

A brief history of the life of Major Rowland George Shears BEM TD (G8KW) and founder of KW Electronics Ltd.

1919 - Born New Barnet in London and Educated Barnet Technical grammar school Apprenticed to Invicta Radio. Principal hobby Amateur radio (BRS 1904) and became licensed as G8KW in 1935.

1938 - Joined local Royal Signals Territorial army unit and mobilised in 1939. First posting was as a Morse code instructor at RS depot Chiswick in London (25wpm).

August 1940 - Posted to North Africa he was involved in providing communications to the 8th Army in the early desert battles but by the summer of 1941 he was back in Cairo working at Polygon radio (Empire Broadcasting service- call sign JCJC). In June/July 1941 he picked up German military radio traffic (Operation Barbarossa in Russia) and reported this to High Command. It was immediately noted that here was a young man with a very good grasp of radio!

1941-1945 Initially recruited by Army intelligence (SIME) to mimic the Morse 'fist' of turned German agents in order to disseminate false information he later, as Sergeant Shears, became a member of "A" force (the Allied department responsible for deceiving the enemy) where he assumed the identity of 'Paul Nicossof' a fictitious German agent in Cairo. More on this episode can be found in the book *'Double Cross in Cairo'* by Nigel West. His Abwehr controller later informed Rowley of the award of the Iron Cross for his work but sadly he never received it!

Mentioned in Dispatches in 1943 and awarded BEM "for distinguished service" then awarded field commission as 2nd Lt. It is believed that Rowley subsequently was involved with further deception operations (Operation Zeppelin?) possibly including the 'Monty's double' and the 'Major Martin fake invasion plans' deceptions. In 1944 he was the 'Signals' net controller during the daring and successful operation on Crete to kidnap the German island commander Major General Kreipe. This operation featured in both a 1950s book and film entitled *'Ill met by moonlight'*. During September 1944 he was part of a specialised force that successfully captured important intelligence documents and coding equipment from the Abwehr HQ building in Athens shortly before the outbreak of the Greek civil war.

May 1945 Repatriated to the UK and then posted to the British Army of the Rhine as a Captain to help re-establish MW public broadcasting (including Langenburg radio on 904 kHz). Rowley was also the communications officer on the first train allowed into Berlin following the end of the Soviet blockade and in May 1947 he was instrumental in the re-establishment of the West German Amateur Radio Service for which the new DARC awarded him membership No. 1 with the call sign D2KW.

Rowley was demobilised at the end of 1949 and went home to marry his xyl Ruth.

September 1950 Settled near Dartford Kent and joined Burndept at Erith before deciding in late 1955 to set out on his own to design and manufacture Amateur radio equipment.

5TH January 1956 Set up the KW Electronics Company with Ken Ellis (G5KW) an old army friend from his Middle East days. Over the next 18 years the company prospered and went on to manufacture a range of HF/SSB radios for both the amateur and commercial markets including the much loved KW2000 transceiver

1974 Sold KW Electronics to the Decca Group. Amateur radio products were re-badged with the Decca logo and the new Company expanded its commercial operation

1979 Decca absorbed into the Racal Group who had little interest in amateur radio products and the new owners immediately ceased production for the Amateur market.

1980 -1989 Rowley bought back a lot of KW/Decca assets and started trading under the name KW Ten-Tec Ltd. However in 1989 Rowley at 70 years finally retired following the sale of the business to HRS Electronics (who ceased trading in 1991).

1989-2009 honoured by RSGB and ARRL (the Company had donated equipment to both the Science museum (GB2SM) and the Society). Later a street in Dartford was named after him (Shears Close). He suffered some poor health in later years including deafness as a result of the IRA bomb blast at Harrods in 1993.

Sadly on 17-11-2009 Rowley Shears G8KW became SK aged 90 years.

Postscript.

Rowley's eldest son Richard (who now holds G8KW) is sometimes QRV during the KW 'on- the-air' weekend. This is always the first weekend in January every year and whenever possible closest to the 5th!

The above short history was compiled , edited and placed on the “KW_ radios” website, with the permission of the family, from notes taken by Lawrie Atkinson G4FAA at a talk given by Rowley’s nephew Colin to a local North Kent Radio Society meeting in June 2016.

Thus all mistakes are entirely mine!

However any KW or Rowley related additions, corrections or anecdotes will always be welcome!

Please note that the KW users group (KW_ radios) which has an international following, is currently hosted by Yahoo but this may change-*this is a restricted group -email the owner for approval!*

de G4FAA in Jan 2018