



# SPIES *Why was Karel Richter executed?*

## Source 1

### KAREL RICHTER.

### M.I.5. REPORT.

On the 14th May, 1941, at about 10.20 p.m., War Reserve Police Constable A. J. Scott of the Hertfordshire County Constabulary was on duty on the North Orbital Road near the Roundabout, London Colney. He saw two lorry drivers standing on the footpath on the South side of the road. Their lorry was just opposite, and a man who was later found to be RICHTER was standing some ten yards away. The lorry drivers asked the Constable the way to the North, saying that they had already asked the man nearby but that he appeared to be a foreigner and wanted to go to hospital. The Constable directed the lorry drivers on their way. He did not obtain the number of the lorry or the names of the drivers, and thus it has not been possible to trace these two men. He then spoke to RICHTER, asking him where he was going. RICHTER said that he was going to Cambridge but that he felt ill, could go no further and wished to go to hospital. The Constable asked for his identity card and RICHTER produced an identity card in the name of SNYDER of 14 Duckett Street, E.1. RICHTER further said that he had just come from Ipswich and had been given a lift on a motor lorry.

Constable Scott informed Sergeant Palmer of St. Albans by telephone and remained with RICHTER until shortly afterwards Sergeant Palmer arrived on the spot. The Sergeant put certain questions to RICHTER, in the course of which RICHTER said that he had been to Groner, Norwich, Cambridge and Bury St. Edmunds, and wished to return to Cambridge. Sergeant Palmer decided to take RICHTER to Fleetville Police Station, and on arrival there RICHTER produced a Czech passport. There was no endorsement upon it showing where RICHTER had landed in the United Kingdom. He was searched and upon him was found:-

£551.10. 0. in English notes,  
1,400 American dollars,  
and some Dutch notes and coins.

He had with him also a ration book, a compass, and a portion of a map of East Anglia.

## *M15 account of the capture of Karel Richter*





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## Source 2

RICHTER proved one of the most obstinate persons under interrogation that we have so far dealt with at Latchmere House. He was a truculent and stubborn trained agent. The fact, however, that we had obtained previous information from JAKOBS shook his confidence, and when finally he was confronted by JAKOBS - who had been carefully trained for the part - this resulted in a 'break'. It is of passing interest that he was interrogated for seventeen hours before he finally confessed where he had hidden his parachute and apparatus. He was immediately taken under escort by the officers of this establishment to the scene of his arrival, and the following articles, all of which he had hidden before approaching Constable Scott, were retrieved:-

1. Black leather camera case, 8" x 3" x 2", containing wireless parts; similar zip-fastening case with the under-mentioned wireless parts:-
  - (a) Crystal to be handed to another German agent (known to M.I.5.)
  - (b) Wireless equipment capable of adapting a Mains receiving set, enabling messages to be sent to Germany.
  - (c) An adaptor which will enable this equipment to be utilised with normal high-tension batteries, should it be impossible to obtain a Mains receiving set.
2. Parachute-holder and harness.
3. Camouflaged parachute.
4. Steel helmet and flying overalls.
5. Loaded automatic pistol, Browning pattern (Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre Herstal-Belgique No. 42028).
6. Empty knife sheath (knife not yet traced).
7. Parcel with large salami sausage, cut in half; brown bread; sausage meat and paste sandwiches.
8. Hand trowel.
9. Torch.

*Extract from case file on Karel Richter*





# SPIES

*Why was Karel Richter executed?*

*Source 3*



*Photographs showing search of field for equipment buried by Richter before his capture*





# SPIES

*Why was Karel Richter  
executed?*

*Source 3 (pg2)*



*Photographs showing search of field for equipment buried by  
Richter before his capture*





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## Source 4

### INSTRUCTIONS:

#### (a) Principal Assignment.

The principle purpose of RICHTER's mission was to deliver funds and a spare wireless crystal to another German agent in this country whom he was instructed to contact. An elaborate procedure had been arranged whereby RICHTER was to identify this agent and, if the initial rendezvous miscarried, a series of alternatives were arranged. RICHTER also states that he was intended to discover whether this agent was under control and whether the messages which he was sending were authentic.

#### (b) Code:

RICHTER was given a code which in the absence of directions for constant variation would have been reasonably easy to break. There is no evidence that he had any system for varying the code.

#### (c) Money:

The Germans are apparently troubled at the possibility that we may change the numbers or colours of the current £1 and 10s notes. They consequently provided RICHTER with \$1,400 with instructions that he was to bury the dollar notes near the place where he landed. If he had difficulty in changing the English notes he was to retrieve the dollars and change them in small amounts at the ports, but not to attempt to change them in large cities or banks.

#### (d) Secret Ink:

RICHTER was instructed in the use of tablets dissolved in alcohol for the purpose of secret writing. He did not bring any tablets with him, but said that he had been told to purchase an article sold in England under the name of 'Secret Ink' which would dissolve in water and provide a secret ink. He was given detailed instructions as to how to write his message, and was supplied with a cover address in Sweden to which he could send letters if in difficulty. This is in fact a cover address and is apparently obtainable at any chemist's shop on signing the poison book. It is the equivalent of a secret ink.

#### (e) Questionnaire:

RICHTER was instructed to give information on the following points in his first investigations:-

- (i) What was the road like, or what were roads in general like - under strict, or not strict control?
- (ii) What was the control at the railway station like?
- (iii) Was it necessary to show one's Identity Card?
- (iv) Is it necessary to show this card when spending a night at an hotel?
- (v) Are gas masks carried in England, and how?
- rent (vi) Are they carried generally or only on journeys?

He was expected to send written reports as frequently as possible and also information on the general conditions in the district in which he found himself.

*Extract from a report giving details of Richter's mission*