



Alderney & Sark

Alderney was evacuated completely prior to its occupation and became a "Fortress Island". The islanders of Sark, largely cut off from the outside world and led by their Seigneur, shared their home with the occupying force.

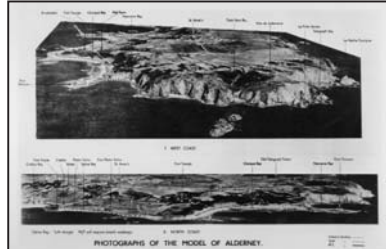
Alderney, because of its closeness to "blitzkrieged" France, had been evacuated by the Royal Navy on June 23rd 1940 after a mass-meeting of its residents had decided to leave.

On 2nd July 1940 Alderney was occupied. Occasionally farm workers from Guernsey were allowed in, but after the 1942 harvest Alderney became a fortress. The garrison comprised over 3000 men as well as many Organisation Todt officials. The coastline was heavily mined and there were three heavy artillery batteries as well as defence fortifications.

Alderney was selected as the site for a prison camp for political prisoners from Germany. Other camps housed OT labourers who, like the prisoners, lived in squalid conditions. Many graves were found in Alderney at Liberation, but no positive evidence of atrocities alleged to have occurred there.

Sark was occupied on 3rd July 1940 by a small force of Germans. The Sarkese, with their Seigneur, Dame Sibyl Hathaway, had decided against evacuation and stayed on their farms. Had they gone there is no doubt that Sark would have been destroyed. Determined to sit out the war, the Islanders endured the deterioration in their standard of living, sharing their homes with 300 occupiers. The Dame kept the situation firmly under control.

British commando raids on Sark resulted in soured relations with the Germans, the mining of the cliffs and sealing off of beaches. Some Islanders were deported. Nevertheless the spirit of those remaining survived until Liberation on 10th May 1945.



British Military Intelligence built a large detailed model of Alderney and its German fortifications based on evidence from RAF photographic reconnaissance. It was used in preparation for the liberation of the Island.



Workers from Guernsey bring in the harvest in Alderney.



The funeral of two German soldiers killed whilst clearing mines in Sark shortly after Liberation.

German soldiers of the Sark garrison photographed at the Bel Air Hotel in the summer of 1940 shortly after the occupation began.

