



SUBTERFUGE AND SPIES

In order for the Allies to land unnoticed on the beaches of Normandy, it was important to divert the Germans' attention away from what might be happening to ensure all the plans could be kept secret.

There were lots of different operations set up to put them off the scent.

The most important one was **Operation Fortitude**: a series of plans designed to misinform the Germans about what was happening. These plans were aided by support from the French Resistance and a network of spies.

OPERATION FORTITUDE consisted of two main misinformation campaigns:

Fortitude North – using fake radio traffic, designed to lead the Germans to expect an attack on Norway.

Fortitude South – the creation of an invented or ghost army called the First United States Army Group. The Allies 'let slip' false information that there were a large amount of troops under the guidance of the US General Patton which were training in either Kent or Sussex. The aim of this imaginary army was to deceive the Germans into thinking the planned attack would be at Calais and divert their attention from what was really happening in Normandy. The campaign included a series of radio messages which were deliberately routed to Kent to make the Germans think the Allies were stationed there.



Poster warning people to be careful about spreading secrets. IWM PST 0142





Many German radar stations were destroyed on the French Coast in preparation for the landings so that the Germans wouldn't know they were arriving. An SAS operation (Special Air Service) used dummy paratroopers over Le Havre and Isigny – different areas of France, making the Germans think there had been an airborne invasion there in preparation for an attack.

The RAF (Royal Air Force) dropped metal foil which made German radar operators think there was a group of ships landing near Le Havre and to support this, small vessels towed barrage balloons. However, all this false activity was deliberately planned to be a long way from where the real attacks would take place in Normandy.

The French Resistance

The French Resistance was an 'underground movement' of brave French men and women fighting the Germans who were occupying France. They had to operate in secret as the Germans were stationed in their villages and houses. Their operations included the sabotage of the rail system and electrical facilities and cutting the underground telephone and teleprinter cables.

Strange messages were transmitted by the BBC French Service – snatches of poems, quotes and random sentences to mask the real messages. On 5 June the increase in activity led the Germans to believe an invasion was actually going to happen, but because there was so much misinformation or false warnings, they ignored it.



Making Metal Strips ©IMW E(MOS) 1451





SPIES

Spies played an important part in the Operation Fortitude by secretly seeking information and passing it on to the Allies. This work was extremely dangerous but the secrets passed by many of these men and women were vital to the success of the D-Day mission and helped enable the successful collaboration of many different people and nations.

Juan Pujol García or Joan Pujol García was a double agent against the Germans which meant both sides believed he was working for them. Luckily he was working for the Allies although it took some time to convince them! His story is rather extraordinary.

Joan Pujol was born in Barcelona in Spain in 1912. After the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s he wanted to make a contribution “to the good of humanity”.



Juan Pujol Garcia © Tamara Kreisler

He offered to spy against Germany for the British but at first, they weren't interested. So he told the Germans he wanted to spy for them, and they accepted him and sent him to Britain to get them the information they wanted.

But instead of going to England, he went to Lisbon in Portugal and started inventing agents he said he worked with, and also wrote reports that he invented, that were meant to have come from London. Sometimes he got information wrong because he was relying on a few factual books and his imagination, but the Germans still believed him!

By 1942, MI6, the Secret Intelligence Service realised he was on their side and brought him to London where he worked closely with a Spanish speaking British officer – Tomás Harris. Together Pujol who was code named GARBO and Harris invented 27 other agents and their life stories. They wrote over 300 hand written letters from and to these agents, all hiding secret writing in the letters. Soon the Germans were receiving so much information they were convinced Pujol and his team knew everything that was happening in Britain and so they didn't try and find out anything more.





GARBO made sure that the Germans believed in Fortitude South – the invented army. He told them that the main invasion was going to be in Calais not in Normandy and arranged for an urgent message to be delivered on 6 June (D-Day), to convince them that the false army was just leaving England that day, when in fact they had already landed in Normandy. The Germans believed him and he managed to keep convincing them the real invasion was on its way in Calais for two more months.

This delay allowed the Allies time to really establish themselves in France and secure what they needed. Amazingly, the Germans still thought Pujol had done a good job for them and awarded him their highest honour – the Iron Cross! GARBO managed never to be found out by the Germans and after being awarded the British honour of an MBE he moved to Venezuela where he lived until 1988. He did have to keep a low profile though to ensure no-one found out who he really was.



Juan Pujol Garcia © Tamara Kreisler



Juan Pujol Garcia's passport © Tamara Kreisler

