

TOP SECRET MEMO FROM BRITAIN'S S.O.E.
(SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE) MAY, 1943

Dear Noor,

You have proved yourself to be a skilled wireless radio operator for the WAAF and are fluent in French and English. We need people with skills like these to work as undercover agents, sending messages to a network of spies working for Britain in Paris. This network is known as Operation Prosper.

Your superiors tell us that before the war you worked as a children's book author. This makes you an unlikely candidate for the very different work of being a secret agent, but we have been told you are keen to offer your skills to help win the war. This is a very brave decision. If captured the German police, the Gestapo, will show no mercy.

Regards

S.O.E.

PS: Your codename is Madeleine. (The name is taken from a character in the book of traditional Indian children's stories you wrote.)

THIS WIRELESS RADIO BELONGS TO

NOOR
INAYAT
KHAN

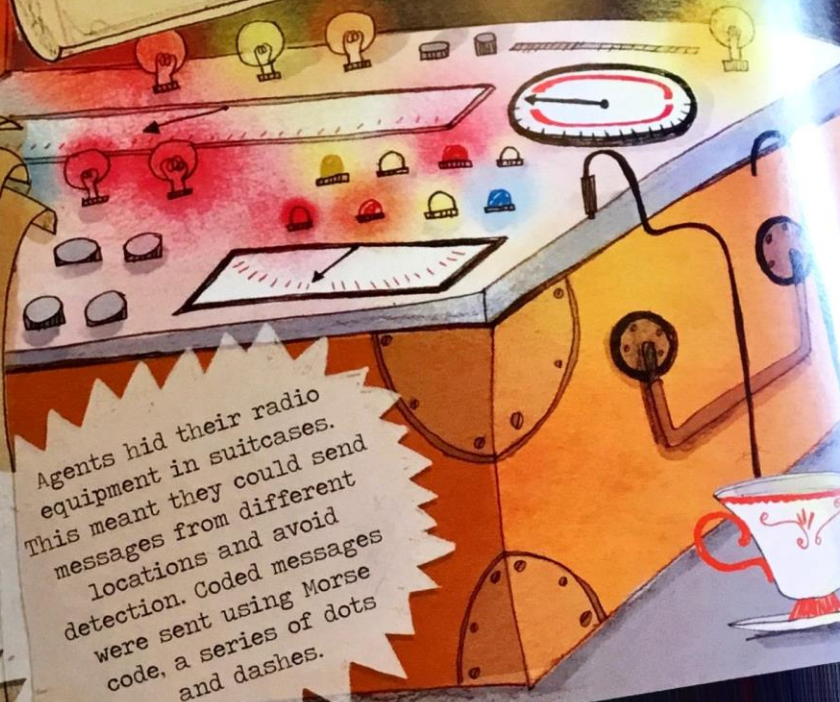
UNLIKELY SECRET AGENT AND
HEROINE OF WORLD WAR TWO.



OCCUPATION: First female wireless operator to be sent into Nazi-occupied France during World War Two.

BACKGROUND: Noor's father was descended from Indian royalty and her mother was American. She grew up with a strong belief in fairness and tolerance of people's differences. This was precisely why, after being forced to flee the invading German army in her home in Paris, France, and go to Britain, Noor decided to join the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) as a radio operator to support the British fight for freedom against the Nazis.

Agents hid their radio equipment in suitcases. This meant they could send messages from different locations and avoid detection. Coded messages were sent using Morse code, a series of dots and dashes.



MESSAGES FROM MADELEINE:

MAY 1943: London, do you receive me London? I have been in Paris for just 72 hours but have located radio equipment in the greenhouse of a fellow spy.

The FASTEST response time of ANY agent landing in the field.



July 1943: DISASTER! Operation Prosper has been compromised! Many agents have been arrested. I am the only radio operator left in Paris. Don't try and persuade me to return to Britain - I intend to do whatever it takes to keep communications open.

The average time a radio operator avoided capture was just SIX weeks. I managed to work in Paris for FIVE MONTHS!

September 1943: The Gestapo are desperate to catch me. I have to be very careful as they are driving around Paris with radio signal detection equipment hidden in bakery and laundry vans.

To evade capture I changed my appearance several times.

The Gestapo will never recognise me now!



MISSION REPORT

Noor sent over **20** messages to London that helped to evacuate airmen who had been stranded in France, but in October **1943** the Gestapo tracked her down. Calling upon incredible inner strength Noor resisted arrest, made daring attempts to escape from prison and refused to give away any secrets.

Tragically, Noor did not survive being a prisoner of war. Her incredible efforts were acknowledged with the highest honour for bravery - the George Cross. Noor was one of the most remarkable agents of World War Two. Her work showed that in extreme situations ordinary people are capable of extraordinary things.



SECRET CODES
TWENTY TAJAK TALES
BY ANA INAYAT KHAN