



## **Gibraltar: Challenge, Change & Continuity**

The Friends of Gibraltar Oral History Project (1930 to 1970)

**Beever, John Grosvenor** (Ser 224 / IWM 009482R01-08x)

### Object description

British civilian child in Scarborough, GB during German naval bombardment, 1914; officer served with H Section, Special Operations Executive in Portugal, 1941-1942; served as assistant to Sir Charles Hambro at Headquarters, Special Operations Executive Baker Street, London in GB, 1942-1943; served as assistant to General Stawell in Egypt and Italy, 1944

### Content description

REEL 1 Background in Scarborough, GB, 1905-1914: father's occupation, family origins in Nottinghamshire; education; recollections of German naval bombardment as schoolboy in Scarborough, 1914; interest in archaeology, choosing a career in law. Aspects of recruitment to Special Operations Executive in GB, 1940: hearing of Special Operations Executive organisation through contact with Sir Frank Nelson, recruitment of solicitor partner Hugh Quinell; story of German organised demonstration against British Embassy in Madrid, 1941; aspects of recruitment interview, 11/1940; attempt to find out more about ISRB; leaving Royal Artillery unit; Special Operations Executive's cover as ISRB. Recollections of period as officer with H Section, Special Operations Executive in Portugal, 1941-1942: importance of H Section; question of foreknowledge of Iberia; flight to Lisbon, January 1941; first impressions of Lisbon; diplomatic separation of belligerents in Portugal. REEL 2 Continues: cover as assistant to British military attaché in Lisbon; contact with Russian émigré, Michael Tereschenko; information passed from Tereschenko to penetrate German secret service; German secret service's attempts to gain information from British sailors; duties with H Section; H Section's activities including contingency plans to destroy oil installations in Tagus estuary in event of German invasion; liaising with Hugh Quennell in London and with Gibraltar. REEL 3 Continues: opinion of working with Portuguese personnel, establishing non-Portuguese regional organisers; passing of money to Belgian agent; contingency plans for Portuguese resistance movement; question of contact with anti-Salazar groups. REEL 4 Continues: story of lending his office to SIS and repercussions in British Embassy, disclosure of true role to Antonio Salazar; attempt to have H Section's directives updated from spring 1942; relations with SIS and Section 5; impressions of Salazar; relations with SIS. REEL 5 Continues: pinion of work of SOE's

financial director John Venner; story of SIS' reaction to penetration of SOE in the Netherlands; background to return to London, June 1942; liaison between H Section and OSS; attending Special Operations Executive training course at Arisaig, Scotland. Recollections of period as assistant to Sir Charles Hambrot Headquarters, Special Operations Executive, Baker Street, London in GB, 1942-1943: taking up new post 1942; foreknowledge and opinion of Hambro; observations on growth and development of Special Operations Executive, 1940-1943; relations between Special Operations Executive and conventional forces staff. REEL 6 Continues: stories illustrating relations between Special Operations Executive and Air Ministry Staff including Sir Charles Portal and with Foreign Office; friction over Special Operations Executive requests for aircraft supply, improvement in situation after 1943; problems of support for Communist resistance in Balkans. REEL 7 Continues: relations between Special Operations Executive and Balkan Communist resistance; Sir Charles Hambro's resignation. Aspects of period as assistant to General Stawell in Egypt and Italy, 1944: structure of Special Operations Executive in Mediterranean. REEL 8 Continues: relations with resistance movements.

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