

**SCOUTS-L**

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**BADEN-POWELL  
A SPY?**

**Date:** Fri, 7 Mar 1997 00:05:32 -0600  
**Reply-To:** golden cliff <c60clg1@CORN.CSO.NIU.EDU>  
**Sender:** Scouts-L Youth Group List <Scouts-L@tcu.edu>  
**From:** golden cliff <c60clg1@CORN.CSO.NIU.EDU>  
**Subject:** B-P a spy?

A little while back there was a thread about Scouting trivia where we were discussing the possibilities of B-P being involved in intelligence activities.

I remember scanning through a book a few years back which indicated B-P had done such work, although I can't find that particular source now.

I did run across a newer book of similar nature.

The title is.. **SPY BOOK: the Encyclopedia of Espionage** written by Norman Plmar and Thomas Allen published by Random House 1997 ISBN 0-679-42514-4.

Baden-Powell is mentioned three times in the book, on pages 43, 70, and 189.

Page 43 Offers a synopsis of B-P's career. Here are some excerpts...

"While serving in India as a junior officer, he developed small unit patrolling and reconnaissance procedures that later became basic Army tactics."

"Baden-Powell is credited with carrying out official and unofficial intelligence missions into hostile territory, often in disguise, from 1880 to 1902."

"Official records, which do not disclose his espionage work, listed him as inspector general of the South African constabulary in 1900 and head of the South African cavalry from 1903 to 1907. He retired from the army in 1910 with the rank of major general."

"When he learned that his military textbook, *Aids to Scouting* (1899), was being used to train boys in woodcraft, he became interested in camping for boys. He set up an experimental camp in 1907 and, after retiring, devoted his energies to organizing the movement that became the Boy Scouts."

**"Baden-Powell was knighted in 1909 and raised to the peerage in 1929, becoming Baron Baden-Powell of Gilwell.**

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**Page 70 describes the "Sonderfahndungsliste" called by the British the "Black Book". It was part of the German plan to invade Britain, listing the most important British subjects and European exiles to be taken into custody by the Gestapo. There were 2,820 on the list. The book mentions only a few... "Others included Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts, who had been involved in British intelligence".**

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**Page 189 talks about the beginnings of British intelligence. "But there was an undercurrent of amateurism to British spying until the Boer War (1899-1902) revealed the need for a permanent, professional approach to intelligence and counterintelligence. Maj. Gen. Sir Rober Baden-Powell, the hero of the siege of Mafeking in 1900, introduced inovative intelligence techniques during this war. These innovations helped kindle new interest in reorganizing the Secret Service to provide intelligence in the event of a European war."**

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**It's been clearly documented that B-P was involved in a great deal intelligence work. Whether you label him as a master spy or not, is another question. Some do. The other book I had seen went into greater detail with his spy activities and technique. It was very interesting.**

**So you can think of B-P as the great founder of our movement, a hero and soldier, or maybe even an early prototype version of James Bond.**

**Whatever your viewpoint it makes for interesting reading and even more interesting speculation.**

**YIS, Cliff Golden  
Scoutmaster Troop 33; DeKalb, Illinois  
Three Fires Council BSA**

**From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Sun Feb 23 05:25:41 1997  
Date: Sun, 23 Feb 1997 05:25:40 -0500 (EST)**

**From:** "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
**To:** SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <scouts-l@tcu.edu>  
**Subject:** BP - Spy? Scouting Trivia  
**Message-ID:** <Pine.SUN.3.91-FP.970223050106.22632A-100000@cap1.capaccess.org>  
**MIME-Version:** 1.0  
**Content-Type:** TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII  
**Status:** RO  
**X-Status:**

For the better part of eighty years there have been rumors and question as to whether Baden-Powell was a spy during World War I. E.E. Reynolds in his book "Baden-Powell: A Biography of Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell, Oxford University Press: London (1942) sheds some light on the issue.

Apparently there was a lot of speculation as to why B-P wasn't given an active commission in charge of a division. Lord Kitchner publically stated that B-P's work with Scouting was too important, that he had lots of generals to assign, but nobody else was qualified to lead Scouting in the good work it was doing.

Early in the War he visited the Front several times and wrote a book called "Quick Training for War" to help new recruits. About 1915 he wrote another book entitled "My Adventures as a Spy" (later retitled "The Adventures of a Spy"). [In 1889 B-P had served as Intelligence Officer for the Mediterranean. Earlier in 1886 he had been engaged in espionage in Russia, where he was arrested and taken to St. Petersburg, where with the help of a German officer he escaped by ship.]

During these war years traveled often raising money to be used for building huts for soldiers on the front and organized the Sea Scouts to do coast watching with the Navy.

In 1916 a Chicago newspaper reported that B-P had been executed for spying for the Germans. A Pittsburg newspaper got the story a little differently and reported that B-P was in the Tower of London. When informed of the report, B-P wrote back:

"Dear Sir,

I regret that the report that I am sojourning in the Tower of London,

under a charge of espionage, cannot be correct, as I was taken out and shot over a month ago (according to a Chicago newspaper). I am not clear which country I was spying for, but at the moment I am fairly busy on work for Great Britain."

And during the last year of the war (1918) he did visit Spain to look over the Scouting Movement and in the process managed to make some inquiries into the use German submarines were making of Spanish ports.

I would suspect that the foregoing was sufficient to make Hitler believe that B-P was a spy and dangerous.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
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From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Wed Feb 26 02:10:04 1997  
Date: Wed, 26 Feb 1997 02:10:02 -0500 (EST)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <scouts-l@tcu.edu>  
Subject: Award knots and the medals they represent  
Message-ID: <Pine.SUN.3.91-FP.970226015624.11425E-100000@cap1.capaccess.org>  
MIME-Version: 1.0  
Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII  
Status: RO  
X-Status:

When attending a gathering where a more formal uniform is required, it really is up to the individual Scouter to decide whether to wear medals, medals with knots, or just knots. BSA acting on the recommendations of volunteers changed the Insignia Guide to add a little common sense and get away from a strict rule that was detracting from more important things in Scouting. The language mandating that a medal and cloth badge could never be worn together was removed. The language on page 5 of the current insignia guide was changed to say "Generally, when a cloth badge is worn, the metal one is not worn." to allow discretion and avoid hardships for those with only a single uniform.

**Recognition serves an important purpose in encouraging and motivating folks to do their best whether youth or adults. The idea is to use this as a tool or method, but not to make an end in and of itself. I think we might be better served to relax a little on this. After all at an Eagle Court of Honor, I suspect that most of the people are going to be focused on the Eagle and the proceedings and not pulling out an insignia guide to see whether Scouter Ned is wearing his medals correctly and making notes for later critiques. Yes, you should wear the uniform properly and do what is right, but on the other hand lets not get so hung up on it that we forget that we are there to serve the aims of Scouting for the boys. Wear your awards proudly, it encourages others to do more for Scouting, but don't get caught up in fussing over it so much that you lose sight of the aims of Scouting.**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
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**Date: Fri, 7 Mar 1997 10:12:11 -0600  
From: Russ Jones <CSRTJ@TTUHSC.EDU>  
Subject: Re: B-P a spy?  
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>**

**I seem to recall hearing that at one point during the Boer War, B-P infiltrated enemy territory in the guise of a naturalist. After surreptitiously making a highly detailed drawing of the fortifications around an enemy stronghold, he was arrested on suspicion of spying, with the drawing in his possession. He was detained and questioned at length, but his cover story held, his drawing was never discovered, and he was eventually released. He returned with his drawing--cleverly disguised as part of the markings on the wings of a butterfly he had sketched. Whether this story is fact or merely embellishment of the legend I don't know, but it seems pretty that clear B-P did indeed engage in spying at various points in his career.**

**Yours in Scouting,**

**Russ Jones <csrtj@ttuhsc.edu>**  
**Scoutmaster, Troop 575 & National Jamboree Troop 1636**  
**South Plains Council, Lubbock, Texas**  
**Eagle Scout, class of 1965**  
**"I used to be a fox..." SC-295**  
**"I used to be a staffer..." SC-430, SR-110, SR-206**

**Date: Fri, 7 Mar 1997 15:13:39 -0500**  
**From: Randy Moyers 1355 6051 <moyersrl@PLHP002.COMM.MOT.COM>**  
**Subject: Re: B-P a spy?**  
**To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>**

**The book -250,000,000 Scouts- by Laszlo Nigay (sp?) recounts several espionage expeditions that B-P performed at the request of the British government. A couple of these were in the Mid-East (Afghanistan) and at least one was in Africa (Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe). In each case he used his cover as a naturalist and artist to bring back drawings and watercolors of terrain, cities, fortifications, and encampments. In Rhodesia he also used his influence to gain support for the British troops among local factions, in effect a third column. It seems clear that B-P was one of the originators and early practitioners of the fine art of spying**

**YIS,**  
**Randy KE4NNI**  
**CC, WEBELOS Leader, Outdoor Activity Chair Pack 281**  
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**Date: Sun, 9 Mar 1997 00:21:09 +0800**  
**From: "Grant O'Neil" <poneilgdo@ALPHA2.CURTIN.EDU.AU>**  
**Subject: Re: B-P a spy?**  
**To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>**

**Russ Jones wrote:**  
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 >eventually released. He returned with his drawing--cleverly disguised as  
 >part of the markings on the wings of a butterfly he had sketched.

I have in front of me Tim Jeals's biography of BP. Among the photos  
 between  
 pages 132 and 133 is a reproduction of the butterfly map described above;  
 this illustration was included in BP's book "My Adventures as a Spy"  
 published in 1915. However, this spying took place some time before the  
 Boer  
 War. According to Jeal, these spying activities "...allegedly took place in  
 various countries bordering the Mediterranean between 1890 and 1893.  
 BTW, I  
 would suggest that it was BP's own book about his spying activities that  
 would likely have led the German intelligence service to label him as a  
 "master spy" during WW2, rather than any information they may have had  
 about  
 his current activities; given the amount of his time that was devoted to  
 scouting virtually from 1911 to the time of his death I find it hard to  
 imagine he could have had the time (or, for that matter, the necessary  
 inconspicuousness) to indulge in any espionage activities.

YiS

Grant O'Neil	- .
Assistant Venturer Leader	_r  Ll\
2nd Ballajura Venturer Unit	__ \
Swan Valley District	=> \  __  /
Western Australia	~~ `-'
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