

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister.

Agree x/ and y/ when?

Ref. A0886

PRIME MINISTER

*Yes - but surely he would hold  
return the medals if his 1x  
20 winter asked him.*

Mr. Anthony Blunt

*was at the 40-45 period  
when he gave most information  
and of  
re:.*

Mr. Blunt was awarded an emergency commission when he joined the Army in 1939. He was released from military duty in 1945, in the rank of acting Major. When he relinquished his emergency commission on exceeding the age limits for recall in 1954, he was granted the honorary rank of Captain. He was awarded the 1939-45 Star and may also hold the Defence Medal.

2. Recent events raise the question whether he should be stripped of his honorary rank and his wartime medals.

3. If he were being dealt with under normal Army disciplinary procedures, and it was proposed to strip him of his rank, it would be necessary for the Ministry of Defence to communicate with him through his solicitor to establish whether he wished to make any representation before his case was considered. This is because disciplinary proceedings are based on the principle that no action should be taken which gives the appearance of judging an officer without trial. In this case, an approach of that kind to Mr. Blunt could lead to unfavourable public comment; and in any case it is not clear what representations he could make which could affect the case, since he is a self-confessed spy. It is therefore proposed that the Army Board should consider the case on the known facts, without inviting Blunt to make representations. If the Board decides to strip Blunt of his honorary rank, he would be told by letter and there would be a notice in the London Gazette.

X |

4. As to Blunt's war medals, Queen's Regulations provide for forfeiture where a person has been convicted of treason or sedition. As Blunt was given immunity from prosecution, he has not been convicted and it would not be possible to deprive him of his medals under the current rules. Deprivation would also involve going to him and demanding to have the medals back. On balance, the Ministry of Defence consider it preferable to take no action in respect of Mr. Blunt's medals.

Y |

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5. The Secretary of State for Defence agrees with this course, as do I myself. May I tell the Ministry of Defence that you are content?

RTA

(Robert Armstrong)

7th December, 1979

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

MR. ANTHONY BLUNT

The Prime Minister has seen your minute AO886 of 7 December 1979. She agrees that the Army Board should consider on the known facts, without inviting Blunt to make representations, whether he should be stripped of his honorary rank of Captain.

She also agrees that the Ministry of Defence cannot take action, under the current rules, to deprive Blunt of his medals. She has, however, commented that it was during the war period that Blunt gave away most information and that he would surely return the medals which he was awarded for his service during that period if his solicitor was invited to ask him to do so. You may wish to consider with the Ministry of Defence whether we should take action on these lines.

C. A. WHITMORE

10 December 1979

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Ref. A01161

MR. WHITMORE

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Blunt

In your minute of 10th December to Sir Robert Armstrong you conveyed the Prime Minister's views on the question of stripping Blunt of his honorary rank of Captain and of his wartime medals.

2. We have now heard that the Army Board has decided that Blunt should forfeit his honorary rank and be asked to return any war medals in his possession. Blunt is being informed of this and an announcement of his loss of honorary rank will be published in the London Gazette.

*Mr.*  
(M. J. Vile)

17th January, 1980

2.

Prime Minister.

To note.

JWJ

17.

*Mr*

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2.

Prime Minister.

AKH

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Ref. A01391

MR. WHITMORE

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Professor Anthony Blunt

The Prime Minister will wish to know that the Army Board has decided that Professor Blunt should forfeit his honorary rank of captain and be asked to return any war medals in his possession.

2. Today's London Gazette includes the notification of his deprivation of rank, and he has returned four miniature medals which he says are the only medals in his possession.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

12th February, 1980



Security

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Professor Anthony Blunt

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute AO1391 of 12 February 1980 and she has noted that the Army Board has decided that Professor Blunt should forfeit his honorary rank of captain and that, in accordance with the Army Board's request, he has returned four medals.

CAW

14 February 1980