

1943 - 1944

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OVERLORD COVER PLAN

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Overview

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OVERLORD COVER PLAN

An admirer of strategic deception, Great Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill established the London Controlling Section (LCS) in mid-1942. This was a secret bureau that met within Churchill's underground Cabinet War Rooms to plan stratagem against Hitler's Nazi regime. As Chief of the LCS in July, 1943, Colonel John Bevan submitted "Plan Jael," the overall deception policy for the Overlord invasion.

Plan Jael, named after a woman in the Old Testament who committed acts of treachery, contained five main spheres of secret activity: offensive intelligence, counter-intelligence and security, special operations, political warfare, and deception. After many revisions and names, Jael became "Bodyguard" and was presented to General Eisenhower when he reported to duty as the Supreme Allied Commander in January, 1944.

The codename "Bodyguard" was chosen due to the following quote said by Winston Churchill to Joseph Stalin in 1943: "In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies."

Bodyguard was the overall strategy for a number of cover and deception operations intended to mislead the enemy and protect the Overlord invasion. It had two objectives:

First, Bodyguard operations would need to convince Hitler to disperse his forces so that they would not be concentrated in the real invasion area, the beaches of Normandy, France. Secondly, Hitler's response to the invasion needed to be delayed by

convincing him that the real invasion was just a diversion for a larger imminent invasion.

To achieve this, Bodyguard proposed a war plan that was just close enough to the truth to seem credible to Hitler, but would mislead him completely about the time, place, and force of the invasion. Therefore, Bodyguard created no less than 36 subordinate deception plans with peculiar names to keep the Nazi forces spread out and guessing where and when the Allies would invade western Europe. For example, Operation Ironside presented the threat of an assault at Bordeaux, France, while Operation Vendetta threatened the region of Marseilles, France, and Operation Ferdinand kept Nazi troops occupied in the Genoa region of Italy.

Operation Fortitude was a major piece of Bodyguard and it was also divided into two sub-plans, Fortitude North and Fortitude South.

The objective of Fortitude North was to convince Hitler to keep the 27 divisions he had stationed in Norway, Denmark, and Finland in place until the Allies invaded Normandy. This was to be accomplished through threats of an Allied invasion from Scotland.

Similarly, the objective of Fortitude South was to convince Hitler to keep his 15th Army at Pas de Calais before, during, and after the Allies invaded at Normandy. This was to be accomplished by presenting Hitler with the threat of an Allied invasion from the Dover, England area.