

RESISTANCE & SOE: TASK INSTRUCTIONS

The key question: What was the role of Special Operations Executive and what kind of people worked for it?

Your task

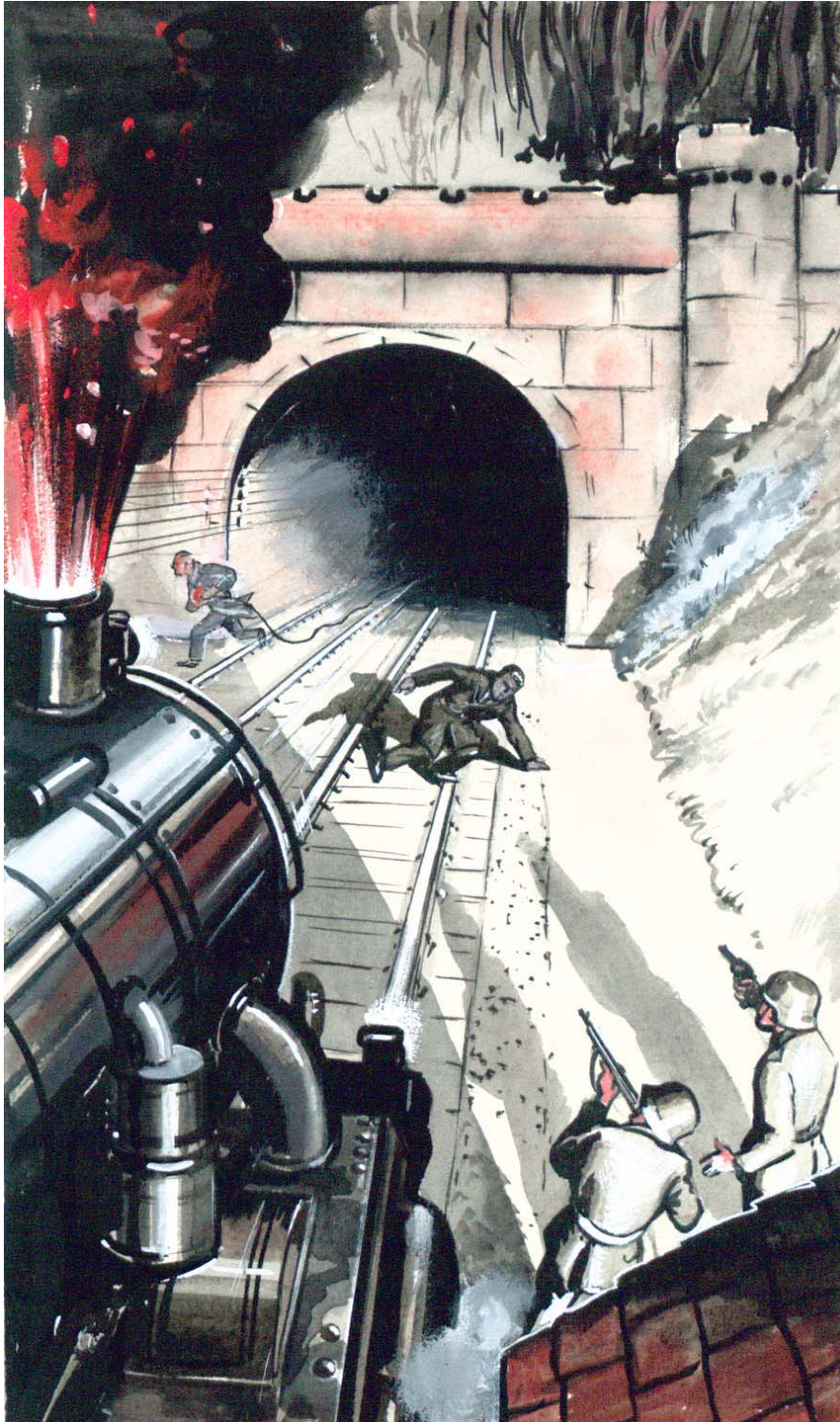
Use our sources to find out about the people who worked for the SOE and create a recruitment poster for more agents.

Use the outline to plan your poster.

Here are some artists' impressions of SOE agents in action

Catalogue refs: a: INF 3/488; b: INF 3/502

Source a



Source b



WESTERN EUROPE 1939–1945: RESISTANCE AND SOE

What is this source?

These pictures were produced by government artists and show the activities of SOE agents in the Second World War.

The British Ministry of Information commissioned this artwork for the wartime "Boys' Adventure stories". Along with posters, magazines, postcards and photographs, childrens' books containing images like this, were also used to support the war effort on the home front.

What's the background to this source?

From 1939 to late 1942 Germany and its allies had the upper hand in the war. During this period it was difficult for Britain and its allies to take any direct action against German forces. To tackle this problem British Prime Minister Winston Churchill set up the Special Operations Executive (SOE). SOE's job was to go into occupied countries and spread propaganda, collect information and attack important targets.

SOE had two main departments. SO1 dealt with propoganda while SO2 dealt with active operations. SO2 agents went into occupied territory to blow up railways, bridges, radio transmitters and similar devices.

It's worth knowing that..

SOE did not just operate in Europe. Agents like Christine Granville (who also features in this investigation) were also active in North Africa and in Asia against the Japanese.

Many SOE agents were not British. The majority of these had been driven out of their home countries by the German occupation. They were then recruited because they would be able to blend in easily to the country they were working in.

What do we learn about SOE from this source?

1. Where are both agents operating?
2. Artists produced both of these scenes. Does this mean they are pure imagination? Use the other sources in the box to help you answer.
3. What do you learn from this source about the type of people who became SOE agents?
4. Why is it likely that **Source b** was used as propoganda?