¹⁰⁶⁹

Outside of combat, Donovan was a quiet man, who kept his anger inside. He had a sharp wit, but rarely laughed out loud himself. He was a man of tremendous energy and intellect, who slept little and read voraciously, mostly in military and political

¹⁰⁶⁸ Dunlop, *Donovan*, 13- 26; Douglas Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage* (New York, 2011), 10-13. Donovan's grandfather may have had some contact with the Fenian Brotherhood, the North American wing of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) terrorist organization. See Brown, *Last Hero*, 15-16.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Dunlop, *Donovan*, 28, 32-33, 44-113; Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 15-16, 18-31. Cf. Stephen L. Harris, *Duffy's War: Fr. Francis Duffy, Wild Bill Donovan, and the Irish Fighting 69th in World War I* (Washington, 2006). The Croix de Guerre was initially refused, until a Jewish sergeant, who had participated in the same operation, was given his as well. The poet Joyce Kilmer served under Donovan, and was his acting adjutant when he was killed.

history, but also Shakespeare. He enjoyed singing Broadway tunes and excelled at ballroom dance. Although he enjoyed fine food, he seldom drank and did not smoke.¹⁰⁷⁰

Donovan is often lionized in accounts of OSS, but Anthony Cave Brown provides a rather different picture of a Catholic beholden to Francis Cardinal Spellman, “a creature who seemed to believe that the only thing to do with Communists was to burn them alive, a priest who saw eternal damnation in anything pink.”¹⁰⁷¹ Moreover, Brown writes, “whether Donovan was really the right man for the post of chief of America’s first secret service is very questionable.” He argues that Donovan lacked both bureaucratic skills and good judgment, while his right-wing politics “were useless internationally,” leading to policy failures.¹⁰⁷² “Likable, even admirable on occasions, he was in fact an Elizabethan man, swaggering about capitals in beautiful cords, displaying a fine calf for a riding boot.”¹⁰⁷³

Donovan worked as a lawyer after World War I, but his eyes were always on political conflicts across the seas. In the summer of 1919, while Colin Gubbins was serving in Archangel as aide-de-camp to General Ironside, Donovan participated in another element of the Allied Intervention. Traveling via Japan, he undertook a trip to Siberia, to collect information and try to make sense of the confusing situation there. Richard Dunlop contends that Donovan traveled at the personal request of President Woodrow Wilson, but Douglas Waller points out that Donovan was hostile to Wilson.

¹⁰⁷⁰ William Samuel Stephenson, ed., *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-1945*, (New York, 1999), 8; Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 2-3. *British Security Coordination* is the official history compiled by the organization in 1945.

¹⁰⁷¹ Brown, introduction to *The Secret War Report of the OSS*, 5.

¹⁰⁷² *Ibid.*, 5. Brown cites Donovan’s decisions to wade ashore with the troops Sicily, Salerno, and Normandy, as brash actions inappropriate to a spymaster.

¹⁰⁷³ *Ibid.*, 6.

Moreover, Roland Morris, the US ambassador to Japan, claimed that Donovan begged to join Morris on his tour of the White Russian forces in Siberia. Whatever the motive for his travels, Donovan concluded that the Japanese had designs on the region and that White Russian forces were of poor quality. Whether President Wilson took Donovan's assessment seriously is debated by Dunlop, Waller, and other Donovan biographers, but on 31 December Wilson ordered American forces out of Siberia and pressured Japan into doing likewise.¹⁰⁷⁴ In the autumn of 1931 Donovan again returned to the region, unofficially investigating the Mukden Incident and informally communicating his thoughts on Japanese aggression to the US government.¹⁰⁷⁵

In November 1935 Donovan traveled to Italy, where he met Benito Mussolini; convincing the dictator he was sympathetic to the fascist cause, Donovan received permission to visit the Italian lines in Abyssinia, which Italy had invaded in the previous month. Donovan spent two weeks touring facilities and interviewing Italian officers. Upon his return to the United States, Donovan – who had traveled at his law firm's expense – briefed an excited War Department, which had been unable to place spies among the Italian invaders.¹⁰⁷⁶ Continuing to travel as a private citizen, and making use of his network of contacts, he visited Germany in 1937 and observed German army maneuvers; in 1938 he toured the Czech defenses in the Sudetenland, witnessed the fighting in Spain, and again observed maneuvers in Germany.¹⁰⁷⁷

¹⁰⁷⁴ Dunlop, *Donovan*, 117-29; Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 32-33.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Dunlop, *Donovan*, 177.

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 185-90; Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 51-54.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Dunlop, *Donovan*, 192-93.

Observing the British

War broke out in Europe in September 1939; following the collapse of France in May and June of 1940, Britain stood alone against Nazi Germany. It was in this context that the concept for the new organization that would become OSS emerged, beginning with Donovan's trip to Britain in the summer of 1940. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox suggested someone be sent to study the situation in Europe, particularly with regard to German fifth column forces; moreover, Knox suggested his friend Bill Donovan for the role. President Franklin D. Roosevelt added to the mission this task of assessing the strength of the British.¹⁰⁷⁸

Donovan left for Britain in the middle of July 1940. Lord Lothian, the British ambassador to Washington, cabled ahead to the Foreign Office, explaining that Donovan was a key advisor of Secretary Knox, and therefore was likely to have strong influence over arms sales to Britain. This was an exaggeration, but it accomplished Lord Lothian's purpose, opening doors throughout Whitehall.¹⁰⁷⁹ On arrival Donovan toured the island nation's defenses and formed strong relationships with the British leadership. Naval intelligence, MI5, and SIS all provided Donovan with briefings.¹⁰⁸⁰ In addition,

¹⁰⁷⁸ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 5; Dunlop, *Donovan*, 204-8; Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 59. The official history of British Security Coordination (BSC) in New York contends that the original proposal for this visit was made by their office to Donovan, who in turn suggested it to Roosevelt. This may have happened in addition to Knox's suggestion, though Donovan's limited access to the president at this point suggests that BSC may have exaggerated its role. See Stephenson, ed., *British Security Coordination*, 9. Jay Jakub points out that Donovan insisted afterward that he never met Stephenson prior to this trip. *Spies and Saboteurs: Anglo-American Collaboration and Rivalry in Human Intelligence Collection and Special Operations, 1940-1945* (London, 1999), 4.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 59.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Stephenson, ed., *British Security Coordination*, 10-11; Dunlop, *Donovan*, 209-17; Jakub, *Spies and Saboteurs*, 5-7; Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 60. Jakub provides one of the most well-researched accounts of Donovan's trips to Britain, as well as other aspects of Anglo-American clandestine cooperation in this period.

Sir Frank Nelson made certain that Donovan received access to SOE facilities throughout Britain. Colin Gubbins introduced him to the SOE schools.¹⁰⁸¹ Conyers Read, an American historian of Britain who later worked for OSS, argued that this visit by Donovan, “marks the beginning of close cooperation with the British which was to characterize the whole history of... OSS. When Donovan later undertook to organize his secret intelligence... and his subversive operations... he turned frankly to British models.”¹⁰⁸²

On his return to the United States Donovan concluded “that the British would hold out; that America must help, at least in the matter of supplies; and that fifth column activity had become a fact of major importance in modern warfare.”¹⁰⁸³ The *Fifth Column Lessons for America* he co-authored with journalist Edgar Mowrer after his return was considered in Chapter IV.

Although Roosevelt and Donovan, a Republican, disagreed sharply on domestic policy, each were powerful men of sharp political skills who understood that they shared the belief that America must act on the global stage.¹⁰⁸⁴ In November 1940, the president again had need of Donovan’s services, this time sending him to the Mediterranean to assess the situation there. He left the following month, first stopping

¹⁰⁸¹ Dunlop, *Donovan*, 212; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 95. It appears, however, that Donovan did not personally meet Sir Frank Nelson until February 1941. Moreover, according to the official history, Donovan’s tours of SOE facilities were “conducted” (i.e., limited). See Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 388.

¹⁰⁸² Conyers Read, manuscript, in the possession of and quoted by Dunlop, *Donovan*, 212-13.

¹⁰⁸³ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 5.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 55.

in Britain, where he returned to SOE's network of training schools.¹⁰⁸⁵ Donovan was once again impressed by the British, though this did not leave them above criticism. As the *War Report of the OSS* explains, "the Germans were exploiting the psychological and political elements.... Neither America nor Britain was fighting this new and important type of war.... Their defenses against political and psychological warfare were feeble."¹⁰⁸⁶ Donovan urged President Roosevelt to take action in this sphere. After stopping in Britain, Donovan then traveled to Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt, Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Cyprus, Palestine, Iraq, Spain and Portugal, before returning to the States via Britain.¹⁰⁸⁷ Of these dozen territories, half were British; Donovan's – and America's – priorities were clear.

The Coordinator of Information (COI)

In the summer of 1941, vast amounts of information were flowing into Washington. Faced with this challenge, President Roosevelt asked Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, and Attorney General Robert Jackson to consider this problem and that of intelligence in the broadest sense. When consulted by the committee, Donovan advised the creation of an organization with responsibility for intelligence, propaganda, and subversion, a vision as expansive as

¹⁰⁸⁵ "CG's Comments on Foot's Book," nd, 3, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM; Stephenson, ed., *British Security Coordination*, 24; Dunlop, *Donovan*, 270; Jakub, *Spies and Saboteurs*, 14; H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Quiet Canadian: The Secret Service Story of Sir William Stephenson* (London, 1962), 151.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 6.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Stephenson, ed., *British Security Coordination*, 13-14; Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 6; Dunlop, *Donovan*, 230-70; Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 43-45. Cf. Makenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 388.

anything Dalton sought. Bold though this proposal was, the committee endorsed it in its report to the president.¹⁰⁸⁸

Roosevelt asked Donovan for a more specific proposal, and on 10 June he submitted his “Memorandum of Establishment of Service of Strategic Information.” He almost certainly received help drafting the document from Sir William Stephenson, the chief of British Security Coordination (BSC), and his staff in New York.¹⁰⁸⁹ In this document, Donovan argued that “our mechanism of collecting information is inadequate.” While acknowledging that “we have intelligence units in the Army and Navy,” Donovan contended that “these services cannot, out of the very nature of things, obtain... accurate, comprehensive, long-range information.” To remedy this problem, he called for the creation of a new agency:

a central enemy intelligence organization which would itself collect either directly or through existing departments of government, at home and abroad, pertinent information concerning potential enemies, the character and strength of their armed forces, their internal economic organization, their principal channels of supply, the morale of their troops and their people and their relations with their neighbors or allies.

Moreover, Donovan emphasized that “to analyze and interpret such information by applying to it... the experience of... specialized trained research officials in the relative

¹⁰⁸⁸ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 7; Dunlop, *Donovan*, 280-84. At this point Donovan was not exclusively interested in clandestine work; he had also taken the preliminary step of passing an Army physical in May 1941, exploring the possibility of commanding a combat division. See Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 69. Secretary Stimson even went so far as to offer Donovan command of the 44th Division, if he wanted it. See Dunlop, *Donovan*, 289. Stimson’s autobiography, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York, 1947), co-authored with McGeorge Bundy, makes no mention of this or any other events in the creation of OSS. Donovan and his organization are only mentioned once in the work, in general terms.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Jakub, *Spies and Saboteurs*, 27. BSC represented both SIS and SOE in North America. Jakub goes so far as to argue that Stephenson, Admiral John Godfrey, director of British Naval Intelligence – who “was a guest in Donovan’s New York apartment at the time the paper was purportedly drafted” – or Godfrey’s assistant, Ian Fleming – brother of Peter Fleming and later creator of James Bond – may have even “co-authored” Donovan’s memorandum (27).

scientific fields, (including technological, economic, financial and psychological scholars,) is of determining influence in modern warfare.” Finally, “there is another element in modern warfare, and that is the psychological attack against the moral and spiritual defenses of a nation. In this attack the most powerful weapon is radio.”

To carry out all these functions, Donovan proposed the appointment of a Coordinator of Strategic Information, assisted by a panel composed of the Directors of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Naval Intelligence, and the Military Intelligence Division. He was quick to caution, however, that “the proposed centralized unit will neither displace nor encroach upon the FBI, Army and Navy Intelligence, or any other department of the government.”¹⁰⁹⁰

Although Donovan had included physical subversion – e.g. sabotage – in his initial report to the *ad hoc* committee, he omitted it from this proposal. When the president created the Office of the Coordinator of Information on 25 June 1941, its precise functions were not defined. The president did, however, invoke the “authority vested in me as... Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy,” suggesting that the new organization was military in nature.¹⁰⁹¹ Moreover, the document authorized the Coordinator to “carry out, when requested by the President, such supplementary activities as may facilitate the securing of information.”¹⁰⁹² The wide purview of the

¹⁰⁹⁰ Donovan, Memorandum of Establishment of Service of Strategic Information, 10 June 1941, in Thomas F. Troy, “Donovan’s Original Marching Orders,” Appendix A, *Studies in Intelligence* XVII, no. 2 (Summer 1973): 67-68.

¹⁰⁹¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, 11 July 1941, quoted in Dunlop, *Donovan*, 530. Cf. Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 7-8.

¹⁰⁹² Quoted in Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 8

new organization fit well with Donovan's vision of irregular warfare. As the *War Report of the OSS* explains, his

basic concept, evolved from his experience extending back to World War I and particularly his observation of wars from 1935 through 1940, had envisaged a "softening-up" process to pave the way for the regular armed forces, consisting broadly of three phases: First, secret intelligence infiltration and preparation; second, sabotage and subversive harassing tactics; and third, resistance groups and guerrilla or commando operations.... Even before his appointment as Coordinator of Information he had urged these ideas often and cogently.¹⁰⁹³

From this genesis came an organization which carried out *both* intelligence and sabotage, thus fulfilling the functions of SIS and SOE within a single organization.

Over the next year and a half, from the creation of COI to America's entry into the Second World War following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Donovan worked to establish his new intelligence and sabotage organization. Waller notes that "the Coordinator of Information office became a reflection of Donovan's creative and eclectic mind – constantly exploring, expanding, experimenting. He launched new projects, rearranged priorities, and shuffled personnel."¹⁰⁹⁴ Inspiration and assistance from the British was essential in building the new organization. During these eighteen months, Donovan met with or telephoned Sir William Stephenson at least 36 times, about once every two weeks.¹⁰⁹⁵ One subsequent member of OSS, Carleton Coon, a Harvard anthropologist, argues that Donovan modeled his new organization not on Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), but on SOE.¹⁰⁹⁶

¹⁰⁹³ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 70.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 74-75.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Dunlop, *Donovan*, 317. This figure comes from Donovan's appointment book; unrecorded meetings may push the figure even higher. Cf. Stephenson, ed., *British Security Coordination*, 25-29.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Dunlop, *Donovan*, 317-18.

By October 1941, COI had agents in Vichy North Africa, operating under the diplomatic guise of being vice-consuls. That same month, COI established an office in London.¹⁰⁹⁷ Perhaps most importantly, on 10 October, a new section of COI was established, known simply as “Special Activities – K and L Funds.” This office handled not only secret intelligence, but subversion and guerrilla warfare activities.¹⁰⁹⁸ As part of the new venture, Donovan sent Lieutenant Colonel Robert Solborg, an Army intelligence officer seconded to COI, to Britain for three months to receive “extensive training in British [i.e., SOE] schools.”¹⁰⁹⁹ In the following months, Donovan lobbied hard for expansion in this area. In December he sent President Roosevelt an account of the British Commandos’ development and a few days later argued “that there be organized now, in the United States, a guerrilla corps, independent and separate from the Army and Navy.... This force should, of course, be created along disciplined military lines, analogous to the British Commando principles, a statement of which I sent you recently.”¹¹⁰⁰

From the beginning, Donovan argued that intelligence and special operations, although closely collaborating, should be divided into different branches. Any doubt about this arrangement was removed by America’s formal entry into the war after the

¹⁰⁹⁷ Brown, ed., *Secret War Report of the OSS*, 135-36; Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 93; Dunlop, *Donovan*, 327; Jakub, *Spies and Saboteurs*, 32-33; Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 132.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 70. “The letters ‘K’ and ‘L’ were arbitrarily chosen; they have no significance” (85).

¹⁰⁹⁹ Donovan to Adjutant General, “Stephenson, William Samuel – Recommendation for Award of Distinguished Service Medal,” 19 June 1944, J. Russell Forgan Papers, Box 1, Folder (unmarked envelope), Hoover Institution Archives on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University; quoted in Jakub, *Spies and Saboteurs*, 39. Cf. Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 72; Stephenson, ed. *British Security Coordination*, 28; Dunlop, *Donovan*, 327.

¹¹⁰⁰ Donovan to Franklin Roosevelt, 22 December 1941, quoted in Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 72.

Japanese attack of 7 December 1941. Although COI had worked with its British counterparts prior to that time, such cooperation grew exponentially afterward. In light of the fact that the British SIS and SOE had a strong rivalry and separate cabinet ministers, liaison was made much easier for the Americans if they came from two distinct branches of COI. In December 1941 divided “Special Activities – K and L Funds” into the Secret Intelligence Branch (otherwise designated SA/B) and the Special Operations Branch (SA/G).¹¹⁰¹

Transformation to OSS

As COI grew, its detractors in the military, the State Department, and the FBI increased. In March 1942 there was a major push to have it abolished; Archibald MacLeish, director of the War Department’s Office of Facts and Figures, and Harold Smith, Budget Director, proposed creating a new propaganda organization and dividing COI’s other assets among existing organizations. For a time Roosevelt delayed a decision, but on 13 June he divided COI into the Office of War Information (OWI) and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the latter under the broad authority of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹¹⁰² It was a decision which mirrored the departure of Britain’s PWE from SOE, though unlike its British counterparts, OSS united sabotage and intelligence within a single organization.¹¹⁰³

¹¹⁰¹ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 73; Dunlop, *Donovan*, 312. The designations stand for “Special Activities” and reflect the initial leaders of each branch, David Kirkpatrick Este Bruce (SA/B) and Maj. (later Col.) M. Preston Goodfellow (SA/G).

¹¹⁰² Dunlop, *Donovan*, 350-54; Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, 115-16.

¹¹⁰³ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 389.

The growth of COI and its transformation into the OSS may have owed something to British influence. The official history indicates that prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the British were content to exchange information with a variety of American agencies: COI and FBI, as well as military and naval intelligence. After America's official entry into the war, however, as exchanges dramatically increased, "the British became disturbed about giving such information to several uncoordinated agencies which lacked carefully-trained specialists concerned exclusively with counter-espionage techniques. Therefore, they suggested that all counter-espionage material be channeled through a single agency."¹¹⁰⁴ To sweeten the arrangement, the British offered to share their extensive counterintelligence files with such an agency.

A few days before the official creation of OSS on 13 June 1942, Donovan and Major Preston Goodfellow, his director of special operations, traveled to London to negotiate an arrangement with Sir Charles Hambro for cooperation with SOE in the field. Although OSS worked out similar arrangements with SIS, the agreement with SOE was arguably the more important. The distinction arises out of the difference between intelligence and special operations. In the case of intelligence, information sharing and collaboration between agents in the field often poses a grave danger to the safety of agents, a danger which frequently outweighed the benefits of SIS-OSS cooperation. On the other hand, while Gubbins warned of the dangers posed to special operations by over-organization, duplication of effort would result in wasted lives and operational confusion; in this case, the benefits of close SOE-OSS cooperation

¹¹⁰⁴ Brown, ed., *Secret War Report of the OSS*, 49.

outweighed the costs. These negotiations between SOE and OSS regarding the precise terms of their collaboration were ongoing when Roosevelt signed the order dividing COI and creating OSS.¹¹⁰⁵

Uniquely American Sources of Doctrine

The extensive personal and institutional cooperation of Donovan and COI/OSS with their British counterparts suggest Britain as an obvious source for the ideas and doctrine of irregular warfare which OSS utilized during World War II. To adequately assess the extent of British influence, however, it is necessary to first consider uniquely American sources of possible inspiration available to COI/OSS.¹¹⁰⁶ From the breath of potential sources, a handful will be considered: American activities in the Philippines and Hawaii in the final decade of the 19th century, the lessons in irregular warfare gathered in the Marine Corps *Small Wars Manual*, and experiences of espionage and violence along the US-Mexican border.

¹¹⁰⁵ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 84, 206-7. The agreement generally divided the world into British and American spheres; although SOE and OSS would both operate in both areas, one or the other would take the lead. The British sphere included India, East and West Africa, Western Europe, the Balkans, and the Middle East; the American sphere included China, Korea, Australia, Atlantic islands such as the Canaries, North Africa, and Finland. Cf. Stephenson, *British Security Coordination*, 29-30.

¹¹⁰⁶ As Rhondri Jeffreys-Jones argues America's early reliance on Britain has been emphasized – some might say exaggerated – by both advocates and detractors of the Central Intelligence Agency, for polemical purposes. See Jeffreys-Jones, “The Role of British intelligence in the Mythologies Underpinning the OSS and Early CIA,” *American-British-Canadian Intelligence Relations*, ed. David Stafford and Rhondri Jeffreys-Jones (London, 2000), 5-19.

Philippines & Hawaii

Some historians and soldiers argue that the US has a long history of irregular warfare, reaching back to the colonial era.¹¹⁰⁷ As pertains to OSS actions during the Second World War, however, the most directly relevant examples begin in the late 19th century. In 1898, following the sinking of the USS *Maine* in Havana harbor, the US imposed itself upon a conflict between Cuban rebels and Spanish authorities, and war with Spain was declared in April.

In addition to fighting in Cuba and Puerto Rico, Americas also saw action in the Philippines. On 4 February 1899 fighting broke out between American forces and Filipino rebels just outside of Manila; the one-time allies, having defeated the Spanish the previous summer, now began a conflict which officially lasted until July 1902, though scattered fighting continued for several years thereafter. For nine months the infant Philippine Republic fought a conventional war against the US military, but in November 1899, Emilio Aguinaldo, president of the Republic, declared that conventional resistance had failed and called for a guerrilla war instead. The US

¹¹⁰⁷ James F. J. Archibald, an American soldier who observed the Boers, makes this argument: “The tactics of the American soldier have been the outcome of generations of Indian wars and of fighting in woods and mountains. Our colonial forefathers established the general principles of our present fighting methods when they learned the art of warfare from the natives of the wilderness. When Colonel Washington saved General Braddock’s defeated British regulars from annihilation by the Indians, he employed, in the main, the same tactics we now use. Washington implored the British general to dispose his men like the pioneer volunteers, as individual fighters; but the Royal officer disdained to take lessons from a colonial.... The American victories of the War of Independence were won by the common-sense tactics natural to men who had handled long rifles from their boyhood, and who had learned to hide first and shoot afterwards” (*Blue Shirt and Khaki*, 125-26). Historian Andrew J. Birtle shares these sentiments, arguing that “there was a strong continuity in the manner in which the US Army performed counterinsurgency and overseas constabulary missions in the century that preceded the outbreak of World War II” (*U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* [Washington, 2009], vii).

military, having recently defeated Spain in a conventional conflict, now had to redirect its efforts and undertake a counterinsurgency campaign, a most unconventional effort.

Through the cooperation of sympathetic local officials, the Filipino guerrillas were able to live among the population or establish camps proximate to population centers; in both cases, local officials and the people at large supplied them with provisions and collected funds for them.¹¹⁰⁸ Thus supported, guerrillas were able to launch attacks against American convoys.¹¹⁰⁹ The rebels also mounted a concerted campaign to deny information to the American forces; Filipinos found cooperating with the occupiers would be punished, sometimes with death.¹¹¹⁰ The insurgents' fears were well-founded; even a single individual could provide US forces with information sufficient to arrest rebel leaders, capture their weapons, and destroy the rebel grip on a given town. Captured rebels, in turn, could supply information to roll up additional guerrilla organizations.¹¹¹¹

The American response to the insurgency was multi-faceted, incorporating methods drawn from both American and European traditions. Under a "policy of chastisement" military forces vigorously pursued guerrillas and destroyed them. This often meant concentrating civilian populations into well-guarded villages, cutting them

¹¹⁰⁸ Lt. W. T. Johnston, "Investigation into the Methods Adopted by the Insurgents for Organizing and Maintaining a Guerrilla Force," in War Department, *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1900*, vol. 7 (Washington, 1900), 257-62. Although this report pertains to only a small area of the Philippines, Gen. Arthur MacArthur comments: "The conditions throughout [the island of] Luzon are so similar that the within report, with a few modifications to adapt it to locality, might apply to any part of the island. It is together the best description which has reached these headquarters of the insurgent method of organizing and maintaining a guerrilla force" (appended to Johnston, 264-65).

¹¹⁰⁹ Johnston, "Investigation into the Methods," 259-60.

¹¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 258.

¹¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 262-63.

off from the guerrillas they supplied with information, provisions, and concealment.¹¹¹²

The US utilized light and mobile forces, traveling with limited supplies for rapid pursuit of rebels.¹¹¹³ Native forces were also organized into auxiliary forces which could utilize their knowledge of the language, culture, and geography, to assist American forces.¹¹¹⁴

The Philippines was not the only scene of American irregular operations in this era. In 1893 a group of white planters in the Kingdom of Hawaii organized themselves into the “Committee of Public Safety,” with the intention of opposing Queen Liliuokalani’s revisions to the constitution of 1887; the committee contacted the US minister, John L. Stevens, who organized a landing party from the USS *Boston*, then in Honolulu harbor, to aid the committee with force. The queen abdicated, and Hawaii became a republic, with the goal of annexation by the US.¹¹¹⁵ President Grover

¹¹¹² J. Franklin Bell, 12 April 1901, quoted in Glenn Anthony May, *Battle for Batangas: A Philippine Province at War* (New Haven, CT, 1991), 246; Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency*, 130. The policy of concentration had also been utilized by the Spanish in Cuba, by the British in the Second Anglo-Boer War, by Union forces fighting Confederate partisans in Arkansas during the American Civil War, and by the US Army against Native Americans in the West. See John M. Dobson, “Spanish-Cuban/American War,” in *The War of 1898 and U.S. Interventions, 1898-1934: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Benjamin R. Beede (New York, 1994), 521; Denis Judd and Keith Surridge, *The Boer War* (New York, 2002), 194-96; Robert R. Mackey, *The Uncivil War: Irregular Warfare in the Upper South, 1861-1865* (Norman, OK, 2004), 66-68; Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency*, 130. The US also employed a “policy of attraction” designed to win over the local population through respect for local customs, construction of facilities such as roads and schools, and outreach efforts such as concerts and public health events. See War Department, *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1899* (Washington, 1899), 10, 12. John Morgan Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags: The United States Army in the Philippines, 1898-1902* (Westport, CT, 1973), 57-60; Gates, “Military Government and Civic Action in the Philippines,” in *War of 1898*, 333.

¹¹¹³ Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Lawrence, KS, 2000), 147.

¹¹¹⁴ Charles J. Crane, “Paragraphs 93, 97 and 88 of General Orders 100,” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States XXXII* (March/April 1903), 254-56; J. W. Ward, “Use of Native Troops in Our Possessions,” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States XXXI* (1902): 798; Clayton D. Laurie, “Philippine Constabulary,” in *War of 1898*, 412; Laurie, “The Philippine Scouts,” in *War of 1898*, 421; Stuart Creighton Miller, “Macabebe Scouts,” in *War of 1898*, 273.

¹¹¹⁵ Charles D. Ameringer, *U.S. Foreign Intelligence: The Secret Side of American History* (Lexington, MA, 1990), 74; George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (Oxford, 2008), 297; Sylvester K. Stevens, *American Expansion in Hawaii, 1842-1898* (Harrisburg, PA, 1945), 206-8, 214-24.

Cleveland, whose administration was inaugurated shortly after these events, described them in the following way:

The lawful government of Hawaii was overthrown without the drawing of a sword or the firing of a shot.... But for the landing of United States forces upon false pretexts respecting the danger to life and property, the committee would never have exposed themselves to the pains and penalties of treason by undertaking the subversion of the Queen's Government.¹¹¹⁶

While Cleveland's description contains clear moral condemnation, the mechanics of subversion parallel the kind of actions SOE and OSS undertook nearly half a century later: using subterfuge, not brute force, to encourage local clandestine organizations to overthrow regimes considered undesirable.¹¹¹⁷

Central America and the Small Wars Manual

In Central America and the Caribbean region, the US had a long history of paramilitary operations. In the late spring of 1898, Lieutenant Andrew S. Rowan, of the Army's Military Intelligence Division, made contact with the Cuban insurgents then fighting against Spain. Rowan traveled to Cuba by fishing boat from Jamaica, met with rebel General Calixto García, who was then badly in need of weapons and ammunition, and left Cuba by a small boat to Nassau. For his efforts, Rowan was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. But Rowan's most powerful legacy came in the form of an essay published in 1899 and two subsequent films in 1916 and 1936, all titled "A Message to García." Although these works took liberties with the historical details of

¹¹¹⁶ Grover Cleveland, quoted in Ruhl J. Bartlett, ed., *The Record of American Diplomacy: Documents and Readings in the History of American Foreign Relations* (New York, 1964), 365.

¹¹¹⁷ Annexation would finally come in 1898 by way of a joint resolution of Congress during the administration of President William McKinley.

the case, they helped popularize the idea of the lone American spy, working with foreign insurgents to advance American interests.¹¹¹⁸

Likewise, in Panama the US gave clandestine support to separatists in order to build the Panama Canal. When Columbia refused to sell the land in question to the US, Philippe Bunau-Varilla, a major shareholder in the French company that owned the land, collaborated with President Theodore Roosevelt, Secretary of State John Hay, and local employees of the company who were willing to lead a Panamanian rebellion. While Bunau-Varilla met with American leaders in Washington in October 1903, the USS *Nashville* was dispatched to Panama.¹¹¹⁹ Meanwhile, two Army officers, travelling in civilian dress, collected detailed military intelligence on Panama and the situation there, probably on direct orders from Washington.¹¹²⁰ The presence of US forces in Panama prevented the Columbian government from quashing the rebellion, and the new republic signed a treaty giving the Canal Zone to the US. Historian Charles D. Ameringer contends that the US did not engage in covert actions of this sort again until the Cold War, due to the propensity to use the Marine Corps to deal with “troublesome situations.”¹¹²¹ Thus, given their frequent usage in irregular conflicts, it is to the Marines and their experience that we must now turn.

Throughout its history, the US Marine Corps has fought a large number of small wars; that pattern only escalated following the Spanish-American War of 1898.

¹¹¹⁸ Ameringer, *U.S. Foreign Intelligence*, 76-77; George S. Bryan, *The Spy in America* (Philadelphia, 1943), 201-3; Richard Wilmer Rowan, *The Story of Secret Service* (New York, 1937), 417-418

¹¹¹⁹ Ameringer, *U.S. Foreign Intelligence*, 79-81; Michael L. Conniff, *Panama and the United States: The Forced Alliance* (Athens, GA, 2001), 64-67; Walter LeFeber, *The Panama Canal: The Crisis in Historical Perspective* (New York, 1989), 23-26.

¹¹²⁰ Ameringer, *U.S. Foreign Intelligence*, 85-87.

¹¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 87

Between 1898 and 1934, the Marine Corps was engaged in active operations every single year, and in 1929 more than two thirds of its personnel were on duty outside the continental US.¹¹²² In 1935 the various lessons learned from these engagements were compiled into a single volume, the *Small Wars Operations*, revised and republished as the *Small Wars Manual (SWM)* in 1940.¹¹²³ Like Lawrence, who argued that “irregular war is far more intellectual than a bayonet charge,” the *Small Wars Manual* contends that “small wars demand the highest type of leadership directed by intelligence, resourcefulness, and ingenuity.”¹¹²⁴

The *SWM* bears a strong resemblance to Callwell’s work of half a century before, from which it likely took its name.¹¹²⁵ Like Callwell, the *SWM* is concerned with punitive expeditions and other measure undertaken by a major power to suppress lawlessness and insurrection outside the major European population centers. As with Callwell’s work, the *SWM* primarily offers insights into *counter*-guerrilla operations, though with a little imagination many of its observations could be utilized by guerrillas as well. The *SWM* suggests that irregular forces are capable of great effectiveness; it cautions, however that the Marine Corps’s experience “has been gained almost entirely in small wars against poorly organized and equipped native irregulars. With all the

¹¹²² United States Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (Washington, 1940), 1-2 (p.2). Each chapter of this work has its own pagination.

¹¹²³ Keith B. Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps’ Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1940* (Boulder, CO, 2001), 214, 224-27.

The topic of irregular warfare commanded wide consideration within the Marine Corps at this time. In 1940 Samuel Griffith, translator of Mao’s *On Guerrilla Warfare* commented that “we in the Marine Corps have as yet encountered nothing but relatively primitive and strictly limited guerrilla war. Thus, what Mao has written of this new type of guerrilla war may be of interest to us” (Translator’s Note to Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 38).

¹¹²⁴ Lawrence, “Evolution of a Revolt,” 68; USMC, *Small Wars Manual*, 1-6c (p. 9).

¹¹²⁵ Cf. Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 207, 216, 226.

practical advantages we enjoyed in those wars, that experience must not lead to an underestimate of the modern irregular, supplied with modern arms and equipment.” It goes on to suggest the tactics such a modern irregular might employ: “He will be able to concentrate a numerical superiority against isolated detachments at the time and place he chooses; as in the past he will have a thorough knowledge of the trails, the country, and the inhabitants.”¹¹²⁶

The *SWM* contends that “methods of operation must be studied and adapted to the psychological reaction they will produce upon the opponents.... Strategy should attempt to gain psychological ascendancy.”¹¹²⁷ This emphasis on psychology was also seen in Donovan’s proposal of 10 June 1941, in which he called for the creation of a strategic information service. In that document he argued that intelligence should be analyzed by “specialized trained research officials in the relative scientific fields (including... psychological scholars.” Likewise, he explained that, in addition to the traditional tools of military force, “there is another element in modern warfare and that is the psychological attack.”¹¹²⁸

The *SWM* identifies a number of the tactics which partisans might employ, including threatening lines of communication, blending in with local civilians, and collecting intelligence from local sympathizers, who deny such information to the anti-

¹¹²⁶ USMC, *Small Wars Manual*, 1-6b (p. 8). Cf. *Small Wars Manual*, 2-5 (p. 6): “Generally their [guerrillas’] intentions will be to make surprise attacks against the intervening forces in superior numbers and against undefended local villages and towns.”

¹¹²⁷ USMC, *Small Wars Manual*, 1-8 (p. 13).

¹¹²⁸ Donovan, Memorandum of Establishment of Service of Strategic Information, in Troy, “Donovan’s Original Marching Orders,” 67-68.

partisan forces.¹¹²⁹ Considerable space is devoted to the matter of ambushes. The *SWM* advocates many tactics already discussed: clear lines of retreat, obstacles to block the road, and careful observation.¹¹³⁰ Although the section on convoys discusses defenses against ambushes, few of its details pertain to expected ambush techniques.¹¹³¹ Moreover, the extent to which OSS was inspired by the ambush tactics in the *SWM* is questionable. Put simply, OSS was not nearly as interested in ambushes as was the US Marine Corps. The version of the two week OSS Basic School offered at the RTU-11 training camp in Clinton, Maryland, for example, included only four hours of paramilitary training, divided evenly between the study of close combat and booby traps.¹¹³²

Likewise, the *SWM*'s discussion of partisan raiding on supplies requires careful attention. It observes that "frequently irregulars kill and rob peaceful citizens in order to obtain supplies which are then secreted in remote strongholds. Seizure or destruction of such sources of supply is an important factor in reducing their means of resistance."¹¹³³

While the tone clearly betrays the *SWM*'s counter-insurgent perspective, it also

¹¹²⁹ USMC, *Small Wars Manual*, 1-9a (p. 14).

¹¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 6-70, 6-72e (pp. 41, 43).

¹¹³¹ *Ibid.*, Chapter VIII. One of the few comments on ambushers themselves is this: "If the enemy has made a practice of using land mines, it may be advisable to have a pilot cargo truck precede the point" (8-5 [p. 3]). While the potential use of landmines is acknowledged, their most dangerous position or possible use in conjunction with ambushing forces are not discussed. Elsewhere it is observed that "critical places on the route of march, such as fords, defiles and trail crossings should be reconnoitered and commanding positions occupied before the convoy is committed to them" (8-6b [p. 4]). The suggestion is that these make excellent ambush sites, though it is not explicitly stated. Finally, the *SWM* notes that the rear of a convoy should never be left unprotected, even in an attack; that guerrillas might use a feint against the front or flanks to draw escorts away from the rear, the site of the main attack, is hinted, but not stated outright (8-6d [p. 5]).

¹¹³² "Master Outline of Two Weeks Basic OSS Course at RTU-11," 29 December 1944, Record Group 226, Entry 161, Box 12, Folder 131. Students did receive 6 additional hours of training in weapons handling at this school, which was located in Clinton, MD.

¹¹³³ USMC, *Small Wars Manual*, 1-8b (pp. 12-13).

highlights the utility of captured supplies and the importance of protecting such supplies. However, the *SWM* offers thin comment on the true danger posed by guerrilla attacks on supply lines: tying down counter-guerrilla forces, stretching them thin and making them ineffective. The *SWM* acknowledges that “the greater the number of localities that are garrisoned permanently, the less is the mobility of the command; consequently, care should be taken to retain sufficient reserves properly located to take up the counter-offensive at every opportunity.”¹¹³⁴ This suggests an awareness that counterinsurgent forces might sometimes be stretched thin, but not an awareness that partisans might actively seek to create such a situation.

Although would-be guerrillas could glean some lessons from the *Small Wars Manual*, its offerings are limited. This is not only because its tactics are presented from the counter-guerrilla perspective, but, more importantly, because the work generally assumes static and reactive partisans. Prescriptions for action by anti-partisan forces suggest that they can move about freely and pursue a program of pacification as their resources allow; no acknowledgement is made that guerrillas actively seek to disrupt such pacification schemes.¹¹³⁵ Although the *Manual* insists that “a careful study must be made of the ruses and stratagems practiced by the enemy,” less than a page is devoted to

¹¹³⁴ USMC, *Small Wars Manual*, 5-20 (p. 18).

¹¹³⁵ Rare exceptions to this trend can be found. With regard to information obtained from locals, for example, the *Manual* comments: “Patrol leaders must evaluate cautiously information obtained by questioning inhabitants encountered on the trail. A person who resides in a community overrun by guerrillas generally is sympathetic towards them or fearful of their reprisals” (6-65 [p. 39]).

them.¹¹³⁶ With so little discussion of guerrilla activities themselves, there was less of use to the OSS here than might be expected.

US Customs Service

On 14 April 1942, COI activated Detachment 101, a unit designed to conduct irregular warfare operations in Asia and commanded by Colonel Carl Eifler.¹¹³⁷ When arrangements were made for Det. 101's creation, there was a small discussion about the name:

“What shall we call the unit?” asked [Garland] Williams [Goodfellow's aide]. “Detachment 1,” replied Eifler. “It's going to be the first outfit into the field.” “No,” said Williams. “We'll call it Detachment 101. We can't let the British know we only have one unit.”¹¹³⁸

Eifler was at once an exceptional man and typical of irregular warfare leaders. He managed to join the Army when he was 15 years old, serving for eighteen months at the Lighter than Air station in Arcadia, California, and with an aerial photography unit in the

¹¹³⁶ USMC, *Small Wars Manual*, 6-87 (p. 54). The brevity of this list of guerrilla ruses permits it to be quoted in full:

(1) Inveigling the enemy into an attack and pursuit and then, when he is disorganized and scattered, make a violent counter-attack. A modification of this method includes abandoning animals and supplies and then, when the attacking force is more interested in booty than pursuit, to counter-attack.

(2) A group of the enemy may retreat before the attacking force and lure it into a carefully prepared ambush.

(3) Disguising themselves to resemble their foes, sometimes wearing a similar uniform.

(4) Having their men on service of security disguised like their foes.

(5) On one pretext or another, to lure a small enemy force into an exposed position and destroy it.

Examples:

(a) Cutting a telegraph wire and then destroying the repair party.

(b) Raiding a community with a small group and then striking the patrol sent to its relief with a stronger force.

(6) A guerrilla group surprised in an area may hide its firearms and assume the appearance of a peaceful group of citizens busy in their fields or clearing trails.

¹¹³⁷ Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines with the OSS in Burma* (Chicago, 1979), 65, 89.

¹¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

Philippines, before being dismissed from the Army for lying about his age. He then attended the Los Angeles Police Academy, graduating in the class of 1926. He later moved to the Newport Beach PD, enlisted in the Army Reserve and eventually spent eight years with the US Customs Service.¹¹³⁹ Eifler's time on the border was arguably his most important training for the clandestine war he would later wage with OSS. Although he was only one man, Eifler's experience is worth considering, both because he had lasting influence, as the first commander of one of OSS's earliest paramilitary formations, and because his experience with US law enforcement provides a case study of the kinds of non-military experiences that some OSS members brought to bear on their work.

Eifler worked out of Calexico, California, more than 100 miles east of San Diego. Shootouts with criminals – armed with rifles, shotguns, and machineguns, more firepower than Customs agents carried – were numerous and dangerous.¹¹⁴⁰ In order to catch rum smugglers, Eifler and his colleagues at Customs relied upon informers on the Mexican side of the border, a veritable foreign intelligence network.¹¹⁴¹ In addition, Eifler himself operated illegally and under cover on the Mexican side of the border, sometimes making use of his command of the German language.¹¹⁴²

On one such operation in 1934, Eifler spotted a number of Japanese in Tijuana. His curiosity raised, he tapped his network of informers and discovered that the men were Japanese military officers. Further investigation showed that as many as 400

¹¹³⁹ Thomas N. Moon and Carl F. Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel* (New York: 1975), 2-14.

¹¹⁴⁰ Cf. Carl E. Prince and Mollie Keller, *The US Customs Service: A Bicentennial History* (Washington, 1989), 213.

¹¹⁴¹ Moon and Eifler, *Deadliest Colonel*, 5, 8.

¹¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 6-7, 12-13.

Japanese personnel were operating in northern Baja California, regularly crossing into the US to visit shipyard in California. In addition, the Japanese personnel occupied an abandoned smugglers' airfield, not far from the border. Informants told Eifler that the Japanese officers were also engaged in secret negotiations with Mexican officials to utilize facilities in Baja in the event of war between the US and Japan. Eifler took the fruit of his investigations to an Army lieutenant colonel in the area, Joseph Stilwell. Stilwell, who later served as Chief of Staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek and commander of the China-Burma-India Theater, in which capacity he worked with OSS's Detachment 101, was impressed by Eifler's report, but unable to act on it. The report, in one form or another, appears to have made its way to Washington, and the Japanese threat in Baja eventually evaporated.¹¹⁴³

This was real-life experience with intelligence, subterfuge, and strategy, experience that Eifler gained apart from his service in the Army Reserve, and apart from the British, their Empire, or any of the lessons codified by Colin Gubbins. If OSS made little formal use of the knowledge contained in the Marine Corps's *Small Wars Manual*, it certainly tapped into the kind of irregular experience that Carl Eifler embodied.

¹¹⁴³ Moon and Eifler, *Deadliest Colonel*, 7-11.

British Influence

Camp X

OSS eventually grew to have 13,000 personnel with a total budget of \$135 million.¹¹⁴⁴ But in the months prior to the American entry into the war, Donovan faced very basic tasks in his effort to build a viable clandestine organization, tasks such as training American agents. A conversation in the summer of 1941 was emblematic of the situation. Meeting with Kenneth Baker, head of the Psychology Division of Donovan's Research & Analysis Branch, and Dr. J. R. Hayden, former Vice-Governor of the Philippines, Donovan told them,

“I want you to start the schools.”

“What schools?”

“The SI [secret intelligence] training schools.”

“But we don't know anything about espionage schools....”

“Who does?”¹¹⁴⁵

The answer to the question was clear enough: the British. Since the US was not officially at war, British training of American personnel would constitute a violation of neutrality.¹¹⁴⁶ Such concerns were not enough to derail plans for joint training, but they had to be considered. Thus, it was decided to build a new school in Ontario, Canada, outside the United States but close enough for easy access.¹¹⁴⁷ As it turned out, Special

¹¹⁴⁴ Roosevelt, *War Report*, 116; Ameringer, *U.S. Foreign Intelligence*, 159.

¹¹⁴⁵ William L. Cassidy, ed., *History of the Schools & Training Branch, Office of Strategic Services* (San Francisco, 1983), 37.

¹¹⁴⁶ Even after the American entry into the war, it remained unclear if COI/OSS personnel should be classified as soldiers or civilian agents. “All the member of Detachment 101 had to obtain United States passports. The exact status of individuals working for the Coordinator of Information and later on for the Office of Strategic Services was equivocal. Were they civilians? Were they soldiers? Some hairsplitting legal experts decided they were members of the former group; others considered them part of the military. In any case it would be wise for them to be issued passports.” Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 90.

¹¹⁴⁷ Forty, “History of the Training Section of S.O.E.,” 75; Stafford, *Camp X*, 31. The exchange was not entirely one-sided. While Britain shared its experience of clandestine warfare, the US shared men,

Training School 103 would not begin operations until 9 December 1941, two days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, obviating the need for neutrality.¹¹⁴⁸

Camp X, as it came to be known, was intended not only to *teach* the Americans, using the SOE training syllabus developed under Gubbins, but also to impress them and draw them into the British way of thinking about matters of irregular warfare.¹¹⁴⁹ As David Stafford notes, “Gubbins envisaged far more than the training of agents. He wanted to help shape the mental universe of those in the United States who were preparing for American entry into the shadow war.”¹¹⁵⁰ “A really efficient training school would impress the Americans,” Colonel Tommy Davies wrote after his visit to the US in October 1941. “It would also provide us with valuable propaganda in obtaining their co-operation in the realm of subversive activities.”¹¹⁵¹ Another assessment from within SOE explained:

American resentment at England’s still playing the leading part in this war is going to cause difficulties in all spheres. SOE’s best insurance against trouble of this sort is the development of close collaboration with OSS. It will be easy now, when we can be of great help to them while they are still floundering in their initial difficulties, to get them more or less on the right track. It might be very

material, and contacts in countries, such as Vichy France, to which the US had better access than Britain. See Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 390.

¹¹⁴⁸ Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 11. There is also evidence that Americans were training in Britain around the time Camp X was established. In a memo to the president on 21 December, Donovan made reference to an American “who will be returning from England where I have had him at the guerrilla school” (Donovan, quoted in Dunlop, *Donovan*, 533). Americans were trained in Britain in larger numbers after the formal entry of the US into the war. See Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 207. Gubbins recalled: “Immediately after Pearl Harbour, Donovan requested us to take some hundred of his Officers through our training courses, and they began streaming over [to Britain]. Other of them were given short courses at our training school near Toronto, a very popular event as by doing they qualified for a foreign service medal!” (“CG’s Comments on Foot’s Book,” nd, 3, Gubbins papers, 3/2/57, IWM).

¹¹⁴⁹ While the camp was officially known as Special Training School (STS) 103, it was also referred to by the name of a nearby small town, Oshawa. Having once been home to a farm, students typically called it “the Farm” or simply “the Camp.” See Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 13.

¹¹⁵⁰ Stafford, *Camp X*, 12.

¹¹⁵¹ Davies report on his US visit, 15 October 1941, in the SOE Archives; quoted in Stafford, “Intrepid,” 311.

difficult indeed, later on, when they have got the bit between their teeth, particularly if they are given the impression in these early months, that we have gone ahead without bothering about them.¹¹⁵²

Clearly, the American adoption of the British training syllabus was a good thing for the British, but it was also a good thing for the Americans, creating a “unity of doctrine and effort between OSS and SOE,” something advantageous to both sides.¹¹⁵³ Even in its details, Camp X instilled a certain British style; Major Richard M. Brooker, the camp’s first chief instructor and later commander, demanded strict attention to spit and polish. Part of this may well have been aimed at overawing the Americans with rarefied British custom, but it also instilled a sense of seriousness in the students; Brooker believed an attention to detail to be an integral part of intelligence: “if there’s anything loose in the intelligence business, you’re dead,” he explained.¹¹⁵⁴

At the camp American students received three to four weeks of intensive training. Where possible, the course would be tailored to match the future location or mission of the students; however, all students received the same basic elements, and even variations did not usually represent something heretofore unseen somewhere in the SOE training system.¹¹⁵⁵ Students at Camp X were introduced to surveillance, disguises, codes, ciphers, invisible inks, propaganda, close-quarters combat, silent killing,

¹¹⁵² Russell Miller, *Behind the Lines: The Oral History of Special Operations in World War II* (New York, 2002), 57, quoting a “secret assessment... written by a senior SOE officer after a visit to Washington in October 1942,” found in TNA: PRO, HS 7/283.

¹¹⁵³ Stafford, *Camp X*, 90.

¹¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 93. Part of Camp X’s original purpose was also to give preliminary training to those SOE agents – generally French Canadians or recent immigrants from Europe – recruited in Canada, before attending finishing schools in Britain. This function tapered off both because the number of Canadian recruits dried up fairly quickly, the immigrant communities having been thoroughly canvassed, and because the American entry into the war accelerated the number of American students. See Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 11.

¹¹⁵⁵ Stafford, *Camp X*, 92.

recruiting and running agents and adopting a cover, among other exciting topics.¹¹⁵⁶

Instruction came through a mixture of lectures and hands-on field work.

By the summer of 1942, Gubbins was beginning to think that Camp X, in its brief life, had served its purpose. In March of that year OSS had established its first training facility, Area B, in the Catoctin Mountains of Maryland, near the presidential retreat of Shangri-La.¹¹⁵⁷ As the OSS system of schools came on line, Camp X became increasingly redundant. Moreover, British security needs in Latin America – at one time a consideration – were diminishing. However, the view that Camp X had become “an expensive and unnecessary luxury,” was not quickly accepted.¹¹⁵⁸ But in light of the scheduled Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943 and the subsequent landings on the Italian peninsula, guerrilla efforts were stepped up in the Balkans and Gubbins argued that, with this new push, the staff at Camp X were needed in Britain more than in Canada. Few SOE recruits were coming out of North America now that the Americans had their own schools and Canada had largely been combed for agents. In May 1943, it was decided to close Camp X. The decision was postponed, due to a late wave of Canadian recruits for the Balkans, but in February 1944 the decision was again made to shut down the camp and in April its doors were permanently closed.¹¹⁵⁹

The school had trained more than five hundred students from SOE, SIS, COI/OSS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police,

¹¹⁵⁶ Stephenson, *British Security Coordination*, 423-24; Stafford, *Camp X.*, 93-114.

¹¹⁵⁷ Today Shangri-La is known by the name President Dwight Eisenhower gave it: Camp David. Both Area B and Camp David are located within Catoctin Mountain Park.

¹¹⁵⁸ Stafford, “Intrepid,” 312-13.

¹¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 314.

many of whom went on to train others in the ungentlemanly arts.¹¹⁶⁰ Among Camp X's graduates were men like Lieutenant Colonel Garland Williams, who had directed the New York Bureau of Narcotics, served in the Army and joined COI in the autumn of 1941. Having been trained by SOE at Camp X, he returned to the States to oversee the entire training program for SA/G.¹¹⁶¹

Influence beyond Camp X

Even after the closure of Camp X, the British continued to influence OSS. This influence was continued most concretely through the work of British instructors who served at OSS schools. Fairbairn was among those who moved to the United States, where, one historian explains, he “made a lasting impression on just about everyone he met, including OSS, who got him on more or less permanent loan from the British.”¹¹⁶²

Major Brooker, who served as Camp X's first chief instructor and commanding officer from August 1942 until March 1943, was widely credited with being the single largest contributor to the school's overall success.¹¹⁶³ Though he was “very aggressive

¹¹⁶⁰ Stephenson, *British Security Coordination*, 424; Stafford, *Camp X*, xvi.

¹¹⁶¹ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 81.

¹¹⁶² O'Donnell, *Operatives, Spies and Saboteurs*, 4. After the war, Fairbairn was employed by the new countries of Singapore and Cyprus, training their riot squads. He died 20 June 1960, at his home in England. See Cassidy, “Fairbairn in Shanghai,” 71.

¹¹⁶³ Stafford, *Camp X*, 10, 53; Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 13. Born in Paris on 23 September 1909, Brooker joined SOE's training section on 18 March 1941 and was given the rank of Captain. “Inside his large and powerful British frame,” David Stafford writes, “was an American struggling to get out.... Lacking an Oxbridge education, and with a background in European commerce, he mixed uneasily with many of the City-bred executives and professional soldiers who staffed the upper reaches of the SOE” (Stafford, *Camp X*, 10-1). Perhaps reflecting a commonly-held belief, Kim Philby wrote, “as far as I am aware [Brooker] had never lived an underground life. But after a little research he could talk to trainees as if he had never lived otherwise” (Philby, *My Silent War*, 36). This is true in the sense that Brooker lacked a military background and had only brief experience in government secret service. However, he brought with him other kinds of useful experience. His father had managed the Paris office of Thomas Cook's travel agency and young Brooker, had learned French as his first language. In the 1930s he worked as a

and sometimes not too diplomatic,” gaining “many detractors within OSS,” Brooker also gained many supporters and was frequently described as a natural salesman and “a brilliant and convincing lecturer.”¹¹⁶⁴ After leaving Camp X, Brooker was seconded to OSS as Advisory Director of Training. One official history explains:

His contribution to the subsequent reorganizations and the consolidation of training programs was very important – if not the determining factor.... He visualized a flexible, yet standardized, type of training to accommodate all needs.... The plan was solidly founded on the British experience. OSS had no tradition or practical experience in the field at this time.¹¹⁶⁵

As another history explains, “during 1943, S&T continued to lean heavily on the British for assistance by sending potential instructors to British schools and by borrowing instructors from the British for varying periods of time.”¹¹⁶⁶ The OSS Maritime School, located in Area D, a wooded section of the Potomac across from Quantico, began its work in February 1942 under a British officer on loan from the Royal Navy.¹¹⁶⁷

In addition to the British instructors who served at OSS schools, the OSS’s official *History of the Schools & Training Branch* explains that almost all of OSS own instructors first “trained in the Canadian SOE school near Toronto [Camp X] in a month-

traveling export salesman for Nestlé; when the Spanish Civil War broke out he was in Barcelona and to him fell the task of getting the company’s blocked currency to Switzerland. “We got [the Spanish pesetas] out through the Pyrenees, using couriers and clandestine routes.... It took volumes of false papers and plenty of imagination” (Stafford, *Camp X*, 12). When World War II broke out he joined the Field Security Police and attended a course at the Intelligence Staff College at Matlock, “where his forthright and distinctly unmilitary attitudes to authority brought him into conflict with the commandant” (Stafford, *Camp X*, 12). This was followed by a stint at the rough Tyneside docks, where he learned about interrogating and searching suspects. Gubbins recognized in him a kindred spirit and recruited him into SOE.

¹¹⁶⁴ Cassidy, *History of Schools and Training Branch*, 73; Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, 143.

¹¹⁶⁵ Cassidy, *History of Schools and Training Branch*, 65. After the war, Brooker was awarded the American Legion of Merit (see Stafford, *Camp X*, 10).

¹¹⁶⁶ History of S&T [draft], Record Group 226, Entry 146, Box 49, Folder 67, National Archives (College Park, MD). This passage was adopted, with minor changes, for the S&T section of the *War Report of the OSS*. See Roosevelt, ed., 232.

¹¹⁶⁷ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 81.

long course... The Canadian school furnished lecture syllabi which S&T adapted for use at all the training areas.”¹¹⁶⁸ The course of instruction for OSS Basic School, training common to both intelligence and special operations personnel, covered 19 topics, of which 17 unambiguously correspond to major topics of the SOE syllabus; moreover, only one major section of the SOE syllabus – operations, including passive resistance and subversion of troops – is not covered by the corresponding OSS syllabus. In other words, the two are virtually identical.¹¹⁶⁹ Likewise, among the archival papers of the OSS can be found hand-written notes which clearly follow, sometimes verbatim, the SOE lecture outlines.¹¹⁷⁰

In addition, the British supplied OSS’s earliest classroom demonstration devices, including “incendiary pencils, fog-signals, lead delays, limpets, escape files, concealed compasses and models of ships and aircraft.”¹¹⁷¹ In addition, when Camp X was closed in the autumn of 1944, its entire stock of teaching aids and equipment was passed to OSS for use in the growing OSS school system.

¹¹⁶⁸ Cassidy, *History of the Schools & Training Branch*, 71. Cf. Forty, “History of the Training Section of S.O.E.,” 75.

¹¹⁶⁹ “Basic SI-SO Course of Instruction,” Exhibit A, Cassidy, ed., *History of the Schools & Training Branch*, 169-71; Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, 31. Both SOE and OSS modified their training programs throughout the war; the SOE syllabus cited here is from February 1944, while the OSS syllabus is from March 1943. The comparison is imperfect, but sufficient to demonstrate the very strong similarities. The two topics not directly paralleled in the SOE program were anonymous letter writing and map reading.

¹¹⁷⁰ See untitled notes, Record Group 226, Entry 146, Box 65, Folder 890. The notes here unambiguously correspond to six British lectures: Rigden, ed., *SOE Syllabus*, “Objects and Methods of Irregular Warfare” [A.1], 35-37; “Propaganda – Introductory” [C.1], 192-95; “Propaganda Presentation: Fundamental Principles” [C.3], 200-1; “Reproduction and Distribution – II” [C.6], 211-213; “Objects and Methods of Counter-Espionage” [A.6], 61-63; and “Appendix: Recruiting” [A.12.13.15], 96-97. There are no notes in this collection which do not correspond to a British lecture.

¹¹⁷¹ Stephenson, ed., *British Security Coordination*, 425. Cf. Cassidy, *History of the Schools & Training Branch*, 71.

American Affinity for the British

In one of his earliest statements of guerrilla policy, Donovan argued to Roosevelt in a memorandum of 22 December 1941 that guerrilla warfare should have two facets: “1. Setting up of small groups working as bands under definite leaders. 2. The establishment of guerrilla forces military in nature, in order to secure cohesion and successfully carry out a plan of campaign.”¹¹⁷² In the same memorandum Donovan expresses his concern that “the preparation and conditioning of those people and those territories where the issue is to be fought” has been neglected, suggesting that the partisan bands mentioned in his first point would consist primarily of indigenous resistance forces.¹¹⁷³ As the *War Report of the OSS* explains, from its inception, “SA/G was to operate in support of local area commands. Consequently, the Washington headquarters did not have direct operational control over its missions in the field.” Moreover, “the organization and administration of the Branch was along military lines and its first personnel were drawn from the armed services, principally the Army.”¹¹⁷⁴ In these two points we see the influence of SOE and Colin Gubbins, who argued repeatedly for the use of local forces and their militarization (if not strict inclusion within the military).¹¹⁷⁵

The remainder of the same memo of 22 December offers views which had been articulated by a number of thinkers, including, but not limited, to Colin Gubbins.

¹¹⁷² Memorandum No. 94, 22 December 1941, Donovan to Roosevelt, in Robert E. Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak – GI Dagger: Marines of the OSS* (Quantico, VA, 1979), Appendix A, 236.

¹¹⁷³ Ibid. *The War Report of the OSS* comes to the same conclusion, using the phrase “small bands of local origin” when paraphrasing Donovan’s proposal (Roosevelt, ed., 80).

¹¹⁷⁴ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 80.

¹¹⁷⁵ See, for example, *AGW*, 1 § 4, 22 § 83; *PLH*, 4 § 6, 13 § 14.

Donovan writes, for example, that “it is unnecessary to stress that modern large-sized armies are greatly dependent on roads, railways, and signal communications, and the creation of supply and munitions dumps.... These communications constitute a desirable target both of the military and sabotage type.” Likewise, he argues that “the whole art of guerrilla warfare lies in striking the enemy where he least expects it and yet where he is most vulnerable.”¹¹⁷⁶ Considering his extensive contact with SOE, the most plausible explanation is that Donovan received these views, at least in part, through the hands of Colin Gubbins.¹¹⁷⁷

This emphasis on both local populations and the need for militarily valuable partisans may also be found in the training curriculum for OSS’s Operational Groups (OG’s), units of foreign language-speaking soldiers created on 23 December 1942.¹¹⁷⁸

Their stated mission was

to create Guerilla Units capable of operating in various occupied countries; these units are recruited from the various nationals and first generation Americans.... *They will be militarily organized, disciplined and trained to go into the country of their origin to organize, and instruct, local resistance groups into effective Guerrilla units.*¹¹⁷⁹

Although the methods of the OG units differed from those of conventional military forces, that their work was directly complementary was made clear: these units existed

¹¹⁷⁶ Memorandum No. 94, 22 December 1941, Donovan to Roosevelt, in Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak – GI Dagger*, Appendix A, 236.

¹¹⁷⁷ Cf. *AGW*, 20 § 75; *PLH*, 1 § 2a, 2 § 2.

¹¹⁷⁸ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 223.

¹¹⁷⁹ Outline of Training Programs at Areas “A” and “F” for Operational Groups, 1, Record Group 226, Entry 146, Box 264, National Archives (College Park, MD). Emphasis added.

“to harass the occupying forces; by so doing they would render effective assistance to the main effort.”¹¹⁸⁰

In addition, the basic shape of OSS training followed the British model. American agents attended a Preliminary School for about two weeks, where they learned fieldcraft and weapons, and at which their taste for alcohol was carefully observed. Next they moved to two weeks at a Basic School, the American version of SOE’s Paramilitary Schools, where students practiced sabotage and raids. Then it was off to an Advanced School (equivalent to SOE’s Finishing Schools), where they learned to operate under cover, and finally to Parachute School. Additional OSS schools focused on maritime operations, industrial sabotage, and particular overseas locations, filled the role of SOE’s Specialist Schools.¹¹⁸¹

Like their British counterparts, American students of sabotage also studied the basics of intelligence. As one OSS history explains,

in COI, the tendency for [intelligence and operations] to find considerable value in each others’ training courses had already appeared. This tendency probably can be ascribed to the influence of the British SOE training. It will be remembered that the British SOE combined in one organization both paramilitary and intelligence functions.... OSS men trained in British schools, either in Canada or England, received a rounded picture of operations in modern war and returned to OSS imbued with the idea that OSS students should receive training in the many facets of subversive operations.¹¹⁸²

While Britain had a dedicated intelligence organization – the Secret Intelligence Service – SOE nevertheless continued to straddle the line between intelligence and military

¹¹⁸⁰ Outline of Training Programs at Areas “A” and “F” for Operational Groups, 1, Record Group 226, Entry 146, Box 264, National Archives.

¹¹⁸¹ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 81, 236-37.

¹¹⁸² History of S&T [draft], Record Group 226, Entry 146, Box 49, Folder 67, National Archives (College Park, MD).

operations, occupying a bureaucratic gray zone that remains difficult to demarcate even in the present day. This ambiguity was in turn inherited by OSS and manifested in its training, which frequently united intelligence and special operations.

Relative Influence

OSS and its agents were certainly influenced by a variety of experiences and ideas pertaining to irregular warfare. *The War Report of the OSS* explains:

The problem of training personnel for... OSS was a complex one.... There was no precedent in America for such an undertaking and it was necessary at first to piece together various fragments of seemingly relevant knowledge from other agencies of the Government, to borrow instruction techniques from the British, and to adapt certain technical aspects of orthodox military training to the probable conditions under which guerrilla units and resistance organizers might operate.¹¹⁸³

As the aforementioned cases demonstrate, the unprecedented nature of OSS's work has been exaggerated, just as SOE's has. The *War Report's* own admission that orthodox military training had some bearing on guerrilla problems acknowledges, to some extent, that past models could be utilized.

The above passage from the *War Report* also highlights the fact that the influence upon OSS was not monocausal: it included the British example as well as American sources, both civilian and military. Thus, the question is not which of these played a role in shaping American thinking on irregular warfare – they all did – but which played the *preeminent* role. While individual Americans were influenced by their experiences of places like the US-Mexican border, it is difficult to make the case that, with regard to

¹¹⁸³ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 231.

doctrine and tactics, America's clandestine warriors were more influenced by their own background than by British tutelage.

Historian Rhondri Jefferys-Jones observes: "It could be argued that, while the Americans did have a tradition, they kept on forgetting about it and having to start from scratch, while the British remembered intelligence lessons from the past."¹¹⁸⁴ Jefferys-Jones argues that this line of thinking exaggerates the extent of an ongoing British clandestine tradition; instead, he contends, British secret services only managed to get themselves organized in the late 1930s, just in time for war.¹¹⁸⁵ Jefferys-Jones's argument pertains more to intelligence than sabotage or guerrilla warfare, but it is an accurate description of GS(R) and Section D. Nevertheless, it is worth making an additional distinction: the US had a tradition of irregular warfare but failed, by and large, to draw upon it when the time came. Although Britain stood in danger of also ignoring its own irregular tradition, it was recovered and codified through the efforts of J. C. F. Holland and Colin Gubbins.

The JEDBURGH Teams

An appropriate coda to the story of joint Anglo-American training in clandestine comes in the form of the JEDBURGH teams. The idea of the teams apparently came from Gubbins himself, who referred to them as "my pet project," and proposed in July 1942 "the dropping behind of the enemy lines, in cooperation with an Allied invasion of the

¹¹⁸⁴ Jefferys-Jones, "Role of British Intelligence," 9.

¹¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 9; Wesley K. Wark, *The Ultimate Enemy: British Intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939* (Oxford, 1986), 240.

Continent, of small parties of officers and men to raise and arm the civilian population to carry out guerrilla activities.”¹¹⁸⁶ The concept received further consideration at the SPARTAN exercises conducted in March 1943 in southern England, war games designed to simulate and study plans for the Allied re-occupation of Western Europe. Eleven SOE teams were dropped behind enemy lines in this exercise, and managed to contact and organize the simulated resistance cells with considerable success and limited expenditure. The exercise convinced the British Army that SOE could provide reliable support, not only in *occupied* Europe, but also in the process of *liberating* it.¹¹⁸⁷

In their final form, the JEDBURGHs consisted of three members: an SOE or OSS officer, a French officer, and an American, British, or French radio operator. They would be parachuted into France immediately following the Operation OVERLORD landings at Normandy in June 1944, to support the French resistance and the Allied agents already in place. Thus, members were required not only to be of excellent intelligence and skilled with small arms, but also fluent in French.¹¹⁸⁸

¹¹⁸⁶ Gubbins to Foot, 31 January 1964, 1-2, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM; Gubbins to Chief of SOE Security Section, 6 July 1942, quoted in the *War Diary of the Special Operations Branch of the Office of Strategic Services, London*, vol. 4, book 1, i, Record Group 226, National Archives (College Park, MD), published in facsimile as Bradley F. Smith, ed., *OSS Jedburgh Teams I* (New York, 1989). David Stafford also attributes the concept of the JEDBURGHs to Gubbins. See *Secret Agent: The True Story of the Covert War against Hitler* (New York, 2001), 212. Foot suggests that it owed something to GIDEON Force, commanded by Wingate in Abyssinia. See Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 190.

¹¹⁸⁷ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 603; *War Diary of the Special Operations Branch*, vol. 4, book 1, x-xii, published as Smith, ed., *OSS Jedburgh Teams I*.

¹¹⁸⁸ Roosevelt, ed., *War Report of the OSS*, 210; “Personnel Rqmts SOE/SO D-day Plan,” 29 Sept. 1943, quoted in *War Diary of the Special Operations Branch*, vol. 4, book 1, xviii, published as Smith, ed., *OSS Jedburgh Teams I*; David Schoenbrun, *Soldiers of the Night: The Story of the French Resistance* (New York, 1980), 331. While 75 teams were designated for France, six teams each were also created for the Netherlands and Belgium, with personnel from those countries participating. As it turned out, events in Belgium moved too quickly to drop any teams there, though seven were dropped into the Netherlands. See Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 604.

Although all these men were in uniform, unlike many SOE and OSS agents, they function in accordance with the well-established doctrine of organizing and aiding local forces. As Gubbins had written in 1939, “The culminating state of guerilla warfare should always be to produce in the field large formations of guerillas, well-armed and well-trained, which are able to take a direct part in the fighting by attacks on suitable hostile formations and objects in direct conjunction with the operations of regular troops.”¹¹⁸⁹ The JEDBURGH teams were designed to help do just that. As the *Secret War Report of the OSS* explains, they were “to help in the coordination of resistance activities with the needs of the invading armies, to train men at new resistance centers following the landings and to direct the delivery of additional supplies by air.”¹¹⁹⁰ Likewise, Gubbins observed in 1939 that

it may... frequently be advantageous to appoint certain serving army officers for duty with guerillas... to serve as specially qualified staff officers or assistants to guerilla commanders. In such cases, it will often happen that the serving officer works hand and glove with the titular leader, the latter, owing to his local connections, etc., ensuring the cohesion of his guerillas, while the former supplies to the partnership the technical knowledge necessary for the most effective direction and co-ordination of the guerillas’ operations.¹¹⁹¹

That is precisely what the JEDBURGHs did, organizing and arming recruits, participating in operations, liaising with British and American forces, and advising resistance leaders,

¹¹⁸⁹ AGW, 1 § 4.

¹¹⁹⁰ Brown, ed., *Secret War Report of the OSS*, 389. Cf. Stafford, *Secret Agent*, 213. The JEDBURGH syllabus elaborates somewhat upon this description of the mission, explaining that JEDBURGHs “can fill any one of the following roles:-

- (a) Organise and lead raiding parties varying in size from 5 to 10 men up to a maximum of 100.
- (b) Organise the reception of stores and equipment for the personnel they recruit.
- (c) Organise acts of sabotage by small bodies of men working independently.
- (d) Secure and pass on information about enemy troop movements, location of vital points, etc.
- (e) Spreading of rumor, and fifth column work.
- (f) Preparing the civilian population for the arrival of Allied forces” (Forty, “History of the Training Section of S.O.E.,” 196).

¹¹⁹¹ AGW, 7 § 18.

but leaving command of resistance operations in French hands.¹¹⁹² Indeed, the JEDBURGH teams themselves were placed under the operational control of the General Staff of the French Forces of the Interior (*État-Major des Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur* or EMFFI).¹¹⁹³

The JEDBURGHs received a pared-down version of the usual training received by SOE and OSS agents. This included parachuting and making contact with friendly elements (usually in the form of a “reception committee”), as well as radio operation, close combat, weapons training (including foreign weapons), and demolitions. In addition, JEDBURGH training placed special emphasis on “preventing demolition of main bridges, etc.” by retreating German forces, a task of particular concern in the period immediately following the Allied invasion.¹¹⁹⁴ Omitted were those topics pertaining to operating under cover, since the JEDBURGHs would land in uniform a relatively short distance in advance of the Allied forces. Some training was received by American elements of the teams before they were sent to Britain, where training was completed at Milton Hall, Peterborough.¹¹⁹⁵

¹¹⁹² Brown, ed., *Secret War Report of the OSS*, 403.

¹¹⁹³ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 605; Foot, *SOE in France*, 33.

¹¹⁹⁴ “Preliminary Proposals for ‘Jedburgh’ Training,” 21 July 1942, Record Group 225, Entry 146, Box 266, Folder 3656, National Archives. Cf. Forty, “History of the Training Section of S.O.E.,” 59-60, 196; *War Diary of the Special Operations Branch*, vol. 4, book 1, xxiii, published as Smith, ed., *OSS Jedburgh Teams I.*

¹¹⁹⁵ Forty, “History of the Training Section of S.O.E.,” 59; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 604; *War Diary of the Special Operations Branch*, vol. 4, book 1, 1-3, published as Smith, ed., *OSS Jedburgh Teams I.* At the time, Peterborough was part of Northamptonshire, though today it belongs to Cambridgeshire. Prior to the completion of this facility, JEDBURGH personnel began their training at regular SOE schools. Parachute training was conducted at STS 51, the SOE Parachute Training School at RAF Ringway, outside Manchester.

In total, ninety-three JEDBURGH teams were parachuted into Europe.¹¹⁹⁶ Their activities there have been well recorded, though the way they were used and the value of their operations remain open to debate.¹¹⁹⁷ As one of the end products of Special Operations Executive's doctrine and training, however, they are undeniably the product of the lessons codified by Colin Gubbins.

¹¹⁹⁶ Brown, ed., *Secret War Report of the OSS*, 403; Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 604; Foot, *Resistance: European Resistance to Nazism, 1940-1945* (New York, 1977), 247. *The Secret War Report of the OSS* places the total figure at 92.

¹¹⁹⁷ A sample of the literature on the JEDBURGHs includes: Aaron Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets* (Novato, CA, 1986); Colin Beavan, *Operation Jedburgh: D-Day and America's First Shadow War* (New York, 2006); Roger Ford, *Steel from the Sky: The Jedburgh Raiders, France 1944* (London, 2004); Will Irwin, *The Jedburghs: The Secret History of the Allied Special Forces, France 1944* (New York, 2005); Tommy Macpherson, *Behind Enemy Lines Autobiography of Britain's Most Decorated Living War Hero* (Edinburgh, 2010); John K. Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty: An American Soldier in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1991). The debate about whether or not the JEDBURGHs were dropped into France too late was well known in the decades after the Second World War. Gubbins wrote to Foot in 1964, "I am in entire agreement with what most of the Jedburghs said, that they were dropped too late, or could anyway have been dropped more quickly early after D Day. Unfortunately these operations went out of my control, as you know, when Koenig took over Emmfi about 1st July. In spite of this I sent for A.D.E. shortly after and told him that my pet project, the Jedburghs[,] had been absolutely wasted by not being pushed in at once. Although I no longer had control of them. However, as I say I do not mind your criticism in the slightest except that I did my best to get them in long before they actually went" (Gubbins to Foot, 31 January 1964, 1-2, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM).

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The value of sabotage and subversion has been hotly debated. As noted in the introduction, some historians, such as John Keegan, have concluded that that SOE was expensive and ineffective.¹¹⁹⁸ Assessments of Anglo-American clandestine relations have likewise sometimes been scathing. Anthony Cave Brown – no fan of Bill Donovan – argues that at the end of the war “nobody... stepped forward from the grimy London headquarters of SIS to speak well of Donovan.”¹¹⁹⁹

When attempting an overall assessment of the value of SOE and its work, it is necessary to weigh the costs against the benefits. The Second World War was a massive conflict, with millions of men under arms and nearly unimaginable quantities of war materiel expended. Casualties give some sense of scale: Britain lost 264,000 servicemen, the British Empire 125,000, and the United States 300,000. The numbers of German, Japanese, and Soviet servicemen and women killed – not to mention civilians – runs into the millions for each country.¹²⁰⁰ In a war of such staggering scale, the clandestine services were never very large. As of 29 May 1944 the number of SOE personnel in occupied territories stood at only 1,599 in Europe and 352 in the Far East,

¹¹⁹⁸ Keegan, *Second World War*, 483-85.

¹¹⁹⁹ Brown, introduction to *The Secret War Report of the OSS*, 7.

¹²⁰⁰ R. A. C. Parker, *The Second World War* (Oxford, 1989), 281-85. Ernest and Trevor Dupuy give similar figures: 397,762 military dead for Britain and the Empire, 292,100 for the US, 2,850,000 for Germany, 1,506,000 for Japan, and 7,500,000 for the Soviet Union. They estimate a total of 15,000,000 military dead for the entire Second World War, whereas the First World War cost 8,020,780 military dead. Nevertheless, the greater discrepancy between the two wars comes with regard to civilian deaths: 6,642,633 in the first conflict, but an astonishing 26-34,000,000 in the second. See R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 3500 B.C. to the Present*, 2nd edition (New York, 1986), 990, 1198.

less than 2,000 total.¹²⁰¹ The entire force of SOE around the globe on that date consisted of only 1,847 officers, 6,471 other ranks and 1,558 FANYs, a total of 9,876 men and women.¹²⁰²

The materiel consumed by SOE was quite small; the sum total of its industrial sabotage attacks in France utilized about 3,000 lbs. of explosives, the weight of a single large bomb dropped by the RAF. Nearly 100 factories, mines, and other industrial installations were damaged or destroyed by these sabotage efforts.¹²⁰³ Likewise, SOE's use of the resources of other services was slim. In 1941 a mere 0.13% of RAF Bomber Command's sorties were for SOE purposes. That proportion grew as the war progressed, and by 1945, when Bomber Command flew more sorties for SOE than in the previous four years combined, that proportion had risen to 11.47%. Still, for the five year period from 1941 through 1945, only 4.13% of Bomber Command's sorties were for SOE.¹²⁰⁴ Any argument based on what *might have been* should be treated with caution, but it is difficult to make the case that this small use of resources could have made a substantial contribution to the war effort in other hands.¹²⁰⁵

¹²⁰¹ "Personnel Employed by S.O.E.," Table II: British Officer and O.R. Personnel in Occupied Territories, TNA: PRO, HS 7/1.

¹²⁰² "Personnel Employed by S.O.E.," Table I: Home and Overseas Establishments, HS 7/1. SOE's total personnel peaked in September 1944, just shy of 10,000. See Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 197.

¹²⁰³ Foot, *SOE in France*, 436, 505-17.

¹²⁰⁴ Table I: Comparison of Total R.A.F. Bomber Command Sorties from U.K. with Those Carried Out for S.O.E., HS 7/1. The proportions for the five years in question were: 0.13% (1941); 0.68% (1942), 2.49% (1943), 3.33% (1944), 11.47% (1945). Bomber Command flew a total of 369,073 sorties, of which 15,243 were for SOE. It should be noted, however, that this figures only apply to British sorties from the UK; for operations elsewhere SOE received sorties from formations other than Bomber Command, including from USAAF aircraft. Still, proportions elsewhere were likely along similar lines.

¹²⁰⁵ Foot, *European Resistance*, 313-14.

Meanwhile, there is ample evidence that the forces of resistance and the clandestine services that supported them made a significant contribution to the ultimate Allied victory. The British Chiefs of Staff estimated that 14 German divisions were tied down conducting internal security operations in Yugoslavia due to partisan activities. Another three or four divisions in Albania “were contained by partisans only.”¹²⁰⁶ The Chiefs concluded that “S.O.E. activity forced the Germans to retain considerable forces in areas of no immediate military value to us. These forces could have been used elsewhere and were contained by economical expenditure of effort.”¹²⁰⁷ The Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) concluded that “without the organisation, communications, material, training and leadership which SOE supplied (with the assistance of OSS...), ‘resistance’ would have been of no military value. In DENMARK and HOLLAND, indeed, there might have been no resistance at all but for the work of SOE.”¹²⁰⁸ Case studies of clandestine operations in two areas – Normandy and Burma – highlight the contribution made by resistance forces and their Allied interlocutors, both British and American.

Normandy

Both SOE and OSS had agents in France prior to the Allied landings at Normandy on 6 June 1944. These men and women, augmented by JEDBURGH teams and

¹²⁰⁶ Chiefs of Staff (45) 665 (0), quoted in “Numbers of Germans Tied Down by the Action of Resistance in Europe,” 1, HS 7/1.

¹²⁰⁷ Chiefs of Staff (45) 665 (0), quoted in “Numbers of Germans Tied Down by the Action of Resistance in Europe,” 1, HS 7/1.

¹²⁰⁸ Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), “The Value of SOE Operations in the Supreme Commander’s Sphere,” 13 July 1945, 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/36, IWM.

OSS Operational Groups (OGs) immediately after the landings, helped arm, organize, and lead members of the resistance. OSS alone dropped 20,000 tons of weapons, ammunition, and supplies to French partisans.¹²⁰⁹ On the night of 5/6 June, the BBC broadcast the code phrase, “The wine is red.” It was the signal for the resistance to strike.¹²¹⁰ These men and women proceeded to conduct sabotage with the primary purpose of preventing German reinforcements from reaching the beachhead. As a result, Allied forces were able to break out of their initial positions and push deep into France.

Nearly a thousand rail lines in France were cut by partisans the night of 5/6 June 1944.¹²¹¹ More than two thousand additional rail lines were cut over the course of the next three weeks.¹²¹² SOE estimated that, on average, German forces south of the River Loire were delayed two days in their move north to Normandy. In some cases the delay was much longer. The 2nd SS Panzer Division was delayed two weeks as it fought partisans on its journey from Toulouse in the south to St. Lô, in Normandy. In the central French region of Corrèze, 5,000 German troops had to be deployed against partisans in June 1944 – 5,000 soldiers who otherwise would have been sent to Normandy. The following month the Germans had to redeploy elements of the 9th Armored Division and 157th Infantry Division against resistance fighters in the Vercors

¹²⁰⁹ Dunlop, *Donovan*, 438.

¹²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 439.

¹²¹¹ Foot, *European Resistance*, 315. Foot argues that the French resistance was of far greater value in stopping German movements than were bombing raids. While air attacks destroyed all but one bridge across the Seine below Paris in May and early June 1944, and all but one across the Loire below Gien, German forces had learned from their experience in Russia to always have field bridging equipment on hand. It was because of attacks by French partisans that the Germans were unable to use it to good effect.

¹²¹² Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 154-55.

plateau in eastern France, and the 11th Panzer Division against partisans along the Dordogne River in southwest France.¹²¹³

Even after the initial Allied breakout from Normandy, the resistance continued to show its worth. One column of 20,000 German troops fleeing from southwest France found that it could not travel directly east, as it wanted, since partisans controlled the roads beyond Poitiers. Instead, it was forced to turn north into the Loire valley, where 18,000 of its number were taken prisoner.¹²¹⁴

One might justly ask to what extent SOE or OSS were responsible for these successes. “How much Resistance was mobilized by the ‘Jedburghs,’ which would otherwise have been ineffective?” Mackenzie asks. “There is no means of measuring this: but practically every ‘Jedburgh’ which was in the field for any length of time found much to do on the lines intended for it – reconciling factions, suggesting targets, bringing supplies, instilling good guerilla doctrine. They were certainly a reinforcement to Resistance out of proportion to their numbers.”¹²¹⁵ In addition to delaying German movements, SHAEF noted that organized resistance also aided regular forces

by disrupting enemy telecommunications... by enabling allied formations to advance with greater speed through being able to dispense with many normal military precautions, e.g. flank protection and mopping up, by furnishing military intelligence, [and] by providing organised groups of men in liberated areas able to undertake static guard duties at short notice and without further training.¹²¹⁶

¹²¹³ “Numbers of Germans Tied Down by the Action of Resistance in Europe,” pp. 1-2, HS 7/1; SHAEF, “The Value of SOE Operations in the Supreme Commander’s Sphere,” 13 July 1945, 1, Gubbins papers 3/2/36, IWM; Foot, *SOE in France*, 440-41.

¹²¹⁴ “Numbers of Germans Tied Down by the Action of Resistance in Europe,” 1-2, HS 7/1. Although not quoting directly, the document cites Chiefs of Staff (45) 146.

¹²¹⁵ Mackenzie, *Secret History of SOE*, 606.

¹²¹⁶ SHAEF, “The Value of SOE Operations in the Supreme Commander’s Sphere,” 13 July 1945, 1-2, Gubbins papers 3/2/36, IWM. Similar assessments of resistance value were made for other campaigns in

Moreover, SHAEF recognized the larger role played by the resistance when “setting the oppressed peoples at loggerheads with the occupying power.” This opposition not only made it difficult for the Germans to exploit fully their conquered territories, but it also fostered the will to resist. “This morale factor was, of course, greatly enhanced by the feeling of support from and contact with the Allies.... As resistance met with success, national self-respect and confidence were restored, and the desire and ability to resume responsibilities after liberation revived.”¹²¹⁷ This is no small accomplishment considering that SOE was never as large as a single infantry division.¹²¹⁸

Gubbins’s vision of subversive forces working in close conjunction with regular forces was certainly achieved in France. In the days following Germany’s defeat, General Dwight Eisenhower, overall commander of Allied forces in northwestern Europe, wrote a letter of thanks to Colin Gubbins. In it, Eisenhower observed that “in no previous war, and in no other theatre during this war, have resistance forces been so closely harnessed to the main military effort.”¹²¹⁹

France. General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, who commanded the invasion of southern France, Operation DRAGOON, estimated that the German army operated at only 40% of its full fighting efficiency due to resistance attacks. See Foot, *SOE in France*, 442.

¹²¹⁷ SHAEF, “The Value of SOE Operations in the Supreme Commander’s Sphere,” 13 July 1945, 1-2, Gubbins papers 3/2/36, IWM. Foot notes that attacks by communist partisans in France, although successful in assassinating German occupiers, resulted in horrific reprisals against the civilian population, reprisals that the communists dismissed as “precipitating a revolutionary situation.” In contrast, “many of SOE’s sabotage coups were unnerving to German morale in a more sophisticated way, less prodigal of lives” (*SOE in France*, 439).

¹²¹⁸ Foot does acknowledge, however, that the general economic damage caused by sabotage in the occupied countries – as distinct from the specific sabotage focused on military goals related to invasion and liberation – remains open to discussion. See Foot, *European Resistance*, 312-13; *SOE in France*, 434-35.

¹²¹⁹ Dwight Eisenhower to Gubbins, 31 May 1945, Gubbins papers 3/2/36, IWM.

Burma

The Empire of Japan invaded British Burma in January 1942, overrunning the entire country in a few months. However, members of the native Burma Rifles who either did not retreat to India with the main British force, or who returned to Burma after having done so, formed the core of organized resistance. Among such resistance forces, the ethnic hill peoples – particularly the Karens and Kachins, though others as well – predominated.¹²²⁰ These men formed themselves into guerrilla units that not only harassed the Japanese by attacking patrols and supply columns but also rescued downed Allied airmen.¹²²¹

SOE's Burma Section, which worked closely with the Karen forces in southeastern Burma, was led by John Ritchie Gardiner, a man who had worked in forestry and served on the Municipal Council of Rangoon before the war. As historian Louis Allen explains, the Burma Section's goal was "to contact nuclei of local resistance against the occupying enemy force, assess their potential, arm them if it was considered that an armed rising would assist the returning British, and lead and control the rising when it occurred."¹²²² The Karens represented just such a local resistance.

Several months before the Japanese invasion, Noel Stevenson, an Assistant Superintendent of the Burma Frontier Service, began organizing and training guerrillas.

¹²²⁰ "SOE in the Far East, 1941-1945," 2, TNA: PRO, HS 7/1; William Joseph Slim, Viscount Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (London, 1957), 119. Guerrilla warfare came easily to the Karens, whose traditional methods of fighting involved "forays secretly organized and carefully executed against their enemies.... The warriors so timed their march as to reach the vicinity of the foe's village after dark, distributed their force around the unsuspecting inhabitants before dawn, and sallied forth with a great shout as soon as it was light" (Harry Ignatius Marshall, *The Karen People of Burma: A Study in Anthropology and Ethnology* [Columbus, OH, 1922], 152, 156).

¹²²¹ Gerald Astor, *The Jungle War: Mavericks, Marauders, and Madmen in the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II* (Hoboken, NJ, 2004), 231, 233.

¹²²² Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War, 1941-1945* (New York, 1984), 575.

Major Hugh Seagrim was recruited by Stevenson and organized a guerrilla force of Karens, built around a core of fifty-five policemen. By April 1942 Seagrim, now living and dressing like a Karen, and his guerrilla force in the hills were totally cut off from the British Army, a problem only rectified when SOE was able to drop a radio and agent to him in October the following year. So much did the Japanese fear Seagrim and his Karen force – and their proximity to the roads and rail lines connecting Rangoon to Mandalay – that a punitive expedition (*tōbatsu*) was launched into the Karen Hills. To end the egregious violence against innocent civilians, Seagrim voluntarily gave himself up and was executed by a Japanese court. However, his Karen guerrillas remained in contact with SOE and also with elements of the collaborationist Burma National Army, including its Karen battalion, which became resentful of the Japanese and their false promises of independence.¹²²³

In 1945 the British XIV Army returned to Burma and, after the capture of Mandalay, began pursuing Japanese forces southward. Historian Charles Cruickshank describes the problem the geography imposed, and the solution SOE and the Karen resisters offered:

The Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers run parallel in the centre of the country, north to south.... The Irrawaddy is flanked to the west by the Arakan Yomas Range, and the Sittang to the east by the Karen Hills. It was down these valleys that the XIV Army proposed to drive the Japanese forces; but since the mountains precluded outflanking movements on any great scale, the enemy would have

¹²²³ “SOE in the Far East, 1941-1945,” 5, TNA: PRO, HS 7/1; Allen, *Burma: The Longest War*, 576-77; Charles Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East* (Oxford, 1983), 166; Michael Hickey, *The Unforgettable Army: Slim’s XIVth Army in Burma* (Tunbridge Wells, UK, 1992), 150-51; Ian Morrison, *Grandfather Longlegs: The Life and Gallant Death of Major H. P. Seagrim, G.C., D.S.O., M.B.E.* (London, 1947), 74-159. The Burma National Army (BNA) was raised by the Japanese to defend the puppet state they established in Burma. However, as the war progressed, the BNA became increasingly dissatisfied with its Japanese overlords and eventually switched sides.

every opportunity of making an orderly withdrawal, and re-forming troops.... [SOE] was to make that orderly withdrawal impossible.¹²²⁴

“I gave the word, ‘Up the Karens!’” General William Slim, commander of XIV Army recalled in his memoirs.¹²²⁵ And up the Karens rose. Operation CHARACTER deployed teams of British officers and nearly 12,000 irregulars, all in radio communication with SOE.¹²²⁶ Over 12,000 weapons were supplied to these Karen levies by air drop.¹²²⁷

Following the long-standing British practice of empowering traditional Karen leadership, these forces were raised through local Karen chiefs.¹²²⁸ Four Special Groups – north to south, *Walrus*, *Otter*, *Hyena*, *Mongoose* – gathered numerous sub-parties, making life difficult for the Japanese. *Walrus* alone raised more than 2,000 men in its first three weeks on the ground. General Slim recalled: “Japanese, driving hard through the night down jungle roads... ran into ambush after ambush; bridges were blown ahead of them, their foraging parties massacred, their sentries stalked, their staff cars shot up.”¹²²⁹ The Karen guerrillas were so effective that in the month of June 1945 they inflicted more casualties than the vastly larger regular forces of XIV Army. Total casualties inflicted by CHARACTER were 10,964 enemy dead, 644 wounded and 18

¹²²⁴ Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, 174.

¹²²⁵ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 485.

¹²²⁶ “SOE in the Far East, 1941-1945,” 5, TNA: PRO, HS 7/1; Allen, *Burma: The Longest War*, 578-9; Ronald Lewin, *Slim: The Standardbearer* (Hamden, CT, 1976), 253. Guerrillas were raised by SOE Special Groups, “patrols of twenty to twenty-five men... trained for offensive action,” and supported by JEDBURGH teams (Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, 20, 175n, 186). “There were misgivings in the SOE Council in London about using these Special Groups on the ground that their task was not genuine special operations; but Gubbins argued that they were the best means of capitalizing on the contacts which [SOE] had made earlier in the Karen Hills” (186n).

¹²²⁷ Morrison, *Grandfather Longlegs*, 193-201. This was more than four times the amount of weapons supplied to the Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League (AFPFL), an amalgamation of several ethnic groups from the majority Bamar ethnic group.

¹²²⁸ Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, 188.

¹²²⁹ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 485.

captured.¹²³⁰ SOE's total losses in Burma were a mere 303 officers, NCOs, and native levies.¹²³¹ In addition to its own operations, CHARACTER supplied valuable intelligence to the RAF; by the time Allied forces were closing in on Rangoon, CHARACTER was supplying virtually all of the targeting data used by the RAF's 224th Group, indeed, more high-value targets than it had assets to attack. So effective was this intelligence that plans were made such that when Malaya was invaded a single squadron would be set aside for the sole purpose of hitting mobile targets reported by SOE.¹²³²

The Karens were not the only people in Burma to resist the Japanese occupation; the Kachins in the north of the country did the same. Like the Karens, most Kachins returned to their villages after the initial British defeat, to conduct guerrilla warfare and await the British return.¹²³³ Richard Dunlop observes that the Japanese made the mistake of believing that they "could terrorize the Kachin mountain warriors into making peace by carrying out ferocious attacks on the... villages. Fire, rape, and the mutilation of young boys would intimidate the Kachins into surrender," or so the

¹²³⁰ Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, 189-90. Operation CHARACTER accounted for the bulk of casualties inflicted by SOE in Burma: 16,879 killed (65% by CHARACTER), 995 wounded (65% by CHARACTER) and 285 captured (6% by CHARACTER). For similar figures from a slightly different period, see "SOE in the Far East, 1941-1945," 5, TNA: PRO, HS 7/1. One of the last battles was typical of the sort the Special Groups and Karen levies fought. At the end of July the remnants of the Japanese Twenty-Eighth Army tried to cross the Sittang River in *Mongoose*' sector. Seven hundred fifty guerrillas on the eastern bank opposed three thousand Japanese soldiers on the west bank. The crossing was a disaster, with the Karens pinning down Japanese forces, leaving them easy targets for the Royal Air Force. Against the Karens alone – excluding losses to the RAF – the Twenty-Eighth Army lost 1,240 men in the engagement, which went on until September, in spite of Allied attempt to convince the Japanese their government had surrendered.

¹²³¹ Lt. Col. J. R. Gardiner, "Consolidated report and maps on Burma operations, 1941-1945," 23 December 1945, Chapter VII, 5, TNA: PRO, HS 7/104

¹²³² Gardiner, "Consolidated report and maps on Burma operations," Chapter VII, 4-5, TNA: PRO, HS 7/104; Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, 190. Gardiner estimates that, although SOE's primary mission was not intelligence, at the height of its operations it supplied 80% of the intelligence coming out of Japanese-occupied Burma.

¹²³³ Astor, *The Jungle War*, 231-3; Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 119.

Japanese thought.¹²³⁴ Instead, the Japanese earned for themselves the wrath of a fearsome people with a long history of violence, who inhabit one of the most inhospitable corners of the world.

Though the British Army did not return in large numbers until 1945, as early as January 1943, British officers were infiltrated into Burma to organize the Kachins into units known as Kachin Levies.¹²³⁵ Crucially, these Levies defended Fort Hertz, an obscure outpost in the extreme northern corner of Burma, of almost no consequence except that it had an airfield. It was from Fort Hertz that the Allies were able to infiltrate men and equipment further into Japanese-occupied Burma.¹²³⁶ Beginning in earnest in the spring of 1944, the British organized a number of Kachin units, with a total strength of 3,000 men. However, in the autumn of 1944 SOE withdrew from the area, at the instance of General Joseph Stilwell, the regional American commander, who resented the British presence.¹²³⁷

OSS sent its first paramilitary unit, Carl Eifler's Detachment 101, to northern Burma, where it operated under Stilwell. Detachment 101 worked with the local Kachin population, organizing guerrilla forces and rescuing downed airmen.¹²³⁸ The American

¹²³⁴ Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 34. Dunlop contends that this approach was suggested to the Japanese by "the Kachin's old enemy, the Shans." However, one of the themes of E. R. Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure* (London, 1964) is that the British failed to understand the intermixing of Kachin and Shan culture, implying that the two ethnicities enjoyed close ties, a rather different portrayal from Dunlop's. Irrespective of where they got the idea, that the Japanese carried out a program of particular brutality against the Kachins is confirmed by eye-witness accounts.

¹²³⁵ Astor, *The Jungle War*, 231.

¹²³⁶ "SOE in the Far East, 1941-1945," 5, TNA: PRO, HS 7/1; William R. Peers and Dean Breilis, *Behind the Burma Road* (London, 1963), 60.

¹²³⁷ Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, 164-65, 172-73; Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 261.

¹²³⁸ Untitled history of OSS in the Far East, 5, 12, Record Group 226, Entry 146, Box 48, Folder 670, National Archives; Astor, *The Jungle War*, 141-42. It was, indeed, the guarantee of rescuing downed

Kachin Rangers, recruited by Detachment 101, eventually numbered 10,200 men.¹²³⁹

They provided intelligence to Stilwell's American and Chinese forces as they worked to capture the Japanese garrison at Myitkyina, an operation in which the British Kachin Levies also participated.¹²⁴⁰

Like the Karens, the Kachins were praised by their Western colleagues for their skill in irregular warfare. "As guerrilla soldiers they were ideal," Colonel William R. Peers, who eventually commanded Detachment 101, would recall. "The difficulties of following invisible tracks through jungle or crossing towering peaks they looked upon as a natural contest. Weapons they understood as a fact of life; demolitions were not beyond their powers."¹²⁴¹ Kachin resistance forces not only supplied intelligence and launched sabotage missions against Japanese targets, but also played a vital role by controlling the jungle and securing its trails, allowing Stilwell to move his forces unmolested. The Kachin Rangers alone were responsible for 5,428 known enemy dead and possibly as many as 10,000 more. In the course of the war they destroyed 51

crews that led the Air Transport Command to agree to drop members of Detachment 101 and their equipment into the Kachin Hills.

¹²³⁹ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 184.

¹²⁴⁰ Astor, *The Jungle War*, 176; Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 26, 138. In spite of the close support the Kachins provided to Stilwell's Chinese troops, these ill-disciplined soldiers committed a variety of crimes against Kachin villages while passing through their territory. Indeed, the government of Burma, in exile in India, reported, "War is war, but it would be difficult to find a parallel of human suffering to that endured by the peaceful, loyal and simple Kachins of Burma at the hands of the Chinese" (*Misconduct of Chinese Troops in Burma*, Defense Dept., Govt. of Burma, Simla, 1943 [India Office Records: M/3/856], 29; quoted in Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, 2nd ed. [Dhaka, 1999], 46, 60).

¹²⁴¹ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 63-64. Apart from his service with OSS in Burma, Peers became well known for leading the Peers Commission, which investigated the 1968 My Lai massacre in Vietnam.

bridges and 277 enemy vehicles and rescued 574 Allied personnel from the jungles of Burma.¹²⁴²

As with the war in Europe, the contribution made by resistance forces in Burma, supported by SOE and OSS weapons and coordination, was substantial, even when considering the massive scale of modern industrial warfare. General Slim, commander of the XIV Army, believed the resistance played a significant role.

Our own levies led by their British officers were a most valuable asset and had a real influence on operations.... They could not and were not expected to stand up to the Japanese in pitched battles but they could and did in places harry them unmercifully.... They had an excellent jitter effect on the Japanese, who were compelled to lock up troops to guard against attacks on the lines of communication.¹²⁴³

This was precisely the role Colin Gubbins had envisioned in 1939: threatening communications and forcing the enemy to spread himself thin, thereby diluting the power of his conventional capabilities.

Gubbins after the War

In spite of the major successes of SOE in France, Burma, and elsewhere, the organization was disbanded in early 1946, with any leftover assets transferred to SIS.¹²⁴⁴

Gubbins, an acting major general by the end of the conflict, was unwanted by the British

¹²⁴² Untitled history of OSS in the Far East, 5, 12, 19-21, Record Group 226, Entry 146, Box 48, Folder 670, National Archives; Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 141, 184. “After the first few [downed crews of the US 10th Air Force] were rescued from behind the lines, there was a noticeable improvement in the morale of the Air Corps. It continued to improve with additional rescues until, finally, the crewmen took it almost as a matter of course that they would be brought out safely” (185).

¹²⁴³ Gen. Slim, “Account of operations of Fourteenth Army 1944-1945,” 29, TNA: PRO, CAB 106/48, quoted in Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, 257.

¹²⁴⁴ Foot, *SOE in France*, ix, 524; Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 202-3; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 231-37.

Army, which had more generals than it needed, many of them with far more experience commanding in the field than Gubbins, whose work was entirely secret. Lord Selborne fought hard to have Gubbins's rank made substantial, so that he could retire with a major general's pay, but the War Office refused to grant any exceptions: he could keep the rank as an honorific, but would retire with the pay of his substantial rank of colonel.¹²⁴⁵ The simple fact was that Britain was on the brink of bankruptcy. On 1 February 1946, Gubbins wrote to Selborne, thanking him for his efforts. The letter reveals Gubbins's mixed feelings about the situation.

I know that the War Office decision is wrong, both ethically and on the practical basis of my past career, the appointments I have held, my age etc., without taking into account my service in SOE, but I bear no grudge whatever against them & am only sorry that they can be so stupid.

I am retiring without any feelings of bitterness. I feel it a real privilege to have been in SOE for five years, & know that I was thereby enabled to do far more for our country than if I had been a substantive major-general in any other appointment whatever, and that there are not many people as lucky as that.¹²⁴⁶

Having been knighted in 1944 as a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, Gubbins was, however, promoted to Knight Commander in the New Year's Honours of 1946.¹²⁴⁷

If Gubbins was virtually forgotten by the bureaucrats of the British government, the same could not be said of foreign governments. In addition to the Order of St. Stanislaus (3rd class) he received from the White Russian government, Gubbins was awarded the Croix de Vaillance by Poland in 1940 and a raft of honors after the end of the Second World War: the Légion d'Honneur (Officer) and Croix de Guerre from

¹²⁴⁵ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 238.

¹²⁴⁶ Gubbins to Selborne, Friday 1 Feb. 1946, 1-2, Papers of Roundell C. Palmer, 3rd Earl Selborne, MS Eng. Hist. c. 1002, fol. 48, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

¹²⁴⁷ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 238.

France, the Order of Leopold (Grand Officer) and Croix de Guerre from Belgium, the Royal Order of St. Olaf from Norway, the Order of Merit from the United States, the Order of the White Lion from Czechoslovakia, Order of the Dannebrog (1st class) from Denmark, the Order of Orange Nassau (Grand Officer) from the Netherlands, as well as Greek and Italian awards. In his case, the British government waived the usual rule limiting British soldiers to four foreign awards.¹²⁴⁸

The transition back to civilian life was not easy for Sir Colin, who had been in the army since 1914. With only a colonel's retirement pay, he sought employment. He tried business management, working at a rubber company and then a textile manufacturer. He appears to have been successful, but not outstandingly so, and his heart was not in it. His real interests lay elsewhere. His great passion of the post-war era was the Special Force Club, an organization he founded for former members of SOE; its benevolent fund cared for the widows and orphans of those who had served and not returned.¹²⁴⁹ Before agreeing to write a preface or forward to an author's book, Gubbins would always request that the author or publisher make a small donation to the Club's benevolent fund.¹²⁵⁰

In 1950 Sir Colin remarried; his new bride was the widow of a Norwegian pilot who had died flying for the RAF. The matter of her citizenship highlights the disregard Gubbins was shown after the war; when she applied for British citizenship, she was told that her husband, who had been born in Japan while his father was on consular service,

¹²⁴⁸ Philip Rea to Selborne, 30 May 1946, Papers of 3rd Earl Selborne, MS Eng. Hist. c. 1002, fol. 48, Bodleian Library; Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 238.

¹²⁴⁹ Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 238-39, 241.

¹²⁵⁰ Gubbins papers 3/2, IWM.

qualified as a British *subject*, but not a British *citizen*, a status that was only created under the British Nationality Act of 1948. (The Home Office unhelpfully suggested that, since Sir Colin's father had been born in British India, he might be able to claim Indian citizenship.) Sir Colin had to apply for British citizenship before his new bride could claim the same.¹²⁵¹

In spite of such difficulties, he settled into and profoundly enjoyed his new married life. He took up gardening and, feeling the deprivation of never having attended university, took to intellectual and aesthetic pursuits, reading widely, visiting art galleries, and attending the ballet. He eventually returned to his Scottish roots and retired to the Isle of Harris; he served as colonel in command of the local Home Guard from 1952 to 1956. On 23 January, 1976, he was commissioned the Deputy Lieutenant of the Isles Area, Western Isles, an honor he deeply valued. Two weeks later, on 6 February, suffered a heart attack, and died on 11 February.¹²⁵²

Far from disappearing, insurgency and guerrilla warfare have become common in the decades following the Second World War. So long as they remain, the study of SOE and OSS likewise maintain their relevance. For historians and policymakers interested in understanding these organizations and the ideas they utilized, Colin Gubbins is indispensable. As Lord Selborne observed, "It is not too much to say that the Organisation over which he presided was mainly his creation."¹²⁵³ In that creative

¹²⁵¹ Home Office to Lady Gubbins, 23 February 1951, Gubbins papers 3/4/9, IWM.

¹²⁵² Wilkinson and Astley, *Gubbins and SOE*, 242-43.

¹²⁵³ Selborne to the Rt. Hon. J. J. Lawson, PC, MP, 17 October 1945, 1, Papers of 3rd Earl Selborne, MS Eng. Hist. c. 1002, fol. 10, Bodleian Library.

capacity he built a clandestine service which embodied the lessons of his own life and of the British military experience around the globe.

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APPENDIX A

*THE ART OF GUERRILLA WARFARE***General Principles.****Object.**

1. The object of guerilla warfare is to harass the enemy in every way possible within all the territory he holds to such an extent that he is eventually incapable either of embarking on a war or of continuing one that may already have commenced. The sphere of action should include his home country, and also, in certain circumstances, such neutral countries as he uses as a source of supply. This object is achieved by compelling the enemy to disperse his forces in order to guard his flank, his communications, his detachments, supply depots, etc., against the attacks of guerrillas, and thus so to weaken his main armies that the conduct of a campaign becomes impossible.
2. There are three types of guerrilla warfare: --
 - (a) The activities of individuals, or of small groups working by stealth on acts of sabotage.
 - (b) The action of larger groups working as a band under a nominated leader, and employment of military tactics, weapons etc., to assist in the achievement of their object, which is usually of a destructive nature.
 - (c) The operations of large guerilla forces, whose strength necessitates a certain degree of military organization in order to secure their cohesion and to make and carry out effectively a plan of campaign.

3. The type of guerilla warfare that can be carried out in any particular territory is dependent on the local conditions at the time, as explained later. The greater, however, should always include the less – i.e., where circumstances are favourable to the employment of large guerilla forces, they will also permit the action of partisan bands and of saboteurs. Where conditions are unsuitable to large scale operations, the action of partisan bands should be supported by that of saboteurs.

4. The culminating state of guerilla warfare should always be to produce in the field large formations of guerillas, well-armed and well-trained, which are able to take a direct part in the fighting by attacks on suitable hostile formations and objects in direct conjunction with the operations of regular troops. It may well be, however, that in the early days of the war, guerilla activities must, owing to the enemy's strength and lack of support of the local population, be limited to acts of sabotage. [2]¹²⁵⁴ As the war progresses, and as the enemy's hold begins to weaken owing to successful sabotage, to war wariness of the enemy's troops, and as the inhabitants cease to be overawed, conditions will become ripe for the formation of partisan bands.

These bands will, at the commencement, act singly or in small local concentrations. By their audacity and apparent immunity from hostile counter-measures, they must then fan the flame of revolt until circumstances become favourable for the organization of large groups of bands, working under central leadership on a semi-military basis, necessitating a considerable degree of co-ordination as regards arrangements for supplies, munitions, collection of military intelligence, etc.

¹²⁵⁴ Numbers in brackets refer to original page breaks. Insofar as possible, the original formatting has been preserved.

5. There are two main points in this connection to bear in mind: --

- (a) To obtain the maximum effect from guerilla warfare it is necessary to make use of all three types. Therefore, a careful study must be made as early as possible of the territories concerned, so as to determine for what methods of warfare each territory is suited, and to make the necessary preparations in advance. It is an extravagant waste of effort and opportunity if, for example, in an area suited for large scale guerilla operations, activities are, for want of preparation and forethought, limited to the uncoordinated actions of partisan bands and saboteurs.

Further, it must be remembered that the enemy will institute counter-measures as soon as guerilla activities against him commence. If these activities are on a small scale, it may be relatively easy for him not only to suppress them temporarily, but also, by that action, to prevent their resuscitation on either that or a larger scale. It has been shown countless times in history that where firm enemy action has been taken in time against small beginnings, such action has always met with success. To counter this, therefore, it is again important that the commencement of guerilla operations should be on the highest and widest scale that the area concerned will permit.

The two arguments above overwhelming support this policy.

- (b) The second point to be noted is that the organization of guerillas must not be of a higher degree than circumstances will, with reasonable safety, and a view to efficiency, permit.

The factor of "safety" concerns possible enemy counteraction; the closer and higher the organization, the more easily can it be broken up and become ineffective. It is

valueless and dangerous prematurely to organize partisan bands, acting independently as they normally should, into platoons, companies, [3] squadrons, etc. and then into regiments or brigades, with nominated commanders, skeleton orders of battle, intelligence services, etc.; such organization necessitates documents, written orders, files, etc. all or any of which, falling into the enemy's hands, may enable him to destroy the guerilla movement at a blow.

In any case, such organization is unnecessary in the early stages. In these conditions, except for a central directing brain and a few trusted emissaries, partisan bands should be self-contained, acting under their own leader's initiative towards the ends directed by the controlling authority, obtaining their own information by the most direct and simplest means (usually by word of mouth) and maintaining the loosest organization compatible with effective action.

(6) The factor of efficiency concerns the inherent advantages that guerillas enjoy through their superior mobility and their lack of communications. A premature tightening of organization is directly inimical to these two advantages, so that an increase in the degree of organization over the bare minimum necessary must inevitably lead to decreased efficiency. It is obvious, however, that, in the culminating stages of guerilla warfare, with large masses of guerillas taking an open part, some degree of organization is necessary in order to establish a chain of command, to render administrative arrangements possible, and to collect intelligence as a basis for plans, etc.

7. At any time, therefore, the correct degree of organization to be established must be a matter for the most serious consideration of the controlling authority; as conditions

change, so will the degree. To meet changing circumstances, therefore, the controlling authority must plan in advance, so that closer organization can be instituted when the moment demands, or can be relaxed if enemy action temporarily necessitates.

Objectives of guerilla warfare.

8. The whole art of guerilla warfare lies in striking the enemy where he least expects it, and yet where he is most vulnerable: this will produce the greatest effect in inducing, and even compelling, him to use up large numbers of troops in guarding against such blows.

Modern large-sized armies, entirely dependent as they are on the regular delivery of supplies, munitions, petrol, etc., for their operations, present a particularly favourable opportunity for guerilla warfare, directed against their communications by road, rail or water, and against their system of internal postal and telegraph communications.

Further, the maintenance of these large armies necessitates the establishment of dumps and stocks of supplies, munitions, etc. [4] at focal points, which offer most suitable targets for guerilla action.

The guarding of these communications and dumps against attack will, even before the threat is evident, necessitate the institution by the enemy of detachments and posts, more particularly at vital points on the communications and where dumps of importance are located. These detachments themselves are a suitable object of attack.

Thus the operations of guerillas will usually be directed against the flanks of armies, against their communications and against posts and detachments established by

the enemy for the express purpose of protecting his important localities against such sporadic attempts.

Methods and Principles.

9. The methods and principles of guerilla warfare must be based on a proper estimation of the relative advantages and disadvantages enjoyed by the enemy on one hand, and the guerillas on the other, in armaments, mobility, numbers, information, morale, training, etc.

10. The enemy will almost invariably possess armament superior both in quantity and quality – i.e., he will have artillery, mortars, gas, armoured vehicles, etc., in addition to the automatics and rifles with which the guerillas will also be armed. In total strength the enemy will normally have the superiority as well, but the distribution of his forces will necessitate the use of detachments against which superior guerilla forces can be brought.

11. It is in mobility, in information, and in morale that the guerillas can secure the advantage, and those factors are the means by which the enemy's superior armament and numbers can best be combated. The superior mobility, however, is not absolute, but relative – i.e. to the type of country in which the activities are staged, to the detailed knowledge of that country by the guerillas, etc. In absolute mobility, the enemy must always have the advantage – i.e., the use of railway systems, the possession of large numbers of motors, lorries, armoured cars, tanks, etc., of large forces of cavalry, etc. By the judicious selection of ground, however, and by moves in darkness to secure surprise,

the guerillas can enjoy relatively superior mobility for the period necessary for each operation.

12. The enemy will usually be in a country where the population is largely hostile, so that the people will actively co-operate in providing information for the guerillas and withholding it from the enemy. The proper encouragement of this natural situation and the development of the system of obtaining information will ensure that the guerillas are kept au fait with the enemy's movements and intentions, whereas their own are hidden from him. [5]

13. Morale, training, etc., are factors of importance in which first one side and then the other may have the advantage. Where the enemy is constrained by demands on his forces to use reserve and second-line units for guarding communications, etc., neither the morale nor training will be of a high standard. The morale of the guerilla should always be high; fighting in his own country, among his own people, against a foreign foe who has invaded his land, the justice of his cause will inflame his embitterment. At the same time, the narrow limits of the training he requires, his natural dash and courage, and the careful, detailed rehearsal of projected coups should enable him, with the advantage of the initiative, to match even the best trained troops.

14. Guerillas must obtain and make every effort to retain the initiative. To have the initiative confers the invaluable advantage of selecting the place of operations that most favour success as regards locality, ground, time, relative strengths, etc. The initiative can always be secured by remaining completely quiescent until the moment for the commencement of guerilla activities arrives, and then suddenly launching out against an

unsuspecting enemy. To retain the initiative conferring these advantages demands a ceaseless activity, so that the enemy is prevented from getting his blow by the constantly recurring necessity of parrying those aimed at him.

15. Until the final and culminating stages of partisan warfare where large bodies of guerilla are co-operating with the regular forces, it must be the object of partisans to avoid prolonged engagements with their opponents, unless in such overwhelming strength that success can be assured before the arrival of reinforcements. The object must be to strike hard and disappear before the enemy can recover and strike back. Therefore the action of all partisan bands must be governed by the necessity [sic] of a secure line of retirement for use when the moment for calling off the action arrives. It must be borne in mind, too, that the immunity of partisans from enemy action is a most valuable moral factor; to inflict damage and death on the enemy and to escape scot-free has an irritant and depressing effect on the enemy's spirit, and a correspondingly encouraging effect on the morale, not only of the guerillas but of the local inhabitants, a matter of considerable moment; in this sphere of action nothing succeeds like success.

16. From the above review of the circumstances of guerilla warfare, the aim of the guerilla must be to develop their inherent advantages so as to nullify those of the enemy.

The principles of this type of warfare are therefore:-

- (a) Surprise first and foremost, by finding out the enemy's plans and concealing your own intentions and movements. [6]

- (b) Never undertake an operation unless certain of success owing to careful planning and good information. Break off the action when it becomes too risky to continue.
- (c) Ensure that a secure line of retreat is always available.
- (d) Choose areas and localities for action where your mobility will be superior to that of the enemy, owing to better knowledge of the country, lighter equipment, etc.
- (e) Confine all movements as much as possible to the hours of darkness.
- (f) Never engage in a pitched battle unless in overwhelming strength and thus sure of success.
- (g) Avoid being pinned down in a battle by the enemy's superior forces or armament; break off the action before such a situation can develop.
- (h) Retain the initiative at all costs by redoubling activities when the enemy commences counter-measures.
- (i) When the time for action comes, act with the greatest boldness and audacity. the partisan's motto is "Valiant yet vigilant."

These are the nine points of the guerilla's creed.

Organization.

17. In guerilla warfare it is the personality of the leader that counts: he it is who has to make decisions on his own responsibility and lead his men in each enterprise. He must therefore be decisive and resourceful, bold in action and cool in council, of great

mental and physical endurance, and of strong personality. These qualities alone will enable him to control his followers and win their unquestioning obedience without the close constraints of military organization and discipline which are the antithesis of guerilla action and a drag on its efficiency.

A background of military training is invaluable for a guerilla leader, tempering his judgements and strengthening his decisions. The almost universal adoption of compulsory military training throughout Europe and the levees en masse of the Great War will usually ensure that every leader will have had a military experience of some sort or other. To this should be added, by study and instruction, a realisation of the influence of a mechanized age on the operations of large armies, both as a factor limiting and handicapping initiative and as a factor opening up new possibilities of mobility, of air action, of fire power, etc.

The selection of suitable leaders is therefore of paramount importance. The central authority must, and perforce will be, some man of prestige and weight who has been a leading personality in the territory in time of peace, as the leader either of some [7] powerful association or league or minority. Leaders of local partisan bands will be selected from those of standing or mark in the locality who possess the necessary attributes of personality.

18. It may, however, frequently be advantageous to appoint certain serving army officers for duty with guerillas, either to serve directly as commanders, more particularly in the higher spheres, or as specially qualified staff officers or assistants to guerilla commanders. In such cases, it will often happen that the serving officer works hand and

glove with the titular leader, the latter, owing to his local connections, etc., ensuring the cohesion of his guerillas, while the former supplies to the partnership the technical knowledge necessary for the most effective direction and co-ordination of the guerillas' operations.

19. The wider the guerilla movement spreads, and the closer that its organisation must ultimately in that case become, the greater will be the need for a leaven of regular officers to carry out the basic work of simple staff duties, and to effect liaison with the regular forces. These officer must, however, clear their minds of all preconceived ideas regarding military procedure and apply their minds entirely and objectively to the success of the matter in hand. The very fact of their being regular officers may prejudice their position in the eyes of the partisans, and such prejudice can only be overcome by the proof they can give of their value to the guerilla cause.

20. In cases where the guerillas are a nation in arms, or part thereof, fighting for their freedom in alliance with or assisted and instigated by a third power which is willing and anxious to render all assistance to them, it will usually be advisable for that third power to be represented by a mission at the headquarters of the guerilla movement. The duties of such a mission would be to provide expert advice, to ensure liaison, to arrange the supply of arms, ammunition, money, etc., and to provide leaders and assistants to leaders, if such were found to be necessary.

21. It is of great importance that the personnel of such missions should be au courant with the countries and territories where they are to work; the more detailed knowledge, personal liaison and reconnaissance that they can have or can effect before operations

are even envisaged, the greater is the chance of their success. They must study the languages, dialects, topography, etc.; they must know the ethnological, political and religious groupings of the people, the history and aspirations of the country, its heroes of the present and martyrs of the past. They must in fact be prepared, at the risk of future regrets and disillusion, to identify themselves in every way with the peoples they are to serve.

22. As described in paragraph 5 (b), it is important that the degree of internal organization of the guerillas should be suitable [8] to the conditions in which they are operating; over-organization is more dangerous and detrimental to guerilla operations than too loose an organization. The latter can be tightened as circumstances prescribe, whereas the relaxing of control that has once been established, even though necessitated by changed conditions, must at first lead to some embarrassment, confusion, and the loss of direction.

23 The organization of partisans must usually commence with the formation of local bands, number not more than about 30 men each. It is not only simpler and more convenient to form them on a local basis, but also quicker. The men live in the neighborhood, they know the country, they know each other, and their leaders, and can assemble rapidly when required, either for operations in their own area, if targets for attack exist, or for transfer to some area where conditions are more favourable. At the same time, there will be many areas where it will not be possible to form bands. Suitable and willing men in such areas must be given a rallying place, to which they will move under their own arrangements and there to join existing bands.

24. Modern developments, particularly in aircraft, mechanized forces and wireless, have profound influences on guerilla warfare, enabling the enemy rapidly to concentrate in opposition to any moves of guerillas that have been discovered. Concealment from aircraft, therefore, becomes one of the most important factors and inevitably curtails the possibilities of large forces of guerillas moving at will throughout the country. In effect, such large forces, if they are to remain undiscovered, can only move by night and must conceal themselves by day or else move by routes – i.e. through thick forests etc. – which afford concealment from reconnoitring [sic] aircraft; such routes however themselves offer some difficulty to movement.

25. In addition, areas which offer good opportunities for concealment are usually just those areas where the maintenance and supply of large guerilla forces becomes difficult. They are usually wild, with little cultivation or pasture land for carrying stock or feeding the guerillas' animals, and supplies would have to be brought in specially. At once the guerillas would begin to be dependent on communications, a situation cramping their mobility and exactly opposed to the characteristic which constitutes their chief military value.

26. It must be clearly realized therefore that in most European countries, except for large areas in the east and south-east, conditions will rarely at the commencement of a campaign be suitable for the employment of guerillas in large masses. Even in Asiatic and North African countries, the presence of hostile aircraft will make this difficult. [9]

27. It is therefore probable that in the early stages of a war, the scale of guerilla warfare will not exceed that activities of partisan bands; even if it should never exceed

this, however, a guerilla campaign of this type directed with skill and executed with audacity and ceaseless activity will be a most potent factor in absorbing hostile forces and thus rendering a proper campaign by the enemy impossible. For this type of guerilla war a loose organization is essential, and co-ordination and direction of effort must emanate in considerable detail from the central controlling authority known as “The Chief”.

“The Chief”, or Military Mission or Guerilla Bureau.

28. “The Chief” may be either an individual of the country concerned located with his small staff in the area of guerilla activities, or a section of the General Staff (Intelligence Branch) of the Army concerned, and located at its General Headquarters, or even a military mission from a third party, located either at the General Headquarters of one of the armies in the field, or some other more suitable place. “The Chief” may thus be established in either friendly territory, or in territory occupied nominally by the enemy. The relative advantages of either course are as follows: -

29. If located in enemy territory – i.e. in the area where guerilla bands are to operate – contact and direction are easier, co-ordination of plans simplified, and “The Chief’s” presence must have a stimulating effect on the partisans. In addition, intelligence and planning, which depend so much on local conditions at the moment, can be more thorough. On the other hand, the nearness of the enemy and his activities will necessitate constant changes of location, and the possibility of enemy raids will

necessitate the reduction of documents, files, etc. to a minimum which may be incompatible with effective action.

30. Conversely, the installation of “The Chief” at the General Headquarters of an army, or even in friendly territory, brings in its train closer relations with the regular forces, wider sources of information, the possibility of complete documentation, greater security, and facilitates the provision of such supplies as the guerillas may receive, i.e. arms, ammunition etc. What is lost, however, is the close touch with the active agents of the guerilla campaign, and the inspiration which only the presence of “The Chief” in their midst can really arouse. This can, however, be counteracted by the appointment of a “Deputy Chief” specially chosen for his personality and characteristics, and granted plenipotentiary powers for use in emergency.

31. “The Chief” will direct his bands by emissaries or personal visits and will appoint regional assistant-chiefs to assist him. When a large operation is planned, he will frequently direct and [10] lead it in person. As, however, the organization is purposely loose, it is important that “The Chief” should not be exposed to unnecessary danger. Much of his plans and intentions for future action, his knowledge of the country and of his assistant-chiefs will not have been committed to paper nor can be, but are stored in his brain; his loss might be irreparable.

32. Assistant-chiefs may again appoint sub-chiefs under them, according to the size of the regions for which they are responsible and the number of bands they contain.

Arms and Equipment.

33. The provision and replenishment of arms and equipment for guerillas is a problem that requires constant consideration. It is obvious that, if adequate supplies can be obtained before hostilities commence and can be suitably distributed, the problem is immensely simplified; further, guerilla operations can then be commenced without delay. The possibility of providing such peace stocks is governed almost entirely by political considerations, so that each country or district must be considered as a separate case; the attitude of the General Staff concerned is also of importance, more particularly in view of the pressure they can exert on their governments, a pressure which grows in weight on the approach of crises.

34. The arms most suitable for guerillas are those which do not hamper their mobility, but which are effective at close quarters. Guerilla actions will usually take place at point blank range as the result of an ambush or raid, with the object of inflicting the maximum amount of damage **in a short time** and then getting away. What is important therefore is a heavy volume of fire developed immediately, with the object of causing as many casualties and consequent confusion as possible at the outset of the action. Undoubtedly, therefore, the most effective weapon for the guerilla is the sub-machine gun which can be fired either from a rest or from the shoulder – i.e. a tommy-gun or gangster gun; in addition, this gun has the qualities of being short and comparatively light. Special efforts must therefore be made to equip each band with a percentage of these guns. Carbines are suitable, being shorter and lighter than rifles, and the long range of the rifle is not necessary. After carbines come revolvers and pistols for

night work and for very close-quarters, and then rifles. The more silencers that can be obtained for these weapons the better; a 'silenced' rifle or revolver not only impedes detection, but has a considerable moral effect on the sniping of sentries, etc. Telescopic sights are invaluable for snipers.

Bayonets are quite unsuitable for guerillas: these are only for use in shock action which should be eschewed; a dagger is much more effective, and more easily concealed.

[11] Bombs and devices of various kinds are of great use; when possible they should be specially made for the peculiar requirements of guerilla warfare, but standard army equipment must frequently be made to serve.

35. Replenishment of stocks during a campaign, particularly of ammunition, must be a constant concern to all partisans. When operating behind the enemy's lines, the maintenance of supplies from outside will be a matter of the very greatest difficulty, frequently impossible; it is most important therefore that every opportunity to seize arms and ammunition from the enemy should be grasped. This is the only sure way of obtaining requirements. It will sometimes be necessary to organize raids whose primary object is the seizure of arms; every partisan must always have this matter uppermost in his mind, and be prepared to grasp any opportunity that offers.

Information and Intelligence Service.

36. In their normally superior facilities for obtaining information guerillas have a factor in their favour of which the fullest advantage must be taken in order to counteract the enemy's superior armament and equipment. Operating as they usually will be

among a friendly population, a system of obtaining information must be so built up that, from the offensive aspect, the fullest information required can be obtained prior to any contemplated operation; and, from the defensive aspect, no action which the enemy intends against the guerillas will escape prior detection. Further, information must always be sought giving details of the enemy's movements, detachments, convoys, etc., which may lead to the initiation of a successful operation.

37. An enemy in occupation of territory is compelled to mix in varying degrees with the inhabitants. Troops must be billeted in houses; cafés and beerhouses will be used for their recreation; working parties will be employed for unloading trains, repairing roads, etc. These circumstances are extremely favourable for the collection of information by the local populace acting as agents. In fact, every reliable man, woman and child of common sense and reliability should be encouraged and trained to keep his ears open for items of information, and, where conditions are suitable, to seek for it by questions, by purloining letters, etc. Among the most suitably placed to act as agents are barbers, waitresses, domestic servants, priests, doctors, telephone and telegraph operators, postmen and camp followers generally.

38. The collection and collation of this information requires some consideration. As pointed out earlier, the seizure of documents by the enemy from guerillas as the result of raids, interception of letters, etc., is of the greatest value to him in his efforts to crush the guerilla warfare. Messages passed by agents [12] therefore should be verbal as far as possible, and the degree of documentation by local partisan leaders must not exceed that which allows reasonable security. As and when the guerilla organization grows tighter

and closer, collation and recording of intelligence will increase until the stage is reached that at the headquarters of the guerilla forces in the field there is a proper intelligence staff with files, maps, enemy order of battle, etc. To err on the side of over-organization, however, is to court disaster; hence the over-riding importance of the personality of the leaders. The leader alone it is who by his activity, his drive, his flair for guerilla warfare, his intelligence and wit, directs his men to successful action without the close organization [sic] necessary for regular forces.

39. When guerilla operations commence, on whatever scale, the enemy will institute counter-measures, of which one important aspect will be intelligence. But he will be working usually amidst a hostile populace; without their co-operation his task will be more difficult and will require a larger number of his own men to carry it out.

40. The guerillas must therefore impress on the people the vital necessity of withholding from the enemy all information about them however harmless it may seem; the people must be convinced that their refusal to co-operate with the enemy in this respect is of the greatest importance for the redemption of their country from the enemy's grasp, and for the safety of their friends and relatives. They must be warned never to discuss the activities of the guerillas in any circumstances whatever.

In every community will be found certain individuals so debased that for greed of gain they will sell even their own countrymen. Against this contingency close watch must be set, and wherever proof is obtained of such perfidy, the traitor must be killed without hesitation or delay. By such justifiably ruthless action others who might be tempted to follow suit will be finally deterred.

41. It will be necessary, in addition, to harass the enemy's intelligence service in every possible way. Agents that he may have imported must be tracked down and shot, his intelligence officers and staff sought out and neutralized, and captured documents and plans destroyed after perusal.

42. Guerillas themselves must be trained to give away no information if captured. The enemy intelligence officers will be adepts in leading prisoners into indiscretions, in installing listening sets and 'pigeons' in prisons, concentration camps, reading prisoners' ingoing and outgoing mails, etc.

43. The advantage of superior information is the guerillas' greatest asset; it must be used to the fullest extent possible. [13]

Intercommunication.

44. All means of communication that are open to interception by the enemy must be used with the greatest discretion – i.e. civil postal service, telephone and telegraphs, etc., as any code and ciphers used by guerillas must of necessity be simple or only infrequently changed, and their solution by the enemy will not be a difficult task. Such devices therefore only give a very relative security.

45. The passing of information verbally and direct is clearly the safest and in many ways the most reliable means. At the same time, however, opportunities for this will not always occur, and frequently messages must be written and conveyed by several hands before reading their destination. For this purpose it is often better to use women and children who are less suspect and probably could enjoy greater immunity from search.

46. It will be incumbent on leaders within their own areas to arrange adequate means for the collection of information, and their own ingenuity will produce many devices, such as messages left in clefts of trees, in stone walls, in culverts, etc. Pigeons are occasionally useful, but their limitations are obvious – i.e. ease of detection, uncertainty, etc., and the greatest care must be observed in their use.

47. For messages of operational importance between partisan bands and the scouts, and within groups of partisan bands, etc., wireless offers great possibilities. It can be used by scouts to inform their band that an enemy convoy is leaving by a certain route, offering a chance of ambush; it can be used within groups to co-ordinate attacks, to pass on information, etc. The smaller the transmitting set and the wider its range the more useful it becomes; ease of concealment is a very important factor.

Wireless should not be used except for matters of importance; sets are not easily replaced if discovered and should be guarded preciously. It may be advisable to fix certain hours only during which wireless may be used.

ALL MESSAGES IN WIRELESS MUST BE IN CODE OR CIPHER.

Training.

48. Training in the full military sense is not applicable to guerillas, but on the other hand any guerilla who has a background of military training is **ipso facto** a better partisan. The object of military training is to make any recruit of whatever calibre into a reasonably good soldier, so that it is based on the lowest common denominator.

Guerillas on the contrary will usually be recruited from men who have a natural aptitude

or a fondness for fighting, who are accustomed to the use of weapons, to hard sleep, to movement in the dark, etc. [14]

Their training, therefore, should first be directed to the use of their basic weapons, i.e., automatic rifles, carbines, pistols, etc., and to the use of the various destructive devices such as bombs, road and rail mines, etc., which are such a special and useful feature of guerilla warfare.

49. For these devices knowledge of electrical equipment is of great value; leaders must therefore endeavour to include in their bands a few men with this experience; if they do not exist, suitable men must be trained. The actual placing of these devices, and even their firing, can often be carried out in emergency by untrained personnel, but the risks of inefficacy and failure are great and should not be run for want of a little time spent in training.

50. Localities for training must be carefully selected so that surprise is impossible; it is essential to post sentries far out where enemy movement can be seen in time.

51. Weapon training of guerillas must be efficient, not only so that the men may have confidence in their weapons and shoot to kill, but also in order to save ammunition which is frequently an important factor in guerilla warfare. A few rounds spent on perfecting shooting, and testing of rifles, will be amply repaid.

52. Training in defensive action against modern weapons is of importance, more particularly in the following aspects: -

(a) **Aircraft:**

Partisan leaders must impress on all their men that the surest way of attaining success in their operations is by remaining undetected, and that detection will always be followed by enemy action against them. Concealment from aircraft is of the greatest importance, and men must be trained to take cover quickly, to lie face downwards, and to remain absolutely still until the aeroplane has passed.

(b) Tanks, Armoured Cars, etc.

These are very blind when forced by fire to close down their screens; both are very susceptible to ground.

(c) Machine Guns, etc.

Smoke screens formed by smoke bombs are the best antidote.

For further details, see the Partisan Leader's Handbook.

Enemy Counter Action.

53. The first effect on the enemy of the institution of guerilla warfare will be to compel him to strengthen all posts, guards, detachments etc., and to carry out all movements in convoy, even if only of a routine nature. By this the guerillas will have achieved a part of their object, i.e. more enemy troops will be absorbed [15] in purely protective duties, and his forces for offensive action correspondingly reduced.

This reaction of the enemy is however purely defensive. As the scale of guerilla warfare increases, and as successful attacks are carried out against those strengthened posts, convoys, etc., the enemy will undertake active offensive measures against the partisans with the object of finally crushing them.

54. Until the first stage has been reached, and this will not be long, i.e., moving into convoy, etc., members of partisan bands may well be able to remain living but undetected in their own homes, and collecting [sic] by summons for particular operations. This however will soon be rendered impossible by the searches, raids, etc., and issue of curfew, passport and other regulations that the enemy will introduce. When that moment comes it will be necessary for the partisans to “go on the run,” i.e. to live as a band in some suitable area where the nature of the country enables them to be relatively secure.

55. The commencement of offensive action by the enemy will be marked by the institution of “flying columns” – detachments of from fifty to two or three hundred strong, mobile by means of horses, lorries, etc., and equipped with several days of supplies – which will be sent out to search the country, moving by circuitous and haphazard routes, employing scouts and advance guards, and probably assisted by aircraft. The final stage, when this action is insufficient, will be the organization of “drives”, in which large forces of troops consisting of all arms will be used to sweep through successive selected areas, and the accompanying intelligence officers, their staffs, informers, agents, etc., will interrogate every man falling into the net and arrest any to whom suspicion attaches. Aeroplanes are certain to co-operate.

56. Against flying columns, the guerillas’ superior sources of information, knowledge of the country and individual mobility should be adequate protection; the object of the guerillas in these circumstances is to avoid discovery, and not take military

action against the flying columns unless overwhelming strength against any particular column can be combined with favourable circumstances in which to destroy it.

57. Against large-scale drives the guerillas must give way, and move off to some locality where the enemy is relatively inactive. It must be remembered that in countries of any large extent the number of troops required to carry out comprehensive drives simultaneously through every area subject to guerilla warfare will usually be prohibitive. Should the enemy attempt such a policy, the object of this warfare will be even nearer to achievement, i.e. rendering the enemy incapable of carrying on an effective campaign.[16]

58. The counters to such a policy are clear. If the enemy drives throughout the whole area affected give no chance of eventual escape, the partisans must harry the advance as it proceeds, seek the weak spots in it, and break through back into their own country, either by infiltration, or by massing against a weak spot and bursting through by sheer strength and force of arms. To men who know the country and can move freely in the dark there is little risk of failure.

59. Against the various weapons that the enemy may employ, endowed as he will be with superior equipment of war, i.e. aeroplanes, tanks, armoured cars, etc., instructions are contained in the Partisan Leader's Handbook.

Of all these means, the most dangerous to the partisans is the aeroplane: they must be taught always to move and take up their positions by night, to take immediate cover from aircraft of all descriptions, and never to open fire on them unless the aeroplanes themselves attack.

60. Against action by the enemy, other than of a military nature, every step must be taken to render it inoperative. Such action will include the institution of curfew hours, of a system of visas and **cartes d'identité**, of traffic regulations, of restriction on the use of motor transport, etc. In this field, it is the civilian population which can most assist the guerilla; a policy of absolute non-co-operation leavened with enlightened stupidity will do much to render the enemy's control ineffective.

Planning and Action.

61. Just as in time of peace the study of the employment of its regular forces in the event of possible wars is one of the main problems of a country's General Staff, so must the employment of guerilla forces and tactics in aid of the regular army be the object of equally close examination. Probable theatres of war and possible allies in various contingencies will lead this examination over a very wide field. Cases requiring particular study will be those in which either the home country or an ally must envisage in view of the enemy's greater strength, more complete preparation, or more rapid mobilization, a successful invasion of its territory in the early stages of the campaign, even if only to a limited depth.

62. The object of such study is to determine the possibilities of guerilla warfare on the flanks of, but more particularly behind, the advancing hostile armies, and to make the necessary arrangements IN PEACE before the emergency arises. To delay study and preparation until a war has broken out will make the institution of a proper guerilla

campaign infinitely more difficult, and in face of a strong and ruthless enemy, in all probability impossible. [17]

The arrangements to be made must include: -

- (a) The nomination of local partisan leaders.
- (b) The provision of arms, ammunition, destructive devices, wireless sets, etc., and their concealment.
- (c) Selection of “The Chief” and of the personnel of his staff.
- (d) Provision of ensuring liaison between General Headquarters in the field and “The Chief” with his guerillas.

N.B. If “The Chief” is at General Headquarters, liaison is required between him and the deputy chief.

- (e) The formulation of a plan of campaign.
- (f) The selection of vital points for destruction after hostile occupation and their preparation to that end.

ETC. ETC.

63. It may well be that among a group of two or more allied powers, one power by its wealth, its strategic position, its military experience or its initiative is in a position to encourage and assist the others in these preparations. Such assistance may take the following forms:-

- (a) The provision of special weapons and destructive devices for use by guerillas.

- (b) The provision of technical experts in destructive devices specially trained to assist the leaders of partisan bands.
- (c) The establishment of a mission or bureau either at the allied General Headquarters, or in the field with the guerillas, to direct operations in co-ordination with that General Headquarters, and to arrange for the further supply and distribution of money, arms, etc.
- (d) The provision of military experts in the field to assist and co-ordinate the activities of assistant leaders.

Preparatory Planning.

64. A complete survey of likely territories must be made with a view to determining for what types of guerilla activities they will initially be suitable.

Politically, the field of action for guerilla warfare may be broadly divided into three distinct spheres: -

- (a) Where the population, except for numerically insignificant minorities, support the hostile power. This territory usually comprises the enemy's home country and that of his allied and associated powers.
- (b) Where the population is, in varying degrees, hostile to the power in occupation.
- (c) Neutral countries [18]

Friendly Population

65. Unless a war has been begun in opposition to the general weight of public opinion, the enemy's home country will at the onset have been brought to a high pitch of patriotism and jingoism. Such conditions offer no scope for the organization of armed intervention by guerillas and this type of warfare must therefore be limited to subterranean attacks by disaffected individuals or small groups against targets that will interrupt communications, interfere with or damage supplies of food, munitions, etc., assist in diverting the enemy's armed forces and generally lower the morale of the people.

66. At the same time the people's will to war must be sapped and undermined in every other way, so as to induce a craving for peace and for a change in the regime of the country which will lead to it. The object must be to prepare a situation in which an increasing and vocal part of the population will be opposed to the government and its policy, and any alternative will seem to offer fairer prospects. At the right moment it will be desirable to focus public opinion on to an alternative leader or party.

67. Such a campaign is best carried on by "whispering" by skilful propaganda through the press and wireless, by magnification of hardships such as food restrictions, by the sabotaging of food supplies, communications, by publishing exaggerated casualty lists, etc. and many other means. Even in the final stages of such a campaign, however, there is no field for the employment of partisan bands; there representatives either of a foreign power or a disaffected minority would only serve to exacerbate the patriotism of the general population. What is required is to divide the population of the enemy against

itself; the means are endless - knowledge of the country and a fertile imagination will devise the methods.

Hostile Population.

68. A population hostile to the enemy's occupation offers immediately a sphere for the fullest development of guerilla warfare in all its aspects, culminating in a general rising of the people against the enemy. The types of warfare to be employed at the onset must depend on the nature of the country; it is clear that in highly cultivated districts with few physical features the concentration of partisan bands into large formation is out of the question until such time as the enemy's hold begins through weakness to relax. Then is the moment for a general levée en masse of the population with such arms as they have concealed or seized; the enemy's defeat will not long be delayed.

69. In cases of this nature the provision of arms and ammunition and arrangements for replenishing stocks are of primary [19] importance. Where the possibility of aggression by a hostile power and the occupation by it of foreign territory can be foreseen, such provision should invariably be made before the commencement of hostilities. Not only can adequate stocks be more easily obtained and planted, but also more thorough precautions can be made for secrecy in delivery and in distribution and storage.

Where such provisions cannot be made beforehand, an organization must be immediately created for the running of weapons and explosives from neutral or friendly

countries, and plans must be worked out and put in hand for the seizure of hostile stocks by local guerillas.

70. In general, the action to be undertaken in areas where the people are hostile to the occupying power is to stimulate the morale of the inhabitants, to create a policy of complete non-co-operation, both active among those best fitted for it and passive by the whole of the remainder. It is necessary to convince the people that the hostile power is not de facto in control, that its writ does not run and that it will eventually be compelled to evacuate the territory, when those who have tacitly accepted its control will be punished, and those who have opposed it will be rewarded.

Neutral Countries.

71. The institution of guerilla activities in neutral territories from which the enemy draws supplies must depend to some extent on the political and other relations between the powers concerned. In certain cases it may be politic to ignore the assistance given to the enemy by a particular neutral country in view of the even greater aid that is being received. When, however, the supplies which the enemy is obtaining are vital to his conduct of the war it may be necessary actively to hinder this provision in spite of otherwise friendly relations with the country concerned, and to risk the rupture of such relations.

72. This risk, however, must be reduced to a minimum and postponed as long as possible. Its elimination depends primarily on the skill with which the campaign is carried out. The methods to be employed to hinder supply range from the purchase of

supplies, over the head of the enemy, the organization of labour strikes at the vital points – i.e., factories, mines, docks, etc., to the sabotaging of ships, trains and machinery. The engagement of local firms of solicitors, not too scrupulous and at the same time experienced in neutrality and labour legislation, and in the procrastination of judicial procedure will be of the greatest assistance.

73. As in the case of guerilla warfare proper, this [is] a subject which requires close study and preparation before hostilities commence, and the selection of suitable personnel, experienced [20] in shipping and commerce generally, and maritime and neutrality laws of the countries concerned.

Geographical.

74. The geographical study of a territory is concerned with two factors: -

- (a) Its suitability as an area for guerilla warfare. The more broken and forested it is, the more suitable will it be.
- (b) The potential targets for guerilla action which it offers. These will usually be in the shape of road, rail and river communications which the enemy would have to employ for the maintenance of his armies in the field. Vulnerable points within the enemy's own territory must also be marked. The reconnaissance of territories should, whenever possible, be carried out in time of peace by selected officers who have been grounded in the principles of guerilla warfare. Their reports will be of great assistance in formulating a plan.

Organization of Bands.

75. One of the principle reasons for insisting on the advantages of peace time preparation is that, failing such arrangements, the situation of guerilla warfare BEHIND THE ENEMY'S LINES will be a matter of the utmost difficulty. The ideal at which to aim is that when the enemy invasion takes place the men who are to become the partisans should remain in their homes with their arms conveniently concealed, and allow themselves to be over-run. They will then hold themselves in readiness to commence action under their leader the moment the order is given. Where the fronts coved by the main opposing armies are wide and broken, there will be opportunity for partisan bands to penetrate the hostile lines for operations in the enemy's rear, but when the fronts are continuous, as may frequently happen, there will be no such opportunity; without previous provision, therefore, guerilla warfare on the enemy's lines of communication, his most vulnerable and tender spot, could only be sporadic and half-hearted.

76. Most of the great powers include in their forces formations of a para-military character such as Frontier Guards, Customs Guards, Frontier Gendarmerie, and Forest Guards, etc. These organizations, dealing as they do with the prevention of smuggling, illicit crossing of frontiers, poaching, etc., contain men with an intimate knowledge of frontier districts, trained to act by night, and to be self-dependent. As frontiers frequently rest on natural boundaries such as mountains, large river, etc., which form good area [sic] for guerilla activities, such men will be of immense value as the nuclei of partisan bands. [21]

77. From a consideration of the above factors it is apparent that the institution of guerilla warfare to assist the regular armies in the defeat of the enemy is a subject which must in all its aspects be considered and prepared in peace to the fullest extent possible.

Such planning and action should include the following: -

- (a) A careful study of the territories concerned from the point of view of geography, communications, ethnology, racial and religious habits, historical associations, etc., and a decision as to possibilities.
- (b) The supply and distribution of arms, ammunition, devices, pamphlets, etc., and the instruction of potential partisans in their use.
- (c) The selection and training of regular army officers in the art of guerilla warfare; these would be sent to organize and take charge of guerilla operations in their respective areas, or to act as advisers to the local leaders. Such training should include a period of residence in the territory concerned.

Conclusion.

78. The more the subject is considered the more apparent it becomes that in guerilla warfare it is the personality of the leader which counts above everything. It is he who by his personality and steadfastness must hold the loosely organized partisans together, and by his courage, audacity and high intelligence successfully direct and lead their operations.

79. These operations range over an unlimited field according to local circumstances. Large forces of guerillas can harry the flanks of an advancing or returning army, can raid

his communications in force, destroying railways, burning supply dumps and capturing convoys, and then withdraw again to the security of their own lines. Small bands of partisans can live behind the enemy's lines, or filter through gaps in his front, and carry on similar activities on a smaller scale. Individual guerillas can be permanently located in the enemy's rear, where by the sniping of guards, the destruction of military vehicles, buildings, etc., they can be a running sore in his flesh, draining his vitality and hampering his action.

80. Guerillas obtain their advantage over the enemy by their greater knowledge of the country, their relatively greater mobility, and their vastly superior sources of information. Those are the factors which, when properly exploited, enable them to engage with success an enemy who is better equipped, more closely disciplined, and usually in greater strength. [22]

81. The main objects of guerilla warfare are to inflict direct damage and loss on the enemy, to hamper his operations and movements by attacks on his communications, and to compel him to withdraw the maximum number of troops from the main front of battle so as to weaken his offensive power. Direct action of the types envisaged will bring the desired result about. It must always be remembered that guerilla warfare is what regular armies have most to fear. When directed with skill and carried out with courage and whole-hearted endeavour, an effective campaign by the enemy becomes impossible.

82. Guerilla warfare is much facilitated by the co-operation of the local inhabitants, but in the face of an uncompromising hostile occupation this will only become active as the result of successful action by the guerillas. It is this alone that will awaken in the

people the spirit of revolt, of audacity and of endurance, and make them foresee and assist towards the victory that will be theirs.

83. In the modern world the time has now come when aggressor nations, to gain their ends, use every device and ingenuity that their perverted wits can devise to break down the resistance of their intended victims both before and after the occupation of their territory. Given the leadership, the courage, the arms and the preparation, however, there is one thing remaining that they cannot break, and that is the spirit of the people whose territory has been over-run, a spirit expressing itself in uncompromising and steadfast resistance to defeat and in a ruthless and uncompromising warfare of partisans until the enemy is forced to cry "Halt!" and depart. In the long history of the world such deeds have been done, such causes won; and they can be won again, given opportunity.

FINIS

APPENDIX B

*THE PARTISAN LEADER'S HANDBOOK***Principles of Guerilla Warfare and Sabotage.**

1. Remember that your object is to embarrass the enemy in every possible way so as to make it more difficult for his armies to fight on the many fronts. You can do this by damaging his rail and road communications, his telegraph and postal system, by destroying small parties of the enemy, and in many other ways which will be explained later. Remember that everything you can do in this way is helping to win freedom again for your people.
2. You must learn the principles of this type of warfare, which are as follows: -
 - (a) Surprise is the most important thing in everything you undertake. You must take every precaution that the enemy does not know your plans.
 - (b) Never engage in any operation unless you think success is certain. Break off the action as soon as it becomes too risky to continue.
 - (c) Every operation must be planned with the greatest care. A safe line of retreat is essential.
 - (d) Movement and action should, whenever possible, be confined to the hours of darkness.
 - (e) Mobility is of great importance; act therefore where your knowledge of the country and your means of movement – i.e., bicycles, horses etc. – give you an advantage over the enemy. [2]

- (f) Never get involved in a pitched battle unless you are in overwhelming strength.
- (g) Never carry incriminating documents on your person nor leave them where they can be found.

The whole object of this type of warfare is to strike the enemy, and disappear completely leaving no trace; and then to strike somewhere else and vanish again. By these means the enemy will never know where the next blow is coming, and will be forced to disperse his forces to try and guard all his vulnerable points. This will provide you with further opportunities for destroying these small detachments.

3. **Types of Operations** – Operations can be divided into two main types: -

- (a) Those of a military nature which entail the co-ordinated action of a certain number of men under a nominated leader.
- (b) Individual acts of sabotage, of sniping sentries, etc., for which men can be specially selected to work individually in certain areas.

For action of a military nature the choice of suitable leaders is of great importance. A leader must have courage and resource, he must be intelligent and a good administrator and be a man of quick decision. He must know intimately the country in which he is operating, and should be able to use a compass and map. The sort of man required is the type whom other men will willingly accept to lead them in dangerous actions, and whose personality will hold them together.

The size and composition of guerilla parties [3] must depend on the nature of the enemy and the hold which the enemy has over it. It must be remembered that the speed

of modern communications, i.e., motor, wireless, etc., and the presence of aeroplanes make it very difficult for a large party to remain concealed for any length of time.

Parties should therefore number between 8 and 25, depending upon the work to be done; such parties can move quickly and yet hide themselves fairly easily. Under especially favourable conditions, it may be possible to collect several parties together, up to 100 men or more, for some important undertaking. In such cases, however, the arrangements for dispersal after the operation must be made with special care.

4. Modern large-sized armies are completely dependent on roads, railways, signal communications, etc., to keep themselves supplied with food, munitions and petrol, without which they cannot operate. These communications therefore form a most suitable target for guerilla warfare of all kinds, and any attack on them will at once force the enemy to disperse his forces in order to guard them. Communications are open to attacks both of the military and sabotage type. Attacks can also be directed against small detachments of the enemy, stocks of food, munitions, etc., and many other objects.

5. Military action is employed when it appears that damage can only be inflicted if force has to be used first.

The following are types of military action:-

- (a) Destruction of vital points on roads, bridges, [4] railways, canals, etc., when action by an individual employing secret means would not be effective. If a hostile guard has first to be overpowered, or work preliminary to destruction requires a considerable number of men, the project must be undertaken as a military operation.

- (b) The raiding and destruction of hostile mails, either in lorries or trains.
- (c) The destruction of enemy detachments and guards.
- (d) The organization of ambushes of hostile troops and convoys traveling by road or train.
- (e) The destruction of stocks and dumps of food, petrol, munitions, lorries, etc., by first overpowering the guards on them.
- (f) The seizure of cash from hostile pay-offices etc. ETC. ETC.

6. Military action is greatly facilitated by the support of the local population. By this means, warning can be obtained of all hostile moves, and it will not be possible for the enemy to carry out surprise action. It is therefore important to endeavour not to offend the people of each district, but to encourage their patriotism and hatred of the enemy. Successful action against the enemy will breed audacity and force the people to take note and respond. Their response in the first instance should be directed to the supply of information about the enemy, his strength, movements, etc., and to assistance in the concealment of compatriots who are taking part in guerilla warfare. In effect, the people must be taught to boycott the hostile [5] troops completely, except as may be necessary to obtain information. This can be done by convincing them that the enemy's occupation is only temporary, that he will soon be ejected, that those of the people who have helped will then be rewarded, but that those who have fraternized with the enemy will be ruthlessly punished. The question of 'informers' and traitors who are in league with the enemy is dealt with later.

7. The areas most suitable for military action are those where cover, such as rocks, trees, undergrowth, etc. give a concealed approach to the object or detachment to be attacked. Such cover not only provides an opportunity for attack without discovery, but also for getting away safely when the attack is completed. In all such attacks, it is important that sentries should be posted on all approaches to give warning of any possible surprise by the enemy; it is not necessary that all these sentries should be armed men, in fact it will frequently be of advantage to use some women and children, who are less likely to be suspected. A simple code of signals must be arranged.

Every operation of this nature must be most carefully planned. When some particular operation has been decided upon, the locality must be thoroughly reconnoitered, and the enemy's movements in the vicinity should be systematically studied and noted over a period of days, with special reference to such points as the following, where applicable:-

- (a) Hours when sentries are relieved, and how relief is carried out.
- (b) Total strength of guard or detachment. [6]
- (c) How and when do supplies for the guard arrive? Are civilians allowed to enter the post?
- (d) Where do men not on sentry-go keep their rifles? Are these rifles chained up or in plain racks?
- (e) Are men allowed to leave the position for short periods?
- (f) How often are guards inspected, by whom and at what times?

- (g) What means of communication for the post exist, i.e., telegraph, motor-cycle, or cycle messengers, carrier pigeons, etc.[?] Can these be destroyed?
- (h) Do mails or small detachments of men follow regular routes at fixed times, giving opportunities for ambushing?
- (i) Do these detachments have sentries, advance parties, etc., or do they proceed in one group?
- (j) Are motor vehicles fitted with bullet proof or puncture-proof tyres, armoured sides, etc.?
- (k) What special tools and explosives, if any, are required for the operation, and what amount?

Examples of such operations are given at the end of the book.

8. Sabotage deals with the acts of individuals or small groups of people, which are carried out by stealth and not in conjunction with armed force. These undertakings, however, frequently produce very valuable results and, like military action, force the enemy to disperse his strength in order to guard against them. The following are examples of this type of work: - [7]

- (a) Jamming of railway points.
- (b) Destructive work on roads, railways, canals, telegraphs, etc., where this can be done by stealth.
- (c) Firing of stocks of petrol; burning garages, aeroplane hangers, etc.
- (d) Contamination of food, of forage, etc., by acid, by bacilli, poison, etc.
- (e) Contamination of petrol by water, sugar, etc.

- (f) Destruction of mails by burning, acids, etc.
- (g) Shooting of sentries.
- (h) Stamping of horses.
- (i) Use of time bombs in cars, trains, etc.

ETC. ETC.

9. Sabotage to be effective requires the same degree of careful preparation as does military action. The first point is to choose an objective which has some value, even if it is only the sniping of a sentry or the firing of a stack of forage. Such shooting men that the enemy must double his sentries or risk their loss; such destruction means more guards. So more troops have to be used, and this is one of your objects.

The next step must be to study the place and conditions, so that the most favourable moment for success can be selected. A sure line of retreat, or an alibi, must be arranged beforehand. Often it will be necessary to wait a fortnight or longer before the right opportunity presents itself. At the same time, however, it may be necessary at times to carry out sabotage on the spur of the moment without previous preparation, for example when a convoy of lorries arrives [8] unexpectedly in a village, and there is a chance of setting one on fire. Such opportunities should not be missed. It is certain that the enemy will force a proportion of the inhabitants to work for him in mending roads, loading and unloading trains, and other works of a military nature. Such working parties provide good opportunities for sabotage by time bombs, by acids and other devices.

10. **Organization:-**

(This particular pamphlet is intended simply for the use and instruction of guerilla 'parties'. The higher organization of guerilla warfare throughout a whole country or region is dealt with in the manual "The Art of Guerilla Warfare").

In the early stages of guerilla activities, before hostile counter-measures have become intense, it will be possible for the members of a party to live independently in their own villages and homes and carry on their normal occupations, only collecting when some operation is to be undertaken. The longer they can go on living in this way the better. When the enemy begin to take active measures to prevent guerilla warfare by raids on suspected houses, by arresting suspects, etc., it will eventually be necessary for the guerillas to 'go on the run' – i.e., to leave their houses and live out in the country, hiding themselves by day, and moving at night. The number of men 'on the run' in any one party must depend on the nature of the country. If it is wild, hilly, and forested, it may be possible for parties of up to 100 strong to avoid detection for long periods. If the country is flat and featureless and cultivated, it may be difficult for even [9] one man to remain undetected for long. The organization must therefore depend on the country; the wilder it is the closer can the organization be – i.e. the leader has his men closely under control all the time, and the party moves from place to place, as necessary, to carry out operations or avoid capture. In less favourable country, the organization must be looser, and men must be collected for action by secret means. If and when the enemy's activities make it too dangerous, for the time being, to continue, the men should leave their area, and join parties operating in more favourable conditions. These latter parties

must always serve as a rallying point for men who have been forced by danger of arrest to 'go on the run', for deserters from the enemy, and escaped prisoners.

The "leader" is responsible for the organization; the importance of selecting only men who are reliable and resourceful is thus paramount.

11. **Information:** - If you can keep yourself fully informed of the enemy's movements and intentions in your area, you are then best prepared against surprise, and at the same time have the best chance for your plans to succeed. The enemy is handicapped in that his men must wear uniform and are living in a hostile country, whereas your agents wear ordinary clothes and belong to the people and can move freely among them. Therefore, make every use of your advantage in order to obtain information. Suitable people must be selected from among the inhabitants to collect information and pass it on; these should be people who are unfit for more active work, but whose occupations or intelligence make them specially suitable for the [10] task. The following are types who can usefully be employed:-

- (a) Priests.
- (b) Innkeepers.
- (c) Waitresses, barmaids, and all café attendants.
- (d) Domestic servants in houses where officers or men are billeted. These are a very useful source.
- (e) Doctors, dentists, hospital staffs.
- (f) Shopkeepers, hawkers.
- (g) Camp followers.

These people must be trained to know what sort of information is required; this is most easily done by questioning them on further points whenever they report anything, as they will then learn to look for the details required (see example at the end of the book).

They must also be trained to be on the look-out for enemy agents disguised as compatriots.

It is important that as little as possible of this information should be in writing, or, if it is in writing, that it should not be kept any longer than necessary. All papers, documents, etc., dealing with intelligence or your organization in any way, must be destroyed immediately [after] you have finished with them, or kept in a safe place until destroyed.

It has been proved over and over again in guerilla warfare that it is the capture of guerilla documents that has helped the enemy the most in his counter-measures. These have been captured either on the persons of guerillas, or seized in houses that have been aided. The utmost care is therefore necessary. [11]

12. **Informers:-** The most stringent and ruthless measures must at all times be used against informers; immediately on proof of guilt they must be killed, and, if possible, a note pinned on the body stating that the man was an informer. This is the best preventive of such crimes against the homeland. If it is widely known that all informers will be destroyed, even the worst traitors will hesitate to sink to this depth of perfidy, whatever the reward offered.

If a person is suspected of being an informer, he can be tested by giving him false information, and then seeing if the enemy acts on it. If the enemy so acts, such evidence is sufficient proof of guilt, and the traitor must be liquidated at the first opportunity.

13. **Enemy Counter-Measures and their frustration:-** The best means of defeating the enemy's counter-measures is by superior information which will give warning of his intentions – i.e., of raids against suspected houses, of traps he may lay, of regulations he proposes to enforce in the territory he occupies, etc. Attempts to bribe the people must be met by the measures shown in paragraph 12 above.

Certain counter-measures, however, can only be met by special action; for instance, the use of identity cards, which the enemy is certain to introduce when guerilla warfare becomes active, in order to assist him in tracing the guerillas. It will then be necessary to obtain or copy the official seals and stamps so as to provide identity cards for the guerillas.

When the enemy finds that passive means are insufficient to defeat guerilla operations, he will resort to active measures. These will probably take the form [12] of mobile columns of considerable strength, horsed or in motors, including armoured cars and tanks, with which he will make sudden sweeps, often by night, through the various parts of the country. The bigger the column, the easier it is to obtain information about its projected movements, and it may even prove possible to combine several parties together and destroy it. If, however, the enemy's measures are so comprehensive as to lead to unnecessary risk, it will often be better for the guerillas to lie quiet for a month or so, or move to another district.

14. **Conclusion:-** All guerilla warfare and sabotage must be directed towards lighting strokes against the enemy simultaneously in widely distant areas, so as to compel him to weaken his main forces by detaching additional troops to guard against them. These strokes will frequently be most effective when directed against his communications, thus holding up supplies and eventually preventing him from undertaking large scale operations. At the same time, however, action should be taken against detachments, patrols, sentries, military lorries, etc., in such a way that the whole country is made unsafe except for large columns and convoys. This will hamper the enemy's plans effectively.

The civilian population must be made to help by refusing to co-operate with the enemy, by providing information about the enemy, and by furnishing supplies and money to the guerillas. If they suffer inconvenience from your activities, either directly or as a result of enemy counter-measures, it must be explained to them that they are helping to defeat the enemy as [13] much as their army at the front. The bolder the activities of the guerillas, and the greater the impunity with which they can act, owing to their careful planning and superior information, the more will the population despise the enemy, be convinced of his ultimate defeat, and help the guerillas.

Remember that you are fighting for your homeland, your mother, wife and children. Everything you can do to hamper and embarrass the enemy makes easier the task of your brothers-in-arms at the front who are fighting for you. As your activities develop, the enemy will become more and more ruthless in his attempts to stop you; the only effective reply to this is greater ruthlessness, greater courage, and an even wider

development of your operations. Your slogan must be “Shoot, burn and destroy”.

Remember that guerilla warfare is what a regular army has always most to dread.

When this warfare is conducted by leaders of determination and courage, an effective campaign by your enemies becomes almost impossible.

ROAD AMBUSH.

Appendix I

1. Planning.

(a) Find out by what roads small detachments and patrols of the enemy are accustomed to move. Select on one of these roads a locality which offers a good opportunity for ambushing.

2. Locality.

The following points should be looked for in selecting the locality for the ambush:-

(a) A line of retreat must be available which will give all the men a safe and sure way of escape. [14] A thick wood, broken and rocky country, etc., give the best cover

(b) Firing positions are required which enable fire to be opened at point-blank range.

When there is no chance of prior discovery by the enemy, it may sometimes be of advantage to improve the position by building a stone or sandbag parapet.

This should not be done, however, unless it can be concealed from aircraft.

(c) The locality should provide at least two fire positions and it is often better if these are on opposite sides of the road.

- (d) It is best if the fire position enables the approaching enemy to be in view for three or four hundred yards. By this means it can be discovered in time if the enemy is in greater strength than expected; in such a case the enemy should be allowed to pass without being attacked.

3. Information.

Then get the following information:-

- (a) Do the detachments move on foot, mounted, or in motor vehicles?
- (b) What is the average strength of these detachments? How are they armed? How many vehicles
- (c) Do they use armoured cars and light tanks to patrol the roads?
- (d) At what times do they pass the place you have chosen?
- (e) Do they move in one block, or do they put men [15] out in front and behind to guard against surprise? How do these men move, and how far from the main body?
- (f) How will they try to summon assistance if attacked? Where is the nearest place such assistance can come from?
- (g) If the detachment is carrying supplies, are those supplies of a type which can be easily destroyed by you, or be of use to you?
- (h) What sort of troops are they, active or reserve, elderly, young or what? Is there an officer with them? Can he be picked out and shot by the first volley? Can the N.C.Os be picked out as well?

4. **Action.**

- (a) The men must get into position without any chances of discovery. If there is any doubt, the position should be occupied by night.
- (b) Sentries must be posted to give warning of the enemy's approach. They must be in sight of the firing position. It is not necessary to use guerillas for all sentry posts; a woman or child can sometimes be employed with advantage as they need not be in hiding.
- (c) A simple system of signaling by sentries must be arranged. This can be the removal of a hat, doing up a shoelace or any natural action of that nature.
- (d) If the enemy detachment is preceded by scouts, or a scouting vehicle, these should be allowed to pass on and not be fired at. Sometimes, however, it may be advantageous to place one [16] or two guerillas further on from the firing position to shoot these scouts. **They must never be fired on, however, before the main attack begins; the guerilla leader must make certain this is known and understood.**
- (e) The leader must give the signal to open fire. This can either be pre-arranged or given at the moment. Fire must be rapid fire, so as to have an immediate overwhelming effect.
- (f) Two or three of the best shots must be detailed to shoot any officers or N.C.Os. If these cannot be recognized by their uniforms, they can be discovered by noting who is shouting orders, etc.

(g) If the enemy appears to be destroyed, and it is intended to destroy or looting any cars or lorries, men for this task must be detailed beforehand. The rest must remain ready to open fire in case enemy are concealed in the lorries, or reinforcements arrive.

(h) The leader must give the signal to retire, and this signal must be unmistakable.

To judge the correct moment to break off the action is the leader's most difficult task. If the opening volleys of fires have not disorganized the enemy, it will probably be better to retire immediately, and be content with the damage done. If, however, the enemy detachment is completely destroyed, the opportunity should always be taken to seize all rifles, ammunitions, etc., and destroy or loot all other material. All papers and documents found should be taken away for examination. The dead must be searched for any-[17]thing that may be useful.

(i) Remember that soldiers will always face the direction from which they are being fired at. It is usually best therefore to divide the party into two groups, on different sides of the road, of which only one group should fire first. The enemy will then face towards this group and start to attack and fire. The other group must then shoot the enemy in the back.

(j) **Sentries must remain in position until the leader gives the signal to retire.**

(k) Retirement when begun should be as rapid and dispersed as possible, i.e., the party must break up, and collect again as the leader may have ordered. Make full

use of the time until the enemy hears of the attack to get right away from the scene.

- (1) All wounded guerillas must be carried away if possible. It may be useful to have a few horses hidden at a short distance to carry wounded.

5. **Road Blocks.**

The use of road blocks by means of trenches, fallen trees, rocks, etc., in conjunction with an ambush must be carefully considered.

At the commencement of guerilla warfare, before the enemy has had experience, it may be useful to have a block at the place of ambush, so as to force lorries to halt. When, however, the enemy is experienced, he will use scouts and patrols on all roads, and these will be warned by the blocks and so warn their [18] detachments. A stout wire rope fastened across the road after scouts have passed, at a suitable height to catch the motor driver, is a useful device.

If it can be arranged to have mines or bombs buried in the road which scouts will not see, these are of great assistance in demoralising the enemy. Fire should not be opened until the mine has been exploded under the enemy. Here are details of road mines:-

(1) **Crater or Land Mine:-** 60lbs. of high explosive buried 5 feet deep and fired electrically will produce a crater 25 feet across which will wreck a tank, armoured car, etc., completely. All traces of the digging must be obliterated carefully to avoid the enemy locating the ambush by scouts on motor-cycles. The digging for this reason should be done outside the tarred area of the road but close to it. If done overnight and

watered as soon as filled in, the traces of excavation can best be obliterated. The debris from the explosion will be thrown as far as 200 yards. Men in ambush 100 yards away, behind cover, are sufficiently protected, however. A crater so formed, if in a defile, is an impassible obstacle to tanks. The method of laying the charge is as follows:-

A hole 5 feet deep is dug and 60 lbs. of explosive in its paper wrapping is placed in the bottom. The paper wrapping of one packet is broken and an electric detonator is inserted, dug well into the explosive itself. Two wires, 100 yards in length, are joined, to the two ends of wire projecting from the electric detonator. If the ground is wet, these joints must be protected with insulating tape or some other covering. Care must be taken that the two joints do not touch. [19] The long wires are then led away to a distance and hidden where necessary in a shallow trench. When the two outer ends of the wire are connected to the terminals of an ordinary car battery the charge will be exploded.

(2) **Small Land Mine**:- A charge of 10 lbs. of high explosive with not more than 6 inches of earth covering will blow the track off a tank or the wheel off a lorry passing over it. The road should therefore be partially blocked by a broken-down farm cart or other means so that all traffice is forced to proceed through a very limited gap. The charge should be placed as in the preceding paragraph, but may be fired from a distance of 25 yards. Care must be taken to judge the exact moment the wheel of the vehicle passes over the charge.

(3) **Hand Bombs**:- These are of two sorts, those with a 7 second time fuze and those which go off on impact. The impact bomb is essentially for throwing. The thrower should locate himself behind a wall or other cover, preferably within 10 yards of

where the enemy will pass. The bomb will smash through any metal it is in contact with on impact, but will have little effect on a vehicle elsewhere. It should therefore be thrown to hit the side or tracks of a tank or the wheel of a vehicle. The time bomb is most effectively used for the destruction of any machinery or vehicles in which it is placed or thrown.

6. **Remember:-**

- (a) Let scouts pass.
- (b) Use your best shots to kill any officers or [20] N.C.Os and drivers of vehicles immediately.
- (c) Armed sentries must remain at their posts until ordered to retire.
- (d) Any looking or destruction must be protected by men ready to fire.

RAIL AMBUSH.

Appendix II.

In general the rules for road ambushes apply to rail ambushes, so read them and make certain you understand them.

The difference between a rail ambush and a road ambush is that in a rail ambush you must combine some plan to wreck the train, either by derailing it, by blowing a mine under the engine, or other means. **It is not sufficient merely to shoot at the train; this would do more harm than good and must be avoided.**

- (1) The principle is first to derail the train and then shoot down the survivors.

- (2) Choose some place which is suitable for wrecking, for example a high embankment where the falling engine will drag the coaches down with it; or a bridge, where the train will, with luck fall into the river.
- (3) Do not choose a place where trains run slowly; the faster the train is going, the better results you will get.
- (4) The coaches at the rear of the train will probably suffer least damage; your first volleys should be directed against.
- (5) It is best to dispose your party into two groups, [21] as in a road ambush, on opposite sides of the train.
- (6) The signal to shoot will be when the wrecking starts or the mine is exploded. Everyone must start firing immediately.
- (7) The train must not be looted until you are certain that all resistance by the enemy is at an end. After looting, it should be set on fire.
- (8) If the train is armoured, and the wrecking has not been severe, it may be better to retire immediately. An armoured train will usually have many machine-guns with it.

Read again the rules for a Road Ambush and apply them to this case.

Here are some methods of derailing a train:-

To derail a train with certainty, both rails must be cut. This can be done very easily in the following ways:-

- (1) One pound of high explosive pressed hard against the side of each rail.
- (2) Three pounds of high explosive placed against the under sides of each rail.

(3) Ten pounds of high explosive buried under the ballast not more than 4 inches from each rail.

(4) A single charge of fifty pounds of high explosive buried three or four feet deep between the rails. This will lift the locomotive ten feet into the air and is the best way where no bridge or steep slope can be found.

If the derailing is done by methods (3) or (4), [22] or where the ballast has been allowed to come close up under the rails by method (2) as well, it will be possible to lay the charge so that it will be undetected by day. Care must be taken not to show any signs of digging. A tin of water should be carried to wash down the stone ballast and clean it of earth adhering to it when using methods (3) or (4).

In all cases, it is best to fire the charge under or just in front of the front wheels of the locomotive. This can be done in two ways:-

- (a) By means of an electric detonator with long wires leading to a battery where a man is concealed to operate it at the right moment.
- (b) By means of a striker machine which is buried under a sleeper next to a rail joint.

The weight of the locomotive passing over releases a striker which fires the charge by means of an instantaneous fuze.

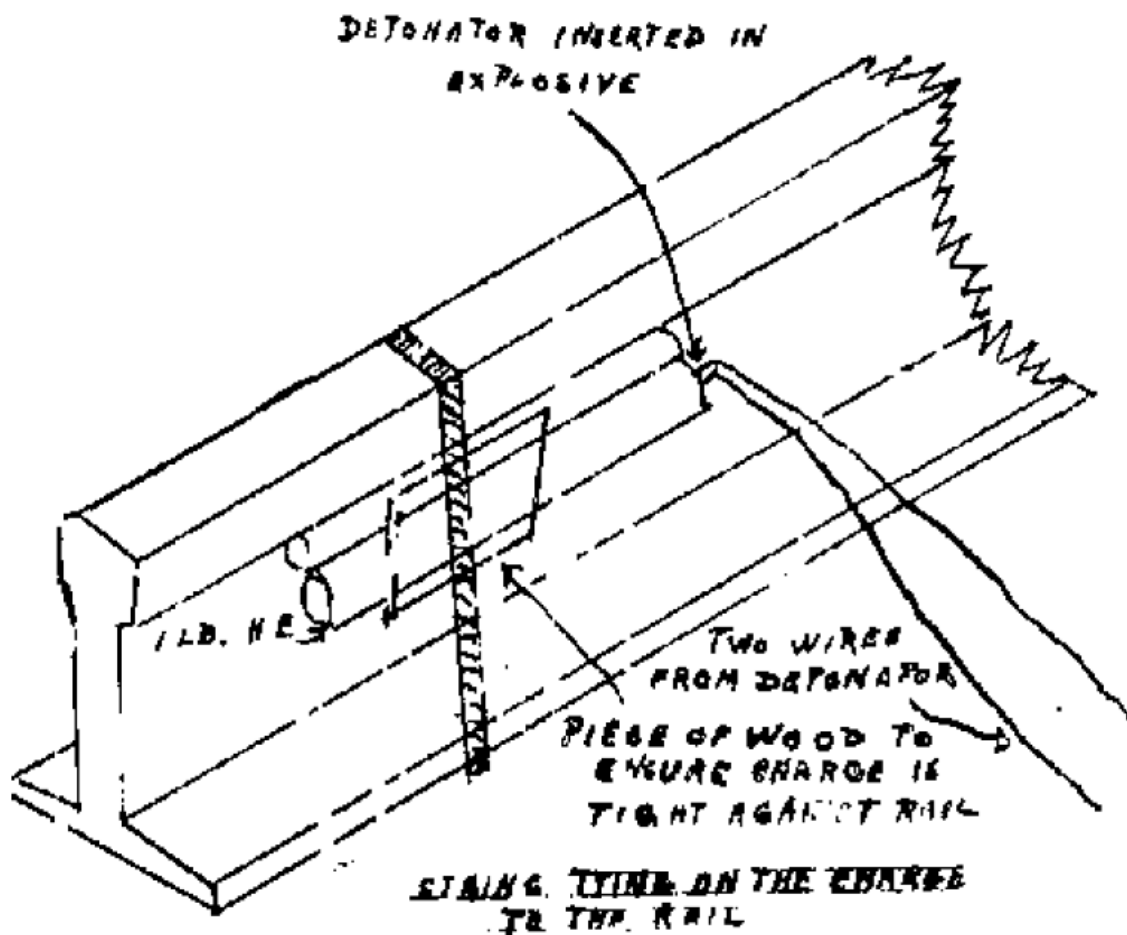
In both cases, the detonator must be buried firmly in the explosive. When a battery is used, great care must be taken that the battery does not come near the end of the wire till the last moment, to avoid accidents.

A length of wire up to 100 yards may be used leading away from the explosive to a hidden spot where it is fired. Insulated wire such as is used for electric light in houses

must be used. The accumulator batter out of a car is best but a good hand torch dry battery will do. [23]

Diagrams¹²⁵⁵ of methods (1) and (2) of cutting rails:-

Method (1).

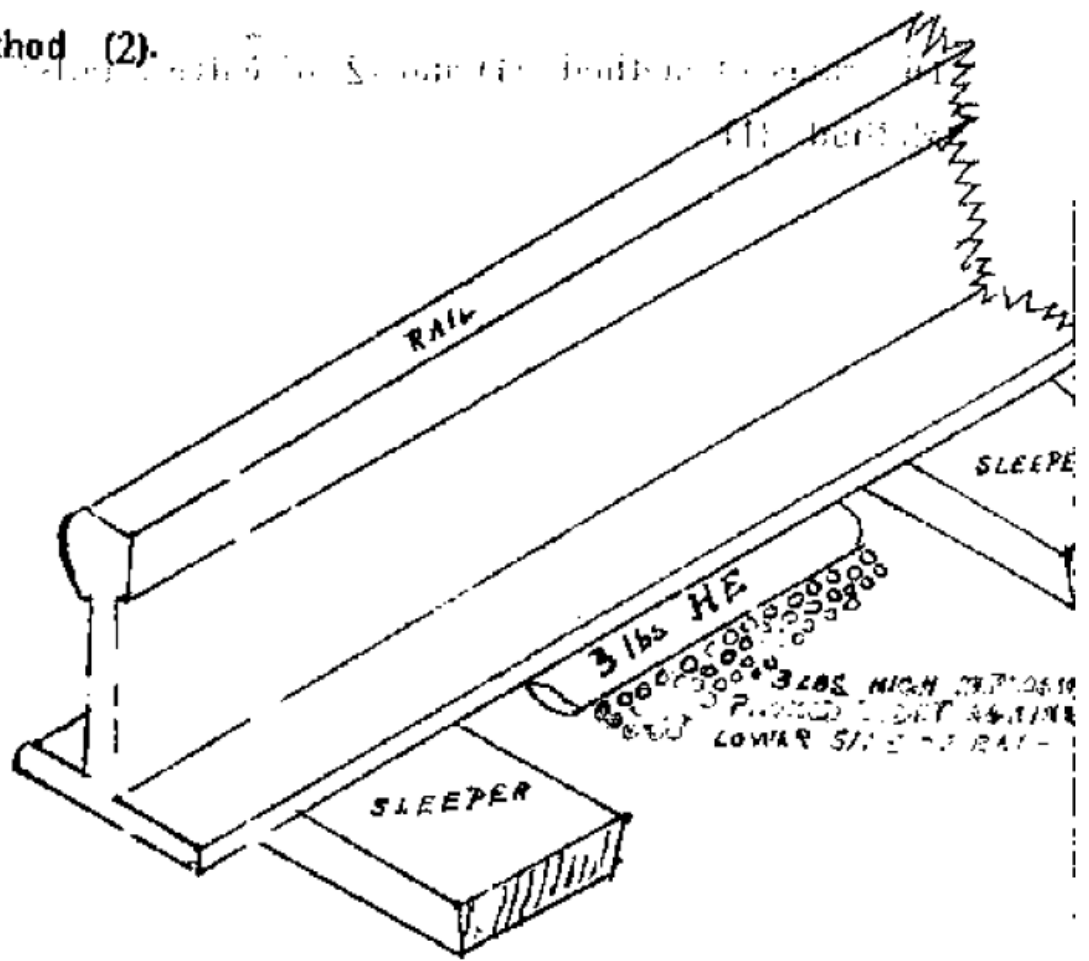


[24]

¹²⁵⁵ Diagrams used with the permission of the Imperial War Museum for dissertation purposes only. Not to be reproduced without the permission of the copyright holder.

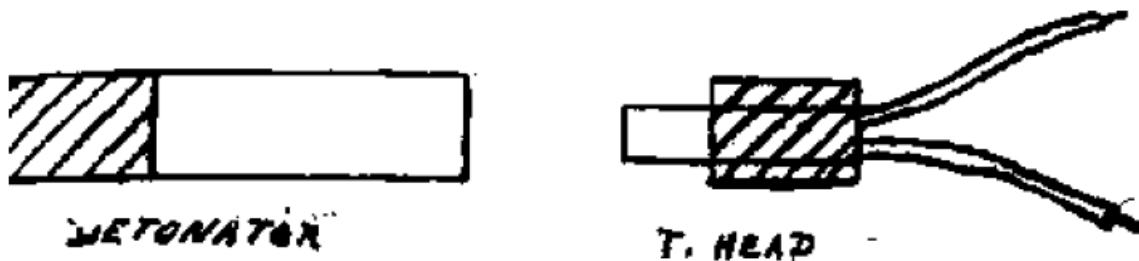
Method (2).

Method (2).



Detonator and wires to battery should be arranged as in Method (1).

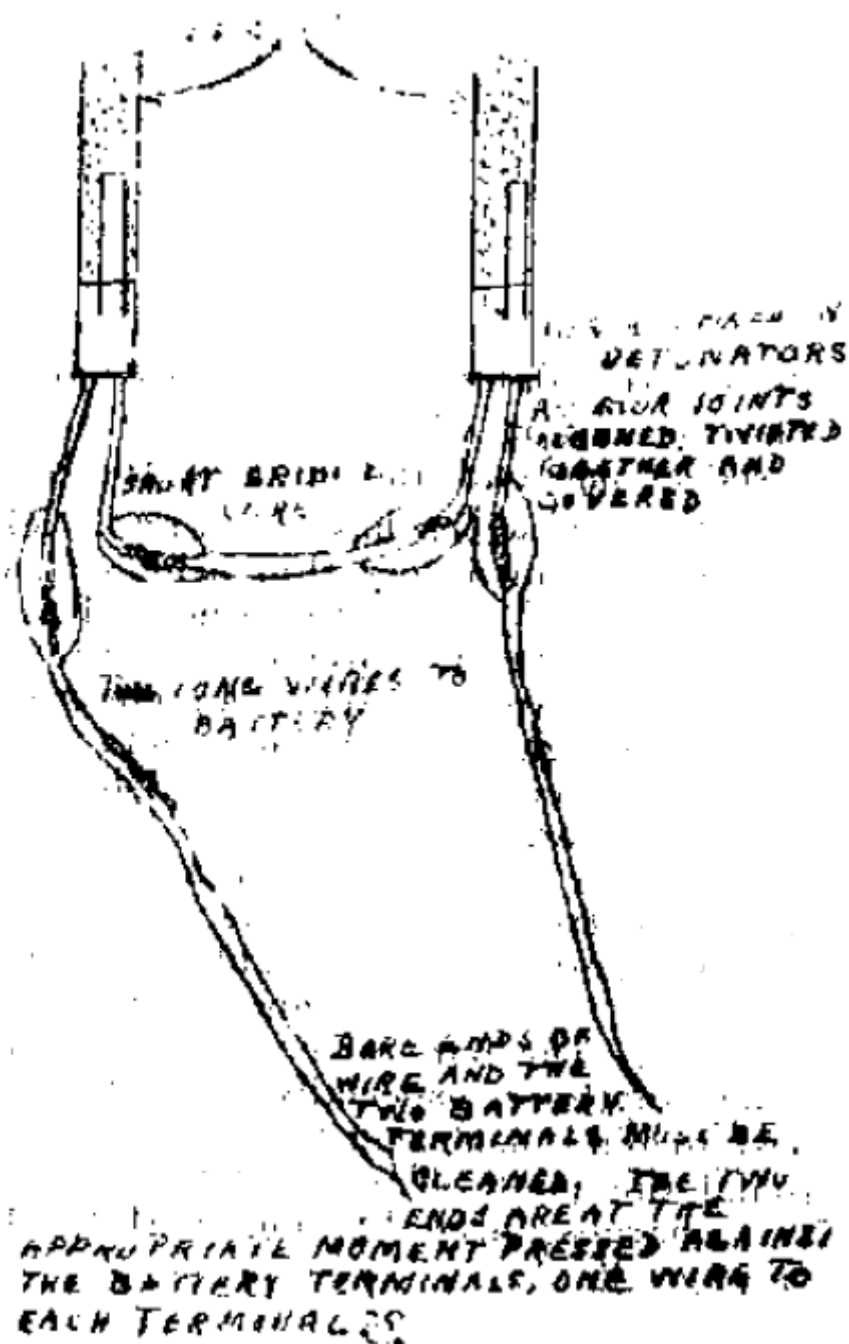
[25] Method of connecting electric detonators.



The electric detonator is in two parts:-

- (1) The detonator, which is a small copper tube closed at one end and open at the other.
- (2) The T head, which has two wires sticking out of one end and a very thin bridge of wire like the filament of a lamp the other. The filament end of the T head is pressed into the open end of the detonator. When an electric current passes through the filament it gets red hot and burns away completely but in doing so ignites the detonator.

When wires are joined together or to the T head or battery, the covering must be cut away and the metal cleaned bright by scraping with a knife. The wires may then be twisted together. The bare wire at a joint must never touch anything, especially another joint. It is best to bind insulating tape or a piece of cloth round the joint. The joining of the wires for two charges fired by one battery is shown on page 26. [26]



[27] Destruction of Railway Engines:-

(1) If you have no explosives, run off most of the water into the boiler and bank up the fire. The fire box, no longer cooled by the water, will get red hot and the steam pressure will bend it in.

(2) If you have explosives, make it up into one pound packets each with a hand bomb time striker mechanism. This mechanism will explode the charge six seconds after the pin is pulled out. The best places to put these charges are on any of the large machined portions of the engine which the hand bombs will cover and are not more than 1" thick. If the engine is cold, open the smoke box in front and put a charge just inside one of the tube openings.

THE DESTRUCTION OF AN ENEMY

Appendix III.

POST, DETACHMENT OR GUARD.

1. The object of this can be either to inflict casualties on the enemy, or to carry out the destruction of some place which the detachment is guarding.
2. The detachment will usually be housed in a small house, hut, or tents, and will have taken steps to try and make these safe against attack. Remember, however, that if you use cunning, patience, and determination, no small post can be made impregnable and at the same time do its job of protection properly. [28]
3. **Information:-** You must get detailed information of the posts in your area, and then decide which offers the best chances of success. It may not be possible to get full

details of all, but you will get enough information about some of them to enable you to select one and carry out a successful attack.

4. The points on which you should get information are:-

- (a) Strength of the detachment, number of officers, N.C.Os etc.
- (b) Who commands the detachment?
- (c) Are the troops active or reserve? Are they old or young men? To what regiment or district do they belong?
- (d) What arms and equipment do they carry? Have they machine-guns?
- (e) Is there a reserve of arms in the post? Where are they kept?
- (f) What are the orders for safe custody of arms? Are they locked up?
- (g) What means of communication has the post got – i.e.
 - (i) Telegraph or telephone wireless.
 - (ii) Signal flags.
 - (iii) Rockets.
 - (iv) Pigeons.
 - (v) Sirens, hooters.
 - (vi) Messengers.
 ETC.

Can any of these be destroyed when necessary?

- (h) What sentries does the post provide – [29]
 - (i) On the railway, bridge, or store it is guarding?
 - (ii) On the post itself?

- (i) At what hours are sentries relieved –
 - (i) By day?
 - (ii) By night?
- (k) How is relief carried out?
- (l) Is there a group of men in the post always ready for immediate action? How strong is it?
- (m) How long is each sentry's beat? What are its limits?
- (n) What places can these sentries not see except by going to them?
- (o) Are any civilians allowed to approach or enter the post, selling food, papers, etc.? Can you use any of these civilians to get information?
- (p) Are there any searchlights in position?
- (q) Is the post protected with barbed wire? Is this wire electrified? How do soldiers get in and out?
- (r) Where does the post get its water supply from?
Can the source of water be destroyed?
- (s) How often is the post and its guard inspected by someone from outside?
- (t) How far away is the nearest re-inforcement and how long would it take to come?
Can it be ambushed on the way by another part?
- (u) Can your destructive work be undertaken while the post is being fired at, or must the post first be destroyed completely? [30]
- (v) Can the post be blinded by smoke bombs for long enough to allow the destruction to be done?

(x) Are there watch-dogs, alarm traps, etc.?

ETC. ETC.

5. **Plan:-** This must depend on the information collected regarding the daily life and habits of the post, the state of alertness of the guard, its strength, armament, etc.

If the post is very small – say six to eight men – it may be possible to capture it by getting one or two men inside to seize the arms and hold up the guard at the moment the sentries are shot; on the other hand, it may be possible to rush the post from outside after shooting the sentries, to surround it and cut all communication, and shoot down all the men inside. It will also frequently be practicable to carry out destruction by one group while the other group of the party prevents the enemy of the post interfering. This depends to some extent on how long the destruction will take.

If the post is large, it will probably not be possible to destroy it. In such cases, if you wish to carry out some really important destructive work, it should be attempted by masking the post with heavy fire, smoke, etc. Such an attack has usually most chance of success when carried out by night.

In every case of an attack on a post, your first care must be to arrange for the destruction of means of communication – i.e., telegraph, wireless, etc. – unless you have a plan to ambush reinforcements. [31]

Do not alarm any post that you mean eventually to attack – i.e., do not allow men to snipe it, to cut off its water supply, etc. Leave it absolutely quite until the moment for attack comes. This will put the enemy off his guard.

**CONCEALMENT AND CARE OF
ARMS AND EXPLOSIVES**

Appendix IV.

Try and get your arms before the enemy invades your country, so that you can conceal them more easily and at leisure.

1. One of the first acts of the enemy will be to demand the surrender of all arms held by the civil population.
2. All arms, bombs, etc., which are concealed must be protected against damp, rust, etc.; remember that your life and that of your friends may depend on a weapon in good order. The best way of preserving rifles, revolvers, etc., is to cover them with mineral jelly or Vaseline, and wrap them in greasy paper or cloth. They may then be safely buried.
3. Places where arms can be concealed are:-
 - (a) In the ground by burying. Choose a place where the earth has already been turned, or else go far away into a wood, etc.
 - (b) In the thatch or roof of a house.
 - (c) In a well-shaft, by making a chamber in the wall six feet or more down the shaft.
 - (d) In the banks of streams, in hollow trees, behind a water-fall, etc. [32]
 - (e) In haystacks, potato or turnip heaps, ditches, culverts, etc.
 - (f) Do **not** use places like cellars, wooden floors, cattle sheds, etc., which the enemy is bound to search.
 - (g) As a last resort, give them to your women if caught unexpectedly.

4. You must make every effort to obtain arms and ammunition from the enemy during ambushes, raids, sniping, etc., as it will be difficult in time of war to replenish your stock by other means. Boxes of rifles and ammunition are frequently transported by rail and in lorries, inadequately guarded: find out when these are being carried and try and get them.

Be very cautious of buying arms from a supposed enemy traitor. This is a common way of inducing you to walk into a trap.

THE ENEMY'S INFORMATION

Appendix V.

SYSTEM AND HOW TO COUNTER IT.

As soon as guerilla warfare or sabotage commences, the enemy will set up an information organization in order to try and find out your organization, leaders and intentions.

The methods he will employ are as follows:-

- (1) Local agents, selected from amongst the inhabitants, and either bribed or compelled to act for him.
- (2) Agents recruited from his own or other countries and imported into your area.

These two types of agents can only be discov-[33]ered by very careful work on your part, by getting information regarding arrivals of unknown people, by laying traps for suspected agents, etc.

- (3) Special information branches that he will form.
- (4) Captured prisoners and their interrogation.

- (5) Captured documents which may reveal details of your organization, plans, names of partisans, etc. It is most important that no documents should be kept unless absolutely essential, and these should never be carried on the person for longer than necessary. This is usually the enemy's best source of information.
- (6) Censorship of civilian letters.
- (7) By placing agents among captured partisans. This is a difficult thing to counter and can only be met by strict discipline among the partisans in the prisons and concentration camps. They should be trained never to talk about their military matters, to mention names, or to give away any information at all. Steps must be taken within prisons by the partisans to test and try out every prisoner who comes in, to make absolutely certain that he is not an agent in disguise.
- (8) **Listening sets:-** These will also be placed in prisons and camps, so all conversation must be restricted to general matters and nothing said which might lead to the capture or death of your compatriots. [34]
- (9) Men who are captured must at once organize themselves in the prison to censor all their own letters that they are writing to friends outside, and to censor all incoming letters to individual prisoners.
- (10) The best method of dealing with informers is their ruthless extermination when discovered, as described in the main part of this book.
- (11) Prisoners who are being interrogated may be tempted by the fact that there is only one enemy in the room to give away information if pressed, as they may feel that only one person will know it. All men must know that this is not

correct; not only will the enemy install listening sets in the room in which the prisoners are interrogated in order that two or three people may hear any confession, but also all the information a prisoner gives, and his name and district, will be taken down in writing and distributed everywhere. His comrades would then eventually discover his treachery and he would be dealt with suitably when the enemy has been defeated.

You must try and break up or hinder the enemy's information organization by all means. The most effective is the destruction of the personnel engaged on that work. Intelligence officers, N.C.Os, etc., will frequently work individually and move about the countryside. Opportunities must be sought to kill them and destroy or carry off any papers they are carrying. [35]

HOW TO COUNTER ENEMY ACTION.

Appendix VI.

The enemy will make use of his superior armaments to try and break up guerilla activities. Here are some of the methods he will employ, and ways for you to counter them.

- (1) **Aeroplanes:-** These will be used to search the country for guerilla parties, and possibly also to attack them. The best counter is concealment, therefore move as much as you can by night. By day, on the approach of an aeroplane, men must be taught to get under whatever cover is available, **and to lie still with faces to the ground.** Movement and human faces show up to aeroplanes at once.

Do not fire at an aeroplane unless actually attacked by it. Remember that an aeroplane, if it sees you, will at once report your position to the nearest military detachment who will come out after you. Therefore, if you think your party has been seen, move off at once to some other place, and keep a good lookout.

- (2) **Tanks, armoured cars, armour-plated lorries etc.:-** Do not shoot at these haphazardly; it will have no effect unless you have anti-tank rifles and bombs, etc. You must lay a proper trap if you are trying to destroy them – i.e. a road mine or block, or the vehicle must be halted. Remember that these vehicles shut down their windows when attacked, and are then very blind; it will then be possible for [36] hold men to crawl close enough to bomb them or set them on fire with petrol.
- (3) **Gas:-** The enemy will only use gas if he gets you in a corner and other methods fail. Therefore your first precaution must be to avoid being caught where you cannot get away. Your information of the enemy's plans and proper posting of sentries and look-outs when the party is collected will prevent you being caught. If you hear that the enemy intends using gas against guerillas, all men should provide themselves with gas-masks.
- (4) **Shells, bombs, grenades:-** Against these weapons the best protection is to be down flat behind any cover available, such as a bank, ditch, etc.
- (5) **Machine-guns, etc. :-** Smoke bombs can be used to create a smoke screen between yourself and the machine-gun so as to enable you to get away.

GUERRILLA INFORMATION SERVICE.**Appendix VII.**

1. Early information of the enemy's moves, strength, intention, etc., is vitally important. You must therefore impress on all your compatriots the necessity of passing on to some members of the party any information they hear. The following, owing to their occupations, are in a good position to get news:- [37]

- (a) Innkeepers, hawkers.
- (b) Waitresses, barmaids, etc.
- (c) Postmen, telephone and telegraph operators.
- (d) Station-masters, railway porters and staffs.
- (e) Doctors, priests, dentists, hospital staff.
- (f) Domestic servants, barbers.
- (g) Shopkeepers, newsagents.
- (h) Contractors, camp followers, camp sanitary men.
- (i) All people who have access to military camps, establishments, etc.
- (j) Discontented enemy soldiers.

2. Domestic servants and café attendants are particularly valuable agents; they must be encouraged to gain the confidence of the enemy soldiers, and be on easy and intimate terms with them. Suitable agents of this type should be introduced into houses where enemy officers are billeted, etc. It is a natural weakness of soldiers in a hostile country to react favourably to acts of courtesy and kindness from women; such men will frequently drop unsuspecting hints that they are shortly going on patrol, etc. The agent must then find out as much detail as possible and pass it on at once.

3. Discontented soldiers must be discovered, i.e., those who have recently been punished, have had their pay stopped, etc. These, if encouraged, may give useful information.
4. Information should be passed by word of mouth unless that is impossible. If impossible, it must be written and sent by messenger (children frequently make good messengers) or placed in a pre-arranged [38] place, and then destroyed by the recipient.

SABOTAGE METHODS.

Appendix VIII.

Sabotage means any act done by individuals that interferes with the enemy and so helps your people to defeat him. It covers anything from the shooting of a sentry to the blowing-up of an ammunition dump. The following are various acts, and the best way of carrying out the difficult ones:-

- (1) **Lorries, cars, tanks, etc.:-** Burn them by knocking a hole in the bottom of the petrol tank, and setting fire to the escaping petrol. If you can't burn them, put water or sugar in the petrol tank, or remove the magneto, etc. This will temporarily disable the vehicle.
- (2) **Munition Dumps:-** The best method is to lay a charge of explosive among the shells and then explode it, but it will be rare that you will get an opportunity to do this unless you are disguised as an enemy soldier. There are other ways. If the dump is in a building, a good way is to set fire to the building. Use oil-soaked rags, shavings, thermite bomb. If the dump is in an open field or by the

road, throw a special bomb into it (this must be a bomb with at least one kilogramme of explosive in it, and you must hit a shell or it will not be effective).

- (3) **Cement:-** Open the sacks, and pour water on them, or leave them for rain and moisture to get in. [39]
- (4) **Hay, Forage:-** Burn or throw acid or disinfectant.
- (5) **Petrol stocks:-** Use a special bomb or thermite bomb.
- (6) **Refrigerator sheds, and refrigerator railway vans:-** Destroy the refrigerating apparatus.
- (7) Sniping and killing sentries, stragglers, etc. Get a rifle or revolver with a silencer, but use a knife or noose when you can. This has a great frightening effect. Don't act unless you are certain you can get away safely. Nighttime is best and has the best effect on enemy nerves. Get used to moving about in the dark yourself. Wear rubber shoes and darken your face.
- (8) **Telegraph lines on roads and railways:-** Cut these whenever possible. When you cannot reach them, throw over a rope with a weight on the end and try and drag them down. Cut down a tree so that it will fall across them.
- (9) **Railways:-** Jam the points by hammering a wooden wedge into them. Cut signal wires. Set fire to any coaches and wagons you can get at. If you can use explosive, try and destroy the points. Remember that railways can carry very little traffice if the signaling apparatus is interfered with, and this traffice must go every slowly.

- (10) **Water supplies:-** Contaminate water which [40] is used by the enemy. Use paraffin, strong disinfectants, salt, etc.
- (11) Destruction of leading marks, buoys, lightships, etc., in navigable waters.
- (12) **Burning of soldiers' cinemas, theatres:-** Cinema films are highly inflammable. The cinema should be fired **during a performance** by firing the films in the operator's box. This should easily be arranged.
- (13) Time bombs, cigar-shaped, are very suitable for placing in trains, lorries, etc. They are made of lead tubing, dividing into two halves by a copper disc. Suitable acids are put in each half, and when they have eaten the copper away, the acids combine and form an intensely hot flame, which set fire to anything with which it comes into contact. The thickness of the copper disc determines when the bomb will go off. Get some of these bombs.

F I N I S

VITA

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