

WESTERN EUROPE 1939-1945: INVASION

**Extract from a report about the German occupation of Jersey,
June 29th 1940**

Catalogue ref: FO 371/24392

Motor Launch "SUZANNE".

Arrived Dartmouth 28.8.40., 1100 hrs, having left ROZEL, Jersey at 2400 hrs.
26.8.40. Owner unknown, but might be a Mr. POOL. Tonnage: 3 tons appx.

Crew:-

212

LETOURNEUR, Henri Paul. French. Born 25.10.13 at MANTES LA VILLE
(Seine et Oise).

COURVAL, Andre Paul Honore Desire. French. Born 22.11.12 at
Carteret.

MILET, Clement. French. Born 3.9.19 at Carteret.

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The following information was given by the above three men:-

They escaped from CARTERET to Jersey on 29th June 1940 in a fishing boat. The Germans began to occupy Jersey the following day, and they thereupon started to plan their escape to England. They discovered that the "SUZANNE", lying at Rozel, was relatively poorly guarded by the Germans and they decided to make their escape in her. Parts of the magneto had been removed and there were only 4 gallons of petrol aboard. With the assistance of Mr. RICHARDSON, Advocate, of St. Helier, they obtained the necessary parts for the magneto and about 30 gallons of petrol. They escaped undetected by the Germans. They were at sea about 35 hours, having had a great deal of engine trouble.

They brought with them a map of Jersey, upon which they had marked with ammunition dumps, gun emplacements, W/T posts, barracks, and the German G.H.Q. They also brought a number of letters from people in Jersey who helped them to escape, addressed to relatives in this country.

They gave the following information about conditions on the island:-

1. There are about 1000 German troops in Jersey.
2. Parachute troops, recognisable by their badges, very prominent.
3. Morale of German soldiers not very high. They are unenthusiastic and listless.
4. The day following the aerial battles in which 140 German 'planes were destroyed, 6 German pilot officers committed suicide rather than take the air.
5. Civilians as a whole well treated by the Germans, who are trying hard to make friends with them -- with little success.
6. Two-thirds of all foodstuffs requisitioned and sent to France.
7. Aerodrome of St. Pierre extensively used by German bombers, fighters and troop carriers. The planes are parked in wheat fields surrounding the aerodrome and the wheat is used for camouflaging them. Planes to and from France never rise more than about 100 ft. above the water.
8. Very few restrictions on activities of civilians; they may listen to the B.B.C. news in English or French. There is a curfew at 2300 hrs.
9. A group of ex-service men on the island is planning to blow up the aerodrome.
10. The Golf course at Gronville Bay is being used as a landing ground for fighter craft.

over/

What is this source?

This source is an extract from a Foreign Office report based on information obtained from some French men who escaped to England in late June 1940.

These men escaped from France to join French forces based in England. People in Jersey helped them to escape.

What's the background to this source?

In May 1940 German forces drove British armies out of France. France surrendered on June 21st 1940. This left the Channel Islands in a very vulnerable position. Britain initially planned to defend the islands but then changed the decision. Islanders were given a choice of occupation or

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evacuation. The Channel Islands were invaded on June 30th 1940 and remained in German hands until May 9th 1945. It was the only part of the United Kingdom to fall into German hands.

The German forces allowed the existing government of the islands to continue, but with very limited powers. A large military build up took place on the islands in case Britain should try to take them back. Slave labour from Eastern Europe was used to build huge fortifications. In the event, the D-Day landings of 1944 bypassed the islands and left the German forces there isolated.

It's worth knowing that...

The Channel Islands suffered all of the same restrictions and hardships that other occupied territories endured. Anti-semitic propaganda and measures were introduced. Censorship and curfews were enforced. Any kind of resistance was severely punished.

In 1942 all those not born on the islands, and also men who had served as officers in World War I, were deported to camps in Germany. There has been some controversy over the island government's policy of passive co-operation, and some aspects of the occupation are still sensitive issues today.

What level of alert should Britain be on?

1. Would you say the men were likely to give the British reliable information?
2. What useful information did the three men provide?
3. What aspects of the German occupation of Jersey would either worry or comfort the British?
4. What level of alert would you put Britain on as a result of studying this evidence?

Record your answer in your table.