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# NOOR INAYAT KHAN

Noor Inayat Khan worked as a spy for Britain during Second World War, was sent to France as a secret agent and then was killed in the most horrific way possible. Noor had lived a life many could not imagine, broken engagement, a secret agent, children's author – here we explore her life and contribution.



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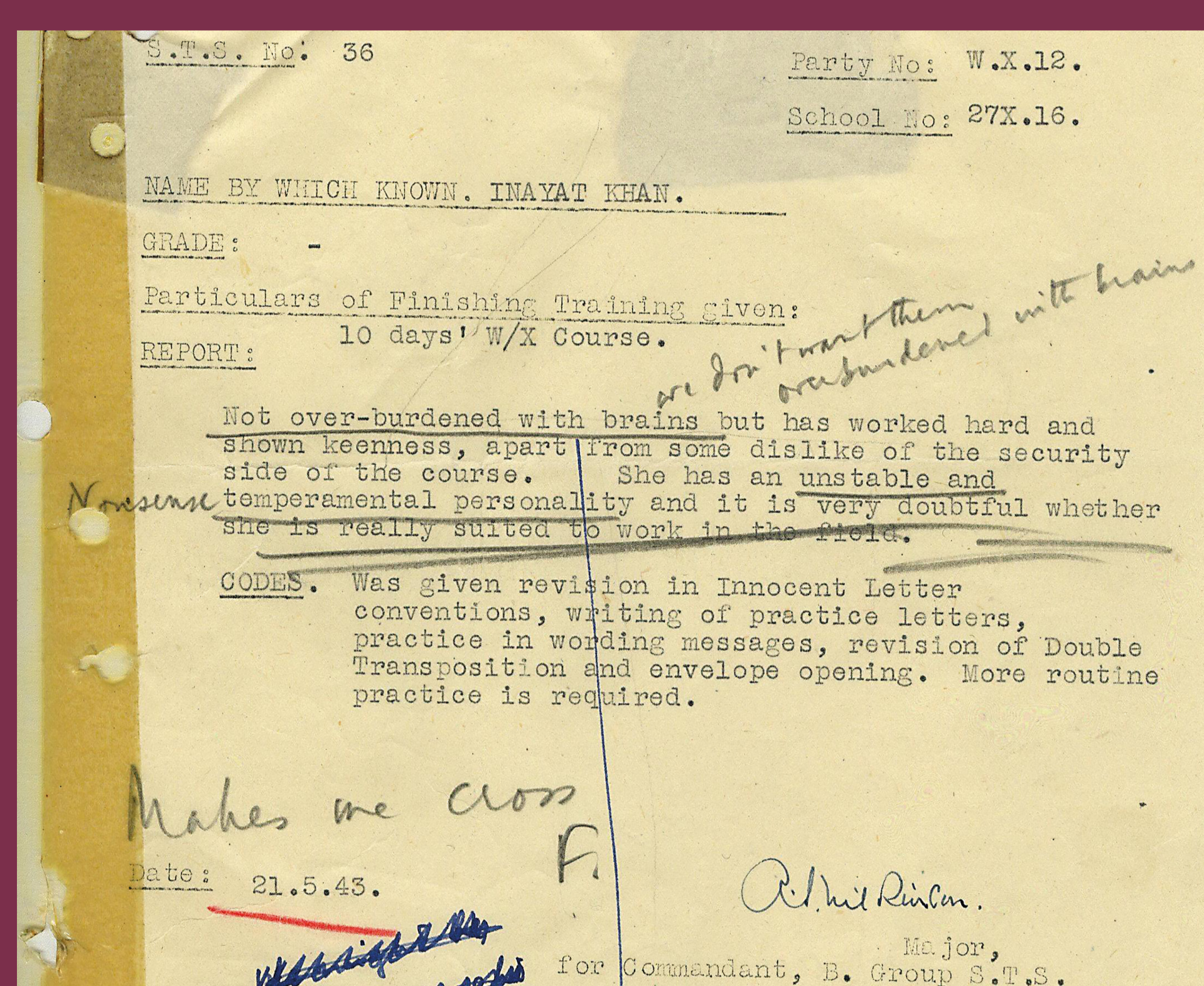
Noor Inayat Khan was born in Moscow on 1st January 1914 to an American mother, Ora Barker, and an Indian Muslim father, Inayat Khan. Noor's father was a Sufi teacher and a musician, also a descendant of Tipu Sultan who ruled the Kingdom of Mysore in south India. Noor and her siblings would often write poetry (Noor's mother was a poet) and play music. Noor had studied child psychology and becoming an established children's author, writing many children's stories both in French and English. Noor had a children's book published called 'Jataka Tales' and her stories were also broadcasted on Children's Hour of Paris. With outbreak the of the Second World War all that changed on 5th June 1940 when the family left France and settled in London.



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Noor and her family were pacifists so her decision to join the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) was surprising. Whilst Noor joined the WAAF as a radio operator, her brother, Vilayat, joined the Royal Air Force. Noor was asked to attend an interview that would change her life as she was being asked to join the Special Operations Executive (SOE). The SOE was created in 1940 as a secret military organisation with the purpose to organise and carry out espionage, sabotage and reconnaissance in occupied Europe. It was also the first military organisation in the UK to actively recruit women. Noor was selected as she could speak fluent English and French.

Training was hard physically and mentally. Some of those training Noor seemed overly critical of her- one even stating that she was not very clever, despite speaking several languages. Noor was trained as a wireless operator and the first female to be flown into France on 16-17th June 1943 she was given the codename 'Madeleine'.

Noor became part of a resistance group and the only SOE operator in Paris. She was nearly caught a few times and when the mission became too dangerous she was asked to return back to London. Noor refused the order and went on to send several messages. In October 1943 was arrested by the Nazi's, betrayed by an acquaintance, and on 13th September 1944 was executed at Dachau. Her last words were 'Liberte'.



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