

An interesting American I met in Burma during the War

His name was Grant Taylor and I went with a number of other officers to a lecture he was giving one afternoon in central Burma.

It was like no other lecture. The venue was an aircraft hanger and the stage was an enclosure of sandbags, targets, tin cans and model figures. Grant Taylor strode in through the audience decked in an array of revolvers (large and small) all tucked in his belt. He introduced himself and said he was an American Police Marksman who had who had been drafted into the Army to show people like us how to be efficient, ruthless pistol shooters – in his words “how to shoot people without showing fear, pity or remorse”. He spoke in short sentences occasionally drawing a gun or two and shooting a target or making a model figure jump across the stage while he moved about. He told us the following story. “A professional gunman was given information about six Luftwaffe pilots who were having a rest break by the sea in Normandy in a villa specially used for that purpose. His orders were to kill them and he had the use of a small motor boat and two crew to help him. The venture went well; the two crew kept the boat anchored off shore while the gunman swam to shore, crept into the villa, crashed into the dining room where the pilots were eating, shot them in accordance with textbook training, i.e. first shoot the first man who moved, then the next man who moved, and so on. When all six had been shot (in less than a minute) the gunman ran back to the shore and was helped into the motor boat by the two crewmen. They then returned to England where he had a bath, ate a meal and slept soundly.”

This intriguing tale was told again in an article I read in a magazine several years later. This time the gunman’s name was given. His name was Grant Taylor.