

Remembering D-Day's secrets and spies

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Sunday - June 6 - marks the 77th anniversary of D-Day, probably the most significant event in the history of the 20th century in western Europe.

It is without doubt the most important historical event that Torbay has ever been a part of.

At the heart of the D-Day story was a secret.

The destination of the D-Day landings was the most important secret of the war.

Every operation had codenames such as 'Overlord' or 'Neptune' to confuse the enemy.

To ensure the success of the landings, Hitler had to believe they were a diversion for a much greater force landing at Calais.

To this end a wall of secrecy surrounded the troops, who became increasingly cut off from the population.

A trail of disinformation was created by the press, intelligence agencies and secret agents.

Incredibly, the secret remained intact.

One such agent was Garbo or Arabel, Juan Pujol was the Allies' top double agent.

A Spanish national, he was recruited in Gibraltar and was flown to Plymouth for interrogation and training, before supplying the Germans with false information about the invasion.

He was so trusted that he became one of the few men decorated by both sides during the war.

In Torbay as D-Day approached, ID cards were frequently checked as security tightened around the invasion force.

For most people photography in



British Red Cap and a U.S. guard check the credentials of a local girl

Pictures: TORQUAY MUSEUM

public areas was banned, the unauthorised use of a camera could cost you time in a police cell and consequently private images from this time are rare.

In addition to this, official directions banned the use of certain areas of the highway unless in possession of an authorised certificate.

This helped maintain secrecy,

but was an annoyance for everyone.

The documents that outlined the invasion itself were held in the highest of secrecy.

Torquay Museum holds one set of these papers for the use on a landing craft LCT2070 which left Torquay on D-Day.

This Top Secret Bigot was the highest classification of secrecy



Clandestine photograph of warships at Dartmouth. Wartime photographs like this one are rare

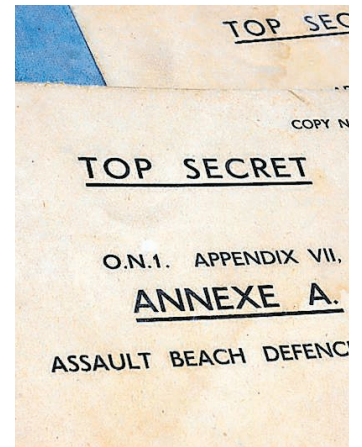


The Allies' top double agent Juan Pujol

surrounding the Normandy landings. The word Bigot came from the order, To Gibraltar written backwards, and would prompt the question, 'Have you been Bigotted?' A bemused response would be taken as a 'no' and the conversation would end.

These documents contained a top secret map of the Normandy beaches.

The map clearly shows the codenames for the beach landing areas, Gold, Juno, Sword, Omaha and Utah, the American assault troops of Force 'U' were heading for Utah. The troops knew well in



Top secret D-Day documents, soon to be seen in 18The Secret Museum exhibition

advance which beach they were landing on, but not until hours before the assault did they know where the beaches were.

Torquay Museum has been collecting and commemorating Torbay's contribution to D-Day for over 25 years now and has created a comprehensive collection relating to the people who were involved in this world changing event. The top secret D-Day documents and map are the highlight of this collection and can be seen in this year's summer exhibition 'The Secret Museum' which opens on June 12.

Creating biggest exhibition Torquay Museum has ever made

The Secret Museum is the largest and most complex temporary exhibition Torquay Museum has ever created. With more than 175 different objects or collections selected, and more than 100 of these by the local community, getting all these exhibits into Pengelly Hall has been a huge task. Many of the items we have never seen on display before. Here are a few images of the exhibition under construction as the exhibits emerge from the stores.

Fitting an acrylic screen onto a Victorian dolls house



Many objects for the exhibition have had to be conserved and prepared for display. The monkey, nicknamed Rafiki, is being dusted off before it gets moved into the 18 Victorian Museum section.



Project curator Clare and volunteer Harry laying out 18 secret objects chosen by the public