

Operation Fortitude?

Operation Fortitude was part of the wider plan, Bodyguard, to mislead the enemy about the timing and location of the Allied invasion of north west Europe. Fortitude South had as its key aim, the appearance that the invasion would take place in the Pas de Calais, across the shortest sea crossing. As part of this, the fictitious First United States Army Group (FUSAG) under General George Patton was created and the movement of this into Kent was part of the deception. Spurious radio traffic was produced, along with convoys that drove south by day, then back north by night, and inflatable landing craft and vehicles. It has been thought that Special Duties played a part in Fortitude. These documents possibly provide some evidence towards this idea.

SECRET

Dear *Kenneth,*

For security reasons it has become necessary for some special arrangements to be made for operating the wireless sets used in the area.

Orders have been given that all our wireless sets must observe periods of:-

- (a) Wireless silence.
- (b) Intense activity.

The details of the periods of wireless silence and of wireless activity are shown in the lists attached to this letter.

During periods of wireless silence, you must not use your sets at all unless an enemy ground raid really takes place. In this event you will of course use your set and will carry on in the usual way as ordered for raids and will keep watches that have been laid down for raid periods.

During periods of intense activity, I shall be grateful if you will do your best to pass as many messages as possible, as this would be a great help from a security point of view.

The contents of this letter and details concerning periods of silence, etc., must not be discussed on the air.

Not lost,

Ipswich.
28 Jan 44.

Dear K.G.,

- (1) We have been informed that the dates of the silence & activity periods are to be changed.
- (2) Will you please destroy by fire the lists of dates now in your possession.
- (3) In future, these dates will be sent to you by post as they arise. A complete list will not again be issued.
- (4) The next dates are as follows:-

Activity Period.

25 Feb.-26 Feb.

Silence Period.

27 Feb.-29 Feb.

The above dates are inclusive in each case.

Yours sincerely,

G. J. J. J.

This letter and the attached dates refer to periods of intense wireless activity and also periods of radio silence. These would give the impression of a unit being present and then moving away. Presumably similar periods in Kent would mimic the arrival of the fictional Army. These plans suggest that the Allies thought that these messages could be intercepted by the Germans, even if their content could not be deciphered. Otherwise there would be no point in these changes in broadcasts. Similar activities were undertaken by regular Army Signals units as well. However studies after the war found no evidence that the Germans noticed this signals traffic at all! However, at the time this could not have been assumed.

Types of Information Required.

Long Term.

1. Troop movements, not below brigade (other than movements to concentration areas)
2. Training-e.g. combined exercises, glider training etc.
3. Trials of special equipment.
4. Accumulations of stores & equipment.
5. Construction of all kinds associated with invasion preparations.
6. Restrictions on civil population.
7. Rumours & leakages of information.

Short Term.

8. Concentrations of aircraft, shipping, landing craft, vehicles, rolling stock etc.
9. Special measures for traffic control.
10. Rumours & leakages.
11. Any other indications of movement to concentration areas, assembly areas, & transit areas, or of the imminence of combined operations.

Last report to be posted Sat. 28th Aug.

Thereafter, fortnightly.

In relation to what?

This note with its handwritten addition refers to fortnightly reports being completed from 28 Aug (presumably 1943). This appears to instruct the Special Duties personnel to report on the movement of troops or stores, and on any observed specialist training, such as by gliders, which might be linked to an invasion of Europe. They were also to note any rumours or leaks of information. This would have allowed an assessment of what any German spies might be reporting back to Germany. After the war it became clear that the British had identified all the German spies sent to Britain, and the only intelligence being transmitted was from British run double agents, who were also supplying intelligence to support Operation Fortitude.