



Jersey Archive Information Leaflets

German Occupation, 1940 – 1945

General Information

The Occupation of Jersey by German Forces during the Second World War commenced on the 1 July 1940. The Occupation was to last for nearly five years and eventually ended on the 9 May 1945 – Liberation Day. The Occupation remains one of the most fascinating periods in Jersey's recent history.

The United Kingdom government provided ships to evacuate women, children and men who wished to join the forces when it seemed that Occupation was inevitable. Though just over 23,000 registered to evacuate, the total number of Jersey residents who actually evacuated was under 10,000.

The Islands were originally intended to support troops invading England. However, approximately eight months after they had been captured, the Islands, instead of being a base for operations into the south of England, became territories that needed to be defended. They were heavily fortified using Organisation Todt construction workers from various parts of Europe including Russia and Spain. There was also a high concentration of German Forces present in the Islands; research has indicated that there was one German soldier to every three members of the civil population.

A number of United Kingdom and some Jersey born residents of the Channel Islands were deported to internment camps at Biberach, Wurzach, Dorsten and Laufen in Germany. Hitler originally conceived this measure as a reprisal for the internment of German citizens in Iran working against the Allies. The Führer also considered United Kingdom-born residents as a security threat.

After the D-Day landings in June 1944, life became very hard for Channel Islanders. The Allied advance into Europe ended supplies to the Islands from mainland France. The International Red Cross ship the SS Vega sailed for Jersey from Guernsey on the 29th December 1944, bringing much needed food and supplies to the Island.

Access

Each collection held by the Jersey Archive has a unique reference code. These collection references have been included in the following information after the collection title.

Should you wish to find out more about a certain collection simply go to one of the Open Public Access Catalogues (OPACs) available in the Help Desk area of the Jersey Archive or on the Internet at www.jerseyheritagetrust.org. Click on reference and enter the collection reference/item reference.

Sources held by the Jersey Archive

Records of HM Lieutenant Governor of Jersey, A

The official records of the Lieutenant Governors of Jersey hold relatively few references to the actual Occupation period. Major General J M R Harrison, the Lieutenant Governor at the outbreak of the Second World War, was ordered to demilitarise and leave Jersey in June 1940. The Major General Harrison Collection, **L/C/55**, contains records relating to the demilitarisation and evacuation of civilians from Jersey in this period. The official records, **A/F**, mainly relate to Operation Nestegg – the operation to retake the Channel Islands and the aftermath of occupation.

Bailiff's Chambers Occupation and Liberation files, B/A/W & B/A/L

The Bailiff of Jersey, Sir Alexander Coutanche held a key position within the local government of Jersey during the Occupation. The Bailiff's files record in detail the administration of the Island during this period and the relationship between the local authorities and the German civil authorities. The Bailiff was the head of the Superior Council, which was established on the 24 June 1940 and acted as a buffer between the occupying army and the civil population. The Superior Council consisted of the Presidents of each of the States of Jersey Departments and the Crown Officers. The collection contains over 2,500 separate items and covers areas such as; imports and exports, licensing, entertainment, deportees, departmental orders and correspondence, requisitioning, the Red Cross, police and prosecutions, rationing and war graves.

Immigration and Nationality – Registration Cards, D/S/A

The entire civil population of Jersey was required to register under the Registration and Identification of Person (Jersey) Order, 1940. The official set contains over 31,000 registration cards. Each registration card contains personal details, such as name, address, date of birth and a photograph. Any children under the age of 14 are recorded on the back of their father's card. The registration cards have been catalogued and are available through the Jersey Archive database via a name search.

The Law Officers' Department, D/Z

The Law Officers' Department files contain a number of records relating to the Occupation of Jersey. These files are included in the main filing sequence **D/Z/H5** and relate to a wide variety of subjects, including: Jewish businesses, rationing, German war graves, German orders and minutes of the States of Jersey. This collection also contains a number of files in German that are assumed to have belonged to the Feldcommandant. The files relate to: entertainment, deportations, fuel rationing, Organisation Todt and requisitioning.

Personal Collections

The Jersey Archive holds a number of personal collections of documents that relate to the Occupation period. These include many letters and Red Cross messages sent by anxious relatives to people in Jersey. To access these smaller collections simply click on the term Occupation under themes on the OPAC.

L/C/01 Joan Coles Collection

Joan Coles was deported to Wurzach internment camp on the 18th September 1942. This collection of papers includes her diary detailing every day life in Wurzach and drawings of the camp.

L/C/14 Brigadier Snow Papers

These papers record the detailed plans for the Liberation of the Channel Islands that began as Operation Rankin at the end of 1943 and ended as Operation Nestegg in May 1945. Brigadier Alfred Snow was in charge of the whole of Operation Nestegg and the military Task Force 135. The administrative tasks were undertaken by No. 20 Civil Affairs Unit.

L/C/24 Joe Mière Collection

Joe Mière has completed a significant amount of research into various aspects of the Occupation of Jersey. This collection includes lists of those who were deported and also original propaganda news sheets printed during the Occupation.

L/C/48 David Maindonald Research Collection

This collection of research into German fortifications in the Channel Islands includes photographs and text relating to many of the bunkers and fortifications in Jersey.

L/F/51 Liberation Album

Album of the liberation made by Major Frank H M Sargent (RAOC) of the 135 Field Ordnance Depot. This album contains a photographic and written account of the Liberation of Jersey and subsequent disposal and destruction of the German ammunition and artillery.

L/D/25 Channel Islands Occupation Society Collection

The Channel Islands Occupation Society (Jersey branch) was set up in 1971 with the intention of investigating the period of the German Occupation of the Channel Islands and to maintain and preserve sites of special interest such as the German fortifications in the Island. Subsequently the Society has been placed in charge of the maintenance of a number of bunkers and has undertaken substantial research into the Occupation period in the Channel Islands.

The collection encompasses a wide range of different items including notes on research undertaken by the society into the Occupation, a diverse photographic archive, the recording of a great many speakers talking of many different facets of the Occupation, film recordings concerning the Occupation, maps and plans of the Island and different installations within the Island, a wide range of books on a variety of different subjects dealing with the Occupation and the Second World War, German

magazines available to buy in the Channel Islands during the Occupation and a section dealing with the deportation of islanders to Germany and illustrations that were drawn in the internment camps as a consequence.

Items of interest include plans from 1978 for a proposed 'Bunkerbar' named Last Chance which would have had a lounge, bar and swimming pool within L'Étacquerel Bunker, a monopoly board owned by an internee, Charles E Daly, and signed by fellow internees and many drawings by various internees, including Harold Sydney Hepburn, depicting life and the surroundings in the various internment camps. This collection is an important addition to the archive records concerning the period of the German Occupation and should be utilised by a keen Occupation historian.

Printed Sources

The Jersey Archive holds a number of books and printed sources concerning the Occupation.

Cruickshank, Charles *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, London, 1975

Falla, Francis, *The Silent War. The Inside Story of the Channel Islands under the Nazi Jackboot*, Guernsey, 1994 (reprint)

Ginns, Michael, *The Organisation Todt and the Fortress Engineers in the Channel Islands*, (Channel Islands Occupation Society, Archive Book No. 8), Jersey, 1994

Harris, Roger E, *Islanders Deported Part 1: The Complete History of those British Subjects who were Deported from the Channel Islands during the German Occupation of 1940-1945 and Imprisoned in Europe*, Ilford, 1980

King, Peter, *The Channel Island War, 1940-1945*, London, 1991

Sanders, Paul, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, Jersey Heritage Trust, 2004

Sanders, Paul, *The British Channel Islands under the German Occupation*, Jersey Heritage Trust, 2005

Sinel, Leslie, *The German Occupation of Jersey: A Complete Diary of Events, June 1940-June 1945*, Jersey, 1984 (reprint)

The purpose of the Jersey Archive is to identify, select, collect, manage, preserve and provide access to the Island's on behalf of the whole community, promoting Jersey's culture, heritage and sense of place, both within its shores and beyond.

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Opening Hours: 9am to 5pm, Tuesday to Thursday.
The Reading Room and Help Desk are closed between 1-2pm
Late night till 7pm the last Thursday of the month.

The information in this leaflet is accurate as of March 2010. Please be aware that the Jersey Archive receives new collections on a regular basis and ask staff if you have any queries.