

= Dudley Clarke =

Brigadier Dudley Wrangel Clarke CB , CBE ( 27 April 1899 ? 7 May 1974 ) was an officer in the British Army , known as a pioneer of military deception operations during the Second World War . His ideas for combining fictional orders of battle , visual deception and double agents helped define Allied deception strategy during the war , for which he has been referred to as " the greatest British deceiver of WW2 " . Clarke was also instrumental in the founding of three famous military units , namely the British Commandos , the Special Air Service and the US Rangers .

Born in Johannesburg and brought up near London , Clarke joined the Royal Artillery as an officer in 1916 , but transferred to the Royal Flying Corps after finding he was too young to fight in France . He spent the First World War learning to fly , first in Reading and then Egypt . Clarke returned to the Royal Artillery in 1919 and had a varied career doing intelligence work in the Middle East . In 1936 he was posted to Palestine , where he helped organise the British repression of the 1936 Arab uprising . During the Second World War , Clarke joined John Dill 's staff and proposed and helped implement , an idea for commando raids into France ? an early form of the British Commandos .

In 1940 , Archibald Wavell called Clarke to Cairo and placed him in charge of strategic deception . As cover he was employed to set up a regional organisation for MI9 , a British escape and evasion department . The following year Clarke received a war establishment and set up Advanced Headquarters ' A ' Force with a small staff to plan deception operations . Once satisfied with the department 's structure , he pursued intelligence contacts in Turkey and Spain . In late 1941 Clarke was called to London , where his deception work had come to the attention of Allied high command . Shortly afterwards , while in Madrid , he was arrested wearing women 's clothing , in circumstances that remain unclear . He was released and after being questioned by the governor of Gibraltar , allowed to return to Cairo .

During Clarke 's absence , deception hierarchy in Middle East Command had become muddled . Colonel Ralph Bagnold had taken over deception planning , pushing ' A ' Force aside . Clarke was sent to El Alamein , where Allied forces were on the retreat , to work on deception plans . Upon his return , Bagnold was sidelined and ' A ' Force reinstated as the primary deception department . Throughout 1942 Clarke implemented Operation Cascade , an order of battle deception which added many fictional units to the Allied formations . Cascade was a success ; by the end of the war the enemy accepted most of the formations as real . From 1942 to 1945 , Clarke continued to organise deception in North Africa and southern Europe . After the war he was asked to record the history of ' A ' Force . He retired in 1947 and lived the rest of his life in relative obscurity . As well as pursuing a literary career that produced two histories and a thriller , he worked for the Conservative Party and was a director of Securicor . He died in London in 1974 .

= = Early life = =

Clarke was born in Johannesburg on 27 April 1899 . His father , Ernest Clarke , grew up in Kingston upon Hull and moved to South Africa in the late 19th century , where he became embroiled in the Jameson Raid . Ernest managed to avoid prison for his part in the raid and , via a co @-@ conspirator , obtained a job at a gold mining company . Once settled , Ernest married Madeline Gardiner , and a short while later , Dudley was born . During the Second Boer War , the Clarke family was trapped in the siege of Ladysmith . Although an infant at the time of the siege , Clarke later tried to claim a campaign medal . Soon afterwards , the family returned to England , moving to Watford , where Clarke 's brother , the screenwriter T. E. B. Clarke , was born in 1907 .

From an early age , Clarke wanted a career in the armed forces . In 1912 , he attended Charterhouse School , where he was exposed to the glamorous parties and smart uniforms of the nearby military presence at Aldershot , including the newly formed Royal Flying Corps .

= = First World War and inter @-@ war period = =

I 've always been a little proud of the fact that , when Britain went to war with Germany on 4th

August 1914 , I was already in uniform and under arms ... I was only fifteen and a half and no more than a private in the Charterhouse Contingent of the Officers Training corps

Eager to be in active service , Clarke applied to sit the Army Entrance Exam in 1915 , as soon as he had reached the minimum age of sixteen and a half . To his own surprise ( he had petitioned the Charterhouse headmaster for a recommendation , allowing him to bypass the exam , on the expectation of failing ) , he passed and in early 1916 attended the Royal Military Academy , Woolwich . In November 1916 , Clarke was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery . When his regiment deployed to France , Clarke had to stay behind because , aged 17 , he was too young to fight . Frustrated , he applied to join the Royal Flying Corps and transferred to the School of Military Aeronautics in Reading in November 1917 . The following April he was posted to Egypt to complete his flight training , where he stayed until January 1919 . Despite his promotion to the rank of lieutenant , Clarke transferred back to the Royal Artillery on his return to England .

After the war , Clarke had a varied military career that began with a posting to Mesopotamia in 1919 . During the Iraqi revolt of 1920 , he helped evacuate Europeans from the region by boat . While on extended leave in Turkey in 1922 , he became involved in the Chanak Crisis , a threatened Turkish attack on British and French troops . Clarke volunteered to help the local British force and was tasked with feeding misinformation to Turkish nationalists ? a first taste of the activities that would define his later military career . In 1925 , during another period of leave , Clarke covered the Rif War for the Morning Post .

Over the inter @-@ war period , Clarke became involved in the theatre and drama establishments of his postings . In 1923 , he re @-@ formed the Royal Artillery Officers Dramatic Club and was responsible for the Royal Artillery 's display at the 1925 Royal Tournament . In 1933 and 1934 , he wrote and directed two Christmas pantomimes .

= = = Palestine = = =

In 1936 , Clarke was posted , at his request , to Palestine , just in time to participate in the 1936 Arab uprising . The British presence in Jerusalem was minimal at that time , comprising two regiments of infantry and a motley collection of air and armour under the command of Colonel Jack Evetts . Clarke , as one of only two staff officers , was faced with organising an effective response to guerrilla warfare . He first set to work improving communications between the small Royal Air Force contingent and the army . It was here that he met Tony Simonds , an intelligence officer sent to the region with express orders to set up an intelligence network . Clarke and Simonds worked to feed reliable information to British forces .

Toward the end of 1936 , more troops were dispatched to Palestine . Lieutenant General John Dill was placed in command , and Clarke became his chief of staff . In 1937 , Dill was replaced by Major General Archibald Wavell , the commander who would later give Clarke free rein in Middle Eastern deception operations . In the preface to Clarke 's 1948 book , Seven Assignments , Wavell wrote about their time together in Palestine :

When I commanded in Palestine in 1937 ? 38 , I had on my staff two officers in whom I recognised an original , unorthodox outlook on soldiering ... One was Orde Wingate , the second was Dudley Clarke .

= = Second World War = =

At the outbreak of the Second World War Clarke was promoted to lieutenant colonel and began working on intelligence tasks . He worked with Wavell in the Middle East to research possible Allied supply lines , undertook two trips to Norway ( in an effort to maintain its neutrality ) , and conducted secret missions in Calais and Ireland .

In May 1940 Clarke became a military assistant to General Sir John Dill ( then Chief of the General Staff ) at the War Office . On 30 May 1940 , inspired by childhood recollections of similar Boer forces as well as experiences during the Arab uprising in Palestine , Clarke sketched out an idea for small amphibious raiding parties , called Commandos . On 5 June , while Dill was inspecting the troops

evacuated from Dunkirk , Clarke suggested the idea to him , and the prime minister approved the plan on the following day . Clarke , under Brigadier Otto Lunde , was tasked with setting up a new department , MO9 , and began to recruit soldiers for what would later become the British Commandos . The first raid into France , Operation Collar , took place on 24 June 1940 . Clarke obtained permission to accompany the 120 @-@ strong force , but was not allowed to go ashore . The attempt was not a major success , with only one of the four units managing to kill enemy troops . While waiting on the beach for his men to return , Clarke 's boat was apparently spotted by a German patrol . Somehow Clarke was injured in the ear during , he said , an exchange of fire . Ernest Chappell , who was also on the beach , said that the patrol had not opened fire .

= = = 1941 : Cairo = = =

In Cairo , Archibald Wavell , Clarke 's old commander in Palestine , was commanding the North African campaign . He believed that deception was a key part of warfare . On 13 December he summoned Clarke to Egypt , telling high command he wished to set up " a special section of Intelligence for Deception " . While awaiting Clarke 's arrival , Wavell initiated a successful deception against the Italian forces at Sidi Barrani . Clarke reached Cairo on 18 December , to be greeted by Tony Simonds ? another old hand from Palestine . Wavell put Clarke in charge , albeit under great secrecy , of broad strategic deception operations in North Africa . He held this position , under subsequent Mediterranean commanders , for the next five years .

On his arrival in Cairo , Clarke began to build a network of useful contacts . He befriended Lieutenant @-@ Colonel Raymund Maunsell , who operated Security Intelligence Middle East ( SIME ) , the agency in charge of counter @-@ espionage in the region . Maunsell later worked closely with Clarke , helping to feed misinformation to the enemy via double agents . Clarke 's first deception was a scheme to mislead Italian forces into expecting an invasion of Italian Somaliland instead of Eritrea , the real Allied target . Operation Camilla fooled the Italian leadership completely but instead of diverting troops as the British hoped , they withdrew their forces into Eritrea . From this failure Clarke learned a first lesson , one he would teach to many other deception officers during the war : that the key to deception was not to make your enemy think what you wish but to get them to do what you want .

Clarke had not forgotten his previous pet scheme : the Commandos . In January 1941 , he met the American Colonel William J. Donovan while the latter was touring the region . Clarke 's description of the 1940 British unit inspired Donovan to emulate the idea . Clarke suggested the name " Rangers " , after the frontier force Rogers ' Rangers in the film Northwest Passage , for Donovan 's unit . In May of the following year the United States Army Rangers were founded .

In February , Clarke suffered from an attack of jaundice that put him out of action for about six weeks . He was visited regularly by Maunsell who was , by that time , a firm friend .

= = = = ' A ' Force = = = =

At first Clarke worked alone and in secret , under the official title " Intelligence Officer ( special duties ) to the Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief " . He had neither staff nor official mandate , and worked from a " converted bathroom " at the British Army headquarters , Cairo . His cover role was to establish a regional department for MI9 , the less secret organisation tasked with helping Allied servicemen in escape and evasion tactics . Far from being a token cover , Clarke ran MI9 's Middle East department , in tandem with his deception work , until August 1944 . Clarke 's one @-@ man show in deception was not to last long .

In January 1941 Clarke began Operation Abeam , fabricating the existence of a British paratrooper regiment in the region . It would be two years before such troops reached the Mediterranean , but Clarke hoped to play on Italian fears of an airborne assault . He created a fictional 1st Special Air Service Brigade , using faked documents , photographs and reports , which leaked back to the Italians . He even dressed two soldiers in " 1 SAS " uniforms and set them to wander around Cairo , Port Said and Alexandria hinting at missions in Crete or Libya .

By March , Clarke had another scheme in the works , a deception cover for Operation Cordite , the 6th Infantry Division invasion of Rhodes . His work interviewing locals about the Greek island could not be associated with the 6th so he adopted the guise of ' A ' Force . The name was intentionally vague , designed to add to the mythology of his fictional airborne unit . Although at first only a cover name , the department soon became real and took control of deception in the region . On 28 March 1941 Clarke requisitioned No. 6 Sharia Kasr @-@ el @-@ Nill , Cairo ? opposite 6th Division HQ and below a brothel ? and in April received an official mandate for his department . " Advanced Headquarters ' A ' Force " moved into their new offices on 8 April 1941 and Clarke began to recruit his staff .

Clarke 's airborne SAS had another legacy . In May 1941 David Stirling , an injured member of the early 8 Commando , envisioned a new special forces unit consisting of small commando teams intended to operate behind enemy lines . Clarke gave the project his full backing , and the unit was named " L " Detachment , Special Air Service ? in part to help solidify the existence of the larger fictional force in the minds of the enemy . Stirling 's force later evolved into the modern @-@ day Special Air Service . Clarke therefore had a hand in the formation of three famed military units .

Phantom forces , of which the SAS was only Clarke 's first , played a crucial part in deception operations during the war ? including along the Western Front in 1944 ? but for the rest of April 1941 he worked hard to build his department .

= = = Consolidating deception = = =

Clarke 's " War Establishment " granted him three officers , several enlisted men and a small array of vehicles . A recruitment drive paid off in the form of highly experienced staff . To help with visual deception he brought in Victor Jones and Jasper Maskelyne . He also recruited a Scots Guards officer , Captain Ogilvie @-@ Grant , to manage the MI9 escape and evasion work , which had been adopted as cover for the whole of ' A ' Force . Finally , the services of Major E. Titterington , originally a member of Maunsell 's SIME , were obtained for help in creating forged documents ; eventually Titterington 's operation expanded to form a subsection of ' A ' Force devoted to forgeries .

With his office organised , Clarke was happy to leave day @-@ to @-@ day management to his staff . He then embarked on a trip to Turkey , where he worked to establish a network of misinformation as well as carry out his MI9 role . There he met two important figures in Turkish intelligence ? Brigadier Allan Arnold , the British military attaché , and Commander Vladimir Wolfson , a Royal Navy attaché ? and worked with them to open channels of misinformation to the enemy . In Wolfson , Clarke had found an important resource and , in his own words , began " a long and profitable partnership for Deception and MI9 matters in Turkey which was to last for the rest of the war " . Clarke left Istanbul on 16 May , travelling covertly back to Egypt via Syria and Lebanon in order to reconnoitre the ground that British forces would have to invade when entering the country . He arrived in Cairo on 21 May .

Despite Clarke and Wavell 's successes in deception , the North African campaign was turning against the Allies . In 1941 Erwin Rommel had taken command of Axis forces and won early victories . Churchill replaced Wavell with Claude Auchinleck . Clarke 's new commander was impressed with Wavell 's setup , so ' A ' Force and the rest of Middle Eastern Command continued to operate as before .

= = = Lisbon and London = = =

Clarke travelled to Lisbon on 22 August 1941 aiming , as with his earlier Turkey trip , to open up lines of deception into Axis forces . He spent around a month in the area , posing as a flamboyant journalist , before being summoned back to London . His successful deception activities in the Middle East had caught the attention of high command , and Clarke was asked to write a paper about his experiences .

While in London , Clarke met many of his counterparts on the Western Front . He attended

meetings of the Twenty Committee and Chiefs of Staff Committee ( which was chaired by his old commander , John Dill ) . The paper on deception met with approval in the establishment and it was decided that a department similar to ' A ' Force should be created in London . Clarke was offered the job , reporting directly to the Chiefs of Staff and War Cabinet . He declined , citing loyalty to the Middle East , but his decision was in large part due to the greater operational freedom and status he enjoyed in North Africa . The London Controlling Section was formed and , after some disorganisation , prospered under John Bevan , with whom Clarke would later work closely .

Pleased with his success in London , Clarke returned to Lisbon on 12 October posing as a journalist for The Times named " Wrangal Craker " . His aim was to carry on the semi @-@ undercover work of spreading rumours and misinformation to the Germans . Later that month , in Madrid , he was arrested while dressed as a woman . Guy Liddell , wartime counter @-@ espionage head at MI5 , said of the incident : " I 'm afraid to say that after his stay in Lisbon as a bogus journalist he has got rather over @-@ confident about his powers as an agent . " Clarke was released , apparently at the behest of a German contact who believed him to be " an important agent who was ready to assist the Germans " , and made his way to Gibraltar .

Clarke 's run of bad luck continued . He was ordered back to London to explain the Madrid incident to his superiors but , after setting out on the ship Ariosto , the convoy was torpedoed by a U @-@ boat on 24 October . The Ariosto was one of three ships sunk in the engagement , although he escaped harm and returned to Gibraltar . Rather than attempting another trip to London , Clarke was interviewed by the Governor of Gibraltar , Lord Gort , who judged Clarke 's answers acceptable and concluded that " we can reasonably expect that this escapade and its consequences will have given him sufficient shock to make him more prudent in the immediate future " . It is unclear why Clarke was wearing a dress , but reports of the incident indicated he had been following a lead and gone a little too far in his spy @-@ craft . Photographs of his disguise , obtained from the Spanish police , circulated in London and were viewed mostly with amusement . He was allowed to return to Cairo and reached Egypt on 18 November . Although he escaped disciplinary action over the incident , it was the last time Clarke attempted his own espionage work .

== = 1942 : El Alamein == =

Back in Cairo , Clarke discovered that much had changed during his absence . The recently promoted Colonel Ralph Bagnold had been appointed " Chief Deception Officer " at Middle Eastern HQ and had taken charge of tactical deception . Clarke was annoyed at what he saw as a power grab and at the sudden high profile of deception operations ( Bagnold 's promotion was widely publicised ) . Over the next few months Bagnold secured more and more of the day @-@ to @-@ day management of deception operations leaving ' A ' Force , and Clarke , in a training and advisory capacity .

Despite this , Clarke 's services were in high demand as the opening months of 1942 saw Allied forces in North Africa suffering serious defeats . On 2 February Auchinleck dispatched Clarke to Libya with urgent orders to assist in halting the German advances . Before leaving for the Eighth Army headquarters in Gazala , Clarke left a note , which he later described as " begging for the whole question of deception machinery in the Command to be reviewed completely afresh during his absence . " Once on the ground he found a shaken army conducting a hesitant withdrawal , and in urgent need of delaying tactics to slow the German advance . After brainstorming with his team in Cairo , Clarke envisioned Bastion , a deception operation to convince Rommel that his advance on Gazala was heading into a trap . The plan , which involved Victor Jones creating a strong fictional force of 300 tanks on the British right hand flank , was in full swing during February . The operation appears to have had limited effect . Rommel delayed his advance until May , when British forces were routed at the Battle of Gazala and the Germans resumed their push toward Egypt .

Upon his return to Cairo , on 15 February , Clarke was pleased to find that Auchinleck had restored ' A ' Force as the sole deception organisation at HQ . Bagnold 's enterprise was entirely sidelined and he moved on to other things . Clarke , who in March was promoted to full colonel , said that Bastion had taught him much : " We learnt more Lessons from it than from almost any other plan

and it helped us evolve three important principles . " By the end of March , Clarke considered the much @-@ expanded ' A ' Force , and his theory of deception , to have matured beyond the basic trial and error of the previous years .

= = = = Operation Cascade = = = =

In March 1942 Clarke had begun to draft ideas for an ambitious order @-@ of @-@ battle deception . He had found that the process of convincing the enemy of the existence of a notional force was long and tedious . Operation Cascade was intended to create the fiction of a much increased Allied force in North Africa , including eight divisions , three new brigades , and even the 1st SAS . At first the plan was intended to deter the Axis from extending an offensive against the USSR southward into the region .

After a slow start , in early 1942 , Cascade began to take effect . As early as May , Axis intelligence began to overestimate Allied strength by nearly 30 % . In July the operation expanded . Clarke introduced more and more fictitious divisions and by the end of the year the Germans had accepted many of them as real formations . By 1944 , when the operation was superseded , it had completely fooled the enemy . Cascade was a major success for Clarke ; it supported most of the subsequent major deceptions for the remainder of the war ( by providing established fictional units ) and proved that deception on a grand scale was a realistic strategy .

= = = = El Alamein deceptions , August 1942 = = = =

In May , before Cascade had become fully operational , Rommel defeated the British Army in Libya . Auchinleck rallied his forces at El Alamein and asked Clarke to draft plans for delaying the Axis advance , giving the Allies time to withdraw . Operation Sentinel was designed to convince Rommel , using camouflage , fakery and radio deception , that substantial British armour sat between him and the retreating Eighth Army . In spite of his success at El Alamein Auchinleck was replaced by Harold Alexander on 8 August , Clarke 's third commander in under two years . Bernard Montgomery was handed control of the Eighth Army and instructed to push Rommel back . Montgomery knew Clarke , having taught him infantry tactics at the Staff College in 1931 , and instructed him to prepare deception plans for the Second Battle of El Alamein . The plan involved major camouflage activity , Operation Bertram , radio deception , Operation Canwell and a disinformation campaign , Operation Treatment . On 9 September Clarke was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire ( OBE ) . The citation recognised his efforts in setting up A @-@ Force , but referred to its less clandestine MI9 escape and evasion work .

Clarke had his mind on other things besides awards and El Alamein . He delegated much of the ongoing planning to ' A ' Force staff , as the department was now well established . Instead he flew to London and Washington in October to discuss strategic deception for Operation Torch , the forthcoming British @-@ American invasion of the French North African colonies , leaving Charles Richardson ( a planning officer at Eighth Army HQ ) and Geoffrey Barkas ( Director of Camouflage , Middle East Command ) to implement Operation Bertram . For the first time deception experts from across the theatres of war worked together . John Bevan of the London Controlling Section hosted an October conference for Clarke , Peter Flemming from India , and representatives from Washington . The meeting agreed on plans for a disinformation campaign , which would attempt to convince German high command that the Allied targets in Africa were Dakar and Sicily ( the far eastern and western limits of the theatre ) . Four days after Montgomery 's success at El Alamein , on 8 November , Allied forces landed in Morocco and Algeria to the surprise of German forces there . On 14 October Clarke , along with Bevan and Flemming , met Churchill to discuss all the Allied deception strategies .

= = = 1943 : Barclay = = =

1943 would be the peak of deception operations for Clarke and ' A ' Force ? in 1944 the focus

switched to the Western Front . Until then he was very busy between Operation Barclay and the continuing Cascade . The main Allied push that year was toward Sicily , as decided by high command in January . Barclay was the elaborate deception with which Clarke was tasked , an operation to mislead the Axis into expecting attacks on the far eastern and western extremities of the northern Mediterranean theatre ? namely the Balkan Peninsula and southern France .

On 15 March Clarke again met Bevan , in Algiers , to discuss strategy for Barclay . Building on Cascade he added the Twelfth Army to his fictional order of battle , and began to make them look like a convincing threat to Crete and the Greek mainland . For this new deception ' A ' Force had strong support from London ? in April the famed Operation Mincemeat was used to help bolster Clarke 's deceptive thrust toward Crete .

By this point ' A ' Force had much expanded beyond the small flat in Cairo , adding representatives with the army in Sicily and offices in Algiers and Nairobi . Clarke roved around the region acting as overseer of the department 's operations . On 14 October he was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire ( CBE ) , the citation ( marked " not for publication " ) praised Clarke 's ongoing work , referring to him as " irreplaceable " . In December 1943 , he was promoted to the rank of brigadier . Although the promotion did not include perks associated with higher ranks ( such as a car and driver ) Clarke used his charisma to obtain them anyway .

= = = 1944 : Monty 's double = = =

In 1944 the Allies finally focused on France and the Western Front . Bevan and the London Controlling Section were tasked with inventing an elaborate masquerade to cover the Normandy invasion , a vindication of the theory pioneered by Clarke and Wavell : that every real operation should have a complementary deception .

The focus on France left Clarke supporting the Allied push through Italy . He noted that " the peculiar circumstances of the Mediterranean Theater made it a sheer impossibility to have a hiatus of more than a week or two duration between Deception Plans . " In quick succession ' A ' Force executed deceptions that included the operations Oakenfield and Zeppelin . Later that spring Clarke was inspired by a war film , Five Graves to Cairo , to create Operation Copperhead . Bernard Montgomery had recently been moved to England to take command of the ground forces intended for the Normandy invasion . To confuse the Germans , Clarke located a look @-@ alike , pre @-@ war actor Lieutenant M. E. Clifton James , and brought him to the Mediterranean under much ceremony .

Through 1944 ' A ' Force was slowly winding down . Clarke was involved in planning Operation Bodyguard , a major cover plan for the Allied landing in Normandy , and he was tasked with executing the ( largely political ) deceptions in the Middle Eastern region . However , by the end of the summer ' A ' Force 's usefulness in operations had reached its end . On 13 October Clarke held a party ( true to form , at a Cairo cinema ) for the remaining members of the department . Command of the remaining tactical deceptions was transferred to Caserta . Clarke , along with a skeleton staff , remained in Egypt to tie up the loose ends of various operations and to begin his history of the department . In April 1945 , Clarke left Cairo for London ; on 18 June he called a meeting of the remaining ' A ' Force members at the Great Central Hotel where the department was disbanded .

Clarke was mentioned in despatches on 19 October 1944 , relating to his work setting up ' A ' Force .

The planning and implementation of deception measures which have played a major part in the successes achieved in this theatre have been due in large measure to the originality of thought , imagination and initiative displayed by this officer .

The citation was announced in The London Gazette on 22 February 1945 . Clarke received a further honour that year , when on 19 June he was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath ( CB ) . On 2 April 1946 he was awarded the American Legion of Merit .

= = After the war = =

Following the end of the war Clarke spent some time writing war histories . Until his retirement from the army in 1947 , with the rank of brigadier , he recorded the history of ' A ' Force . The document was never published and remained classified till the 1970s . His first complete book was published in 1948 . Seven Assignments recorded Clarke 's activities during the early wartime period of 1939 and 1940 ( before the Middle East posting ) . It was not his first attempt at a book . In 1925 Clarke had found a publisher for his coverage for the Rif rebellion , but the work was never finished .

Following Seven Assignments Clarke then took a job at Conservative Central Office , as Head of Public Opinion Research , where he worked until 1952 . During this later career he also served as a director of Securicor . In 1952 he resumed his literary career with the publication of The Eleventh at War , a history of the 11th Hussars . The following year he submitted a publisher 's proposal for The Secret War , a full account of deception during the Second World War , but was prevented from writing it by the Official Secrets Act . His final book was fiction , a thriller entitled Golden Arrow , published in 1955 .

Clarke lived out his retirement in relative obscurity , despite the belief of his former commander , Field Marshal Harold Alexander , that " he did as much to win the war as any other single officer " . Clarke died on 7 May 1974 , his address at the time was an apartment in Raleigh House , Dolphin Square , London . Most of his war work in military deception remained an obscure secret until the end of the 20th century and the publication of Michael Howard 's 1990 official history , Strategic Deception in the Second World War .

= = Legacy = =

Clarke was widely regarded as an expert in military deception , and viewed by some of his peers as nearly legendary in status . In his 2004 book , The Deceivers , historian Thaddeus Holt identifies Clarke as " the master of the game " , having been immersed in his deception activities for the entire war . Clarke evolved deception , almost from scratch , as a vital part of Allied strategy . The organisation that he and Wavell established proved a model for the other theatres of war , and his successes directly led to the creation of the London Controlling Section in 1941 . He also misled German intelligence for several years ? to the extent that they overestimated Allied strength in North Africa by a quarter of a million men . The journalist Nicholas Rankin , writing in 2008 , referred to Clarke as " the greatest British deceiver of WW2 , a special kind of secret servant . "

From the start of his Cairo posting Clarke learned the art of deception by trial and error . From mistakes during Camilla he learned to focus on what he wanted the enemy to do rather than on what he wanted them to think . From another early operation ( K @-@ Shell , the spreading of rumours about a new Allied super @-@ shell which eventually petered out after the media picked up the story ) , he learned the value of conducting deception only when there was a clear objective , rather than because it was possible . From Bastion he discovered the difficulty of running a large deception on a short timescale . From these lessons Clarke evolved his principles of deception .

Clarke also had a good appreciation of the complex interplay between Operations and intelligence in deception operations . He understood how to manipulate enemy intelligence agencies to build up the story he was trying to sell , and saw the importance of getting Operations , on his own side , to fit into those stories .

= = Personal life = =

Clarke is described as a charismatic , charming and theatrical character with a streak of creativity , a personality reflected in the escapades of his life and career . His self @-@ deprecating humour and work ethic made Clarke a popular figure within the army , where he was considered to have odd " old world " habits and " an uncanny habit of suddenly appearing in a room without anyone having noticed him enter " . Clarke was considered to possess an " original intellect " , and to have odd habits , but was never seen as eccentric ( a trait that was frowned on within the army establishment ) . Despite having middle @-@ class origins , he aspired to the fringes of the upper @-@ class establishment , in his words : " one of those in the inner circle , watching the wheels go round at the



hub of the British Empire at some great moment in history . "

From his time in Egypt during the First World War , Clarke fell in love with the country and he returned there as often as possible . He had a great respect for the inhabitants , writing that they had " the endearing qualities of humour and fortitude " . Another particular love was film . In Cairo , during the Second World War , he was a regular at the cinema , a location that suited his photographic memory and preference for working at night ; he often conducted meetings there . Films influenced his work in other ways , for instance in the inspiration he took from Northwest Passage to name the US Rangers .

Clarke was inventive as well as frugal . While at flight school in Reading , and without any money to fund his recreation , he built " an apparatus composed of a bootlace , a lanyard and some straps off my valise , by which I am enabled to turn out the light without getting out of bed " .

The incident in Madrid , and Clarke 's love of theatrics , raised awkward questions about his sexuality . His arrest was somewhat hushed up at the time , which may have raised more questions than it prevented . There is no indication that Clarke was homosexual . He was involved in two bad relationships with women . In 1922 he met a Slavic woman called Nina in Wiesbaden , but she disappeared after Clarke smuggled currency to her friend in Bulgaria . Then in the late 1920s a woman in Sussex , who " meant everything in the world " to him , refused an offer of marriage . He often claimed to hate children and never married . Despite this Clarke was known for having beautiful female acquaintances , to whom his friends referred as " Dudley 's Duchesses " .

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