

VIA: AIR  
(SPECIFY AIR OR SEA POUCH)

DISPATCH NO. SGAA-8824

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**SECRET**  
CLASSIFICATION

TO : Chief, SE  
Attn:   
FROM : Senior Representative,  *HAW*  
SUBJECT: GENERAL— OBOPUS/INTEL

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
DATE:                       
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCE METHODSEXEMPTION 3B2B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2007

SPECIFIC— Security Review of Willow Team Operations

REF: SGAW-3280, KAPOK-256, 19 November 1953

1. Herewith additional information regarding Willow Team operations, as per your recommendations in paragraph 21 of reference.

a. and b. Agent Selection

**RESTRICTED TO** EE/YA

RNORDAIN had been employed by  since 1949, during which time he infiltrated Albania 6 times as a member of intelligence teams operating in the Korce area. During these missions for  he worked with RNPOTIUG and AIRWISE on several occasions. In August 1951 his services with  were suspended and he was subsequently dispatched to Syros camp. Reasons for the termination of his services with  were, according to RNORDAIN, his unwillingness to work any longer for services other than the HTNEIGH. In September 1951  visited the camp in his capacity of HTNEIGH representative. He delivered various goods to some of the camp internees but also had the occasion to approach most of the Albanians in camp. RNORDAIN met  for the first time there and immediately told him that he was eager to work for HTNEIGH.  promised to go into the matter as soon as he returned to Athens. 10 or 15 days later RNORDAIN was ordered to leave Syros camp. He was subsequently escorted to GALATEA's office in Athens where he was picked up by  and was installed in the Hotel Egypt, Athens, on the latter's expense. It seems that conditions in the Egypt Hotel were unpleasant because he moved on his own initiative to the Athinaikon Hotel where he "accidentally" met RNPOTIUG. As soon as  discovered this he ordered him to move out and find another hotel for himself. His preference this time was Hotel Knossos, Athens.

In December 1951 he was interviewed by  in the latter's quarters and was asked to name any close friends or associates of his and also make proposals for future operations. He then suggested AIRSLACK and AIRBRED and stated that he would be willing to work with RNDIGEST, RNDOSAGE and RNDEPLOY who were then living in QKDIMPLE. All three of them had previously formed POPLAR Team which we failed to mount. Later in December 1951 RNORDAIN and RNDIGEST were interviewed by  and agreed to form a team with RNDIGEST as team leader (not RNORDAIN, as per SGAW-3280, attachment B., para 3.) This confirmed RNDIGEST, RNDOSAGE and RNDEPLOY were ordered to report to GALATEA's office from where they were picked up by  RNORDAIN was simultaneously picked up from Knossos Hotel by  Team was subsequently moved to our safehouse known as the "Farm."

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c. Review of safehouses

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c. Review of Safehouses and Training

OCC caretaker  
Δ Greece

OCC housekeeper  
Δ Greece  
wife of Safehouse caretaker  
SEX F

(1) 1952 operations

caretaker of Safehouse

Willow Team was held in our former safehouse, known as the "Farm." This consisted of two main houses plus the caretaker's cottage. All three buildings were surrounded by a big garden. The location was good affording little observation from the outside. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the house had been repeatedly used since 1950 for OBOPUS teams and for the staging of a considerable number of Bulgarian agents, it was more or less known that "refugees were being held there by the Americans." The house was serviced by a caretaker, Manolis Spanoulidakis and his wife Marina Spanoulaki, both loyal to us and locally cleared. In the spring of 1951 the Bulgarian desk hired Margarita Milonopoulou nee Ramfou, sister of the caretaker's wife. In April 1952 we were informed that her husband, Demetrios Milonopoulos, was an irreconcilable Communist and for many years in exile on the island of Haghios Efstratios. An investigation was carried out immediately which revealed that although she was not a Communist herself, yet she maintained regular correspondence with her husband. She was subsequently ordered not to leave the house without our permission. Later upon [ ] return from the hospital she was fired.

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Δ Greece

husband of Safehouse  
housekeeper

CIT ?  
OCC Housekeeper  
Δ Greece

housekeeper of  
Safehouse

Willow Team members, like all OBOPUS teams, upon arrival at the safehouse were deprived of their identity cards and were issued orders not to leave the farm. We believe that they never violated these instructions.

The house was supplied with food, water, etc. by [ ] and occasionally [ ] lived at the farm throughout the summer of 1952. All training for the 1952 operations took place in the first rate hilly area NE of the farm. It consisted of hiking, firing of Mauser rifles, Schmeisser automatics and P-38 pistols, map reading, compass and first aid, and was conducted by [ ]

(2) 1953 operations

Prior to the mounting of above operation, team was held in our present "Kifissia" safehouse. It consists of a fenced building, situated on a back street in Kifissia, and is serviced by Olga Garzouni, a very old woman, recommended to us by the Greek General staff. The team was briefed in that house by [ ] directions, was supplied by [ ] outfitted by [ ] and trained by [ ] Training took place in the remote area NE of the Penteli mountain and consisted in a repetition of general principles on map reading and testing of their weapons.

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DPOB ?  
CIT ?  
OCC Housekeeper  
Δ KIFISSIA, Greece

d. Transportation (all operations)

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(1) Recruiting of team

Housekeeper of Safehouse

Team members used local transportation facilities from Syros camp to Athens and QKDIMPLE to Athens. On all such occasions they were escorted by Greek Gendarmes.

(2) Transportation in Athens  
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(2) Transportation in Athens

OBOPUS operational vehicles as listed below were used for the transfer of the team to and from hotels, training sites, GALATEA's office, etc. Vehicles were always parked at a reasonable distance from the pick-up points. Special care was taken regarding the team's transfer to and from the airfields. In this case we used panel trucks. (License nos JMP 109 and 110).

(3) Transportation outside Athens

For trips to Loutraki or Khalkis the office used OBOPUS vehicles A-2770 and A-2765. For trips to and from the airfield of Ellinikon to the airfield of Kastoria we employed the C-47 planes of the Air Support section.

(4) In the border area the team used   vehicles and Missouri mules loaned from the border units.

(5) Following is a list of principle OBOPUS vehicles used for Willow Team operations:

- C-48655
- A-2706
- A-2761
- A-2770
- A-2765
- A-3869
- JMP 109
- JMP110.

e. Personnel (other than those mentioned in reference)

- (1)   Temporarily substituting   for the 1952 August, October operations. Chief of OBOPUS project in 1953.
- (2)   - Assisted   in the operations.
- (3)   - Assisted in the first 1952 briefing.
- (4)   Equipping and training.
- (5)   Equipping, training and supplies.
- (6)   - Equipping, training and liaison.
- (7)   - Assisted in the equipping of the 1952 winter operation. He also escorted the team to the border unit.

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f. The team consisting

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f. The team consisting of RNDIGEST as leader, and members RNORDAIN, RNDOSAGE and RNDEPLOY was interviewed by [ ] twice and briefed by [ ] and [ ] interpreting. The safehouse was supplied by [ ] and [ ] and the team equipped by [ ] Due to the time limit the team members received no training in the field. [ ] was not present in the briefing of this operation. The team was dispatched to the Kastoria airfield in a C-47 escorted by [ ] and was delivered to Captain Metropoulos, then CO of the [ ] border unit of Kastoria.

The team made several desperate attempts to cross the border in the Fushes area on the slopes NE of Grammos, but failed to infiltrate because of the deep and soft snow that blocked the passes. It seems that RNDIGEST and RNORDAIN had slight arguments and disputes among themselves on strategy along the way. Team was flown back to Athens conducted by [ ] The team was debriefed by [ ] and on completion of this the team members were given back their identity cards and personal belongings and were put up in hotels in Athens. RNORDAIN returned to Hotel Knossos whereas the other three were installed at Panathinaea Hotel.

During March, April and May 1952 RNORDAIN exchanged plans and arguments with RNDIGEST on the composition of their team. We don't know what exactly transpired among them and the rest of their comrades (see 1630-CAGWU, para 1.). The fact is that in May 1952 RNDIGEST was hurriedly dispatched to Syros camp for maltreating RNADUANA in the Bernitsa cafeteria in Athens. Reasons were political. [ ] will recall this Memorial Day fracas. RNDOSAGE on the other hand suffered an attack of appendicitis and was confined to a hospital. RNDEPLOY was returned to QKDIMPLE because at that time he was loyal to RNDIGEST. RNDIGEST and RNDOSAGE are now in QKDIMPLE.

g. Concerning the unusual conduct of the Albanian border guards, RNORDAIN furnished the following:

He, RNORDAIN, was leading the team when they were confronted by three armed border guards who asked them to halt. Upon this RNORDAIN told them that he and his men were Sigurimi men patrolling the area. The border guards were reluctant to buy this and asked RNORDAIN to give them the password. Upon this RNORDAIN pointed his automatic at the border guard closest to him and threatened to fire on the slightest provocation. It would seem that the 3 men were taken by surprise and did not dare to move. At this moment the border guards told the team that "they had no desire to hinder their journey." It seems that a long discussion followed during which Willow Team leader found the opportunity to tell the border guards what he thought of the Communist regime. The incident ended in a fashion faintly reminiscent of a wild west movie story. The border guards were asked to give their word of honor (famous Albanian BESA) not to fire in the backs of Willow and this done RNORDAIN and his group continued their route unmolested.

h. Regarding the security

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h. Regarding the security of the net the following additional information was obtained:

(1) The team contacted the principal agent and established the main dead-drop with him. This consisted of selecting a point known to both parties which had to have the following assets and characteristics:

- (a) It should be situated in a more or less frequented place justifying the agent's approach there.
- (b) Should afford security and good observation.
- (c) Should not run the risks of being cultivated, excavated, used by the Army, etc.
- (d) Should be easy to locate.

(2) The principal agent was given an identification number. Hence all letters addressed to him or by him will bear this number. Likewise he allots similar identification numbers to the sub-agents.

(3) It is imperative that the agents have good reasons justifying their mobility between dead-drops. In normal cases the team will not select agents that can not have mobility cover. That is why postmen, drivers, or laborers have top priority in selection.

(4) The team has not been giving danger signals to their agents. On the other hand, all necessary precautions were taken when picking up letters or supplies from dead-drops or supply points. The team, for example, never approached a dead-drop by day and on arrival at the pick-up point the team members took positions while one of them proceeded to the collection of the letters.

(5) It is the principal agent's duty to select, train and brief the sub-agents or their cut-outs.

(6) All agents are carefully briefed to take minute precautions when carrying letters, or other incriminating documents. They were told to secure such objects in bicycle handles, in their bread, etc.

(7) As a rule the sub-agents did not know more than one cut-out. Nevertheless, the team leader admits that in many special circumstances various agents insisted upon maintaining direct contact with the team. This seems to be unavoidable because the people in the country are very suspicious of each other's activities, but also because of psychological reasons. The team leader demonstrated that it is practically impossible to avoid contacting patriots who have been longing to see <sup>men</sup> heralding the liberation of their country and who put their families and lives at stake in order to help in their capacity, their fatherland's cause. (This office does not overlook the fact that teams very often carry out a little politicking or advertising of their own during these missions). In any case when the team

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feels it is necessary to make contact with some known or previously unknown agent a series of special security measures is to be taken. This consists of the team taking positions in a well selected spot from which they can observe the entire area. The prospective contact is then instructed to follow a given observable path, without company and unarmed. He is also briefed to make certain performances while approaching, such as lighting cigarettes, tying his shoes etc., etc. When and if the contact's intentions and motivations are established the rendezvous is made.

(8) A series of signs is also set up between the team and some of their contacts. These signs are to be used to inform all concerned of the team's approach in a given area. Some of the signs serve to inform that the dead-drop net is functioning or that the team is in need of supplies, etc. These signs vary in each operation. Most of them are fairly safe and a few don't lack in ingenuity. NOTE: para 8.c. of attachment B. to reference: A piece of white paper was not placed on a tree branch (cherry tree as a matter of fact) but under a rock on the foot of the tree. The cherry tree is situated in a fenced garden unobserved from without. Other such recognition signs are two rocks, one on top of the other, stakes of fences pinned in the ground upside down, etc., etc.

All information furnished or collected by the team was carried in a notebook. Team's activities and contacts were to be carried in daily, but no mention was to be made of names, identification numbers or localities. These were to be retained in the memory of the team members and the gaps in the notebook were filled in upon the team's exfiltration. The notebook was carried by all the members in turns. Bearer was responsible for its safeguarding and destruction, if needed.

The above, with the addition of some recognition passwords, formed a crude but elaborate and effective security system partly of their own invention.

i. The team is not in a position to know if the net will be operating in the future as is now shown in the diagram. Nevertheless, on January 11, 1954, the team leader informed us that Identities (26) and (29) and their assignments within the Willow Team net, were known to RNPULOG and must heretofore be considered compromised.

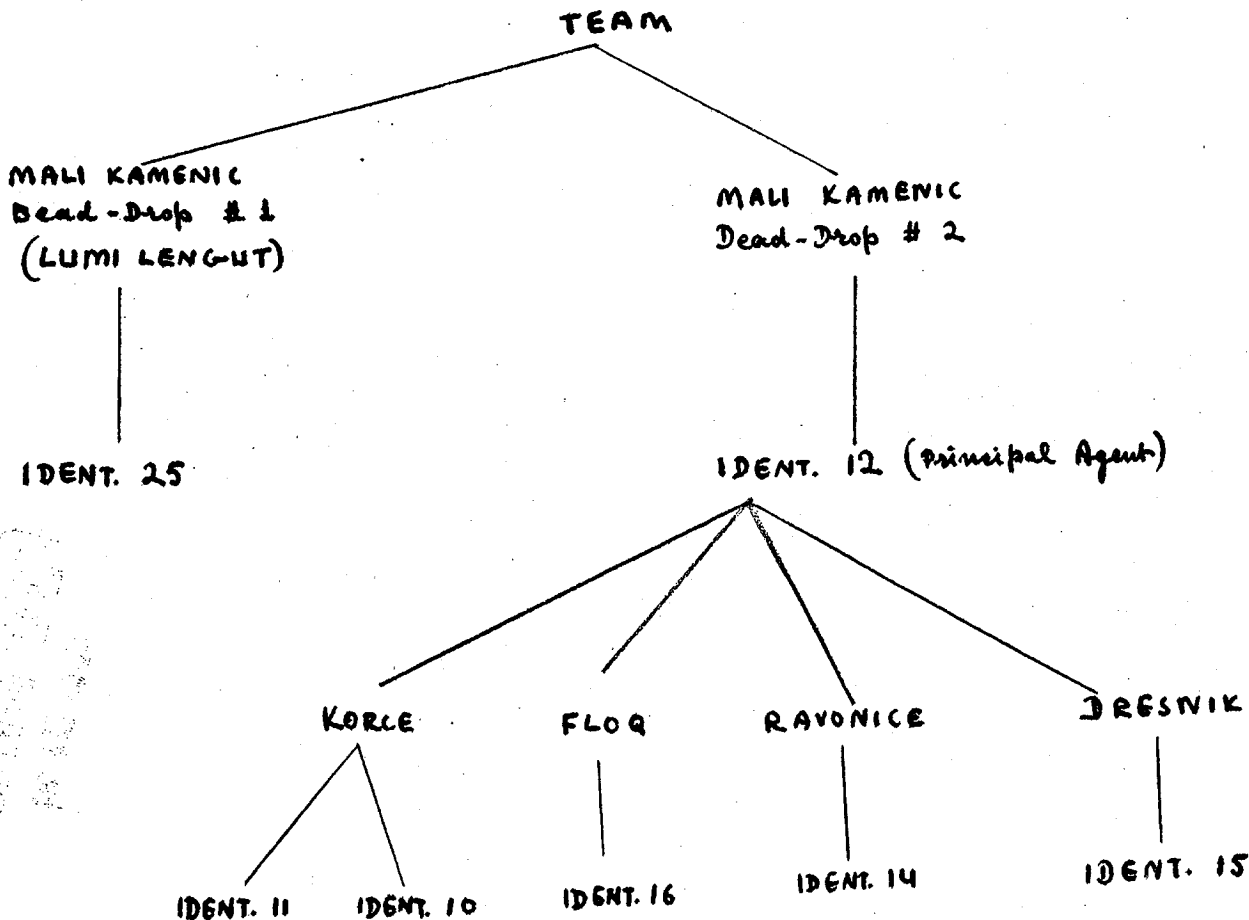
j. We are in accord with your suggestion regarding security training and plan much more extensive training in agent techniques for all our teams.

k. In December 1951 and winter of 1952 the team was held in various hotels in Athens (see para a.). Prior to the mission of 14 June 1952 the team was held in Loutraki, Hotel Olympos. Prior to their second infiltration the team was taken to the town of Khalkis and was installed at the Hotel Euvoia. Between the second and third operation the team remained in Athens (see para p.). During these period the team members circulated freely in town, received medical attention and were issued civilian clothing. The Greek Aliens Directorate was always alerted as to their whereabouts and reported to us regularly. [ ] and occasionally [ ] maintained regular weekly contacts with the team, saw to their welfare and paid them their living allowances. Their living allowance

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consisted of 2,000,000 drachmae monthly per man, increased to 2,500,000 drachmae as of November 1953. During these intervals, as is only natural to the Balkan spirit, they met all the loose Albanians in Athens and discussed politics or party problems freely. It is our belief that in many cases allusions were made regarding their experiences in Albania during operations. This may appear very strange but we admit that inspite of thorough briefings on our part and protestations to the contrary on their part, it has nevertheless been the case.

1. Re para 12 of attachment B. to ref. The two missing contacts were not scheduled to bring any material up. The team was then contacting various individuals with the purpose of establishing a JAFK (net) similar to that of GOGE. These two contacts were made in the third mission of Willow. Identities 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 were contacted for the gathering of intelligence. Identity 12 was assigned as a principal agent and was instructed to organize the KAMENIC net. Subject was born in Kamenic, is 35, farmer, and has a wife and two daughters. Presently subject and family live in same village. The KAMENIC JAFK (net) worked in the following way:



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This set up was partly used in both the two last 1952 operations and the 1953 mission. Identity 21 is the president of Kamenic village.

m. During the 1952 and 1953 operations [ ] gave us the usual amount of information and assistance. This support amounted to information regarding the enemy positions and patrol activities, maintenance of the team in the Kastoria unit and their escorting to the border (see SGAA-8259, KAPOK-2348, 6 February 1954). The team is well known to the unit personnel in Kastoria, having previously served for [ ] They were escorted to the border by Lt. Zoupos and the interpreter Takis, and some P.K.P. unit soldiers. Knowing the areas sufficiently well and having one of their own team members as a guide (RNDEPLOY), the team depended very little upon [ ] support with the exception of the first 1952 operation.

n. The team members are presently stationed in Athens. On February 16 RNORDAIN was moved to 401 Greek Army Hospital for examination. Last November AIRSHIP was exiled to the island of Tinos. Reasons for this were his unwillingness to be of any further use to the team. AIRSLACK is living at Saint George Hotel, Athinas Street, Athens. RNDEPLOY with AIRWORTHY share a room in Hotel Byron, Aeolou Street, Athens. All team members get a living allowance of 2,500,000 drachmae monthly. Contact is maintained regularly by Linaugh. Their conduct is very good.

o. Identity 8 is still in QKDIMPLE. The team is of the opinion that he knows nothing about the composition of the net. On February 11 RNORDAIN advised us to recruit subject for this year's operations. RNORDAIN claims that subject may be able to extend the net in the villages of Turan, Dolan and Osnat. This office is of the opinion that RNORDAIN is considering Identity 8 as a replacement for AIRSHIP. Thus and by using AIRSHIP's cousin, the team may continue to be provided with supplies by AIRSHIP's house.

p. Additional information regarding various phases of the operation:

Re para 4. of attachment B to ref. AIRSPRAY is well known to all the Albanians who carried out operations for [ ] JAVELIN or OBOPUS. He is considered by most of them as a fearless and first rate guide. RNORDAIN reported that AIRSPRAY did not ask any questions concerning the mission and objectives of Willow. Naturally the members of both teams were well known to each other and prior to the infiltration shared the same safehouse in a village (Kolokithou in all probability) outside the town of Kastoria. Willow reports that they got along fine. On January 11, 1954, RNORDAIN recommended Bariq Seit, now in QKDIMPLE, who was then one of the [ ] team members and AIRSPRAY's lieutenant. Bariq Seit has been recommended to us by Fig Team also.

*member of infiltration team  
operating into Albania  
penetrating*

Re para 6. of

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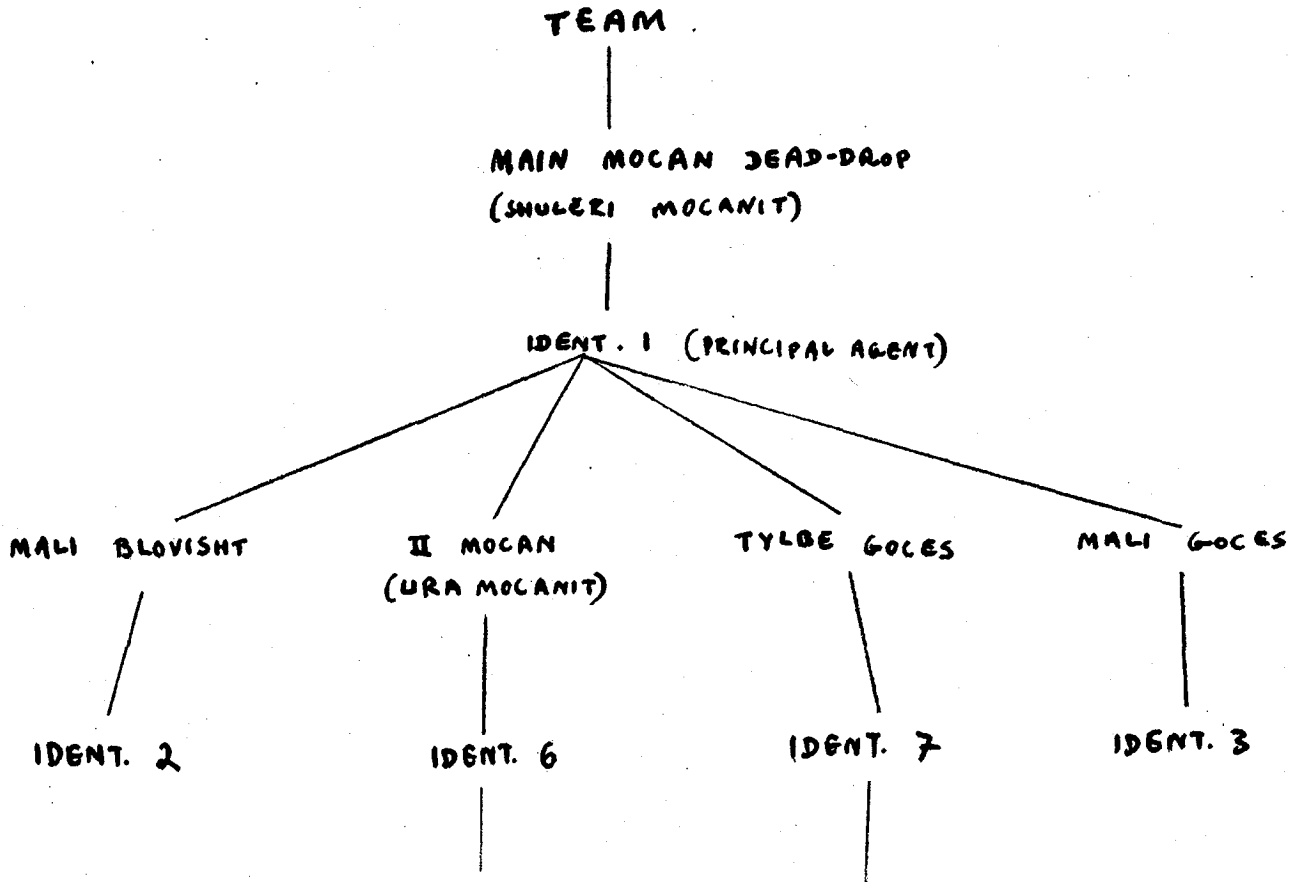
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Re para 6 of attachment B. to reference. Willow Team was instructed to use the following code names: a) SHELK (Albanian for Willow) for team members, b) SHELK SPECIAL for non team members.

Re para 7 of attachment B. to reference. The team was kept at the border by [ ] in one of their safehouses. Consequently there was no use for a cover to disguise their activities. It was transported to the safehouse on July 14 in a C-47 conducted by Linaugh.

Re para 8 of attachment B. to reference. Diagram of net (GCRA JAFK)



Identity 5 and 7 did not serve the same dead drop of MALI GOCES.

Identity 7 services TYLBE GOCES situated on the same hill but 500 yards away from the MALI GOCES dead drop.

We regret not to be able to furnish adequate information on the net personalities. Most of the Albanians when asked about names, including in many cases their own, are seized by utter confusion. Concerning Identity (1), principal agent, we were informed that he was born in Mocan and is still living there. He is

~~V. A. P. O. K.~~

about 35 and a

about 35 and a farmer. Before the war he served in the tax service of the Gendarmeri. His family consists of his wife (name unknown) and a 3 year old girl (name unknown). Subject has never been in prison before or after the war. Subject's brothers are Alush and Mustaf of Mocan and Mysk, dead. Mysk was killed by the Sigurimi of Gjinokastre in 1946 for attempting to escape to the mountains, while serving in the Army. Subject is highly considered by Willow Team.

Identity (4) does not know the 2nd Mocan D/D and can only serve the dead drop outside the village of Tresova. The team disclosed that he was one of their food suppliers in the Tresova area and very often supplied them with letters which otherwise would have been delivered to Identity (6).

Identity (7), son of Bajram, was born in Tresova and is 27. Subject is married and lives with wife and girl at Skoza, farming. His brothers are Shefit, 20, farmer in Tresova; Lile, 30, farmer in Tresova; and Bajrami, 15, farmer in Tresova. No other information is presently available.

Identities (7) and (4) are cousins. The team feels that they don't know of each other's participation in the net. (We feel otherwise).

Re para 13 of attachment B. to reference. Between September 16, 1952 to October 11, 1952 the team was held in Athens. Specifically RNCORDAIN stayed in Hotel Vienna. AIRSHIP and AIRSLACK at Morias Hotel whereas AIRWORTHY and RNDPLOY at Park Hotel.

Re para 14 of attachment B. of reference. Concerning the agents named in this paragraph, we were informed that Identity (20) is AIRWORTHY's brother-in-law. He is a schoolmaster by profession and the last report the team had on said subject was that he was sick in a Tirana hospital. His location at present is unknown to the team.

Re para 16 of attachment B. of reference. A rendezvous with Identity (28) was arranged through Identity (27), but although Identity (28) appeared at the designated spot, the presence of unexpected "shepherds" prevented the team of showing up.

2. [ ] our former Operations Officer, may be in a position to give additional information and fill any gaps of our analysis. We are now trying to obtain any information whatsoever on the Willow net agents and will keep you informed of any developments.

6 March 1954

M/RMW/NAH  
RIM/RMW/WFH/lgk

Distribution:

- 3 - Washington ✓
- 1 - Washington (Vital Documents)
- 1 - Chrono
- 1 - Subject
- 1 - XO
- 2 - CBOPUS

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