
The Round Table

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Welcome to the September meeting of the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table. Tonight's speaker is Jonathan Gawne, the author of *Ghosts of the ETO: American Tactical Deceptions Units in the European Theater, 1944-1945*.

America's overwhelming production strength and logistics capabilities did not guarantee Allied victory in World War II; a two front war divided her resources and manpower. Enemies also have something to say about victory conditions. Without indulging in hypotheticals, it is safe to say the Allies needed to use every weapon, every trick, and to cheat always and everywhere to ensure victory. Among these are "deception" techniques and actions.

Sun Tzu claimed that all "war is based on deception." Deception is a force multiplier shaping the battlefield by creating surprise and by providing security for military operations and forces.

The Allies – Britain, the Soviet Union, and the US – all entered World War II with little if any capacity for deceiving their opponents. All ended the war with highly sophisticated programs for deception and "*maskirovka*." The Russian concept differs somewhat from the Western notion of deception, and included deception, concealment, camouflage, and secrecy, all intended to conceal large scale troop movements and concentrations preparatory to offensives, notably the highly successful operations at Stalingrad, Kursk, and in the White Russian offensive.

Success is measured by the enemy's response. When Gen. Galland of the *Luftwaffe* stated that the transfer of the fighter force from Pas de Calais to Normandy was delayed because the OKW thought Normandy was a feint, he confirmed the success of Operation FORTITUDE.

FORTITUDE, perhaps the most famous of the US-UK World War II deception efforts, attempted to deceive the Germans about the Allied landings on the European continent. It included a horde of lesser known operations that are of interest.

BARCLAY (1943) was sham attacks on southern France and the Balkans. It helped safeguard HUSKY, ensuring operational success in the invasion of Sicily by keeping the Italian fleet in the Adriatic near Greece, and influencing the Germans to misallocate troop strength, leaving Sicily unreinforced. A sham British Twelfth Army of 12 fictitious divisions was created in the eastern Mediterranean using double agents, false communications dummy encampments, and so on. MINCEMEAT, in conjunction with BARCLAY, involved planting a dead courier off the coast

of Spain, with a chained brief case attached containing plans for an invasion of Greece – called

"Husky!" The Spanish forwarded copies of the documents to the Germans, who bought the story, hook, line, and sinker. Sir Michael Howard and other authorities consider MINCEMEAT "perhaps the most successful deception operation in the war."

Operation COCKADE (also 1943) included a series of sequential sub-operations, STARKEY, WADHAM, and TINDALL, to alleviate pressure on Allied operations in Sicily and on the eastern front though feint attacks into Western Europe. Running in September, using double agents, decoy signals, fake troop concentrations, and increased air reconnaissance and bombing in the Boulogne and Brest regions and in Norway, the three plans were implemented in short time lines, had bad back stories, and took place outside the range of tactical air support. STARKEY planners of British-Canadian landing at Boulogne wanted 2,300 heavy bomber sorties over 14 days. Gen. Ira Eaker's 8Air Force had only flown 5,400 sorties in the previous 8 months! The Royal Navy refused to place battleships at risk as bait for the *Luftwaffe*. WADHAM was an ostensible American invasion of Brest, many of the 13 divisions coming directly from the US, following on the successes at Boulogne. TINDALL was a British-American attack to capture the airfield and town of Stavanger, Norway. The forces to be used actually existed in Scotland. COCKADE failed because the Germans did not believe the Allies would invade western Europe in 1943, and they refused to join in air battle as the Allies hoped. The only success was in convincing the Germans there were 51 divisions in the British Isles; actually there were 17!

Operation BODYGUARD was the deception plan to support the OVERLORD invasion at Normandy in 1944. The objective was to induce "faulty [German] strategic dispositions" of forces into northern Italy, the Balkans, Greece, and Scandinavia. Like Gaul, it had three parts: ZEPPELIN, FORTITUDE NORTH and FORTITUDE SOUTH. ZEPPELIN was a sham British-American attack into the Balkans from northern Africa. Decoy landing craft in the eastern Med and selling the Germans 39 divisions when only 18 existed helped make the threat posed by the fake "British Twelfth Army" and the real US Seventh Army believable to the Germans. Soviet cooperation – feints towards Romania and Bulgaria - and double agents helped make the ZEPPELIN story work.

FORTITUDE NORTH was a sham attack on Norway and Denmark, using a fictional Fourth Army of 250,000 men in Scotland – the British VII taking Narvik and the Brit II corps and US XV Corps taking Stavanger. The story spread by double agents, false radio nets, and decoy camps, and So-

If you are a veteran, or know a veteran, of one of these campaigns – contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or coldpatton@yahoo.com

viet fake preparations for an offensive against Finland and northern Norway. The diplomatic offensive - Operation GRAFFHAM - sought over-flight rights and logistic support from Sweden, which informed the Germans, making OKW regard this threat as credible, they kept 12 divisions in Norway!

FORTITUDE SOUTH was to convince the Germans that the main attack would be in the Pas de Calais area in late July, and that the June Normandy landings were a feint to draw German reserves out of the target area. The fictional First US Army Group (FUSAG), commanded by Gen. George Patton, whom the Germans regarded as our best combat commander, had 150,000 US and Canadian troops in eastern England. Pas de Calais was more heavily bombed than Normandy and reconnaissance flights saturated the skies, with double agents, false radios, news reports, and decoy camps and equipment all helping to sell this story, built on the geographic logic of being the closest invasion point with good beaches. Several other smaller operations, including COPPERHEAD (a Montgomery double traveled to Gibraltar the week prior to the Normandy invasion which he would not do if it were the real thing) reinforced the Pas de Calais story.

BODYGUARD was highly successful, and the Germans were surprised by the landings at Normandy on 6 June, and they continued to regard it as a feint until July. ZEPPELIN AND FORTITUDE NORTH were *ambiguity deception* operations, creating uncertainty and inhibiting accurate German intelligence assessments, leading them to misallocate forces to south Europe and Norway. FORTITUDE SOUTH was a *misleading the opponent* operation, reducing ambiguity by making the false alternative so attractive. SOUTH worked so well that OKW, Rundstedt, Jodl, etc. were convinced the invasion point would be Pas de Calais in July. Only Rommel dissented; the *Luftwaffe* had too easy a time flying reconnaissance over FUSAG areas, while air defenses over south England were nearly impenetrable.

Because the British controlled the German agents in England, they were able to send fake intelligence reports back to Germany without fear of contradiction. To coordinate operations they formed the London Controlling Section (LCS), which tried to prevent conflicting deceptions and blown cover stories. When the United States entered the war, they formed their own committee, eventually known as Joint Security Control (JSC), that coordinated deceptions in the European and Pacific theaters, but the Japanese were a minor issue, their High Command did not believe any intelligence that contradicted its presumptions about American/Allied capabilities.

The efforts of the Allies were generally successful because they controlled access to information, had centralized control over deception operations at high levels (LCS), used sound techniques, made deception serve their strategic and operational objectives, and allowed sufficient time for the execution of the deception plans. The Russians fully integrated *maskirovka* into the planning and execution of operations at all levels, leading the Germans to routinely underestimate Soviet strength by fifty percent.

Further Readings:

Jonathan Gawne, *Ghosts of the ETO: American Tactical*

Deceptions Units in the European Theater, 1944-1945 (Oxford, U.K.: Casemate, 2014).

Philip Gerard, *Secret Soldiers: The Story of World War II's Heroic Army of Deception* (New York: Dutton, 2002).

Charles Cruickshank, *Deception in World War II* (New York: Oxford UP, 1980).

Thaddeus Holt, *The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War* (New York: 2004).

Nicholas Rankin, *A Genius for Deception: How Cunning Helped the British Win Two World Wars* (New York: Oxford UP, 2009).

Announcements:

Twin Cities Civil War Round Table -

20 Sept. 2016 – *Civil War Made Modern Food* - www.tccwrt.com - info@tccwrt.com

St Croix Valley Civil War Round Table - 26 Sept. 2016 – *Stonewall Jackson* - 715-386-1268 - rossandhaines@comcast.net

Cannon Valley CWRT -

Fort Snelling Civil War Symposium - 8 April 2017
Minnesota Military Museum, Camp Ripley, 15000 Hwy 115, Little Falls, MN 56345, 320-616-6050, <http://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org/>

Honor Flight - Jerry Kyser - crazyjerry45@hotmail.com - 651-338-2717

CAF - Commemorative Air Force - www.cafmn.org 651-455-6942

Minnesota Air Guard Museum - www.mnangmuseum.org 612-713-2523

Friends of Ft. Snelling, www.fortsnelling.org

Fagen Fighters WWII Museum, Granite Falls, MN, 320-564-6644, <http://www.fagenfighterswwiimuseum.org>

World Without Genocide, 651-695-7621, <http://www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/>

Airshow - Eden Prairie - July 2017 www.wotn.org 952-746-6100

Military History Book Club, Har Mar Barnes & Noble: 28 Sept., Corum, *The Luftwaffe* - sdaubenspeck52@gmail.com

We need volunteers to drive our veterans to and from meetings. Please contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or coldpatton@yahoo.com

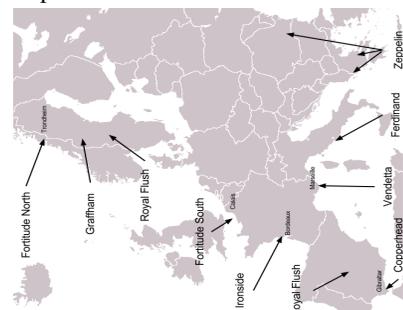
Round Table Schedule 2016-2017

2016

- 8 Sept From Holocaust to US Soldier
- 22 Sept 1930s Pacific Diplomacy
- 12 Oct 11th Airborne, PI to Occupation
- 27 Oct Germany in the 1930s
- 10 Nov Deutsch Lecture - Sentencing at Nuremberg
- 8 Dec Countdown to Pearl Harbor (75th Anniv)

2017

- 12 Jan Battle of Koenigsburg
- 9 Feb Nazi Hunters
- 9 Mar Arsenal for War
- 23 Mar Gen. Lesley McNair
- 13 Apr Last Mission of the 93rd Bomb Group
- 11 May Corps Commanders of the Battle of the Bulge



See our programs on YouTube at <http://youtube.com/ww2hrt>