

FISSEA 2014

Garbo, D-Day and Ultimate Social Engineering



John G. O'Leary, CISSP
O'Leary Management Education

Abstract

- Social Engineers in 2014 can be clever, creative and trust-inducing as they go about their (usually) nefarious deeds. But not one of them has or will come close to the exploits of an unassuming Spanish chicken farmer who convinced the Germans that D-Day's primary target was not Normandy.
- The web of deception that Juan Pujol and a few others wove kept overwhelming forces away from the invasion beaches long enough to ensure that the largest and most complex invasion ever attempted would not be pushed back into the sea.
- From this convoluted story we can learn some valuable lessons regarding social engineering - perpetrators, targets, methods, obstacles, dangers and consequences, both intended and unintended.

Agenda

- The Setting and the Actors (including pigeons)
- Garbo
 - Lisbon & London
 - Garbo's "Network"
 - D-Day deception
 - Awards and aftermath
- Lessons
- References

The Setting

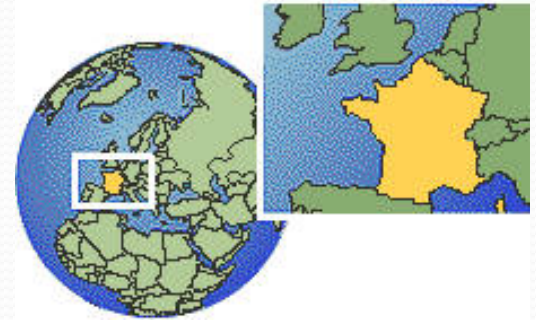


- 1943
- Germans still winning the war, controlled Europe
- But Allies had invaded North Africa and Italy
- Stalin and Churchill had been pushing hard for an invasion of the west coast of France
- German ‘Atlantic Wall’ was more than formidable
- Rommel, Germany’s best, was in charge

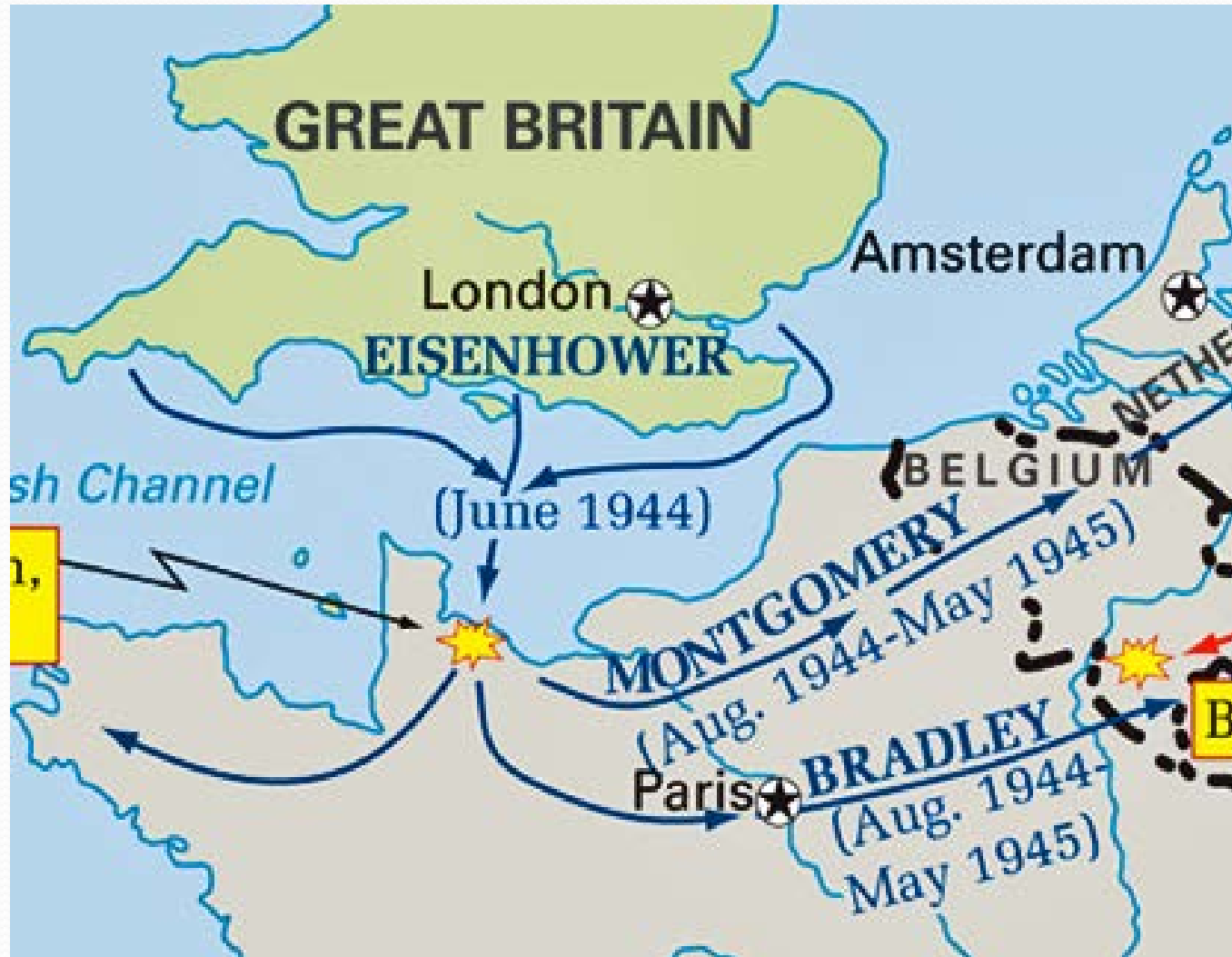


The Setting

- Germans knew invasion of Europe was coming
- Rommel was sure it would be at Normandy
- Other German staff thought Calais more probable
- Hitler knew best chance to defeat invasion was to beat them back off the beaches – no toehold
- Multiple Panzer divisions were available to back up Atlantic wall
- Question was; where to place them?



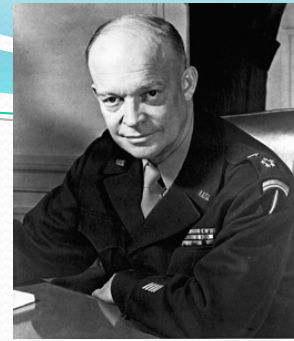




The Setting

- Spies throughout Europe were trying to pinpoint the actual invasion spot
- Lisbon – a true nest of spies: German, British, Russian, American, etc.

The Setting



- Eisenhower (Ike) worried about Germans' ability to bring massive forces against any Atlantic Wall point and stall or reverse the invasion. Smoking 4 packs of cigarettes (Camels) a day
- Ike wanted to land 5 Divisions on day 1 of Operation Overlord. Germans had 56 Divisions in France and the low countries
- He asked L/C Noel Wild, head of Ops(b)- Deception – “Operation Fortitude” - to “just keep the Fifteenth Army out of my hair (note: Ike still had some hair then) for the first two days.”

The Actors- Spies

- Dusko Popov
- Roman Czerniawski
- Lily Sergeyev
- Elvira Chaudoir
- Johnny Jebsen

- Juan Pujol Garcia

To Britain

Tricycle

Brutus

Treasure

Bronx

Artist

Garbo

To Germany

Ivan

Hubert

Solange

Dorette

.....

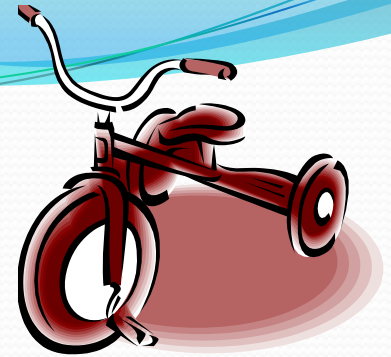
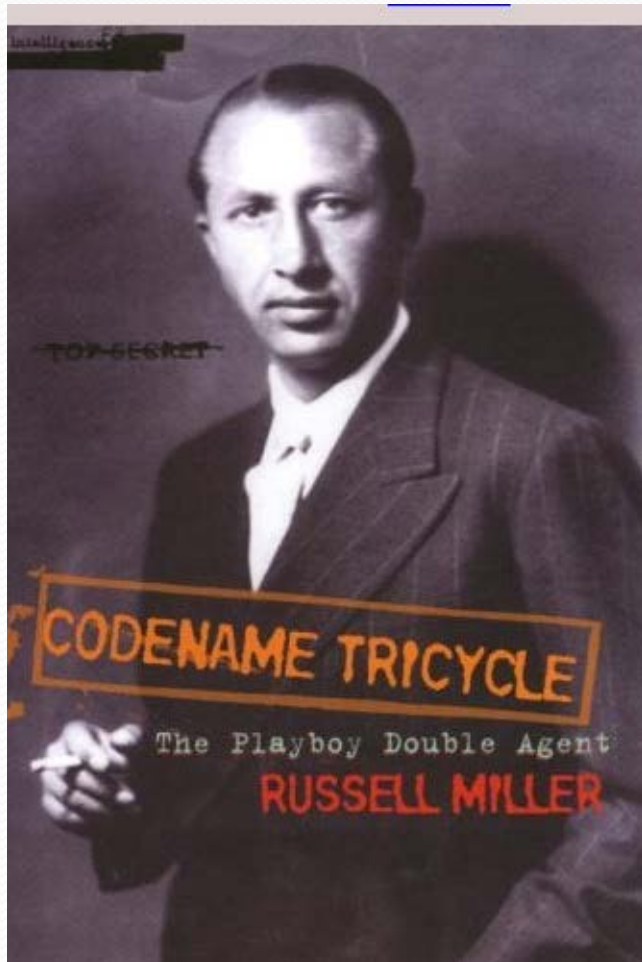
Arabel

Fortitude Spies – Never met



The spies who ensured the success of the D-Day landings. Left to right: Lily Sergeyev ('Treasure'), Roman Czerniawski ('Brutus'), Juan Pojol Garcia ('Garbo'), Elvira Josefina Concepcion de la Fuente Chaudoir ('Bronx') and Dusko Popov ('Tricycle')

Dusko Popov



Playboy
Gambler
Prolific spender
Phenomenal Womanizer
Very comfortable in high
society anywhere
Disliked intensely by J.
Edgar Hoover (FBI)
Regained German
confidence after
“failed” American trip
Close with Johnny Jebsen
Fed Germans lies about
influential Brits

Brutus

Roman Czerniawski

Polish Officer

Loyalty to Poland, all else secondary

Ran only effective spy ring in
occupied France... until betrayed

Germans “turned” him – a double

Would execute his team if he lied

Actually a triple

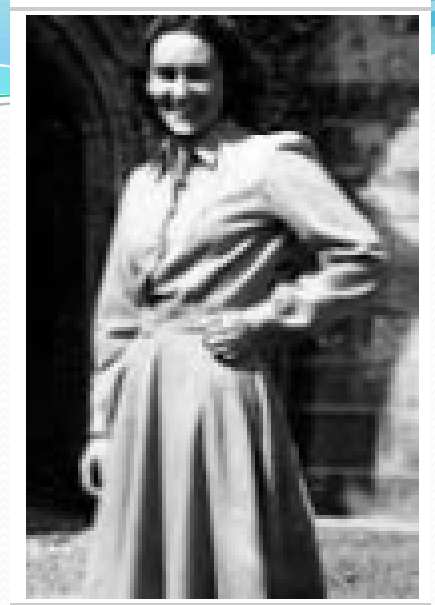
Severely irritated other Poles in

England

Gave the Germans military specifics
that seemed correct to them



Lily Sergeyev



Russian-born French socialite
Lover of her German controller
Extremely attached to her dog “Babs”
Would come to England as a double only if Babs
also came
MI5 hemmed, hawed, ... Quarantines, etc.
Babs never made it past Gibraltar
Agent Treasure threatened to blow the whole gig
Only weeks before D-Day
All subsequent messages sent from her were
actually sent by a substitute operator



Elvira Josefina Concepcion de la Fuente Chaudoir

Bronx



Daughter of a Peruvian diplomat
Came to England when Germans invaded France
Evenings spent at Ritz bar and bridge tables
losing money she didn't have
Recruited and 'Coat-tailed' to the Germans
Hoping they'd try to recruit her..... They did.
Secret ink messages in innocuous letters
Iron-clad cover as a good-time girl
Gossip, dropping names and creating
opinions for people she'd never actually met



Garbo's Partner in Deception – Tomas Harris



He and Garbo together created
a fictitious network of 27
agents

Created backstories and
adventures for each of them
Made up conflicts and
resolutions

Recommended German
decorations for some

Demanded pay raises for others
Fed the Germans nonsense and
misleads with just an
occasional grain of truth

Soviet Mole in British Intelligence – Anthony Blunt

Russia was an ally at that time,
but not privy to this information

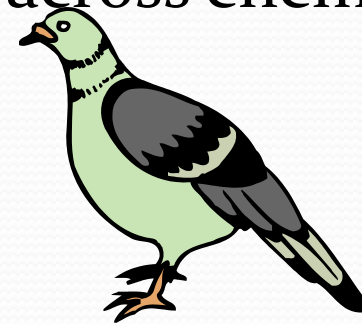
Yet Stalin knew all about
Operation Fortitude, since
Blunt, one of the Cambridge 5
traitors, a high ranking insider,
told Soviets everything ...

Thankfully, they didn't trust
their own spies



Pigeons

- Important way to pass information across enemy lines
 - Fast
 - Reliable
 - Virtually impossible to intercept
- All 57,000 of Germany's pigeon fanciers had to have a certificate of political reliability from the Gestapo (SS controlled it - Himmler was a pigeon fancier)
- No Jews could own pigeons
- Eugenics on the pigeons – substandard lofts wiped out



Pigeons

- British Flt. Lt. R. M. Walker absolutely loved pigeons
- Wanted agents in occupied areas to use pigeons rather than wireless
- Created ways to put messages on quills and feathers
- Worried about NAZI Pigeons, so
 - Pigeon coop screen 10 miles in from coast
 - Falcon unit (3 peregrines) on Isles of Scilly
 - Brought down 23 British birds (friendly fire??)
 - Then went AWOL



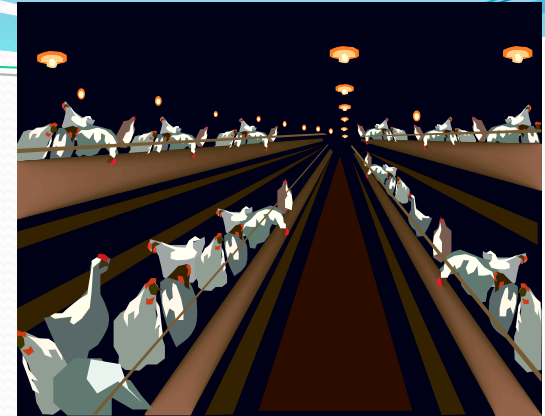
Pigeons



- Pigeon Contamination Plan
- Every German Intelligence station in France had a pigeon section
- Walker recruited 350 sluggish double-agent pigeons to destroy the German pigeon service from within
 - Give them German markings
 - Air-drop them into occupied France
 - Let them breed with Hitler-youth pigeons
 - Let Germans discover them and destroy the whole coop

Juan Pujol Garcia

- Graduate of Royal Poultry School
- Ran poultry farm outside Barcelona; **hated chickens**
- Cinema proprietor; **terrible businessman**
- Cavalry officer – **feared horses**
- Writing style – “exhaustingly verbose – filled up pages without saying much”
- Extremely inventive
- Many mistakes, but Germans didn’t seem to notice – “Scots would do anything for a litre of wine.”



Try and Try Again

- Experiences in Spanish Civil War led Pujol to despise both sides in that conflict – Communists and Fascists, but toughened him for the upcoming WWII
- Jan 1941 – asked British in Madrid to let him, or his wife, Araceli, work for them – no interest
- British wanted Spain neutral
- Plan B - he learned to think like a Nazi and got the Germans to believe he wanted to spy for *them* ...
“*Jawohl, getten zie to Lisbon*”



Lisbon to London



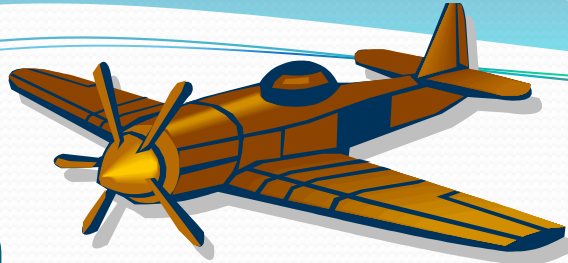
- He counterfeited a Spanish Visa and wove a phony story regarding exchange of Spanish Pesetas for British Pounds as an agent of the Spanish government
- Germans swallowed story & trained him in tradecraft, provided secret ink and multiple codes and money
- They wanted him **in** Britain, but once settled in Lisbon, his first stop was the British embassy
- Sent voluminous messages to Germans describing British places, troops, movements , politics and agent recruiting ... but he was still in Lisbon

Lisbon to London



- Codebreakers at Bletchley Park were intercepting his Lisbon traffic
- British Intelligence couldn't believe he had never been to England, but were puzzled at some of his mistakes
 - Geographic
 - Cultural
- Got his information from libraries, newspapers, store displays, bookstores, etc. ... and his vivid imagination
- British finally took him on as an agent and smuggled him to London

London



- He and Harris were given the services of a Location Scout to avoid mistakes he had made in Lisbon
- One of his agents No. 3(1) got an Aircraft recognition handbook (completely out of date, but real). Garbo had it baked into a cake and delivered (via KLM pilot agent) to his German controller, Kuhlenthal, in Lisbon. “With Good Wishes to Odette” (2 t’s was the indicator). Germans were delighted



London



- June 1943 - Luftwaffe shot down a Lisbon-London camouflaged DC3, killing actor Leslie Howard
- Garbo went ballistic
- “What if you shoot down my KLM pilot!!!”
- “What if one of my agents is on the plane!! Or me!!”
- No London-Lisbon air traffic bothered for rest of the war

London



- After the “death” of his agent Gerbers, Garbo “discovered” some papers encrypted in a strange code
- He couldn’t work it out
- Maybe the German codebreakers could
- He and Harris had created the nonsense code and phony half-messages
 - “Tuesday – spotted numerous large olbeks near
 - Olbeks?? Near where?? How many??
 - And what the hell are olbeks, anyway??



London

- Garbo siphoned an equivalent of \$1.4 million total from the Germans to bankroll Double Cross
- Abwehr was funding its own deception
- But its controllers and actual agents were also skimming funds allocated for Garbo, Tricycle, Bronx, Brutus and Treasure
- Garbo's agents also got awards and attaboys from Abwehr HQ



Garbo's Network



- Purely fictitious
- 27 agents
- Interspersed messages from all of them throughout the leadup to D-Day
- “... 3 saw two British and two American battleships at Scapa Flow ...”
- “... 4 saw large concentrations of troops with 1st US Army patches plus 34 tanks and 45 trucks near Newcastle ...”
- “ ... Carlos saw”



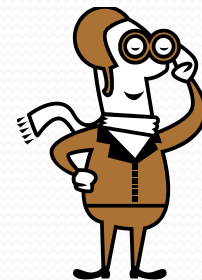
Garbo's Network



- J(1) KLM pilot on regular flights between Lisbon and London. Garbo's courier
- J(2) RAF officer "unconscious collaborator" – passed info on rocket batteries in Hyde Park
- J(3) Top official in Spanish Ministry of Information. "Unconscious collaborator" Garbo's most essential agent
- J(4) Censor at Ministry of Information
- J(5) Secretary at Secretariat of Ministry of War . Also Garbo's "mistress" (imaginary lover)

Garbo's Network

- No. 1 Carvalho – Portuguese commercial traveler, “somewhat lazy and haphazard in his reports”
- No. 2 William Gerbers – Englishman of Swiss-German ancestry. How the British found Pujol. Later “died”
- No. 2(1) Gerber’s widow – radio operator and cutout between Garbo and his agents
- No. 3 Carlos – University-educated Venezuelan, chief deputy to Garbo
- No. 3(1) Glasgow-based RAF NCO. He bought the aircraft recognition book that 2(1) baked into a cake



Garbo's Network

- No. 3(2) Lieutenant in 49th British Infantry Div
- No. 3(3) Glasgow-based Greek merchant seaman, a fervent communist
- No. 4 Fred – waiter in Gibraltar
-
-
-
- All 7 members of the “Brothers of the Aryan World Order” in Wales, including Indian poet “Rags”

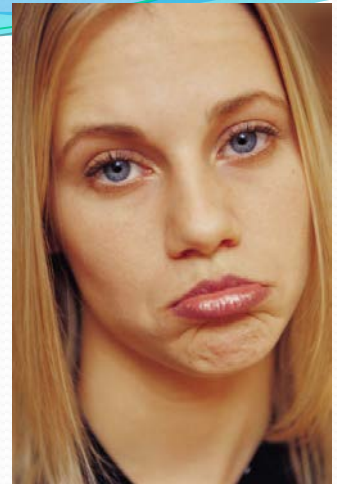


Garbo's Network



- Garbo and Harris added color to make it sound more realistic
- Agent 7(4) was having problems with his British girlfriend
- Agent 6 needed money to pay off gambling debts
- Agent 3 had to keep quiet for a few weeks, afraid that the British were close to catching him
- Agent 4(3) was pouting because he thought the Germans didn't appreciate his efforts
- Two agents, 5 and 5(1), working together were quarreling

Garbo's Network



- He almost constantly requested money
- Didn't always get it
- So he pouted also, claiming that he was risking his life for the Third Reich and wasn't believed or appreciated
- Germans usually gave in and sent money
 - For him and for the "agents"
 - Garbo recommended bonuses for some agents
 - "OK, Good Work"
- Of course, his German controller, was siphoning off some of the money intended for Garbo's "Network"

D-Day Deception



- Garbo and Harris, as with Tricycle, Brutus, Bronx and Treasure, started their work by giving the Germans almost all truth (usually worth very little militarily) and very little falsehood
- Over time, percentage of lies increased, but still some nuggets of truth
- By runup to D-Day (April-May-June 1944) almost all was fiction designed to drive Germans away from the landing site and have them wait for subsequent invasions

D-Day Deception

- By early 1944, Garbo wasn't just reporting, he was giving analysis and drawing conclusions for the Germans
- His aim was not to just influence, but to replace their intelligence service
- To a surprising extent, he did
- Before D-day, he never actually named Calais as the invasion site, but reports of all his "agents" clearly pointed that way



D-Day Deception

- Even while the invasion was proceeding and after the beachhead was established, Garbo insisted that
 - Normandy was a feint
 - The real invasion was yet to come
 - Germany must be prepared to stop the real invasion when it comes, maybe today, maybe next week
- They bought it
- Praised his bravery in continuing to “spy” even though some of his network had been eliminated



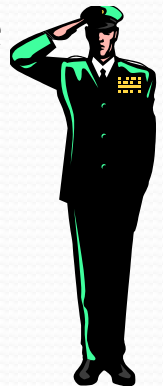


Post-D-Day – June 9

- Hitler orders 1st Panzer Corps and 2nd and 21st Panzer divisions to move south and attack invaders
- Garbo sends message: current operation is large, but diversionary, real attack by FUSAG (Patton's imaginary army) shortly, probably at Calais
- Hitler reads Garbo message, rescinds order for 1st and 21st Panzers
- 2 weeks after June 6 – More Axis forces in Pas de Calais area than before D-Day
- July 6 – 22 Calais divisions on alert for invasion

Awards and Commendations

- July 29, 1944 - Message from his German controller
- Garbo had been awarded the Iron Cross
- Garbonian Response (abridged):
 - “I cannot at this moment, when emotion overcomes me, express in words my thanks for the decoration conceded by our Fuhrer ... I must state that this prize has been won not only by me, but also by Carlos (agent No. 3) and the other comrades... My desire is to fight with greater ardor to be worthy of this medal which has been conceded to those heroes, my companions in honor, who fight on the battlefield.”
- December 1944 – Awarded MBE



An Unsung Hero – Johnny Jebsen




An Unsung Hero – Johnny Jebesen

- Got into Abwehr because he didn't want to be in infantry (Varicose veins)
- Good friend and carousing buddy of Dusko Popov, also prodigious womanizer
- Knew Popov was working for the British, but never betrayed him
- Popov eventually recruited him to join the cause
- Got into trouble with Gestapo, not because they suspected him of counterspying, but because he, like so many other German spy controllers, was doing creative accounting and money laundering ... some of it for the Gestapo



An Unsung Hero – Johnny Jebsen

- Very effectively augmented credibility of Tricycle, Garbo, and the other Operation Fortitude players
- But Berlin was very suspicious about his monetary activities ... also thought he might defect to Britain
- People who were concerned about him were in on the plot to kill Hitler 
- They nabbed him not because they thought he was a double agent, but because they thought he was NOT
- They kidnapped him to preserve the plot to kill Hitler

An Unsung Hero – Johnny Jebsen

- Kidnapped him in Lisbon to bring him back
- Sent to Berlin Gestapo prison, interrogated, tortured
- News of his disappearance sent shock waves through the Double Cross team
- If he broke, all was lost
- D-Day was 3 weeks away
- Jebsen knew a great deal, revealed nothing
- Later sent to Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp
- Disappeared at the end of the War, probably murdered



Aftermath



- Bronx lived to 85, Tricycle to 69, Brutus to 75
- Treasure married a Yank, died in 1950 in Michigan
- Pujol effectively disappeared with his Iron Cross
 - Divorced Aracelli, Remarried – new family in Venezuela
 - Lived quiet, relatively anonymous life with second family, but still followed trade craft and didn't trust anyone
 - Nazis and former German intelligence agents still around
 - Killing him would be sweet revenge for them
 - Intelligence historian Nigel West found him in 1973

Aftermath



- Attended D-Day ceremonies in 1970's
- Brought to tears by rows of crosses at Normandy
 - “I didn’t do enough”
- On return to Venezuela, was sought by American Skinheads looking for “the man who betrayed Hitler”
- After that, occasional visits to Aracelli and kids (now grown) in Barcelona
- Died Oct 10, 1988 – Choroní, Venezuela

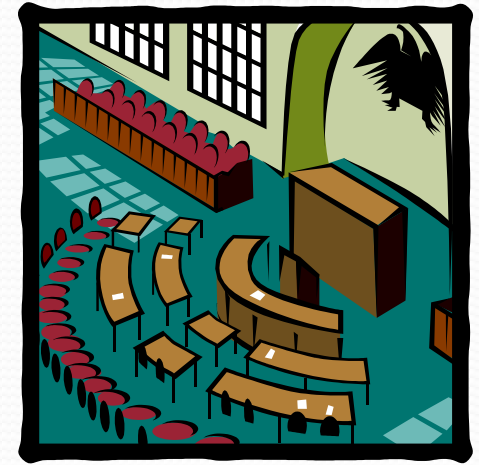
Lessons



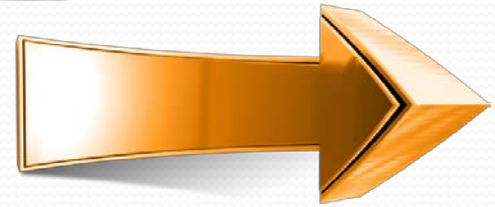
- **To social engineer, know your audience**
 - Garbo understood the German mind
 - Constantly emphasizing how much he loved the Third Reich and how vital it was that Germany win the War
 - Continually telling them how much work he was doing for them and how dangerous it was
 - Delivering loads of detail, but not really telling them anything worthwhile
 - He knew that the German high Command and Hitler came to trust his judgment, even over Rommel's

Lessons

- **Even more, know your “mark”**
 - Garbo played the generals in the German high command like a violin
 - Knew what motivated them
 - Knew what they wanted to hear
 - Knew how to express it in terms that were most believable to them
- Knew that Kuhlenthal, his controller, was not a very dedicated NAZI, and that he was corrupt, taking his cut of money Berlin had sent to him for distribution to Garbo's network
 - Garbo actually liked him and related better with him than his British handlers



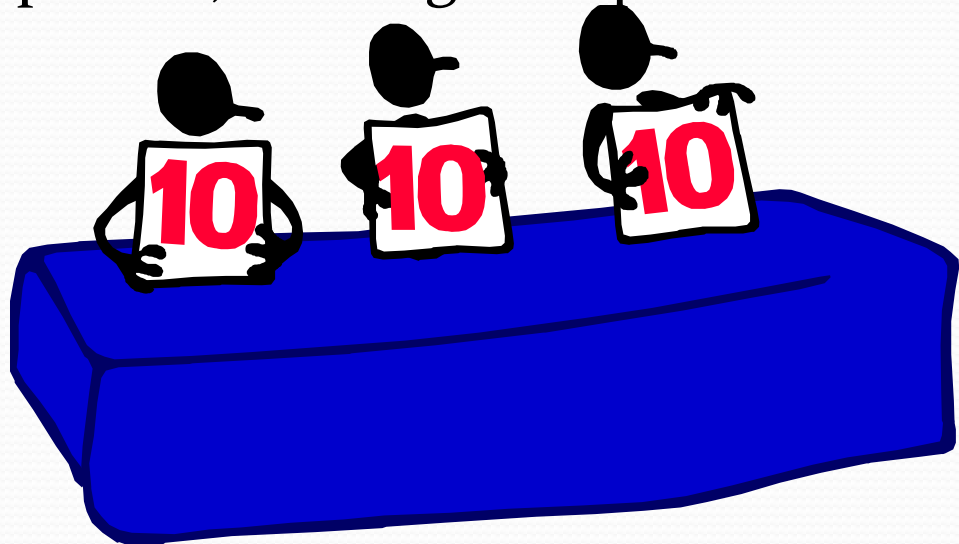
Lessons



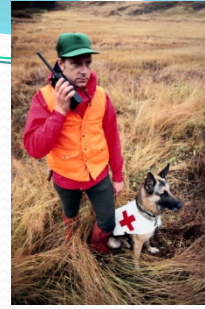
- What your targets think is important, but what they do is crucial
- Hitler *thought* it would be Normandy; so did Rommel; so did many in the German high command
- Reading Garbo's D-day message, Hitler still *thought* Normandy might be the real thing, but he *reversed* the order to send Panzer divisions
- And the tanks *stayed* in Calais, waiting for the “real” invasion, while the beachhead was being secured and the allies were moving inland

Lessons

- **To be effective, be human; don't be too perfect**
 - Garbo's network members had troubles, vices, accidents, mistakes, delays, deaths, etc.
 - Augmented the reality of the unreal network
 - Kuhlenthal wasn't perfect, would get suspicious if Garbo's team was



Lessons



- **Even failure can reinforce credibility if spun well**
 - Cockade - Dummy invasion – fall of 1943
 - Garbo, Tricycle, Bronx, even pigeons were enrolled in the attempted deception
 - Multiple reports from different agents of troop movements and naval maneuvers and invasion readiness activities
 - But on Sep. 8, nothing happened
 - No real troops, no invasion, no marshalling of German forces by reported invasion sites
 - But Garbo and Tricycle both got well-done kudos from the Abwehr for reporting so many details of what was going on

Lessons

- **If the culture supports it, complain a lot**
 - He was continually crying for resources
 - Money
 - Appreciation for his hard work
 - Radios
 - Money
 - Forged Papers
 - Money
 - He bawled about how he was a true supporter of the Reich and they didn't show him enough love
 - He requested awards for members of his network



Lessons

- **Emphasize the prime deception point but don't come right out and say it. Let them draw conclusions**
 - “It might be a short run across the channel (Calais); lots of troops and equipment seem staging in Scotland (for Norway); can't ignore Normandy, but preparations point elsewhere”
 - “This is a feint”
 - “The real invasion will come later; better be ready”
 - “Make sure we have forces in reserve to repel the real, large-scale invasion”



Lessons

- **Architecture - Less is More; Deception - More is More**

- Multiple agents, real and fictitious
- Voluminous, verbally diarrheic reports
- Gossip, name dropping
- False military information in stultifying detail
- Montgomery double in Gibraltar
- Fake tanks and ships and vehicles and planes
- Pigeons (real, but second-rate)
- More bombs on Calais than Normandy for D-Day
- Fake paratroopers and flotillas





Lessons

- **Strengthen your hand, especially by emphasizing their values**
 - 3 hours before the main invasion started, he was allowed (by the British) to send a message to the Germans that Normandy was being invaded
 - But the Germans weren't listening at 3:00am
 - So Garbo chastised them "I am very disgusted as, in this struggle for life and death, I cannot accept excuses or negligence."
 - His message indicated that Patton's First Army was being held back for the next, larger invasion
 - Again, they bought it. And apologized profusely to Garbo

References

- Talty, Stephan, *Agent Garbo*, Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, New York, 2012, ISBN 978-0-547-61481-6
- Macintyre, Ben, *Double Cross*, Crown Publishers, New York, 2012, ISBN 978-0-307-88875-4
- Winterbotham, F. W., *The Ultra Secret*, Dell Publishing, New York, 1974
- Hinsley, F. H. and Stripp, Alan (editors), *Code Breakers*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993, ISBN 019285304-X
- Katzenbeisser, Stefan and Petitcolas, Fabien (editors), *Information Hiding*, Artech House, Norwood, MA, 2000, ISBN 1-58053-035-4

References

- Atkinson, Rick, *The Guns at Last Light*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 2013, ISBN 978-0-8050-6290-8
- Owen, David, *Hidden Secrets*, Firefly Books, Toronto, 2002, ISBN 1-55297-564-9

Final Words



- Today's Social Engineers can brag about their gaining confidence and cadging information and getting into networks, but there has never been a more effective and more consequential social engineering escapade than what the Double Cross team did in Operation Fortitude
- And a failed Spanish chicken farmer proved to be the absolute master of the game