



Christos Jecchinis

Professor Christos Jecchinis was born in Athens in 1924 and witnessed the German occupation of the city at the age of seventeen. His father served in the British Army during the First World War and Chris was determined to do what he could towards the Allies' cause. He joined the 'Bouboulina' organisation of Madame Karayianni and watched submarines and other naval craft at Salamis Island, going so far as to photograph the German Commander's map of the naval base situated in the Commander's office.



1944. On the right: General Napoleon Zervas, 'EDES' chief

At the urging of Madame Karayianni, who was later executed for her espionage activities, Chris left Athens as it was becoming too dangerous for him to stay. He joined up with the 'Lapworth' Group operating beyond Olympus and involved in attacking the railway line between Mount Olympus and the coast, a vital supply line for the Germans. From 3 August 1944, Chris was involved in a number of sabotage operations and over a period of four months these operations resulted in the destruction of two bridges and huge amounts of arms and ammunition, together with the damage of nine trains, of which eight engines and eighty carriages were beyond repair. Each time a train was damaged, Chris and fellow saboteurs cut out paper silhouettes of the engine to commemorate their victory. The Second World War Experience Centre is honoured to have the original silhouettes in its care.

Despite several near misses and a bout of pneumonia, incurred after escorting US airmen to safety, Chris Jecchinis' only injury was in October 1944 whilst involved in harassing the German withdrawal from Greece. Chris lit the fuse which led to the destruction of fifteen carriages, being too close for comfort to the debris raining down upon him. In his book 'Beyond Olympus' Chris recalled how close-knit the team members were, having experienced some incredible times together.

In December 1999 on a visit to England, Chris came to Leeds to be interviewed on tape by [Peter Liddle](#) for the Centre. As well as his tape-recorded interview and the paper silhouettes of trains, the Centre is honoured to preserve a signed copy of his book and some fascinating photographs.



"Souvenir before the last operation"
Standing (left to right): An American O.G., Captain M. Carver, Sergeant F. Langley, Major Hill, Captain Anghelatos, O.G. Larry, and O.G. 'Top'. Kneeling: Jecchinis in the middle of two O.G.'s

O.G.'s (photograph right) are explained in Chris's book 'Beyond Olympus' as:

The American President had no objection, however, to a handful of Americans bolstering the predominantly British



mission in Greece. It was good diplomacy to give the operations an Allied complexion without overcommitting American aid in the theatre. On August the 10th we were informed by radio that a group of these American 'fighting ambassadors' had been assigned to us, and were already on their way to Ano Melia. They were Paratroop O.S.S. Commandos of the type known as O.G.'s.

O.S.S. was the equivalent of the British S.O.E. (Special Operations Executive).

Transcript of Audio Clip

Chris talks about betrayal by quislings and seeing men shot:

I saw people shot in fact right near our neighbourhood. I saw the Germans with the support of some very few quisling forces that we had, that every country had. Unfortunately the French had more than we had and everybody else in Europe. If you remember even the Poles had a lot of quislings serving in the German forces, and the Prussians and therefore when you see people being shot, chased in the street and shot, because someone betrayed them, or told the German authorities or even the Italian Fascist authorities at the time that these were Resistance people, or that they were engaged in any sabotage activities, or they might be, the Germans were out there to get them and by trying to get them, if they resisted, they were shot. I even saw, you know one incident where the two young men were shot, you didn't have to see them actually being shot right there at the front of your eyes but you could see them round the corner of your house about a hundred yards away and this is a tremendous experience for a young man of seventeen years old.



Summer 1944.

Manuel, Constantinides, Lt. G.A.W. Heppel (HQ Force133) at Golista, North Greece in borrowed civilian clothes due to the fact that he was going to 'recce' a small German plane on an airstrip outside Jannina.



Mortar training



The Second World War Experience Centre
Reproduction of an article from the Centre's website
<http://www.war-experience.org/collections/clandestine/jecchinis/default.asp>



"Chris in action"



"Bazooka Train"

Two of the cut-out trains made as souvenirs of successful operations

Inventory of the Donation

- Tape recorded (with transcript)
- Book, 'Beyond Olympus', by Chris Jecchinis (signed)
- Set of photographs
- Cut-out silhouettes of the trains blown up
- An article about him from college newspaper

