



Dwight D.  
Eisenhower  
Memorial

## NATIONAL EISENHOWER MEMORIAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

### LESSON

# Art of Deception: Selling a Story to the German Army



#### Duration

One 45-minute period

#### Grades

7–12

#### Cross-curriculum Application

U.S. History, World History, Geography, English, Media Arts



## Historical Background

As Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower later remarked, “Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.” Operation Overlord, also known as D-Day, was a massive undertaking involving unprecedented planning and meeting challenges in execution. The operation consisted of 2,700 ships manned by 195,000 sailors. The fleet carried 156,000 troops, 12,000 vehicles, 2,000 tanks, and nearly 10,000 tons of stores across the English Channel. In addition, thousands of military aircraft supported the amphibious invasion.

The success of the Normandy invasion also depended on the element of surprise. All the planning and effort that went into the operation could have been undone if German military leaders knew the location and timing of the landing ahead of time. German military leaders worked hard to determine what General Eisenhower and the Allies planned to do.

In order to keep this important information secret, Eisenhower and his advisors initiated Operation Bodyguard (part of a larger deception plan called Operation Fortitude) to confuse the German forces about the exact location of the landing.

## Objective

Students will examine primary sources related to some of the Allied plans to deceive the German Army as to the time and location of the invasion of northern Europe. What techniques of deception were used? What role does deception play in military strategy? What can these deceptions tell us about how the German military viewed the Allies?

Students will take on the role of documentary filmmaker and develop a plan for a short video promotion for a film on Allied military deceptions during World War II. Students will review the Eisenhower E-Memorial film “How Did the Allies Keep D-Day a Secret?” and note what that film chose to emphasize concerning Allied deceptions as they plan their own film. Students will select a particular primary source they would like to highlight in their preview and justify their choice.

## Essential Question

How important is the element of surprise in military operations?

## Sources

- » Map of German Dispositions in France. June 1944. Wikimedia Commons.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:German\\_depositions\\_in\\_France\\_-\\_June\\_1944.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:German_depositions_in_France_-_June_1944.jpg)

*Teacher Notes: This is an allied military map of German military positions in northern France.*

*Interesting details:*

- *Locate Calais in France and Dover in Great Britain. The English Channel is very narrow here and therefore it makes sense that the German military would expect the invasion to take place at this location.*
- *Find the dotted line near Calais labeled with the word “diversion.”*
- *Note the position of the German Army in Calais to defend against a possible attack by the Allies there.*

» *Photo of a Fake Airplane. October 1943. The National Archives.*

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/battles/dday/popup/deception.htm>

*Teacher Notes: The photo shows a fake airplane like those used to deceive the German military.*

*Interesting details:*

- *Fake airplanes like this one were used to make it seem like a large military base existed near Dover in England.*
- *The plane was made with canvas and looks quite realistic.*

» *Inflatable Dummy Weapons. September 18, 1947. National Archives and Record Administration.*

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/292565>

*Teacher Notes: An inflatable tank like those placed in England near Dover to deceive the German military.*

*Interesting details:*

- *The tank, like the plane, was designed to make it appear that a large Allied force existed in Dover.*
- *The tank is less detailed than the plane, and it does not look as realistic as the plane. Likely it was designed to be viewed from a distance.*

» *Military Patch. National Park Service. 1944.*

[http://www.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/eise/Military/WWII\\_alliedComm/EISE11266\\_militaryPatch.html](http://www.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/eise/Military/WWII_alliedComm/EISE11266_militaryPatch.html)

*Teacher Notes: The patch in the photo is from the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, a fictitious United States military unit. The 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry was one of several fake military units created to deceive*

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*the German military into thinking that the Allies had troops massed near Dover in England.*

*Interesting details:*

- *A division of infantry is a large force —usually about 20,000 soldiers.*
- *The 14<sup>th</sup> infantry “ghost” division was only one of the fictitious units supposedly near Dover in England. Operation Bodyguard’s purpose was to convince the German military into believing that the entire U.S. First Army Group, headed by celebrated commander General George Patton, was stationed near Dover.*

- » Photo of Soldier Lifting an Inflatable Jeep. December 9, 1959. National Archives at Kansas City.

*Teacher Notes: A photograph of a soldier lifting a “dummy” army jeep above his head.*

*Interesting details:*

- *This photo was taken after the war, but it shows the same kind of inflatable or “pneumatic” vehicle used during the wartime deception.*
- *The jeep, similar to the tank above, does not appear to be very realistic and was likely meant to be viewed from a distance such as from German reconnaissance planes.*

- » Photo of Rubber “Dummy” Dressed in GI Clothing. January 6, 1953. National Archives at Kansas City.

*Teacher Notes: This photo shows a dummy dressed like a U.S. soldier.*

*Interesting details:*

- *Another photo from after the war, but dummies like this would have been used to simulate a busy army base in England during the war.*
- *Notice how the dummy’s hands are hidden, making it more likely to appear realistic from a distance such as from German reconnaissance planes.*

- » Operation Bodyguard Memorandum. February 3, 1944. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

*Teacher Notes: A memo outlining various elements of Operation Bodyguard and explaining the goals of the operation.*

*Interesting details:*

- *Notice the memo’s date, February 3, 1944, three months before the Normandy invasion.*



- *The memo originates from the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, Office of the Secretary General Staff—this was the administrative office for Gen. Eisenhower’s command.*
- *The memo reveals that Operation Bodyguard involved a number of different deceptions including making it appear that the Allies would also invade Norway.*

» “Operation Bodyguard: FBI Recognizes WWII Counterintelligence Landmark in New York.” June 9, 2014. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/fbi-recognizes-wwii-counterintelligence-landmark-in-new-york>

*Teacher Notes: This brief article explains how FBI radio operators sent misleading messages to German intelligence concerning Normandy invasion plans.*

*Interesting details:*

- *The press release is from 2014, but it describes events that took place during World War II.*
- *According to the article, individuals working for the FBI sent messages to Germany pretending to be from German spies working in New York.*
- *These messages included false information about the timing and location of the invasion of northern Europe.*

» Order of Battle OB West. June 6, 1944. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

*Teacher Notes: The source is a U.S. Army map showing the position of German forces in Europe. Interesting details:*

- *A large number of German forces (including two attack infantry divisions) remained near Calais in case the Allies landed there.*
- *The actual invasion took place in Normandy, west of Le Havre on the map.*

» “How Did the Allies Keep D-Day a Secret?” June 5, 2013. Eisenhower Memorial.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqIACSKI4sI>

*Teacher Notes: The brief two-minute film outlines the Allied efforts to keep D-Day a secret and convince the German Army that the invasion would occur at Calais.*

*Interesting details:*

- *The film mentions the role played by General George Patton commanding the fictitious First Army Group.*
- *The film argues “the location and time of the D-Day invasion was the most closely*



*guarded secret in the history of warfare.”*

## Materials

- » Art of Deception Handout
- » Documentary Short Film Preview Handout

## Preparation

- Print one copy of the Art of Deception and Documentary Short Film Preview Handouts for each student.
- Print out copies of the primary source materials and place them at stations around the classroom.

## Procedure

1. For a warm-up, display the following quote from the ancient Chinese military strategist Sun-Tzu on the board or projector. “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.” Pose to the students these questions: In war, how do armies gather knowledge about their enemy? How do they prevent their enemy from gathering knowledge?
2. To orient students to geography, show them the map of German dispositions in France, June 1944. Discuss where the Allies might have landed on the French coast. Point out that landing at Pas de Calais made sense because it was the closest to England. Relate this back to the warm-up discussion concerning the Sun-Tzu quote and the importance of preventing the enemy from discovering one's plans.
3. Give each student an Art of Deception Handout.
4. Direct students to go on a gallery walk, visiting the various stations around the room. Remind students to examine the source at each station carefully. Students will note on the handout what they see and how they think it related to Operation Bodyguard.
5. Coming together as a class, instruct students to compile a list of the main elements of the Allied deception and use their answers to complete the handout: What part of the plan





would you want to know more about?

6. Show the class Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial video “How Did The Allies Keep D-Day A Secret?” Prompts: What details of Operation Bodyguard were included in the video? What was left out? If you made a documentary about Operation Bodyguard, what details would you include?
7. Assignment: Students will take on the role of documentary filmmakers charged with creating a preview of their latest project: a film about Allied deception during World War II. To promote their film they will outline a short promotional video based on one source from the lesson. Students will record their responses on the Documentary Short Film Preview Handout.

### **Differentiation**

If students need more scaffolding or background, teachers can show the video, “How Did The Allies Keep D-Day A Secret?,” before the gallery walk.

Teachers may also make use of the Teacher Notes that accompany the above sources. Providing these notes to students may help them to notice important details within the sources.

As an extension, or if there is additional time, students can research previous attempts by the Allies to deceive the German Army, such as Operation Mincemeat and/or how the Allies gained knowledge about what the German forces really knew (e.g., the Enigma machine and codebreaking) and outline a documentary film based on these deceptions.

### **Assessment**

Students will be assessed on their responses to primary sources in their handouts and by their contribution to the class discussion at the end of the lesson. Students should analyze the sources related to Operation Bodyguard deceptions carefully to determine their purpose and explain which part of the plan they would like to know more about and why. These explanations should reflect an overall understanding of Operation Bodyguard and its role in the Normandy invasion. Student understanding of these sources should also be reflected in their responses on the Documentary Short Film Preview Handout per the attached rubric.



## Related Resources

### *Lesson Plans*

- » *Deception and Double Agents: The Success of Operation Fortitude. Understanding Sacrifice:* An Education Project of the American Battle Monuments Commission.  
<http://abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/activity/deception-and-double-agents-success-operation-fortitude>  
Operation Fortitude was essential to the success of Operation Overlord and the Normandy Invasion. In this lesson, students learn the reasons for and the necessity of Operation Fortitude, use critical thinking skills to determine the impact of Fortitude, and write narratives of the events using historical evidence.
- » *In Plain Sight: A D-Day Deception.* Eisenhower Foundation.  
<https://www.eisenhowerfoundation.net/ikeducation/lesson-plans/plain-sight-d-day-deception>  
This lesson provides a series of “secret files” for students to explore secondary sources to learn about the various operations to deceive the Germans about the D-Day invasions.
- » *Where in the World? Mapping the Geography of D-Day.* National WWII Museum.  
<http://enroll.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-teachers/lesson-plans/pdfs/where-in-the-world-war.pdf>  
This lesson directs students to explore maps to better understand the scale of the Normandy invasion.

### *Secondary Sources and Digital Resources*

- » *American Experience: D-Day.* Public Broadcasting Service.  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/dday/index.html>  
This companion site to the PBS documentary film features maps, soldiers’ letters, interviews, a timeline, and lesson plans.





- » *Deception and Decoys Ahead of D-Day*. British Broadcasting Corporation.  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-27710330>  
This short video interviews British citizens who were a part of the deception plans in advance of D-Day.
  
- » *The Normandy Campaign*. American Battle Monuments Commission.  
[https://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive\\_files/normandy/index.html](https://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/normandy/index.html)  
This site allows users to explore the D-Day campaign through an interactive map and timeline.
  
- » *Strategic Deception: Operation Fortitude*. Michael Donovan, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Army War College, 2002. Defense Technical Information Center.  
<http://www.dtic.mil/get-tr-doc/pdf?AD=ADA404434>  
Prepared as a student project for the U.S. Army War College, this paper offers a helpful overview of Operation Fortitude.

*Primary Source*

- » *World War II: D-Day, the Invasion of Normandy*. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.  
<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/world-war-ii-d-day-invasion-normandy>  
This site features an excellent collection of primary sources related to D-Day and the invasion of Normandy.
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Map of German Dispositions in France. June 1944. Wikimedia Commons.

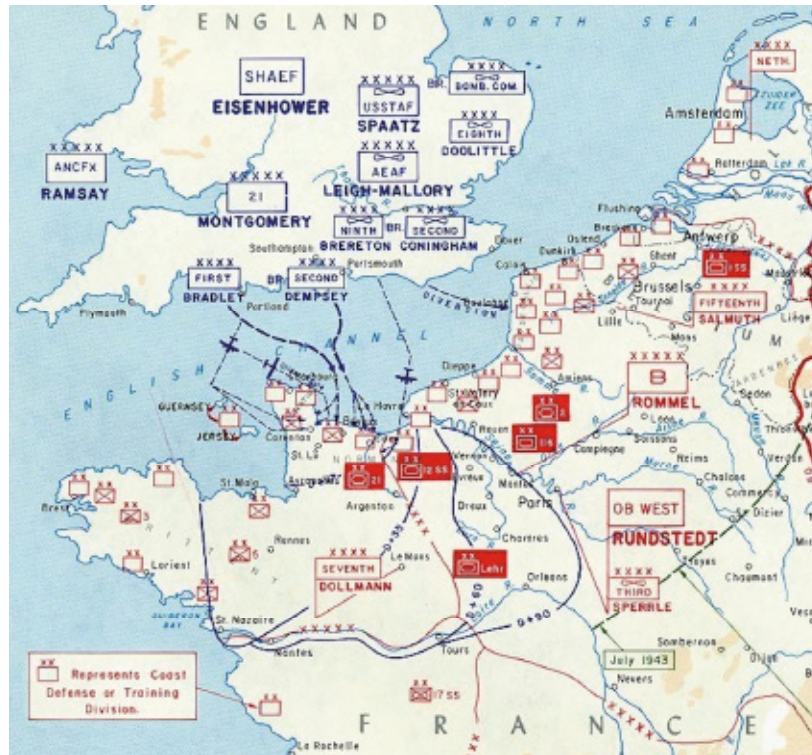




Photo of a Fake Airplane. October 1943. National Archives.

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Inflatable Dummy Weapons. September 18, 1947. National Archives and Record Administration.







Military Patch. National Park Service.

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Photo of Soldier Lifting an Inflatable Jeep. December 9, 1959. National Archives at Kansas City.

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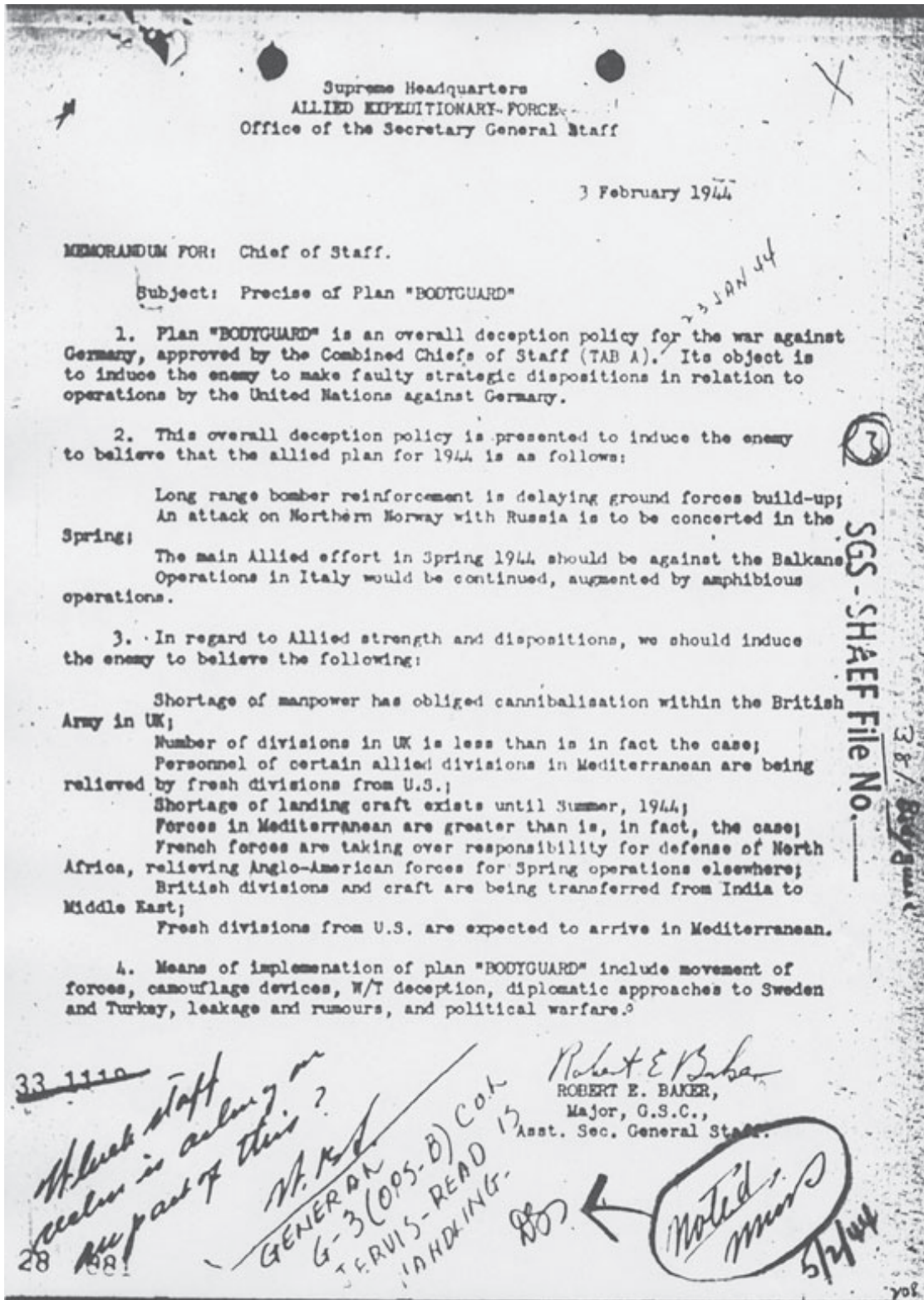
Photo of Rubber “Dummy” Dressed in GI Clothing. January 6, 1953. National Archives at Kansas City.

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Operation Bodyguard Memorandum. February 3, 1944. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.





“Operation Bodyguard: FBI Recognizes WWII Counterintelligence Landmark in New York.” Federal Bureau of Investigation.



During World War II, FBI agents and radio technicians lived and worked undercover at Benson House, secretly transmitting coded messages that the Nazis believed came from their own spies. | High-res image

In honor of the 70th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, the FBI last weekend celebrated a landmark that was home to one of the Bureau’s intelligence successes during World War II. At a ceremony in recognition of the effort of FBI employees during World War II, the Society of Former Special Agents, the Episcopal Diocese of New York, the Suffolk County Historical Society, and the FBI’s New York Division placed a plaque at a quaint building known as Benson House in Wading River, New York, overlooking Long Island Sound.

It was there, from January 1942 until the end of the war in Europe in 1945, that FBI agents and radio technicians lived and worked undercover, secretly transmitting coded messages that the Nazis believed came from their own spies operating in New York. The Nazis believed their operatives were funneling significant details about U.S. forces, munitions, and war preparations. But in fact, the transmissions were controlled by the FBI—the Nazi spies were FBI double agents. The Bureau’s work—known as Operation Ostrich—was central to our counterintelligence operations throughout the war and was part of a larger effort by Allied Forces to deceive the enemy called Operation Bodyguard.

The Allied effort derived its name from a statement by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who said, “In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies.”

Misleading Adolf Hitler’s intelligence services was integrated into the long preparation for the June 6, 1944 landing of 160,000 Allied troops in Normandy, France. Operatives set out to deceive the Nazi leader about the nature and location of the main Allied thrust so that he would be ill-prepared to meet the invasion. The key to Bodyguard’s success was the Allies’ control of a number of German spies and ability to read coded German messages that confirmed the Nazis



“Operation Bodyguard: FBI Recognizes WWII Counterintelligence Landmark in New York.” Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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didn't know their agents were compromised.

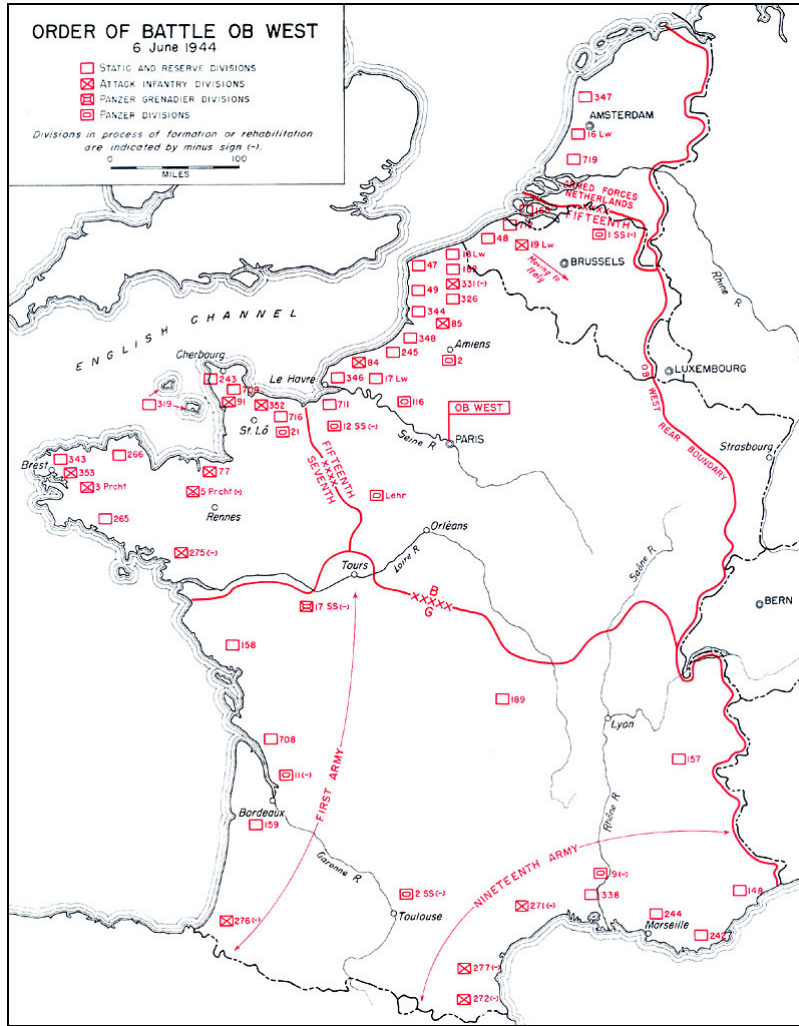
For the FBI, the initial purpose in participating in the counterintelligence effort was to learn about Nazi espionage—who was involved, how they worked, and what they wanted to know. Early on, intelligence from one double agent's transmission indicated the Nazis were very interested in U.S. experiments with atomic energy. This, in part, spurred U.S. efforts to build the atomic bomb before the Nazis could.

The secretive work at Benson House proved even more valuable because it allowed us to plant misleading information for Nazi officials—essentially controlling what the enemy knew about the U.S. and its state of military readiness. In the case of Operation Bodyguard, it allowed us to help Allied efforts to protect the D-Day invasion plans.

Even after the fall of Germany in 1945, Nazi intelligence officials believed that the hundreds of messages sent by their spies in the U.S. were real. The FBI's efforts to contribute to the Allied “bodyguard of lies” were among the many Bureau intelligence efforts during the war and were surely some of our most significant.



Order of Battle OB West. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.





### Art of Deception Handout

*Directions: Examine the sources on your gallery walk and use them to fill out the following table:*

| Source: Title, Creator,<br>Date (if applicable) | List three details you notice<br>about the source | How might this have deceived<br>the German Army? |
|---|---|--|
| 1.  |   |  |
| 2.  |   |  |
| 3.  |   |  |





**Art of Deception Handout cont.**

| Source: Title, Creator,<br>Date (if applicable) | List three details you notice<br>about the source | How might this have deceived<br>the German Army? |
|---|---|--|
| 4.  |   |  |
| 5.  |   |  |
| 6.  |   |  |



**Art of Deception Handout cont.**

| Source: Title, Creator,<br>Date (if applicable) | List three details you notice<br>about the source | How might this have deceived<br>the German Army? |
|---|---|--|
| 7.  |   |  |
| 8.  |   |  |
| 9.  |   |  |



## Art of Deception Handout cont.

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What part of the plan would you want to know more about? Explain *(2-3 sentences)*.



## Documentary Short Film Preview

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*Directions: You are a documentary filmmaker working on a film about Allied deception during World War II. Your first step is to create a short promotional or preview video to show people who might want to invest in your film. Select one source from this lesson to highlight in your promotional video and explain why you chose it.*

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**Title for documentary:**

**What source do you plan to highlight in your documentary preview to hook your audience?**

**Why did you choose this source?**

**What story does it tell about Allied deception?**

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## Documentary Short Film Preview cont.

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Documentary filmmakers often use camera movement such as panning or zooming in or out to help tell a story without using words. What part of your source would you want the audience to focus on?

How could you use camera movement to direct their attention to that part of the source? You can describe or sketch your idea below.

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### Art of Deception Rubric

|                              | Fully Meets Expectations<br><i>3 points</i>   | Minimally Meets Expectations<br><i>2 points</i>  | Not Yet Within Expectations<br><i>1 point</i>  |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Factual Understanding</b> | The documentary preview demonstrates understanding of the main idea of the selected source (or piece of evidence) and identifies its key details. | The documentary preview demonstrates understanding of the main idea of the selected source (or piece of evidence) but does not identify key details. | The documentary preview does not demonstrate understanding of the main idea of the selected source (or piece of evidence).                   |
| <b>Sourcing</b>              | The documentary preview demonstrates understanding of the selected source's origin: especially when it was created and the creator's goal.        | The documentary preview demonstrates partial understanding of the selected source's origin: when it was created and the creator's goal.              | The documentary preview demonstrates insufficient understanding of the selected source's origin: when it was created and the creator's goal. |
| <b>Evidence-Based Claim</b>  | The documentary preview makes a reasonable claim and uses appropriate sources and evidence to support that claim.                                 | The documentary preview makes a reasonable claim but the sources and evidence only partially support that claim.                                     | The documentary preview makes a claim that is not supported by appropriate sources and evidence.   |
| <b>Presentation</b>          | The documentary preview is well-organized and clear. No (or only minor) spelling and grammar errors.  | The documentary preview is somewhat disorganized and unclear. Several spelling and grammar mistakes.   | The documentary preview shows little or no organization. Repeated major spelling and grammar errors.   |