

= Operation Hardboiled =

Operation Hardboiled was a Second World War military deception . Undertaken by the Allies in 1942 , it was the first attempt at deception by the London Controlling Section (LCS) and was designed to convince the Axis powers that the Allies would soon invade German @-@ occupied Norway . The LCS had recently been established to plan deception across all theatres , but had struggled for support from the unenthusiastic military establishment . The LCS had little guidance in strategic deception , an activity pioneered by Dudley Clarke the previous year , and was unaware of the extensive double agent system controlled by MI5 . As a result , Hardboiled was planned as a real operation rather than a fictional one . Clarke had already found this approach to be wasteful in time and resources , preferring to present a " story " using agents and wireless traffic .

Resistance to the operation by the chosen units meant that much of the preparation was not completed . Adolf Hitler ordered the reinforcement of Scandinavia in March and April 1942 , before Hardboiled was shelved in May . It is unclear to what extent the operation contributed to his decision . Despite its limited impact , the operation gave the LCS experience in planning deceptions , and laid the groundwork for future exploitation of Hitler 's belief that Northern Europe was strategically important .

= = Background = =

Strategic deception was a new topic for the Allies , having been pioneered in 1941 in Cairo by Dudley Clarke and his Advanced Headquarters ' A ' Force . Following a presentation in September by Clarke , the Joint Planning Staff of the British War Ministry decided that a special organisation should be set up to plan and execute deception operations . They recommended that a " controlling section " be set up to oversee strategic deception planning , which would then be put into practice at the operational level by the armed services . The idea was approved and Clarke was offered the role . After he declined , the Chiefs of Staff chose Colonel Oliver Stanley , the former Secretary of State for War , as the new Controlling Officer .

Stanley had great difficulty in convincing the Allied military establishment , which was sceptical of strategic deception and resistant to the idea of a central planning authority , to take part in an operation . Despite obtaining a few staff officers , the London Controlling Section (LCS) was , in the words of one member , in a state of " near impotence " . In December 1941 Stanley received permission to plan the LCS 's first operation , following several months of pressure on the Allied command .

= = Planning = =

Hardboiled had no specific goal for the Allies , other than to convince the Germans of an imminent invasion threat against Norway . Clarke had already established that deception operations should have a clear idea of what the enemy was supposed to do (rather than what they were expected to think) . Stanley was unaware of this , not being in communication with Clarke 's department in Cairo . As a result , the objective for Hardboiled was chosen because the resources existed and it would not affect real future operations (planners had already rejected Norway as a viable target) , rather than for any strategic advantage it brought the Allies . Stanley was also unaware of the extensive double agent network under the control of the Twenty Committee , having merely been told that MI5 had an avenue through which to pass information to the enemy .

Stanley at first proposed that the notional target should be Narvik or Trondheim . Allied commanders decided these were implausible targets because of their northern location and an amphibious landing at Stavanger was chosen , based on planning for Operation Dynamite (a previously considered , and rejected , invasion of the country) . The date of the fictional invasion was set for 1 May 1942 . Hardboiled was planned as a real operation , involving actual training and troop movements , culminating in the embarkation of a fake invasion . The plan relied on German intelligence , rumour and leaks to convey the deception to the enemy . Clarke and ' A ' Force had

already discovered in previous operations that realistic training was wasteful , having found that much of the effort could be falsified using agents and wireless traffic . The LCS lacked guidance from Cairo and so made many of the same mistakes .

The LCS also lacked knowledge of MI5 's Double @-@ Cross System and its double agents . The department were unaware that no uncontrolled German operatives were active in the UK , and so incorrectly believed any deception would have to be highly realistic to appear genuine .

Before the operation could go into action , Stanley had one final objection ; he found the codename Hardboiled " silly " . LCS member Dennis Wheatley had picked it from a book of codewords , and explained to Stanley (who was unaware) that the name had been randomly selected so as to bear no relation to the operation 's aims .

= = Operation = =

The Royal Marines Division were earmarked for Hardboiled , trained in mountain warfare , and given cold weather equipment . Realistic invasion plans were drawn up and Norwegian currency was stockpiled . These preparations met with considerable resistance from the armed forces , who considered the operation to be a waste of effort . The need for soldiers in real operations and training meant that , in the end , a lot of the preparation never occurred .

The LCS attempted passive deception as part of Hardboiled . Agents canvassed Norwegian refugees for information about Stavanger and for possible interpreters . The hope was that rumours would reach neutral countries and filter back to the German intelligence network . Some deception was also passed on via agents .

= = Impact = =

Hardboiled soon petered out as the Royal Marines were required for an amphibious operation in Madagascar in July 1942 . It had appeared effective , as during April and May the Germans had reinforced the region . Historian Joshua Levine notes that Hitler had a " near @-@ obsession with defence of Scandinavia " during this period and that it is unclear how much the operation had contributed to his strategy . Michael Howard , who wrote the official British history of strategic deception , attributes the lacklustre response to severe setbacks the Allies were then facing on every front , and writes that it is difficult to imagine the Germans believing that a major offensive operation was being planned .

The operation did not give the Allies any tactical or strategic advantage ; Howard notes that it provided experience for the planners in handling deception and for the Twenty Committee in proving the worth of double agents . Terry Crowdy , writing in 2008 , argued that any experience that the LCS attained was limited by the lack of guidance from Cairo and knowledge of double agents . Dudley Clarke had already shown that the most effective method of deception involved the use of agents and faked wireless traffic , rather than major training and troop movements . Hardboiled was the first deception plan aimed at Norway . It led into several others , including Operation Tindall and Operation Solo , culminating in the 1944 Operation Fortitude North , one of the Allies ' largest and most successful deceptions .

In May 1942 , John Bevan replaced Stanley as head of the LCS , after the latter had asked Winston Churchill for permission to re @-@ enter politics . At the same time , the committee was given much broader powers . Hardboiled was sidelined by the new regime , and had been dropped entirely from the LCS programme by the end of May .