

TERRIFIC FUN

The Short Life of Billy Moss: Soldier, Writer and Traveller

The Fates had at first been kind to Billy Moss. Born into a privileged background and brought up by devoted parents, he was good looking, athletic and a precociously talented writer; he had penned his first book *Island Adventure* by the time he was fifteen. With a languid charm and a playful self-deprecation typical of his era, Billy had every chance of succeeding in whatever career he chose to pursue. Then, three months after his eighteenth birthday, a reluctant Britain declared a state of war with Germany and his future was no longer a matter of choice; it was a day that was to impact on him for the rest of his life.

Childhood, boyhood and youth

Billy's father, Stanley Moss, was born in Japan in 1875. The son of Charles D. Moss¹, the Chief Clerk and Registrar of H.B.M.'s Court for Japan, Stanley was a successful businessman, making and losing a fortune three times over. At the age of forty, Stanley married Natalie Galitch, a Russian national eighteen years his junior born in Nikolayevsk-on-Amur, at that time a busy port in Eastern Siberia. Her father at one point was the mayor of Harbin, a city of 60,000 which had been built during the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway [1897-1902] that linked Vladivostok with Chita.

An only child, Billy was born in Yokohama on 15 June 1921 and two years later, after a devastating earthquake² levelled most of the city – 'the house was wrecked and after spending one week on the hill above the house with no protection and sleeping in the open air [we] were taken off by American destroyer'³ - the Moss family made their way to Kobe, then to Shanghai and from there to England. It was to be the first of many such journeys; by the time he was a teenager, he calculated he travelled two and a half times around the world, including a return journey to Japan in 1927/28.

Schooling started for Billy at the age of five; at The Hall School in Weybridge he was viewed as 'a most promising child' and at St Dunstan's School in Finchley Road, he received a similar appraisal the following year. From there, he was sent to Lydgate House School in Hunstanton in Norfolk where he made an excellent impression. On his leaving, the headmaster wrote to his parents that 'he had been a fine little fellow, has proved himself most capable and loyal as Head Boy'. With a wide range of interests such as art, theatre, cinema, and music, together with sports such as cricket, football, boxing, and tennis, Billy soon settled in to his public school, Charterhouse, set in the Surrey countryside outside Godalming.

In his final year at Charterhouse, with the help of two friends, he produced *Congress*, a school magazine to which he invited illustrious Old Carthusians to contribute. Many accepted with the exception of Robert Graves who wrote a testy letter of refusal – 'Dear Mr Editor, Sorry: I have no story and don't write articles and the chief connexion I have with the school is a recurrent nightmare that I am back there again...' The one and only issue with a print run of 1,000, and illustrated by Billy, was by any standards a considerable success. It included fiction by Richard Hughes of *High Wind in Jamaica* fame;

¹ Charles Moss had originally travelled to Australia on account of ill-health. He went to visit his brother, E.J.Moss, in Yokohama and stayed for the next thirty years until his death in 1903. His funeral was attended by his brother and nephew, E.J.Moss Jnr, his son and C. Moss and P. Moss.

² The Great Kanto earthquake of 1 September 1923 killed over 100,000 people. Yokohama and Tokyo were devastated.

³Diary entry Stanley Moss.

a history of the Boer War by Lord Baden Powell; humour by Ben Travers and W.C.Sellar of *1066 and All That*; reminiscences of actors Aubrey Smith and Richard Goolden; articles by golfer Henry Longhurst and travel writer Henry Baerlein; and Lieutenant-Commander Scourfield's account of the mining of *HMS Hunter* off Spain.

Stanley Moss, having lost his first fortune in the Yokohama earthquake disaster, had worked hard to accrue a second, only to lose it in the Wall Street Crash of 1929. A third foray into Japanese mining proved successful until the Japanese government sequestered his assets. Stanley died suddenly in 1938. They had been a close-knit family, travelling together to many parts of the world. Billy found he felt the loss of his father more acutely as time went on than he did at first.

He and his mother were left in relatively straightened circumstances⁴ and the fees for his final year at Charterhouse were paid by his uncle, the diplomat Sir George Moss, later Adviser on Chinese Affairs to SOE's Delhi Group.

On leaving school in July 1939, Billy accompanied his mother together with her sister, Olga, and her brother-in-law on a trip to Riga. Leaving Tilbury on 3 August, they arrived in Gothenburg and after a brief stopover in Stockholm, they reached Riga on 7 August. Almost immediately they found themselves caught up in the chaotic events that surrounded the British declaration of war against Germany on 3 September. Running perilously low on money, they left Riga on 7 September and reached Stockholm where they caught a train to Oslo. After several adventures in search of a ship, they ended up in Bergen where they found a passage to Newcastle. Their ship, *The Meteor*, once the Kaiser's yacht, sailed at 11.30 p.m. with over 200 passengers on board, most of who slept on deck in fear of being torpedoed by a German U-boat⁵. The very next day Billy started work as a trainee accountant with The British American Tobacco Company⁶, which had recently relocated from London to Egham after the Ministry of Supply had requisitioned its Westminster Head Office. After finding digs in Staines, Billy worked for the company until the New Year of 1941 when he joined the Army.

Off to war with the Coldstream Guards

Enlisting in the Coldstream Guards, one of Britain's oldest and most distinguished regiments, Billy started his military career at the Guards Depot in Caterham, the home of 'spit and polish', and moustachioed Sergeant Majors with a variety of encouraging phrases. Accepted for officer training, he progressed to Sandhurst in April and by the beginning of August was gazetted Second Lieutenant Emergency Commission⁷. Soldiering on the home front at that time was somewhat akin to peacetime; King's Guard at St James's Palace, cocktail parties, deb dances and a spell with the holding battalion at Chequers⁸. In his diary, he noted 'it had been wonderful staying at Chequers at a time when every word spoken by Churchill was gospel and thrilling to see him "off duty" and to speak with him and eat and drink with him and understand him and his ways'. A period of guarding Rudolf Hess at Mytchett Place in Surrey was followed by a posting to the 6th battalion before finally being sent overseas in August 1942 to join the 3rd battalion. As Billy put it, 'there had been the blitz, and yet we had all been so gay – theatres, night-clubs, restaurants and riotous weekends'.

⁴ WSM left £400, about £22,000 at today's valuation.

⁵ It was an uneventful voyage unlike a later one when *The Meteor* was stopped by a German submarine in the North Sea. After demanding to know how many British passengers were on board, the Captain quickly dived on the approach of a British patrol.

⁶ He had been offered a job with them on 19 July 1939 while still at school and Britain still at peace.

⁷ 2.8.1941

⁸ 1.9.1941-20.1.1942

In his 1944 diary, Billy was curiously diffident and précised about his war in North Africa: ‘...then up into the desert – action for the first time and, of course, it was the best time, because it only lasted for two or three months and the campaign was over – lovely feeling of advancing and beating the Germans – after that a pleasant ‘rest cure’ by the sea at Hamamet...’ The true story of 3rd battalion Coldstream Guards in North Africa was a good deal more dramatic; and later, in *A War of Shadows*, Billy lifts this veil of nonchalance when he recalls an incident in Tunisia, ‘when you saw a guardsman lying in the middle of a minefield with both his legs blown off, and crying to you, begging you to drag him out..’.

Arriving in Cairo on 17 October, Billy found the battalion at Quatana to the South of Damascus, where, as part of 201 Guards Motor Brigade, it was engaged in what was termed a flag waving exercise, ostensibly to guard the oil fields at Kirkuk but primarily to provide a show of force to the Turks. It must have been a daunting moment for a young officer to join a battle-hardened unit that had been continuously in action in the desert since the outbreak of war⁹. One of its most famous exploits was when Major Hereward Sainthill¹⁰, the acting commanding officer, courageously fought his way out of Tobruk, bringing 17 Coldstream officers and 183 Other Ranks [ORs] back to Allied lines. As the regimental history of the Coldstream Guards pithily records, ‘there was an air of unorthodoxy about the 3rd battalion, with its battered yellow trucks, the Arab argot of the guardsmen, the Hebron coats, desert boots, and coloured fly-switches of the officers’.

Simon Phipps, who joined the battalion at the same time, was at first in awe of these bronzed veterans but soon made to feel welcome. ‘The Hebron coats were found in Damascus, an hour’s drive away [from Quatana]. The shops of Mr Saki and Mr Arouni in the bazaar were stores of brocades and carpets and coats of sheepskin or astrakhan lamb. One would stagger away, well loaded, to dine at the Orient Palace Hotel’¹¹.

Then in February 1943, the order came for 201 Guards Brigade to go up to the front, by this time in Tunisia. This involved a non-stop drive along the coast of North Africa, a journey that lasted over a month and took the men of the 3rd battalion through old haunts like Mersah Matruh, Tobruk and Benghazi. On 6 March, along with the 6th battalion Grenadier Guards and 2nd battalion Scots Guards, the Coldstreams were deployed at Medenine in a U-shaped defence to stop a German counter-attack. It was a turkey shoot, the Germans retreating leaving fifty-four irreplaceable tanks behind, most destroyed by the anti-tank guns of the Scots Guards. The Brigade was exhilarated and when Montgomery told them ‘when I give a party, it is a good party...this is going to be a good party’, the Guardsmen moved forward with confidence and optimism.

About 10 miles to the northwest of Medinine on the road to Tunis lies a hilly feature known as the Horseshoe. About 600 feet above sea level, it dominates the flat landscape around and controls the approaches to Mareth. Reported to be lightly held by run of the mill enemy units, this was the location of Montgomery’s next ‘party’. On the night of 16 March 1943, the Brigade formed up, the Grenadiers on the right, the Coldstreams on the left and the Scots Guards in reserve. Such had been the need for security that only a handful of recon patrols had been sent out to probe ‘the lightly held defences’. No

⁹ The battalion had been posted to Egypt in 1937 and based in Mustapha Barracks, Alexandria. It had been in action against the Italians and then the Germans from July 1940 onwards.

¹⁰ Famous for his signal: ‘Surrender is not an operation that the 3rd battalion has practiced in peacetime and we do not intend to start now’.

¹¹ History 2nd and 3rd battalions.

air photographs were available and no enemy prisoners had been snatched¹². Just as the Brigade was about to cross the start line, a German aircraft flew over the battlefield dropping flares. It was as if the Brigade was expected. The Guardsmen froze in their tracks.

Then at exactly 2045 hrs, the British artillery opened up – it was to fire some 24,000 rounds in the next ten hours – and the Guardsmen advanced in open formation, crossing a small wadi¹³ and making their way slowly up the hills to their front. Then literally all hell broke loose. Accurate German mortar fire rained down on them, machine guns opened up from their rear and the first wave found itself in a densely sewn minefield. As the troops pressed on, they found themselves in a second even denser minefield which exacted terrible casualties. In a death defying display of courage and superhuman determination, No 1 Company fought its way to the top of the rocky outcrop of Sidi el Guelaa in savage hand to hand fighting; a paltry nine men returned out of the 120 or so who had set off. Their commander, Michael Wills, lay dead among the rocks and scrub that his men had so gloriously taken.

The Bren gun carriers, key to the success of the assault with their loads of ammunition and water, were unable to cross the steep banks of Wadi Zess and by first light, at 0525 hrs, the Brigade withdrew. Eleven Coldstream officers and 148 ORs were killed, wounded or missing. For the Grenadiers, the tally was even worse. The Battle of the Horseshoe was one of the greatest and most terrible fought by the Brigade of Guards in the Second World War and an abject lesson in poor battlefield intelligence or, as the Coldstream history puts it, ‘faulty information’. Not only had the German minefields remained undetected but the defenders turned out to be none other than the crack German 90th Light Division, one of the most experienced formations of the Afrika Korps. For Billy, this had been a satanic baptism of fire.

By April, 201 Guards Brigade was back in the line and the 3rd battalion linked up with the 2nd battalion which had landed as part of 1st Army the previous November in Algiers. Both units took part in the final days of the Tunisian campaign. The battalion’s next task was to garrison the Island of Pantellaria¹⁴ to the south of Sicily. By all accounts this was a pleasant interlude to the grim business of fighting a determined and skilful enemy. It was not to last and on 7 August the battalion moved to the assembly area at Tripoli for the invasion of Italy where it landed a month later. By then, Billy, with his fluency in Russian, was on his way to the top secret Force 133, the codename of the Special Operations Executive [S.O.E.] in the Middle East. Set up by Churchill in 1940 to ‘set Europe ablaze’, S.O.E. Cairo had been engaged in collecting intelligence, sabotaging key installations and arming and training resistance fighters in Greece and the Balkans since early 1941.

A few weeks later, he met Peter Daubeny, a fellow officer from 3rd battalion, ‘who turned up [in Cairo] with his left arm blown off’. Having landed at Salerno on 9 September, the battalion had been almost continuously in action. By the time it came out of the line on 26 September, the havoc inflicted by the Germans on the battalion at Salerno was truly appalling – eight officers and sixty ORs killed, ten officers and 163 ORs wounded. No.1 Company has ceased to exist for the second time in less than six months. Billy recorded in his diary ‘Peter¹⁵ –left arm blown off, Jonny L, John H, Mike B

¹² In stark contrast, the Germans had captured a Gunner officer with a copy of the operational order on him.

¹³ Wadi Zess.

¹⁴ Pantellaria had surrendered on 11 June 1943 after being bombed into submission. Operation CORKSCREW, the Allied landing by British commandoes, was unopposed.

¹⁵ Lt Peter Daubeny WIA 11 September 1943; Lt John Longueville KIA 14 September 1943; Captain R.J.M.Harly KIA 14 September 1943; Major the Hon Michael Brodrick MC KIA 10 September 1943; Lt the Hon David Joicey KIA 25 September 1943; Major William Gore-Langton WIA 11 September 1943.

killed...David killed [was this David Forbes?¹⁶], Bill G-L – right arm blown off.’ He was particularly upset by the news of Lionel Buxton’s death, ‘shattering news ...and the bottom seemed to have fallen out of everything – plans and schemes and dreams and the best friend I’ve ever had just vanished’.

Soldiering with S.O.E. behind enemy lines turned out to prove dangerous and demanding but inherently less risky for a young officer than confronting battle hardened well-equipped and well-led German troops on the front line.

In Cairo with S.O.E.

Allocated the symbol D/H 793, Billy reported for duty at S.O.E.’s offices at Rustom Buildings in Cairo on 22 September 1943. At 22 years old, he was one of its youngest members. After temporarily acting as an A.D.C. to a Brigadier, he was appointed G3 Albania, a junior staff officer’s position; his job was to ensure that the British Military Missions [BMM] heading for Albania had everything they needed before they left and then to ensure their timely despatch. Similar duties were carried out by the G3 on the return of a Mission. Major David Smiley remembered how after leaving Albania “we flew from Bari to Cairo, where we were met by a tall, languid officer of the Coldstream Guards, who introduced himself as Billy Moss and informed us that he was our conducting officer....Moss very kindly invited us to join him in a big house in Zamalek which he and some others were sharing.”¹⁷

The house was ‘Tara’, a spacious villa which Billy had found as an alternative to the dreary S.O.E. ‘Hangover Hall’ hostel he was billeted in. With the delectable Countess Sophie Tarnowska as ‘the presiding genius and Egeria¹⁸ of the household’¹⁹ and S.O.E. officer Arnold Breene²⁰ as its first lodger, the arrival of Paddy Leigh Fermor [after fifteen months behind enemy lines in Crete], David Smiley, Billy McLean and Rowland Winn soon made ‘Tara’ the place to be seen. It was to become a legend ‘for its riotous parties and for the eccentric behaviour of its occupants’²¹.

For Billy, Cairo provided an entrée into a glamorous world of high society far removed from the close-knit kudos of regimental soldiering, a glittering milieu populated by European royalty in exile, scions and relations of the fabulous wealthy Egyptian monarchy, crafty diplomats, literary intellectuals, and an inexhaustible supply of spies and devil-may-care soldiers. It was to leave an indelible impression on him. In particular, he adored the witty and fun-loving Leigh Fermor, his elder by six years, and relished every moment spent in his scintillating company.

Plotting a kidnap: the abduction of General Kreipe

Leigh Fermor had been operating in enemy-occupied Crete from June 1942 to September 1943. His last action had been to smuggle the Italian General Angelo Carta off the island after the 8 September announcement of the Armistice by General Badoglio. Already in touch with the Italians through Major Tavana, the head of Italian counter-espionage on the island, Leigh Fermor had managed to arrange a meeting with the General to discuss how best to resist the German call for the disarmament of the large Italian contingent which garrisoned the east of the island. However, events moved too quickly for any chance of successful negotiations, so a hastily improvised escape plan was put in place. Driven in his

¹⁶ Lt Col killed Cassino 23 Nov 1943

¹⁷ David Smiley: *Albanian Assignment*.

¹⁸ Divine consort and counselor of Numa Pompilius, the Sabine second king of Rome.

¹⁹ Leigh Fermor: *The First Ball at Tara* [written for Sophie Tarnowska Moss].

²⁰ Just returned from Fitzroy Maclean’s Mission to Tito.

²¹ David Smiley.

staff car towards Seteia, Carta and his aide got out and walked into the hills where they met up with Leigh Fermor; the car, with pennant flying, kept going to Seteia where it was abandoned as ‘a false scent’. Making their way across the mountains, the escape party was amused to find leaflets dropped by German spotter aircraft offering 30 million drachmas for the General, dead or alive. The embarkation took place in rough seas with the result that Leigh Fermor inadvertently found himself headed for Cairo – his intention had been to remain on the island - while the new S.O.E. arrival, Sandy Rendel, accidentally dropped his code books and charging engine over the side of the dinghy on disembarking.

The idea of kidnapping a German General in Crete had been first mooted by S.O.E. officers, Major Tom Dunbabin and Captain Xan Fielding; each had their own target in mind. In September 1943, Dunbabin reported ‘it should be easy to kidnap Muller. One of our agents is on good terms with his chauffeur, and he might be abducted on the road. Alternatively, it sounds easy to break into the Villa Ariadne with a strength of about twenty. This operation, if carried out, should be synchronised with Operation Brauer’²². He was referring to Fielding’s idea to abduct General Bräuer, which Fielding had ruefully concluded on 28 July 1943 that ‘it’s obvious to me now that capturing Generals...is out of the question as storms and breakdowns occur with such maddening frequency’²³. Mulling over the recent rescue of General Carta one evening in the fashionable Club Royale de Chasse and de Pêche²⁴, Leigh Fermor took their ideas to the next stage and started detailed planning in the winter of 1943. Here was a way of hitting back at the Germans based on ‘our late adventure [General Carta] which suddenly took on the guise of a practice run for a much more serious undertaking’²⁵. One brainstorming session took place in the bathroom at Tara: ‘while David Smiley and Billy McLean advised the would-be kidnapers on ambush techniques, Leigh Fermor drew maps of the target area on the steamy bathroom walls...’

From the beginning, Leigh Fermor knew he would need a number two to carry out his audacious plan. The urbane 24 year old Russian aristocrat and British intelligence officer Prince ‘Yurka’ Galitzine was approached, as was 37 year old former oil man, Captain Charlie Maydwell of the Rifle Brigade. The latter, who had spent most of 1942 training Kurds in Kurdistan in the ways of guerrilla warfare, was raring to go but was forestalled by Colonel Guy Tamplin, who insisted that he remained available for Romanian operations. Xan Fielding, by now a fellow Tara lodger, was also put forward as Paddy’s ‘driver’ but his small stature and swarthy looks did not match the profile of the archetypal Aryan German soldier he was meant to impersonate; furthermore, he was needed in Crete as an area commander. Billy proved the perfect fit²⁶.

‘Kreipe, of course, was the wrong target’, Leigh Fermor airily admitted in a press interview after the war. The original target, General Friedrich-Wilhelm Müller, the commander of 22nd Air Landing Infantry Division, was notorious for his ruthlessness. He had been responsible for the almost instant execution of fifty Cretans after the Special Boat Section²⁷ [S.B.S.] raid in June 1942 [a similar number of hostages, this time Jews and prisoners were executed after the S.B.S. raid the following July] and had overseen the operations in the Viannos and Deripetra areas in September 1943 when eight villages

²² Report No.1 [New Series] 8-23 September [HS5/723]

²³ Fielding to Major Jack Hughes-Smith 28 July 1943

²⁴ Artemis Cooper *Cairo in the war* p.301

²⁵ *Ill Met by Moonlight*: afterword.

²⁶ Billy was the third candidate to be interviewed [Leigh Fermor’s ‘*Jennifer’s Diary*’ note to Sophie Moss]

²⁷ Later Special Boat Squadron.

were burnt to the ground and up to 1,000 civilians including women and children killed in reprisal for *andartes* attacks in the Kato Simi area²⁸.

Leigh Fermor's strategy was to undertake a bloodless operation that would be attributed to British forces alone in order to avoid direct reprisals being meted out against the Cretan population. S.O.E. staff officers calculated the risk/reward and over-ruled Colonel Bickham Sweet Escott, who expressed his view that 'the price would be heavy in Cretan lives'. Fielding indirectly was equally anxious: 'it is manifestly ridiculous for a commando party to burn a few planes and leave a note saying "all my own work, don't blame the Cretans for this"'. Without Cretan assistance the party could not land or reach their objective and the Germans know it'²⁹. The potential reward in terms of raising Cretan morale and the propaganda value for home consumption outweighed the risk of reprisals, provided that the abduction was solely attributed to British personnel.

Having successfully abducted their General, the S.O.E. team left in Kreipe's staff car a sealed letter addressed to General Bräuer, General officer commanding Fortress Crete:

To the German Authorities in Crete
23 April 1944
Gentlemen,
Your Divisional-Commander Kreipe was captured a short time ago by a British Raiding Force under our command. By the time you read this he and we will be on our way to Cairo.
We would like to point out most emphatically that this operation has been carried out without the help of Cretans or Cretan partisans, and the only guides used were serving soldiers of His Hellenic Majesty's Forces in the Middle East, who came with us.
Your general is an honourable prisoner of war, and will be treated with all the consideration owing to his rank.
Any reprisals against the local population will be wholly unwarranted and unjust.
Auf baldiges Wiedersehen!
Major P. Leigh Fermor, Commanding raiding Force
Captain W.S.Moss, Coldstream Guards
P.S. We are very sorry to leave this motor-car³⁰ behind.

Immediately following the abduction and extraction of Kreipe, there was no immediate retaliation by the Germans in the form of reprisals³¹. Billy wrote in his diary: '2 May – No news of threats of reprisals in Heraklion having been carried out, so perhaps our letter did the trick'. This 'inactivity' can reasonably be attributed to General Bräuer. No one had been killed and the result of the abduction was a loss of face for the Germans rather than of personnel. Under these circumstances, Bräuer, regarded as tough but fair, chose not to instigate immediate reprisals. He had never liked Kreipe and was rumoured to be

²⁸Müller did not act unilaterally. General Speidel, the Military Commander of Greece from September 1943 until April 1944, controlled the reprisal and hostage practice through the various sub-area headquarters which reported to him. Speidel was later tried for war crimes and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment.

²⁹ He was referring to the S.B.S. raid on Heraklion. Fourth Report Crete June 1942 [HS5/725]

³⁰ Billy refers to 'this beautiful car' in *Ill Met by Moonlight*.

³¹ The reprisals of 1 to 4 May 1944 are generally seen as a belated German reaction to a number of ELAS attacks on their troops and installations. The villages of Kamares, Megarikari, Lokhria, and Sakhtouria were all burnt and fifteen men executed. However, the German-controlled newspaper *Paratiritis* did refer to 'the brazen and criminal deeds of the outdoor bandits who abducted and spirited away General Kreipe...'

pleased, as were many other German soldiers, that he had left the island in such humiliating circumstances³².

In London, the S.O.E. Council was delighted with the spectacular outcome. CD [Major General Colin Gubbins] signalled Commander Force 133 Cairo: 'Heartiest congrats you and other officers concerned successful completion recent operation. My personal best wishes to two principals whom I know. A great coup.'

The Coldstream Guards were equally proud of Billy's escapade, the Regimental Lieutenant Colonel writing to him 'if, as we suspect, you were the hero of a certain recent enterprise of which we have heard, I wish to congratulate you very heartily on your fine performance, and all the credit it confers on the Regiment. It is indeed a feather in your cap, and an additional point to the Coldstream star!'³³

For his part in the operation, Billy was awarded an immediate MC³⁴ for his outstanding courage and audacity: 'this officer showed exceptional gallantry in taking part with Major Leigh Fermor in the organization and execution of the kidnapping of Major-General Kreipe at Arkhanes, Crete on 26 April 1944. It was due to Captain Moss's swiftness in attacking the General's car that the operation was made possible. In the early stages of the kidnapping, Captain Moss impersonated the chauffeur of the General's car and for an hour and a half drove 'the General' through Heraklion and passed twenty-two controlled road blocks before the car was finally abandoned. Subsequently Captain Moss assisted in moving the General during a period of seventeen days through enemy held territory'. Leigh Fermor was awarded a DSO.³⁵

The party arrived back in Egypt on 16 May. Leigh Fermor was ill and almost immediately hospitalized. In *A War of Shadows*, Billy wrote 'I think first of those daily visits to Paddy in hospital – of seeing his arms and fingers growing thinner and thinner, yet swollen and red at the joints – and , secondly, not of the gaiety that accompanied my return, but of the bitter-sweetness which, for the first time in my life, I recognised as being the taste of success: the resentments, the jealousies of others, and even the estrangement of some whom one had considered friends'.

Return to Crete

As part of a coordinated operation with the S.B.S., Billy returned to Crete in early July³⁶; it was to prove a woeful example of lack of communication between the two organisations. Commanded by Major Ian Patterson MC, a force of 41 S.B.S. raiders had been tasked by GHQ Middle East to destroy petrol and fuel dumps on the island³⁷. When the recce patrols landed on the night of 1/2 July, they were met by S.O.E.'s Sandy Rendel with a mule train of twenty-three animals and their attendant villagers, for Rendel had been told by Cairo to expect 3,000 lbs of stores. There was, in fact, only half that amount. Already concerned about poor security, Patterson was appalled to learn that 'one of the bandit chiefs...had been briefed for an operation the same night [as the S.B.S. attacks] while another party was apparently toying with the idea of attacking an HQ at Archanes'. That party was Billy and it is clear

³² This is confirmed by Major Beutin in his letter to Billy Moss.

³³ 23 May 1944 RHQ Coldstream Guards to Captain I.W. Moss

³⁴ 23 May 1944

³⁵ Initially Billy was told he would be getting a DSO as well. Indeed, Leigh Fermor in his post-operation report wrote: 'I should like to state that any credit to British personnel for the success of this operation was due in exactly equal shares to Capt. Moss and myself as we collaborated intimately on every single detail'.

³⁶ Leigh Fermor returned to Crete on 28 October 1944 until 23 December 1944.

³⁷ Report No.1 dated 15 August 1944 Major I.W.Patterson

that there was scant coordination by S.O.E. with the S.B.S. force commander: for Billy's task - apart from providing guides for the S.B.S. - was to raise a small strike force to carry out a diversionary attack at the same time. His original plan was to attack the HQ of 22 Grenadiers at Ano Archanes where he hoped to find Müller in residence and could mount a second attempt at his abduction³⁸.

Inevitably word soon got around that British commandos had landed and many villagers spent the nights out in the hills to avoid reprisals, for the memories of German retaliation after the S.B.S. raid the previous summer were still vivid. Days after Billy's party landed on 13/14 July, the Germans took up battle positions in Heraklion and Lasithi provinces and sentries were doubled. The S.B.S. attacks duly went in on the night of 22/23 July and the raiders were all extracted by 29 July.³⁹ They did a great deal of damage; like the S.A.S., it was their stock in trade to kill the enemy and destroy his assets. At Durasi, 20,000 gallons of petrol [Estimate] had been destroyed, one truck and one staff car wrecked and two Germans killed; at Apostoloi, the tally was 35,000-40,000 gallons⁴⁰, ten German killed and two seriously wounded; at Veneration, 70,000 gallons [Estimate] and two Germans killed; at Armeni, thirteen Germans killed, one wounded and one staff car destroyed; at Alikianos, 6,500 gallons [Estimate] and three German killed; and at Voukolies, 20,000 gallons [Estimate] and two Germans killed including one officer. It cannot have been lost on Müller that a previous commander of Fortress Crete, General Andrae, had been replaced by General Bräuer after the 1942 SBS raid; the whole garrison therefore was brought to a high state of readiness.

Billy received information from his Cretan contacts that he would be betrayed if he went ahead with the attack on the HQ; he therefore abandoned this plan. Instead he opted to ambush enemy transport on the Heraklion-Rethymnos road with his small band of Cretan E.O.K.⁴¹ *Andartes* and Russian escaped P.O.W.s. However, his hand was forced when, on 7 August, a German detachment from the garrison at Yeni Gave [Drosia] attempted to take 50 hostages, mostly women, in Anogia after the villagers had refused their demand for slave labourers. The detachment was surrounded and attacked by an E.L.A.S. band⁴² with seven Germans killed and their Warrant Officer captured⁴³. It was only a matter of time before there was a retaliatory response in force.

In *A War of Shadows*, Billy recalled that 'we found little difficulty in deciding what form the action should take. The Germans, bent on razing Anogia to the ground, would in all likelihood arrive upon the scene in the early morning. ...if they could be waylaid before leaving their transport and deploying, Anogia might be saved.' It was a clear cut and laudable decision by an officer on the ground for this was not the first time that the Germans had been in Anogia that year. On 16 February, Dunbabin had reported that they had put a cordon around the village, arrested ten men and executed a key member of the resistance. 'After the incident the survivors at once made it up with the local communists, agreed to act together against further German attacks, in the event invasion. If there are further arrests, plunder or burning of houses, they will defend themselves. A drop of arms is therefore urgent'⁴⁴.

³⁸ He had discussed this plan with Leigh Fermor during the many visits to see him in hospital in Cairo.

³⁹ With the exception of Lieutenant Lodwick and Corporal Nixon who were captured [Lodwick: *Bid The Soldiers Shoot*]

⁴⁰ Dunbabin's estimates for Siva and Apostoloi were a total of 1,700 gallons of petrol.

⁴¹ A non-Communist Cretan resistance organization supported by MI6 and S.O.E.

⁴² Pro-Communist Greek guerrilla movement.

⁴³ Cpl Lewis interrogated him but had to hand him back to the ELAS band [Appendix to Maj Dunbabin's Report 14 Aug 1944]

⁴⁴ HS5/725

In his post-operational report written on 21 August, Billy was elated that ‘as a result of my operation not one Cretan has been killed, which is an enormous change from the situation one year ago’. He expanded on this, stating as fact ‘that the Germans since April of this year and the abduction of General Kreipe appear to have wholly given up the policy of taking reprisals against the civilian population. As a result of this, it may be suggested that the attitude of this HQ [S.O.E. Cairo] concerning the killing of Germans in Crete might well be reconsidered.’

Regrettably Billy was wrong; that same day, German troops executed thirty men from Damasta and destroyed the village. Müller, who had replaced Bräuer as Commander Fortress Crete on 1 July 1944, was determined to pick up from where he had left off the year before. His 13 August Order of the Day to destroy Anogia was quite specific:

Order by the German General Commander of the garrison of Crete:

“Because the town of Anogia is the centre of the English Intelligence on Crete, because the people of Anogia committed the murder of the Sergeant Commander of the Yeni-Gave, as well as of the garrison under his orders, because the people of Anogia carried out the sabotage of Damasta, because in Anogia the guerrillas of the various groups of resistance take refuge and find protection and because it was through Anogia that the kidnapers with General Von Kreipe passed using Anogia as a transit camp, we order its COMPLETE DESTRUCTION and the execution of every male person of Anogia who would happen to be within the village and around it within a distance of one kilometre”

Chania, 13 August 1944, H. Müller

Ludwig Beutin, a company commander in 16 Regiment of 22 Division, wrote to Billy in 1950 after the publication of *Ill Met by Moonlight*: ‘But – without expressing any kind of excuse – what is the leader of a unit to do, when he is daily attacked by non-soldiers, by people without uniform - or insignia - who hide their guns behind a bush and look like peaceful shepherds immediately after making a surprise attack? In the ten days between 1 and 10 August (1944) we lost about fifty killed and thirty wounded⁴⁵ in attacks like these, without our being able to find out where the enemy were. In these circumstances, General Müller decided to issue threats, and then followed them through in the hope of bringing the Cretans to reason⁴⁶.’

It is postulated that Müller had strategic reasons for implementing a wave of terror across Crete in order to assist the planned German evacuation from much of the island to a defensive enclave around the port of Chania. Dunbabin further speculated that he wanted to implicate his soldiers as war criminals to counter defeatism.

Whether the deaths of Cretans shot in reprisals by Müller were as a direct result of the kidnap remains debatable. However, that they were linked in the mind of Müller seems indisputable. When the 822 Infantry Battalion surrounded the villages of Ano Meros, Dhpygis, Gerakari, Vryses, Kardaki, Krya Vrysi and Gourgouthoi and Ano Meros on 22 August, they explicitly declared that the reason for their presence was the passage of General Kreipe through the area. During his trial in Athens in November 1946, General Bräuer testified that the reprisals were linked to the kidnapping of Kreipe.

⁴⁵ Cpl Lewis confirms these numbers in his report.

⁴⁶ Three senior German officers – Generals Bräuer, Andrae and Müller – were extradited and tried in Greece for war crimes committed in Crete between 1941 and 1945. Bräuer and Müller were found guilty in December 1946 and executed in May 1947. Andrae was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Major Jack Smith-Hughes⁴⁷, who had run S.O.E.'s Cretan desk in Cairo since 1941, wrote in March 1945 that 'Kreipe was not avenged immediately because General Bräuer disliked him and seems to have been rather amused at the exploit: but towards the end Bräuer was succeeded by Müller, the great butcher of the Viannos, and Müller knew that the kidnapping had been planned for him in the first place. Before he left Crete in August 1944 he sacked some 8 villages in the Amari and even blew up their wells on the grounds that they had harboured Kreipe; and as a final act of *Schweingerei* he destroyed the mountain village of Anogia and rendered its population of 3,000 homeless.'

As the senior S.O.E. officer on Crete, Major Tom Dunbabin, while cognisant with the German order of 13 August, felt that a more likely reason was one given by a German soldier in Kardaki who said 'the war will end in two months' time and we shall all be ruined, but we mean to ruin you first'. He attributed the reprisals in Damasta and Anogia to 'the recent incidents there'.

No blame or responsibility can be attached to Leigh Fermor or Moss: yet the reprisals weighed heavily on both men. It was the price paid by all those who resisted the Nazi regime in Europe. The Cretans knew it; Billy knew it and on many occasions he risked his own life to bring freedom to Greece.

It is important not to view German anti-partisan operations in Crete in isolation. Between 1942 and 1944, eighteen major operations were conducted by the Germans in Mainland Greece. In June 1944, Operation GEMSBOCK led by 1st Mountain Division in the area of the Greek Albanian border cost ELAS guerrillas over 2,500 dead and prisoners, and a large stock of arms. Three weeks after it finished, the XXII Mountain Corps took to the field in Eastern Greece: Operation STEINADLER inflicted heavy losses on the Greek guerrillas - a total of 567 dead and 976 prisoners.

In a letter to Billy's mother dated 15 November 1944, Leigh Fermor wrote that Billy 'has been recommended for a very well-deserved bar to his MC'. Certainly Corporal Lewis's appendix to Major Dunbabin's 14 August Report supports this premise: 'From local reports reaching me it is evident that Captain Moss showed extreme courage and bravery throughout the whole operation and especially when dealing with the turret of the armoured car – under full view and fire of the enemy and at point blank range.' Inexplicably no bar to his MC was forthcoming.

The bitter-sweetness Billy had detected after the Kreipe abduction continued. A senior I.S.L.D.⁴⁸ officer on the island – Ralph Stockbridge⁴⁹ – later commented that 'Moss's totally undesirable attack on the Germans at Damasta...must have contributed to the destruction of Anogia'. This was unfair. The ambush on the road to Damasta was a calculated response to sequence of events initiated by E.L.A.S., not by Billy.

As far as SOE London was concerned, Billy had delivered what was required. In the SOE Worldwide Weekly Sitrep of 17 August 1944, under Crete the entry reads: 'BLO supported by 8 Greeks and 6 Russians mined main road Heraklion-Rethymno on 5 August and holding road block destroyed 9 M.T. and killed 45 Germans and took 12 prisoners'.

⁴⁷ Smith-Hughes had approved Leigh Fermor's original plan.

⁴⁸ The cover name for the S.I.S. in the Middle East and Balkans.

⁴⁹ Artemis Cooper, *Patrick Leigh Fermor: An Adventure*.

A 'Commando' on the Greek Mainland

On his return in September, Billy met up with Leigh Fermor at Lady Spears's⁵⁰ house in the hills above Beirut where he was recuperating⁵¹. They drove to Damascus together where they 'spent a very happy and gay five days' before flying back to Cairo where their new assignments awaited them. It was clear that the Germans were now bent on withdrawal from Greece; Army Group E had ordered the evacuation of all troops south of the Corfu-Ioanina-Kalambaka-Olympus line with the exceptions of the garrisons of Crete and Rhodes. Leigh Fermor as a Cretan specialist would return to the island; Billy was destined for the mainland to carry out 'a sort of Commando job'.

In the summer of 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Nick Hammond, the head of S.O.E.'s BOODLE Mission in Macedonia, temporarily assumed command of the Allied Military Mission to Greece, a joint S.O.E./O.S.S. venture, while Colonel Christopher Woodhouse went to Cairo to report on the situation in Greece and then on to England to brief Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, and the Prime Minister. Hammond had been directed by Cairo to prepare for NOAH'S ARK, an operation designed to harass German troops as they withdrew from Greece and, at the same time, to protect key installations and infrastructure from enemy scorched earth tactics.

In Macedonia, command was assumed by Major Ronnie Prentice. With two sub-missions, TRUFFLE led by Captain Max Backhouse and FERTILISER by Captain Pat Evans, together with another fourteen British Liaison Officers and sixteen ORs, Prentice had considerable S.O.E. resources at his disposal. In addition, he had attached to the BOODLE Mission some ninety Raiding Support Regiment personnel under Major Astell, twenty-five American Operational Group personnel under Captain Darr and a similar number of Long Range Desert Group under Major Stormonth-Darling.

Billy arrived by air at Grevena, a small country town in Northwest Greece, on 18 September together with Captain Tozer and Lieutenant Dutton. After being sent from pillar to post, Billy eventually joined up with Ken Scott, a 25-year-old Major in the Royal Engineers who had been in Greece since 12 May 1943. Scott had won his spurs in Roumeli in a brilliant night-time operation that destroyed the Asopos rail viaduct that linked Athens to Thessaloniki. 'Scotty', as he was known to all, was the planner for NOAH'S ARK demolition targets in Area No.1 [Macedonia]; with his unrivalled knowledge of the countryside – he had spent the winter of 1943/44 on the slopes of Mount Olympus - and of local partisan politics, he relished the prospect of interdicting the German retreat. Indeed, in his post-operational report, he enthused 'that the explosive situation was good as I had brought thirty-four mules loads with me...'

Operations to hamper and harass the German withdrawal now began in earnest and the tally for the VERMION region sub-mission by the end of October was highly satisfactory. Scotty was in charge of the road and rail network in north Vermion on the axis Arnissa/Skidra; Captain Max Backhouse covered the Kozani-Veria road in south Vermion. As the Germans began to withdraw, the tempo of operations increased commensurately with road bridges blown, culverts mined, rail tracks cut, trains derailed, roadblocks booby-trapped and ambushes sprung. The railway line Naoussa-Edessa-Florina was effectively destroyed for the duration as was the Kozani-Verria road. Four major ambushes were sprung on the Edessa-Florina road and over 250 Germans captured.

⁵⁰ Wife of Major General Sir Edward Spears MP, Churchill's First Minister to Republics of Syria and Lebanon.

⁵¹ Paddy spent a month at their house after being discharged from hospital p.97 *More Dashing, Further letters of PLF*.

At one point, Scotty and Billy planned to blow the Aliakmon rail bridge by swimming down the river in darkness and attaching explosives to the piers. However, since Scotty's earlier recces, the Germans had replaced the wooden piles with stone piers and had supported each span in approximately twenty different places, thus making anything other than a partial demolition impossible.

Left in charge of north Vermion while Scotty went south to meet up with the RSR and OG, Billy was in his element, signalling Prentice on 11 October ⁵² 'have persuaded all available *andartes* to join forces...numbers now total 2,000. RSR and OGs sent for and will join ambush soonest. Everything going very well. Good prospect of destroying Hun forces'. Then, as a gracious postscript to George Jellicoe, one of Tara's most popular visitors, who was commanding POMPFORCE which was heading north through Greece to Thessaloniki, he added 'Welcome George. Hope see you and conquering army very soon. The very best of luck, Billy'.

Billy's last mission was to oversee the liberation of Edessa once the Germans had evacuated the town and take charge of repairs to the road bridge which would undoubtedly have been blown. On arrival, it transpired that the demolition had been a botched job, so after four days Billy headed off towards Salonika, taking a jeepload of journalists in tow. When he reached the city, he found Andy Lassen of the SBS already installed in a large hotel on the waterfront. Lassen had led a typical swashbuckling patrol of SBS and LRDG into the city centre when the Germans were still laying demolitions in the port. After enjoying the hospitality of the newly liberated Greek population for a week⁵³, Billy noted in his diary that 'the first tentacles of the headquarters staff arrived: intelligence officers, clerks, a Town Major, a crate of typewriters, administrative officials, and a woman welfare worker'. Realizing that his unconventional war in Greece was over, he hitchhiked to the airport to catch a flight to Athens and from there to Cairo.

The Far East revisited

On return to Cairo in November, Billy found to his consternation that he, along with all other Guards officers in Force 133, had been posted back to regimental duty. He immediately put pen to paper⁵⁴, asking for an exemption from regimental duties. His reasoning was twofold. First 'the enemy has placed a large reward on my head because they have discovered that I have been operating in German uniform and in plain clothes...In the event of my capture with a regular unit, this fact would not only result in extremely unpleasant consequences for me, but perhaps would also reflect upon the men under my command or those who were captured with me. Working with irregular units, however, one is nearly always on one's own and one knows that one would be shot in any case if one was captured'. Second, he believed he could be of far greater service to his country and do more for the name of the regiment if he was allowed to continue working with S.O.E. In a rather self-deprecatory tone, he volunteered that 'I do not think I was a very competent officer when I was with the 3rd battalion, and it was for that reason that I finally left it. Since that time I have had three long spells in occupied territory, and believe that when I am working on my own my efficiency in every sort of way improves a hundredfold.'

(It was during this time that Billy met Joan Rayner and wrote to Paddy about her on 5 December – see Artemis Adventure p.200. PLF later met her at a party in Cairo given by Marie Riaz, a mutual friend of

⁵² Signal Moss/Prentice Liddel Hart Archive 2/5/1-2

⁵³ Richard Capell [*Simioata*] does not mention him in his meetings in Salonika with Prentice, Scott, Woodhouse etc immediately after the Germans left.

⁵⁴ Letter Moss/RHQ Coldstream Guards 1 December 1944.

his and Billy. A cousin of the photographer Costas Achilopoulos whom PLF knew from his days in pre-war Greece and Romania, Marie was married to a rich Egyptian sugar merchant and known for her lavish parties⁵⁵.)

Billy's wish was granted and he was posted to the Far East to join S.O.E.'s Force 136. But first he enjoyed some well-earned leave, arriving in England on 31 January 1945. With the encouragement⁵⁶ of Brigadier Barker-Benfield, commander of Force 133, based on the diary he had kept at the time, Billy set down on paper the story of the kidnap of General Kreipe⁵⁷. By the time he had finished, he was en route to the jungles of Thailand so he asked Leigh Fermor, in England on sick leave, to act as his literary agent⁵⁸ and submit the manuscript to Hamish Hamilton Publishers. But before that clearance was needed from the appropriate authorities.

Officialdom reacted badly. CD, Major General Colin Gubbins, found 'the proposed book in the worst possible taste'; Colonel Eddie Boxshall [D/H 109] concurred, opining that 'the manuscript [is] of questionable taste and of no literary or documentary value...a penny shocker'. The War Office then stepped in and banned publication, primarily on the grounds of security since many of the names mentioned could easily be brought to the attention of the Japanese with whom Britain was still at war.

Some commentators have questioned why it was Billy who wrote the book rather than Leigh Fermor – who, after all, was the principal architect of Kreipe's abduction –, and it has been suggested that this was because Billy had more time on his hands. This is nonsense for Leigh Fermor had more than enough time on his hands after his return from Crete that summer. 'Billy had to leave [to return to Crete], and I dawdled on for another month or so, getting better and better, and riding and dancing quite a lot. This was delightful... Nevertheless, this honeyed and Capuan idleness began to pall...'⁵⁹ For Billy, there was no such let up until he returned from Macedonia in November.

Mission to Thailand

Thailand, or Siam as it was then known, had been invaded by Japan on 8 December 1941 in order to gain access for her armies to invade Malaya and Burma. After a day's fighting the military government of Prime Minister Field Marshal Phibun ordered an armistice. Shortly afterwards the Japanese were granted free passage and on 21 December 1941, the two countries signed a military alliance. Subsequently, Thailand declared war on the United States and Great Britain on 25 January 1942 and undertook to assist Japan in its war against the Allies. In return, Thailand acquired four states in northern Malaya as well as territory in the Shan States of northern Burma.

After the relentless Japanese advance had finally come to a halt in mid-1942, the challenge for S.O.E. was to find a Thai resistance group to work with. A bitter rival of Phibun, the former Finance Minister and member of the Regency Council, Pridi Phanomyong, had been a staunch opponent of the Japanese alliance and, after a number of discussions with those holding similar views, the *Seri Thai* or Free Thai movement was started up, with chapters opened in Washington and London.

⁵⁵ Adam Sisman: *More Dashing, Further letters of PLF*

⁵⁶ Indeed an S.O.E. memo of July 1945 referred to 'an invitation'.

⁵⁷ It was against Standard Operating Procedures to keep a diary behind enemy lines. However, given that Billy had little to do in the days after the actual kidnap other than keep an eye on Kreipe, Leigh Fermor did not object.

⁵⁸ Leigh Fermor had yet to have a book published. His first was *Traveller's Tree* published in 1950.

⁵⁹ Letter to Sir Ian Moncreiffe Bt, published in *Ill Met by Moonlight* afterword.

Run by Major A.C. 'Peter' Pointon, a former forest manager of the Bombay Burmah Company in Thailand, S.O.E.'s Thai Country Section launched Operations APPRECIATION I and II to establish W/T contact with Pridi. Satisfied that the W/T traffic from Bangkok was genuine and not under Japanese control, the Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia Lord Mountbatten sent Pridi a message in August 1944 to the effect that the Free Thai movement could make 'a valuable contribution' to the Allied cause. This opened the way for S.O.E. to up its game with increased supplies of arms and training cadres, for the British were keen to mount a large scale deception campaign – Operation SCEPTICAL - to fool the Japanese into thinking that Thailand had precedence over Malaya as an Allied invasion target. The more troops retained by the Japanese in Thailand, the less the resistance would be to Operation ZIPPER, the invasion of Malaya planned for September 1945. The OSS plan envisaged 214 American personnel organizing twelve 500-strong battalions with sufficient arms and ammunition for 7,200 men; S.O.E. plans for an 8,500-strong guerrilla force were similarly ambitious, predicated on the deployment of officers such as Billy who had excelled in Europe.

Billy arrived in Ceylon in May 1945, now the headquarters of Force 136. After serendipitously meeting up with John Hibberdine⁶⁰ [S.O.E. Albania] and Ken Scott [S.O.E. Greece], the three of them persuaded Pointon to let them drop as a team with Scott as leader [Op SUNGOD⁶¹/GABBERDINE] in the Nakhon Si Thammarat area on the border with Malaya. By now events had overtaken them for the Japanese had surrendered on 15 August⁶² after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No longer engaged in offensive operations, their brief was to find POWs and supervise the disarming of Japanese troops.

After an uneventful drop near Bandon, they installed themselves in the bungalow of a disused tin mine where they patiently waited for their W/T set to arrive for somehow it had been left off their drop list. After a fortnight, local Thai sources told them that the Japanese were planning to move 500 POWs from Bandon up to Bangkok, so Scott went to investigate. Their W/T set finally arrived five days later and Moss and Hibberdine set out for Narkhon on the old narrow-gauge railway. Here they met Scott who had little news of POWs in the area but had found out that the Japanese were mustering at the seaside town of Songkla. Just as they were readying themselves to go there, a signal arrived to "stand fast and make no official contact with the Japanese until ordered". Passing the time attending bullfights, cock fights and a Thai ball, the Mission eventually arranged the orderly surrender of Japanese forces in the area before retiring to the charms of Bangkok on 20 November and then home for Christmas.

On 22 August 1945, Billy was promoted to major for the second time. His report read: 'This officer has carried out his considerable responsibilities in the field with distinction and ability. This recommendation carries the strongest support of CO M.E. 25. Captain Moss has carried out some extremely fine operations, and has held a majority previously. He has worked at his task with conspicuous skill, and has gained the confidence of high ranking Siamese officers, in conjunction with whom he has been working in the field'. On 25 January 1946, he was cross-posted to Operation PYTHON, the demobilization programme that ring fenced S.E.A.C. troops from further deployment in the Far East. In effect he was on gardening leave and was discharged on 21 November 1946.

After the War

⁶⁰ HS5/132

⁶¹ HS 1/58

⁶² The formal surrender took place on 2 September 1945.

In spite of all the alarms and excursions of war with S.O.E., Billy had won the hand of his housemate at Tara, the beautiful Countess Sophie Tarnowska, the granddaughter of Count Stanislaw Tarnowski (1837–1917), the distinguished Polish academic and literary figure. The Moss-Tarnowska wedding in Cairo on 26 April 1945 was a glamorous event; their witnesses were Prince Peter of Greece, the cousin of the King of Greece, and Major the Hon Peter Pleydell-Bouverie of the KRRC. The reception was held at the house of Princess Emine Toussoun, the sister of King Farouk. The cachet of Tara lived on.

Once demobbed, Billy embarked on the precarious career of a writer. It suited his peripatetic yearning for adventure and at the same time played to his strength as a wordsmith. He loved writing and worked hard and long hours. His first book, a novel *The Hour of Flight*, was published by Harrap in 1949. Long on dialogue, it was typical of the moody genre of the time. Then, after the bickering and squabbles with the British security establishment had finally subsided, *Ill Met by Moonlight* was finally published in 1950. It received a warm reception: Malcolm Muggeridge, Harold Nicolson and Peter Fleming all wrote favourable reviews. The serialization in *Reynold's News* in October 1949 was billed as 'the story MI5 tried to ban!' On 30 December 1949, the BBC Home Service broadcast '*Rendez-vous in Crete*', the first episode in a series called *Now it can be told*. Both Billy and Leigh Fermor had speaking parts and how delighted they must have been when Major General Sir Colin Gubbins, their erstwhile literary nemesis, introduced the series.

Another novel *Bats with Baby Faces* which Billy had started in the Siamese jungle, came out in 1951. Subtitled 'a scenario for caricatures', and set in 1942 in Deir-Ez-Zor [Syria] and Cairo, it is an irreverent adventure story punctuated with dark passages, none more so than the opening chapter that immerses the reader in a premeditated and cack-handed attempt to kill a rogue agent. *Bats* was followed by *A War of Shadows*, the sequel to *Ill Met by Moonlight*, an account of his further adventures with S.O.E. His last novel *Three Plagues*, 'a situation for caricatures' was published in 1953. Written in Riverstown, Eire, Billy strived to produce an antidote to 'caution, apprehension, and retribution [which] were now the orders of the day, for there was no time left for celebration or feelings of relief' by recounting the carefree antics of three friends gallivanting around France. The title came from a verse of the 17th century English poet Alexander Brome that resonated with Billy:

*I have been in love, and in debt, and in drink
This many and many a year,
And those are three plagues enough, any should think,
For one poor mortal to bear. '*

Five books in five years is productive by any standard but books take time to sell. Billy also became a freelance journalist. His first venture, in association with *The Sunday Graphic*, was the quest to find 'Scarface'⁶³ Otto Skorzeny, the German Special Forces officer who had rescued Mussolini in a daring mountain top raid in 1943. Skorzeny had escaped from a denazification holding camp in 1948 and vanished from view. In February 1950 a photograph of him sitting in a café on the Champs Elysées was published in the French press which caused predictable consternation⁶⁴. Billy and his friend, the Old Etonian actor and Bohemian man-about-town Michael Luke, launched the hunt on 26 March. In an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald* correspondent in London, Billy breathlessly explained:

⁶³ He had received a 'schmiss' on his face in a student duel in Vienna.

⁶⁴ In April 1950, his memoirs were published by *Le Figaro*, an editorial decision that caused a riot by 1,500 communists outside the paper's offices in Paris

‘Skorzeny is 6 feet and 4 inches, weighs 18 stone and has a large duelling scar on his left cheek. Despite these characteristics he has evaded the intelligence forces of half the Continent. He pops up – then down again – before anyone can lay hands on him...In our hunt we start from scratch. There is no knowing of what by-ways of intrigue and counter-plot we may find ourselves involved. Don’t forget that thirteen people have already lost their lives as a result of their complicity in the disappearance of Mussolini’s treasure. Where is that treasure? And where is Skorzeny? Those are the questions we intend to answer.’ Pacey reports followed from Zurich, ‘somewhere in France’, and Cairo but the trail petered out. Skorzeny was in fact in Madrid, running a small engineering business.

Shortly after, he submitted a part-work about his former S.O.E. colleague the late Krystyna Skarbek [aka Christine Granville] to the *Picture Post* who published it in September 1952. He had met Krystyna and her compatriot and lover Andrzej Kowerski [aka Andrew Kennedy] in Cairo where they had arrived in 1941 after a series of dramatic adventures across war-torn Europe. She went on to serve with distinction in enemy-occupied France and was awarded the George Medal and OBE. Billy had been planning a biography but had withdrawn it after Andrew Kennedy raised objections; he, like many of her friends, was in a state of shock after her brutal and callous murder by an obsessive lover in Earls Court in June 1952.

This was followed by a five-part series in *The People* in November 1953 about an exposé of the Lebensborn – the Fountain of Life Organisation – a sinister story of Himmler’s attempt to procreate racially pure children of the Master Race in Nazi stud farms. What had started in 1935 as a purely German concern later spread to Austria, Norway, France, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. In Eastern Europe it was estimated that more than 250,000 children were kidnapped by SS and police units and sent by force to Germany. Only 25,000 were recovered after the war and sent back to their families. Behind the sensationalism was a plea by Billy for the recognition of the women who had been ‘used’ and for their fatherless children for during the ten years of the program’s existence, at least 7,500 children were born in Germany and 10,000 in Norway.

Billy’s next project was *Gold Is Where You Hide It; What Happened to the Reichsbank Treasure?* [A. Deutsch. 1956]. This was a pacey investigation in the best tradition of investigatory journalism into what happened to the Reichsbank reserves [gold bullion, cash, precious stones and metals] and the Abwehr cash pile which were taken to Bavaria in the closing days of the war. Researched in collaboration with Andrew Kennedy who spoke excellent German, their start point was the disappearance of the gold and money shortly after the American forces overran the area. Billy was in his element.

The Reichsbank gold reserves, worth some \$238 million, had been sent by train to a mine at Merkers, about two hundred miles southwest of Berlin, for safekeeping after the devastating raid in February 1945 when nearly 1,000 B-17 bombers of the US Eighth Air Force had pulverized Berlin, causing the near collapse of the bank building. The SS had also sent the rump of their loot, mainly gold and silver, to the mine in March along with many of Germany’s art treasures which also ended up there.

American military personnel entered the mine on the morning of 7 April and within a few days had made an initial inventory. There were 8,198 bars of gold bullion; 55 boxes of crated gold bullion; hundreds of bags of gold items; over 1,300 bags of gold Reichsmarks, British gold pounds, and French gold francs; 711 bags of American twenty-dollar gold pieces; hundreds of bags of gold and silver coins; hundreds of bags of foreign currency; 9 bags of valuable coins; 2,380 bags and 1,300 boxes of Reichsmarks (2.76 billion Reichsmarks); 20 silver bars; 40 bags containing silver bars; 63 boxes and

55 bags of silver plate; 1 bag containing six platinum bars; and 110 bags from various countries. But what happened to it?

Moss and Kennedy travelled back and forth across Germany and into Switzerland and corresponded with fugitives in Argentina, to research what had happened⁶⁵. They talked to many witnesses before finally establishing what had become of the treasure – receiving death threats on several occasions. What Moss and Kennedy uncovered, and the conclusions they reached on the various people responsible for the disappearances, have not been disputed to this day. The disappearance of Major Martin Borg, the US Military Governor of Garmisch-Partenkirchen at the time, has yet to be explained. Curiously, in 2013, the German government asked the United States to return 300 tons of gold which it had had in its safekeeping for fifty years.

Unable to resist an adventure – he had written to Billy Mclean in June 1955 about arming the Karens in Burma – Billy became involved in a madcap scheme to rescue a deb's delight from the French Foreign Legion. A love-struck West de Wend-Fenton⁶⁶, after three nights drinking, had enlisted in the Legion after being spurned in marriage by Margaret Lygon, a great-granddaughter of the 6th Earl Beauchamp. It made great copy for the tabloids and, before long, plans were being made by his friends⁶⁷ in London to rescue him. Led by the explorer and writer, former S.B.S. officer Michael Alexander, who later published the story in *The Reluctant Legionnaire*, Billy spent 'a lengthy period as a guest of the French Foreign Legion in Sidi-bel-Abbes'. The outcome was a screenplay, *The Thin Line*, for one episode of a twenty-six-part TV series, *Assignment Foreign Legion*, produced by former Spitfire ace, Tony Bartley, and broadcast in 1956-57.

The writer-director-producer team of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger had bought the film rights to *Ill Met by Moonlight* in 1952⁶⁸ but they only starting shooting in 1957. With Xan Fielding as technical adviser, the cast assembled on the Riviera; Leigh Fermor briefly joined them. Billy popped in occasionally to Pinewood studios. Despite both its initial and enduring success, Billy received little remuneration for the film rights on account of an inadequate and poorly drafted contract.

In 1958 Billy translated Baron Von der Heydte's *Daedalus Returned: Crete 1941*, published by Heinmann in London. This may seem an aberration, given his wartime experiences in Crete. Yet there was a synergy and sympathy for Von der Heydte, an officer of keen intellect, had written a well-observed, honest and moving account of his experience as the commanding officer of a German parachute battalion in Crete⁶⁹. Billy could certainly relate to his soldiers whose average age was not much more than eighteen. Some were idealists, others ambitious, but Von der Heydte 'liked the adventurers best. They had jumped easily into life and they found it worth living for, whatever it brought along, provided that it did not become monotonous.' Surely this was a category into which Billy could comfortably insert himself.

⁶⁵ At some stage during the writing of *Gold is where you hide it*, Billy worked in France for the BBC.

⁶⁶ Billy had used West as the model for March Rafferty in *Three Plagues*: a man 'born with a silver knife in his back'.

⁶⁷ Including two former SOE officers Gavin Maxwell and Xan Fielding, the latter proposing an entirely different plan to Maxwell's.

⁶⁸ According to Daphne Fielding.

⁶⁹ Von Der Heydte went on to serve on every front during the course of the war until he was captured in the Ardennes. Bitterly attacked for his outspoken anti-Hitler sentiments as a P.O.W., he emerged from the war as a highly decorated paratroop officer with an untarnished reputation.

At the end of the book, when describing the memorial erected to his men who had fallen in battle, Von der Heydte confides ‘as diverse my soldiers were, I liked them all. Whether good or bad, they had grown into my heart. I lived with them and for them’. The inscription read: ‘In these olive-groves and on the heights of Perivolia these men of the 1st Battalion of the Third Parachute Regiment fought, and won, and died’. On tablets to the left and right of this inscription the names of the dead were engraved, while the reverse side of the pedestal carried an inscription as follows: ‘In valiant combat against the Battalion 156 members of the following British regiments died for their King and Country’. Beneath were inscribed the names of the units to which the British troops who had fought against them had belonged. This sort of chivalrous conduct by an old-school officer resonated with the British tradition.⁷⁰

The unsigned introduction to the English translation has all the hallmarks of Billy: ‘Crete, like Arabia, has a faculty for bringing out in Englishmen a strong streak of romantic banditry wedded to a pronounced literary sensibility. This has led to the focusing of attention on the resistance aspects of the war in Crete...at the expense of the set-piece battle...It was, for one thing, the world’s first and last successful operation of its kind...So it happened that a large island was captured from us by a navyless enemy. Moreover, the sheer physical setting was romantic and evocative in the extreme. The invading Germans were carried by plane and glider...to be dropped among the dusty vineyards and watercourse of Crete on a blazing spring morning. Heroic echoes were started up by the jabbering tommy-guns among the antique rocks.’ *The Spectator* found that Von der Heydte wrote ‘with a little of the masochistic self-pity typical of so many German books about the Second World War. Yet he was a humane man...a romantic and a gentleman who became a regular soldier in 1933 to avoid the political situation he could not, as a civilian, hope to alter’.

Also in 1958, Wayne Street University Press published *10 Contemporary Polish Stories*. Included in the collection was *My father joins the Fire Brigade* by the Polish Jewish writer, Bruno Schulz, from his *Sanatorium under the hourglass [1937]* which had at some point been translated by Billy and Sophie.

Later years

The couple had had three children: Christine Isabelle, named after their friend and former S.O.E. agent Krystyna Skarbek (Christine Granville), Sebastian (who died in infancy) and Gabriella. Initially living in London, they had moved to Riverstown House, a Georgian house in County Cork in Ireland, hoping that life there would be more affordable. Sadly they found it impossible to raise the money to complete the purchase of the property and returned to London in 1954.

Separated from Sophie in 1957 at her request, Billy began to travel in earnest. In fact, although this was not his plan, he never again returned to Britain. His first destination was New Zealand from where he hoped to land by parachute on the South Pole and rendezvous with Vivian Fuchs and Edmund Hillary on their Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, the first expedition to reach the South Pole overland for over 46 years since the race between Amundsen's and Scott's parties in 1911 and 1912. When this turned out to be impractical, on 14 February 1958 he flew instead in a Globe Master aircraft (with one engine cutting out six hours from his destination) to Scott Base at McMurdo Sound. From

⁷⁰ After Von Der Heydte had left Crete for operations in Russia, in August 1941 the Germans launched a punitive expedition – Special Action No.1 – against the villages of Alikianu, Skimes, Furnes and others. Thirty-six men and two women were shot for resisting and attempting to escape; 109 males including boys were found guilty of armed resistance and shot. Skimes, where arms and ammunition were found, was razed to the ground. The following month, another operation, this time officially called a ‘League of Nations’ undertaking, was carried out by the Germans on the Omalos Plateau. Military tribunals found 110 men guilty of resistance activities and shot forty-five including six British and Commonwealth personnel.

there he reported on 2 March the arrival of Fuch's historic overland crossing of 2,158 miles of previously unexplored snow and ice in 99 days.

In April, he returned to New Zealand in the icebreaker, *The Glacier*, 'a terrible rough passage' he told his elder daughter. For the next three months, he stayed with Bill and Ngaire Gibbs on Great Barrier Island, living in a bach⁷¹ behind their farm house. Now he began one of the more extraordinary adventures of his colourful life; he signed up as a crew member of the *Crusader*, a 47 ft Alden-rigged Malabar ketch owned and skippered by Bill Endean, a former RNZAF Lancaster bomber pilot awarded the DFC and bar. Endean had sold his furniture manufacturing business and invested the proceeds into the yacht which he planned to sell for a profit when he reached California. The other members of the crew were 19-year-old John Ewing, a technical engineering cadet studying for his marine radio operator's certificate, 19-year-old Warwick Davies, a student at Auckland University, and Rex Hill, another RNZAF pilot who had flown Hurricanes and Spitfires in the war.

After leaving Devonport Harbour and picking up Billy from Great Barrier Island, Endean set course for Rarotonga, a sail of some 1,600 nautical miles. The weather tested both the crew and the boat as they sailed through gale force winds and high seas; *Crusader* turned out to be far from seaworthy, taking on water that filled her bilges despite the efforts of her soaking wet crew to pump it out. On 27 June, John Ewing noted in his diary that 'the skipper and Bill Moss... had one hell of an argument. WSM declared he was on strike and would no longer be doing watches'. Billy had objected to the fact that Endean absented himself from watchkeeping on the grounds that he was the navigator and cook! On 7 July, the exhausted ship's crew put into to Rarotonga and went ashore to unwind.

Once again the weather proved fickle, alternating between monstrous seas and violent storms that threatened to flood the bilges despite furious pumping by the crew and moments of total calm without a whisper of a breeze. Throughout, Billy excelled as a helmsman, steering the yacht through mountainous troughs in cold and windswept conditions. By 22 July, they sighted landfall and anchored in Paopao Bay off Moorea Island just Northwest of Tahiti. The next day they sailed to Papeete, the main town on Tahiti, where some fifty other yachts and motor launches were anchored for the extended Bastille Day celebrations. Billy visited the Hollywood actor and former OSS Balkans officer Stirling Hayden on his yacht the *Wanderer* which he was sailing across the Pacific with his four children after a bitter divorce from his second wife. Five years older than Billy, Stirling shared the same wanderlust and happy-go-lucky approach to life as Billy but with the key difference that he could and did make a good living as an actor whenever he chose to.

On Tahiti, relations between Endean and his crew reached a low point. All of them had had enough of his authoritarian style and lack of seamanship and they discussed renting a villa for a few months 'to provide a break for WSM to work on his book'. Billy took charge and went to the French authorities to complain that Endean had refused to release the funds that the crew had lodged with him. This prompted a visit by the Gendarmerie to the *Crusader* where they oversaw the return of the money to its rightful owners. Rex Hill then returned to New Zealand on the cargo ship *Melanesia*,. John Ewing joined the crew of MV *Repasado* sailing for New Zealand and Billy and young Warwick Davies found a passage on Tig Lowe's 56 foot MS *Manawanui* which was headed to the West Indies via the Panama Canal. The despotic Endean recruited a new crew and continued for the West Coast of America.

⁷¹ A holiday home

A postcard to his daughter from Mangareva dated 5 September 1959 tells her of plans to visit Pitcairn and the Easter Islands and Billy eventually reaching Cristobal in Panama on 8 November after fifty-two days at sea. *Manawanui*'s last port of call was Nassau in the Bahamas in April⁷² 1960 where Billy left ship and signed up with the *Nassau Guardian* as a feature writer with a column on Mondays and Fridays. He also spoke about Pitcairn Island to the Friends of the Bahamas. From there, he made his way to Jamaica, his final island haven.

An enduring mystery about Billy's time at sea is the whereabouts of the book he wrote for Andre Deutsche. In the 1962 catalogue, *The Road to Portobello* is described as the book 'the author of *Ill-Met by Moonlight* takes to sea. He begins it in the Antarctic to which he went as a journalist at the time of Sir Vivian Fuch's expedition, continues it in New Zealand [partly on Great Barrier Island – by his account an earthly paradise for anyone fed up with 'civilized' living - and ends it sailing across the Pacific, through much filthy weather, with a skipper whose foibles did much to make the journey both picturesque and hazardous. Mr Moss took in Tahiti and - even more interesting - Pitcairn Island of Bounty fame, and his narrative revels in these experiences like a porpoise in the waves. Old sea-dogs may blow through their moustaches at the book, for Mr Moss himself makes no pretence of being a yachtsman while the seamanship he describes veers between the unorthodox and the inept; but anyone who enjoys a racy account of distant places in which much solid information is handled with a deceptive and pleasing nonchalance will find that the *The Road to Portobello* is the book for him'. One chapter entitled *Christian Sentiments* was serialized in the *Daily Gleaner* in February and March 1963. Mysteriously it was attributed to another book title *Take him to Sea*.

Billy wrote to tell his daughter about his new job – 'the pay [is] miserable, but I have a reasonable expense account, and as a newspaper, *The Daily Gleaner* is one of the best I have ever worked for'. Now living at the 17th century Ferry Inn, he told her in May 1962 that 'I now have a fascinating job on this newspaper covering "entertainment" all over the island. This means I have to go to all the shows, films, cabarets, hotels and restaurants – and get paid for doing it. It's terrific fun.' His column called *Merry-Go-Round* covered all the performing arts and he also wrote about TV in the *Televue* column. He was equally upbeat in a letter to his daughters three years later: 'Life out here continues to be very pleasant, though (as in England) we have been having a lot of labour troubles. However, the country is so beautiful and the climate so perfect that everything seems all right – even if it isn't. (At the moment, for instance, there's a strike at *The Gleaner* – which is the only daily newspaper in Jamaica – but how can I complain when orchids are growing outside my window and humming-birds try to share my breakfast?).'

Increasingly suffering from ill health, Billy died in 1965, aged just 44. His funeral was held at the Garrison Church in Kingston on Friday 13 August and was officiated over by Captain the Reverend Oriane Lindsay of the Jamaica Defence Force. Two buglers from the 1st Battalion Jamaica Regiment sounded Last Post and Reveille over his coffin which was draped in a Union Jack. A simple rock of red and white mottled Jamaican marble was erected over his grave with the inscription 'In loving memory of William Stanley Moss, A Soldier, A Writer, A Traveller'.

Arrested by war of the chance to develop his array of talents, Billy had embarked on a life of haphazard travel and freelance employment, seeking to reproduce in peacetime the dangers and excitement he had known during the war. Unable to come to terms with the realities of austere post-war existence and the need 'to settle down', he sought to replicate the pattern of dangerous assignments which had made such

⁷² The *Nassau Guardian* reported him as arriving in December

an impression on him as a young man at Tara. He was, after all, one of Richard Capell's 'audacious, gay, determined and much-enduring' young men⁷³.

Yet it was a fatal formula for a happy life. Did 'the things that fix themselves like limpets to the memory', images of horrific deaths which provide 'milestones for the memory', the jigsaw puzzle of 'utter failure [that] mingled so freely with success'⁷⁴ all conspire to haunt him and hound him to an early grave? Today, over seventy-five years from the year of S.O.E.'s formation, tragic evidence of suicide and PTSD among former personnel has accrued: while none wore the psychological scars of war easily, many suffered gravely from hidden torments. Billy was one of them.

It is therefore fitting, with the benefit of hindsight, to qualify the understated inscription on his headstone – a courageous and gallant soldier, a talented and prolific author and intrepid journalist, and an irrepressible and fearless traveller.

⁷³ Capell was the opera critic of *The Daily Telegraph* turned war correspondent. [Capell: *Simiomata, a Greek Note Book 1944-46*].

⁷⁴ All phrases used by Billy in *War of Shadows*

PLF's Jennifer's 'Cairo' Diary for Sophie Moss

Costa Achillopoulos - photographer

Princess Joan Aly Khan

Julian Amery SOE

Rene Andrews – spelling? N/T

Natasha Bagration – Georgian/Russian princess married to Charles Johnston

Cecil Beaton - photographer

Priscilla Bibescu – her mother was Asquith's daughter who married a Romanian Prince.

Joyce Britton Jones – mistress of King George of Greece

Charlie Brocklehurst – is this Lt Col Charles Brocklehurst⁷⁵ of Hare Hill?

Bernard and Inez Burrows – second secretary

Geoffrey Butros-Ghali – old Coptic family [father was PM?]

Dennis Craig – N/T

Adrian Daintrey - painter

Elizabeth David – see Artemis Cooper's book

Madou Faucigny-Lucinge [later Lady Forbes]

Robin Fedden – writer, lecturer

Michal Forrester – SOE? No trace in records. AC says he was a leader of Cretan guerrilla

Dudley Forwood – Scots Guards

Princess Frederika of Greece

Yuri Galitzine - SOE

Eddie Garthorne-Hardy – writer, lecturer

Joyce Grenfell - actress

General Gubbins - SOE

Elsa Gued⁷⁶ - see footnote

⁷⁵ 2nd Special Service Detachment (SSD 2)], based, in late 1941, at the Bush Warfare School in Maymyo (Pyin-U-Lwin), Burma (Myanmar); under Lieutenant Colonel Henry Courtney Brocklehurst for training for 204 British Military Mission to China.

⁷⁶ In 1947 James Bowker married Elsa Gued, whom he had met in Cairo while he was posted there. Lady Bowker (as she became) was a noted socialite. She continued to live in London after Sir James' death, and in 1992 she met, and became a *confidante* of, Diana, Princess of Wales. Lady Bowker died in 2000. She had no children.

Bill Harcourt – N/T
George Jellicoe - SBS
Charles Johnston – diplomat/Chancery
George Katsimbalis - poet
Patrick Kinross - writer
Alexi Ladas – friend of Billy and PLF
Miranda Lampson – daughter of Ambassador. Married Geoffrey Jamieson in 1946
Betty Lampson – Ambassador’s niece
Julian ‘Lizzie’ Lezard – man about town, then SOE France
Hamish Mackenzie – second secretary Embassy Athens in 1955
Fitzroy Maclean SAS
Marcelle Massourides or Matossian?
Themis Marinou - SOE
Charlie Maydwell - SOE
Denise Menasce – PLF’s girlfriend
Irene Najjar – mistress of King Farouk
Burnet Pavitt - musician
Prince Peter of Greece
Lilia Ralli - Alexandrine Greek, model for Jean Dessès, friend of Cecil Beaton
Marie and Mamduh Riaz – Joan met PLF at one of her parties
Russell Pasha, Sir Thomas and Lady Dorothea - diplomat
Francis Salvago – merchant family
Shan and Roxani Sedgwick ⁷⁷
Princess Shevkiar – first wife of King Fouad, father of Farouk
Amy and Sir Walter Smart - <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/Archive/2006/788/bo10.htm>
Lady Spears [Mrs Mary Borden-Turner] – wife of Sir Edward Spears, British minister to Syria and Lebanon

⁷⁷ "Shan." Born on 8 February 1901 to Alexander and Lydia Rogers Sedgwick in Stockbridge, he worked as the Middle East correspondent for the **New York Times** and as the Associated Press correspondent in Greece in the 1930s. He married Roxane Soteriadis of Greece and lived in that country for most of his later years. Alexander died in Greece on 19 January 1996

David Stirling - SAS

David Sutherland - SBS

General Tsigantes Greek Sacred Squadron

Maro Vatsulalls

Samira Wahba – old Coptic family

Samiha Wahba – as above

Eddie Ward – N/T

Wissa family [Gertrude ('Gertie'), Farousa and Philae]– old Coptic family

Dick Wyndham⁷⁸ - see footnote

⁷⁸ Painter, printmaker, writer, illustrator and collector, Dick Wyndham was born into an aristocratic family (a descendant of the Earl of Egremont); educated at Wellington College and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst; served in the army during WWI, winning the Military Cross; inherited the country house 'Clouds' in 1914 from a cousin, but lived there only briefly; from 1927 he lived at Tickerage Mill near Uckfield, Sussex and moved and partied with an artistic group; exhibited at Goupil and Tooth; had his first solo there in 1933; noted for his landscapes; author of several novels including: the 'Gentle Savage', 1936 and 'Painter's Progress' in 1938; served in WWII, but was invalided out and became a foreign correspondent and was killed in Jerusalem in 1948, aged 52, in a skirmish between Israeli troops and the Arab League.