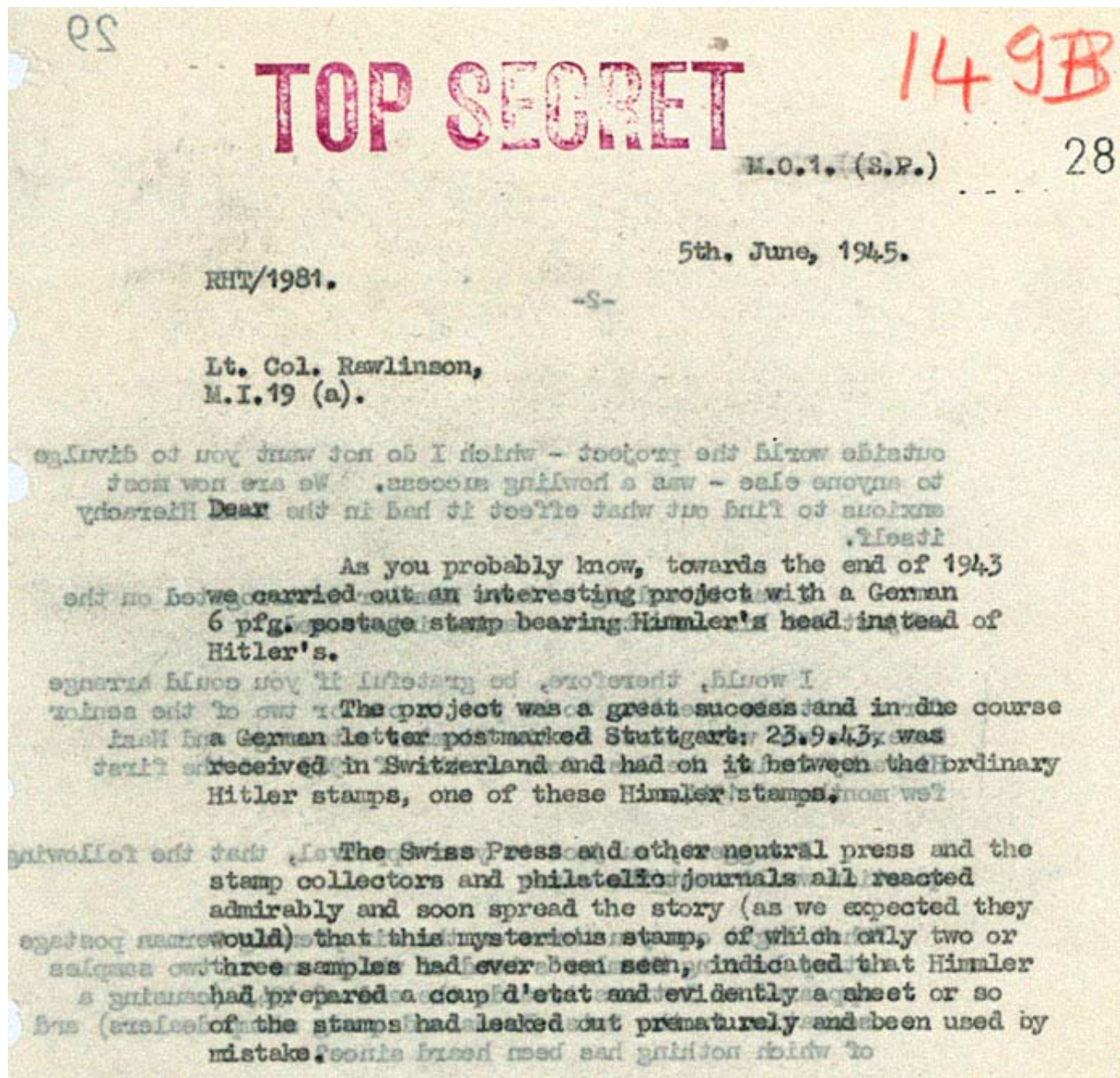


WESTERN EUROPE 1939-1945: DECEPTION & BLUFF

**Extracts from a letter from a British intelligence officer,
June 1945**

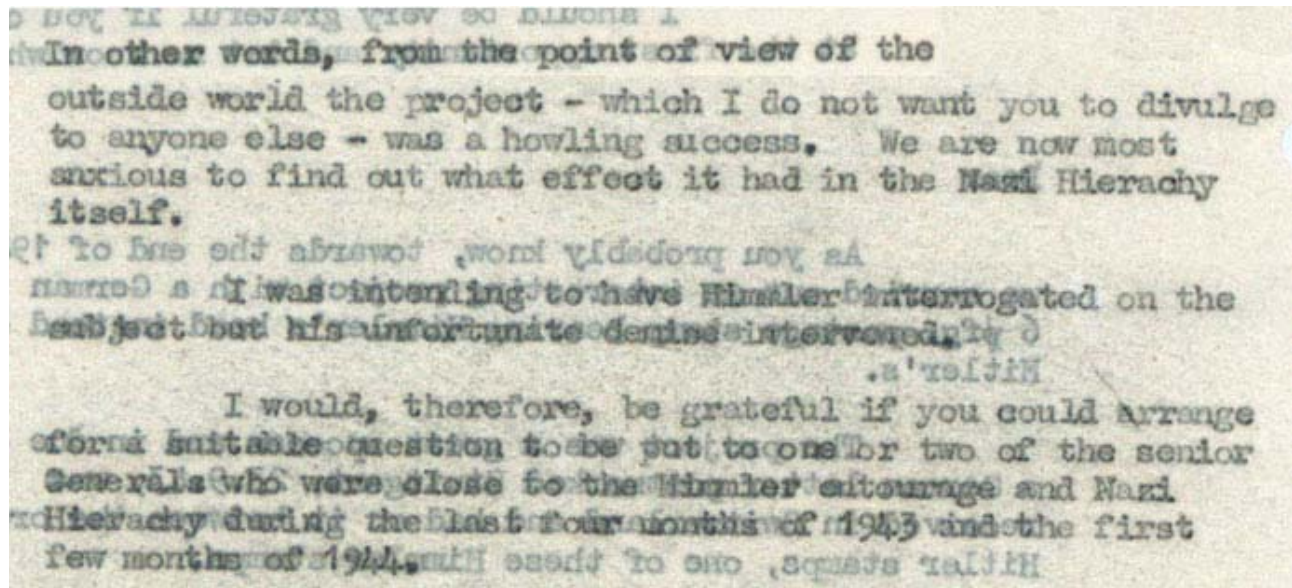
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Extract a



WESTERN EUROPE 1939–1945: DECEPTION & BLUFF

Extract b



What is this source?

A British intelligence officer wrote this letter to Lt Colonel Rawlinson of the British Army.

The writer wanted the Colonel to ask any prisoners he was holding if they remembered the issuing of the Himmler stamps (see the opening source to this investigation) and what impact it had.

What's the background to this source?

By late 1943 the tide of war was beginning to turn against Germany. There was some evidence that German morale was poor. The British intelligence agencies were keen to take any opportunity that they could to try and stir up trouble in Germany. They came up with this idea of creating a stamp bearing the head of Heinrich Himmler. They hoped this would make Germans think that Himmler was trying to overthrow Hitler.

Heinrich Himmler was one of the most powerful Nazis. He controlled the SS. This huge organisation was almost a state inside the German state. It had its own armed forces and factories. It controlled the police and the Gestapo (secret police) and the concentration camps for Jews and other enemies of the Nazis. The SS certainly could have arranged to have stamps printed if Himmler had been plotting to overthrow Hitler. The British were hoping to cause doubt and suspicion between the leading Nazis.

It's worth knowing that...

Himmler was captured in 1945 but he took poison and killed himself before he could be interrogated.

The fact that the letter writer wanted this information suggests that he did not know what kind of impact the fake stamps had on the Nazi leadership.

How does this source help us to understand the importance of deception tactics during the war?

1. Why did the letter writer believe his project had been a great success?
2. What impact do you think this stamp and the articles about it might have had?
3. Can we tell from this source whether the stamps affected the Nazi commanders?
4. Do you think this source can help you to convince your friend that the British used deception tactics in WW2?

You could do this as a presentation or a written report. Use the report sheet to help.