

British Double Agents and Operation Fortitude: A New Perspective

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Abstract:

On June 6th, 1944, Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy as a part of Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of France. While they experienced pockets of stiff resistance, Allied troops sustained far fewer casualties than they had expected. The reason for this was due to Operation Fortitude, a deception mission that intended to fool Hitler about the time and location of the Allied invasion mission. The use of double agents by British Intelligence services was essential for the effective execution of Fortitude. The story of the double agents goes beyond their success during Fortitude. Double agents were initially recruited as German agents, but key agents immediately turned themselves in to British authorities upon reaching the nation. These agents decided to become involved with British Intelligence due to broader circumstances that were happening in Europe. The emergence of Fascist regimes disrupted the political landscape of Europe and led to widespread condemnation from political and social spheres. Their development as double agents became crucial to their effectiveness during Operation Fortitude. Their successful infiltration of German Intelligence allowed them to convince Hitler and German High Command that the main Allied invasion force would come at the Pas de Calais instead of Normandy. The result was that the Allies met an unprepared German defense force on D-Day and were able to advance past the beaches. The work of the double agents during Fortitude saved thousands of Allied lives and was vital to the success of Operation Overlord.

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*“In wartime truth is so precious that she should always be attended
by a bodyguard of lies”¹*

-Winston Churchill

At 6:30 AM on June 6th, 1944, Allied forces landed at Utah Beach as a part of the amphibious assault plan under Operation Overlord. Despite being 2,000 yards south of the intended landing objective, Allied troops came ashore and encountered minimal resistance. Infantry and tank forces moved quickly on the beaches, pulverizing bunkers and eliminating enemy troop positions as they advanced. By 9:00 AM, Allied forces had captured the beach and reduced the defenses behind the beach as they began to move inland.² The success enjoyed by the Allies at Utah surprised some of the top military commanders who had planned the invasion. Allied General Dwight D. Eisenhower had predicted that the unsuitable landing grounds, beach obstructions, and anticipated defense forces at Utah Beach would prove to be a great hazard for Allied forces to overcome. He believed that this would be one of the toughest beaches at Normandy to capture.³ However, Allied forces sustained less than 600 casualties, which was significantly less than what had been predicted.⁴

The Allied success at Utah was not a stroke of luck. Allied forces were met by an undermanned and undersupplied German defensive force that allowed them to advance with far fewer casualties than anticipated. The reason for this was not a matter of German troop availability or the superiority of Allied forces over German forces. Rather, it was the work of British Intelligence planning and double agent activity. Along with Operation Overlord,

¹ Donovan, Michael J. "Strategic Deception: Operation Fortitude." *Strategy Research Project*, 2002, 1.

² Ford, Ken, and Steve Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*. Oxford: Osprey, 2009, 164.

³ Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Crusade in Europe*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1948, 246.

⁴ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 328.

intelligence services had devised Operation Fortitude, a deception mission intended to deceive Hitler and German High Command about the timing and location of the invasion. The successful execution of the deception operation allowed for Allied forces at Utah, and the other four beaches at Normandy, to face unprepared German defense forces and sustain fewer casualties.

Double agents were central to the effective execution of Operation Fortitude. By definition, a double agent is a spy/agent who pretends to be working for one nation when in reality they are working for their adversary. The Twenty Committee became a subdivision of Britain's domestic counter-intelligence service that was dedicated to the development of these agents and the supervision of the Double Cross System, an anti-espionage operation set up by the British. John Cecil (J.C.) Masterman was the chairman to the Twenty Committee and wrote extensively about his experiences in his memoir *The Double Cross System*. Double agents have been used throughout history as a method of deception and counterespionage, and the use of these agents by the British was not unique to World War II⁵. However, the impact they had on Britain, Germany, and Allied military operations have made them a popular subject of scholarship.

The use of double agents throughout war has been extensively studied since information about them became available to the public. Rather than attempting to unveil unseen information on these double agents, this thesis will add a different perspective on their recruitment, how they were utilized, and the impact they had on one of the largest deception mission of the war: Operation Fortitude.

The significance of Operation Fortitude and its overall impact on Operation Overlord have been debated by many historians through the years. Historians such as Ben Macintyre,

⁵ Masterman, J. C. *The Double-cross System: The Incredible True Story of How Nazi Spies Were Turned into Double Agents*. New York, New York: Lyons Press, 2000, 1.

Michael Howard, and Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Donovan have all agreed that Fortitude was vital to the success of Overlord. They believe that Hitler and German High Command were deceived about the location of the invasion and were caught in a state of hesitation about how to respond. They also believe that double agents were integral to the execution of Fortitude, as they were able to effectively deliver the means of deception to German Intelligence and German High Command.⁶ The Allied deception efforts were then able to effectively convince Hitler that the invasion of France would take place at the Pas de Calais. Believing that the main invasion force would come ashore at the Pas de Calais, the Germans were caught by surprise when a large invasion force arrived at Normandy and failed to effectively mobilize troops throughout France to stop the invasion in its tracks.⁷ Therefore, the work of these double agents was instrumental to the success of Operation Overlord.

However, not all historians agree with these claims. Mary Barbier points out many of the traditional arguments regarding the impact of Fortitude and claims that the impact operation had on D-Day and Overlord was minimal. She argues that the Germans had been expecting the Allied invasion of France to take place at the Pas de Calais before Fortitude ever began, and reduces the impact the double agents had on the thinking of German High Command. She also believes that the disputes between German Generals over the placement of defenses and troop reserves resulted in the Normandy sector being unprepared for the invasion. Lastly, she argues that Allied air superiority was responsible for preventing the formation and deployment of an effective counter attack that could have halted Allied invasion forces.⁸ She concludes that

⁶ Donovan, "Operation Fortitude".

⁷ Howard, Michael. *Strategic Deception in the Second World War*. New York, New York: Norton, 1995.

⁸ Barbier, Mary. *D-day Deception Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2007, 184-193

Operation Overlord still would have succeeded in achieving its objectives without deception operations in place.

This thesis will enter the debate by discussing and analyzing how these double agents were crucial to the deception of Hitler and German High Command. Like Macintyre and Donovan, I will argue that Fortitude and double agent activity were vital to the success of Overlord. However, I will expand the boundaries of the story behind the agents and the results of their deception operations. The making of the double agent was not a British victory, but rather a circumstance of Europe at the time. Additionally, I will look at D-Day from a statistical perspective to show the significant impact the double agents had on German defense forces prior to the invasion. The Fortitude story left the Germans unprepared for an invasion at Normandy, but I will provide a numerical perspective on troop deployments and casualty numbers to show what could have happened on D-Day without the work of the double agents.

The first chapter of this thesis will take a look at agent recruitment. As I show here, the whole story of these double agents is much more complex than Britain's intelligence abilities. Many of the most successful double agents were not caught by the British and forced to work against the Germans. Key agents were initially sent to Britain as German agents, but immediately turned themselves in once they came over. A phenomenon like this begs the question: why did these agents surrender to the British? The answer lies within the circumstances within pre-war Europe. This chapter will reveal how the emergence of Fascist regimes throughout Europe during the 1930's set the stage for widespread backlash against this form of government. I will then look at the backgrounds of key agents and how their experiences with Fascism and Nazism primed them to become successful double agents. This chapter will incorporate the British

recruitment of the double agents within the broader history of Europe, and how it coincided with the nature of Fascism and Nazism, and the rise of the Popular Front.

The second chapter will focus on how these agents were utilized before and during Operation Fortitude. It will trace how double agents had to establish themselves as German agents before they could ever be used for deception operations. After they were trusted, I will explore how they operated during Operation Fortitude and how they were able to successfully play on the psychology of Adolf Hitler. I will take a look at the contributions of individual agents and how they were able to deliver the means of deception to German Intelligence in a manner that was believable. Lastly, I will reveal how double agent activity affected the thinking and decision making of Hitler and German High Command about the impending Allied invasion of Europe.

The final chapter of this this thesis will explore the effectiveness of Operation Fortitude. This chapter will show that Hitler and German High Command were convinced that the invasion of France would come at the Pas de Calais region instead of Normandy as a result of double agent activity. I will look at troop displacements prior to the invasion to illustrate how a large percentage of German forces available in Western Europe were stationed at the Pas de Calais, leaving other defensive forces along the French coast thinly stretched. As a result, the Allies were met by unprepared and undermanned forces defending the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. I will then use casualty statistics and troop deployments to convey how a prepared German defensive force could have effectively halted the Allied invasion and put Operation Overlord in jeopardy.

Each of these chapters draws on a variety of primary and secondary sources. Chapter 1 will rely heavily on the memoir of J.C. Masterman, Chairmen of the Twenty Committee, and on

the memoirs of some of the key agents. These memoirs help illustrate how the Double Cross System and the Twenty Committee formed, and how these agents were able to be recruited as British double agents. I will also analyze declassified intelligence files from the British Archives of two of the most dynamic agents of the war to reveal how their backgrounds put them in a position to become effective double agents for the Twenty Committee. Chapter 2 will deal heavily with secondary literature to explore the specifics of Operation Fortitude and the activity of the double agents. The memoirs of the agents and Masterman will also be discussed and analyzed to show the development of the agents, and how they were used specifically to deceive the Germans during Fortitude. Chapter 3 will look at the memoirs of Allied Generals Bernard Montgomery and Dwight D. Eisenhower to reveal the goals and fears of Allied planners during Operation Overlord. I will also look at the memoir of Colonel Hans von Luck, a Panzer officer under the command of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. His accounts add to the German narrative of the events that took place before and during D-Day, and reveal the impact Allied deception efforts had on German High Command. Additionally, the chapter draws on a variety of battlefield statistics to add to the argument of the significance of Operation Fortitude. The statistics will then be used to conduct a quantitative analysis to show that if Hitler had not been fooled by the Fortitude story, he would have had the military capabilities to halt the Allies on the beaches and push them back into the sea.

In his memoir, Masterman recounts that throughout the war he had dreamed that the years of work with these agents would provide them with one “glorious” deception opportunity that would have a significant impact on Allied military operations.⁹ That moment came with Operation Fortitude, which represented the culmination of years of intelligence activity by the Twenty Committee and the double agents. In fact, intelligence operations were active before the

⁹ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 43

onset of the war. As early as 1938, British Intelligence began to experiment with the use of double agents. War had yet to fall upon Europe, but Britain had already begun to cultivate one of its most important intelligence assets of the war.

Chapter 1: Foundations of the Double Cross System and Agent Recruitment 1935 to 1943

Introduction

In the years leading up to the World War II, Germany had been building up its military forces in preparation for an armed confrontation with Europe. Their militarization programs gave Germany one of the best militaries in Europe. One of the biggest obstacles to German success in Europe was Great Britain. Before the outbreak of war, the Abwehr (the German Intelligence Service) tried to infiltrate agents into Great Britain to gain a foothold in the buildup of intelligence on British operations. However, Britain was able to track down all agents that had infiltrated the country, even though the British did not realize they had discovered every agent at the time.¹⁰ Twenty-one agents were sent over to Britain before the war broke out and all but one were captured or gave themselves up.¹¹ Following interrogation, these agents were either executed or turned into double agents. The discovery and turning of these agents set up the foundation for the formation of the “Double Cross System”.

Although Britain enjoyed success tracking these agents once they entered the country, it was not a victory that the British could take full responsibility for. At the time that the first agents were sent across the English Channel, Anti-Fascist and Anti-Nazi movements were sweeping across Europe. People began to vocalize their disapproval of Fascism and Nazism, and called for a united effort to help stop the spread of Fascism throughout the continent. An early example of this was the Popular Front formed in part by a communist politician from Bulgaria

¹⁰ Masterman, J. C. *The Double-cross System: The Incredible True Story of How Nazi Spies Were Turned into Double Agents*. New York, New York: Lyons Press, 2000, 4

¹¹ F. H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War, Abridged Version*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 118.

named Georgi Dimitrov. The Popular Front was a political alliance endorsed by the Communist party to form a united political coalition that opposed Fascism.¹² The adoption of the Popular Front in many democratic European countries, including Britain and France, from 1934 to 1939 illustrated a widespread disapproval of Fascism.

Nazi-Germany's aggressive territorial acquisitions that instigated the start of World War II perpetuated the antifascist and anti-Nazi attitudes. Men in the countries that were taken over were recruited for military service, which included work within the intelligence community. Some men became soldiers, while others were able to assume non-combat roles as secret agents who were sent abroad. Many of the agents that were sent to Britain were from nations that were either under the direct control of Nazi Germany or had governments that were influenced by Fascism. Agents such as Brutus, Garbo, Tricycle, and Mutt and Jeff all shared antifascist and anti-Nazi sentiment, and turned themselves in when they arrived in Britain. Therefore, Britain's achievement within the Intelligence community and during Operation Fortitude was not in their ability to recruit double agents. Rather, it was how they used them to carry out deception operations that distinguished them as an effective intelligence agency.

The goal of this chapter is to explore how the Double Cross system was created and how it was implemented within British Intelligence. I will examine how Military Intelligence Section 5, also known as The Security Service or MI5, was first able to track down the German agents that entered the country. I will then look at how the lives of a few agents were entangled with the rise of antifascism and anti-Nazism in their respective countries. This will give us a better understanding as to why they were so eager and willing to switch sides in order to work with the British. The recruitment of these agents paid major dividends for the British during Operation

¹² Payne, Stanley G. "Civil Strife and Dictatorship, 1930-1935." In *Civil War in Europe, 1905-1949*. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 112.

Fortitude when they were used as the channels through which the methods of deception reached the German Intelligence Agency (Abwehr).

The Twenty Committee and the Formation of Double Cross System 1936-1938

By 1938, it was apparent that war would erupt across Europe. Hitler had not declared war on Britain, but he was already making sure that he was gathering the proper intelligence when that day came. To do this, the Abwehr had been sending agents into Britain via parachute, submarine, or through false documents. Little did the Germans know that all of these agents were being tracked upon their entry into Britain. British Military Intelligence Section 5, which served as Britain's domestic security and counter-intelligence agency, had been busy in their counter espionage activity. While Britain focused much of their attention on their intelligence efforts, the Germans focused much more on the build up of their military forces. Believing in the superiority of his military and the Aryan race, Hitler had not put in as much time promoting intelligence activities. As a result, the Abwehr was not given the same prestige in Germany as British Military Intelligence services were in Britain.¹³

While British Intelligence operations were active at this time, it was also crucial for the British population to be ready for an imminent invasion. In Tim Clayton's book *Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain*, an American journalist named Whitelaw Reid gave his accounts about the nature of Britain's wartime preparations. While he noted that civilian moral was high, their plan for ground defenses lacked in relation to aerial and naval preparations. He was impressed with the fighting spirit that had been instilled in them by Winston Churchill, but was concerned with

¹³ Tavares, Ernest S. "OPERATION FORTITUDE: THE CLOSED LOOP D-DAY DECEPTION PLAN." April 1, 2001. http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/people/aldrich/vigilant/tavares_fortitude.pdf.

the lack of realistic methods that could be used to combat the Nazi war machine. When Reid asked a customs official about how he felt about the war, he assured Reid that the British would be fine, remarking that he had several broom sticks with broken bottles attached to them, stating that “Any bloody Nazi that comes in my house, he’s going to get that right in his face!”¹⁴ He also claimed that another woman had placed a mattress on the roof of her house, so if a bomb were dropped there it would simply bounce right off.

While these accounts are interesting and suggest that Britain was unprepared for an invasion, British military records at the time seem to indicate the contrary. Professor Mark Harrison presented an article that illustrated Britain’s progressive military response to the threat of Nazi Germany. Before the out break of war, Britain’s military spending was relatively low with defense spending only claiming 7% of national expenditures. Their major focus was rearming the navy and air force, which turned out to be a slow process considering their defense budget was tightly constrained by political and economic doctrines that were in place to protect against financial instability that could be caused by defense spending. Additionally, there were financial constraints placed on military policy that prevented them from reconditioning ground forces. By the dawn of the Battle of Britain, this all changed when Lord Beaverbrook took over as the Minister of Aircraft Production in 1940. Under his leadership, he was able to mobilize the resources necessary for preparing Britain for the impending German invasion, specifically within the air force and navy. From 1935-1939, the British only spent 500 million dollars on combat munitions production, but drastically increased to 3.5 billion dollars by 1940 and 6.5 billion

¹⁴ Clayton, Tim, and Phil Craig. *Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1999, 167-168.

dollars by 1941.¹⁵ By the time the Germans began their attack on Britain in July of 1940, the British were well prepared to thwart aerial and naval assaults.

In the years leading up to the Battle of Britain, the Twenty Committee was also formed. The layout of British Intelligence at the time was quite systematic and complex. Military Intelligence Section 5, also known as MI5 or the Security Service, was Britain's domestic counter-intelligence service. The Twenty Committee was a subdivision within MI5 that oversaw the operations of the Double Cross system during World War II. The Double Cross System was an anti-espionage operation set up by members of MI5. Eventually, the agents of double cross were tasked with deception operations that became extremely useful in the later parts of the war.

John Cecil (J.C.) Masterman was the chairman of the Twenty Committee who wrote about his experiences with the committee in his memoir *The Double Cross System*, originally published as a classified document just after the war in 1945¹⁶. Masterman was a trained historian and his accounts of the activities of the Twenty Committee are crucial for understanding how the organization operated. His memoir is an important primary source that illustrates the inner mechanisms of British Intelligence at the time. I will use him as a source throughout this chapter, but it is important to note that his opinions and arguments are biased considering he was the leader of this organization.

One of the first German agents to fall into the hands of the British was Arthur Owens who arrived in the country via parachute in September of 1938. He immediately turned himself into British authorities and offered his services to Military Intelligence Section 5 (MI5). Instead of imprisoning him, the British decided to use him as a double agent under the codename *Agent*

¹⁵ Harrison, Mark. "Resource Mobilization for World War II: The U.S.A., U.K., U.S.S.R., and Germany 1938-1945." University of Warwick Archives. 1988.
<https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/staff/mharrison/public/ehr88postprint.pdf>.

¹⁶ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, v.

Snow and proved to be an invaluable asset to MI5. From Owens, the British learned a great deal of information regarding how the Abwehr operated and allowed them to identify other German agents that were either in the country at the time or were on their way.

The origins of the Twenty Committee and the Double Cross system are closely intertwined with the rise of Agent Snow. Snow was never able to publish his memoirs about his experience as a double agent, but his role within MI5 laid the foundation for the establishment of the Twenty Committee and the Double Cross system. The story behind Arthur Owens before he was recruited by MI5 is melodramatic, but vitally important for understanding his motives. Born to two Welsh parents in Wales in 1899, Owens was an electrical engineer that moved to Canada at a young age, only to return to England a few years before the war. Upon his return, he worked with a firm that had a majority of its contracts with the Admiralty. During this time, he traveled back and forth to Germany on business, bringing back as much technical information as he could and passed it along to the Admiralty.¹⁷

At the beginning of 1936, Owens was employed by Military Intelligence Section 6, also known as MI6 or the Secret Intelligence Service, which was responsible for supplying the British government with foreign intelligence. His mission was to provide information to the government about what he had seen in the German shipyards. According to his account to MI5, he came in contact with a German engineer named Pieper through his business later that year. Through their numerous interactions, he eventually requested that Owens should work as a German agent and abandon his relationship with the British. He accepted Pieper's offer and intended to use his new position as a way to penetrate the Abwehr in the interests of the British. Following several

¹⁷ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 39

meetings across Germany, he was accepted by the Germans as an agent and given the codename Johnny.¹⁸

Although the British knew about his contact with the Germans, they decided not to take any actions against him with the hopes that he would eventually confess on his own. However, from 1936 to the outbreak of war in 1939, Snow was a German agent working for the interests of the Abwehr and was actually harming the British. This was a tactic that many double agents who followed Snow would pursue because it allowed him to build up his relationship with the Abwehr before he could effectively infiltrate their operations. Snow's principal contact was Major Ritter, who was given the alias Dr. Rantzau, and Snow was tasked with delivering information regarding the Air force to him.

When he returned to England in September of 1938, he informed the British of his German contact and that he was set to receive a wireless radio transmitter from Germany. He quickly installed the unit in his home, but the device was defective and he was unable to establish a connection with Germany. Almost a year later, he was incarcerated at Wandsworth Prison due to suspicions about his activity with the Germans. After revealing the location of a hidden transmitter, the British ordered him to reestablish a connection with Germany under the direction of MI5. From the prison, Snow's first message was sent, effectively launching the double-cross system. Very shortly afterward, Snow was receiving numerous orders from the Abwehr requesting military information.¹⁹

In less than a year, agents were being sent over from Germany to meet up with Snow and help him with his spying activities. By the end of 1939, at least three agents were discovered and either recruited to be double agents by the Twenty Committee or were sent away to be

¹⁸ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 39

¹⁹ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 40-42

imprisoned or executed. Another victory that came at the hands of Snow and the Double Cross system was their ability to obtain knowledge regarding wireless codes and the German cypher procedure. The British were able to decode many cyphered German messages due to codes that were given to Snow for operating his wireless transmitter. Therefore, the information gathered through Snow exposed the methods of the Abwehr and assisted the British in cracking other messages that were sent by the Germans. According to J.C. Masterman, the Snow case was essential to establishing a complete mastery of the system in the early years of the war.²⁰

In his book *Strategic Deception in the Second World War*, Michael Howard presents the Twenty Committee as forming by accident. “British deception operations in the Second World War began almost by accident. The intelligence and security services found that they had the means of misleading the enemy, and the urgent need to make use of them, long before their military colleagues had thought seriously about deception at all”.²¹ His account is very similar to Masterman in that he credits Agent Snow with laying the foundations for the formation of the Twenty Committee and the Double Cross System. Like Masterman, he cites the importance of Snow, but is quick to illustrate that he was not a trustworthy character. The British were unsure about his loyalty consistently tracked all of his activity. Additionally, he says that by 1940 Snow controlled a network of six agents that were highly trusted by the Abwehr. MI5 did not realize it at the time, but those six men constituted the sum total of all German agents that were operating in Britain at the time.²²

²⁰ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 43

²¹ Howard, Michael. *Strategic Deception in the Second World War*. New York, New York: Norton, 1995, 3.

²² Howard, *Strategic Deception in the Second World War*, 4.

Antifascism, Anti-Nazism, and British Intelligence 1935-1939

After the Snow case became active in 1938, it became clear that British Intelligence had a very valuable asset at their disposal. In May of 1939, members of MI5 and the Deuxième Bureau, the French equivalent of MI5, met to discuss the value of “double crossing agents”. In his memoir, Masterman discusses a lecture given by a member of the Deuxième Bureau. “He stressed specially the importance of penetrating the enemy Secret Service, and of discovering enemy intentions, and incidentally painted a gloomy picture of the preparations already made by German agents in France armed with ‘absolutely undetectable’ wireless sets, in the use of which they have previously been trained.”²³ Not only would these agents be of great value providing information about the enemy, but they would be essential in protecting the national security of Britain. Plans for German agents were already drawn up and it was only a matter of time before they became active. Hence, the recruitment efforts of the Twenty Committee and MI5 were of utmost importance.

While Masterman may have thought that the reason for Britain’s ability to discover and employ German agents lay within their superior intelligence techniques, the real reason is much more complex. Many of the most successful agents from the war, including Agents Brutus, Garbo, Tricycle, and Mutt and Jeff, came from countries that were either occupied by the Nazi state or influenced by Fascist governments. These men also turned themselves in to British authorities as soon as they arrived, indicating that these events were not a result of a complex intelligence operation to track them down. Rather, it was more of a circumstance of the state of Europe at the time. All of these agents had one thing in common, and that was their hatred of

²³ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 38

Nazi Germany and Fascism. Their reasons behind their predispositions are all different, but it motivated them to do what they could to help bring an end Fascism and Nazism.

The emergence of antifascist movements throughout Europe before the outbreak of war is complex and not exactly the result of a united effort. However, there were individuals who sought to unite Europeans against this form of government. Joseph Stalin was an adamant anti-fascist who saw this form of government as a major threat to communism and the Soviet Union. He relied heavily on the Communist International as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy that promoted communism in other European nations. He wanted an international alliance with Britain and France that would also promote a form of collective security from Nazi Germany. However, Stalin was well aware that communism was viewed as a revolutionary threat to capitalism in those countries. Therefore, he encouraged a policy within democratic governments that would ally communist parties with social democratic or other capitalist parties to oppose the rise of Fascism and Nazism in Europe.²⁴ This policy became known as the Popular Front, which was an alliance across political parties that focused its efforts on resisting Fascism. The goal of the Popular Front was to unite all worker and democratic antifascist elements in electoral coalitions. In other words, they wanted to prevent any fascist parties from gaining influence in democratic governments by creating an alliance amongst other political parties.

A prominent Anti-Fascist and Communist International at this time was Georgi Dimitrov, a politician from Bulgaria. In 1935, he called for the formation of a “broad people’s antifascist front” to combat Fascist influence. To Dimitrov Fascism could be defined as “the open terrorist

²⁴ La Botz, Dan. "The Popular Front, A Social and Political Tragedy: The Case of France, by Dan La Botz, New Politics." *The Popular Front, A Social and Political Tragedy: The Case of France*. 2011.. <http://newpol.org/content/popular-front-social-and-political-tragedy-case-france>.

dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital”²⁵. He is credited with being one of the major advocates of the Popular Front.

According to Dimitrov, “The fundamental, the most decisive thing in establishing an anti-fascist People's Front is *resolute action of the revolutionary proletariat* in defense of the demands of these sections of the people, particularly the working peasantry -- demands in line with the basic interests of the proletariat -- and in the process of struggle combining the demands of the working class with these demands”²⁶ Although Dimitrov was a communist who saw the overthrow of the bourgeoisie as the ultimate goal of his communist party, he saw Fascism as a global threat that needed to be terminated. He was willing to ally himself with parties that he once considered his enemies because his hatred of Fascism outweighed his long-term political objectives.

The Popular front saw particular success in Spain shortly after Dimitrov’s call to action. In 1936, the Popular Front alliance won the Spanish government elections by a narrow margin, illustrating how this political alliance was able to minimize fascist influence through democratic elections. However, this victory was short-lived as General Francisco Franco and his fascist rebels attacked the newly formed government in July of 1936. Franco’s aggressions launched Spain into the Spanish Civil War, lasting from July of 1936 to April of 1939. General Franco and his fascist rebels emerged from the conflict successfully with the help of Hitler and Mussolini, and were able to establish a fascist government in Spain. Therefore, the success of the Popular Front in democratic elections did little to stop the country from succumbing to fascism.²⁷

²⁵ Payne, Stanley G. "Civil Strife and Dictatorship, 1930-1935." In *Civil War in Europe, 1905-1949*. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 112.

²⁶ Dimitrov, Georgi. "The Anti-Fascist People's Front." *Georgi Dimitrov, Selected Works* 2, no. 2 (1972).

²⁷ Eubank, Keith. *The Origins of World War II*. New York, New York: Crowell, 1969, 68.

Elsewhere, the Popular Front was also unsuccessful in their pursuits to limit the spread of fascism. According to Payne, “Popular Front coalitions were primarily defensive, undertaking only a certain number of new initiatives before breaking down altogether.”²⁸ By taking a stand against Fascism and allying with other non-fascist parties, the communists were successful in rising in popularity as they were able to attract new members. However, their own political party motives ended up working against them. In his book *The Origins of World War II*, Keith Eubank states that “The Popular Front failed to halt fascism, chiefly because the Communists never sincerely supported bourgeois democracy. Although they publicly appeared to back the Popular Front, they did not stop their efforts at undermining and destroying the socialist and democratic parties.”²⁹ Therefore, a lack of cohesion between the parties that were allied within the Popular Front contributed to the ultimate failure of the political organization. Nonetheless, the Popular Front represented a united political effort by members of nations across Europe to limit the spread of fascism.

Key Agents during Operation Fortitude

Next, we will look at how the key agents during Operation Fortitude were recruited and why they turned sides. There are over 120 personal files of double agents in the MI5 records, making it nearly impossible to dissect each agent’s reason for turning. However, looking at the personal stories of the next few agents will give us an idea of the kind of people the Germans were recruiting, and why they were so willing to then work for the British. More importantly, we

²⁸ Payne, *Civil War in Europe*, 114

²⁹ Eubank, Keith. *The Origins of World War II*. New York, New York: Crowell, 1969, 68.

will look at why these agents turned themselves in and were so eager to work as double agents under the Twenty Committee.

Many of these agents who were recruited by British Intelligence came from different backgrounds, but decided to work for the British because they all shared a mutual distaste for Hitler, Nazi Germany, and Fascism. The key agents during Operation Fortitude all came from countries that were either occupied by Germany or were influenced by a Fascist government. In one way or another, they were exposed to the true nature of Fascism or Nazi Germany and were quick to change loyalties following their recruitment by the Abwehr. For this next section, we will look at how the lives of these agents were intertwined with Fascism and Nazism and how they developed their sentiments towards these governments before they began working for the British.

It is worth mentioning that I refer to these agents by their real names until the British recruited them. After their recruitment, I refer to them by their agent names. The years in the section titles signify the years in which the section encompasses.

Agent Tricycle 1912-1940

Dusan Popov was born as the son of a wealthy industrialist from Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia (present day Serbia) in July of 1912. In his memoir *Spy/Counterspy*, Popov details the moments of his life before he became a spy and his experiences as a part of MI5 and the Twenty Committee. Growing up, he was always an independent person and a bit of a free spirit, loving life and always trying to find a new adventure for himself. While he was studying law at the University of Freiburg in Germany, he met his best friend Johann Jebsen, who was the heir to a

large shipping company. Before he left for home, Popov was briefly incarcerated by the Gestapo for his outspoken negative opinions towards the Nazis. He was saved from being sent to a concentration camp due to the efforts of Jebesen, who had his father negotiate his release.

After graduating, Popov returned to Yugoslavia to get involved in the import-export trading industry. He intended to study at the University of Oxford where he would write books on philosophy, but this dream of his never came to being. In early 1940, not too long after the outbreak of the war, Popov was living in Dubrovnik where he had recently opened his own law firm. Shortly after, he received a letter from Jebesen, who he had not seen in three years, that he needed to meet with him urgently in Belgrade, Serbia.

At this time, Jebesen confided to Popov that he had joined the Abwehr because it saved him from being drafted into the armed forces. His recruiter was a family friend who was the deputy to Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, chief of the Abwehr. Canaris had confirmed to Jebesen that as a freelance spy he would never have to wear a uniform and be sent off to war. In his book *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies*, Ben Macintyre recounts that Jebesen told Popov, “Hitler is the undisputed master of Europe. In a few months’ time, he’ll probably finish off England, and then American and Russia will be glad to come to terms with him”³⁰ With this in mind, he asked Popov to have dinner with a friend of his at the German embassy.

The friend Jebesen was referring to was Major Muntzinger, the most senior Abwehr officer in the Balkans. At the dinner, Muntzinger wasted no time giving Popov the sales pitch. In Popov’s memoir, he recounts Muntzinger stating, “No country can resist the German army. In a couple of months, England will be invaded. To facilitate the German task and to make an

³⁰ Macintyre, Ben. *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-day Spies*. New York, New York: Crown, 2012, 10

eventual invasion less bloody, you can help.”³¹ He also added that the Germans have multiple agents in England that are already providing the Nazis with very valuable information as they prepare to invade. Popov was of particular interest to the Abwehr because he was well connected in British social circles. His business background was also an ideal cover that would allow him to infiltrate the country. He was given sometime to think about the offer and accepted the following morning. This was the first and only spy that Jebson would recruit to the Abwehr, but Popov had plans of his own that he planned on conducting as a spy.³²

What the Germans did not realize is that Popov had experiences with Fascism and Nazism while he was studying at school in Freiburg that shaped his negative sentiments. He was in Freiburg in the mid to late 1930’s, around the time that the Nazis began to pursue anti-Semitic policies. He witnessed Jewish businesses being shut down, Jews being beaten in the streets, and the complete isolation of the Jews from the rest of the population. As an independent free spirit, he could not stand to see an entire race of people being oppressed by the Nazi regime. As his form of protest, Popov would frequently go to a Jewish café that all non-Jews were banned visiting. Jebson and Popov both hated the Nazis and were not afraid to let it be known to the people around them. During his incarceration, he was horrified by the work of the Gestapo and of the German people. His close friends and professors were quick to abandon him and confer the allegations that were being pressed against him. This experience would mark him for life and made him an adamant anti-Nazi and antifascist.

Not too long after accepting the offer, Popov contacted the British representative in Belgrade for advice with the situation. He advised him to continue his conversations with the Abwehr while also staying in contact with the British. In late December of 1940, Popov arrived

³¹Popov, Dusko. *Spy/Counterspy; the Autobiography of Dusko Popov*. New York, New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1974.

³²Macintyre, *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-day Spies*, 11

in Britain following British instructions, and after interrogation they decided to officially open a case for him. Now Agent Tricycle, the Twenty Committee saw him as a high quality agent who's superior social skills could enable him to meet people and establish connections within any social stratum. Additionally, like the Germans, his career as a skilled businessman provided him with an excellent cover that would allow him to make frequent trips to Lisbon, located in a neutral country.³³

Agents Mutt and Jeff 1919-1941

As Masterman recounts in his memoir, John Moe and Tor Glad were two Norwegian spies who washed up on the shores of England in April of 1941. They arrived via boat after being dropped off from a German seaplane that had departed from Norway. Upon their arrival in England, they immediately turn themselves in to the authorities. They had been equipped with a two-way wireless transmitter, out of date travelers' books, and detonators. Originally recruited as German Agents, their primary mission was to sabotage food dumps in Scotland, equipped with recipes for constructing incendiary bombs. Their secondary mission included fathering intelligence on air raid damage, military deployments, and civilian morale.³⁴

When looking into Mutt and Jeff, I will rely heavily on the files that were kept secret by British Intelligence for over 30 years. The British Paperless Archives have recently made this content available to the public. Over 500 pages of declassified files on Mutt and Jeff will be used to detail their backgrounds, how they became involved with the Abwehr, and their activity within British Intelligence as double agents. These declassified documents provide detailed accounts of

³³ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 57-58

³⁴ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 98-99

the backgrounds of John Moe and Tor Glad that are fundamental to understanding their experiences with Nazi Germany, how they became German Agents, and why they were so quick to turn themselves in to British authorities when they reached the country.

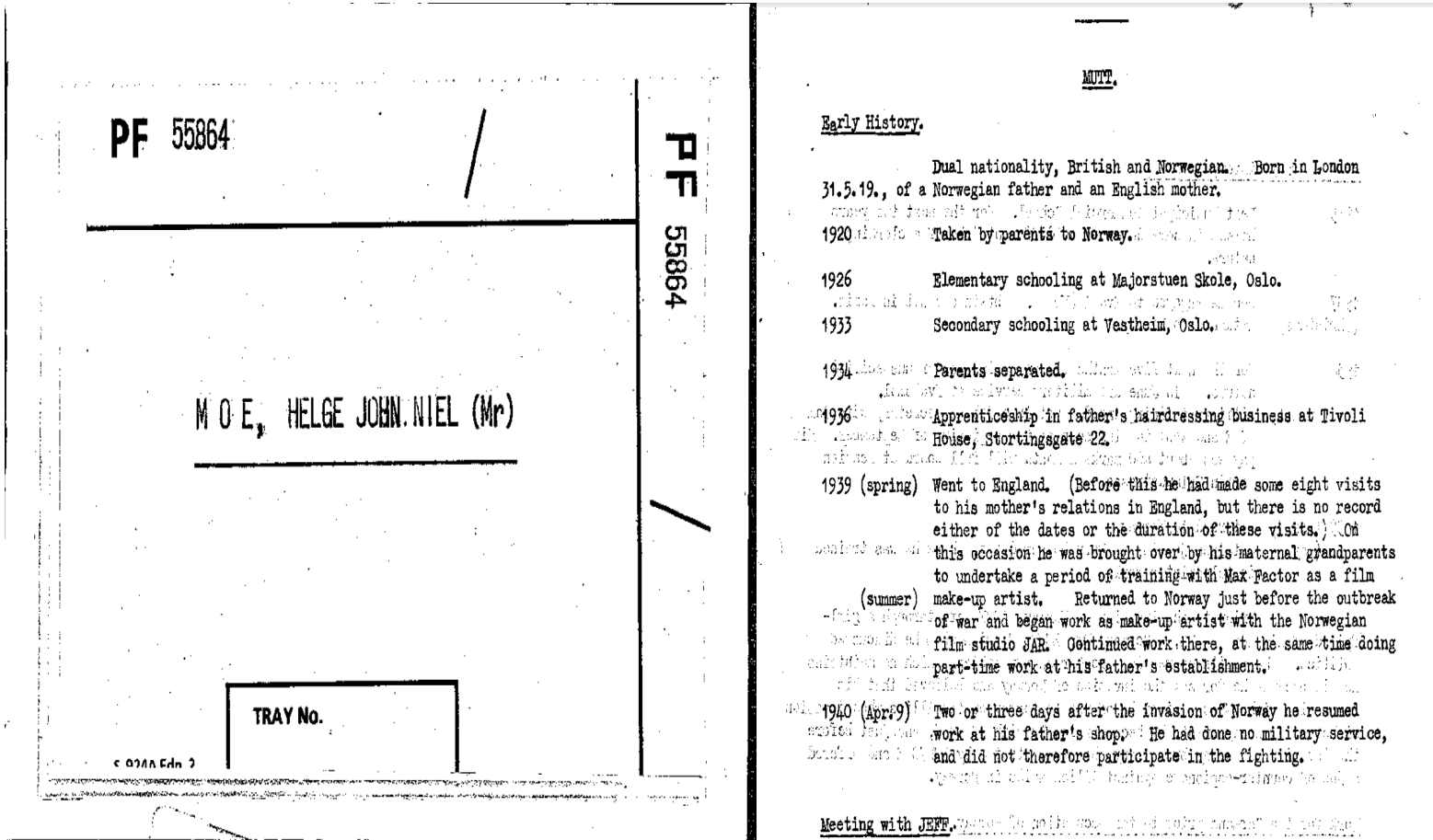


Figure 1: Selected items from Mutt and Jeff's Intelligence Files³⁵

³⁵ British Archives, *World War II Mutt and Jeff Double Agent MI5 British Intelligence Files*, BACM Research, Paperless Archives. Source material from Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Agency (NSA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Secret Service, National Security Council, Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Justice, National Archive Records and Administration, and Presidential Libraries

Although they were not technically a team as British agents, many of Agents Mutt and Jeff's missions coincided, which is why it is appropriate to talk about them together. John Moe (Mutt) was born in May of 1919 to a Norwegian father and a British mother while also possessing British nationality because he was born in London. He and his family returned Norway in 1921, where his father opened up a women's hairdressing business. After a brief stint in Britain working as a make up artist, he returned to Norway in 1940 when war broke out later that same year. By July 1940, he was virtually unemployed after his father's hairdressing business collapsed.³⁶

Later that month, Moe was introduced to Tor Glad (Jeff) who worked for the German occupation government as a postal censor. Glad was born in May of 1916 near Oslo, Norway to parents of Norwegian heritage. After he left school, he secured a number of positions working with commercial firms, but was not able to hold on to a job for more than a few months at a time. He first came in contact with the Germans in September of 1939 when he was approached by Dr. Benecke, the commercial attaché at the German Legation in Oslo. He was then recruited by the Germans to help spy on British agents in Southern Norway, but he made no attempts to actually spy on them. He was fired after a week, but was called upon shortly after by German intelligence to spy on Norwegian loyalists. Once again he did not spy and was moved to a position in a postal censorship office where Moe began working a few days later. It was here that the pair got to know each other.³⁷

³⁶ British Archives, *World War II Mutt and Jeff*, 33.

Source material from Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Agency (NSA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Secret Service, National Security Council, Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Justice, National Archive Records and Administration, and Presidential Libraries

³⁷ British Archives, *World War II Mutt and Jeff*, 34

Both Moe and Glad worked for the Nazi occupational forces after they took over the country in April of 1940. Just after he completed the invasion of Poland, Hitler began to plan out the invasion of Norway as a way of giving the German Navy a flank where they could operate against British shipping. According to Anthony Beevor's *The Second World War*, Hitler had wanted to capture Norway because the Port of Narvik in Norway would help to secure the supply route of Swedish iron to Germany.³⁸ Norway would play a crucial role in the fueling of the Nazi war machine as they continued their campaign throughout Europe.

After Norway was invaded, the Norwegians were reluctant to accept any terms of a peaceful occupation. The King of Norway ordered full mobilization of the Norwegian army. Despite their valorous efforts, the Nazis were able to subdue Norway within a month. One victory for the Allies was that they were able to evacuate the royal family to London, allowing them to maintain legitimacy while in exile. Even though Norway had surrendered, that did not mean that the fighting was over. The Norwegian Resistance formed shortly after the fall of the country to Nazi Germany. Commando raids, sabotage operations, and civil disobedience from the civilian population were all methods used by the resistance to undermine the Nazi occupiers.

After three months of working side by side, Moe was dismissed under suspicion of stealing a Censorship Black List and releasing it to a loyalist Norwegian who had connections with resistance fighters. Not too long afterwards, Glad became extremely bored during his time at the postal office, and after a month decided to approach his German handler where he requested to be sent to Britain as an agent. His request was accepted, but it was determined that he would go with another person to work with as a team. Glad suggested that Moe should be his

³⁸ Beevor, Antony. *The Second World War*. New York, New York: Little, Brown and Co. 2012, 75

partner and accompany him on the mission. It was during this time that they were both trained in wireless communication and sabotage.³⁹

After the Nazi takeover and the continuing resistance movement throughout Norway, it is clear that there were external factors that affected the loyalty of Moe and Glad to Germans and the Abwehr. Anti-Nazi sentiment was rampant throughout their home country, and both men showed little desire to help the Nazis even though they worked for them. Moe was even suspected of aiding Norwegian resistance fighters, while Glad simply refused to follow orders. Evidently, both men were partial to anti-fascist and anti-Nazi movements, making it very understandable as to why they were so eager to switch sides and work for the British.

As mentioned earlier, Moe and Glad turned themselves into British authorities as soon as they landed and were recruited to work for MI5, specifically within the Twenty Committee as double agents. As British agents, their new mission was to relay false information back to the Germans using the transmitters they were given before coming to Britain. However, they would have to build up their reputation as agents before they could be fully utilized for deception missions. To make sure that their German handlers did not suspect that Mutt and Jeff had flipped, MI5 arranged for fake sabotage operations to take place and had the two agents report back to the Germans that they were responsible for the attacks. In one case, the British went as far as setting up a controlled explosion to take place at a power plant. The attack was so believable that it was widely reported by the local media as a legitimate attack on British soil carried out by the Germans.⁴⁰

According to Masterman, Mutt and Jeff's work was incredibly scattered at first, performing small missions here and there to build up their relationship with the Abwehr and the

³⁹ British Archives, *World War II Mutt and Jeff*, 35

⁴⁰ British Archives, *World War II Mutt and*, 35

German high command. In time, their information gathering about troop movements and military activity became incredibly important for Hitler and the Abwehr as Germany braced for an impending Allied invasion. Mutt and Jeff's work became particularly important during Operation Fortitude North, which helped tie up some of Hitler's best tank units in Norway before the Allied landings at Normandy.

It is also important to note that the German army was not entirely happy about Hitler's decision to maintain a large occupation force in Norway. According to Beevor, the army complained throughout the war that the occupation of Norway tied down too many troops that could have been used to aid in other military operations.⁴¹ This was due to a variety of factors, including the reasons for invading that were mentioned earlier. One reason in particular that stands out was Hitler's obsession with controlling the North Sea and its ports. In his article "Strategic Deception: Operation Fortitude", Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Donovan of the United States Marine Corps wrote that Hitler believed it would be much harder to defend an Allied assault on Europe if they were successful in retaking Norway.⁴²

Agent Brutus 1939-1943

Agent Brutus was an important agent during Operation Fortitude, but his case did not begin until 1943, right around the time that the Allies began planning for the invasion of France. It is important to mention him and how he was recruited here, but he will be discussed at great length in the next chapter.

⁴¹ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 76

⁴² Donovan, Michael J. "Strategic Deception: Operation Fortitude." *Strategy Research Project*, 2002, 4.

Roman Garby-Cverniawki was a Polish Air Force officer who had worked with distinction as the head of a secret organization that attempted to establish Allied espionage networks in France between 1940 and 1941. He was captured by the Germans in November of 1941 and imprisoned for nine months before the Germans “converted” him and recruited him to work for the Abwehr. Like other spies before him, his mission was to infiltrate England. He was expected to report on military information of all sorts, with the primary task of “bringing about collaboration between Polish military circles and the German army, and to create a Polish fifth column in England with possibilities of subversive propaganda and sabotage”⁴³

The German’s did not realize that they had failed to actually convert Cverniawki. In his book, Macintyre describes how Cverniawki was able to convince the Germans of his loyalty to the Abwehr. “He would later claim that he had merely played a part, pretending to discuss collaboration [between the Poles and the Nazis] ‘as though I had really swallowed their propaganda’ when it is unlikely he ever had any such intention. He was determined, however, to keep fighting for Poland, and in order to do that, he needed to get out of prison.”⁴⁴ He was able to convince the Germans that he believed in the collaboration of the Germans and the Poles to save the Polish from “Russian barbarism”⁴⁵. He volunteered himself to be smuggled into Britain and work for the Germans as a spy. In reality, this was his great escape where he could work with the British to free his people from the Nazi Fascist state.

His reasons for his predispositions towards Hitler and the Nazis are quite obvious. Just two years prior to his imprisonment, he fought against the Nazi invaders as a fearless and devoted pilot in the Polish Air Force. He fought for his country and watched as his fellow soldiers died performing the same duty. The Nazis were also responsible for a string of atrocities

⁴³ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 144

⁴⁴ Macintyre, *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-day Spies*, 51

⁴⁵ Macintyre, *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-day Spies*, 51

across Poland during and after the invasion. Jews and prominent Poles across the country were rounded up and sent to concentration camps where they were either executed or forced to work as slave laborers. Some prisoners were used by Nazi doctors for medical experiments that either killed them or left them extremely crippled.⁴⁶ This cruelty was not just limited to a select few evil soldiers and military officials. In Beevor's book, he states "Ordinary German soldiers, not just members of the SS, took to maltreating the Jews with gusto by beatings, cutting off the beards of elders, humiliating and even raping young women... and setting fire to synagogues."⁴⁷ Nazism was essentially attempting to eradicate the Polish state and was simultaneously decimating the Polish population. As a Polish nationalist, Cverniawki had clear motives as to why he wanted to bring an end to Hitler's reign of terror and destruction.

Upon arriving in England, he immediately turned himself into the British authorities, and insisted that he be used in "the great game" of deception and double cross the Germans. Although he was trusted by the Germans, he wasted no time at all turning himself in and telling the truth about his reason for being in the country. Later that year he went to work at the Polish Headquarters in England as Agent Brutus, working as a liaison officer between the Royal Air Force and Polish Forces. His reports were used by the Germans to gather information about the Allied invasion force.⁴⁸ Alongside Agent Garbo, Brutus became an invaluable asset to Allies as they conducted their deception operations during Operation Fortitude South.

⁴⁶ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 22

⁴⁷ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 29-30

⁴⁸ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 145

Agent Garbo 1912-1942

Juan Pujol Garcia, codenamed Agent Garbo, was one of the most significant and well-known double agents of the war. Compared to the other agents recruited by MI5, Garbo's situation was more unique and complicated. Garbo's life leading up to his work with British was instrumental in shaping his motives for wanting to fight against Nazi Germany. Because of the impact he had on the Twenty Committee and his complex background, I want to spend more time discussing his life than with the previous agents to emphasize his brilliance and illustrate how he became one of the most successful spies of the war.

Juan Pujol Garcia established himself in the middle of the war as a brilliant Nazi agent who was willing to offer his services to the British. However, he came from very humble and unpromising beginnings. In his memoir written with the help of famed author Nigel West entitled *Operation Garbo*, Pujol discloses the closest details of his personal life and his work as a double agent. Born in Barcelona, Spain in 1912 to a successful manufacturer, Pujol was a troublemaker in his youth and was an apathetic student who never really showed any promise in his academics. At the age of 16 he dropped out of school to work at a hardware store. The mundane nature of the job led him to become incredibly disinterested with his position, causing him to quit his job⁴⁹. He had a very active imagination and contrived unwieldy business ideas, but he was never a good businessman.

Due to mandatory conscription that was in place at the time, Pujol was drafted into the Seventh Regiment of Light Artillery within the Army of the Spanish Republic, which ended up being a cavalry regiment. Not too long after completing his training, he ended his military

⁴⁹ Pujol, Juan, and Nigel West. *Operation GARBO: The Personal Story of the Most Successful Double Agent of World War II*. New York, New York: Random House, 1985, 16

service with little enthusiasm or appreciation of his fellow cavalrymen. “I lacked those essential qualities of loyalty, generosity, and honour that cavalryman is meant to possess; I had no desire to stay in the army.”⁵⁰ Once again, Pujol had no desire to pursue an occupation and quit shortly after starting.

On July 18, 1936 Spain descended into a vicious Civil War as the communist Republican forces and right-winged Fascist forces clashed for control of the country. Shortly after the war began, Pujol’s mother and sister were accused of being counter-revolutionaries and arrested. It took the work of a relative in a trade union to rescue them from captivity, causing Pujol to detest the Republicans’ treatment of his family. Once the conflict erupted, all former servicemen were called upon to fight for Republican forces. Due to his extreme disinterest in military affairs and overall opposition of the Republican government, he and his fiancé went into hiding. However, he was arrested in a police raid and was expecting to be punished harshly for attempting to run away from the conflict. Luckily for Pujol, his fiancé arranged for him to escape from prison and he once again went back into hiding. During this time, he became sick of living a life of self-confinement and came up with a new plan to reenter the republican army using false documents with an assumed name with the eventual goal of deserting. In September of 1938, he was on the front lines fighting against fascist forces in the Battle of the Ebro. As part of his greater plan, he leapt from the republican trenches and deserted to the fascist lines that were on the other side of no-man’s land. Dodging intense gunfire along the way, Pujol risked everything to escape Republican forces and reach the fascists. Once he reached the fascist forces, he was promptly captured as a prisoner of war.

However, while Pujol was in captivity he realized that the Fascists were no better, if not worse, than the left winged Republicans. Although he was released from prison following the

⁵⁰ Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 18

conclusion of the Spanish Civil War in April of 1939, he grew to hate the oppressive fascist state that had taken over his country. "I had been through the vicissitudes of our civil war when some people, in the name of the fatherland and of freedom, had willfully imposed their views on us; we had been forced to submit to the diabolical dogmas of the perpetrators, who were themselves a devilish creatures, able instigators of a new apocalypse."⁵¹ When all of Europe descended into war later that year, he made a commitment that he would do everything in his power to help defeat the Nazis.⁵²

Pujol's relationship with his father played a major role in his motives during World War II. Despite his troublesome ways as a child, he absolutely idolized his father. In his memoirs, he discusses his father at great length because the values that were instilled in him at a young age were responsible for his subsequent actions later in life. His father was a very affectionate man and was quite apolitical. He belonged to no political party and did everything he could to distance himself from political affairs. Pujol's father grew up in a time of great political turmoil within Spain that was characterized by bloodshed. From the Ten Years War with Cuba beginning in 1868, to the Disaster of 1898, and culminating with World War I, he lived most of his life in a Spanish nation that was constantly overwhelmed with violence at home or abroad. Even though Spain was neutral during World War I, the horrors of war were very clear to many Spaniards, including Pujol's father.

According to Pujol, "My father was deeply steeped in liberalism and believed implicitly in freedom. He abhorred oppression... He taught me to respect the individuality of human beings, their sorrows, and their sufferings, be they rich or poor, good or evil, black or white."⁵³ For these

⁵¹ Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 44

⁵² Stanchak, John E. "Agent Garbo: How a Brilliant & Eccentric Double Agent Tricked the Nazis & Saved D-Day." America in WWII, Academic OneFile, Dec. 2012: 58.

⁵³ Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 11

reasons, he hated war and all those who sought to wage bloody conflicts at home and abroad. World War I particularly disturbed him and how the world could involve itself in such destructive conflict that took the lives of so many young men.⁵⁴ According to Pujol, his father once said, “War is so horrendous, so atrocious, that no man, especially one of Christian principles, should feel able to undertake the responsibility of starting it.”⁵⁵

At the time that World War II had begun, Pujol had failed at nearly everything he had set his mind to. He dropped out of high school, quit the military on two occasions, and was a failing poultry farmer, which he blamed on the communist policies of the Republican government. However, his father had instilled in him very powerful values about humanity that he was determined to act on. Pujol’s father never directed his anger at the soldiers, but rather at the politicians who had the authoritative power to send millions of men into battle to their deaths.

For this reason, Pujol himself resented all fascist, authoritarian dictators, especially Hitler. He viewed Hitler as “a demon, a man who could completely destroy humanity”⁵⁶ He would listen in horror to the radio broadcasts about the superiority of the Aryan race, and soon learned that citizens in Germany were being harassed and assaulted simply for not sharing the same racial background. It mortified him that a large number of people had fallen victim to the vicious propaganda preached by Nazi leaders that lacked any moral or rational sense.⁵⁷ It seemed to him that the German people were being stripped of their freedoms and all respect for humanity was beginning to deteriorate throughout the Fascist state. The outbreak of war in 1939 meant that this oppressive regime could spread throughout Europe and have more people fall victim to Hitler’s prejudice.

⁵⁴ Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 9-14

⁵⁵ Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 12

⁵⁶ Pujol, *Operation Garbo*,

⁵⁷ Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 44-45

By 1941, Hitler had conquered nearly all of Western Europe and a substantial part of Eastern Europe, confirming Pujol's worst fears about the war. In January, he decided to present himself to the British embassy in Madrid, seeing as Britain was the only independent nation in Western Europe that had successfully thwarted a German attack on their nation. He offered himself to the British security services as a spy, but they showed no interest in him. However, this did not deter him from helping the Allied cause. He decided to approach the other side and offer his services to the Nazis at the German embassy later that year. Pujol presented himself as a Nazi sympathizer within the Spanish government that traveled to London often, even though he could not speak English. This was important to the Germans because they wanted to use Nazi and fascist sympathizers from other countries as spies because they were loyal and less detectable than spies from Germany itself. After much pressing, the Germans accepted his offer and he was hired as a Nazi spy.⁵⁸

Pujol told the Germans that he wanted to go to England so he could spy on the British directly. However, the Nazis did not provide him with the proper papers to actually make it over to Britain. This is where Pujol's over active imagination came into play. Instead of making his way to Britain, he stationed himself in Lisbon and began to send false reports back to England using only a map of Britain, a tour book, a train schedule, a Portuguese book on the Royal Navy, and a book of British and French military terms. Using these books and his brilliant imagination, he created a series of 39 fictional reports over the course of nine months that he sent to the Abwehr (German Intelligence forces). The Abwehr trusted these reports inherently and began to put more faith in Pujol as a spy.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 49-51

⁵⁹ Tavares, *Operation Fortitude*, 7.

Because Pujol's reports stated they were from England, British intercepts indicated to MI5 that a Nazi spy was among them somewhere in the country. Even though the reports were fabricated, many of them were surprisingly accurate and highly alarmed the British. Eventually, Pujol was able to get in contact with an agent in Military Intelligence section 6, also known as MI6 or the Secret Intelligence Service. He told the agent his whole story about his work as a Nazi spy and the fictitious reports he was sending to Germany. MI5 soon realized that he was completely trusted by his Abwehr controllers and all of Abwehr itself. Most importantly, he was willing to work for MI5, which would make him one of the most valuable assets to all of British Intelligence.⁶⁰

Pujol soon found his way to London in April of 1942 where he began his career as *Agent Garbo*. His spy network was made up of 27 sub-agents that were all completely fictitious, making it seem like Garbo was receiving his reports from a large number of agents all across England, Europe, and the United States. This offered Garbo a degree of protection because if information given to the Germans was proven to be false, he could blame it on poor information gathering from one of his sub-agents. Garbo's network became extremely valuable during Operation Fortitude South when Hitler regarded him as his most trusted agent, and relied heavily on him for information about the impending Allied invasion in 1944.

Conclusion

By 1943, the British Intelligence efforts to track down and convert German spies was immensely successful. Many of the agents that they had recruited not only turned themselves in to the authorities, but were more than willing to help with the Allied war effort. Looking at the

⁶⁰ Tavares, *Operation Fortitude*, 7.

key agents leading up to Operation Fortitude, each agent came from a country that was either occupied by the Nazis, or was under the influence of a Fascist regime.

While this was a great victory for the British, it was not a victory that could be attributed solely to the efforts of British Intelligence. Anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi sentiments pushed these agents to do what they could to fight against Nazi Germany as they continued their aggressive actions across Europe. The nature of Fascism that they witnessed at home or abroad compelled these agents to do their part in the fight against Fascism and Nazism. Anti-Fascist movements that were sweeping across Europe due to the efforts of the Dimitrov and the Popular Front certainly helped bring mass awareness to the evils of Fascism, and represented one of the first major efforts to halt Fascist influence.

Additionally, it should be noted that certain miscalculations and oversights by the Abwehr played a significant role in the success of the British. The Germans trusted these agents when they sent them to Britain, but their reasons for trusting these men are quite questionable. For example, Agent Tricycle was temporarily imprisoned after college because he outwardly expressed anti-Nazi opinions. Yet, the Germans were very quick to recruit him to the Abwehr based solely on his social connections and his relationship with Jebson. Additionally, the Germans agreed to send Mutt and Jeff to England, even though they both proved to be horrible and disloyal employees at a postal censorship office.

Although these men claimed to be pro-Nazi within their respective countries, their histories seem to prove otherwise. In his memoir, Masterman clarifies that, “information secured after the end of hostilities supports our surmise that some Abwehr officials willfully shut their eyes to suspicions about these [double] agents. They thought it better, for their own selfish

reasons, to have corrupt or disloyal agents than to have no agents at all.”⁶¹ This thesis will not attempt to investigate the inconsistencies of the Abwehr, but it is important to point out that their intelligence failures did their nation a massive disservice later in the war. As I will discuss in the next chapter, Operation Fortitude was an incredible intelligence victory for the Allies that was largely responsible for the Allied military success during Operation Overlord.

⁶¹ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 88.

Chapter 2: Utilization of Double Agents during Operation Fortitude 1943-1944

Introduction

By the summer of 1943, the tide of war had turned in favor of the Allies. Hitler's forces at Stalingrad surrendered to the Red Army on February 2nd after more than six months of intense combat, which also represented the first major defeat of Hitler's armies. In July of that same year, the Nazis suffered another major defeat at the Battle of Kursk, the last time they would ever stage a major offensive on the Eastern Front. Hitler's forces were now on the run with the Red Army following in pursuit. The Allies also began their Italian Campaign in the summer of 1943, beginning with the invasion of Sicily in July. By August 17th, the Allies had captured Sicily and began their invasion of Italy on September 3rd.⁶²

On November 28th, Allied leaders met at the Tehran Conference to discuss their military strategy against the Axis powers of Germany and Japan. At this point in the war, millions of soldiers and civilians had lost their lives on the Eastern Front due to Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union had urged the Allies to open a second front ever since the Germans invaded to help divert some of Hitler's forces. The planning of opening a second front finally began at the conference along with a Soviet plan to launch a major offensive to occupy Hitler's armies on the Eastern Front.⁶³

From November 28th to December 1st, the Allies began their first talks for the planning of Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of France. Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill knew that this would be an incredibly difficult mission as the Allies would have to amphibiously assault

⁶² Beevor, Antony. *The Second World War*. 1st ed. Vol. 1. New York, New York: Little, Brown and, 2012.

⁶³ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 512-513.

Hitler's infamous Atlantic Wall, a series of coastal defenses that extended from France to Norway. Establishing a beachhead would be no easy task and it was decided that a *Strategic Deception* operation would be needed to supplement invasion forces. Operation Bodyguard began shortly after the conference with the ultimate goal of deceiving Hitler of the time and location of the invasion. Within Bodyguard was Operation Fortitude, which sought to convince the Germans of two false invasion sites while also inflating the actual size of the Allied invasion force.⁶⁴

Operation Fortitude was a deception mission that relied heavily on the use of double agents. This chapter will argue that Britain's intelligence victory was within the Twenty Committee's ability to use these double agents to deceive Hitler as to the timing and location of the invasion of Europe. These agents were able to create a great deal of confusion amongst Hitler and his officials that kept them guessing about the date and place of the invasion. This chapter will also assess how the double agents were used to meet the distinct criteria for successfully employing strategic deception to mislead the Nazis.

While the previous chapter focused on how Fascism and Nazism affected the psychology of the agents, this chapter will focus on how the agents affected the psychology of Hitler and members of the German High Command through their use of strategic deception. First, I will look at the complexities of strategic deception and how it is used in military conflicts. Next, I will explore the Nazi State under Adolf Hitler in Germany. I will then look at how the foundations for deception were built through the activity of the Double Cross System in the years leading up to Operation Fortitude. Lastly, I will look at how the double agents were able to

⁶⁴ Howard, Michael. *Strategic Deception in the Second World War*. New York, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995.

achieve their deception objectives for Operation Fortitude North and South, and what the final impact was on German High Command.

Strategic Deception: What it is and How it is Used

Strategic deception is a complex principle that can be defined simply. According to Richards J Heuer in his article “Strategic Deception and Counterdeception”, he states, “Strategic deception aims to manipulate elite perceptions in order to gain competitive advantage. It is usually achieved by passage of information to national or military decision makers either directly or via a nation’s intelligence services. Channels for passing such information include public or private statements by government officials, leaks to journalists, double agents, and spoofing of technical intelligence collection sensors”.⁶⁵

In his book *Strategic Deception in the Second World War*, Michael Howard provides a detailed description of the elements of strategic deception. To Howard, military deception is of utmost importance when it comes to success on the battlefield. As renowned Prussian General and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz said, “Surprise lies at the root of all military activity without exception”.⁶⁶

The main goals of strategic deception are straightforward. “The commander who wishes to impose his will on the enemy – which is, after all, the object of all military operations - will seek also to deceive him; to implant in the adversary’s mind an erroneous image which will not only help to conceal his true capabilities and intentions but will lead that adversary to act in such

⁶⁵ Heuer, Richards J. “Strategic Deception and Counterdeception: A Cognitive Process Approach”. *International Studies Quarterly* 25 (2). [International Studies Association, Wiley] 1981, 294.

⁶⁶ Howard, *Strategic Deception*, ix.

a way as to make his own task easier”⁶⁷ The commander will seek to get inside the head of the other enemy commander to determine what his predispositions about the impending attack are. The commander will then seek to exploit those dispositions by providing him with information that confirms his own beliefs. Persuading the enemy to think something is not a successful deception. Rather, convincing the enemy to do something is when a successful deception operation is achieved.

According to Howard, surprise and deception are dependent on two classical pillars of war: security and intelligence. Security means the enemy must have no knowledge of the operation. Intelligence is necessary to make sure that the deception is believable and will influence the decision making of the enemy. It is possible to affect a person’s actions only if the motivations of the enemy are well understood. Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery put it humbly by stating that one must figure out “what makes them tick”.⁶⁸ Therefore, it is incredible important to understand the psychology of the enemy before one can move forward with any deception operations. Heuer agrees with this psychological principal. “The chances for successful deception are increased by knowledge about the cognitive processes of the target decision makers or intelligence analysts.”⁶⁹

By the time World War II began, strategic deception was not a new or unique principle to militaries around the world. However, knowing how to effectively use it became an art form that required the use of the newest technologies and recruiting the right personnel to help effectively utilize the deception techniques. Fortunately for the British, they enjoyed two advantages over the Germans that put them in a great position to pursue any methods of strategic deception.

According to Howard, intelligence channels established by the decryption abilities by members

⁶⁷ Howard, *Strategic Deception*, ix.

⁶⁸ Howard, *Strategic Deception*, ix.

⁶⁹ Heuer, “Strategic Deception and Counterdeception”, 295.

of MI6 at Bletchley Park were able to determine the intentions of the German Government and High Command based on their confidential communications. Secondly, the high level of security within Britain made it possible to virtually control all communications, allowing the British to apprehend and control all active German agents in the country.⁷⁰ The use of double agents would prove to be of utmost importance in the years leading up to Operation Overlord, especially with the development of the Double Cross System.

Structural Realities of Nazism under Adolf Hitler

In order to understand how the Nazis were deceived, it is important to first look at the Nazi State under Adolf Hitler. One of the major characteristics that defined Hitler's rule was the concept of "absolute power". In his book *Profiles in Power: Hitler*, Ian Kershaw states that from 1938 to 1943 Hitler's power was absolute. "There were no institutional constraints on his exercise of power; no decision of any significance could be taken without his approval; no organization presented an oppositional threat."⁷¹ Additionally, it was up to the German people to support Hitler's realization of absolute power. Not long after Hitler came to power in 1933, Hitler began to tighten his grasp around the German state and the German people. "A prominent Nazi declared in 1934 that in the Third Reich it was 'the duty of everybody to try to work towards the Fuhrer along the line he would wish' ... 'working towards the Fuhrer' in promoting the circumstances in which his power became unconstrained and his vague or utopian ideological imperatives found implantation as government practice."⁷²

⁷⁰ Howard, *Strategic Deception*, x.

⁷¹ Kershaw, Ian. *Profiles in Power: Hitler*. Vol. 1. London: Longman, 1991, 133.

⁷² Kershaw, *Hitler*. 8.

The absolute power of Hitler became especially important during his preparations for war and ultimate wartime strategy. “In conditions of feverish preparation for war, then war itself, the process of the collapse of rational structures of government and administration into a fragmented and competing set of executive agencies of Fuhrer power accelerated sharply.”⁷³ Essentially, separate agencies, including the Abwehr, worked to outdo each other in order to show that they were doing more to help Hitler realize his visions. They continued to pursue this despite the fact that Hitler was slowly losing touch with reality.

Towards the end of the war, Hitler’s detachment from reality started to become clear. He had delusions of grandeur for Germany and the German people, despite lacking the adequate resources and manpower to make these dreams come true. According to Kershaw, “His self-imposed isolation in his remote headquarters in East Prussia intensely magnified his tendency to exclude unpalatable reality in favour of an illusory world in which ‘will’ always triumphed. He no longer visited the front, paying his last visit to any army field headquarters in September 1943; the war was conducted entirely from the map-room of the Fuhrer bunker.”⁷⁴ By 1943, Hitler was fighting a losing war and had gone from the offensive to the defensive. However, he did not want to come to terms with the fact that he was actually losing. If he stayed away from the front, he would not have to face the desperate reality of the German army and the German people. Hiding in isolation allowed him to pretend that everything was still going according to plan and that a victory was still within his reach.

Additionally, Hitler only wanted to surround himself with people who agreed with him and thought like him. His delusional state of all bearing knowledge was heightened by the fact that he only associated himself with people who believed in what he believed in. “Though he

⁷³ Kershaw, *Hitler*. 134.

⁷⁴ Kershaw, *Hitler*. 168.

was often indecisive about precise political actions, Hitler never wavered about the certainty of his ideas. To those in his proximity, who shared his general prejudices, the strength and certainty of conviction, extending beyond that of the average bigot or crank into grandiose and irrevocable formula for a glorious future, was a major factor in establishing his personal supremacy.”⁷⁵ One person who fell into this category was Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, who Hitler promoted as the Commander in Chief of the West in 1942. From 1942 to 1944, he oversaw all military activity on conquered territories in the West, including Nazi occupied France. According to Kershaw, he did not always see eye to eye with Hitler when it came to military strategy and tactics, but he never challenged any of the Fuhrer’s orders and remained loyal to him until the very end.⁷⁶

Another one of Hitler’s fatal flaws was his inability to understand the complexities of military planning and strategy. “Hitler’s tendency to over-simplification, his strategic miscalculations, his instinctive leaning towards offensive rather than defensive weaponry, his reduction of complexities to matters of will... and his self-delusion – sometimes based upon misinformation – imposed limitations, sometimes damaging, on policy formulation.”⁷⁷ Hitler’s delusional state directly impacted his inability to make practical military decisions based on the resources and manpower that was available to him. His decision-making proved to be incredibly destructive to his own armies at times, especially after defying suggestions from his top military commanders on the Eastern Front.⁷⁸

From a psychological standpoint, Hitler was not a healthy or stable man. His volatile and unstable mental state was responsible for many of his decisions that he made throughout the war.

⁷⁵ Kershaw, *Hitler*. 18.

⁷⁶ Kershaw, *Hitler*. 180.

⁷⁷ Kershaw, *Hitler*. 172.

⁷⁸ Kershaw, *Hitler*. 173.

In an article published by psychology PhD Frederick L. Coolidge “Understanding Madmen”, he uses the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-IV-TR, to determine the specifics of Hitler’s mental illnesses. With the help of 19 historians with at least 10 years of “Hilterian” studies experience, he used their accounts to help with a series of psychopathological tests. After close analysis, Coolidge comes to the conclusion that Hitler fits the modern diagnosis for schizophrenia, paranoid type. When discussing Hitler’s diagnosis, he states, “Associated features include anxiety, anger, aloofness, and argumentativeness. The DSM-IV also states that persecutory themes may predispose schizophrenic individuals to suicidal behavior, while a combination of persecutory themes, grandiose delusions, and anger may predispose such an individual to violence. The DSM further indicates that such individuals may have a superior or patronizing manner and stilted or intense interpersonal interactions.”⁷⁹

Hitler was a paranoid schizophrenic with delusions of grandeur who was also responsible for all major decisions made by the Nazi state. He experienced many of the classical symptoms of schizophrenia including “paranoia and hypersensitivity, panic attacks, irrational jealousy, and delusions of persecution, omnipotence, and megalomania”⁸⁰ Paranoia is often characterized by having one’s personal, often irrational, fears dictate how they make decisions in their daily lives. In addition, it can be exemplified through one’s extreme mistrust of others without any viable evidence to justify their reasons. Although the medical diagnosis was not available to the British, Hitler’s personality type presented the Twenty Committee with the perfect formula for success: gain Hitler’s trust and play on his fears. Once an agent is trusted, he becomes part of an extremely small circle of people that Hitler will actively listen to. Because of Hitler’s absolute

⁷⁹ Coolidge, Frederick L. "Understanding Madmen: A DSM-IV Assessment of Adolf Hitler." *Individual Differences Research* 5, no. 1 (2007). <http://www.uccs.edu/Documents/fcoolidg/DSM-Assessment-of-Hitler-Final-Copy-2007.pdf>.

⁸⁰ Coolidge, “Understanding Madmen”.

power, if Hitler listens to an agent, the whole German state will listen to him as well. As stated earlier, Hitler wanted to surround himself with people who thought like him and people who agreed with him. If the agents presented Hitler with the information he wanted to see that usually confirmed his fears, he was far more likely to trust them.

Gaining Hitler's trust would not be an easy task. For British agents, it would be the result of years of hard work that was orchestrated by MI5 and the Twenty Committee. These agents would have to work for the Germans before they could be of any value to the British. Unfortunately, this meant that they would do more harm than good in the beginning of their operations.

The Double Cross System in Practice: The Foundations for Deception 1940-1943

The first step to gaining Hitler's trust was infiltrating the Abwehr and establishing each double agent as a respectable and trustworthy German agent. In 1940, the Abwehr stepped up their efforts of trying to establish a spy network in Britain. However, the double agent system that was implanted by the Twenty Committee was ironclad. In F.H. Hinsley's comprehensive history of British Intelligence in World War II, he states, "By August 1940, MI5 had then made use of a pre-war contact [Agent SNOW] to introduce two new double agents to the Abwehr, and the [MI6]'s Radio Security Service had begun to intercept and decrypt radio transmissions associated with the Abwehr's hasty preparations for dispatching spies in advance of a German invasion. Assisted by these sources, and by the ineptitude of the Abwehr, MI5 had totally

defeated the Abwehr's first offensive.⁸¹ The Twenty Committee had claimed its first of many victories throughout the war.

The British network of spies was effectively manipulating the German Intelligence system from Britain. According to J.C. Masterman, "At the beginning of 1941, we did, in fact, control the enemy system, though we were still obsessed by the idea that there might be a large body of German spies over and above those whom we controlled. This idea made us somewhat timid in the early days, but did not affect the general policy."⁸² Even though they did not know it at the time, the Twenty Committee had uncovered every single German spy that had entered the country.⁸³ Agents were communicating with the enemy via wireless transmitters, secret writing, and by personal contact in neutral countries. The questionnaires and supplementary questions began to give the Twenty Committee a very comprehensive picture of the German objectives.⁸⁴ The British were beginning to learn what "made the enemy tick". The precautions they took early on served to benefit them years later as they experimented with deception missions.

It is worth mentioning that Rear Admiral JH Godfrey, Director of Naval Intelligence at the beginning of the war, saw the value of double agents very early on. He took the lead in creating a mutually supportive relationship between double agents and their controllers, and with the armed forces. The foundations that he laid between the Twenty Committee and the British armed forces made the formation of the Double Cross System and its goals possible.⁸⁵

⁸¹ F. H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Abridged Version (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 118.

⁸² Masterman, J. C. *The Double-cross System: The Incredible True Story of How Nazi Spies Were Turned into Double Agents*. New York, New York: Lyons Press, 2000, 61.

⁸³ While this statement may seem controversial, it has been verified by Hinsley, Howard, Donovan, and several other authors within their books.

⁸⁴ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 77.

⁸⁵ Howard, *Strategic Deception*, xi.

Now that the British had effectively established their spy network, they were able to lay out their objectives for the war. In his book, J.C Masterman outlines the seven major objectives of the Double Cross System:

1. To control the enemy system, or as much of it as we could get our hands on
2. To catch fresh spies when they appeared
3. To gain knowledge of the personalities and methods of the German Secret Service
4. To obtain information about the code and cypher work of the German Service
5. To get evidence of enemy plans and intentions from the questions asked by them
6. To influence enemy plans by the answers sent to the enemy
7. To deceive the enemy about our plans and intentions⁸⁶

Event though the Twenty Committee had successfully created this spy network by 1941, they still had to build up these agents within the Abwehr. As stated earlier with Agent Snow, these agents still had to work for the enemy and deliver them the proper intelligence that they had requested. One of the main tasks of the Twenty Committee was determining what factual information the agents could pass along to the Germans that would satisfy their overseers, but also not do too much damage to the British. The committee had always envisioned a great day where the agents could be used for a great deception mission against the enemy. However, if these agents were to have that glorious day in the future, they would have to spend a good amount of time working with the Abwehr.

In order for the Germans to trust these agents, they had to actually present them with viable and truthful information about what was going on in Britain at the time. Many of these

⁸⁶ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 61.

agents were given questionnaires by the Abwehr in regards to troop movements, aircraft capabilities, civilian morale, and communication lines. From 1941 to 1942, these agents were able to successfully obtain this information and pass it along to the Abwehr. Members of MI5 and the Twenty Committee carefully reviewed and filtered the information that was eventually sent, but the intelligence being provided was credible. They were not lying or attempting to deceive the enemy yet.

Additionally, these agents built up their networks of trust by carrying out sabotage missions across Britain. For example, Mutt and Jeff were able to effectively establish themselves as trustworthy agents due to their effective sabotage activities. During Plan Brock, Mutt and Jeff, along with the help of MI5, blew up several Nissen huts associated with the British military. The explosions were successful and able to convince the British population that German agents operating in Britain conducted the act. According to Masterman, “Judicious planting of further clues and the intervention of a Special Branch officer sent by us brought local opinion round to the theory of sabotage, and appropriate accounts appeared in the local press”⁸⁷. Instead of taking Mutt and Jeff’s word that the sabotage was successful, the Abwehr now had verifiable proof in local newspapers that illustrated that the agents were acting on behalf of the Germans. Therefore, these agents were successfully harming Britain through the leaking of viable intelligence and through violent, yet calculated, sabotage missions.

This strategic risk, however, ended up paying massive dividends. By end of 1942, questionnaires sent by the Germans increased in size and volume, indicating that the German’s were becoming more heavily reliant on these agents. The subject of the questionnaires also revealed the German interests from month to month, including the potential for any British invasions. The Germans were beginning to consider defensive options towards the end of 1942,

⁸⁷ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 129.

and they began to ask these agents to gather general information about projected invasions. Additionally, more specific questions were being asked that included details of allied convoys, the tactics employed by Allied airborne divisions, aircraft capacity and production figures, and other military statistics. As the potential for an invasion became more imminent, the Germans became highly concerned with the aircraft industry and relied heavily on agents to supply them with vital information.⁸⁸

Therefore, these agents were not only building up networks of trust with the Abwehr, but the content of the materials they were receiving from them gave the British an idea of German interests at the time. By 1943, the British and the Twenty Committee believed that they had established enough of a foothold within the German Intelligence community, as a result of these double agents, to begin testing deception missions.⁸⁹

In May of 1943, the deception plan Operation Mincemeat was put into action. The operation would coincide with Operation Husky, the Allied invasion of Sicily, and was meant to convince Hitler that the Allies were going to amphibiously assault Greece from Africa. The plan consisted of dropping the body of a man, who resembled a Royal Marines officer, off the coast of southern Spain. Attached to the officer were classified documents that thoroughly outlined the Allied invasion plans for Greece. These documents were in fact fake and only meant to deceive Hitler of the actual invasion site. Although Mincemeat did not directly involve the work of double agents, the plan originated from members of the Twenty Committee and represented one of the first major successful deception mission undertaken by the British.⁹⁰

According to Antony Beevor, Mincemeat played on the psychology of the enemy in order to achieve success. “Like all effective campaigns of misinformation, it played to Hitler’s own

⁸⁸ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 127

⁸⁹ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 137

⁹⁰ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 137-141

idea of what his enemy's intentions were and strengthened his belief that the British plan was to invade southern Europe via the Balkans. His Austrian background made him obsessive about the region. A panzer division and other forces were consequently diverted to Greece just before the landings in Sicily."⁹¹ The British were able to effectively play on the psychology of Hitler, knowing that he had suspected an invasion through Greece. As a result, the British were successful in deceiving Hitler because they made him act on the false information being provided. As Howard said in his book on strategic deception, "it is not enough to persuade the enemy to think something; it is necessary to persuade him to do something."⁹² Transferring tank units to Greece demonstrated the strategic deception capabilities of the Double Cross System and the Twenty Committee.

By the later half of 1943, the Double Cross System had been successfully established by the Twenty Committee and had built the foundations of trust within the German Intelligence community and German High Command. Additionally, the British were able to successfully test and implement smaller deception missions that set the stage for the large-scale operations during Operation Overlord and Operation Fortitude.

Allied Military Plans

Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin all met at the Tehran Conference to discuss the opening of a second front in Western Europe. The Allies decided that American, British, and Canadian forces would invade Northern France through an amphibious assault on Hitler's Atlantic Wall, a series of coastal defenses and fortifications that stretched from Southern France into

⁹¹ Beevor, Antony. *The Second World War*. 1st ed. Vol. 1. New York, New York: Little, Brown and, 2012, 424.

⁹² Howard, *Strategic Deception*, ix.

Scandinavia. The Allied leaders also decided that the location of the invasion site would be the beaches of Normandy, as opposed to the Pas de Calais, which was the shortest distance across the English Channel into France. Such a crossing would require an invasion force that the world had never seen before with help from technologies that had yet to be battlefield tested. According to Masterman, the planners of Operation Overlord knew that the hazards associated with the naval crossings would be heavily dependent on the success or failure of a deception mission.⁹³

Allied Deception Plans: Operation Bodyguard and Operation Fortitude

To support the main invasion force, the Allies decided to implement a deception operation codenamed Operation Bodyguard. The main objective of Bodyguard was to deceive Hitler and the German High Command about the time and location of the invasion. Bodyguard was a massive deception operation that encompassed many other sub-operations, including Operation Fortitude. Fortitude was different from other operations under Bodyguard in that it was specifically associated with the forces landing at Normandy. Fortitude was designed by the deception planners within the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF)⁹⁴. The primary goals of Fortitude were as follows:

1. Deceive the Germans about the timing and location of the Allied Invasion and make them believe that Norway was the initial target of any invasion from Britain
2. Convince the Germans that the invasion site was to be the Pas de Calais area

⁹³ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 149.

⁹⁴ Pujol, Juan, and Nigel West. *Operation GARBO: The Personal Story of the Most Successful Double Agent of World War II*. New York, New York: Random House, 1985, 131.

3. Once forces began landing at Normandy, convince the Germans that the Normandy landing was a deception⁹⁵

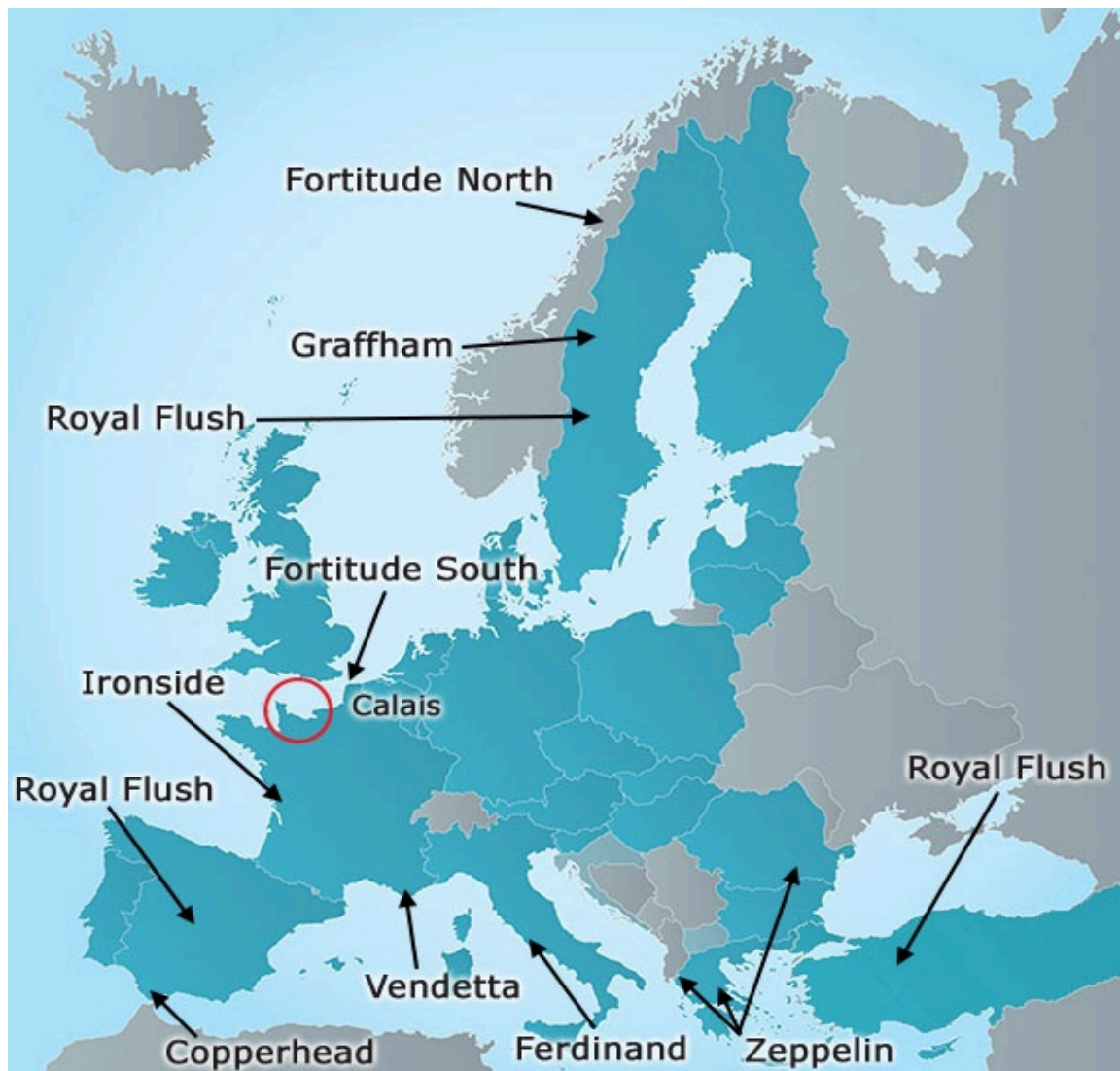


Figure 1. The various deception operations associated with Operation Bodyguard⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Donovan, Michael J. "Strategic Deception: Operation Fortitude." *Strategy Research Project*, 2002, 4.

⁹⁶ Figure 1 shows the various deception operations that were under the Bodyguard umbrella, with Fortitude North and South clearly laid out. The red circle is around the beaches of Normandy where the actual invasion took place. <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/d-day-facts-summary-and-timeline-of-the-normandy-landings.html>

To accomplish these goals, Fortitude was split into two separate operations: Fortitude North and Fortitude South. Fortitude North was meant to convince the Germans that the Allies were going to make Norway and Sweden an invasion site for their forces. Fortitude South would focus more on convincing Hitler that the main invasion was going to come at the Pas de Calais in France and that any other forces that came ashore elsewhere, including Normandy, would be diversion forces. While the goals of these missions seem to contradict each other, they both had the objective of paralyzing the German High Command and have troops committed to locations where the invasion would never take place. In order to fully understand the complexities of these operations, we must take a closer look at the operation in action.

Operation Fortitude North

The primary objective of Fortitude North was to convince German High Command that an invasion of Norway was a distinct possibility. German command was to believe that Allied forces would be ready to assault the coastal defenses of the region once given the orders from Allied commanders. In his article “Strategic Deception Operation Fortitude”, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Donovan states that the Allies had to create the footprint of an invasion force that was capable and prepared to invade an environment like that of Norway and Sweden in order for Fortitude North to be successful.⁹⁷ At this point in the war, the Germans were on the defensive and could not use their air force to conduct aerial reconnaissance missions as readily as they were once capable. Nonetheless, the British wanted to make it as hard as possible for the Germans to observe the Norway invasion force, and decided that the geographic location of Scotland would be a great place to keep them out of sight. As a result, the Allies had set the

⁹⁷ Donovan, “Operation Fortitude”, 5.

Germans up where they had to rely on their “agents” to gather and deliver information regarding the invasion force. Donovan also suggests that all of the spies that the Germans’ relied on for this task were double agents under the control of MI5 and the Twenty Committee. According to Howard, German High Command was almost completely dependent on these double agents for information about what was happening inside Britain.⁹⁸

General Andrew Thorne assumed responsibility for the phantom Fourth Army, which consisted of over 250,000 troops, including tactical air force and over 250 armed vehicles. Because the Germans could not see visible evidence of this army through aerial reconnaissance, they relied heavily on the use of double agents to deliver information. Mutt and Jeff had already established themselves as agents that German Intelligence could trust based on their sabotage activity in Britain. They were supplied with scripted human intelligence reports that they then turned over to their Abwehr overseers. MI5 and the Twenty Committee carefully scripted these reports before they ever reached the hands of the agents. Mutt and Jeff were also used to supply information to the Germans that confirmed what they heard over intercepts between British forces. The intercepted messages they received were also scripted, but having the agents corroborate the details of the intercepts with information that they gathered on their own added validity to their reports. Donovan also states that the information passed on by Mutt and Jeff was even read by Hitler himself.⁹⁹

The decision to implement Fortitude North came at the hands of the Twenty Committee who sought to play on their knowledge on the preexisting fears of Hitler. Since the beginning of the war, Hitler emphasized the importance of controlling the North Sea through ports in Norway and Sweden. After the German defeat in World War I, German Admiral Wolfgang Wegener

⁹⁸ Howard, *Strategic Deception*, xi.

⁹⁹ Donovan, “Operation Fortitude”, 6.

wrote an essay that blamed the loss of the war on Germany's inability to control the North Sea, which resulted in the bottling up of the German fleet. After reading this essay, Hitler became fanatically passionate with the idea of maintaining control of Scandinavia.¹⁰⁰ He believed that control of the North Sea was absolutely essential to defeating the British.¹⁰¹ To the Twenty Committee, this presented them with the perfect opportunity to help to deceive Germany. If they played on Hitler's fears of a potential invasion coming through Norway, Hitler would leave a sizeable defense force in place, even if evidence from his most trusted advisors pointed to the contrary.

The impact the agents had on the operations themselves will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, but it is important to see how the goals of the deception operation were deeply centered on the activity of the agents. While Fortitude North was not as convincing to German High Command as its counterpart, Fortitude South, the operation was successful in tying up 27 German divisions for the defense of Norway and Denmark. The total number of troops in this area exceeded 300,000 after further reinforcement by Hitler due to the threat of a potential attack that was exploited by Fortitude North.¹⁰² As mentioned earlier, Hitler had the final say in all major military decisions. If any form of evidence slightly corroborated his fears, he was going to act on his own accord. Therefore, if the agents could fool Hitler, they would fool all of German High Command. Even though the Hitler was far more convinced that the invasion force would land in France, leaving 300,000 troops in Norway made these men unavailable to reinforce the coastal defenses of France and illustrated how easily Hitler could be manipulated by exploiting his fears.¹⁰³ Therefore, Fortitude North was successful in completing its primary

¹⁰⁰ Donovan, "Operation Fortitude", 5.

¹⁰¹ Donovan, "Operation Fortitude", 5.

¹⁰² Beevor, *The Second World War*, 571.

¹⁰³ Donovan, "Operation Fortitude", 8.

objectives to convince German High Command to act on its reinforcement of Norway and commit troops away from France.

Operation Fortitude South

By the spring of 1944, Masterman and the rest of the Twenty Committee knew that it was nearly impossible to cover up the fact that the major invasion would come somewhere along the coast of France. Therefore, following through with the objectives of Fortitude South were of utmost importance. The objectives were as follows:

“First to postpone the date of the attack, secondly to indicate that the attack would come in the east (Pas de Calais) rather than in the west (Normandy) of the threatened area, and thirdly, after the real attack had taken place, to suggest that it was only a first blow and that a second even weightier assault would follow in the Pas de Calais area at the eastern end of the target.”¹⁰⁴

Essentially, the Twenty Committee wanted to keep Hitler guessing about the time and location of the actual landing site for the invasion. Once the real invasion force landed at Normandy, their next objective was to convince Hitler and German High Command that the force that landed was a diversion and that the main invasion force would land at the Pas de Calais. Additionally, the Allies wanted to convince Hitler that the invasion would take place at least 45 days later than the actual date set for Overlord.

¹⁰⁴ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 150.

Convincing Hitler that the invasion would come at the Pas de Calais would cause Hitler and the German High Command to commit men and resources to beaches and coastal defenses at which the Allies had no intention of landing. Misleading the Germans about the time of the invasion would make the early landings at Normandy more of a surprise assault and hopefully catch German forces unprepared. This would also help make the landings a little easier if German defenses were not ready. Lastly, convincing the Germans that the invasion at Normandy was a deception landing would ensure that Hitler would not try to reinforce the beaches by sending his full forces from the Pas de Calais. This would then give the allies more time to buildup sufficient forces that would be capable of establishing a beachhead and moving inland into France.¹⁰⁵

Much like the fictitious Fourth Army that was created for Fortitude North, SHAEF organized the creation of the First United States Army Group (FUSAG). It was decided that General Patton would lead this fictitious army that consisted of over a million men spread out across southeastern England. At first glance, this seems to be a rash decision considering it was revealed through Ultra intercepts that General Patton was considered by the Germans to be one of the most established and respected Generals in the Allied military. However, his stellar reputation made the cover for this operation that much more creditable. The Germans suspected that the main invasion force would be led by the Allies best general, and to them, they assumed that general would be Patton. By putting him in charge of the FUSAG, the credibility of this new military unit was now in check. The Abwehr also had comprehensive files on the biographies on senior Allied military officers, and it would be very suspicious if new or unrecognized generals were given the responsibility of leading this massive invasion force.¹⁰⁶ If Patton was in charge of

¹⁰⁵ Donovan, "Operation Fortitude", 9.

¹⁰⁶ Donovan, "Operation Fortitude", 10.

the FUSAG, Hitler and German High Command were very confident that this would be the main invasion force.

Double Agents and Fortitude

As stated earlier, the double agents would become the channels through which the means of deception would reach the Abwehr, German High Command, and Hitler. The manipulation of Hitler and German High Command through the use of these double agents is where the British excelled and gave Operation Fortitude the best chance for success. Additionally, the story that the Twenty Committee had the agents portray to the German's was almost identical to German thinking at the time, especially with concerns to Fortitude South. According to Juan Pujol, or Agent Garbo, in his memoir *Operation Garbo*, he illustrates how the story of Fortitude South aligned with the thinking of Field Marshal von Rundstedt, who was the commander of Nazi military forces in the west, which included the coastal defenses of France. Garbo's own assessments were confirmed by co-author Nigel West. "He decided that the Allies would opt for the shortest route across the Channel for the following reasons: the Allies would need at least one major port; they would require constant protection from the air, so the nearer the beachhead the better, and Calais offered the most direct path to Germany."¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the British succeeded in utilizing the double agents to play on the psychology of the enemy.

One major factor that allowed for the Twenty Committee to understand what the enemy was thinking at the time was their utilization of Ultra intercepts. In his book *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies*, Ben Macintyre states that by 1942 nearly all the messages being sent back and forth between members of the Abwehr were decrypted by the British. This meant

¹⁰⁷ Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 133.

that over 200 messages were intercepted and decrypted everyday. “From this trove of information MI5 constructed a detailed picture of German intelligence and its personnel, methods, strengths, and frailties; MI5 knew who its enemies were and what they were doing and thinking.”¹⁰⁸ Equipping the agents with this knowledge allowed them to successfully supply the Germans with the intelligence that they expected to hear: the invasion of Western Europe would take place at the Pas de Calais. Knowing how the enemy thought allowed the agents to play on their fears, and to determine, as Montgomery said, “what makes them tick”. After successfully building up their network of trust, it was now time for the agents to deliver the means of deception to the Abwehr and German High Command.

With this in mind, it is important to look at the individual contributions of the double agents, and how they were used to strategically deceive Hitler and German High Command.

Agent Brutus

Agent Brutus was an interesting case because of his undying loyalty to his Polish homeland. This was a point of great concern amongst members of the Twenty Committee. Because his interests always boiled down to the good of his home country, they feared whether they would be able to trust him or control him within the context of his missions. Additionally, the Germans knew how he was a resolute Polish nationalist, having served as an officer in the Polish air force.¹⁰⁹ However, Brutus used these facts to his advantage. He portrayed to the Axis that he was working for the Germans in the hopes that once they defeated the Allies, they would reward Poland. In a message to the Abwehr in early 1944, he writes:

¹⁰⁸ Macintyre, Ben. *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-day Spies*. New York, New York: Crown, 2012, 123-124.

¹⁰⁹ Macintyre, *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-day Spies*, 197-198.

“The risks involved in helping the Axis to resist the coming offensive are justified only if I have your government’s undertaking, after the defeat of the Allies, to offer through me to the Polish government liberal peace terms. In setting up an organization to give you full and up-to-date information about military preparations for an invasion, I am acting solely from ideological motives and with the object of securing for Poland an honorable place in the new Europe. This is the only reward I ask”¹¹⁰

Therefore, by making it seem like working for the Germans was doing his country a service, his loyalties were not questioned by the Abwehr. Once the British picked up on how trusted he was by the Germans, Brutus became much more integral to deception operations.

In March of 1944, Agent Brutus was officially validated as a double agent to work under Operation Fortitude. To the British, he was a highly valuable agent simply as a result of his Polish nationality. In his article “Operation Fortitude: The Closed Loop D-Day Deception Plan”, Major Ernest Tavares writes that Brutus was assigned to the Scottish lowlands where he could observe the military preparations of the Free Polish units. It was here where he made very good use of his imaginary radio operator to pass along misinformed reports to his Abwehr handlers.¹¹¹ Part of these false reports included implementing the fake threats to Norway. Brutus began to relay false orders from Allied military commanders about their intentions to cross the North Sea and attack Norway (part of Fortitude North). “Brutus provided the Germans with the Fourth Army’s insignia and headquarters location in Edinburgh, described large bodies of troops in

¹¹⁰ Macintyre, *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-day Spies*, 198.

¹¹¹ Tavares, “Fortitude: Closed Loop D-Day”, 9.

Stirling and Dundee, and offered evidence that American and Norwegian forces were also gathering.”¹¹² He also received supplementary reports from Agents Mutt and Jeff as well as Agent Garbo, who all reported seeing similar troop built ups and movements. Once Fortitude operations were well underway, it was determined that Garbo and Brutus were the most trusted agents within the Abwehr.

Agent Garbo

Although many agents were used during Fortitude operations, much of the burden fell in the lap of Garbo due to his comprehensive network of subagents and from ISOS intercepts that indicated that he was the most trusted agent in Berlin.¹¹³ This was truly an incredible feat for British Intelligence considering Garbo’s entire network of agents was completely fake. Therefore, whenever Garbo provided information that was not reliable, he simply blamed it on one of his fake agents, which kept his creditability intact. In fact, he once reported that one of his subagents known as the “Swiss Businessman” had died of natural causes, and the obituary for the agent appeared in British newspapers where the Abwehr could confirm that this was true. The Twenty Committee went through all this trouble to honor a man who never existed.¹¹⁴

For Fortitude North, Garbo had 5 of his 27 agents stationed in Northern Ireland and Scotland to report on the movements of the fictitious Fourth Army that was meant to assault Norway. His subagent Dagobert reported extensively within the area, and Garbo relayed all of the information to the Abwehr. On April 22, 1944, Garbo received a very important message from the Abwehr with regards to Dagobert’s reports.

¹¹²Macintyre, *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-day Spies*, 231-232.

¹¹³Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 132.

¹¹⁴Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 237.

“I have taken note with great interest of what you have told me in your letters about the amplification of your network and the numerous messages which you have sent during the last few weeks have demonstrated to me that you have been absolutely right in your idea of nominating the old collaborators as subagents of their networks. In particular, the network of Dagobert appears to be one which is giving the best results.”¹¹⁵

This message proved to be very important and significant news for the Twenty Committee and the Double Cross System because it was the first real proof that Fortitude North was beginning to fool the Germans. Major Tavares details the degree to which the Germans trusted Garbo through his activity for Fortitude North. The Twenty Committee relied on Ultra intercepts, which were able to decipher encrypted Nazi messages, that revealed what the Abwehr wanted to hear. The Twenty Committee then devised the information and sent it to Garbo who delivered the much-wanted information to the Abwehr. Based on further Ultra sources, Garbo’s reports were able to convince the Germans that there was a full sized British Army (Fourth Army) in the North that was supported by a corps-sized United States unit.¹¹⁶

As time went on, the creditability of Fortitude North deteriorated, but as mentioned earlier the operation was successful in tying down over 300,000 troops in Norway. Where Garbo really excelled as a double agent was his work with Fortitude South. According to Nigel West and Tavares, Garbo’s services were invaluable to the German High Command and the Abwehr

¹¹⁵ Pujol, *Operation Garbo*, 137-138.

¹¹⁶ Tavares, Ernest S. "OPERATION FORTITUDE: THE CLOSED LOOP D-DAY DECEPTION PLAN." April 1, 2001, 16. http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/people/aldrich/vigilant/tavares_fortitude.pdf.

as they tried to obtain information about the impending allied invasion.¹¹⁷ They asked for information on the size and location of troop build-ups, as well as any information he may have on the timing and location of the invasion site. Garbo continued to provide the Abwehr with raw intelligence in the months leading up to the invasion, all of which suggested that the Allies were in favor of landing at the Pas de Calais. The Twenty Committee knew that Hitler and the rest of the German High Command already had convictions that the invasion would come at that site, and they used Garbo to exploit their predispositions.

Two key moments characterized the impact that Garbo had on Fortitude and the actual invasion plans for Operation Overlord. The first of these moments came on the eve of the actual invasion. The Twenty Committee was well aware that given the size of the invasion force, it would be impossible for the agents to not see any signs of the impending invasion. If they did not report to the Germans, they would lose their creditability and would be rendered useless for the rest of the invasion. To prevent this from happening, the Twenty Committee was able to convince the Allied High Command to allow them to leak that an invasion was coming just hours before the assault began. This move was incredibly successful because Garbo was able to preserve his creditability by warning the Germans of the impending invasion, and it was done so late that the Germans could not successfully deploy their troops to the beaches. Tavares gives a description of how Garbo was able to accomplish such a feat.

“To accomplish this, GARBO sent sub-agent 7(6) (purportedly in Glasgow) to run down a rumor of the invasion, and that GARBO was expecting a call at 0300 hours British Standard Time. He advised his controllers to stand by for an extremely urgent message to be sent at that time. The timing was such that by the

¹¹⁷ Tavares, “Fortitude: Closed Loop D-Day”, 22.

time the message was received, decoded, recoded through Enigma and forwarded to Berlin, the first wave of troops would be assaulting the beach. Due to the typical Abwehr ineptitude, the message was received in Madrid, but was not decoded and forwarded until 0608 hours -- after the start of the preinvasion bombardment. However, the effect was unchanged: GARBO had forewarned the Germans, if only by a few hours, and his credibility remained intact”¹¹⁸

With Garbo’s creditability still intact, he was able to remain active for the second half of Fortitude South, which began once the actual invasion at Normandy was underway. His second great moment as an agent came on June 8th, two days after the Allies had landed at Normandy. As stated earlier, one of the main goals of Fortitude South was to convince Hitler that the Normandy landings came from a diversionary force to draw attention away from the larger invasion that would take place at the Pas de Calais. However, not long after the landings, Hitler ordered to have troops deployed to the Normandy coast to assault the beachheads. This was exactly what the Allies did not want to happen, which prompted Garbo to send the following message to the Abwehr and the German High Command to halt any troop movements.

“After personal consultation with [various agents], I am of the opinion, in view of the strong troop concentrations in SE and E England, that these operations are a diversionary maneuver designed to draw off enemy reserves in order to attack in another place. In view of the continued air attacks on the concentration area

¹¹⁸ Tavares, “Fortitude: Closed Loop D-Day”, 23-24.

mentioned [Pas de Calais and/or Belgium], which is extremely favorable for this, it may very probably take place in the Pas de Calais area...”¹¹⁹

At this time, Garbo was the most respected agent in the Abwehr, which gave extraordinary creditability to his claims. The message was received on June 9th, and by 7:30 AM on June 10th Hitler had canceled his orders. Although two divisions were eventually deployed to Normandy (4th Panzer and Panzer Grenadier divisions), seven other divisions were never mobilized and instead were ordered to stay and defend the Pas de Calais.

The contributions and accomplishments of Agent Garbo exceed what was just discussed in this last section. However, the events that were mentioned illustrate how Garbo was high successful in strategically deceiving Hitler and the German High Command. He was able to effectively contribute to Hitler’s decision to leave more than 300,000 troops stationed in Norway, a nation that was never going to be invaded during Overlord, and convinced German High Command that the invasion of France would take place at the Pas de Calais. Additionally, he convinced Hitler that the landings at Normandy were a diversion, and was able to persuade Hitler to cancel troop deployments to that area. Therefore, he accomplished the main goal of strategic deception by not only making the enemy think something, but also having them act on misinformation.

¹¹⁹ Tavares, “Fortitude: Closed Loop D-Day”, 26-27.

Conclusion

Based on the definition provided by Michael Howard in his book *Strategic Deception in the Second World War*, it is clear that the British were able to effectively deploy the elements of strategic deception to fool Hitler and the German High Command through their use of double agents during Operation Fortitude. Therefore, the victory for British Intelligence was not within their recruitment of double agents, but within their ability to use the agents to manipulate Hitler, the Abwehr, and German High Command.

From 1940-1943, these double agents carried out reconnaissance and sabotage missions throughout Britain to establish a network of trust within the Abwehr. In addition to decrypted wireless intercepts, the questionnaires sent to the agents gave the British an idea of German thinking at the time. Once these agents were trusted, they could then be used by the Twenty Committee to start feeding the Germans false information that would set the stage for a massive deception mission on the scale of Operation Fortitude. During Fortitude, the British were able to effectively use these double agents to meet the elements of strategic deception.

First, the security of the mission was maintained and the Germans never discovered the intentions of the double agents. Second, the agents were able to act on the psychology of Hitler and the German High Command. Hitler was paranoid of an attack that could cause him to lose control of the North Sea through his ports in Scandinavia. The evidence provided to Hitler through Fortitude North supported his fears, causing him to reinforce troop build-ups in Norway. These troops remained in Norway for the remainder of the war. Additionally, intelligence provided through intercepts and the double agents themselves suggested that the Germans were suspicious of an impending invasion of France at the Pas de Calais. The British used the agents

to play on these predispositions during Fortitude South by providing them with evidence of a fake army led by the Allies “best” commander, General Patton, while also convincing them that any other invasion would be a diversion. Once the invasion began, they were able to keep German troops away from the beaches and even convinced Hitler to cancel troop deployments that would reinforce forces at Normandy.

The most important part about the strategic deception employed by the British and the double agents is they were able to make Hitler take action. The Twenty Committee was able to successfully utilize their knowledge of Hitler’s mental state at the time to exploit his fears to make him believe what he already feared: a potential invasion through Norway and a direct assault on France through the Pas de Calais. Because Hitler’s power was absolute, if the Twenty Committee and the double agents could fool him, then they could fool all of Germany. As a result of deception activities, Hitler reinforced troops in Norway, stationed the majority of their forces near the Pas de Calais, and cancelled orders that would reinforce German defenses at Normandy, the site of the actual invasion. Each of these three major events illustrates how the British were successful in strategically deceiving the Germans. Successfully deceiving the Germans through the use of double agents during Operation Fortitude was a major factor for the success of Operation Overlord. In the next chapter, I will discuss how the success of Overlord was completely dependent on the success of Fortitude, and how the failure of the double agent operations would have led to the demise of the entire invasion.

Chapter 3: Measuring the Success of Operation Fortitude

Introduction

Operation Overlord was the largest amphibious assault that was ever undertaken by a military force. Over 150,000 soldiers crossed the English Channel on the morning of June 6th, 1944, to open up a second front in the west against Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany.¹²⁰ At 6 am, the first wave of Allied forces landed at the beaches of Normandy, a different landing site than Hitler and the rest of German High Command had anticipated. Allied troops were supported by a combination of aerial and naval bombardments as they attempted to establish a beachhead in France. Upon their arrival, they encountered stiff resistance from German forces as they endeavored to push the allies back into the sea.

Divided into five beaches, the Allies were tasked with securing Gold, Sword, Juno, Utah, and Omaha beaches, as well as the promontory overlooking Omaha and Utah beaches at Pointe du Hoc. As the landing craft landed at the beaches and opened their doors, it was the duty of Allied soldiers to press forward onto the beaches regardless of the enemy firepower they encountered. It was a race against the clock for the Allies to move inland. Additionally, all five beaches had to be secured in order to successfully establish a beachhead into France. If the Allies failed to capture just one beach, the whole invasion would fail and Allied troops would be pushed back into the sea.

By days end, all five beaches had been secured and Eisenhower himself was very pleased with the progress that Allied troops had made into France. Moreover, Allied commanders were very pleased with the relatively low casualty numbers. With the exception of Omaha beach and

¹²⁰ Ford, Ken, and Steve Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*. Oxford: Osprey, 2009, 7.

Pointe du Hoc, casualty numbers were far lower than expected, which was considered a major victory for the Allies. The fight for France was far from over and it would be over two months from the first landings that the Allies were able to declare that France had been liberated.

However, getting ashore was the most critical hour of the operation.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the main goal of Operation Fortitude was to keep Hitler guessing about where and when the Allied invasion would commence. Specifically, the goal of Operation Fortitude South was to convince Hitler that the invasion would come at the Pas de Calais area instead of Normandy, and this objective was heavily dependent on the work of the Twenty Committee and double agents. German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel knew that if a beachhead was established within the first couple of days, the Allied invasion of France had a high probability for success.¹²¹ This meant that the first 48 hours of the operation would set the tone for the rest of the invasion.

The generally accepted narrative is that Operation Fortitude played a major role in the success of Operation Overlord. However, this narrative must be called into question. In this chapter, I will argue that the efforts of the Twenty Committee and double agents were vital to the success of Operation Overlord by looking at what happened on D-Day and what could have happened. Although D-Day was one of the bloodiest days of the war for Allied forces in the west, they were met by a German force that was unprepared, undersupplied, and undermanned. I will argue that if a prepared and adequately supplied German force met the Allies at the beaches on June 6th, Allied troops would have sustained extremely heavy casualties that could have resulted in the failure of the entire operation. Therefore, the success of Operation Overlord was dependent on the effective work of the double agents towards the Allied deception efforts during Operation Fortitude.

¹²¹ Beevor, Antony. *The Second World War*. 1st ed. Vol. 1. New York, New York: Little, Brown and, 2012, 574.

Historians like Mary Barbier have disagreed with the popular notion that Fortitude and the work of the double agents were essential to the success of D-Day. Through this chapter, I will provide sufficient evidence to suggest that the work of the double agents was vital to the Allies success. To do this, I will first look at the fundamentals of an amphibious assault and how such assaults are successful. I will then look at the troop displacements throughout France as a result of double agent activity, specifically looking at the lopsided number of German forces that were stationed at the Pas de Calais area that were not deployed to the Normandy beaches. Next, I will look at the Allied objectives that were laid out by General Eisenhower and Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery on D-Day, and the key events that took place on Omaha beach. Throughout both of these sections I will also include the accounts from the memoir of Panzer Commander Colonel Hans von Luck, who was stationed in Normandy when the Allied invasion began. Lastly, I will analyze the effectiveness of Fortitude North and Fortitude South in their deception operations based on the troop and tank displacements that it caused, and illustrate how a prepared German force would have put the operation in jeopardy. By providing a statistical analysis of troop and casualty numbers, I will prove that if the Hitler had not completely believed the Fortitude story, the Germans would have had the potential to push the Allied invasion force back into the sea.

Fundamentals for an Amphibious Assault

According to David L. Goldfein from the Joint Chiefs of Staffs in their doctrine on amphibious assaults, an amphibious operation is a military operation launched from the sea by an amphibious force to conduct landing force operations within the littorals. Considered to be one

of the most difficult operations of war, an amphibious operation requires the ability to control air, land, and sea forces. Integrated command and control is essential to achieve the main goals of the operation, which include unity of effort, speed of action, and coordinated application of sea control.¹²² An amphibious assault is one of many types of amphibious operations. Within the document, Goldfein defines an amphibious assault as the following:

“An amphibious assault involves the establishment of a landing force on a hostile or potentially hostile shore. The organic capabilities of amphibious forces, including air and fire support, logistics, and mobility, allow them to gain access to an area by forcible entry. The salient requirement of an amphibious assault is the necessity for swift introduction of sufficient combat power ashore to accomplish amphibious force objectives. An amphibious assault may be designed to comprise the initial phase of a campaign or major operation where the objective is to seize and establish a military lodgment, e.g., ports, airfields, and advance bases; to support the introduction of follow-on forces”¹²³

Based on this definition, it is clear that the success of an amphibious assault is dependent on forces from land, air, and sea working together in a united effort to establish a foothold on land occupied by the enemy from the sea. Naturally, amphibious forces assaulting an established land force are at an extreme disadvantage. Heavy losses from the assault forces are to be expected, and a simple numbers advantage does not guarantee success. The complexity of such an

¹²² Goldfein, David L., LtGen. "Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Joint Doctrine Amphibious Operations." August 10, 2009. <http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/JointDoctrineAmphibiousOperations.pdf>, 22

¹²³ Goldfein, "Joint Doctrine Amphibious Operations", 24.

operation helps bring to light what Allied forces on D-Day had to do in order to be successful. If the Allies were met by a prepared force on the beaches of Normandy, a lot of complications would have been encountered by the assaulting troops that would have made a coordinated effort a lot more difficult. Luckily for the Allies, the work of the Twenty Committee and the double agents left the state of defensive affairs in France a complete wreck. The next section will look at how the agents were able to create a great deal of confusion for the Germans as they prepared to defend against an Allied assault on France.

State of German Forces and Defenses in France

As mentioned earlier, Hitler and the rest of German High Command were convinced that an attack would come at the Pas de Calais. From a geographic standpoint, it was the shortest distance across the English Channel and would bring Allied forces much closer to Paris. Additionally, the Abwehr believed that the Allies intended to land there based on the reports from several of their most trusted agents. Little did the Germans know that their most trusted agents were in fact British double agents who had been feeding Hitler and the German High Command false intelligent reports. This caused great confusion within German defense plans. As a result, the actions of German defense commanders were restricted because Hitler was unwilling to commit any reserves away from the Pas de Calais until he was absolutely confident that an Allied landing was the main invasion force and not just a diversion.¹²⁴

After the St. Nazaire and Dieppe Raids of 1942, Hitler ordered the construction of a series of coastal defenses that stretched from Southern France to Norway. This became known as the Atlantic Wall and it was meant to protect his western empire from any attacks from the sea.

¹²⁴ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 17.

By 1943, it was clear that the Atlantic Wall was unprepared for an invasion and Hitler decided to take action. On November 3, 1943, Hitler issued Directive 51, which reversed former military priorities and placed emphasis on the need to strengthen defenses in the West as the probability of an Allied attack from Britain increased. As part of the order, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was promoted to a leading commander in the defense of France under Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt. Part of his first order of business was to inspect Atlantic Wall construction and to help invigorate efforts in previously neglected areas, including Normandy.¹²⁵

Rommel believed that the best hopes for defeating an Allied invasion would be to crush opposing forces on the beaches before they could adequately establish a beachhead. For this reason, it was of the utmost importance that coastal fortifications were as strong as possible to help repel Allied forces. Additionally, Rommel believed that it was essential to have troop and Panzer tank divisions as close to the beaches as possible to reinforce beach defense efforts. According to Donovan, he knew from his experiences in North Africa that Allied air superiority would make it nearly impossible for German reserve forces to move forward to the beaches during daylight hours.¹²⁶ However, von Rundstedt disagreed with Rommel over the placement of Panzer divisions and argued that they should be held away from the coastal zone for fear that naval and aerial bombardments would decimate their forces. Hitler established a compromise and had each commander control three tank divisions, while he assumed control of the remaining four. As a result, only three of the ten panzer divisions were in positions to relieve coastal defenses at Normandy in June of 1944.

Hitler took those Panzer divisions and placed them in strategic areas near the Pas de Calais, and only he had the authorization to release them. Due to the lack of trust he had for his

¹²⁵ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 30.

¹²⁶ Donovan, Michael J. "Strategic Deception: Operation Fortitude." *Strategy Research Project*, 2002, 14.

generals, Hitler placed reserves under his control and continued to exercise his absolute control over the German military. He wanted to use the reserves based on his own beliefs of how the invasion would turn out. According to his logic that was supported by the work of the double agents, the invasion would almost certainly come at the Pas de Calais, and he wanted those units under his direct command so he could deploy them when necessary. Therefore, these panzer divisions were effectively useless in the defense of Normandy.

While Hitler believed wholeheartedly that the invasion would come at the Pas de Calais, the views of his generals were very much conflicted. In his memoir *Panzer Commander*, Colonel Hans Van Luck gives a detailed description of the German situation in France and specifically at Normandy. When he first arrived at Normandy, he received an update on the current situation at hand from General Edgar Feuchtinger. In General Feuchtinger's report, he states:

“Our division is the only one near the coast behind the Atlantic Wall, which, here in Normandy, is not yet fully developed and manned by an inexperienced infantry division. The anticipated Allied landing is not expected in Normandy, but rather in the Pas de Calais, the shortest distance between England and the Continent... We have to reckon on airborne landings or large-scale commando operations, which would serve as a diversion from the actual landing”¹²⁷

From this report, it is clear that many generals were in agreement with Hitler, and preached the same beliefs to other officers and soldiers. However, Rommel was not as convinced. When Rommel came to visit Normandy, Colonel von Luck recalls him stating, “I know the British from France in 1940 and from North Africa. They will land at the very place where we least

¹²⁷ Luck, Hans Von. *Panzer Commander: The Memoirs of Colonel Hans Von Luck*. New York: Praeger, 1989,133

expect them. It might be here.”¹²⁸ By using this logic, Rommel is asserting the fact that the Allies would be unlikely to invade an area that the Germans are expecting them to attack, which for the Germans was the Pas de Calais.

Rommel was perhaps the most outspoken general who strongly believed that the Allies would not attack at the Pas de Calais. In a report back to Berlin in May of 1944, Rommel states, “From the Allied point of view the number one objective is to get firmly ashore... This is improbable on the Pas de Calais coast, which is strongly defended, but is possible on the Normandy coast which is barely fortified.”¹²⁹ Rommel understood the thinking of Allied generals, and was quick to poke holes in Hitler’s logic. It would be incredibly difficult for the Allies to assault the most fortified position along the Atlantic Wall with an invasion force that was not battle hardened. According to Donovan, Rommel had been doing his own analysis and was convinced that an attack was much more likely to come at Normandy and was doing what he could to help reinforce the coastline.

“Rommel had noticed that German reconnaissance flights were periodically allowed over southeastern England (where deception efforts were in place) but were fiercely driven off when they approached southern England (where the actual invasion was being prepared). Rommel requested the immediate movement of the 12th SS Panzer, Panzer Lehr, and 21st Panzer divisions along with a brigade of the 24th Nebelwerfer (six-barreled 300mm rocket launchers) to be moved from reserve areas in the rear to forward positions to support Normandy. Luckily

¹²⁸ Luck, *Panzer Commander*, 134.

¹²⁹ Donovan, “Operation Fortitude”, 13.

for the Allies, von Rundstedt and Hitler still believed the FORTITUDE story and his request was denied.”¹³⁰

Rommel was the only German general to see through the deception that was delivered to Hitler and German High Command by the double agents. However, the absolute power exercised by Hitler and the trust he had in these agents overrode the logic used by one of his most distinguished generals. As a result, forces at Normandy were simply unprepared to defend against an amphibious assault from an Allied invasion force of that magnitude.

Hitler’s belief in the Fortitude story was apparent through his troop deployments. Forces stationed in Normandy were a part of the Seventh Army while forces at the Pas de Calais were part of the Fifteenth Army. According to Mary Barbier in her book *D-Day Deception*, the Fifteenth Army was a more competent fighting force in comparison to the Seventh Army. She states that as a result of Fortitude South, Hitler and German High Command retained the superior Fifteenth army in the Pas de Calais area in the weeks leading up to the invasion, and in several weeks following the landings to help repel what Hitler thought would be the main invasion force.¹³¹ The Seventh Army was led by General Friedrich Dollman, who commanded German forces during the Battle of France, but had been on occupational duty since 1940. Unlike most commanders who took part in the western campaign, he never saw action on the Eastern Front. In contrast, the Fifteenth Army was under the command of General Hans von Salmuth, a hardened veteran on the Eastern Front who was reassigned to the West in August of 1943.¹³² The Fifteen Army also consisted of nearly 20 divisions, making the Pas de Calais the most heavily

¹³⁰ Donovan, “Operation Fortitude”, 13.

¹³¹ Barbier, Mary. *D-day Deception Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2007, 187

¹³² Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 32.

reinforced area in France.¹³³ Therefore, the double agents' ability to convince Hitler that the main invasion would come at the Pas de Calais resulted in his decision to position a larger, superior force in that area, leaving the Normandy sector with a much less competent force.

The 20 divisions within the Fifteenth Army is a significant number that should be looked at in a broader context. Prior to the Allied landings in June of 1944, 60 divisions were stationed in the West, stretching from Denmark to the Spanish border along Hitler's Atlantic Wall. The Fifteenth Army had its 20 divisions stationed at the Pas de Calais. From a geographical standpoint, the Pas de Calais only occupies 40 kilometers of the coast and is also over 250 kilometers from Normandy. Meanwhile, the coastline from the Spanish border to Denmark amounts to over 2,000 kilometers, including the nearly 1,400 kilometers of coastline in France.¹³⁴ This means that 33% of German forces were stationed across 2% of the total coastline they were tasked with defending, and just under 3% of the total French coastline. Therefore, the work of the double agents during Operation Fortitude caused Hitler and the German High Command to commit one third of their force to a very small area of coast that the Allies had no intention of attacking. Consequently, Hitler's forces in other areas were stretched too thin to present a formidable defense against Allied Forces, including forces at Normandy.

¹³³ Barbier. *D-day Deception Operation Fortitude*, 187.

¹³⁴ Distance was calculated by tracing the coast of France to Denmark using tool provided by <https://www.daftlogic.com/projects-google-maps-distance-calculator.htm>



Figure 1: Visual of the scale of Hitler’s Atlantic Wall stretching from Spain to Norway¹³⁵

A thinly stretched defense force was a fact that was known well by Hitler’s commanders. The forces on the coast of Normandy were part of the LXXXIV Infantry Corps, commanded by General der Artillerie Erich Marcks. In their book *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, Ford and Zaloga explain that Marcks did not believe that it was feasible to defeat the Allies on the beaches

¹³⁵Map of Northern Europe during World War II with visual of the Atlantic Wall with the image provided by http://kiwichateau.com/yahoo_site_admin/assets/images/Atlantikwall_02.983554_std.gif

as Rommel had suggested. “Marcks did not agree with Rommel over tactics to defeat an amphibious landing, since he felt that his corps was far too weak and thinly spread to defend the extensive coastline it had been assigned.”¹³⁶ Marcks knew that the forces he had at his disposal were not enough to thwart an Allied attack in the Normandy sector. In fact, the Germans would have needed another year before they could realistically hope to repel an amphibious landing given the forces and defenses that were available to them.¹³⁷ It was not until Rommel was appointed to inspect the defenses in late 1943 were visible changes made to the coastal defenses of Normandy.

The most sufficient changes that took place to any beach were the defenses at Omaha. Early on in Overlord planning, Omaha beach was selected as a landing site due to deep water anchorage opportunities for the construction of an artificial harbor and because it was undefended. However, by early 1944, it was clear that taking Omaha beach would be more difficult than had been previously anticipated. In February 1944, the First United States Army (FUSA) conducted a comprehensive study of Omaha beach. It was concluded that, “If defended by an infantry regiment, the configuration of [Omaha] beach would multiply the combat power of the German troops and present a formidable defensive position - assaulting it would likely result in heavy casualties. If it was defended by a full infantry division, it would be impregnable.”¹³⁸ Even though the Germans were unprepared for an invasion at Normandy, at least one of the beaches still posed a formidable threat to Allied forces.

In fact, the Allies were heavily concerned with the element of surprise. Allied planners were worried that if the Germans had suspected a landing at Normandy, they would reinforce the

¹³⁶ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 32.

¹³⁷ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 36.

¹³⁸ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 45.

area so heavily that an amphibious assault would be impossible.¹³⁹ Additionally, the fictitious First U.S. Army Group (FUSAG) that was supposed to attack at the Pas de Calais was put under the command of General Patton, who was considered to be the best Allied general. This action essentially put Patton out of action for the entire military operation, but it was a price the Allies were willing to pay to sell the deception to Hitler and German High Command. Therefore, the Allies believed that the success of the deception missions through Operation Fortitude would play a major role in determining the success of Operation Overlord. If the Germans knew where the invasion was coming, they could fortify and reinforce the coast with forces that were readily available in France to push the Allies back into the sea.

Goals of Allied Commanders on D-Day

Operation Overlord was set to be the largest amphibious operation in history, involving more than 5,000 ships and 8,000 aircraft and eight divisions of men in the first wave alone.¹⁴⁰ The size and scale of the operation required meticulous coordination between top Allied commanders, including U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower and British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. In his memoir *Crusade in Europe*, Eisenhower describes in great detail the objectives of Overlord and Allied plans to get ashore in France. To Eisenhower, the timing was essential to the success of the operation. Meteorological reports and tidal patterns revealed that the best time for the Allies to attack would be between June 5th and June 7th. Eisenhower knew that if none of these days proved to be suitable, the operation could have disastrous results.

¹³⁹ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 46.

¹⁴⁰ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 579.

“If none of the three days should prove satisfactory from the standpoint of weather, consequences would ensue that were almost terrifying to contemplate. Secrecy would be lost. . . . Morale would drop. A wait of at least fourteen days, possibly twenty-eight, would be necessary—a sort of suspended animation involving more than 2,000,000 men!”¹⁴¹

Deception and secrecy, two essential characteristics of the operation, would be compromised if the weather did not cooperate. If the Allies had to wait at least two weeks for the invasion, the Germans would have been able to spot the motionless Allied naval vessels in position to attack the Normandy sector. This would present them with the opportunity to further reinforce the beaches and provide a major obstacle to Allied invasion forces.

If the weather cooperated, the Allies would have to seize the five beaches at Normandy. In Eisenhower’s words:

“The first and great objective was to assault and capture a satisfactory and indestructible beachhead which we could build up as rapidly as possible for the later decisive battle for France”¹⁴²

An objective like this is very difficult and complicated, especially against a coastal defense force. To achieve this objective, Montgomery laid out the Allied tactical approach to D-Day in *The Memoirs of Field Marshal Montgomery*. His plans were as follows:

¹⁴¹ Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Crusade in Europe*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1948, 239.

¹⁴² Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 244.

1. In Operation Overlord, an uncertain factor is the speed at which the enemy will be able to concentrate his mobile armored divisions against us for a counter-attack. On our part we must watch the situation carefully and must not get our main bodies so stretched that they would be unable to hold against a determined counter-attack
2. The best way to interfere with the enemy concentrations and counter-measures will be to push forward fairly powerful armored-force thrusts on the afternoon of D-Day
3. To be successful, such tactics must be adopted on D-Day; to wait till D plus 1 (day after D-Day) would be to lose the opportunity and also to lose the initiative
4. The result of such tactics will be the establishment of firm bases well in advance of our main bodies; if their location is carefully thought out, the enemy will be unable to by-pass them.¹⁴³

Speed would be crucial to Allied military operations. The idea of a massive German counterattack preoccupied Allied commanders, as a massive tank mobilization had the potential to push Allied forces back into the sea if they were not far enough inland. Therefore, it was of the utmost importance that the Allies seize all five beaches as quickly as possible. The failure to capture just one beach would create a massive divide in Allied invasion forces, and would greatly increase the amount of time it would take to effectively establish a beachhead and move inland. Such a delay would greatly increase casualties, allow German troops to mobilize, and possibly result in the failure of the operation.

¹⁴³ Montgomery of Alamein, Bernard Law Montgomery, Bernard. *The Memoirs of Field Marshal Montgomery*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2005, 211.

The Critical Hours on D-Day: June 6th – 7th, 1944

Based on the information that has been discussed, it is clear that the Germans were entirely unprepared for an invasion to come at Normandy. Yet, the Allies still encountered stiff resistance at Omaha Beach that almost put the entire invasion in jeopardy. Bad weather, logistical failures, and lack of battle experience made the first phase of the Allied invasion a mess. In order for the invasion to be successful, the Allies had to storm the beaches and immediately advance inland. Failing to capture at least one of the beaches would split Allied forces and would have spelled disaster for their advance into France. With this in mind, it is important to look at the key events that took place during the first and most critical 48 hours of D-Day to analyze just how close the Allies were to being unsuccessful, even with the successful work of their double agents.

Omaha Beach, June 6th 1944

Beginning in early 1944, Rommel increased his efforts to fortify positions along the coast that he believed would be possible targets of the Allies. At Omaha, he had 3,700 beach obstacles set up, the highest of any of the D-Day beaches, to help slow the advance of Allied landing craft and surface vehicles (including jeeps, tanks, armored cars, etc.). Troops stationed at Omaha came from the 716th Infantry Division, which was a poorly qualified unit, called the “Grandcamp” sector by the Germans due to the advanced age of many of the troops within the division. Additionally, this division was a static division, meaning that they were not trained or equipped for the offensive capabilities that a normal infantry would be prepared for. They were

specifically trained for defensive purposes. The 352nd division also reinforced Omaha with two regiments available on the beach on D-Day. Within the German Army, a regiment generally consisted of 1,000 to 2,000 men, meaning that anywhere from 2,000 to 4,000 men were available to defend Omaha beach.¹⁴⁴

On June 6th at 6:30 AM, the first wave of Allied forces from the U.S. First Army under the command of Lieutenant General Omar Bradley began to storm ashore on Omaha beach. Despite the months of coordinated planning, the initial wave began with disastrous results. The first wave consisted of 1,450 men packed together in landing crafts that had to battle rough water conditions and a strong tide just to stay afloat and on course. This caused many of the landing crafts to drift away from their targets and ended up landing hundreds of yards from where they were supposed to land. Once they came ashore, the ramps were dropped and the men onboard were subject to intense machine gun fire from fortified positions. The close air support that was supposed to take out the beach obstacles fell a few miles away from the beaches, making the beach completely open terrain. The nearest cover was 200 yards away at a seawall, meaning these men had to run into a wall of machine gun and mortar fire completely exposed. Additionally, the naval bombardment of the beach defenses was far too short to be effective. Against the advise of veterans who had participated in amphibious landings in the Pacific, Bradley had the bombardment last for only 40 minutes in an attempt to get ashore before the tides came in. As a result, much of the beach defenses were still intact, which created a slew of issues for Allied vehicles trying to come ashore.¹⁴⁵

To make matters worse, troops were issued more equipment than normal, which heavily labored their efforts to run forward and take fire. Many landing craft managed to run aground on

¹⁴⁴ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 34.

¹⁴⁵ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 334.

sandbars before they reached the beaches, causing the soldiers to swim ashore with their heavy equipment strapped to them. As a result, many men in the first wave drowned from the weight of their own gear.¹⁴⁶ In Beevor's book, he cites an account from a member of the 1st Division, who stated:

“Some boats were coming back after unloading, others were partly awash, but still struggling. Some were stuck, bottomed out, racing their motes and getting nowhere. Some were backing up short distances and trying again... I saw craft sideways, being upturned, and dumping troops into the water. I saw craft heavily damaged by shellfire being tossed around by the waves. I saw craft empty of troops and partly filled with water as though abandoned, awash in the surf. Men were among those struggling for the pitiful protection they gave.”¹⁴⁷

The issue with landing craft was not unique to infantry units. Due to poor conditions, many of the landing craft that were carrying tanks and artillery pieces were swamped and sank before they ever reached the beaches. Consequently, troops from the first wave were storming the beaches without the help of any heavy armor or artillery to support their charge. The Germans were quick to capitalize on the Allies logistical failures as they continued to cut down troops that were stuck in the water and those that were advancing up the beaches.¹⁴⁸

Within an hour, the first wave of Allied troops suffered a casualty rate around 40%, and most units lost their primary officers, rendering them leaderless. The first wave was so disastrous

¹⁴⁶ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*,

¹⁴⁷ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 579.

¹⁴⁸ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 580.

that Bradley considered calling off the assault.¹⁴⁹ The second wave came ashore roughly half an hour after the first wave and experienced many of the same navigational issues as the first wave.¹⁵⁰ Once they reached the seawall to meet up with troops from the first wave, the next obstacle was taking over the bluffs where the fortified machine gun and artillery posts were located. The first attempt to get over the bluffs failed, and it was not until 9 AM that there were portions of three companies over the bluffs. Therefore, despite a strong numbers advantage, the Allies were pinned down on the beaches by an inferior force for almost three hours.¹⁵¹

While all of this was going on, Colonel von Luck and the men in his tank division were completely anchored to their positions back from the coast. They were still waiting on clearance from German High Command to mobilize their forces.

“After only a few hours, the brave fighting units in the coastal fortifications could no longer withstand the enemy pressure, or else they were smashed by the Allied naval guns; while a German panzer division, ready to engage, lay motionless behind the front and powerful Allied bomber formations, thanks to complete air superiority, covered the coastal divisions and Caen with concentrated attacks.”¹⁵²

His entire division was powerless to help stop the Allied onslaught on the beaches. The men were eager to mobilize and advance on Allied forces, but Hitler and German High Command did not give them clearance to engage until much later in the day. In von Luck’s words, “We knew

¹⁴⁹ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 581.

¹⁵⁰ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 81.

¹⁵¹ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 83.

¹⁵² Luck, *Panzer Commander*, 138.

the order: ‘to attack only on orders from the highest authority’¹⁵³ Unfortunately for them, that order would have to come from Hitler who still believed the Fortitude story.

On the Allies side, despite breaking through German defensive lines by 9 AM, Overlord was still hours behind schedule. Engineer teams had failed to clear beach obstructions to allow for more landing craft to come ashore, causing massive buildups on the beach and vehicles were unable to move forward. All further vehicle landings were cancelled at 830 AM despite a dire need to reinforce troops who were already on the beaches. To the Germans, the Omaha defensive effort appeared to be going so well that forces at Normandy were transferred to help forces over at Gold beach where the situation for the Germans was less promising. At 11:30 AM, Bradley received an alarming report from one of his aides, eerily stating, “Disaster lies ahead”¹⁵⁴. Although conditions began to improve after that message, it reveals that for five hours Allied commanders were deeply concerned that the Omaha assault would end as a catastrophe.

By the end of the day, the Allies were eventually able to capture the beach and push a little under a mile inland before resting for the night. To Colonel von Luck, this was turning into a nightmare scenario for the Germans.

“Now the very thing Rommel had feared had happened: the enemy had not been attacked by our whole division and thrown back into the sea in the first hours of the landing.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Luck, *Panzer Commander*, 140.

¹⁵⁴ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 95.

¹⁵⁵ Luck, *Panzer Commander*, 143.

The Germans had failed to defeat the Allies on the beaches and allowed them to successfully establish a beachhead. While German coastal forces fought valiantly to repel the Allied attack, they were too weak to mount an ample defense.

That being said, the Germans were still almost succeeded in repelling the Allied attack on Omaha beach. A new study performed by Steven Zaloga in 2014 suggests that nearly 3,700 casualties were reported from Omaha beach alone with most of them coming from the first and second waves.¹⁵⁶ This number is higher than some of the traditional estimates, but the statistic was determined after a reassessment of casualty figures by Zaloga in his most recent book *The Devil's Garden: Rommel's Desperate Defense of Omaha Beach*. In total, the Allies suffered nearly 8,000 casualties across the five beaches and were able to land 150,000 men in France by days end, suffering a casualty rate of 5.3%. The Germans experienced far fewer casualties in comparison, reporting only 4,000 casualties on all five beaches combined.¹⁵⁷ However, despite conceding the beaches to the Allies, there was still hope for the Germans to push the Allies back into the sea. There was still time to launch a massive counter attack that could have forced an Allied retreat and a recapture of the beachheads.

June 7th, 1944

By the end of the day on June 6th, Eisenhower, Montgomery, and other Allied commanders were very pleased with the results from the first day of operations. The casualties sustained were less than expected and invasion forces were in a position to advance further into France. However, there was still a chance for the Germans to stop the invasion dead in its tracks.

¹⁵⁶ The Devil's Garden. Rommel's desperate defence of Omaha Beach on D-Day by Stephen Zaloga, page 12.

¹⁵⁷ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 335.

While the beachheads were established, troops continued to pour into France, but the landings were still not secured. Allied forces still needed to advance further inland to prevent a buildup of troops, vehicles, and supplies on the beaches. June 7th would prove to be a decisive day for the Allies and whether they would be able to continue their advance that began 24 hours earlier.

Colonel von Luck was growing frustrated with the manner in which German High Command responded to the invasion. It was clear to him that a large invasion force had landed at Normandy that was far too big to be a diversionary force. Yet, few forces were sent to relieve them.

“Now, on the evening of 6 June, it seemed to have become clear even to Hitler that it must be a matter of a large-scale invasion. But, as Feuchtinger told us, Hitler and his High Command still reckoned on a further landing in the Pas de Calais. The panzer division and reserve units stationed there were not to be withdrawn, on express orders from Hitler.”¹⁵⁸

Still believing the Fortitude story, Hitler refused to commit any of his reserves from the Pas de Calais to assist with the counterattack at Normandy. Thus Colonel von Luck and Rommel were powerless in their efforts to provide adequate reinforcements for a German counterattack.

As mentioned earlier, Rommel knew that the Germans’ best chance to defeat the Allies would be at the beaches or near the coast. With this in mind, he knew he had to commit all of the resources he had against the Allies to halt their advance. In Beevor’s work *The Second World War*, he states, “Allied commanders were afraid of a great German panzer counter attack, which contributed to their excessive caution. Luckily, Hitler’s failure to take a decision until the late

¹⁵⁸ Luck, *Panzer Commander*, 143.

afternoon of June 6th to commit his tank formations played to their advantage.”¹⁵⁹ As the Allies moved further inland on June 7th, the 21st Panzer Division was finally released by Hitler after an excessive delay, and Rommel sent them forward to fight the advance. However, the Canadian 3rd Division and British 3rd Division were able to out maneuver the Panzer units as they prepared to launch their counterattack. A stiff battle ensued as Allied forces approached the town of Caen, but the result was a stalemate on both sides. The Allies had stopped their advance, but in the process had completely thwarted the panzer counterattack. Therefore, German forces lost their last chance to push the Allies back into the sea.¹⁶⁰

Analysis of the Effectiveness of Fortitude North and South on D-Day

The failure of the Germans to effectively maneuver their tank divisions played a crucial role in the success of the Allies during the first 48 hours of Operation Overlord. The double agents under the Twenty Committee had successfully led Hitler and German High Command to believe that a major invasion would come at the Pas de Calais, causing Hitler to devote the majority of his men and resources to the defense of that region. The British knew that the Germans were expecting an invasion to come at that location, and used the double agents to effectively present them with the misinformation that confirmed what they previously believed. Unfortunately for the Germans, all of this information was part of a deception plan that was developed to disguise the fact that the main invasion would come at Normandy. Operation Overlord was a success, but it is important to look at how vital these agents were to the Allied victory.

¹⁵⁹ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 581.

¹⁶⁰ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 330.

It is important to note that even when the deception was in place, the Allies still almost failed to capture one of the five beaches. This near failure at Omaha beach was also against an ill-prepared force that was undermanned and under the command of a general who had not seen combat since 1940. Logistical failures, equipment malfunctions, and a lack of battle experience resulted in a blood bath for the first and second waves of troops on Omaha Beach. The first wave in particular suffered such heavy casualties, losing 40% of its forces in the first hour, that General Bradley considered abandoning the beach all together. An abandonment of Omaha beach might not have resulted in the failure of D-Day, but it would have significantly delayed the operational timeline and greatly increased Allied casualties. A large delay in Allied military operations would have given the Germans time to mobilize defense forces and would have considerably diminished Allied territorial advances into France. This would have greatly increased the likelihood of a successful German counter attack on the following day that could have pushed the Allies back into the sea. Therefore, the failure to capture Omaha Beach would have put Operation Overlord in serious jeopardy.

This fact brings into question what would have happened if the double agents had failed to deceive Hitler. Mary Barbier in her book *D-Day Deception* makes the argument that Operation Fortitude and the work of the double agents was not necessary for the success of D-Day. While she believes that the Allies would have sustained significantly higher casualties, she also believes that they would have been able to eventually achieve their objectives due to their air superiority and operational failures made by the Germans. In fact, at the end of her book she concludes “The entire Fortitude deception plan provided a dramatic operation aimed at the

Germans. In final analysis, however, its impact was minimal.”¹⁶¹ I will disagree with Barbier and make the claim that the work of the double agents was vital to the success of Operation Overlord.

Fortitude North

Operation Fortitude North was part of the Fortitude deception that attempted to convince Hitler that an invasion force would land in Norway. The British knew that Hitler was obsessive about retaining control of the region due to his belief that the German failure in World War I was a result of their inability to control the North Sea. Hitler’s ports in Norway allowed his navy to maintain control of the North Sea, and he was very protective of the region. The Twenty Committee and the double agents used this information to play on his fears and present Hitler with information that supported the theory of an Allied invasion coming through Norway. As a result, he kept over 300,000 soldiers stationed in the country. According to German General Alfred Jodl, that number was far larger than necessary. “We kept some 300,000 men in Norway during most of the War, when 100,000 men would have been sufficient had Norway been for us merely an occupational and security commitment”¹⁶²

Hitler and the rest of German High Command believed that an invasion was far more likely to come through France than Norway, and were not totally sold on the deception presented to them. However, they kept over 300,000 men stationed in the country, which could have been used for the defense of France. Forces along the coastal defenses in France were heavily undermanned and stretched way too thin, as they were in desperate need of reinforcement. Instead, the men stationed in Norway stayed there for the remainder of the war, and not a single

¹⁶¹ Barbier, Mary. *D-day Deception Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2007, 195.

¹⁶² Barbier, *D-day Deception Operation Fortitude*, 184.

unit was transferred to help with the defense of France at any point during the Allied invasion. While it is difficult to assume that a force of that size could have stopped the Allied landings at Normandy, it is safe to say that reinforcements from the troops in Norway certainly would have helped with the defensive effort along the Atlantic Wall and at Normandy. Therefore, the Twenty Committee and the double agents were successful in preventing the reinforcement of France with as many as 300,000 German soldiers.

Fortitude South

Operation Fortitude South was part of the Fortitude deception that attempted to convince Hitler that the main Allied invasion force would come at the Pas de Calais. The effects that the double agents had on the state of German defenses and troop deployments have already been discussed earlier in the chapter. The result was the Normandy sector of France was unprepared for an invasion of that magnitude while the Pas de Calais Region was the most heavily reinforced sector of the Atlantic Wall with upwards of 20 divisions occupying 40 kilometers of coast. The work of the double agents had made Hitler so confident about the location of the invasion that he committed over one third of his forces to the defense of the Pas de Calais, leaving forces in Normandy too thinly stretched.

In addition, the Germans grossly overestimated Allied troop strength as a result of the agent activity. The reports provided to the Abwehr and German High Command greatly inflated the number of troops available to the Allies. By late May, they believed that the Allies had 75 to 90 divisions, when in reality the number was closer to 50 or 60.¹⁶³ As a result, when Hitler began to hear reports of the number of troops landing at Normandy, he thought the number of troops

¹⁶³ Barbier, *D-day Deception Operation Fortitude*, 189.

was too small to be from the main invasion force. Consequently, it stood to reason that a massive force had not landed in France yet and was still waiting to strike. To Hitler and German High Command, the rest of the unaccounted Allied forces would invade through the anticipated Pas de Calais coast.

If the double agents had not been successful with their deception activities, Hitler and German High Command would not have been sold on the idea of an invasion coming at the Pas de Calais. As a result, they would not have been so quick to devote as much of their men and resources to the defense of such a small sector of France. Absent the double agents, German forces could have been spread out more evenly along the coast of France. Considering Rommel had been suspicious from the beginning that the Allies were likely to invade at Normandy due to the poor state of coastal defenses in the area, Hitler would not have been so reluctant to grant him the troops and tanks he wanted to defend the area. In addition, Hitler could have been able to devote more resources to the buildup of coastal defenses along the beaches of Normandy that would have made beach navigation much more difficult. Let it not be forgotten that upwards of 200,000 men could have been transferred from Norway to help fortify the coast of France if Fortitude North had not been successful in playing on the fears of Hitler. Based on the casualties sustained by the Allied troops at Omaha beach, the situation would have been a lot worse if the Allies had met a prepared and well-manned defensive force.

It is also important to dissect the 20 divisions that were stationed at the Pas de Calais once again. A military division within the German Army consisted of anywhere from 10,000 to 15,000 men.¹⁶⁴ With this number in mind, it can be estimated that anywhere from 200,000 to 300,000 men were stationed at the Pas de Calais waiting for an Allied amphibious assault. On D-Day, the Allies landed 150,000 men on the beaches of Normandy after several waves of men and

¹⁶⁴ Ford and Zaloga. *Overlord: The D-Day Landings*, 34.

resources. If Hitler had known that the invasion would take place at Normandy, it stands to reason that he would station at least 200,000 to 300,000 men to defend the coastline. This means that the Allies would have been outnumbered two to one attacking a fortified beachhead from the water. According to Howard, it is a basic principle in military theory that an attacking force should be larger than the defending force to increase the probability of success, unless under the cloak of deception.¹⁶⁵ Without deception, the attacking Allies were facing at least a two to one disparity in troops. Not to mention the fact that all 150,000 men did not land at once and had to arrive in much smaller waves. For example, the first wave at Omaha beach was 1,450 men. Even with air superiority and effective bombardments from naval vessels, it would be completely unfeasible for the Allies to effectively advance past the beaches suffering from such a numbers discrepancy.

Taking it one step forward, if the Germans had known that Normandy was the site for the Allied invasion, it is highly possible that the Allies would have never made it off the beaches. As mentioned earlier, the Allies were very concerned that if the Germans knew where the invasion was coming, they would reinforce the area to the point where an amphibious assault would be impossible, despite having air superiority. Additionally, the Allies were so concerned with the element of surprise that they chose the revered General Patton to lead the fake FUSAG army, which sidelined him for the operation. They were willing to sacrifice the leadership of one of their best generals in order to effectively legitimize the deception activity. To Allied commanders, the success of Operation Overlord was completely dependent on the Germans not knowing the location of the main invasion site. For this reason, deception was crucial for an Allied victory.

¹⁶⁵ Howard, Michael. *Strategic Deception in the Second World War*. New York, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995, ix.

Based on the casualty figures of D-Day, a German defense force of 200,000 to 300,000 men would not be necessary to successfully repel the Allies. With deception efforts in effect, the Allies sustained nearly 8,000 casualties on the beaches while the Germans suffered around 4,000, making the Allied to German casualty ratio two to one. In theory, a German force of 75,000 men could have defeated the entire Allied invasion force of 150,000 men if the same casualty ratio was in effect. However, the Allies would have abandoned the invasion long before the lost every single man that landed at Normandy. Based on my own assessment of military tactics and strategy at the time, I assert that the Allies could have sustained a maximum casualty rate of 30% on the first day alone in order to continue with the invasion. With this number in mind, the size of the German defense force would have to be around 22,500. Therefore, if the Allies had encountered an invasion force that was less than 10% the size of the force at Pas de Calais, commanders would have been put in a situation where they may have had to abandon the entire invasion. This is also under the assumption that tank divisions were improperly mobilized, meaning that if adequate tank divisions were available for the defense of Normandy, this number could be lower.

Conclusion

The reality is that the double agents were highly successful in creating uncertainty within the minds of German High Command and Hitler about the time and location of the Allied invasion of France. In a conversation between General Dwight D. Eisenhower and General Bradley, Bradley stated:

“Operation Fortitude ...was responsible for containing a minimum of 20 divisions in the Pas de Calais during the first crucial months of the invasion. The enemy was led to believe-and reacted to-a long inventory of opportune untruths, the largest, most effective and decisive of which was that (Neptune) itself was only the prelude to a major invasion in the Pas de Calais area.... Best testimony to the effectiveness with which this misinformation influenced the enemy's command decisions is the historic record of the enemy's committing his forces piecemeal-paralyzed into indecision in Normandy by the conviction that he had more to fear from Calais”¹⁶⁶

As a result of Fortitude South, Hitler and German High Command retained the entire 15th Army in the Pas de Calais area until late July 1944, which was more than 6 weeks after the invasion took place. This was due in part to the fact that they still believed that the Normandy landings were from a diversionary force. Additionally, they did not station their superior forces near Normandy, but at Pas de Calais instead. Believing that the Pas de Calais was under an imminent threat, many of their panzer units were stationed to the north and east of the Seine river, making them unavailable to counterattack Allied forces at Normandy. Prior to the invasion, Eisenhower knew that if a sizeable tank force was mobilized to the beaches then the Allies would be pushed back to the sea and the invasion would fail.¹⁶⁷ Rommel also knew that if beachheads were established then the Allies were highly likely to liberate France. Tank mobilization would be the key to whether the Allies would be able to establish a beachhead. Therefore, Fortitude South effectively immobilized German panzer divisions situated east of the Seine River, and

¹⁶⁶ Donovan, “Operation Fortitude”, 16.

¹⁶⁷ Beevor, *The Second World War*, 581.

effectively eliminated the threat of the Allies meeting a sizeable tank force during and after the landings.¹⁶⁸ Based on the evidence provided here and earlier in the chapter, it is clear that the Twenty Committee and double agents played a vital role in the success of Operation Overlord and it is questionable whether the Allies would have been victorious without the work of the agents.

¹⁶⁸ Barbier. *D-day Deception Operation Fortitude*, 187.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to provide a new perspective on Operation Fortitude and the use of double agents. First, I explored the establishment of the Double Cross System and the Twenty Committee, and how the British were able to recruit double agents. While it has been commonly believed that their recruitment was a British victory, it was more a result of the circumstances in Europe at the time. Anti-Fascist and Anti-Nazi movements swept across the continent throughout the 1930's to prevent the spread of Fascist influence. Many of the key double agents who were recruited initially as German agents had their own experiences with Fascism that caused them to develop predispositions against such regimes. As a result, when they were sent over to Britain to gather information on the enemy, they were quick to turn themselves in to work for the British. This allowed the British to develop a unique network of double agents that could effectively infiltrate German Intelligence (Abwehr) and manipulate the thinking of Hitler and German High Command.

I then looked at how these agents were utilized and developed by MI5 to gain the trust of their German overseers within the Abwehr, and how some were able to gain the trust of Adolf Hitler. While much of their activity did harm to Britain and the Allied war effort, this was all part of the plan that would allow them to gain the trust of Hitler and German High Command. Masterman said that MI5 dreamed of a day when the British would be able to use these agents for one glorious moment of deception that would be instrumental to the success of Allied military forces.¹⁶⁹ That moment came during Operation Fortitude when these agents were called upon to feed the Germans false reports about the time and location of the Allied invasion of Europe.

¹⁶⁹ Masterman, *The Double Cross System*, 43

Historian Mary Barbier made the claim that Operation Fortitude and the work of the double agents had a minimal impact on the outcome of Operation Overlord and believed that the Allies would have still been successful even if it had failed. Throughout the final chapter, I have joined the historical debate about the significance and impact of Fortitude and double agent activity on the outcome of Overlord. I illustrated the influence the double agent activity had on the state of German defensive forces in France before the invasion and portrayed how the Allies were close to failing at Omaha even with deception operations intact. I then revealed the impact of Operation Fortitude North and South on German military decisions, and how an unsuccessful deception operation could have allowed the Germans to more effectively allocate their defensive forces. Additionally, by showing how an unprepared force at Omaha beach almost defeated Allied landing forces brings to light how disastrous the operation could have been if the Allies had met a prepared German force on the beaches. My own quantitative analysis of troop deployments shows that the size of the German defense force would not have to be particularly large either. My calculations illustrated that only 10% of the force that was stationed at the Pas de Calais, 20,000 to 30,000 men, had the potential to push the Allies back into the sea.

These double agents did not just fool Hitler and German High Command about the time and location of an invasion. These agents were responsible for saving thousands of lives, and potentially saving the operation that was responsible for liberating France. Operation Overlord successfully opened up a second front in the west in the war against Nazi Germany. With U.S. and British forces advancing from the west and Soviet forces advancing from the East, Hitler's days were numbered. It would be overly optimistic to say that the work of these double agents was responsible for the Allies victory during World War II. However, it would be fair to claim

that the British double agents were vital to success of Operation Overlord, which helped bring the war to an end in May of 1945.

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