

The role of the intelligence services

Extract from a German intelligence report that was intercepted by British intelligence

Catalogue ref: HW 1/2784

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ENEMY MINING FROM THE AIR REMAINED LIVELY WITH SCHWERPUNKT OFF SUBMARINE BASES, LEZARDRIEUX AND AGAINST CHANNEL ISLAND NARROWS. AGENTS' REPORTS, APART FROM A PLETHORA OF LANDING DATES WHICH MAINLY POINT TO THE FIRST HALF OF MAY, YIELDED NO SPECIAL INFORMATION.

C. IN C. WEST APPRECIATES THE SITUATION AS FOLLOWS:

INVASION-PREPARATIONS BY THE ANGLO-AMERICANS IN THE ENGLISH MOTHERLAND ARE COMPLETED. DESPITE THE FACT THAT VISUAL AND PHOTO RECCE HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO INCLUDE THE WHOLE OF THE ENGLISH SOUTH COAST, THE OBSERVED CONCENTRATIONS OF LANDING SHIPPING SPACE, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA NORTH OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT (PORTSMOUTH - SOUTHAMPTON), NEVERTHELESS GIVE A CLEAR PICTURE OF A MAIN CONCENTRATION DEFINING ITSELF IN THAT AREA. TONNAGE OF SHIPPING SPACE FOR LANDINGS WHICH HAS SO FAR BEEN OBSERVED CAN BE ASSUMED TO BE SUFFICIENT FOR 12 TO 13 DIVISIONS (WITHOUT HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND REAR ELEMENTS) FOR FAIRLY SHORT SEA-ROUTES.

What is this source?

This is an extract from a German intelligence report that the British intelligence services were able to intercept in 1944.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/>

WESTERN EUROPE 1939-1945: D-DAY

By 1943 British intelligence services had cracked a number of German codes. What was even more valuable was that the Germans were unaware of the extent to which their codes had been cracked.

What's the background to this source?

By late 1942 the tide began to turn against Germany. From 1943 to 1944, British Empire and US forces began a build up of troops and equipment to drive the Germans out of the lands they had invaded in 1940. The landings took place in June 1944.

German naval forces and aircraft closely watched the Allies' preparations. It was simply not possible to hide a force as large as the D-Day invasion force but the Allies did try very hard to keep the Germans guessing about exactly where the invasion would take place.

It's worth knowing that...

The fact that the Germans did not know that the Allies knew what they were thinking was incredibly useful. Apart from any other advantages, it allowed the Allies to see whether their plans to deceive the Germans were working.

How does this source help us to understand why D-Day was successful?

1. What does the source tell us about what the Germans knew?
 2. The Germans did not know the British were intercepting their reports. Is that obvious from this source?
 3. How much of the information in this source is correct?
 4. How would you sum up the main value of this source to the historian?
- Will you include this source (or part of it) in your storyboard?
 - If you do use it, what are the main points you will make in your caption?

Use the framework to plan your storyboard.