

## Getting kitted with gadgets and suicide pills

Catalogue ref: IWM RMY 78

Courtesy of the [Imperial War Museum](http://www.iwm.org.uk), London.

Extract from a film called "Now It Can Be Told" produced by the RAF Film Production Unit for the British Government in 1946 about the work of British agents during the war.

### Transcript

**Officer:** Here are your papers "Felix".

**Male agent:** Good.

**Officer:** Identity card, ration card, demobilization.

**Male agent:** Thank you.

**Officer:** Have you got your British Card? Good. Micro-photos of your targets?

**Male agent:** Oh yes.

**Officer:** Some small money that will be useful.

**Male agent:** Good.

**Officer:** And the money belt.

**Male agent:** Thank you very much.

**Officer:** Here are your papers. Can I have your British identity card?

(Female agent hands this over)

**Officer:** Good. Here's some lose money. Now you have your codes and WT plan haven't you?

**Female agent:** Yes, they were given to me in London.

**Officer:** Oh good. Felix, here are your lethal tablets.

**Male agent:** Thanks very much.

(Officer hands him a cork)

**Male agent:** How's it work?

**Officer:** Oh, I'll show you.

**Male agent:** In a cork, very neat! Thank you.

**Officer:** And "Cat", your tablets are in the lipstick.

**Female agent:** I see. Thank you.

**Officer:** Right.

## WESTERN EUROPE 1939–1945: RESISTANCE AND SOE

### What is this source?

This film is a reconstruction showing the work of men and women who belonged to the Special Operations Executive in WW2. The SOE was set up to carry out missions in enemy territory. British agents working with the French Resistance are shown disrupting enemy communications in preparation for the Normandy landings.

The film was produced in 1946 by the RAF Film Production Unit and was paid for by the Central Office of Information.

---

### What's the background to this source?

When the Germans overran most of Europe in 1939–40 there were still many people in the occupied lands who were prepared to resist them. The job of the SOE was to locate people who could resist the Germans and also send agents in to help the resistance movements.

Resistance took many forms. Many resistance workers focused on collecting information about German activities, troop movements and weapon sites. Some took part in sabotage operations, destroying important factories and rail links. It was a very dangerous activity. Resisters risked being tortured and executed. There were often reprisals for acts of resistance as well.

---

### It's worth knowing that...

Many of the 'British' agents were not British! Large numbers of people fled from the German advance in the early stages of the war and ended up in Britain. Some of these were recruited as agents to be sent back to their own countries because they spoke the language, they were familiar with those countries and they wanted to help their country.

The SOE was one of many organisations that carried out operations behind enemy lines. The SOE and other agencies also had to work closely with the RAF and Royal Navy, because agents were usually dropped in from planes or submarines.

---

### What do we learn about SOE agents from this source

1. What training and equipment were they given?
2. What tasks did they carry as agents working in occupied France?
3. What type of people carried out this work?

Use this outline to plan your poster.