

## WWII Operation Bodyguard Deception & Misdirection

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“In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies.” – Winston Churchill, 1943.

Those were the exact words of the man fondly called Bulldog, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and major American Ally during World War II. His words, along with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Supreme Allied Commander, Dwight D. Eisenhower, sparked an idea of hope, an idea called *Operation Bodyguard*. Operation Bodyguard was one of the greatest deceptions in World War II and, in fact, all of history. How about diving into the what exactly Operation Bodyguard was and the innovative deception and misdirection it used to support D-Day in June 1944? Soldiers, *ATTENTION!*

To start, “bodyguard” means to protect. The Allies wanted to protect the secret of when and where they were going to invade Northern Europe to rescue the continent from Nazi occupation. Operation Bodyguard created an illusion to make the Nazis think one thing all while the Allies’ D-Day plans were unfolding right under their noses.

Operation Bodyguard was a big deal to plan and an even bigger deal to carry out. It was also part of other important operations for the Allies’ D-Day invasion. The Allies were a group of countries including the United States, Great Britain, and Russia who were fighting against a group of countries called the Axis powers which included Germany, Italy, and Japan. They were at war because the Axis powers wanted to take over the world through any means necessary while the Allies wanted to protect their own countries from their evil. When Churchill and Roosevelt met in December, 1941 and according to Archives.gov, “The conference placed first priority on the Atlantic theater and the defeat of Germany and Italy.” This eventually led to creation of Operation Bodyguard and other operations focused on D-Day.

After much intense planning, the Allies finally had a strategy to try to retake Europe back from Germany. It was a huge, intricate plan. In the detailed plans were calculations of how to deceive and misdirect the Germans. Some of the deceptions as part of Operation Bodyguard were inflatable rubber tanks, a “ghost” army, putting dummies on parachutes to look like airborne invasions, and fake and scrambled radio waves to help Hitler waste his precious time decoding them. Even General George Patton was chosen to command the fake army! Some of the many other people involved were spies like Juan Pujal Garcia and double agents like Eddie Chapman.

Because of all of this planned deception and misdirection it actually made the Germans confused, and weeks before the Allied invasion, German forces moved a good portion of their army to Pas-De-Calais in order to be “prepared for the invasion.” That was certainly good news for the Allies because this meant the Nazis had believed them!

On June 6, 1944, the Allies fought in Normandy, not Pas-De-Calais. After all the grueling months of planning it all came down to the battle. Truth be told, the Allies certainly had more soldiers there than the Germans and the German commanding officer wouldn’t wake Hitler up from his sleep to call for reinforcements! According to History.com, “within a few days about 326,000 troops, more than 50,000 vehicles and some 100,000 tons of equipment had landed. By August 1944, all of northern France had been liberated, and in spring of 1945 the Allies had defeated the Germans.” This marked the beginning of the end of World War II.

Now, it’s important that we learn from history so we don’t repeat it. A few lessons from Operation Bodyguard that are useful for us today are that warfare isn’t all about fighting, it includes more than just guns, missiles, and ships. It is important to plan and think. Don’t just do and kill. Operation Bodyguard is a good example of this because the Allies made all of the Nazis

think the Allies were building an actual army in an entirely different location than Normandy! The amount of thought put into it was incredible! The actions the Axis powers took were despicable in their efforts to try to take over the world, however, the intense planning, deception, and misdirection put into D-Day should be remembered for as long as possible! Even with all of the planning, many men were killed on D-Day and we shall always remember them for their ultimate sacrifice to help keep the world free.

The difference that Operation Bodyguard made in my own life was not being born into a country where it is ruled by the Axis powers. My life, and every other person in this world, would be significantly harder and worse. If D-Day had not succeeded and no other plans were being made to stop world domination, this whole world as we know it would probably be blown up by now. Another important difference it made in my life is seeing how important strategy, teamwork, and thinking is. Just a simple form of decision making can go a long way in life.

Thank you to all of the people who gave their life and helped to contribute to the Allied success of D-Day and World War II.

Research Materials

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