

Female spies and their secrets

Are women useful as spies? If so, in what capacity? Maxwell Knight, an officer in **MIS**, Britain's domestic-**counterintelligence** agency, sat pondering these questions. Outside his office, World War II had begun, and Europe's **baptism** by **blitzkrieg** was under way. In England the intelligence community was still an all-male domain. But a lady spy could come in handy, as Knight was about to opine.

MIS 军情五处

intelligence 智力; 情报

counterintelligence 反情报

baptism 洗礼

blitzkrieg 闪电战

Intelligence officers had long presumed that women's special assets for spying were limited to strategically deployed female abilities: batting eyelashes, **soliciting pillow talk**, and of course maintaining files and typing reports. **Overseeing** operations? Not so much.

solicit 恳求; 请求

pillow talk 枕边细语

oversee 监督; 审查

World War II, a "total war" that required all able male bodies for global fighting, offered new opportunities.

As Sarah Rose writes in **D-Day** Girls, women were considered good **couriers** — a high-risk role — because they could rely on **ingratiation** and seeming naïveté as tools in tight spots. The war also provided openings for women to show that they could execute operations, making strategic life-and-death decisions.

D-day 诺曼底登陆日

courier 导游; 投递员

ingratiation 迎合; 讨好

Virginia Hall was, as the British journalist Sonia Purnell writes, “the most successful Allied female **secret agent**.” She directed **guerrilla** forces to support the D-Day landings. **Disguised** as a milkmaid, she sold cheese and **eavesdropped** on the German Seventh Army, which, Purnell writes, helped “pave the way for the Allied **recapture** of Paris.”

secret agent 特工

guerrilla 游击队

disguise 伪装；掩饰

eavesdrop 偷听；窃听

recapture 夺回

However, after the war, the contribution of these women was overlooked and then forgotten. In 1953, the head of the CIA, Allen Dulles, **convened** a “**Petticoat** Panel” to look into attitudes toward women at the agency. Compared with men, they were seen as more emotional, less objective, and insufficiently aggressive.

convene 集合；召集

petticoat 女性的；裙子

That was then. Now the CIA is directed by a woman, Gina Haspel, who has promoted **veteran** women to head top **directorates**. These leaders have antecedents, whether or not they know it.

veteran 经验丰富的

directorates 董事会