

Bodyguard of Lies by Anthony Cave Brown. Book review by Russell J. Bowen

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE IN FULL
2 JULY 96

UNCLASSIFIED

BODYGUARD OF LIES. By *Anthony Cave Brown*. (Harper & Row, New York, 1975. 947 pp.)

The rather improbable title of this book — an outstanding example of what might perhaps best be described as scholarly investigative journalism applied to the field of oral¹ military history — finds its origins in the following Churchill quotation:

"In war-time, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies."

While ostensibly a narrative description of the role of "Bodyguard," the AngloAmerican deception effort in support of military operations against Hitler in World War II, it is also a litany of compelling illustrations of the application of intelligence (both human and military) and special operations in the winning of the war in the West. Perhaps its greatest virtue is that it is the first detailed open-literature presentation of an integrated view of both the political and military aspects of warfare as expressed in deception and, specifically, of the contributions made by "special means" to the achievement of strategic and tactical surprise before, during and after the Normandy invasion.

Written largely from a British viewpoint, the book presents warfare as a vast game of ploy and counterploy engaged in by small groups of high-level planners and executives, men of great sensitivity and intelligence, who were striving to optimize the effectiveness of limited resources (the British), while cooperating with a massive and dynamic ally (the Americans), the latter impatient to get the job done as expeditiously as possible and with only limited regard for the niceties of how or at what cost.

It is the story of a vast, interlocking conspiracy between the British, the Americans and, during the invasion period itself, even the Russians, to deceive Hitler and the German military leadership as to the time, place, and manner in which the invasion of western Europe would take place. (For reasons of security, the French were forced to play the role of silent partner, something for which de Gaulle was never to forgive either Britain or America.) The centerpiece of this effort was the attempt to dupe Hitler into believing that the main Allied effort would be made against the Pas de Calais of France, and to sustain this belief even after the real attack had been launched against Normandy. The remarkable success of this monumental deception is well known. What the author has done for us here, in a very accomplished manner, is to present the major elements of the story in both human and institutional terms.

A mere review cannot begin to do justice to the richness of example afforded by this detailed compendium of descriptions of organizations, plans, operations, incidents and personalities. Whether it concerns the sacrifices and failures resulting from the need to preserve the security of the source of Ultra² data, as in the decision not to warn the town of Coventry that it was to be bombed, or the initial defeat of the British 8th Army in North Africa because its then commanding general could not be told that the intelligence concerning Rommel's impending attack was absolutely accurate, or the many deceptions, stratagems, and special operations mounted in support of Bodyguard and its subordinate elements, the book abounds in fascinating and seemingly authoritative descriptions of events and situations. A multitude of errors of detail arise from the author's need to rely on secondary sources, personal interviews with participants in events long after the fact, and only limited access to official records (even that only after the majority of his writing had been completed). It would appear, however, that the main outlines of the story have been accurately preserved.

There are numerous neat little examples of the use of Ultra intelligence

to defeat the enemy on the field of battle, as in the case of Montgomery's victory at El Alamein, and in the winning of the Battle of the Atlantic through destruction of the U-boat resupply system and — eventually — the U-boats themselves. Then there were the vital contributions of Ultra to air warfare in the winning of the Battle of Britain, and in permitting the British to mount such an effective (if vain) defense of Crete against the German paratroop and glider forces that Hitler lost faith in airborne warfare and used these specially trained troops as infantry in future operations. All of this is presented in engrossing detail.

Much attention is given to critical tactical aspects of the Normandy invasion through the breakout phase and into the early stages of the battle for northern France. The use of Ultra intelligence to determine German plans and movements as a basis for the application of both conventional and unconventional means in the isolation of the battlefield is set forth in great detail. Always in the background is the necessity to maintain the credibility of the threat to attack the Pas de Calais, so that the German 15th Army would continue to be held in reserve in that area and would, as a consequence, not figure in the Normandy operations. The use of XX-Committee³ double agents contributed importantly to this deception. Hundreds of special forces teams were employed at strategic points around the periphery of the battle area, either to act on their own or to guide the actions of local resistance elements in harassing and delaying German infantry and armored forces trying to reach Normandy from Brittany and from south-central France.

The futile efforts of the Schwarze Kapelle,⁴ the abortive high-level German resistance movement against Hitler that functioned throughout the war and received significant support from Admiral Canaris' Abwehr (military counterintelligence), is treated in considerable detail, particularly in relationship to Anglo-American planning. While the conspiracy purportedly provided some important intelligence inputs and unwittingly served the British as a cover for Ultra in some instances, no evidence is presented that this conspiracy was taken seriously and exploited in a major positive fashion by the deception planners. The author is clearly of the opinion that opportunities were lost in the non-utilization of the Schwarze Kapelle. British sources have subsequently claimed that the role of the Schwarze Kapelle in Anglo-American deception activities has been greatly exaggerated.⁵

A most interesting and significant example of the effects of deception (and of selfdeception) presented by the author concerns Col. von Roenne, the able head of Fremde Heere West (FHW), the Wehrmacht intelligence agency responsible for appreciations of Allied threats to the German forces in western Europe. This officer who, incidentally, was also a member of the Schwarze Kapelle, was the western front counterpart to General Gehlen in the East. Since he was responsible for military estimates relative to the anticipated invasion of France, his office became one of the main targets of Bodyguard's deception operations. The Allies were able to deceive him into overestimating their forces in England through a variety of stratagems involving leaks and double-agent disinformation actions, supported by Ultra intercepts that permitted monitoring and estimation of the effects of their efforts.

Thus, after the Sicherheitsdienst (the SD or secret intelligence service of the SS) had become dominant over German military intelligence early in 1944, Col. von Roenne learned that they were halving his estimates of Allied forces in England before passing them on to higher headquarters. On the advice of his assistant, who the author suggests may actually have been a British agent, Col. von Roenne was supposedly persuaded with reluctance to double his estimates of these forces. When the SD subsequently ceased their editing of his figures, the overestimation of Allied strength became very greatly magnified, thereby providing support to the London Controlling Section's mythical scenarios of large forces being held in readiness in northern and southeastern England. If true, this must have contributed in no small measure to the successful deception of Hitler which resulted in retention of the 15th Army in the Pas de Calais area long after the attack on Normandy.'

The general cover and deception plan for Overlord' was originally called Plan Jael and, subsequently, simply Bodyguard. Bodyguard would attempt to persuade the German leadership to believe the following six strategic considerations: (1) The Allies had so much faith in the decisive character of the combined bombing and would give it such high priority that the buildup of ground forces would be too slow to permit an invasion until July of 1944, if one were intended at all that year; (2) German forces had to be held where they were in western Europe because there were troops ready in England to take advantage of any weakening of German garrisons; (3) there would be a joint Anglo-American-Russian attack on various parts of Norway in the spring of 1944; (4) the main Allied effort in the spring of 1944 would be against the Balkans; (5) the Russians would not begin their summer offensive before

the end of June; and (6) the requisite Allied force for a cross-Channel assault would not be trained and ready until the summer — in any event, the western powers would not launch their offensive until after the Russians had opened their main summer offensive.

The broad strategic deceptions of Bodyguard included some 36 subordinate plans and scores of associated stratagems. Elaborate deceptions were involved, which were designed to threaten Norway, the Pas de Calais, and the Biscay and Mediterranean coasts of France, their object being — in conjunction with continuing threats to the Balkans and the existing military operations in Italy — to tie down German forces in those areas before, during, and after Neptune.⁸ In addition to these stratagems, Bodyguard proposed to mount a large diplomatic and political offensive to induce, or at least suggest, the possibility of defection of Finland, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria. A similar campaign, which would also include economic warfare, would be launched to persuade the neutrals — Sweden, Turkey, Portugal, and Spain — to enter the conflict on the Allied side, or to compel them to cut their links with Germany. And, finally, a massive campaign of political warfare would be directed at the occupied countries and at the Third Reich itself.⁹

While Bodyguard became the formal responsibility of General Eisenhower, its operational coordination rested with a small group of British establishment personalities (with one American representative) known as the London Controlling Section (LCS) within Allied Supreme Headquarters. Many members of this group saw themselves as representing the last vestiges of British tradition. As a consequence, they had little difficulty in convincing themselves that they were fully justified in waiving the rules in this life-or-death struggle with the Hun. This group, operating at the highest levels of security, and with full access to Ultra intelligence, exercised general guidance and coordination of the various Committees of Special Means (CSM) located within the major war planning staffs of the Allied forces. The element within the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington was known as joint Security Control (JSC). While Cave Brown does not make the point with clarity, the CSMs were directly responsible for the planning and control of deception operations within their own commands.

LCS had "A-Force" in the Mediterranean, and similar bureaus in the Near East, India, and Southeast Asia through which to exercise its influence on military operations. The contributions of the Soviet government to

Bodyguard and Fortitude¹⁰ would be arranged by the British and American military missions in Moscow. (A formal protocol between the Allies and the Russians, to cover cooperation during the invasion period, was signed at the beginning of March, 1944, and was ended by the Russians six months later.) When their services were required, all MI-6, SOE, and OSS agents in the field were available to the LCS, as were the deception sections in the Allied army groups, the various British and American economic and political warfare agencies, the British Foreign Office, and the American State Department. The controlled double agents of the XX-Committee were to play an important role in support of the effort, as well. In the words of the author, "deception had become a major industry."

While specific examples of particular controversial aspects of this book will be discussed below, it seems worthwhile to bring up at this point a general criticism of the book's implied theme that the LCS served as the coordinator of all Allied deception operations. While it probably maintained cognizance of all such operations in order to avoid duplications of effort, inadvertent disclosures of policy, etc., it certainly did not possess the capability for conceiving, planning, and executing the myriads of stratagems and deceptions that came into being in support of Allied efforts. Even in the military field, it had to relinquish responsibility to the field commands for the generation of local deception activity.

That LCS concerned itself with the deception planning in support of Overlord cannot be disputed. Another organization which preceded it into existence by several years, however, was responsible for many high-level stratagems and deceptions in both the political and military realms. This was the British Security Coordination (BSC) under Sir William Stephenson, which reported directly to Winston Churchill.¹¹ Conceived as a coordinating body for all British intelligence, counterintelligence, and special operations in the days when the very survival of Britain was open to serious question, this operation was set up in New York City in 1940.

It subsequently expanded to encompass a staff of some 2000 individuals (1,000 of them in New York City), with a major communications center and extensive facilities in Ontario, Canada, for the training of operational personnel and the development and manufacture of special equipment. It was provided with full access to Ultra intelligence and, through Stephenson, served as a key link

between Churchill and Roosevelt in the uncertain days prior to U.S. entrance into the war against the Axis.

An important early function of BSC was to provide the American president with detailed information on Fascist activities directed against the United States, which served to justify his approval of unofficial U.S. cooperation with Britain against Germany. Moreover, once the United States was involved in the war, such intelligence helped to assure that a major share of the U.S. military effort was directed toward Europe. Among the most important contributions of BSC during this early period were its efforts in support of the creation of the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI),¹² with William Donovan as its head. Although the role of BSC as an intelligence coordinating body diminished after Pearl Harbor, as the position of Britain became less precarious and that nation became transformed into a mammoth staging area for an eventual return to the European mainland, the organization continued to perform important intelligence functions, particularly with respect to the security of the Western Hemisphere. Through the scant attention which he gives to British Security Coordination in his massive tome, Cave Brown reveals his ignorance of large areas of WW II intelligence history, and of the scope of British intelligence activities in particular. He mentions BSC only once, and then incorrectly, as the MI-6 organization in New York City.

There are many positive features of this ambitious work, aside from the above criticism and the many minor errors of detail inevitable in a creative work of this size (i.e., dates, titles of offices, descriptions of events, translations of German terms, etc.), based so heavily on secondary references and the oral testimony of individuals long after the events in question – to say nothing of the limitations imposed by security. A number of debatable or controversial matters, however, should be mentioned.

For one thing, the extent of the responsibility of Ultra, deception, and special means for the success of the Normandy invasion is open to at least some question on general principles. The author himself attributes much of the element of tactical surprise to the relaxation of German vigilance because of the unfavorable weather immediately prior to and during the early portion of the invasion. Moreover, intelligence and surprise are generally conceded by military authorities to constitute only a moderate portion of the prerequisites for success in battle, despite the fact that they can be decisive in some cases, as the author would have

us believe was true in this instance. While there is little doubt that losses would have been much greater and success would probably have been delayed had there been no Bodyguard, to call it decisive may be journalistic exaggeration.

The tendency of the author to use the terms Ultra and Magic interchangeably is regarded as an oversimplification by American code-breaking specialists. The author tends to excuse use of the term by Bodyguard personnel as a means of cover for the Ultra effort, certainly an understandable justification. Thus, prior to the Anglo-American intelligence collaboration in 1941, the American Magic code-breaking effort against the Japanese had proceeded along quite different lines, largely independent of the British Ultra activity. This was despite the common origins of German and Japanese encoding equipment in early forms of Enigma which were commercially available in Europe in the 1920s. While Cave Brown fails to note the close collaboration between the two efforts that was initiated prior to Pearl Harbor,¹³ he does pay tribute to American contributions to Bodyguard through signals intercept activity against the Japanese at Asmara, Ethiopia. There, the radio-teleprinter communications of the Japanese ambassador to Germany were being read regularly to reveal high-level German military and political planning information. Presumably, Magic was involved here, rather than Ultra.

The occasional air of condescension about the authors descriptions of the British origins of deception thinking and direction, and the supposed general deterioration of deception efforts when Eisenhower took over the Allied command after the Normandy invasion, is somewhat annoying.¹⁴ One receives the distinct impression that the author feels there would have been no coordinated deception activity had the British – and Churchill in particular – not created the magnificent Bodyguard instrument. While perhaps true in terms of the overall concept, tactical deception would certainly have been included in Allied military planning whether or not LCS had ever existed. Debate on this point is bound to be inconclusive and is probably pointless. It would seem to be more a question of degree than of the likelihood of existence or non-existence of deception and special means, had Churchill not introduced the idea.

The author's claim that Cicero,¹⁵ the valet of the British ambassador to Turkey who delivered many of that gentleman's secret papers to the Germans, was actually under the control of MI-6 as a deception operation, seems implausible, although there are other indications that

this may have been true toward the end of Cicero's tenure. Thus, despite the reported assertion of the former head of MI-6, Stewart Menzies, to the author, that Cicero had been under British control, and certain circumstantial evidence which the author adduces in support of the claim, it defies imagination to believe that Overlord planning documents would have been unilaterally leaked to the Germans by the British simply to convince the former of the overwhelming strength of the Allies in preparation for the invasion. The fortuitous circumstance that the German secret services (the SD in this case) did not believe the information and made no use of it could certainly not have been foreseen by LCS.¹⁶ The inherent self-serving character of this story is so apparent that it requires much more proof than Cave Brown advances to justify its acceptance.

The author's story of the British acquisition of an Enigma machine from Poland is certainly open to question. However, given that there are at least six supposedly authoritative versions of this controversial issue, it scarcely seems profitable to argue the pros and cons of any particular one. The true story will have to await some official history of the events concerned. The main points of difference among the various versions concern the role of French intelligence in bringing the British and Polish intelligence forces together in 1939 to exploit Polish access to an Enigma device. Thus, despite the claims presented by the French intelligence officer, General Bertrand, in his book *Enigma*,¹⁷ to the effect that he brought the British and Polish code-breakers together, there is recent evidence¹⁸ that the British may have been in secret contact with the Poles with respect to Enigma as early as 1938. There is general agreement, however, that the British did not bring a model of the Enigma machine back from Poland until mid-1939.

One mystery in Cave Brown's version is his apparent acceptance of Bertrand's book and his use of it in support of many arguments and discussions related to codebreaking, while at the same time he ignores the description Bertrand gives of the French acquisition of Enigma. Instead Cave Brown seems to favor the version advanced by the former French intelligence officer Garder, which is presented in the appendix of Bertrand's book but repudiated by Bertrand as completely false. To compound the mystery, Cave Brown chooses to support his approach by quoting an issue of *Die Nachhut* (The Rear Guard), the publication of former members of the *Abwehr*, which also favors the Garder version. As neither story now seems likely to be accepted by historians as the true

one, the matter has become somewhat academic. Cave Brown does, however, reveal a considerable measure of confusion on this subject.

The author is on somewhat less controversial ground when he claims that Enigma — derived information was not shared with the Russians. At least three sources¹⁹ maintain, however — albeit without any supporting evidence — that such information was indeed made available to the Russians without letting them know the actual source, using Roessler (i.e., "Lucy"), of Buero Ha²⁰ in Switzerland as a cut-out to Rado,—the chief Soviet intelligence agent in Switzerland, whose main radio operator was the possible British double agent, Alexander Foote. The chief question here seems to be whether Buero Ha, an adjunct of the Swiss military intelligence organization with a semi-official pre-war status, was the real source of Roessler's information and, if so, whether Buero Ha obtained its information from Germany or from the British. To date, this remains an open question.

The great detail presented on the so-called Schwarze Kapelle suggests a heavy reliance on German source material. Comments on the misuse of German dissidents and the loss of opportunities to avert the need of an invasion of Europe also have a somewhat German flavor. The author leaves us with the feeling that the British never took the German dissident movement seriously and, lacking any real understanding or trust of it, used it without compunction as a cover for the source for Ultra material and for other deception purposes. Whether any useful information was obtained from the Schwarze Kapelle is left an open question. A more recent book²¹ confirms that the British never really trusted Admiral Canaris and his associates and that it was left to the Americans, working through the OSS in Switzerland, to exploit this doubtful source.

The tone of condescension of the book toward the American war leadership is perhaps inevitable in a work so dependent on British sources. For example, attribution of the concept of "Unconditional Surrender" to an off-hand statement by President Roosevelt when he could not think of anything better to say is open to serious question. According to most accounts, Henry Morgenthau is supposed to have had something to do with originating this uncompromising policy. The impression that the Americans were lacking in sophistication in the matter of deception comes through frequently, as does the low opinion of the capacities of Generals Marshall and Eisenhower held by the British military leadership. Actually, the tone of the book with regard to

U.S. lack of sophistication is mild in comparison with that of the history of British Security Coordination mentioned earlier.²² Near the end of his presentation, Cave Brown tries to balance the story on Marshall in the matter of the cross-Channel invasion controversy by noting the existence of German contingency plans to withdraw from France in 1943, observing that Marshall may have been right after all to press for an early invasion of France over British opposition. Other more official histories of the British point of view during that period remain uncompromising in their opposition to an invasion of western Europe in 1943.²³ Another bone of contention arising out of different British and American strategic perceptions which comes in for frequent comment is the special interest of the British in the eastern end of the Mediterranean and Churchill's desire for an attack on the Balkans.

The sources of German tactical surprise in May 1940 and December 1944 come in for considerable discussion. It is suggested that the Ultra capability was not fully operable in the first case and that over-reliance was placed on it in the second case. It is also suggested that the Germans may have become aware of the compromise of Enigma before the Battle of the Bulge, thereby accounting for the employment of radio silence by the German commander, Marshal von Rundstedt, during the period prior to the attack. The author advances the view that a trusted member of the Dutch underground and purported confidant of Prince Bernhard, operating under the code name King Kong, had been doubled by the Germans and revealed the secret of Ultra to them. No explanation of the highly improbable access of either Prince Bernhard or King Kong to Ultra intelligence is offered by Cave Brown.²⁴

Whether von Rundstedt simply chose to maintain radio silence to further the deception he was pursuing as to the number of divisions facing the Americans in eastern Belgium, or whether he suspected the truth, is, of course, open to debate. Certainly, the Germans went back to the use of Enigma after the beginning of the Bulge action. Flicke²⁵ offers as an explanation for the German ability to achieve surprise the lack of German-speaking American agents behind the German lines during a transition period in combat. This reported lack of rear-area radio traffic is consistent with the claim made in the official OSS history²⁶ that at the time of the Battle of the Bulge, the First Army (U.S.) was the only army without an OSS field detachment. Flicke, a former lieutenant-colonel in the Funkabwehr (signal security service,) notes the absence of agent broadcasts from within the German lines after October 1944, as

the Allied forces in northern France left French-speaking areas behind in their advance to the borders of Germany. He gives no hint of any German suspicion that Enigma had been compromised, and he certainly should have been in a position to know such information. The author offers the explanation that even if it had been suspected that Enigma was no longer safe, it would not have been feasible — given the disrupted state of German signal communications after Normandy — to have made a fundamental change in encipherment techniques. On the face of it, this is a rather facile and unconvincing argument.

In view of the many evidences of inconsistency, controversy, and simple errors of fact in this book, of which only a few have been cited here, it seems appropriate to inquire into the author's sources of information. For one thing, given official British reluctance to cooperate with the author, to what extent are the interviews with British sources entitled to belief? Has the author deliberately withheld material at official request and, if so, to what extent is the accuracy of the presentation affected thereby? Thus, the author admits that the text was nearly complete before he gained access to declassified U.S. information. The majority of the writing must, therefore, have been based on oral interviews with individuals concerning events far in the past and on a study of secondary references, mainly in the form of openly published intelligence literature, a notoriously unreliable source of information. How objective was the author able to be when it came down to a decision between U.S. and British views of a particular issue? Was the author's discovery that people opened up to him more, the more he seemed to know about a subject, really evidence of openness on the part of respondents, or was the author being used by some of those being interviewed, particularly those with a British or German orientation? Only a detailed analysis of source material can provide answers to questions such as these.

A number of general points arise after reading this extensive work on the role of deception and special means in warfare, some of which may even be catalogued under the designation of "lessons learned." The first and most obvious of these is what the book's revelations do to the credibility of histories of WW II prepared with access to the conventional source material only, such as press accounts and memoirs. While it does little to the chronicle of events, it plays havoc with the validity of analytical appraisals of cause and effect, particularly, appreciations of the reasons for the outcomes of battles. We are in the position of the historians who have, over the decades, commented glowingly on the

inherent superiority of the German army at Tannenberg at the outset of WW 1, when in fact the Germans had been listening to Russian radio traffic broadcast in the clear, and knew all of the latter's order of battle and planning secrets (a situation which, incidentally, did not change materially when the Russians subsequently introduced a primitive system of encipherment).²⁷

Another question is, of course, why, having all of this detailed knowledge of German order of battle and planning through Ultra and other sources, the Allies did not do a better job of beating the Germans. While the text presents numerous examples as to why, the question really goes to the basic contribution of intelligence to success in battle and the qualifications of the Germans as military opponents. As to the first question, the limited possibilities of intelligence to control most tactical situations should be apparent to anyone with military staff experience. As to the second, it cannot be denied that the Germans had built a formidable military machine with a highly competent leadership group in the form of the German General Staff and the many talented field commanders. The author brings out the latter point very well in his treatment of Rommel's masterful generalship in North Africa and his futile improvisations during the Normandy campaign.

Clearly in the category of lessons to be learned is the superiority of a centrally coordinated intelligence, security, and special operations activity, as represented by the LCS and Bodyguard, over uncoordinated, largely independent, and competing agencies, as represented by the German political and military intelligence services.

The main lesson of Enigma itself is never to place reliance on any device or procedure that is not subject to periodic objective testing. Unfortunately, it is a weakness of systems protected by extremes of security that they tend to be insulated from adequate review by their very security procedures. On the other hand, AngloAmerican experience with Ultra shows that, given the proper incentives, mechanisms, and, above all, choice of personnel, security can be maintained over very long periods of time spanning both war and peace.

Were it not for the crucial nature of the failure of the Schwarze Kapelle, it would scarcely be worthwhile to rehearse the much studied conspiracy of the generals, and of Admiral Canaris in particular. The latter would seem to typify the paradox of the anti-Nazi German nationalist, a patriot who desperately wished to see the downfall of

Hitler, but who could not bring himself to violate his soldier's oath and engage in openly treasonable action until it was too late. It is little wonder that the British intelligence agencies did not know what to make of Canaris and his associates. In any event, it was no way to run a successful palace revolution. Proud men of action found themselves enmeshed in the futility of indecision, while the SD slowly but surely closed in on them.

Perhaps the greatest lesson to be learned from this study in strategic order of battle deception concerns the validity of the traditional process of intelligence analysis in which a picture of enemy "capabilities, vulnerabilities, and probable courses of action" (the last being a cautious euphemism for intentions) is assembled from bits and pieces of information of varying degrees of reliability. The British scheme was clearly to defeat this process by systematically creating a false picture of the Allied order of battle and operational plans (particularly the time and place of the main invasion effort) through the leakage of slightly false items of information on major matters, information carefully calculated to confirm what the German leadership was predisposed to believe (i.e., a Pas de Calais invasion site), and gross distortions of those things which the Germans could not readily confirm (the dispositions, strength, and state of training of invasion forces in England). Through the medium of Ultra intelligence, the effects of this deception could be tracked, permitting the employment of special means to repair any weaknesses that might develop in the false picture which was being created.

An interesting side-observation arising out of this study of deception is the ease with which senior commanders were convinced of a false pattern of developments, despite the many doubts of working-level personnel of the German intelligence services concerning the validity of particular elements of deception. Thus, once the predispositions of the opposing military leaders were understood, particularly those of Hitler himself, deception could be focused on the reinforcement of those preconceptions. Considerable latitude in erroneous detail could be tolerated once a general pattern of development had been established, without changing German leadership perceptions. Buchheit's observations on the degree of knowledge possessed by German military intelligence prior to the Normandy invasion are instructive in this regard.²⁸

Likewise, many deceptions which seemed quite promising in the planning stages actually had little effect in practice. An example of this

is the celebrated operation known popularly as "The Man Who Never Was," in which a corpse dressed in the uniform of a British major and carrying false secret dispatches, was allowed to float ashore on the coast of Spain.²⁹ It was intended that the papers should find their way to German intelligence and indicate to them the false intent of attacks against Sardinia and Greece instead of against Sicily. According to a former German staff officer³⁰ this deception, despite its acceptance by the Germans, in reality had no significant influence on the subsequent course of events. The threat of attacks on Sardinia and on Greece had already been accepted by the German leadership many months before, perhaps due to earlier deception efforts, and appropriate dispositions of troops had been made. Likewise, several dozen intercepted messages originating from North Africa clearly indicated that Sicily was a likely point of attack. Hence, the Axis forces had prepared themselves to a certain extent against all eventualities.

Although one may argue that the success of the main Bodyguard deception depended primarily on the failure of German intelligence collection capabilities within Britain and on the increasingly disrupted character of the German military services prior to the invasion of France, the Bodyguard story also points up the absolute necessity for confirmatory evidence in support of the results of analysis of fragmentary information. Thus, the much-touted "mosaic" approach to the analysis of intelligence is highly susceptible to the influences of erroneous data, whether arising from natural causes or from deliberate action on the part of the opposition. From the standpoint of intelligence analysis and its pitfalls, alone, Bodyguard of Lies should be regarded as a basic text and required reading for all aspiring intelligence analysts.

One incidental result of publication of the revelations of Bodyguard should be to answer certain nagging questions in the minds of those still surviving German generals and admirals as to why, despite all their efforts, the "breaks" always seemed to go against them in crucial situations, in seeming defiance of all the laws of probability. Were it not for the still unforgettable Hitlerian overtones, one might even manage to feel a bit sorry for the "honest gentlemen" of the German military officer corps, who were up against another group of "honest gentlemen" who had elected to waive the rules of gentlemanly behavior for the duration. In reality, of course, the Germans were not above using deception themselves whenever the opportunity presented itself, as witness the large-scale "North Pole" operation in Holland, when for more than a year

the Abwehr, by means of false radio transmissions from doubled agents, captured a majority of the personnel being parachuted into Holland to work with the Dutch underground, and caused futile airdrops of many tons of materiel.³¹

Cave Brown, the author of this spectacular if flawed work, is a retired foreign correspondent for major British and Australian newspapers. He acquired an early interest in the subject of deception operations through observation of his father, an expert engraver, working on propaganda material and deceptive cartography for the government in war-time England. He says that he first began thinking seriously about this book when he was reporting from Washington during the Cuban Missile Crisis. In the course of his research, he assembled great quantities of material derived from open literature, declassified U.S. official documents, and the results of more than a hundred interviews of former British, American, German, and French intelligence personnel who were in one way or another associated with deception operations.

Denied access to official British records in no uncertain terms, Cave Brown was more successful with the National Archives and the Office of Military History in Washington, profiting greatly from recent declassifications of records under the Freedom of Information Act. He reportedly still has more than 100,000 words of unused manuscript with which he expects to do more publishing. Given the multitude of errors of detail in the present work, there is probably little reason to fear prosecution for security violations. It would be quite difficult for any prosecutor to show that the author has told the absolute truth about any matter with which he has dealt.

The atomistic thinker or the academic interested in absolute historical accuracy would probably do well to avoid this book. It is not a reliable reference text on the minutiae of particular deception operations. However, the Gestalt thinker, who can be satisfied with holistic impressions of the patterns of military deception operations and who enjoys immersing himself in a highly readable presentation by a competent writer who has taken pains to make the most of uncertain data and a modest understanding of his subject matter, should find the book a rewarding experience.

While far superior in the scope of its coverage and much better written than counterpart publications such as Winterbotham's *The Ultra Secret*,³² Bertrand's *Enigma*, Stevenson's *A Man Called Intrepid*, and

Delmer's *The Counterfeit Spy*,³³ Cave Brown's work fails to escape the common stigma of intelligence narratives: considerable inaccuracy as to detail and occasional lack of validity of interpretation. It raises enough questions to suggest the need for an official history of the subject of deception and special means in WW II. Moreover, in addition to making such a treatment available for the European Theater, there is need of a better understanding of the role of Magic and U.S. deception operations in the winning of the war in the Pacific.

Russell J. Bowen

Footnotes

1 Although Cave Brown made extensive use of published material and some limited use of official records, his heavy reliance on personal interviews in support of key elements of his presentation is felt to justify the reviewer's use of the term "oral history" in describing this work.

2 The British security codeword used to designate compartmented signals intelligence.

3 The coordinating body, supported by MI-5, responsible for organizing the employment of a select group of "doubled" German agents in deception operations (see J. C. Masterman, *The Double-Cross System in the War of 1939-1945*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1972.)

4 The term of opprobrium reportedly used by Reinhard Heydrich, head of the intelligence and counterintelligence operations of the SS, to designate the file on the German officer conspiracy (see Walter Schellenberg. *The Schellenberg Memoirs*, Deutsch, London, 1956.)

5 H.R.Trevor- Roper, the distinguished Oxford historian and a WW II member of MI-6, in a quite biased and highly unfavorable review of this book (See New York Review of Books, 19 February 1976), asserts that Stewart Menzies, WW II head of MI-6, from whom Cave Brown obtained important aspects of the *Schwarze Kapelle* and MI-6 portions of the book, was by the time of the interview senile and eager for selfaggrandizement. Trevor-Roper's own objectivity is open to question

when he claims that Cave Brown has made MI-6 the controlling element of British deception efforts in which the role of the Schwarze Kapelle has been grossly inflated. This is an exaggerated interpretation of admittedly erroneous tendencies on the part of the author, through which Trevor-Roper attempts to show that the book contains fundamental misperceptions, but Trevor-Roper's credentials as a participant in some of the events under consideration cannot be ignored when it comes to matters of factual detail. He points out many such errors, strengthening this reviewer's impression that this is the book's basic failing, arising out of the authors limited access to primary source material, his lack of background in the area of intelligence, and his journalistic compulsion to present a readable story, however fragmentary the available data.

6 There is evidence that this fascinating story may have been considerably exaggerated. Gert Buchheit, in *Spionage in Zwei Weltkriegen* (verlag Politisches Archiv, Landshut, Bundesrepublik, 1975,) criticizes the much less explicit treatment of von Roenne by Ladislav Farago (*Game of the Foxes*, David McKay Co., Inc., New York, 1971.) Specifically, Buchheit disputes the central role of Col. von Roenne in intelligence estimating, noting that he was located in OKH (Army HQ,) while the estimates of enemy capabilities which carried weight with German policy makers were being provided by OKW (Armed Forces HQ.)

7 The overall Allied plan for the invasion of western Europe.

8 The sub-element of Overlord concerned with the invasion of Normandy.

9 It should be pointed out that only a limited number of the deceptions envisaged in the early planning were implemented, a fact which Cave Brown fails to make clear. He was obviously led astray to a certain extent by overreliance on early planning documents.

10 Fortitude was the overall project for deceptions aimed at convincing the Germans that notional Allied forces in the UK were poised to land at points other than Normandy.

11 William Stevenson, *A Man Called Intrepid* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1976.)

12 The first U.S. central intelligence activity, which preceded and gave birth to the Office of Strategic Services. See Thomas F. Troy, "The COI

and British Intelligence," *Studies in Intelligence* XVIII-1Supplement.

13 Stevenson, *op. cit.*

14 For one thing, deception's greatest role is played prior to the battle.

15 The code-name assigned to this spy by German intelligence.

16 Geri Buchheit, *op. cit.*

17 Gustav Bertrand, *Enigma* (Librairie Plon, Paris, 1973).

18 Stevenson, *op. cit.*

19 Richard Deacon, *A History of the British Secret Service* (Frederick Mueller, London, 1969;); Malcolm Muggeridge, *The Infernal Grove* (William Morrow, New York, 1974;); and Charles Whiting, *The Battle for Twelveland* (Lee Cooper, London, 1975.)

20 Roessler, code-named Lucy, provided information which purported to come from the highest German government circles to the Soviet Resident, Rado, through one of Rado's subordinate agents. It is suspected that Roessler actually received the information from the organization of Major Hausmann of Swiss intelligence known as Buero Ha, for which Roessler worked. (c.f. Whiting, *op. cit.*)

21 Stevenson, *op. cit.*

22 *Ibid.*

23 *Ibid.*

24 Indeed, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, has recently repudiated this story and threatened to sue the author.

25 William F. Flicke, *War Secrets in the Ether, NSA 1953-1954* (OUO.)

26 *War Report-Office of Strategic Services (OSS)*, Vol. 2, Washington, D.C., 1949 (Declassified.)

27 Muggeridge, *op. cit.*

28 Buchheit, *op. cit.*

29 As set forth in the book of the same name by the originator of the

scheme, *Ewen Montagu* (Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1953, 1966.) Montagu has stated privately that in two pages dealing with this operation, Cave Brown has "ten factual errors and three embellishments."

30 Buchheit, *op. cit.*

31 The story of this considerable success of German military intelligence is presented in H. J. Giskes, *London Calling North Pole* (Kimber, London, 1953.)

32 Frederick N. Winterbotham, *The Ultra Secret* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1974.)

33 Sefton Delmer, *The Counterfeit Spy* (Harper & Row, New York, 1971.)

UNCLASSIFIED

Posted: May 08, 2007 08:46 AM