



# The Man Who Never Was

*Ewen Montagu*

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## **The Man Who Never Was** Ewen Montagu

Recipe for the most brilliant ruse of World War II: Take an anonymous corpse, give him an identity as a supposed Major of the Royal Marines bearing spurious top secret messages, cast him from a submarine into the sea where he will float to the Spanish shore. Then sit back and hope that not only will the body be discovered by the Spanish and the messages turned over to the Germans, but that the enemy right up to the High Command will be fooled into changing their Mediterranean defense plans so that the Allies can invade Sicily with less loss of life. A fantastic long shot, one might think, good material for an Eric Ambler thriller, but not an idea to be seriously entertained. Yet the story of how this very plan was undertaken by the British, coupled with authentic proof of its spectacular success, makes one of the most startling and enthralling true tales to come out of World War II. Ewen Montagu was the main instigator of "Operation Mincemeat," as the plan was officially named, and his description reveals all of the fascinating detail that went into preparation of the hoax. Sicily was the obvious point for the Allies in North Africa to attack, and to throw the Nazis off, required Montegu and his cohorts to act with the brilliance and imagination of chess masters--with the fate of hundreds of Allied lives as the stakes for the game. It was necessary to make the highly suspicious Germans believe that they had stumbled by accident on the greatest intelligence leak of the war, and to attempt it, the author and his associates had to project themselves into the very minds of the Germans. Their scheme in all its many aspects had to be flawless, from documents convincing enough to shake the whole German strategy to an eerily wonderful complex of "personal details to give credence to the existence of a man who never was. The closing chapters includes copies of that documentary evidence as well as photos.

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