

UNCLASSIFIED

# DAILY ENTERPRISE



## (U) HISTORY TODAY - FRIDAY CLASSIC: April 8, 2016

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(U) Every Friday, the Center for Cryptologic History republishes a favorite *History Today* from our 13-year archives. We invite our readers to send us suggestions for favorite articles they would like to see reprised.

(U) Ted Wildman, whose wartime experiences are featured in these related articles, made his post-U.S. Navy career with NSA. He had some of the most unusual SIGINT experiences of World War II.

(U) HISTORY TODAY – August 1, 2005

(U) In 1942, Theodore “Ted” Wildman, a U.S. Navy petty officer with several years’ experience in COMINT, volunteered for a special assignment. His five-man group was advised they could not be told where they were going, what they would be doing, or when they would return. They were further informed that OP-20-G, the Navy’s cryptologic organization, did not want to send them on a mission it considered a waste of resources, but had been overruled.

(U) After crash courses on Japanese military communications and COMINT equipment, the five men were sent on a circuitous journey through Belem (Brazil), Accra, Khartoum, and Aden, to Karachi.

(U) In Karachi, the five met their new chief, Navy commander Milton E. Miles -- he was recuperating from a Japanese assassination attempt. From India, the now six men traveled to Chungking, wartime capital of China.

(U) The group, augmented by new arrivals, established an intercept site outside Chungking from which they were able to collect Japanese military and shipping communications not available elsewhere. When it became necessary to create a direction finding (DF) network, Wildman and his colleagues cannibalized radio equipment available in the area to build their own.

(U) Eventually, the COMINT group at Chungking split up for field work. In January 1944, Wildman became part of a 12-person team that rode horses to the Gobi to set up DF operations in the desert -- the U.S. Navy’s only horseback unit. With a dry climate, relatively flat terrain, and absence of electrical interference, the Gobi was a good area for High Frequency Direction Finding work.

(U) The Gobi unit had radio communications with the Navy, but no physical contact with the outside until July 1944 -- when a truck arrived with Christmas presents!

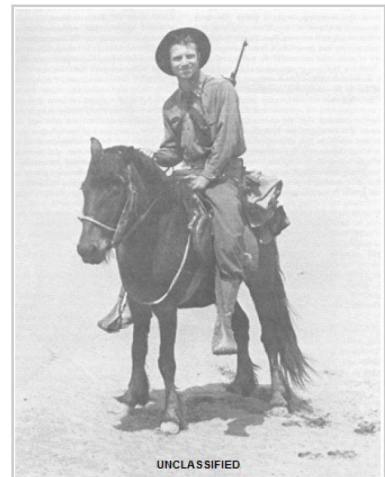
(U) Wildman returned to Chungking and then went on to Washington at the end of 1944. He remained in the Navy and retired as a lieutenant commander in 1956.

(U) HISTORY TODAY – March 3, 2006

### (U) **CRYPTOLOGIC FILMS THAT NEVER WON AN OSCAR:**

*Destination Gobi*, 1953, with Richard Widmark, Darryl Hickman, Martin Milner, and Ross Bagdasarian.

(U) This film tells the story of a group of U.S. Navy weathermen in the Gobi Desert during World War II. Pursued by Japanese forces, the Navy personnel get help from Mongol nomads in escaping.



(U) Theodore “Ted” Wildman was a member of the U.S. Navy’s horseback unit in the Gobi Desert during World War II.

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(U) The film is based on a true story -- of a U.S. Navy DF team in the Gobi in WW II. The group set up an intercept site in the desert and sent DF information back to American forces in China. In 1953, of course, Hollywood could not mention activities related to signals intelligence, so, for the purposes of the film, the Navy group's function was changed to weather reporting.

(U) To discuss historical topics with interesting folks, visit the Center for Cryptologic History's blog, [History Rocks](#) ("go history rocks").

(U) Have a question or comment on History Today? Contact us at [DL cch](#) or

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