



(U) 'Fourth of July Abroad' Tales (part 1)

FROM: SIGINT Communications
Unknown
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(U) On Tuesday we issued a [call for "4th of July abroad" stories](#). We'll post several of these stories today and tomorrow. Appropriately (perhaps), many of the stories have a British setting...

From: [REDACTED]

Text: (U) One of the best -- but most meteorologically challenging -- Fourth of July holidays my family and I have ever experienced overseas was after our arrival at Menwith Hill Station (MHS) in the U.K. on July 3, 1995. Our sponsors warned us that North Yorkshire is known for its rapidly-changing and unpredictable weather, but on the third of July it was 85 degrees and sunny, reminiscent of Southern California. Our sponsors also invited us to the Fourth of July celebration at MHS the next day.

(U) We all awoke early and somewhat jet-lagged on the morning of the Fourth, anticipating the day but disappointed to see that it was raining. Not just a drizzle. Not just steady precipitation. Buckets. Buckets of water. Going sideways. At about 40 mph in the gusts that blew across the bare crown of Menwith Hill. But hey, this is England, we thought, so we donned our gortex parkas and headed up the hill.

(U) The rain let up when we got there -- it had to, because it started to **snow**. And it wasn't cute picture-postcard flakes floating gently down; it was stinging, glass-like bits of ice, which would drive into your skin riding the force of the aforementioned 40 mph gusts. I noticed that all of the trees on Menwith Hill were growing sideways. Things did not look good for the start of the annual MHS Fourth of July Parade.

(U) But the snow let up and the parade set out. People -- both Brits and Yanks -- were festive and friendly. By four o'clock that afternoon it was 80 degrees, sunny, and we were wearing shorts and at a barbecue. All that was left was to wait until 11 p.m. that night to see the fireworks. MHS is so far north that it stays light until quite late -- you can't really see the fireworks in the sky until almost midnight... A fitting end to an overseas Fourth that was both festive and a demonstration of differences in climate and latitude. The spirit of the holiday, however, remained the same.

[REDACTED]

(U//FOUO) Menwith Hill Station

From: [REDACTED], SUSLOL 1997-2000

Text: (U) My story is typical of many NSA'ers who have had the opportunity to live in Cheltenham, England. Each year [SUSLOL](#)

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hosts a huge 4th of July party for the SUSLOL community and our GCHQ hosts. Additionally, many community leaders are invited, to include the Mayor of Cheltenham, school headmasters and church leaders. Hot dogs and burgers are grilled, American beer flows, and there's entertainment for adults and children alike. It's always a great day and the guests are very appreciative of the efforts of the SUSLOL community. More important, however, is the feeling that the Americans come away with. I have never felt a deeper sense of patriotism than I did celebrating our nation's birthday on foreign soil. American pride runs deep and travels with you wherever you go.

From: [REDACTED]

Text: (U) On July 4, 1987 while on a TDY to Edzell, Scotland, another NSA employee and I played golf at St. Andrews. I think we actually had the first tee time that day, at around 7 am. We left Edzell at about 4:30 or 5. But since the days there are so long in the summer, it was already sunny and didn't seem so early, except for the fact that there was no traffic most of the way. They paired us up with a guy from Perth, Australia. So the three of us, two from the US and one from Australia, played golf on one of the world's most famous courses, in Scotland, together on July 4th. And we weren't charged holiday rates. Later that afternoon, we went into work at the site for a few hours. So not only did we play golf, but we also earned a little bit of holiday pay.

From: [REDACTED]

Text: (U) On Independence Day in 1976, I was an Arabic linguist serving with the U.S. Air Force at Iraklion Air Station, Crete. I also served on a committee charged with planning and coordinating bicentennial activities for the American military community. As the key social event of that bicentennial year, the 4th of July celebration was something I'll never forget. The day began with a publicity campaign in the morning, an extravaganza all-day picnic at the base beach, a "disco dance cum town meeting" in the main street that evening, and a fireworks display the likes of which Crete had never seen.

(U) During the morning publicity campaign, we cruised around the base in a fire truck equipped with a PA system, playing "Yankee Doodle" and announcing the day's activities. Among other activities at the ensuing picnic, we selected the winners from some 100 entries in the "First Annual Iraklion Air Station Men's Bake-Off." Then we auctioned off the cakes for charity. My own entry, I recall, went to a group of hungry teenagers who paid ten dollars for a bake-off winner that, unbeknownst to them at the time, was not even baked. Yes, I had spread frosting over a couple of large boxes of dry cake mix, making them look like a confectioner's masterpiece and, thereby, taking home 2nd prize.

(U) At the street dance, which was attended by every man, woman and child from the American community, we voted on new names for the base's main street and beach road. The winners were "Liberty Lane" and "Century Three Boulevard." We also offered samples and a chance to vote on some libations invented and named by various members of the community at a party at my house the night before. The NCO Club and Officers Club had graciously agreed to feature the winning drinks as 50-cent specials for the remainder of the bicentennial year. Winners were a couple

of barely potable concoctions called "The Rocket's Red Glare" and "The Star Spangled Banger." Both drinks were later offered by the clubs, but I have it on good authority that not a single shot was ever sold!

(U) I remember that we somehow "appropriated" some non-appropriated funds in order to purchase \$3K of fireworks to be set off by a professional pyrotechnic specialist brought over from mainland Greece (included in the price). The pyrotechnics were probably not sensational compared to what you might see in any community back home. But to a group of teary-eyed Americans huddled on a foreign beach, watching the fireworks and singing to Old Glory at the stroke of midnight on their country's 200th birthday, with two oceans and a continent separating them from home, nothing in this world could have been finer. We banded together that day and night, as Americans abroad always tend to do on holidays, and experienced our culture and heritage more intensely than the happiest reveler at any 4th of July celebration back in the states.

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