**Occupation of Jersey, Great Britain**



Life under occupation

The German Occupation of Jersey began one week after the British government had demilitarized the island fearing for the safety of civilians should there be any conflict. The codename for this was “Operation Green Arrow” and the initial German Air Force reconnaissance flights mistake civilian farming lorries for troop carriers. On the 28th of June , the German Air Force, not knowing of the demilitarization, bomb and machine gun multiple sites on the island. The attacks killed ten people and wound many more. A few days later on the 1 of July 1940 General Richthofen, The Commander of the German Air Forces in Normandy, dropped an ultimatum from the air demanding the immediate surrender of the island. White flags and crosses were placed in prominent positions, as stipulated by the Germans, and later that day Jersey was occupied by air-borne troops under the command of Hauptmann Gussek.

German Command

Under the occupying forces, one of the greatest hardships was the lack of news from the mainland after the Germans had outlawed the use of crystal radio sets. A number of individuals risked imprisonment by making their own sets and spreading frontline news. Horse drawn traffic became an increasingly regular sight as petrol shortages became severe, and many vehicles were converted to use gas. The price of bicycles rose, and their use was restricted to those connected to essential services. The German’s ordered all traffic to drive on the wrong side of the road. The island was also moved to Central European time. In the months following D-Day, as the Allies regained control of France, the source of supplies fueling the islands was now no longer available.

Food shortage

Shopping hours were reduced as goods became scarce. Food shortages on Jersey were finally relieved by the arrival of the Red Cross ship SS Vega, bringing food parcels to Jersey. Before then, substitutes had been used to replace everyday foods, with seawater replacing salt, for instance, and a mixture of parsnip and sugar beet replacing tea. During the autumn of 1944, fuel supplies were almost gone, leaving no gas, occasional electricity, and very little road fuel. Medical supplies were almost non-existent; and most people were without fuel. A Red Cross relief ship, the S S Vega, arrived in Jersey on 30 December with food parcels, and cases of salt, soap and medical supplies. The visits of the Red Cross ship S S Vega proved a lifeline to the starving islanders.

Fortress island

Hitler ordered the conversion of Jersey into an impregnable fortress. Thousands of slave workers from countries like Russia, Spain, France, Poland, and Algeria built hundreds of bunkers, anti-tank walls, railway systems, as well as many tunnel complexes. In late 1943 the Tunnel Complex Ho8 (now known as the [Jersey War Tunnels](http://www.jersey.com/jersey-war-tunnels)) in St. Lawrence was converted from an artillery workshop and barracks to an emergency casualty clearing station able to cope with up to 500 patients.. All of the fortifications built around the island were part of Hitler’s “Atlantic Wall”.