



### The G.H.Q. Liason Regiment - "Phantom"

Phantom was created in France in 1939 with the specific task of pinpointing the changing locations of "bomb lines" i.e. the battle areas not occupied by Allied troops, and therefore suitable targets for bombs and shells.

Soon it was a vital link between forward patrols and command headquarters all over Europe, keeping the British, Canadians and Americans precisely informed of what their forward troops were doing, and the enemy's reaction.

The Regiment was a streamlined organisation for gaining information of the enemy by the use of long-range patrols either operating with the forward troops or dropped behind the enemy lines.

Phantom was composed of volunteers, all men of outstanding personality, plus exceptional linguistic and motor cycling skills, and a rigorous training in Morse code and radio communication. Their task of collecting information was difficult and dangerous, for they had to travel fast in battlefront areas, over roads often mined, or infested with snipers.

"An adventurous, determined, forceful personality was essential if the right information was to be obtained," an officer recalled. Thus it was a vibrant group who centred on Richmond when the Richmond Hill Hotel and Pembroke Lodge were requisitioned to serve as Phantom's regimental HQ and officers' mess, with the park itself as the primary training ground.

One of them was Major David Niven, who commanded A Squadron and before and after the war was an international film star. Others later reached the top of their professions as academics, politicians, athletes, jockeys (including Sir Gordon Richards), diplomats, lawyers and captains of industry.

The driving force was the Commanding Officer, Lt Col G F Hopkinson, known to all as "Hoppy". Phantom had been disbanded after the Dunkirk evacuation, but Hoppy was determined it should be re-formed. He got permission to recruit 48 officers and 407 other ranks, to set up a pigeon loft with 500 birds for rapid despatch of intelligence, and to acquire high speed vehicles. Then he began a relentless training campaign..

For example, he accustomed Phantom to rise in the middle of the night to begin a complete working day, or to work non-stop for two days and a night or to work all night and sleep in the day conditions they were likely to encounter on active service. He also subjected them to gruelling runs, and icy swims in the park's ponds, and made sure they learnt to transmit and receive Morse messages, with total accuracy, for hours on end at a speed of 30 words a minute.

During the Blitz, when more than 400 bombs fell on the park, he forbade his men to shelter in slit trenches because "taking cover could make cowards". Early in 1941, Phantom sent a squadron to Greece, where many men were lost. Later that year five officers and 52 other ranks went to the Middle East, where they learnt the art of desert navigation and survival before operating with various units in the Eighth Army.

During 1941 and 1942, Phantom maintained detachments in various parts of the UK, where they could give early warning of German invasion. By then the regiment was 900 strong, and sent detachments to Palestine, Iraq, Syria and various parts of Europe, where several died.

By 1944 Phantom's reputation was so high that the SAS, Canadians, Americans, Free French and Poles wanted detachments working with them. Phantom was especially valuable in France, notably when the Falaise pocket was closed, and the German forces were surrounded and annihilated by converging British, Canadian and American troops.

Without Phantom there to identify the exact position of the Allies, casualties from so-called "friendly fire" would have been far greater.





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Their wireless links went straight back to Army H.Q. The Regiment was affiliated to the R.A.C. early in 1944 and thereafter drew reinforcements from the Reconnaissance Corps.

By the end of hostilities some 200 men of the Corps were serving with the Regiment.

The regiment was disbanded in 1947, but re-born two years later as Army Phantom Signals Regiment.

In 1960, following great advances in technology, it ceased to be.

Phantom Sig Regt provided comms for many SF type jobs including the Auxillaries, SAS and other commandos. It was also used to broadcast fake traffic around Dover in conjunction with the "inflatable" army that was being assembled there to convince the Germans that Calais was the intended beachhead



image courtesy of <http://pirtonline.org/phantom.aspx>

Photographer: Unknown

Description: Assumed to be the full establishment of the Phantom Regiment including at least two full troops of dingo scout cars

Date 1942



image courtesy of <http://pirtonline.org/phantom.aspx>  
Photographer: Unknown  
Description: Inspection by senior officer of the Phantom Regiment.  
Date Unknown



image courtesy of <http://pirtonline.org/phantom.aspx>  
Photographer: Unknown  
Description: Trooper John Cave by his Mk1 Dingo  
Date Unknown



image courtesy of D-Day museum Portsmouth

Photographer: Unknown

Description: The Duke of Kent is escorted during an inspection of the Phantom units .

Dingo F14816 is visible in the foreground

Circa 1942





image courtesy of Simon Hamon, Possibly from IWM?

Photographer: Unknown

Description: Mk 1 Dingo F9639 being used by Phantom units in GB during an exercise, the radio aerial on the rear left wing is unusual.

Date Circa 1940's

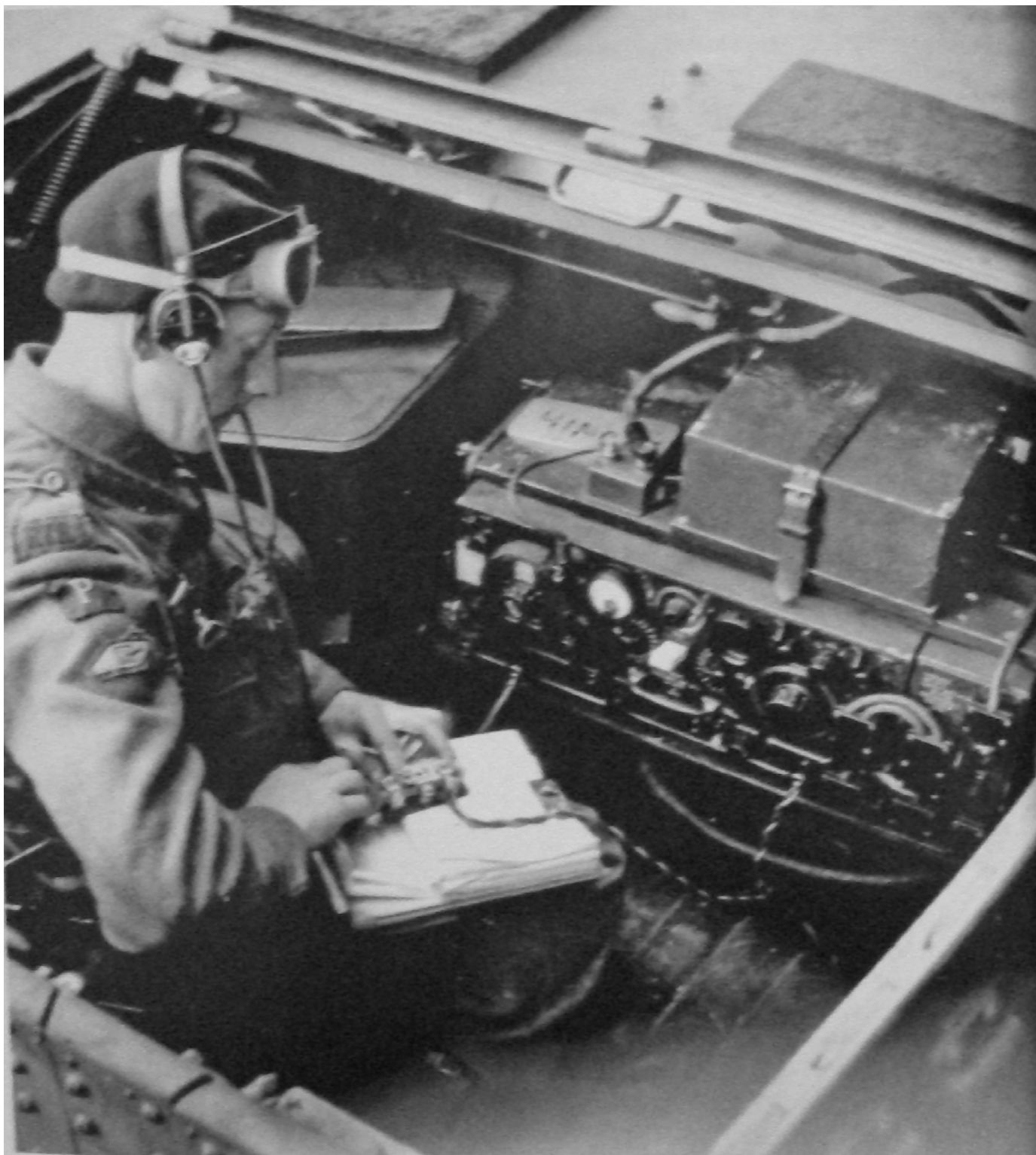


image courtesy of Simon Hamon, Possibly from IWM?

Photographer: Unknown

Description: RTR/ Phantom Radio operator in a Dingo, that's not fitted with a number 19 set or the commander seat.

Date Circa 1940's





Image courtesy of the IWM H 11826

Photographer: Malindine (Lt) War Office official photographer

Description: Motorcycle despatch riders pass messages to a headquarters Scout Car Mk IB **F9639** during an exercise to test airfield defences in the South of England,

22 July 1941.