

Boletín 119 by olliemfl

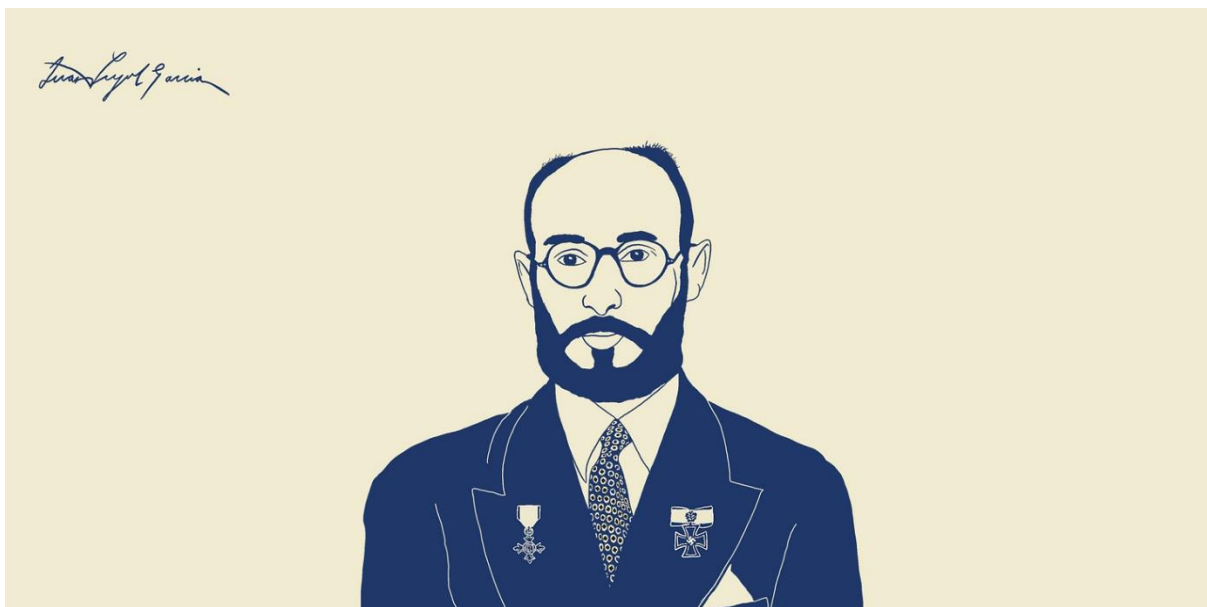
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Agent Garbo's contributions to the Allied war effort have been described as "the largest, most elaborate, most carefully planned, most vital and most successful of all the Allied deceptive operations". (Charles Cruikshank)

👋 **Welcome to Boletín**, an English-language newsletter covering historical, cultural and topical stories related to the A Level Spanish course. This week:

1. Edition 119 of Boletín.
2. Agent Garbo, the Spanish spy who saved D-Day.
3. Tier 2 & 3 vocabulary.

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Juan Pujol García AKA Agent Arabel/Garbo.

🔴 **Edition 119.**

I've wanted to make this issue for years. The story is absolutely fascinating and you'd struggle to believe it's true if it didn't actually happen. This issue is about the Spanish spy, Juan Pujol García, whose deception work as a double agent led to the successful Normandy landings on D-Day.

Agent Arabel/Garbo.

The 6th June 1944 saw 1,213 warships gathered off the coast of Normandy and began disembarking more than 120,000 Allied troops. It was the first phase of history's biggest amphibious operation, involving some 13,000 Allied aircraft, flying a total of 1,1,600 sorties and dropping 5,200 tons of explosives. Yet the enemy was caught entirely unprepared. [1](#)

A bottle of secret ink is exchanged along with secret codes and \$3,000. Agent Arabel's handler then outlines the kind of reports which he expects to receive once Arabel is on the ground in England. Weeks prior to this, and unknown to the Germans, Arabel had offered himself in any capacity that he might be needed to the British in Madrid, but he was roundly ignored. Then British Ambassador Sir Samuel Hoare, determined not to provoke the Generalissimo Franco and keen to avoid any diplomatic incidents was severely restricting Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) work which could potentially cause a stir.

With his tail between his legs but still motivated to attract British interest Juan Pujol García (his real name) decided to study Nazi doctrines and offer himself to the Axis cause reasoning that if accepted he could betray their secrets to the British as a [double agent](#).

Juan was raised in Catalonia and was imbued with his values and beliefs by his father. He was vehemently opposed to tyranny and oppression and had a strong character. Observing from afar events transpiring in Germany he knew that he had to do something and wanted justice for the suffering he saw. Juan was a man fascinated by the origins of words, but despite fighting in the Spanish Civil War he was not a belligerent man. He fought as part of his compulsory military service and even switched sides over to the Nationalists.

After his rejection by the British Juan approached the German embassy and requested to talk with the department responsible for secret affairs, he then offered himself as an informant working from Lisbon as well as England if they had the means of getting him there [2](#) . His Lisbon offer was turned down as uninteresting, but the England offer was tempting for the Germans. Sometime later the secret ink (not so secret it turned out), money and codes were exchanged, and Juan once again sounded out British interest this time trying to hand over his new clandestinely acquired spying equipment. Once more, incredibly, he was overlooked.

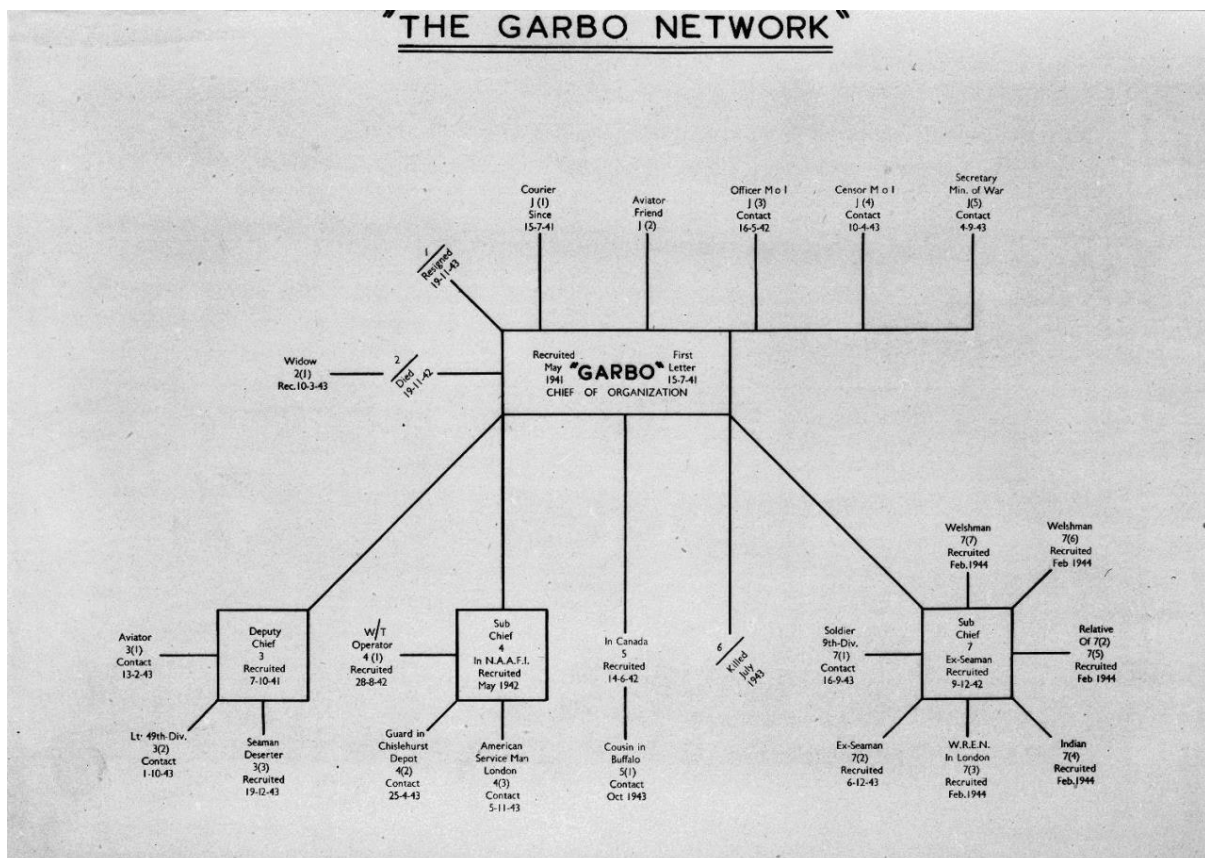
The tide of the war was now changing. MI5 was now controlling every single German agent inserted into Britain with Bletchley Park's [Enigma decrypts](#) revealing nearly all Germans secrets via military intelligence cipher traffic. Most agents who been captured in England had turned against the Abwehr (German military intelligence/counterintelligence) in favour of joining the British double-cross system (a counter espionage setup designed to feed misinformation to the nazis, so called because it was run by the Twenty Committee or XX in roman numerals) because the alternative offered to them in an old London detention centre within a nursing home was unfathomable.

Now in Portugal, Juan Pujol bought a tourist guide and map of England as well as a railway timetable. Using information gleaned from these publicly available resources he began sending his first messages to the Germans who believed he was actually in England. It was his third message, sufficiently (and coincidentally) close to the truth, which alerted MI5 who began to wonder who and where the unknown spy was. It would also lead to a meeting with

an MI6 officer in Lisbon and a trip to England in April 1942 where his dream would be realised. Initially not all members of the SIS were in favour of using Garbo as an XX agent as not all members had access to Most Secret Sources material, to that end material pertaining to Juan was made available to them wherein they realised the potential for deception on a mass scale.

Garbo's work for the British was devastating for the Germans. Previous to joining the British he was completely responsible for his own work however once partnered with MI5 a whole team aided his deception work - Garbo was only tasked with delivering the final product in the form of transmissions and letters to his German handlers in Madrid.

Garbo's deception, spanning years, was aided by 20+ sub-agents, each with their own story and background, all figments of his active imagination. Alongside [Tomás Harris](#) Garbo was able to spin an intricate web of lies and feed carefully crafted misinformation (with some added truths for credibility) to the Germans who accepted everything he reported. The end goal was [Operation Fortitude](#), a deception operation running in parallel with [Operation Overlord](#), with the aim of convincing the Nazi high command that the Allied invasion of Europe would take place in Pas-de-Calais and that any landings in Normandy prior to this were in fact decoys intended to divert attention away from Pas-de-Calais.



Even as D-Day was underway and for weeks after Garbo maintained that the real landings were due to take place in Pas-de-Calais via information reported back by his vast network of make-believe sub-agents. Garbo's reports were tracked through the German lines of communication and so trusted they were that they even reached Hitler's headquarters. Every

deceptive message had been bought by the Germans who confusingly delayed moving divisions of troops to Normandy believing that the main attack was due elsewhere at a later date. The deception was complete.

On 29th July a message was relayed to Juan Pujol from Madrid reading:

With great happiness and satisfaction I am able to advise you today that the Fuhrer has conceded the Iron Cross to you for your extraordinary merits...

Juan Pujol was awarded an MBE in 1944. His fictitious agents were awarded the sum of £31,000 for their service to the Reich³. His death was reported in 1959 with an attack of malaria given as the cause of death, another invention. His faked death allowed him to settle in Venezuela until his story re-surfaced and became public knowledge in the 80s.

Tier 2/3 vocabulary.

- Proporcionar (vb) - *to supply/provide.*
- Convencer (vb) - *to convince.*
- Resultar (vb) - *to turn out to be.*
- Superar (vb) - *to exceed/overcome.*
- Engañar (vb) - *to trick/fool/mislead or deceive.*
- Fingir (vb) - *to pretend, fake or feign.*