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By torturing two captured Dutch spies till they talked, the Nazis "broke" the code of Radio Orange, the Netherlands transmitter in London, and nearly wrecked the Dutch underground. Though this happened in 1942, it has been revealed only recently.

Using the names of the captured men, the German intelligence agents appealed for more arms and more agents. Forty of the latter were seized after parachuting into the Netherlands from RAF planes. Some were killed and some took the lethal pills they carried rather than face torture by Gestapo thugs.

Spies and a transmitter were dropped into Holland by the RAF in 1941. The Dutch agents eluded the Germans until the following year. Meanwhile arms, explosives, food and other supplies needed by the underground were dropped at rendezvous arranged in code messages to Radio Orange.

The Germans managed to deceive the exiled Government and to send repeatedly for men and arms until a spy escaped and reached London. When they kncw the jig was up the Gestapo men wirelessed: "Thanks for all the things you have sent us."