Citroen's WW II Sabotage

You’re likely unaware that this year is the 100th anniversary of Citroën.  While doing some research I happened to stumble upon a fascinating bit of wartime Citroën lore. It involves screwing with Nazis in a genuinely clever and subtle way that nevertheless had big repercussions.  I'll explain.

So, when France was occupied by the Germans in 1940, major French factories like Citroën were forced to produce equipment for the Nazis.  Citroën president Pierre-Jules Boulanger knew he couldn't just refuse to produce anything, but he also knew there's no way in hell he's going to just roll over and build trucks for a bunch of filthy Nazis.  [Pierre had a plan](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https:%2F%2Furl.emailprotection.link%2F%3FbWISbMMcJvCM0OnF7oZl2AxV1V-cQKZI5wthAoFL0fbZ8EI1g7L12af8fYs1weI3ELSHpKhZcbucYKe7oz10Qkr18IvFvO3Ztbb3RHdspLEsze7BuHjyqDnKFwqe3Z_qDJvhQVfeTwOgVxfeJuq2LgtEvV4e-FALOQLfldqMrw0nlPssYfYO1Xt2__m6ajCr41SBT72VFxr04MOJf9xbh6HHSyMVRATVO_4GI7pnlorPY3HkOusywFtzNhy9hcZYuBlLbCSCHpEaUzgULPbws_VQltmxUPedzfljy5PmPZQeOwaLl3Z06fM6qtnF3U_Zbvji7ktlx_hozPmKM5TpdIhiSDWA0IQFXO_TVK6bWUsg0jRM7Ab_vH29s_e1NaH55fDuEDAuVEOCr2HRc_GrOuuvgmby2sVn8SqsuCvzKe1c6Nh3vvYiaR5QNY41YVHNujpjN0QjmSEBxrMX8nLZOQuyYe1HbDHXms1iP3kd13nIzaDGpiLzxZqdyQv-PpsPlxtDp9id1uJt4UQAaiZHXEDSKTq5hwuEdsFlQUkE3PvaqsVcHLlVr6N7ay5Cco19mfkS7hHhSEXV-zZgpvDTas1Dn98Dh-eSaR-rI7DHEsbZzFcaN-zz1DKIGj0wTktNLCD2kRz5URFGgK7JYNsT_3HrEp_O0B2UphIki0I0w1uiQVlL4jSzqWbYcuRuWcuxWO87WBVLfi9xjn00FBtXQYDT9i4KsB6FIyEiqc6S0gmMDBhnbTfbDtW-7AcPSKW0h1raQDdRJXvLcsA0GwRL0JxOh1PY-OAlWjF7QeaSeWbtbx51eOCHV1L38oPuAeaLcjcRwkt3T3UURlE5PZGay8A~~&data=02%7C01%7C%7C5e4a80fdfe7c4579b7e808d75f002397%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637082326512401301&sdata=lqztyJs5Fx6wAu5YPKuT0EF4hY%2FfFnK9yVUqIHJcBSg%3D&reserved=0).

[John Reynold's book Citroën 2CV](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https:%2F%2Furl.emailprotection.link%2F%3FbWISbMMcJvCM0OnF7oZl2A-U_Zm-hnJnEN82OHLxSdeYHVYxf_yS8B_Px5EefGtJUySvGbOttAPENeS1gb4oNjMtBVGAH0miJWctk6K6b6mODOkfbZ2CEeDNqSdp8jPUBpDKCwTjw3H40t7LMiGyswARcZSRwW-J83EjC1tFfsMW70gVOoSxjhUCYM6gpg-pVOXaPhJGrsmh7mY8N82uVEFek2V4_36VRXkY4BQupoX6lpZcbljYoyR8ZcI8XtAsh868V9XTUfNQL2FRYLGbn6DUTecBZlyHA5_iyCA8sxIFelbal-L_6xj3Z3HFmRzziPCFur7pUF2Z9SproIU6GFPzo6bZm-5gYOuPv4lRV5Zz54n03vZLaafSM7Xg8rYUV8MZGKSKmFavGiuImhaxz2soxxazAmt5Hwb6l34-o-G9_LaJfYVz-_MiT5djhsg2EyTdzT1em0PQdsg-s8jYWaMuV08-k2fh4HbHvkcLv80YmXASLmbbaDfmcKO6MDWINQP-f_zXasXYiISsHmImoz-9Mm38w5aC9WAyZO4zu07X7AIidulVNAgztBh6TbtK0yvoef4NWuSeY9ObKoR_ZlgVpr7W-Jey9KAE-h8Dfz0p-F0mHHQLUv-cAbr8wjtG224siDvhSeBYJFcPfWoUDVgsf9f0T7IBNZAZ_Hm615wb4ilwqGHoIiPaKeGQhwdnB7a-U01pmkX7tdQRD1XhoVdkU6I4YLWTltEazTeuEgII2aSHi7TN_l-4XvaDmY5iMBIOPqe9LLDAtiVygMY8UHtsUiuAjpHS4Hh0cl5PtqgbrINnG-1pdXUtnqrvJGA_-fT4ozytcviyGlPMZqWV-nw~~&data=02%7C01%7C%7C5e4a80fdfe7c4579b7e808d75f002397%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637082326512421323&sdata=vQehQkmljXFC9FGNV%2FrZrJq%2FL5z6qM5Xpc6Kvix6hww%3D&reserved=0) describes Boulanger's sabotage efforts.  Of course, he instructed workers to set a nice, leisurely pace when building trucks (likely Citroën T45 trucks) for the Wehrmacht, but that's fairly obvious.  What was brilliant was Boulanger's idea to move the little notch on the trucks' oil dipsticks that indicated the proper level of oil down just a bit lower.

By moving the notch down, the trucks would not have enough oil, but German mechanics would have no idea, because, hey, the little notch on the dipstick says its just fine.  Then, after the truck has been used for a while and is out deployed somewhere crucial, whammo, the engine seizes up, and you've got a lot of angry, stranded, vulnerable Nazis, balling up their little fists and madly barking curses in German.

It's such a fantastic act of sabotage:  it's extremely cheap to implement, it's subtle, there's no way to see something amiss is happening as the trucks are being built, and it delivers its blow away from the site of the sabotage and when it will cause the most inconvenience and trouble.

That's some mighty good sabotaging, Pierre.

Happy 100th Anniversary, Citroën.

The Free World thanks you.