Sir William S. Stephenson

The *Real* James Bond, 007

William Samuel Stephenson - The Man called Intrepid
Born: 25 January1897 Winnipeg, Manitba, Canada
Died: 31 January1989, Hamilton, Bermuda,

WILLIAM SAMUEL STEPHENSON, according to his birth certificate, was born William Samuel Clouston on January 25, 1897 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. His mother's maiden name was Sarah Goodfime Isbiston. His father's name was Samuel Hunter Stanger. Both immigrated to Canada. She was an Icelandic mother and his father was Scottish. His parents were unable to take care of him and he was adopted by an Icelandic family with the last name of Stephenson. He was given his foster family's last name. It's hard to believe this man years later would be the inspiration for writer Ian Fleming's **SIR JAMES BOND, 007**.

Bill left school at an early age and at age 14 began working as a telegraph operator. His only claim to fame while living in Winnipeg was recognizing bank robber and murderer John Krafchenko. He told the police and to make a long story short, the killer was hung.

When Bill joined the army, he lied about his age. On his enlistment papers and part of WSS's military record, it's January 11, 1896. He fudged his birthday because he was too young to join the army. Enlisting with the Winnipeg Light Infantry of the Canadian Expeditionary Force on June 29, 1916, he left for England on the Royal Majesty Ship Olympic. Upon arrival, he transferred to the 17th Reserve Battalion and then the Canadian Engineering Training Depot.

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On Aug. 15, 1917, Stephenson transferred to the Royal Air Force and was posted with the 73rd Squadron on Feb. 9, 1918, after his flight training.

On June 21, 1918, he attacked a German staff car and caused a stampede of German transport horses on the road. He would also destroy a German scout plane and another two-seater plane. For his actions, he was awarded the Military Medal.

While in the air force, he would also become the lightweight boxing champion. As for his regimental number, that was 700758, a number that included the iconic 007 of James Bond. There is no evidence that Fleming used this as inspiration for James Bond, but it is an interesting link.

On July 28, 1918, he was shot down behind enemy lines either by a German pilot or friendly fire. Captured by the Germans, he would remain a prisoner of war until he escaped in October of 1918.

As a prisoner of war, he would begin to steal from his guards and bother the Germans. At one point, he took a can-opener and saw that it was patented in Germany, Austria and Turkey in 1915. He decided that once he was free, he would patent it in the rest of the world. The patent he would file would begin the fortune he would amass over the next few years.

He would say of leaving the POW camp, quote:

As a pilot, he would shoot down 12 German aircraft, including the younger brother of the Red Baron, earning not only the previously mentioned Military Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross. By the end of the war, he had reached the rank of captain.

Returning home to Manitoba after the war, Stephenson started a hardware business with his friend Wilf Russell. The business was unfortunately unsuccessful.

Stephenson would attend the University of Manitoba and develop a process for sending photos over wireless.

In 1924, he would marry Mary French Simmons, the heiress to a tobacco fortune. That same year, he partnered with George Walton to patent the system of transmitting photographs over wireless. This patent, over the course of 18 years, would generate $12 million a year in royalties, making Stephenson a very rich man.

Stephenson would take the money and begin to invest in several industries including aeronautics, steel and radio. Through his work with the wireless photo system and his other investments, he developed a large group of contacts in Canada, Europe and America. He would also start Shepperton Studios, which became the largest film studio in the world outside of Hollywood.

In April 1936, he would provide confidential information to Winston Churchill, then a British Member of Parliament, about how the Nazi government and building up its military, while hiding how much it was spending on its military expenditures. As this was a violation of the Treaty of Versailles, Churchill took the information to Parliament to warn against the appeasement policy of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. He would also help develop the iconic Spitfire and was one of the first directors of public relations for the BBC.

At the start of the Second World War, Stephenson was put in charge of the British Security Co-ordination in the Western Hemisphere and sent to the United States. He would arrive on June 21, 1940, to covertly run the organization. Headquartered in New York on the 35th and 36thfloors of Rockefeller Centre, Stephenson had the codename of Intrepid. As for how that name came about, according to legend, when Churchill appointed him as the head of intelligence operations, he told him quote:

"You must be intrepid."

From that, Stephenson would adopt it as his code name.

United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Britain's Winston S. Churchill met scotlyon the battleship Prince of Wales at Placenta Bay, Newfoundland, Canada, to confer on the Anglo-American alliance which resulted in the Atlantic Charter. August 4, 1941

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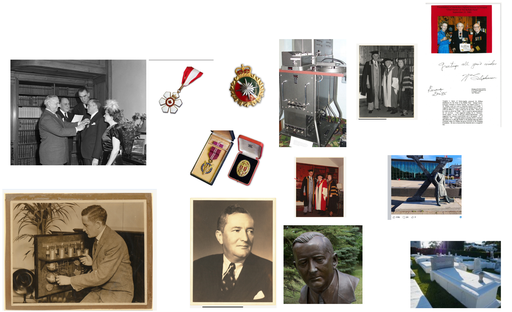

1. A plane similar to what Sir Bill flew is in the Air Museum at Rockcliffe.
Hopefully someone can photograph it such a way that the bronze statute in Winnipeg can be placed beside it.
2. Goggles on page 1
3. Can-opener on page 1 with Canadian coin of King Charles to show size.
4. The pic of Roosevelt and Churchill on the Battleship Prince of Wales in Placenta Bay, Newfoundland, has Sir Bill on the right trying to duck out of the photo op. The meeting was to brainstorm and form a British-American alliance called the Atlantic Charter (14 Aug 1941) - I envision this 10x5" with caption. Maybe Sir Bill can be hand-colored to make him stand out. I suspect the famous Karsh pic of Churchill was taken during this time (and maybe Lord Mountbatten).
Page 2 top right - I'm buying the Hydra pic (taken at Camp X?) can be enlarged 10x5
Bottom left - maybe Baley portrait and bronze state can be made into 1.
Bottom right - maybe a vertical of Camp X off Google Maps with Stephenson (as an older man can be over it (maybe hand coloured)
Page 3 - Stephenson at wireless (maybe 6x4)? Hand-colored?!? (Everything has to appear in order – Pic taken in 1922!? (Seems too early)
Bill Donovan and Sir Bill
Page 5 - gravestone marker - Bermuda
JAMES BOND LEGEND

Mural designed by Donald E. Waite et al - donalde@globalairphotos.com
Art Restoration by Mike Ingram - mike@michelingram.com