



New Document Releases

Special Operations Executive Records Release 8th Feb 2002

Introduction

This is the eighth and penultimate release of records relating to the Special Operations Executive (SOE), Britain's wartime sabotage and subversion organisation (for those not familiar with SOE a very brief history is available). The final release will comprise the 13,000 personnel files. The series of files **(HS 8)** released today are the surviving records from SOE's Headquarters Section, including papers from Specialist Sections and SOE's American Section. Also included in this release are the private office papers of Lord Selborne, the Minister responsible for SOE. Selborne succeeded Hugh Dalton as Minister of Economic Warfare in February 1942 and fulfilled this role up until the end of the war. These General and Headquarters registered files deal with policy, planning, political relations, administration, finance, and personnel matters.

The following list is only a summary of selected files judged the most interesting. Those subjects covered by the release include, Lord Selborne's correspondence with ministers, officials, military personnel, SOE agents and various governments in exile **(HS 8/897-945)**; minutes of SOE Councils and Committees **(HS 8/193-225)**; SOE relations with United States organisations **(HS 8/1-119)**; air liaison, including agent insertion, supply drops, the use of new navigational and communications equipment **(HS 8/120-150)**; naval liaison, operations and equipment **(HS 8/766-831)**; operation of clandestine communication lines into Europe **(HS 8/151-192)**; policy and planning **(HS 8/270-303, inc. OVERLORD 286-300)**; propaganda **(HS 8/ 304-315)**; liaison (Foreign Office, MI5, MI6, Allied governments, etc) **(HS 8/316- 333)**; administration, organisation and finance **(HS 8/334-356)**; communications **(HS 8/357-368)**; recruitment and training **(HS 8/369-396)**; honours and awards **(HS 8/387-413)**; evaluations of sabotage and operations **(HS 8/414-428)**; histories **(HS 8/429-447)**; the termination of contracts and employment (known as 'liquidations') **(HS 8/448-765)**; security **(HS 8/832-896)**, including War Crimes **HS 8/879-882)**; supplementary files which deal with liaison with the Colonial Office and the War Office **(HS 8/946-964)**; organisation and symbols used to denote sections and individuals **(HS 8/965-986)**;

miscellaneous and aide-memoirs many written by post-war SOE advisors (**HS 8/987-1025**) and specimens of forged documents created for SOE agents in the field (**HS 8/1026-1043**).

Some of the files are available to download in their entirety on DocumentsOnline. These are HS 8/897-899. HS 8/897-899 covers Lord Selborne's correspondence with Winston Churchill about SOE from 1942-45.

Highlights include:

Other highlights of the release include the Hitler Passport, created by the SOE forgery section and the photograph album of The Polish Underground Army.

HS 8/897-945 Lord Selborne's (Viscount Woler) correspondence

An index to Lord Selborne's correspondence can be found in HS 8/943 and an individual index to each file can be found at the front of each file as a minute sheet. However, these are not indices or comprehensive and do not include his personal papers held in HS 8/944.

HS 8/897-899 To Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1942-1945)

HS 8/897 covers the period from Mar 1942 to Dec 1943 and HS 8/898 covers up to May 1945. A minute sheet is contained in HS 8/899 which provides an index to both files. As is to be expected these files deal with many different aspects of the war relating to SOE and the Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW) at the highest level and specifically in those areas that were deferred to Churchill. The correspondence is in chronological order and listed below are some papers that maybe of particular interest. The papers often refer to the quarterly summaries that were sent to Churchill by Selborne, these are held in HS 8/899.

HS 8/900	Correspondence with Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee (1942-1945)
HS 8/901	Correspondence with Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden (1942-1945)
HS 8/907	Correspondence with First Lord of the Admiralty, A.V.Alexander (1942-1945)
HS 8/919	Correspondence with the Chiefs of Staff
HS 8/919	Correspondence with the Chiefs of Staff, War Cabinet Secretariat & War Office Officials
HS 8/927	Correspondence with Permanent Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, Alexander Cadogan (1942-1945)
HS 8/924	Correspondence with Desmond Morton (1942-1945)
HS 8/903	Correspondence with Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Anderson
HS 8/904	Correspondence with Minister of Labour, Ernest Bevin
HS 8/905	Correspondence with President of the Board of Trade, Oliver Lyttleton
HS 8/908	Correspondence with L S Amery, Secretary of State
HS 8/909	Correspondence with Minister of Information, Brendan Bracken
HS 8/193-225	Headquarters: Committees

HS 8/1-119	American Section
HS 8/152-177	Clandestine Communication Lines; Circuits and Missions
HS 8/387-413	Honours and Awards
HS 8/414-428	Sabotage evaluation reports
HS 8/429-447	Histories
HS 8/448-765	Liquidation
HS 8/766-831	Naval Section
HS 8/832-896	Security
HS 8/1026-1043	Specimens and reproductions of foreign documentation

A Brief history of SOE and its Archive

The Special Operations Executive (SOE), Britain's covert operations service, was charged by Winston Churchill 'to set Europe ablaze' and as such was responsible for sabotage, subversion and resistance in enemy occupied countries. Formed in July 1940, SOE comprised of three existing organisations, 'D' Section of MI6 ('D' reputedly for 'Destruction'), MI R - Military Intelligence Research section of the War Office, and Electra House - a propaganda section of the Foreign Office. Responsibility for SOE's work lay with the Minister of Economic Warfare, Sir Hugh Dalton (July 1940-Feb 1942) and Lord Selborne. SOE's headquarters were at 64 Baker Street, quite separate from the Ministry, which was located in Berkeley Square. The first Executive Officer, or CD as the position became known, was career diplomat Gladwyn Jebb who returned to the Foreign Office in 1942. Sir Frank Nelson, Sir Charles Hambro and finally Major General Colin Gubbins succeeded Jebb as CD. Initially SOE was divided into three branches: SO1 (propaganda), SO2 (active operations) and SO3 (planning). As a new and seemingly ungentlemanly organisation SOE was frequently at odds with the Ministry of Information (MOI), The Foreign Office, the War Office and MI6. In August 1941, after a dispute with MOI and the Foreign Office, SOE's propaganda functions were transferred to the Political Warfare Executive, which was under Foreign Office control. Although SOE's principal focus was Europe it operated to varying degrees, on a worldwide basis. It was disbanded in 1946 with many agents and responsibilities being absorbed into SIS.

SOE's archive is confused and incomplete. To some extent this is due to the haste and piecemeal fashion in which the organisation developed. For reasons of security no central registry was kept and each branch kept its own papers according to its own filing system. Toward the end of the war there was an attempt to reclassify the papers by subject, irrespective of origin. Only about a quarter of this task was completed in 1946 and as a result two unfinished systems of classification were left. Moreover two major destruction exercises took place, firstly the Oriental mission in Singapore destroyed its files in light of the pending Japanese advance and secondly the Middle Eastern Mission in Cairo, one of SOE's largest foreign stations, similarly destroyed its records as the Germans approached Alexandria. Instructions were subsequently issued for all surviving papers to be sent home after weeding of ephemeral material (Massingham, the Algiers base operating in France, destroyed virtually all its records with the exception of the personal files). Furthermore, a drastic weeding exercise was carried out by inexperienced staff in London. A fire in late 1945 also accounted for a further unknown number of files. Suggested subjects include Finance, FANY, Belgium and Poland. As a result an estimated 85% of SOE records held in London were destroyed.

HS 8/193-225 Headquarters: Committees

As one would expect the Headquarters Committee papers covers a wide range of subjects, ranging from administration, finance and personnel to directives, liaison, policy, operations, planning and politics.

HS 8/198-203

Minutes of the SOE Council and the Objectives Board

As to be expected these minutes deal with all aspects of SOE activities, at the front of each file is a minute sheet or index. Some highlights are **HS 8/198** (Nov 1941 - July 192) 6th & 13th April 1942 use of narcotic drugs in the Middle East; the use of 'considerable' funds for the release of captured agents'; **HS 8/199** 8 June 1943. The Welbum, a device for parachutists who drop into water' the streamlined metal container, houses an electric motor, battery and screw, harnessed to the swimmers back it will travel at 2 knots for 2 miles quite silently; 22 June 1943 'Execution Month' a proposal to carry out widespread simultaneous execution of S.S. Officials, an increase in the production of the Welrod (a silent gun) was also requested to carry out this campaign. **HS 8/201** (1944) 12 Dec 1944 preparations of Christmas parties for wounded personnel of the resistance and those who had survived being taken prisoner 'in order to make parties a success soap, chocolate and cigarettes are welcomed'. **HS 8/202** (Jan 1945-Dec1945) deals almost entirely with future of SOE June 26th 1945 discusses it merger with SIS; Similarly 24 Oct 1945 proposes a combined Secret Service.

HS 8/203

Minutes of meetings of the Objectives board

One paper on this file from 7th August 1942 discusses potentially trading with the enemy; the exchange with Japan of copper or nitrate for rubber.

HS 8/204

CD's (Executive Head of SOE) Weekly meetings (Nov1942-Mar 144)

Sir Colin Gubbins was involved with SOE from the start, an expert in guerrilla warfare, he had by this stage become CD; Head of SOE. These meeting show the day to day business at SOE HQ, from such trivial matters such as the use of telephones for private calls (9th June 1942) to policy, operations and the problems of co-operating with the NKVD (5th Nov 1943)

HS 8/1-119 American Section

SOE's American Section formed part of the British Security Coordination (BSC) Office in New York, headed by the Canadian, William S Stephenson. The BSC not only represented SOE, but also Britain's other intelligence agencies MI5 and SIS. Therefore BSC's responsibilities were far ranging, including intelligence, propaganda, recruitment, counter-espionage and security. With America's entry into the War many of SOE's responsibilities were shared with her US Counter-part, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Whilst SOE had helped establish OSS by training its agents and providing it with the wisdom of experience, inevitably strains between the two organisations emerged as the war progressed. A particular problem was the division of areas of operation and thereby influence. However, OSS's tough

and determined head, 'Wild' Bill Donovan, prevented SOE from dominating the newcomer and close co-operation and mutual benefits were maintained. This combination of cooperation and mistrust is well reflected in the files listed below.

HS 8/1

OSS (Office of Strategic Services) Directive

'Functions of OSS' sent to Gubbins in 1943.

HS 8/2

Operations European Theatre

Fitzroy Maclean's briefing on the military situation in Yugoslavia - withdrawal of 'Reichsdeutsch' to be replaced by Croats, Bosnian Muslims. Failure of German offensive (13th April 1944). Includes summaries of OSS/SOE position in the Mediterranean theatre up to April 1944 and Donovan's suggestion that some SOE staff should be withdrawn from Yugoslavia to make room for OSS.

HS 8/5

Balkans and Middle East

Donovan-Gubbins correspondence, demarcation of roles between OSS and SOE. Reports on the ineffectiveness of Mihailovic and the cetniks. Evidence of the poor relationship between Maclean and Donovan: Maclean threatens to arrest any OSS personnel that enter Yugoslavia without first gaining clearance from Tito and himself. SOE plans to attack the oil refinery at Ploesti in Romania. A list of OSS equipment in the Mediterranean theatre in great detail '4 telescopes, twelve knuckle dusters'.

HS 8/6

London Group

Press release on the role of SOE and OSS in France from occupation to D-Day. Includes a menu from SOE/OSS dinner at Claridges on 20th October 1944 and a list of US staff working at SOE HQ.

HS 8/7

OSS: Middle East

Problems in dealings with the OSS. OSS acting independently in Istanbul. OSS in Yugoslavia and Greece - undesirability from SOE point of view. Attachment of 178 OSS personnel to British military missions inside Yugoslavia.

HS 8/8

Mediterranean group: top level planning of activities

Changes to command structure of OSS/SOE subsequent to allied landing in Italy. OSS efforts to engender resistance in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. More OSS/SOE tension 'It is clear to me that OSS will not do much more than talk' and 'we are kidding ourselves if we think we can prevent the Americans from taking independent action' - Gubbins. Donovan letter on De Gaulle wanting OSS in France to report 'Exclusively to him'.

HS 8/27**1944 South American Diary**

Weekly reports including; contrast of the attitudes of German and British expat communities in South America and the Upper classes in Latin America. Public opinion reported by the British Embassy - 'the men behind the scenes in Argentina expect to be left to keep the flame of Nazism alight after it is extinguished in Europe. In this they are solidly backed by the Church of Rome'.

HS8/52**Nazi Propaganda in US And Abuse Of The US Congressional Frank (1941)**

FBI report on Senator 'Ham' Fish's secretary using his congressional frank to send out isolationist and pro-Nazi material to others. Newspaper accounts of the secretary's arrest and trial.

HS8/53**Defeat Of Fifth Column And Anti-British Propaganda In The USA (1942)**

Full report on British efforts to counter Fifth Columnist propaganda in the US media. 'Identified' Fifth Columnists include WR Hearst and the Ku Klux Klan, while Walter Winchell and William L Shirer are both cited as pro British voices in the press. Tactics of the American Fifth Column are discussed at some length under various headings including 'Racial, Astrology, Anti-Britain, Anti-Canada, Anti-Russia'.

HS8/54**America First Committee (1941)**

British, and American, analysis of this powerful Isolationist group. Includes extensive newspaper coverage of Charles Lindbergh's support for the Nazi regime, full-page headline: 'What Poisoned Lindbergh's Mind?'

HS8/56**American Irish Defence Association: First Report (1941)**

A study of this Irish American lobby group that supported the American war effort and sought to influence opinion in Eire in favour of the allies. Includes a questionnaire on Irish American attitudes to the war and a propaganda leaflet 'No Blarney From Hitler'. Also a profile of Cardinal O'Donnell of Boston, an influential anti-British voice.

HS8/57**American Irish Defence Association: Second Report (1941)**

AIDA stationary, membership cards. Newspaper pieces urging Eire to allow the allies, or at the very least the US, access to ports on the Atlantic coastline.

HS8/58**American Irish Defence Association: Third And Fourth Reports (1941)**

Information on Irish American peace campaigners', efforts to have Col. William Donovan (founder of the OSS) removed from his position in Washington. Also an AIDA poster proclaiming US-Irish friendship and defaced AIDA membership cards 'A Bunch of Black and Tans - shame on you traitors'

HS8/60

American Irish Defence Association: Sixth Report (1942)

Continuing efforts to try and persuade Eire to allow the US access to bases on the Atlantic Coast - list of potential radio speakers to broadcast on behalf of the allies includes Jimmy Cagney, Errol Flynn and Maureen O'Hara.

HS8/117

Reports From The New York Office; Anti-Soviet Press Campaign (1945)

SOE analysis of American press coverage of the Soviet Union featuring ten articles. The beginnings of the Cold War are readily apparent - headlines include, 'Soviet Tactics Embarrass, Bewilder Even Its Friends', 'Reds gird for Third Conflict', 'Reds' Rule Following Nazis' Gory Trail'.

HS 8/152-177 Clandestine Communication Lines; Circuits and Missions

The Clandestine and Communication Section's function was to pass agents, parcels, letters, money and reports into and out of, enemy-occupied territory by clandestine 'lines'.

HS 8/176

Individual Mission: A. Robichaud (Robin) -

Initial training reports and paperwork dealing with preparation for first mission. Account (21 April 1944) of first mission testing the VAR circuit and the CHERUB and CELINE escape lines. Includes postcard from Bordeaux to a safe house in Spain confirming his arrival.

HS 8/177

Individual Mission: Alfred Schouten (Alice Edgar) -

Contains cover story (preparatory notes and final version, typed in French), the agent's cipher, instructions upon landing and the Agent's final report dated June 1945 (handwritten, in French).

HS 8/387-413 Honours and Awards

These files contain recommendations for awards of foreign nationals, giving brief operational details of bravery and courage of the highest order - many operatives were tortured and killed by the Gestapo.

HS 8/387-397

French nationals

HS 8/398-400

Persons without personal files

HS 8/401

African, American, Austrian and Belgian Nationals

HS 8/402

Corsican Czechoslovakian and Danish Nationals

HS 8/403-405
Greek Nationals

HS 8/406
Dutch

HS 8/407
Foreign nationals (excluding France): Countries I-Z

HS 8/410
Issues of Campaign stars and medals

HS 8/412
Minister's Correspondence re Honours and Awards

HS 8/414-428 Sabotage evaluation reports

HS 8/417
Sabotage attacks in Denmark 1944-45
Post-war debriefing of Danish saboteurs by SOE staff. Contains typed accounts of operations (destruction of industrial targets, moored ships, railway lines) with explanatory maps/diagrams and photographs of damage caused.

HS 8/418
Sabotage attacks in Denmark 1944-45
See above (HS 8/417). Also contains details of the destruction of the Gestapo Headquarters in Esbjerg on 9th April 1945 caused by a bomb disguised as the gas meter.

HS 8/423
French resistance June 1944-45
A succinct evaluation of French resistance and delays it caused to German troop movement after the Normandy landings.

HS 8/420-421
German Counter scorch
Temple Mission to France to investigate German methods of demolition and counter-scorch. The files contain many photographs of sabotage to industrial and telecommunication targets.

HS 8/424-427
Sabotage in France
These four files contain accounts of the methods, approach and results of various acts of sabotage on industrial targets. Each file includes many photographs.

HS8/428

SOE Activities In Greece and The Islands of the Aegean 1945

Includes accounts of all the principal SOE operations in the area including a report on the kidnapping of General Kreipe on Crete written by Major P. Leigh Fermor.

HS 8/429-447 Histories

HS8/437

Photograph Album of Polish Underground Army, 1943-44

The album includes scenes in forest hideouts, soldiers taking mass, derailed trains and units in action - (many of these photographs are unpublished). Also several photographs of news sheets published by the Home Army.

HS 8/448-765 Liquidation

Liquidation: the Mediterranean section was established to deal with the final disposal of agents and caiques (fishing boats) used by SOE in Italy and the Balkans. Although there are over 300 Liquidation files (all dealing with Greek claims) the content is largely administrative and therefore somewhat 'dry'. As such there are only a few papers listed below.

HS 8/654

Greek Liquidation Claims: Michael Papazolou-Paradeisianos

This file contains three moving accounts of incidents that took place in the notorious Averoff Prison.

HS8/678

Greek Liquidation Claims: Psaroudakis - Pylarinos (1945-46)

Included in the liquidation claims in this file is the claim of Georgios Psykhoundakis who served with SOE on Crete throughout the occupation, and in 1955 wrote an account of his experiences 'the Cretan Runner'. The file contains an impressive testimonial, including a recommendation of Psykhoundakis for the King's Medal for Courage and the award of £200.

Naval Section

The Naval Section liaised with the Admiralty and administered the SOE flotillas of small boats and supporting bases in the UK, the Mediterranean and South East Asia.

HS8/766

Anti Submarine Campaign (1943-44)

General intelligence on U-Boats including: bases, armament, morale among crews, sabotage inside occupied Europe. Includes sketch maps of Gydnia and Brest showing U-boat pens and repair facilities. The file also contains a

plan of the German naval radio communication base at Sainte-Assise in France.

HS8/767

Anti Submarine Campaign: Interrogation of U-Boat Survivors (1942-44)

Includes details of recurrent sabotage of U-Boats whilst refitting in French Ports, particularly Lorient. Information on the provisions taken on board U-Boats, bars where sailors spent their off duty time and general gossip within the U-Boat fleet.

HS 8/817

Anti-Submarine Campaign: Technical and Intelligence Reports (1941-1942)

Discussions of how best SOE could play a part in the anti U-Boat campaign. Methods explored include the use of platinum pills for destroying submarine batteries, methods of spoiling foodstuffs for use on U-Boats and ways of damaging crews' morale. Also contains rough map of submarine pens at Lorient and a detailed plan of a British battery charging facility at Troon, Ayrshire.

HS 8/769

BRIDFORD: use of Motor Gunboats

A Report by SOE organiser Cdr. Sir George Binney (1945) on the Bridford missions to pick up essential war materials (steel and ball bearings) from Sweden by running the German blockade in converted Motor Gun Boats. Contains a narrative running from the inception of the scheme until the completion of the last mission as well as appendices with further details. **HS 8/768** contains correspondence regarding uses of the Bridford boats at the end of their task. Also includes an account of a Bridford voyage to Sweden over the New Year of 1943-44.

HS 8/770

CONSTANCE: Helford Flotilla (1942-45)

General correspondence relating to the vessels of the Helford flotilla a small private navy set up by G. Holsworth on the river Helford in Cornwall. Includes a spirited defence of the flotilla by Holdsworth in April 1942. Contains one photograph of an anonymous dinghy that appears to have caused administrative problems. **HS 8/771** includes accounts of early sea trials of the Helford vessels 'St. Denis Louise' and 'Mutin' off the Scillies, and several subsequent missions to Brittany. **HS8/772** includes a proposed sea dropping of 'Jedburgh' teams for D-Day.

HS8/784

Operation Moonshine: Report By Lt. Cdr. Bingham MBE DSC (1945)

Account of an effort to supply the Danish resistance with munitions carried across the North Sea on three small merchant vessels. The ships also picked up Swedish industrial material for the Ministry of Supply. One vessel was lost in a collision on the return trip.

HS8/785

Operation Frodesley: Intelligence (1941-42)

Detailed information on three German capital ships moored in fjords in the Trondheim area of Norway; the Admiral von Tirpitz, Prinz Eugen and Admiral Scheer. Includes details of the local garrisons, the activities of the ships, security measures etc. Also contains aerial photographs and diagrams of the two cruisers and the Bismarck (whose layout was very similar to the Tirpitz). HS8/786 contains maps and charts showing the Trondheim area and German installations/troop dispositions in the locale.

HS8/798

Policy: Consideration of Operational use of Welman Craft (1943-1944)

Various considerations of how best to deploy the Welman operationally, including the possibility of giving some to Norwegian forces based on the Shetland Isles

HS8/801

Welman Craft; Specifications, Drawings and Photographs (1942)

Specifications &c for a short range, midget submarine developed by the SOE specifically for action in enemy ports/inshore waters.

HS8/825

Organisation: Support of D-Day Operations (1943-1944)

Proposals for the employment of the Helford flotilla subsequent to the D-Day landings and SOE plans to land small raiding parties on the French coast. With two charts showing the French Atlantic coast and the English Channel.

HS 8/774- 776

Devices and Trials; Naval (1941-445)

HS 8/774 Discussions and proposals for incendiary devices and magnetic mines, includes photographs. **HS 8/775** Attempts to develop a torpedo tube launched canister to deliver equipment to enemy beaches for agents to recover. Also contains discussion of collapsible boats, notes on the best way to sabotage enemy motor vehicles, and a study of German RDF (radar) stations. **HS8/776** Attempts to define the role of SOE maritime units (mainly in the Far Eastern theatre) - chain of command, roster of units, suitable tasks for SOE.

HS 8/832-896 Security

Security section was responsible for physical security of SOE agents, premises and operations.

HS 8/849

Security: Great Britain; Enemy Activities and Counter Measures (1939-41)

Reports on possible tactics in the event of a German invasion, Section D (Left behind groups to operate behind the lines in occupied areas of England) and a German magazine from January 1939 speculating on Nazi involvement with IRA bombings. Also a memo on the threat from spies and how to spot them - 'German...chocolate, with paper showing it's foreign origin, is suspicious.'

HS 8/852

Gestapo Interrogation Methods, Peace Feelers (1941-1945)

Translation of a captured S.D. (Police branch of the S.S.) document from March 1945, reporting on the increase in British agents, particularly agents in German military uniform operating inside Germany. The file also contains reports on Gestapo interrogation methods and notes on the methods used to penetrate British underground networks.

HS 8/858

Publications (1942-48)

Correspondence on proposed books/plays/films concerning SOE operations or by SOE personnel. There is also a note regarding the use of Jean Renoir's 1938 film 'La Bete Humaine', by SOE - presumably because of the story's setting amongst the railways and marshalling yards of Paris and Northern France.

HS8/848

Acceptance and Rejection (1943-44)

Guidelines for the training of SOE operatives and the circumstances in which they should be returned to their original unit (i.e. rejected for SOE service). Instructions on the procedure for rejecting trainees and some examples.

HS 8/879-882

War Crimes

HS 8/881 contains War Crimes testimony and correspondence including an account of the murder of British commandoes taken prisoner during the first mission to attack the Heavy Water plant at Vemork. Also accounts of captivity in various concentration camps and crimes committed by German units in France during their attempts to deploy in Normandy subsequent to the D-Day landings. HS 8/882 contains, amongst similar papers, the details of the OUTHALL mission by SOE's Yeo Thomas. Thomas travelled back to France and Germany to locate various SOE personnel and in particular the camp doctor at Buchenwald who had saved his life whilst he had been imprisoned there. There are also papers relating to Vera Atkins mission to discover the fate of 118 missing agents, 117 were traced.

HS 8/886

BOYKIN kidnapping of Italian Double agents

Operation Boykin was a scheme to kidnap Italian double agents, Ugo Osteria and Stefano Porta, who were posing a threat to resistance efforts in Northern Italy. They were successfully extracted from Italy by use of knock out chemicals and interrogated, leading to the exposure of bogus resistance groups set up for the purpose of intercepting British sabotage material and directives. HS 8/887 contains the interrogation reports.

HS 8/891

Operation MALPAS

Operation Malpas was conceived with the aim of killing a German intelligence operative, Dr. Wertz, who was running a spy network in South Africa from Lourenco Marques. Initially SOE planned to assassinate him using a car

bomb but this plan was rejected for fear of causing 'serious reprisals in a neutral country'. SOE infiltrated Wertz's operation instead and it ceased to be effective.

HS 8/892

Operation LONGSHANKS: Disposal of ex SOE German Seamen

Operation LONGSHANKS was an SOE effort to capture Axis shipping in the Portuguese colony of Goa. Although the mission was a failure, the Germans scuttling their vessels before they could be captured, three anti-Nazi German seamen took the opportunity to surrender to the British. These men served on SOE's strength in India and this file deals with the arrangements for their repatriation and reward at the conclusion of the war in the Far East.

HS 8/893

Missing agents Index; Concentration Camps

Includes handwritten annotation to Violette Szabo's entry 'Believed to be at Ravensbruck'. Szabo and two other female SOE operatives were executed at Ravensbruck in the closing days of the war.

HS 8/895-896

Casualties in the field

Including notifications to SIS of SOE's deceased agents

HS 8/1026-1043 Specimens and reproductions of foreign documentation

This collection of fake documents was produced by SOE's forgery section to provide cover for operatives' clandestine activities in occupied Europe and elsewhere around the world. The fake document section relied heavily on counterfeiters and forgers recently released from His Majesty's pleasure. The documents are often displayed next to an original specimen - the highlight is perhaps a German passport mocked up for Adolf Hitler.

HS8/1030

Middle-Eastern Wartime reproductions 1943

Copies of permits to travel, firearms licences, fishing licences etc. issued by Italian, German, Greek, Bulgarian and Croatian authorities. Includes photographs of originals.

HS8/1031

Specimens of documents produced by IV W: France

Copies, and the originals they were based on, of French official documents from throughout the war years. Includes papers from Vichy and occupied France. Ration cards, demobilisation papers, identity cards &c. This file also contains copies of the cover stories used by the agents employing the documents.

HS8/1032

Specimens of documents produced by IV W: Germany

Copies, and the originals they were based on, of German official documents from the later stages of the war. Includes a fake passport for Adolf Hitler.

HS8/1033

Documents made by IV W: Germany

Identity cards, driving licences, work papers. Includes work pass for the I.G. Farben synthetic chemicals plant at Auschwitz concentration camp.

HS8/1034

Documents made by IV W: Germany

Headed notepaper for various companies, military papers, travel and foreign workers documents. Also includes papers for those who have been bombed out of their homes and refugees from Hamburg.

HS8/1035

French Identity Cards

Various designs, also includes some other forms of identification; student association membership, youth clubs.

HS8/1036

Belgian Identity Cards and Miscellaneous Documents

Includes Rail Pass, vehicle tax papers.

HS8/1037

Specimens of German Miscellaneous Documents

Includes rationing stamps for various foodstuffs.

HS8/1038

Specimens of Documents from Various Countries

Principally contains blank passports from neutral states.

HS8/1039

Specimens of French Demobilisation Papers

Various French regions/branches of the armed forces.

HS8/1040

Specimens of Miscellaneous French Documents

Ration cards, driving licences, and birth certificates.

HS8/1041

Specimens of French Letter Headings

Includes headed paper for banks, town halls, businesses and arms of government.

HS8/1042

Specimens of Norwegian and Danish Identity Cards and Miscellaneous Documents.

Includes railway pass, ration books and fishing licences.

The Polish Underground Army 1943-44
Document Reference: HS 8/437

The photograph album includes scenes in forest hideouts, soldiers taking mass, derailed trains and units in action. Some of these are presented here. The captions are taken from the file.

A forest hut jokingly known as 'Hotel Europe'. 1944



How to put a gun together blindfolded.



Gun instruction, Warsaw, August 1944.



A unit, acting on instructions from London, blows up a bridge on the River Wisloka. 5/6 April, 1944



A special underground army blows up a German military train, April 12 1944.



The 77th Unit celebrating Mass in the open air near Nowogrodek.



The Hitler Passport.

Document Reference: HS 8/1032

SOE's forgery section produced fake documents to provide cover for operatives' clandestine activities in occupied Europe and elsewhere around the world. The fake document section relied heavily on counterfeiters and forgers recently released from his Majesty's Pleasure. This fake passport for Adolf Hitler shows what the forgery department could create and also something of their sense of humour. Note the red 'J' (used to indicate Jews on German passports) and the Government of Palestine stamp showing Hitler as an emigrant to Palestine. It also says his occupation is a 'painter' and his distinguishing features are his 'little moustache'.

PERSONENBESCHREIBUNG

Beruf	Maler	Ehefrau
Geburtsort	Braunsau am Fu...	
Geburtstag	24. IV 1889	
Wohnort	Berlin	
Gestalt	mittel	
Gesicht	oval	
Farbe der Augen	braun	
Farbe des Haars	schwarze	
Besond. Kennzeichen	kleine Schraubart	

KINDER

Name	Alter	Geschlecht

Es wird hiermit bescheinigt, daß der Inhaber die durch das obenstehende Lichtbild dargestellte Person ist und die darunter befindliche Unterschrift eigenhändig vollzogen hat.

Wien, den 30. APR. 1941

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