

TEACHER GUIDE TO STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

THE THIRD REICH PLANS AN ATTACK

1. What skills did the German saboteurs possess? How would these skills have helped them to accomplish their mission? *The saboteurs were well trained in:*

Explosives: *Being well-trained in explosives will help them to know how to assemble and activate the explosives in unfamiliar settings*

American language: *Knowledge of English, American English, will help them look less conspicuous as well as allowing them to communicate with people in America to gain information.*

Current events: *Knowledge of current events allows the saboteurs to blend in with the American people better and also be aware of Anti German sentiment in America.*

Geography: *Knowledge of geography will allow them to find their way to targets quickly.*

2. What items did they bring with them? What did they do with their “baggage” once they landed? *They brought four water-tight boxes containing bombs formed like large coal lumps, other explosives, timers, fuses, primers, detonators, adhesive explosives, cash, S.S. cards, draft cards, civilian clothes, and small folding trench shovels. They buried their “baggage” with their small trench shovels once they made it ashore.*

3. What were some mistakes the saboteur made before and after reaching the United States shore? *(1) Their money included gold certificates that were no longer used as currency, and bills that had Japanese language characters on them. (2) They spoke German after landing in America and were spotted by an unarmed Coast Guardsman. (3) They tried to pay him to keep quiet about it. (4) They had not made any plans to have someone—a German sympathizer--meet them once they reached the United States.*

4. Why do you think George John Dasch reported the other saboteurs to the FBI?

This is an open-ended question. He was working for the US? Guilt? Fear of being caught (because they were already sighted) and subsequently sentenced to death?

5. What were some of the targets the Germans wanted to hit in America? Why would these places be important to the war effort?

Aluminum plants. Railroads, NJ Depot, Railroad bridges and tunnels, department store storage lockers. Most of the targets were vital in the making and distribution of materials needed for the United States war effort. The saboteurs were trying to halt or slow down military supplies from reaching and aiding troops in Europe. The saboteurs also selected targets that would be difficult to rebuild easily (railroads and bridges).

6. What happened to the saboteurs?

Their leader, George John Dasch, turned them into the FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. A secret military trial was ordered by President Franklin Roosevelt. 6 of them were sentenced to death; 1 received life in prison; and Dasch received 30 years. In 1948 the two with prison sentences had their sentences commuted by the President and they were returned to Germany.

7. What surprises you about this historical incident?

I usually think of World War II being fought in Europe. It is surprising to me that the saboteurs were almost successful in terrorizing our rail transportation system back in World War II. Of course, it makes me think of parallels with September 11, 2001, when our air travel system was penetrated with tragic consequences.