

Col Hugh Toye - lived at 6 Farm Close Lane, then had 5 Farm Close Lane built and moved there. Col Hugh Toye, who has died aged 95, was a former intelligence officer whose job it was to track Subhas Chandra Bose, the leader of the Indian National Army (INA) that collaborated with the Japanese and Germans against the British in the Second World War.



The Cambridge-educated Bose rejected Gandhi's pacifism in favour of violent revolution and, based in Burma during the Second World War, assembled an 80,000-strong army which advanced to British India's north-eastern states, creating a government-in-exile and inspiring revolts in the British Indian Army. To the British, Bose was a traitor; but post-war Indians call him "Netaji" ("respected leader"), regarding him as a patriot who took a heroic stance against imperialism.

Toye was posted to India in 1943 and, while he never found his quarry, he conceived a great respect and admiration for the man: "I had a lot of time for him," he told an interviewer. "If we had caught him he would have been sentenced to death, though."

Bose's fate remains a mystery. For many years he was presumed to have died in a plane crash, though there have been persistent rumours that he managed to escape into exile and eventually returned to India to live his last days as a holy man.

One of three children of a Methodist minister, Claude Hugh Toye was born at New Tredegar, Caerphilly, on March 29 1917. His father had served as a missionary in India and west Africa, and after Hugh's birth the family returned to the subcontinent.

Hugh was sent home to be educated at Kingswood, a Methodist boarding school in Bath, from where he progressed to Queens' College, Cambridge. As war approached he joined the TA Medical Corps, and in 1940 went to France with a Field Ambulance Unit. Surrounded, he succeeded in breaking through enemy lines to reach Brest and board a ship to England.

Subsequently commissioned in the Royal Artillery, Toye was posted to India in 1943. After the war ended, he took part in the interrogation of captured Japanese officers. Despite the seemingly unbridgeable gulf between interrogator and interrogated, Toye became friends with one man, whose son maintained the friendship after his father's death. Toye also spent some time in Burma, reporting on the situation at the time of the death of the Burmese nationalist leader Aung San in 1947. Subsequently he became a friend of Aung San's daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi.

Later in 1947 Toye returned home in the rank of major. In the same year he was appointed MBE. After a period at staff college, Toye served as adjutant of the 14th Field Regiment in Hong Kong. Then, after a tour in London as adjutant of a TA regiment, he was sent to Cyprus, initially as a staff officer. He was also given command of his own battery, taking on EOKA terrorists in the forests and villages of Cyprus's

Troodos Mountains. In 1958 he married Betty Hayne, a major in the ATS.

In 1960, promoted lieutenant-colonel, Toye was posted to Vientiane as military attache. Laos had gained its independence from France seven years earlier, and was embroiled in a prolonged civil war between communist Pathet Lao guerrillas (often North Vietnamese) and the forces of the Royal Lao government, a conflict in which both sides received heavy external support from the Cold War superpowers.

Toye built excellent relations with the French, who still had forces in Laos and were well-informed about the fast-changing situation. When, in August 1960, Kong Le, a former paratrooper captain in the Royal Lao Army, led a coup d'etat in an effort to re-establish a policy of peace and neutrality, Toye had him in the embassy to meet the ambassador within 24 hours. His success in this posting led to his being elevated from MBE to OBE.

Toye wrote a book about the country, *Laos: Buffer state or Battleground* (1968). In it he argued that the role of neutral buffer between communist North Vietnam and western-oriented Thailand which independent Laos was asked to assume, "demanded an internal stability and strength that the kingdom did not possess".

In 1962 Toye was posted to Shape in Paris. This was followed by two years as a research fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford, where he took a PhD.

He was promoted colonel in 1968, and a posting to SEATO in Bangkok was followed by a spell in New York as defence adviser to the British Mission at the UN. Toye's final posting before his retirement from the Army in 1972 was as military attache at the embassy in Washington.

In retirement in Oxfordshire, Toye served for many years as local representative for the Armed Forces charity SSAFA.

A lively, occasionally obstinate man, Toye enjoyed reading, writing book reviews, tending his garden, and travelling. He and his wife (who died in 1999) had a son who died in infancy.

Col Hugh Toye, born March 28 1917, died April 15 2012 (obituary Daily Telegraph 17th July 2012)