

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice

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Washington, D. C.  
JUL 13 1942

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL  
BY SPECIAL MESSENGER

Rear Admiral T. S. Wilkinson  
Director  
Office of Naval Intelligence  
Navy Department  
Washington, D. C.

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Admiral Wilkinson:

There is being transmitted herewith a memorandum containing information thought to be of interest to your agency. This information was obtained from the German agents who recently were sent to this country from Germany.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover  
Director

Enclosure

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DIRECTOR  
JOHN EDGAR HOOVER

German saboteurs regarding their objectives, etc

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M E M O R A N D U M

1 It appears that the main objective of the German saboteurs who recently landed in the United States was the destruction of the aluminum and magnesium industry. It was explained to these men by German officers that the interruption of production at the aluminum and magnesium plants would seriously retard the production of military aircraft in the United States. It was also explained to these men that the best method of destroying the plants was by interrupting the flow of electricity in the plants.

2 In commenting on the large production of magnesium in Germany an official of a magnesium plant informed one of the German agents that German airplanes are superior to American manufactured planes because of the larger amount of magnesium used in their construction. He is reported to have stated that 90% of the metal in the Messerschmitts and the "288" dive bombers is magnesium. This individual was also reported to have stated that automotive engineers in Germany are of the opinion that American airplane motors are of higher quality than German motors. One reason given for the inferior quality of the German motors was the low octane content of the gasoline available for use in the German motors.

3 The two groups of German saboteurs came to this country on German submarines which departed from a submarine base at Lorient, France, on May 26 and May 28, 1942. Prior to the departure of one of these submarines it was tied to the seaward side of a freighter to avoid detection from the shore. The departures were made during the early evening and the submarines were escorted by submarine chasers. A mine sweeper went ahead of the submarines and at the entrance of the harbor a large sea-going steamer preceded the submarines. It was explained that this boat was equipped with various electrical devices and had a greater depth than the submarines. This ship was reported to be constructed with numerous air-tight compartments so that in the event the ship was hit by a mine it would not sink. This vessel was described as a "punch absorber." After leaving Lorient, the submarines continued on the surface for the remainder of the night. They then submerged until the next night when they again surfaced and submerged the second day of their trip, after which, they continued their voyage on the surface except for daily practice "crash" dives and just as they approached the shores of the United States.

4 These submarines were reported to have a top speed of approximately 16 knots per hour while on the surface. At half speed they traveled at approximately 12 knots per hour and at reduced speed 10 knots per hour. When the vessel was submerged the speed was reported to be 2½ knots per hour. It was indicated that the vessel traveled most of the voyage at slow speed for the purpose of conserving fuel. At the beginning of the voyage the submarine commander stated that the average Atlantic voyage took from 14 to 17 days. At least one of these submarines while en route to the United States followed a route which was described

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as "the new neutral route" and so proclaimed by the German government. During this voyage they sighted a Portuguese vessel.

5 The submarine used to transport one group of saboteurs to the United States had a tonnage of 750 tons. It was learned that these submarines are some times refueled while at sea from larger supply submarines of 1000 and 1200 tons. These latter submarines are reported to carry sufficient oil to refuel the smaller submarines operating in the Western Atlantic, which refueling can be carried out both while the submarines are below and at the surface. The name of this one submarine was the "Innsbruck" and bore number U-202. It was built by the Kruppe Works at Kiel during the late winter or early spring of 1941. It was commanded by a Lieutenant Captain Linder and carried a crew of approximately 45 men. The submarine had four torpedo tubes fore and one torpedo tube aft and was believed to have carried altogether 14 torpedoes. It was definitely determined that the torpedoes were operated by electric batteries and it is known that the batteries in the torpedoes were charged each day. One of the members of the crew definitely stated that the Germans do not use compressed air or similar motive power in their torpedoes. The armament of the submarine included a large cannon on the forward deck, and an anti-aircraft gun located behind the conning tower which was a 10-shot machine loading weapon. Small caliber machine guns were also in evidence and each member of the crew appeared to be equipped with a rifle and a pistol.

6 One of the members of the crew of the vessel indicated that the depth to which the submarine could submerge was considered an important military secret. The depth gauges were constructed to show a depth of 240 meters and one of the sailors indicated the submarine could submerge further. It was reported also that this particular submarine was damaged sometime ago near Gibraltar at which time it was submerged to 180 meters. The submarine was operated by two Diesel motors manufactured by Krupp of 800 horsepower capacity and it was stated that these motors could use any type of oil for fuel. The longest period of under surface travel on this voyage was for a period of 16 hours. One of the secret agents determined that on a recent voyage of this vessel to the western Atlantic, it remained at sea for a period of between 9 and 10 weeks. During this time the crew claimed to have sunk three ships totaling 36,000 tons, in the vicinity of Greenland. The discipline on the submarine was very strict.

7 The submarines were equipped with long and short radio transmitters made by Telefunken and receivers also made by Telefunken, and from the description furnished, are apparently equipped with apparatus for sending and receiving code messages. The submarines appeared to be in constant touch with one another and with their bases, but it did not appear that any radio messages were sent or received while the vessel was submerged. On this voyage a radio message was received indicating that another German submarine had been damaged and that it was unable to blow the water out of its lifting tanks. It appeared to the officers on the submarine receiving this message that the submarine damaged was lost.

It appeared that the wave length and codes used by the submarines were changed daily. There was also a listening device on a submarine which was constantly attended by an officer while the submarine was submerged, the purpose of which was to detect the presence of other ships in the vicinity of the submarine.

7 From conversations overheard aboard the submarines between German naval officers, it is believed that at approximately the same time the saboteurs departed from Lorient, a third submarine also departed carrying two naval agents who were to be landed in the vicinity of New York or New Jersey. One of the saboteurs believed that these naval agents were to report upon the arrival and departure of ships from the United States.

9 The value of sabotage to Germany's war aims is illustrated by a statement reported to have been made by an army Colonel to the effect that if the two small groups of saboteurs were successful in their work they could do more damage than several divisions of the army and could decide the outcome of the war.

10 One of the sabotage agents has indicated that he inquired into the use of bacteria and poisons in connection with their sabotage activities and was advised that Germany contemplated no bacteria or similar type of sabotage, inasmuch as Germany did not believe that America intended to utilize this type of warfare.

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