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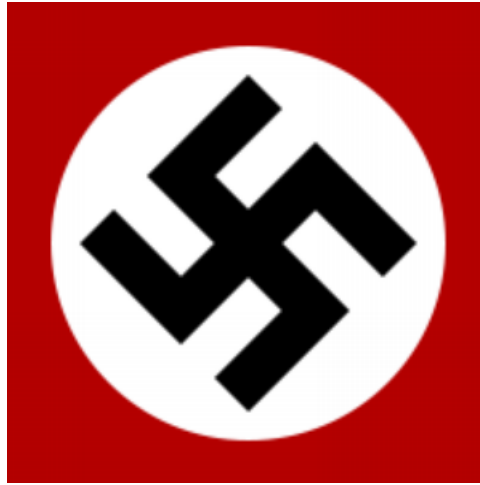
German Youth in the Third Reich

Study and Research by Hagur

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“By the Sign, Thou shalt Conquer”

Emperor Constantine

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Our War Targets

by Hagur

The Aryan tradition and customs are gradually taken away from us in Europe, as well as in other countries where the white are in majority, injured by the invasion of other cultures and races, especially the Islam.

Today, more than ever, all our traditional values are minimised and taken away from us, because of the growing multi-racial materialistic society giving us no other alternative than to “accept” the fact that our land is invaded by strangers finding their “dwelling place and shelter”. We have no longer the right to live as white safely together, while Zionistic governments outlaw our customs, spiritual values, various Nordic traditions of ours, and way of life. Our governments increasingly favour the non-Aryan ethnic minorities, which have settled in our various countries and are mostly anonymously entering by different unthinkable channels, and in Belgium they are known as the “profiteers”.

National Socialism, whichever the worldwide movement is called in our respective countries, are the custodians of genuine freedom of white democracy, upholding our own principles of blood, justice and honour. We must fight for our countries where it is good for us (the white) to live, but soon life will be dramatically impossible to live if sufficient warriors among us do not act in the immediate.

What is important and valuable about our European way of living, and it obviously includes U.S.A and other nations where the white has the ruling majority is becoming lost, obscured through the present Zionistic governments tending towards a multi-cultural society. It is the political game of our several governments to dupe us all, and own kindred in Brussels, Paris, The Hague, Cologne, and so on. What they are doing today is absolutely illegal, committing themselves to change, making and enforcing ever more laws altering drastically our Aryan attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of ours in favour of a multi-racial society.

Today's situation finds its warning in "Mein Kamph", II, XV:

In his Three Articles of Faith Clausewitz expressed this idea admirably and gave it a definite form when he said: "The stigma of shame incurred by a cowardly submission can never be effaced. **The drop of poison which thus enters the blood of a nation will be transmitted to posterity. It will undermine and paralyse the strength of later generations.**" But, on the contrary, he added: "Even the loss of its liberty after a sanguinary and honourable struggle assures the resurgence of the nation and is the vital nucleus from which one day a new tree can draw firm roots."

The last sentence of Clausewitz gives us hope and should sound in our ears, agitate us, and lead us to action.

"We really need to go on war and fight, rejecting present society policies of multi-racialism, and its misleading values and gods which present governments make for us, tolerating new liberties in favour of drug-addicts and sex-obsessed race-mixing, dreaming of a multi-racial paradise."

The time has come, in other words, to preserve our white heritage, as described by Homer in "The Iliad" and "Odyssey", that we belong to the "warrior" culture both by nature and instinct. But, before we start "acting", let us sit down and think as intelligent warriors. The white (ourselves) from our Nordic "Futhark" tradition possess an instinct to strive, to explore, and to conquer.

The multi-cultural society that present Zionistic governments are creating and rapidly putting into motion, are "shadows" as it cannot be fixed in our Aryan society. In this extremely painful way, let us gain insight of what is awaiting us, if we are remaining stagnant! The "shadows" may surely produce the death of our Aryan culture, a standstill that hampers our cultural morality, making convictions ineffective and at last even impossible. If we do nothing, the multi-racial culture arising today will lead our countries to "chaos" and melancholy, making to disappear Aryan values and way of life.

We must learn to be warriors again in order to avoid the ruin of our race and slavery, overwhelmed by other cultures. (Did you ever think even for one moment, that we have become slaves to the Eastern oil producing nations, as everything depends on them ... so far!)

We cannot alter the present situation alone, but as a group through our respective political parties aiming the Aryan life, and groups such as well organised “skinhead brotherhoods” to which the writer belongs. We must stir our Aryan blood in our veins, and fight even to the bitter end. But, there is nothing we can do alone. The only thing I can do alone is “write”, but “action” is group work. Together, and only together we are fierce, tough, and noble warriors.

For instance, a skinhead brotherhood is a group of young but also older men and women sharing the same “Ideal”, acting heroically together to protect and defend our Aryan values even in the face of death. To belong to a party is the heroic choice one has made to be honoured and revered to in life and death. How awful they that die purposeless, being satisfied with what present multi-racial society disgustingly has to offer to a “Noble Race”.

While each Western country fighting for the survival of the Aryan race has its own targets, in common we have at least four main targets, and they are:

- (1) Immigration stop.
- (2) Justice for own folk.
- (3) Preservation of White race.
- (4) Family welfare.

(1) Our race should not intermingle with other races, as it would render our evolutionary effort throughout hundreds of thousand of years absolutely fruitless. Today, we see the decline around through mental and physical degeneration. The Zionists allowing immigration from outside the Aryan territory are the destroyers of our culture, as gradually they make our race to descend into profound darkness, causing within no time our heritage to vanish, firstly through “intermingling” resulting in contamination of blood. By “darkness” is here understood disease and sickness of body and mind because of intercourse with people of other races such as with niggers.

(2) As we are at least at the moment, obliged to live in spite of our pure white origin and heritage in multi-racial communities, we seriously have to fight for “**own folk first**”. It is for our preservation we have to go on war, for the protection of our families and kindred. Our great modern leader (88) would

say, “What we have to fight for is the necessary security for the existence and increase of our race and people, the subsistence of its children and the maintenance of our racial stock **unmixed**, the freedom and independence of the Fatherland.”

- (3) Our folk, our race, and our mutual nations should always maintain the same and greatest concern that it may remain healthy and Aryan based on “Blood and Honour”. At the time of writing last Sunday, I attended an important Congress in the neighbourhood, almost across the road, gathering over 1.200 like-minded folk from all parts of Flandres and every age, the largest political propaganda gathering of the moment. Outside the conference room, among the different stalls books, flags, badges and so on were available, but one stall sold a very remarkable T-shirt, with a slogan in red, reading “Here our Blood – When our Right” (Hier ons Bloed – wanneer ons Recht). I bought it by the way, as it is for that which I am standing for.

The fatherland is the homeland, the nation, of a specific race, **OURS**. The preservation of the white race is our duty, or else we are just wasting our time. “Folk and Fatherland”, “Blood and Honour” are great truths always to remember.

- (4) Greatest attention should be taken to family welfare because of our folk and race, as the Aryan family is the expression of the organic destiny of our white human species, and connection to nature as part of a benevolent and beautiful universe.

Within ourselves, we must discover “**the hero with a sword**”, and fight as dragons for the preservation of our rights as Aryans, even if we have to taste blood through sacrifice.

To fight alone superhuman force is needed, while as a group whatever the name, as long fighting together for the same purpose, no sword will wound us but rather we will break their bones and crush their skulls, as we will be victorious in the battle having passed the sea of flames.

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German Youth in the Third Reich

Biography of Adolf Hitler

Hitler's Early Life 1889 – 1924



Adolf Hitler, the leader of Nazi Germany and founder of National Socialism, was born on April 20th 1889 in a small Austrian town called Braunau, near to the German border.

At half past six on the evening of April 20th, 1889, an innocent child was born in the small town of Braunau Am Inn,

Austria. The name of the child was Adolf Hitler. He was the son a Customs official Alois Hitler, and his third wife Klara. Initially Alois had taken his mother's name, Schicklgruber, but changed it in 1876 and became Hiedler, or Hitler.

Quite important - it is hard to imagine tens of thousands of Germans shouting *Heil Schicklgruber!* instead of *Heil Hitler!* Adolf Hitler later confided to his only childhood friend, August Kubizek, "that the name Schicklgruber seemed to him so uncouth, so boorish, apart from being so clumsy and unpractical. But 'Hitler' sounded rich and was easy to remember.

From the first day that Hitler seized power, January 30, 1933, he knew that only sudden death awaited him if he failed to restore pride and empire to post Versailles Germany. His adjutant Julius Schaub recorded Hitler's jubilant boast to his staff on that evening, as the last celebrating guests left the Berlin Chancellery building: *No power on earth will get me out of this building alive!*

Twelve years and three months later History saw Hitler's prophecy fulfilled, as a handful of remaining Nazis trooped uneasily into his underground study on April 30, 1945, surveyed his still-warm remains slouched on a couch, with blood

trickling from the sagging lower jaw, and a gunshot wound in the right temple and sniffed the bitter-almonds smell hanging in the air.

Wrapped in an army blanket, he was carried up to the shell-blasted Chancellery garden. Gasoline was slopped over him in a reeking crater and ignited while his staff hurriedly saluted and backed down into the shelter.

His father named Alois was fifty-one when Adolf Hitler was born. He was short-tempered, strict and brutal. It is known that he frequently hit the young Hitler. Alois had an elder son from a previous marriage but he had ended up in jail for theft. Alois was determined that Hitler was not going to go down the same round - hence his brutal approach to bringing up Hitler. Some believe that the background of Alois was a potential source of embarrassment for the future leader of Nazi Germany, though experts on Hitler's background disagree with what some wrote.

Adolf Hitler's father was the illegitimate child of a cook named (Maria Anna) Schickelgruber. This cook, the grandmother of Adolf Hitler, was working for a Jewish family named Frankenburger, when she became pregnant. Frankenburger paid Schickelgruber, a paternity allowance from the time of the child's birth up to his fourteenth year. (Reported by the Nazi Comrade Hans Frank in 1930.)

Alois was a civil servant. This was a respectable job in Brannau. He was shocked and totally disapproving when the young Hitler told him of his desire to be an artist. Alois wanted Hitler to join the civil service.

Hitler's mother - Clara - was the opposite of Alois - very caring and loving and she frequently took Hitler's side when his father's poor temper got the better of him. She doted on her son and for the rest of his life; Hitler carried a photo of his mother with him where ever he went.

Hitler was not popular at school and he made few friends. He was lazy and he rarely excelled at school work. In later years as leader of Germany, he claimed that History had been a strong subject for him - his teacher would have disagreed!! His final school report only classed his History work as "satisfactory". Hitler's final school report (September 1905) was as follows:

French	Unsatisfactory	Geography	Satisfactory
German	Adequate	Gymnastics	Excellent
History	Satisfactory	Physics	Adequate
Mathematics	Unsatisfactory	Art	Excellent

Chemistry	Adequate	Geometry	Adequate
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Adolf Hitler was able but he simply did not get down to hard work and at the age of eleven, he lost his position in the top class of his school - much to the horror of his father.

His father Alois died when Hitler was thirteen and so there was no strong influence to keep him at school when he was older. After doing very badly in his exams, Hitler left school at the age of fifteen. His mother, as always, supported her son's actions even though Hitler left school without any qualifications.

When he started his political career, he certainly did not want people to know that he was lazy and a poor achiever at school. He fell out with one of his earliest supporters Eduard Humer in 1923 over the fact that Humer told people what Hitler had been like at school.

Eduard Humer claimed:

“Hitler was certainly gifted in some subjects, but he lacked self-control. He was argumentative and bad-tempered, and unable to submit to school discipline....moreover, he was lazy. He reacted with hostility to advice or criticism.”

Eduard Humer had been Hitler's French teacher and was in an excellent position to "spill the beans" - but this met with Hitler's stern disapproval. Such behaviour would have been seriously punished after 1933 - the year when Hitler came to power. After 1933, those who had known Hitler in his early years either kept quiet about what they knew or told those who chose to listen that he was an ideal student etc.

Adolf Hitler had never given up his dream of being an artist and after leaving school he left for Vienna to pursue his dream. However, his life was shattered when, aged 18, his mother died of cancer. Witnesses say that he spent hours just staring at her dead body and drawing sketches of it as she lay on her death bed.

In Vienna, the Vienna Academy of Art, rejected his application as "he had no School Leaving Certificate". His drawings which he presented as evidence of his ability, were rejected as they had too few people in them. The examining board did not just want a landscape artist.

Without work and without any means to support himself, Hitler, short of money lived in a doss house with tramps. He spent his time painting post cards which he hoped to sell and clearing pathways of snow. It was at this stage in his life - about 1908 - that he developed a hatred of the Jews.

He was convinced that it was a Jewish professor that had rejected his art work; he became convinced that a Jewish doctor had been responsible for his mother's

death; he cleared the snow-bound paths of beautiful town houses in Vienna where rich people lived and he became convinced that only Jews lived in these homes. By 1910, his mind had become warped and his hatred of the Jews - known as anti-Semitism - had become set.

Adolf Hitler called his five years in Vienna "five years of hardship and misery". In his book called "Mein Kampf", Hitler made it clear that his time in Vienna was entirely the fault of the Jews - "I began to hate them".

In February 1914, in an attempt to escape his misery, Hitler tried to join the Austrian Army. He failed his medical. Years of poor food and sleeping rough had taken their toll on someone who as a PE student at school had been "excellent " at gymnastics. His medical report stated that he was too weak to actually carry weapons.

In August 1914, World War One was declared. Hitler crossed over the border to Germany where he had a very brief and not too searching medical which declared that he was fit to be in the German Army. Film has been found of the young Hitler in Munich's main square in August 1914, clearly excited at the declaration of war being announced.....along with many others.

In 1924, Hitler wrote "I sank to my knees and thanked heaven.....that it had given me the good fortune to live at such a time." There is no doubt that Hitler was a brave soldier. He was a regimental runner. This was a dangerous job as it exposed Hitler to a lot of enemy fire. His task was to carry messages to officers behind the front line, and then return to the front line with orders.

His fellow soldiers did not like Adolf Hitler as he frequently spoke out about the glories of trench warfare. He was never heard to condemn war like the rest of his colleagues. He was not a good mixer and rarely went out with his comrades when they had leave from the front. Hitler rose to the rank of corporal - not particularly good over a four year span and many believe that it was his lack of social skills and his inability to get people to follow his ideas, that cost him promotion. Why promote someone who was clearly unpopular?

Though he may have been unpopular with his comrades, his bravery was recognised by his officers. Hitler was awarded Germany's highest award for bravery - the Iron Cross. He called the day he was given the medal, "the greatest day of my life." In all Hitler won six medals for bravery.

In the mid-1930's, Hitler met with the future British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden. It became clear from discussions that they had fought opposite one another at the Battle of Ypres. Eden was impressed with the knowledge of the battle lines which Hitler had - far more than a corporal would have been expected to know, according to Eden.

The war ended disastrously for Hitler. In 1918, he was still convinced that Germany was winning the war - along with many other Germans. In October

1918, just one month before the end of the war, Hitler was blinded by a gas attack at Ypres. While he was recovering in hospital, Germany surrendered. Hitler was devastated. By his own admission, he cried for hours on end and felt nothing but anger and humiliation.

By the time he left hospital with his eyesight restored he had convinced himself that the Jews had been responsible for Germany's defeat. He believed that Germany would never have surrendered normally and that the nation had been "stabbed in the back" by the Jews. "In these nights (after Germany's surrender had been announced) hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed. What was all the pain in my eyes compared to this misery?"

Adolf Hitler remained in the German Army after World War One ended in November 1918. Seething with anger at Germany's defeat, Hitler was employed as a V-Man. Hitler's job was to visit as many political organisations as possible to check out whether they were right wing, centre politics or left wing. In particular, in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, both the government and army wanted to know who the socialists or communists were. The terms of the Treaty of Versailles only added to Hitler's anger during this period in his life.

Hitler also worked within the Education Department of the army and his task here was to lecture returning soldiers on the dangers of communism, socialism and pacifism. Senior officers were impressed with Hitler's skills as a speaker. It was at this time that the corporal, who was a loner, discovered his greatest talent - public oratory. The gas attack Hitler had suffered had affected his vocal chords and he spoke in a manner that few had heard before. Many who later heard Hitler speak at public rallies claimed that his voice had hypnotic qualities to it. In November 1922, Truman Smith, an American spy based in Germany, wrote:

“The most important political force in Bavaria at the present time is the National Socialist German Workers Party...Adolf Hitler...is the dominating force in the movement...his ability to influence a large audience is uncanny.”

Karl Ludecke, who published a book called "I knew Hitler", wrote the following about the first time that he heard Hitler speak:

“Hitler was a slight, pale man with brown hair parted to one side. He had steel-blue eyes...he had the look of a fanatic....he held the audience, and me with them, under a hypnotic spell by the sheer force of his conviction.”

What Adolf Hitler spoke about to the returning soldiers also hit home : the betrayal of the soldiers by politicians; the stab-in-the-back (of the soldiers) by the Jews; the failure of democratic politics and the disaster communism would be for Germany. His thoughts were widely held - but Hitler's audience in 1918 to 1919 was very small and his impact was very little.

In September 1919, Hitler visited, as a V-Man, a meeting of the German Workers' Party. The party name indicated that it had socialist leanings with its "workers'" tag. It was, in fact, an extreme, anti-Semitic, anti-communist, right wing nationalist party lead by Karl Drexler. At Hitler's visit, it only had 40 members. Hitler informed the army that it posed no threat to Germany. After this visit, Hitler joined the party as it seemed to represent all that he believed in. He quickly became the party's propaganda officer.

In early 1920, the party changed its name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) which quickly got corrupted to 'Nazi' by both enemies and supporters alike. Hitler wrote out the party's beliefs in the so-called 25 Point Party Programme. This party programme was a curious mixture - right wing nationalism; anti-capitalism; anti-socialism; anti-wealth etc.

This rag-bag mixture would have been laughable in normal circumstances but Germany was not in normal circumstances. The NSDAP played on the Germans hatred of the Treaty of Versailles (which it said it would ignore); the belief that Germany had been stabbed in the back. Even in its early days, the NSDAP tuned in to many peoples' emotions. However, in 1920, the party was just one of many right wing parties that seemed to exist in Germany at this time.

In a 1920 leaflet, the NSDAP blamed 300 bankers and financiers throughout the world for dictating policy to the world and holding it to ransom.

"Shake off your Jewish leaders.....Don't expect anything from the Bolsheviks (the Russian Communists).....(The Russian government) is nine-tenths Jewish. Bolshevism is a Jewish swindle."

This touched a raw nerve in some Germans. Former soldiers who had been in the Free Corps joined the Nazi Party and their 'skills' were used to break up meetings of other political parties. The use of violence became a way of life for the Nazis.

Regardless of this, the party made little headway in politics. It did benefit from one great advantage in Weimar Germany - the electoral system used proportional representation in deciding results. Any party that got more votes than the cut-off would get some seats in the Reichstag. This favoured the Nazis. They could not afford expensive election campaigns as Karl Ludecke related in his book "I knew Hitler".

"The organisation lived from day-to-day financially, with no treasury to draw on for lecture halls rents, printing costs, or the thousand-and-one expenses which threatened to swamp us. The only funds we could count on were small, merely a drop in the bucket."

Up to 1923, the Nazi Party was small and noisy. Its importance was mainly in the Munich area of Bavaria. Money, or lack of it, was always a problem. The

1923 hyperinflation crisis proved to be an opportunity too good to miss for the now party leader - Hitler.

Hyperinflation ruined the middle class. The poor had little and they lost most of the little they had. The rich lost a lot but as rich people they could keep their heads above water. The middle class did not have the cash reserves of the rich but they lead comfortable lives. These lives were now ruined by hyperinflation and they blamed the government.

Hitler planned to seize the most important city in the south - Munich - and to use the city as a base to launch an attack on the rest of Germany, hoping that the angered middle class would rise up in support of him throughout the nation.

The Beer Hall Putsch

On November 8th, 1923, Hitler and 2000 Nazis marched through the streets of Munich to take over a meeting at the Munich Beer Hall. This meeting was being chaired by the three most important people in Bavarian politics - Hans Seisser, Otto von Lossow and Gustav von Kahr. Depending on whose account you read, Hitler strode to the front of the meeting and declared that when convenient von Kahr would be declared regent of Bavaria, the Berlin government would be tried as traitors, Seisser would be made head of Germany's police.....but as the time was not convenient. He, Hitler, would take charge of the country. He stated that on the following day, the Nazis would march on the War Ministry and set up government there.

On the 9th November, the Nazis started on their march only to be met by armed police. What happened next varies. When the police fired on the leading marchers, the official Nazi biography of Hitler published in 1934 stated that he saved the life of the man next to him who had been shot.

Another unofficial version - by Rudolf Olden - claims that on the first shot Hitler ran away to a waiting car to be driven to the Bavarian mountains and safety. He would not have known that 13 Nazis had been shot dead by the police.

Regardless of what happened and what Hitler did, the march was a disaster for the Nazis and **could** have easily spelt the end of the Nazi Party. Ironically, the Beer Hall Putsch was to launch Hitler into national fame. He was arrested for treason and put on trial. This trial was to make Hitler famous within Germany and may well have saved the Nazi Party from collapse.

From 1924 to 1929, Adolf Hitler, following his experiences at Landsberg Prison, decided that all that he did at a political level would be legal and above board. If he wanted to sell the Nazi dream to the people of Weimar Germany , then he

had to be seen as being a legitimate party leader and not one associated with violence and wrong-doing. Hitler's approach was to highlight the failings of the other political parties in Weimar Germany.

As a policy, it was to fail. Between 1924 and 1929, the Nazis were politically very weak. Their representation in the Reichstag was very low compared to other parties.

Election Year	Communist Party	Social Demos	Democ. Party	Centre Party	Conser-vatives	Nation-alists	Nazis
1919	0	187	75	91	19	44	0
1920	4	186	39	64	65	71	0
May '24	62	100	28	65	45	95	32
Dec '24	45	131	32	69	51	103	14
1928	54	153	25	62	45	73	12

In the three elections held between 1924 and 1928, the Nazis gained fewer seats than the Communist Party and they were the weakest of the main right wing parties. The election campaigns pushed the party to the brink of bankruptcy. If the party had been declared bankrupt, it would have folded.

Weimar Germany from 1924 to 1929 was undergoing a renaissance. The government of Stressemann had got the country back on course after the nightmare of hyperinflation. The Dawes Plan had loaned Germany the necessary money to kick start her economy once again. The industrial heartland of the Ruhr settled down to productivity after the trauma of the French/Belgium invasion. Moderate politicians had won the day and there seemed no place in the new-born Germany for a political party of any extremes - be it from the left or right.

Stressemann had restored Germany's position in Europe. With the support of her previous enemy, France, Germany had entered the League of Nations in 1926. Normality seemed to be in place. Hence the Nazi Party's poor showing at the elections.

Hitler kept to his promise of working within the law. If he did not, it would have looked like an act of political desperation. However, as with any small party, the Nazi Party's funds were limited. Political obscurity beckoned for the Nazis.

They were saved by an event out of their hands - the Wall Street Crash of October 1929. This event was crucial to the Nazis. The Americans called back the money they had loaned Germany in 1924 and 1929 (the Young Plan). Germany had no money to invest in her economy. The growth from 1924 to 1929 had been somewhat of an illusion as a great deal of the money invested had been from overseas loans - primarily America. Money borrowed had to be paid back. In October 1929, Germany was left effectively bankrupt - again.

The impact of the Wall Street Crash took time to impact Germany. Unemployment was not a major issue for 1929. But by September 1930 it was.

September 1928	650,000 unemployed
September 1929	1,320,000 unemployed
September 1930	3,000,000 unemployed
September 1931	4,350,000 unemployed
September 1932	5,102,000 unemployed
January 1933	6,100,000 unemployed

Those unemployed turned to the one party and party leader untainted by the chaos of Weimar Germany.

When the stock market collapsed on Wall Street on Tuesday, October 29, 1929, it sent financial markets worldwide into a tailspin with disastrous effects.

The German economy was especially vulnerable since it was built out of foreign capital, mostly loans from America and was very dependent on foreign trade. When those loans suddenly came due and when the world market for German exports dried up, the well oiled German industrial machine quickly ground to a halt.

As production levels fell, German workers were laid off. Along with this, banks failed throughout Germany. Savings accounts, the result of years of hard work, were instantly wiped out. Inflation soon followed making it hard for families to purchase expensive necessities with devalued money.

Overnight, the middle class standard of living so many German families enjoyed was ruined by events outside of Germany, beyond their control. The Great Depression began and they were cast into poverty and deep misery and began looking for a solution, any solution.

Adolf Hitler knew his opportunity had arrived.

Despite the overwhelming need for a financial program to help the German people, Chancellor Bruening encountered stubborn opposition to his plans. To break the bitter stalemate, he went to President Hindenburg and asked the old gentleman to invoke Article 48 of the German constitution which gave emergency powers to the president to rule by decree. This provoked a huge outcry from the opposition, demanding withdrawal of the decree.

As a measure of last resort, Bruening asked Hindenburg in July 1930 to dissolve the Reichstag according to parliamentary rules and call for new elections.

The elections were set for September 14. Hitler and the Nazis sprang into action. Their time for campaigning had arrived.

The German people were tired of the political haggling in Berlin. They were tired of misery, tired of suffering, tired of weakness. These were desperate times and they were willing to listen...

Adolf Hitler and the Nazis waged a modern whirlwind campaign in 1930 unlike anything ever seen in Germany. Hitler travelled the country delivering dozens of major speeches, attending meetings, shaking hands, signing autographs, posing for pictures, and even kissing babies.

Joseph Goebbels brilliantly organized thousands of meetings, torchlight parades, plastered posters everywhere and printed millions of special edition Nazi newspapers.

Germany was in the grip of the Great Depression with a population suffering from poverty, misery, and uncertainty, amid increasing political instability.

For Hitler, the master speech maker, the long awaited opportunity to let loose his talents on the German people had arrived. He would find in this downtrodden people, an audience very willing to listen. In his speeches, Hitler offered the Germans what they needed most, encouragement. He gave them heaps of vague promises while avoiding the details. He used simple catchphrases, repeated over and over.

His campaign appearances were carefully staged events. Audiences were always kept waiting, deliberately letting the tension increase, only to be broken by solemn processions of Brown shirts with golden banners, blaring military music, and finally the appearance of Hitler amid shouts of "Heil!" The effect in a closed in hall with theatrical style lighting and decorations of swastikas was overwhelming and very catching.

Hitler began each speech in low, hesitating tones, gradually raising the pitch and volume of his voice then exploding in a climax of frenzied indignation. He combined this with carefully rehearsed hand gestures for maximum effect. He skilfully played on the emotions of the audience bringing the level of excitement higher and higher until the people wound up a wide-eyed, screaming, frenzied mass that surrendered to his will and looked upon him with pseudo-religious adoration.

Hitler offered something to everyone: work to the unemployed; prosperity to failed business people; profits to industry; expansion to the Army; social harmony and an end of class distinctions to idealistic young students; and restoration of German glory to those in despair. He promised to bring order amid chaos; a feeling of unity to all and the chance to belong. He would make Germany strong again; end payment of war reparations to the Allies; tear up the treaty of Versailles; stamp out corruption; keep down Marxism; and deal harshly with the Jews.

He appealed to all classes of Germans. The name of the Nazi Party itself was deliberately all inclusive – the National Socialist German Workers' Party. All of the Nazis, from Hitler, down to the leader of the smallest city block, worked tirelessly, relentlessly, to pound their message into the minds of the Germans.

On Election Day September 14, 1930, the Nazis received 6,371,000 votes – over eighteen percent of the total – and were thus entitled to 107 seats in the German Reichstag. It was a stunning victory for Hitler. Overnight, the Nazi Party went from the smallest to the second largest political party in Germany.

It propelled Adolf Hitler to solid national and international prestige and aroused the curiosity of the world press. He was besieged with interview requests. Foreign journalists wanted to know – what did he mean – tear up the Treaty of Versailles and end war reparations? – and that Germany wasn't responsible for the First World War?

Gone was the Charlie Chaplin image of Hitler as the laughable fanatic behind the Beer Hall Putsch. The beer hall revolutionary had been replaced by the skilled manipulator of the masses.

On October 13, 1930, dressed in their brown shirts, the elected Nazi deputies marched in unison into the Reichstag and took their seats. When the roll-call was taken, each one shouted, "Present! Heil Hitler!"

They had no intention of cooperating with the democratic government, knowing it was to their advantage to let things get worse in Germany, thus increasing the appeal of Hitler to an ever more miserable people.

Nazi storm troopers dressed in civilian clothes celebrated their electoral victory by smashing the windows of Jewish shops, restaurants and department stores, an indication of things to come.

Now, for the floundering German democracy, the clock was ticking and time was on Hitler's side.

The years 1930 and 1931 had been good for Hitler politically. The Nazis were now the second largest political party in Germany. Hitler had become a best-selling author, with *Mein Kampf* selling over 50,000 copies, bringing him a nice income. The Nazi Party also had fancy new headquarters in Munich called the Brown House.

Money was flowing in from German industrialists who saw the Nazis as the wave of the future. They invested in Hitler in the hope of getting favors when he came to power. Their money was used to help pay the growing numbers of salaried Nazis and fuel Goebbels' propaganda machine.

The German General Staff was also investing support in Hitler, hoping he meant what he said about tearing up the Treaty of Versailles which limited their Army to 100,000 men and also prevented modernization. The generals had been encouraged by Hitler's performance as a witness during the trial of three young regular Army officers charged with spreading Nazi doctrines in the German Army.

Hitler had used his appearance in the courtroom to send a message to the General Staff that there would be no attempt to replace the regular Army with an army of storm troopers and that once in power, the Nazis would raise the German Army to new heights of greatness. This was exactly what the generals wanted to hear.

It was however, the SA, his own storm troopers, that gave Hitler problems. Many of the violence prone, socialist leaning SA members wanted to become a new German revolutionary army. They also embarrassed Hitler by wreaking havoc in the streets despite his order to lay low. Hitler had to use his personal bodyguard, the SS, under its chief, Heinrich Himmler, to put down a small SA revolt in Berlin led by Captain Walter Stennes.

Hitler installed former SA leader, Ernst Röhm, as the new leader to reorganize and settle down the SA, now numbering over 60,000 members. The SA, however, and its leadership would remain a problem for years for Hitler, culminating in a major crisis a few years down the road.

It was in his personal life, however, that Adolf Hitler was about to face a crisis that would shake him to the core.

Back in the summer of 1928, Hitler had rented a small country house at Berchtesgaden which had a magnificent view of the Bavarian mountains and years later would be the site of his sprawling villa.

For Hitler, then aged 39, it was the first place he could truly call home. He settled into the little country house and invited his step sister, Angela, to leave Vienna and come to take over the daily household chores. Angela arrived along with her two daughters, Friedl and Geli.

Geli was a lively 20-year-old with dark blond hair and Viennese charm, qualities that were hugely appealing to a man nearly twice her age. Hitler fell deeply in love with her. He fawned over her like a teenager in love for the first time. He went shopping with her and patiently stood by as she tried on clothes. He took her to theaters, cafés, concerts and even to Party meetings.

This relationship between Hitler and his niece was for the most part socially acceptable according to local customs since she was the daughter of his half sister.

Young Geli enjoyed the attention of this man who was becoming famous. Strangers would come over and ask Hitler for a souvenir or an autograph while they were sitting in a café. There were also the trappings of power, SS body guards, a chauffeur, and obedient aides.

But young Geli had a tendency to flirt. Although she liked the attention of this older man, she yearned for the company of young people. She had a number of romances, including one with Hitler's chauffeur, who got fired as a result.

Though Hitler cast a jealous and disapproving eye on Geli's romances, he was flirting himself with a fair-haired 17-year-old named Eva Braun, who worked in the photography shop run by his personal photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann.

Hitler's jealousy and possessiveness of his niece made her life increasingly claustrophobic, especially after she moved in with him to a fancy nine-room apartment in Munich. Everywhere she went, she had two Nazi chaperons and had to be back home precisely at the time her uncle ordered. She couldn't do anything without his permission. And each time she tried to get free of her uncle's constraints, he tightened his grip.

Hitler's stormy relationship with Geli worsened. There were many loud arguments.

In September of 1931, Hitler ordered her to stay at his apartment and not go to Vienna while he was away. This made her furious. A huge argument followed. She desperately wanted to go. Hitler said no.

As Hitler headed outside to his car to leave for an SA meeting, Geli went to the window and yelled down to him asking one more time if she could go. Hitler yelled back a stern "No!"

He departed with an uneasy feeling about the whole situation.

The next morning, on the way to Hamburg, Hitler's car was flagged down by a taxi. Rudolf Hess was on the telephone line back at the hotel Hitler had just left and wanted to speak to him immediately.

When Hitler picked up the phone there, he was told his niece had shot herself. In a frenzy, Hitler rushed back to Munich. But by the time he got back to his apartment, Geli's body had been already removed. She had shot herself through the heart with a pistol.

The love of his life was gone, and under horrible circumstances. To make matters worse, there were rumors in the press she might have been murdered, perhaps even on Hitler's orders. Hitler became deeply depressed and spent days pacing back and forth without stopping to eat or sleep.

Hermann Göring would later say Adolf Hitler was never the same after the suicide of his beloved niece. Hitler later said Geli was the only woman he ever loved. He always kept portraits of her hung on the wall, decorated with flowers on the anniversaries of her birth and death. Whenever he spoke of her, it was often with teary-eyed reverence.

Curiously, shortly after her death, Hitler looked with disdain on a piece of ham being served during breakfast and refused to eat it, saying it was like eating a corpse. From that moment on, he refused to eat meat.

Just three weeks after the suicide of his beloved niece, Adolf Hitler met the 84-year-old President of Germany, Paul von Hindenburg, for the first time.

Hitler pulled himself out of the severe depression he fell into after her death. Twice before he had sunk into the abyss of despair, only to emerge stronger – in 1918, lying in a hospital, blinded by poison gas, after hearing news of the Germany's defeat ending World War I – and in 1924, in prison after the failed Beer Hall Putsch.

In October 1931, the former Austrian Corporal was presented to the former Field Marshal. Hitler was a bit unnerved by the Old Gentleman and rambled on at length trying to impress him. Hindenburg was not impressed and later said Hitler might be suited for Postmaster, but never for a high position such as the Chancellorship of Germany.

October of 1931 marked the beginning of the political intrigue that would destroy the young republic and ultimately make Hitler Führer of Germany.

Constant political squabbling among the numerous political parties in the Reichstag resulted in ineffective government.

Adding to the problem, there were now over a hundred elected Nazis in the Reichstag. Under the leadership of Hermann Göring, they regularly disrupted proceedings with vulgar, rowdy behavior to help undermine democracy in Germany.

The German people were desperate for relief from the tremendous personal suffering brought on by the Great Depression, now two years old. Millions were unemployed, thousands of small businesses had failed, homelessness and starvation were real possibilities for everyone.

Civilization itself was unravelling in Berlin where people were fighting in the streets, killing each other in the chaos.

But from their elected leaders, the people got nothing but indecision. In ever growing numbers they turned to the decisive man, Adolf Hitler, and his promises of a better future.

The republic now faced another problem. In 1932, there was supposed to be a presidential election, according to law. But Hindenburg, the glue holding the floundering democracy together, was getting too old and said he was not interested in running again.

Even if he could be convinced to run, he would be 92 by the time the seven-year term ended, with Hitler looming in the background the whole time. If he didn't live the entire term, considered likely since he was failing, then Hitler would have his chance even sooner.

Early in 1932, Adolf Hitler received a telegram from Chancellor Bruening inviting him to come to Berlin to discuss the possibility of extending Hindenburg's present term. Hitler was delighted at the invitation.

"Now I have them in my pocket! They have recognized me as a partner in their negotiations!" Hitler told Rudolf Hess.

He went to the meeting and listened to the proposal, but gave no response. There was no reason to help the chancellor and thus help keep the republic alive.

In February 1932, President Hindenburg reluctantly agreed to run again and announced his candidacy for re-election. Hitler decided to oppose him and run for the presidency himself.

"Freedom and Bread," was the slogan used by Hitler to great effect during the Nazi campaign against tired old President Hindenburg.

Joseph Goebbels waged a furious propaganda campaign on behalf of Hitler, outdoing the previous election effort of 1930. Nazi posters were plastered everywhere. There was a whirlwind schedule of speeches for himself and Hitler. The Nazis held thousands of rallies each day all across Germany. They gave out millions of pamphlets and extra copies of Nazi newspapers. Goebbels also used new technology, making phonograph records and films of Hitler to distribute.

President Hindenburg essentially did nothing. He was content to ride on his reputation and counted on the votes of Germans who wanted to keep the radicals out of power. Goebbels had high hopes that Hitler might pull an upset and sweep into office. Hitler, however, had his doubts. He campaigned knowing he was unlikely to unseat the Old Gentleman. But the campaign was also an opportunity to win support for himself and his Party and extend Nazi influence.

Many in Germany saw the Nazis as the wave of the future. After the stunning success of the 1930 election, thousands of new members had poured into the

Party. Now, in the spring of 1932, with six million unemployed, chaos in Berlin, starvation and ruin, the threat of Marxism, and a very uncertain future – they turned to Hitler by the millions.

In the presidential election held on March 13, 1932, Hitler got over eleven million votes (11,339,446) or 30% of the total. Hindenburg got 18,651,497 votes or 49%.

Hindenburg failed to get the absolute majority he needed, making a run-off election necessary. Goebbels and many of the Nazi leaders were quite disappointed.

But Hitler immediately urged them to start a vigorous campaign for the run-off to be held on April 10, less than a month away.

In the campaign that followed, Hitler criss-crossed Germany in an airplane, descending from the clouds into the arms of growing numbers of fanatics, at ever larger rallies. He gave them a positive message, promising something for everyone, then ascended back into the clouds. "In the Third Reich every German girl will find a husband!" Hitler once promised.

But like any politician, Hitler was subject to scandal. A newspaper run by one of the opposition parties, the Social Democrats, somehow got hold of letters between SA Chief Ernst Röhm and a male doctor, concerning their mutual interest in men. Hitler knew Röhm was a homosexual and had ignored it for years because of Röhm's usefulness to him.

The issue as far as Hitler was concerned was whether Röhm had abused any underage males. Nazi lawyer Hans Frank investigated this and assured Hitler he had found no evidence. Hitler was a little more at ease. Thus, Ernst Röhm, the battle scarred, aggressive storm trooper leader would stay, at least for now, as leader of the SA, now numbering over 400,000.

The campaign for president continued with the Nazis mounting another furious campaign effort with Hitler making several campaign stops a day. President Hindenburg did less than before and didn't make a single speech, causing rumors about ill health.

On a dark, rainy Sunday, April 10, 1932, the people voted. They gave Hitler 13,418,547 or 36%, an increase of two million, and Hindenburg 19,359,983 or 53%, an increase of under a million.

The Old Gentleman, now 85, was elected by an absolute majority to another seven-year term. But no one was at ease. Hitler and the Nazis had shown massive popularity.

Berlin was now a swirling mess of fear, intrigue, rumors, and disorder. Out of that mess arose a man named Kurt von Schleicher, a highly ambitious Army officer, driven by the idea that he, not Hitler, might possibly rule Germany.

The German republic was now as unsteady as the teetering Old Gentleman leading it and up against Schleicher and Hitler, was soon to be buried.

Amid the swirling mess in Berlin of political intrigue, rumors, and disorder, the SA, the Nazi storm troopers, stood out as an ominous presence. In the spring of 1932, many in the German democratic government came to believe the Brownshirts were about to take over by force.

There were now over 400,000 storm troopers under the leadership of SA Chief Ernst Röhm. Many members of the SA considered themselves to be a true revolutionary army and were anxious to live up to that idea. Adolf Hitler had to rein them in from time to time so they wouldn't upset his own carefully laid plans to undermine the republic.

Hitler knew he could not succeed as Führer of Germany without the support of existing institutions such as the German Army and the powerful German industrialists, both of whom kept a wary eye on the revolutionary SA.

In April of 1932, Heinrich Brüning, Chancellor of Germany, invoked Article 48 of the constitution and issued a decree banning the SA and SS all across Germany. The Nazis were outraged and wanted Hitler to fight the ban. But Hitler, always a step ahead of them all, knew better. He agreed, knowing the republic was on its last legs and that opportunity would soon come along for him.

That opportunity came in the form of Kurt von Schleicher, a scheming, ambitious Army officer who had ideas of leading Germany himself. But he made the mistake (that would prove fatal) of underestimating Hitler. Schleicher was acquainted with Hitler and had been the one who arraigned for Hitler to meet Hindenburg, a meeting that went poorly for Hitler.

On May 8, 1932, Schleicher held a secret meeting with Hitler and offered a proposal. The ban on the SA and SS would be lifted, the Reichstag dissolved and new elections called, and Chancellor Brüning would be dumped, if Hitler would support him in a conservative nationalist government. Hitler agreed.

Schleicher's skillful treachery behind the scenes in Berlin first resulted in the humiliation and ousting of General Wilhelm Groener, a longtime trusted aide to President Hindenburg and friend of the republic. In the Reichstag, Groener, who supported the ban on the SA, took a severe public tongue lashing from Hermann Göring and was hooted and booed by Goebbels and the rest of the Nazis.

"We covered him with such catcalls that the whole house began to tremble and shake with laughter. In the end one could only have pity for him. That man is finished," Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary in 1932.

Groener was pressured by Schleicher to resign. He appealed without success to Hindenburg and wound up resigning on May 13. Schleicher's next target was Chancellor Brüning.

Heinrich Brüning was one of the last men in Germany who stood up to Hitler with the best interest of the people at heart. He was responsible for getting Hindenburg re-elected as president to keep out Hitler and preserve the republic. He was also hard at work on the international scene to help the German economy by seeking an end to war reparations. But his economic policies at home brought dismal results. As Germany's economic situation got worse, with nearly six million unemployed, Brüning was labeled "The Hunger Chancellor."

Brüning had also continued the dangerous precedent of ruling by decree. He invoked Article 48 of the German constitution several times to break the political stalemate in Berlin.

To Schleicher and Hitler, he was simply in the way and had to go. Schleicher went to work on him by undermining the support of Hindenburg. Brüning was already in trouble with Hindenburg, who blamed him for the political turmoil that had made it necessary to run for re-election at age 85 against the 'Bohemian Corporal' Adolf Hitler.

Brüning also made an error in proposing that the huge estates of bankrupt aristocrats be divided up and given to peasants, sounding like a Marxist. Those same aristocrats, along with big industrialists, had scraped together the money to buy Hindenburg an estate of his own. When Hindenburg took his Easter vacation there in mid-May, he had to listen to their complaints about Brüning. All the while, Schleicher was at work against Brüning as well.

On May 29, 1932, Hindenburg called in Brüning and told him to resign. The next day, Heinrich Brüning handed in his resignation, effectively ending democracy in Germany.

Schleicher was now in control. He chose as his puppet chancellor, an unknown socialite named Franz von Papen who had grave doubts about his own ability to function in such a high office. Hindenburg, however, took a liking to Papen and encouraged him to take the job.

The aristocratic Papen assembled a cabinet of men like himself. This ineffective cabinet of aristocrats and industrialists presided over a nation that would soon be on the verge of anarchy.

When Adolf Hitler was asked by President Hindenburg if he would support Papen as chancellor, he said yes. On June 4th, the Reichstag was dissolved and new elections were called for the end of July. On June 15, the ban on the SA and SS was lifted. The secret promises made to the Nazis by Schleicher had been fulfilled.

Murder and violence soon erupted on a scale never before seen in Germany. Roaming groups of Nazi Brownshirts walked the streets singing Nazi songs and looking for fights.

"Blut muss fließen, Blut muss fließen! Blut muss fließen
Knuppelhageldick! Haut'se doch zusammen, haut'se doch zusammen!
Diese gotterverdammte Juden Republik!" the Nazi storm troopers sang."

Translation: "Blood must flow, blood must flow! Blood must flow as cudgel thick as hail! Let's smash it up, let's smash it up! That goddamned Jewish republic!"

The Nazis found many Communists in the streets wanting a fight and they began regularly shooting at each other. Hundreds of gun battles took place. On July 17, the Nazis under police escort brazenly marched into a Communist area near Hamburg in the state of Prussia. A big shoot-out occurred in which 19 people were killed and nearly 300 wounded. It came to be known as "Bloody Sunday."

Papen invoked Article 48 and proclaimed martial law in Berlin and also took over the government of the German state of Prussia by naming himself Reich Commissioner. Germany had taken a big step closer to authoritarian rule.

Hitler now decided that Papen was simply in the way and had to go.

"I regard your cabinet only as a temporary solution and will continue my efforts to make my Party the strongest in the country. The chancellorship will then devolve on me," Hitler told Papen.

The July elections would provide that opportunity. The Nazis, sensing total victory, campaigned with fanatical energy. Hitler was now speaking to adoring German audiences of up to 100,000 at a time. The phenomenon of large scale 'Führer worship' had begun. On July 31st, the people voted and gave the Nazis 13,745,000 votes, 37% of the total, granting them 230 seats in the Reichstag. The Nazi Party was now the largest and most powerful in Germany.

On August 5th, Hitler presented his list of demands to Schleicher – the chancellorship; passage of an enabling act giving him control to rule by decree; three cabinet posts for Nazis; the creation of a propaganda ministry; control over the Ministry of the Interior; and control of Prussia. As for Schleicher, he would get the Ministry of Defense as a reward.

Schleicher listened, didn't say yes or no, but would let him know later.

With gleeful anticipation, Hitler awaited Schleicher's response and even ordered that a memorial tablet be made to mark the place where the historic meeting with Schleicher had occurred.

Meanwhile, the SA began massing in Berlin anticipating a takeover of power. But old President Hindenburg soon put an end to Hitler's dreams. Hindenburg by now distrusted Hitler and would not have him as chancellor, especially after the behaviour of the SA.

On August 13, Schleicher and Papen met with Hitler and gave him the bad news. The best they could offer was a compromise – vice chancellorship and the Prussian Ministry of the Interior.

Adolf Hitler became hysterical. In a display of wild rage that stunned Schleicher and Papen, he spewed out threats of violence and murder, saying he would let loose the SA for three days of mayhem all across Germany.

Later that same day, Hitler was called on the carpet by President Hindenburg. The former Austrian Corporal got a tongue lashing from the former Field Marshal after once again demanding the chancellorship and refusing to cooperate with Papen and Schleicher.

In the presence of the steely-eyed old Prussian, Hitler backed down. The gamble for total victory had failed. He put the SA on a two week furlough and went to Berchtesgaden to lick his wounds. They would all have to wait, he told them. Just a little longer.

On September 12, the Reichstag under the new chairmanship of Hermann Göring gave a vote of no confidence to Papen and his government. But just before that vote was taken, Papen had slapped an order on Göring's desk dissolving the Reichstag and calling yet again for new elections.

This was a problem. Everyone was getting tired of elections by now. Goebbels had a hard time getting the Nazi effort up to the same level of a few months earlier.

In the middle of the campaign, Hitler's girlfriend Eva Braun shot herself in the neck during a suicide attempt. Hitler was still haunted by the suicide of his beloved niece a few years earlier. Eva Braun was deeply in love with Hitler but didn't get the attention she craved. Hitler rushed to the hospital and resolved to look after her from that moment on.

This distraction served to slow down the already sluggish Nazi campaign. More problems came after Goebbels and a number of Nazis went along with the Communists in a wildcat strike of transport workers in Berlin, thus alienating a lot of middle class voters.

Bad publicity from siding with the Reds plus the bad publicity Hitler got after his meeting with Hindenburg combined to lose them votes. Adding to all this were the wild antics of the SA. On November 6th, the Nazis lost two million votes and thirty four seats in the Reichstag. It seemed the Nazis were losing momentum. Hitler became depressed.

But there was still no workable government in Berlin. Papen's position as chancellor was badly weakened. And Schleicher was now at work behind the scenes to further undermine him. On November 17, Papen went to Hindenburg and told him he was unable to form any kind of working coalition, then resigned.

Two days later, Hitler requested a meeting with Hindenburg. Once again Hitler demanded to be made chancellor. Once again he was turned down. This time however, Hindenburg took a friendlier tone, asking Hitler, soldier to soldier, to meet him half way and cooperate with the other parties to form a working majority, in other words, a coalition government. Hitler said no.

On November 21st, Hitler saw Hindenburg again and tried a different approach. He read a prepared statement claiming that parliamentary government had failed and that only the Nazis could be counted on to stop the spread of Communism. He asked Hindenburg to make him the leader of a presidential cabinet. Hindenburg said no, and only repeated his own previous requests.

The Government of Germany had ground to a halt.

Meanwhile, a group of the country's most influential industrialists, bankers, and business leaders sent a petition to Hindenburg asking him to appoint Hitler as chancellor. They believed Hitler would be good for business.

Hindenburg was in a terrible bind. He called in Papen and Schleicher and asked them what to do. Papen came up with a wild idea. He would be chancellor again and rule only by decree, eliminate the Reichstag altogether, use the Army and police to suppress all political parties and forcibly amend the constitution. It would be a return to the days of Empire, with the conservative, aristocratic classes ruling.

Schleicher objected, much to Papen's surprise. Schleicher said that he, not Papen, should head the government and promised Hindenburg he could get a working majority in the Reichstag by causing a rift among the Nazis. Schleicher said he could get Gregor Strasser and as many as 60 Nazi deputies to break from Hitler.

Hindenburg was dumbfounded and finally turned to Papen and asked him to go ahead and form his government. After Hindenburg left the room, Papen and Schleicher got into a huge shouting match.

At a cabinet meeting the next day, Schleicher told Papen that any attempt by him to form a new government would bring the country to chaos. He insisted that the Army would not go along and then produced a Major Ott who backed up his claims. Schleicher had been at work behind the scenes to sway the Army to his point of view. Papen was in big trouble.

He went running to Hindenburg, who, with tears rolling down his cheeks, told Papen there was no alternative at this point except to name Schleicher as the new chancellor.

"My dear Papen, you will not think much of me if I change my mind. But I am too old and have been through too much to accept the responsibility for a civil war. Our only hope is to let Schleicher try his luck," President Hindenburg told Papen.

Thus Kurt von Schleicher became Chancellor of Germany on December 2, 1932. There now began an incredible amount of behind-the-scenes political intrigue and backstabbing that would put Hitler in power in only 57 days.

To begin with, Schleicher made good on his promise to try to split the Nazis. He held a secret meeting with Gregor Strasser, a Nazi who had been with Hitler from the start, and offered him the vice-chancellorship and control of Prussia.

To Strasser, the offer was quite appealing. The Nazi Party's recent decline, losing millions of votes and now experiencing terrible financial problems, seemed to indicate that Hitler's rigid tactics might not be the best thing for long-term success. Strasser had also acquired a distaste for the brutal men who now made up Hitler's inner circle.

Through Papen, Hitler found out what was going on. On December 5th, Strasser and his infuriated Führer met, along with other Nazi leaders, in a Berlin hotel. Strasser insisted that Hitler and the Nazis cooperate or at least tolerate the Schleicher government. Göring and Goebbels opposed him. Hitler sided with them against Strasser.

Two days later, Strasser and Hitler met again and wound up getting into a huge shouting match. Strasser accused Hitler of leading the Party to ruin. Hitler accused Strasser of stabbing him in the back.

The following day, Strasser wrote a letter to Hitler, resigning all of his duties as a member of the Nazi Party. Hitler and the Nazi leaders were stunned. One of the founding members and most influential leaders had abandoned them. The Nazi Party seemed to be unravelling. Hitler became depressed, even threatening to shoot himself with a pistol.

Strasser headed for a vacation in Italy.

"Whatever happens, mark what I say. From now on Germany is in the hands of an Austrian, who is a congenital liar (Hitler), a former officer who is a pervert (Röhm), and a clubfoot (Goebbels). And I tell you the last is the worst of them all. This is Satan in human form," declared Gregor Strasser in 1932.

As for Hermann Göring:

"Göring is a brutal egotist who cares nothing for Germany as long as he becomes something."

Regarding Strasser, Goebbels wrote in his diary: "Strasser is a dead man."

Hitler assigned his trusted aid, Rudolf Hess, to take over Strasser's duties. Over the Christmas season, Hitler became quite depressed over the failing fortunes of his Party.

And it seemed to many political observers that the danger of a Hitler dictatorship had passed.

But the new year brought new intrigue. The big bankers and industrialists who had petitioned Hindenburg on behalf of Hitler still liked the idea of Hitler in power. And Papen was now out to bring down Schleicher. On January 4, 1933, Hitler went to a meeting with Papen at the house of banker Kurt von Schroeder. Papen surprised Hitler by offering to oust Schleicher and install a Papen-Hitler government with himself and Hitler, both equal partners.

Hitler liked the idea of ousting Schleicher but insisted that he would have to be the real head of government. He would, however, be willing to work with Papen and his ministers. Papen gave in and agreed.

When Schleicher found out, he went running to Hindenburg, charging Papen with treachery. But Hindenburg had a soft spot for Papen and would not go along.

Schleicher's position was already badly weakened. He was unable to get the government moving because nobody trusted him enough to join him in a working coalition. The German government remained at a standstill with the people and Hindenburg getting more impatient by the day. Something had to be done. Hindenburg authorized Papen to continue negotiating with Hitler, but to keep it secret from Schleicher.

In the small German state of Lippe, local elections were scheduled for January 15. Hitler and the Nazis took this opportunity to make a big impression. They saturated the place with propaganda and campaigned heavily, hoping to win big and prove they had regained momentum.

They received a small increase in votes over their previous election total. But they used their own widely circulated Nazi newspapers to exaggerate the significance and to once again lay claim that Hitler and the Nazis were the wave of the future. It worked well and even impressed President Hindenburg.

On Sunday, January 22, 1933, a secret meeting was held at the home of Joachim von Ribbentrop. It was attended by Papen, Hindenburg's son Oskar, along with Hitler and Göring. Hitler grabbed Oskar and brought him into a private room and worked on him for an hour to convince him that the Nazis had to be taken into the government on his terms. Oskar emerged from the meeting convinced it was inevitable. The Nazis were to be taken in. Papen then pledged his loyalty to Hitler.

Next, Schleicher went to Hindenburg with a proposal – declare a state of emergency to control the Nazis, dissolve the Reichstag, and suspend elections. Hindenburg said no.

But word of this proposal leaked out, bringing Schleicher the wrath of the liberal and centrist parties. Schleicher then backed down, bringing him the wrath of anti-Nazi conservatives. His position was hopeless.

On January 28th, he went to Hindenburg and asked him once again to dissolve the Reichstag. Hindenburg said no. Schleicher resigned.

Papen and the president's son, Oskar, moved in on the Old Gentleman to convince him to appoint a Hitler-Papen government. Hindenburg was now a tired old man weary of all the intrigue. He seemed ready to give in. Hitler sensed his weakness and issued an additional demand that four important cabinet posts be given to Nazis.

This did not set well with the old man and he started having doubts about Hitler as chancellor. He was reassured when Hitler promised that Papen would get one of those four posts.

On the 29th, a false rumor circulated that Schleicher was about to arrest Hindenburg and stage a military takeover of the government. When Hindenburg heard of this, it ended his hesitation. He decided to appoint Adolf Hitler as the next Chancellor of Germany.

However, a last minute objection by conservative leader, Alfred Hugenberg, nearly ruined everything. On January 30, while President Hindenburg waited in the other room to give Hitler the chancellorship, Hugenberg held up everything by arguing with the Nazis over Hitler's demand for new elections. He was persuaded by Hitler to back down, or at least let Hindenburg decide. With that settled they all headed into the president's office.

Around noon on January 30, 1933, a new chapter in German history began as a teary-eyed Adolf Hitler emerged from the presidential palace as Chancellor of the German Nation. Surrounded by admirers, he got into his car and was driven down the street lined with cheering citizens.

"We've done it! We've done it!" a jubilant Adolf Hitler exclaimed.

When Adolf Hitler walked into the presidential office of Paul von Hindenburg to become chancellor, the Old Gentleman was so annoyed he would hardly look at him.

He had been kept waiting while Hitler and conservative leader Alfred Hugenberg argued over Hitler's demand for new elections. It was the final argument in what had been a huge tangled web of political infighting and backstabbing that finally resulted in Adolf Hitler becoming Chancellor of Germany.

Germany was a nation that in its history had little experience or interest in democracy. In January 1933, Adolf Hitler took the reins of a 14-year-old German democratic republic which in the minds of many had long outlived its usefulness. By this time, the economic pressures of the Great Depression combined with the indecisive, self-serving nature of its elected politicians had brought government in Germany to a complete standstill. The people were without jobs, without food, quite afraid and desperate for relief.

Now, the man who had spent his entire political career denouncing and attempting to destroy the Republic, was its leader. Around noon on January 30th, Hitler was sworn in.

"I will employ my strength for the welfare of the German people, protect the Constitution and laws of the German people, conscientiously discharge the duties imposed on me, and conduct my affairs of office impartially and with justice to everyone," swore Adolf Hitler.

But by this time, that oath had been repeatedly broken by previous chancellors out of desperation and also out of personal ambition. Chancellors Schleicher and Papen had seriously suggested to Hindenburg the idea of replacing the republic itself with a military dictatorship to solve the crisis of political stagnation. He had turned them both down.

When a teary-eyed Adolf Hitler emerged from the presidential palace as the new chancellor, he was cheered by Nazis and their supporters who believed in him, not the constitution or the republic.

"We've done it!" Hitler had jubilantly shouted to them.

He was to preside over a cabinet that contained, including himself, only 3 Nazis out of 11 posts. Hermann Göring was Minister without Portfolio and Minister of the Interior of Prussia. Nazi, Wilhelm Frick, was Minister of the Interior. The small number of Nazis in the cabinet was planned to help keep Hitler in check.

Franz von Papen was vice-chancellor. Hindenburg had promised him that Hitler would only be received in the office of the president if accompanied by Papen.

This was another way to keep Hitler in check. In fact, Papen had every intention of using the conservative majority in the cabinet along with his own political skills to run the government himself.

"Within two months we will have pushed Hitler so far in the corner that he'll squeak," Papen boasted to a political colleague.

Papen and many non-Nazis thought having Hitler as chancellor was to their advantage. Conservative members of the former aristocratic ruling class desired an end to the republic and a return to an authoritarian government that would restore Germany to glory and bring back their old privileges. They wanted to go back to the days of the Kaiser. For them, putting Hitler in power was just the first step toward achieving that goal. They knew it was likely he would wreck the republic. Then once the republic was abolished, they could put in someone of their own choosing, perhaps even a descendant of the Kaiser.

Big bankers and industrialists, including Krupp and I. G. Farben, had lobbied Hindenburg and schemed behind the scenes on behalf of Hitler because they were convinced he would be good for business. He promised to be for free enterprise and keep down Communism and the trade union movements.

The military also placed its bet on Hitler, believing his repeated promises to tear up the Treaty of Versailles and expand the Army and bring back its former glory.

They all had one thing in common – they underestimated Hitler.

On the evening of January 30th, just about every member of the SA and SS turned out in uniform to celebrate the new Führer-Chancellor, Adolf Hitler. Carrying torches and singing the Hörst Wessel song, they were cheered by thousands as they marched through the Brandenburg gate and along the Wilhelmstrasse to the presidential palace. Cops on the beat who used to give them trouble now wore swastika armbands and smiled at them. Everywhere was heard the rhythmic pounding beats of jackboots, drums and blaring military parade music.

They saluted Hindenburg as he looked out from a window of the presidential palace. Then they waited at the chancellery for Hitler in a scene carefully staged by Joseph Goebbels. A sea of hand held burning torches cast flickering light on red and gold Nazi banners amid the slow beating of drums in anticipation of seeing the Führer. Men, women and children along with the SA and SS waited. He kept them waiting, letting the tension rise. All over Germany, people listened to this on the radio, waiting, and hearing the throngs calling for their Führer.

When he appeared in the beam of a spotlight, Hitler was greeted with an outpouring of worshipful adulation unlike anything ever seen before in Germany. Bismarck, Frederick the Great, the Kaiser, had not seen this.

"Heil! Sieg Heil!," (Hail! Hail Victory!) went the chorus of those who believed the hour of deliverance had come in the form of this man now gazing down at them.

"It is almost like a dream – a fairytale. The new [Third] Reich has been born. Fourteen years of work have been crowned with victory. The German revolution has begun!" Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary that night.

Meanwhile, an old comrade of Hitler's sent a telegram to President Hindenburg regarding his new chancellor. Former General Erich Ludendorff had once supported Hitler and had even participated in the failed Beer Hall Putsch in 1923.

"By appointing Hitler Chancellor of the Reich you have handed over our sacred German Fatherland to one of the greatest demagogues of all time. I prophesy to you this evil man will plunge our Reich into the abyss and will inflict immeasurable woe on our nation. Future generations will curse you in your grave for this action," the telegram from Ludendorff stated.

Within weeks, Hitler would be absolute dictator of Germany and would set in motion a chain of events resulting in the Second World War and the eventual deaths of nearly 50 million humans through that war and through deliberate extermination.

To begin, Hitler would see the German democratic republic go down in flames, literally. In February 1933, the Nazis hatched a plan to burn the Reichstag building and end democracy once and for all.

Göring then ordered the police to show no mercy to those deemed hostile to the State, meaning those hostile to Hitler, especially Communists.

"Police officers who use weapons in carrying out their duties will be covered by me. Whoever misguidedly fails in this duty can expect disciplinary action," stated the order of Hermann Göring to the Prussian Police.

On February 22nd, Göring set up an auxiliary police force of 50,000 men, composed mostly of members of the SA and SS. The vulgar, brawling, murderous Nazi storm troopers now had the power of police.

Two days later, they raided Communist headquarters in Berlin. Göring falsely claimed he had uncovered plans for a Communist uprising in the raid. But he actually uncovered the membership list of the Communist Party and intended to arrest every one of the four thousand members.

Göring and Goebbels, with Hitler's approval, then hatched a plan to cause panic by burning the Reichstag building and blaming the Communists. The Reichstag was the building in Berlin where the elected members of the republic met to conduct the daily business of government.

By a weird coincidence, there was also in Berlin a deranged Communist conducting a one-man uprising. An arsonist named Marinus van der Lubbe, 24, from Holland, had been wandering around Berlin for a week attempting to burn government buildings to protest capitalism and start a revolt. On February 27, he decided to burn the Reichstag building.

Carrying incendiary devices, he spent all day lurking around the building, before breaking in around 9 p.m. He took off his shirt, lit it on fire, then went to work using it as his torch.

The exact sequence of events will never be known, but Nazi storm troopers under the direction of Göring were also involved in torching the place. They had befriended the arsonist and may have known or even encouraged him to burn the Reichstag that night. The storm troopers, led by SA leader Karl Ernst, used the underground tunnel that connected Göring's residence with the cellar in the Reichstag. They entered the building, scattered gasoline and incendiaries, then hurried back through the tunnel.

The deep red glow of the burning Reichstag caught the eye of President Hindenburg and Vice-Chancellor Papen who were dining at a club facing the building. Papen put the elderly Hindenburg in his own car and took him to the scene.

Hitler was at Goebbels' apartment having dinner. They rushed to the scene where they met Göring who was already screaming false charges and making threats against the Communists.

At first glance, Hitler described the fire as a beacon from heaven.

"You are now witnessing the beginning of a great epoch in German history...This fire is the beginning," Hitler told a news reporter at the scene.

After viewing the damage, an emergency meeting of government leaders was held. When told of the arrest of the Communist arsonist, Van der Lubbe, Hitler became deliberately enraged.

"The German people have been soft too long. Every Communist official must be shot. All Communist deputies must be hanged this very night. All friends of the Communists must be locked up. And that goes for the Social Democrats and the Reichsbanner as well!"

Hitler left the fire scene and went straight to the offices of his newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, to oversee its coverage of the fire. He stayed up all night with Goebbels putting together a paper full of tales of a Communist plot to violently seize power in Berlin.

At a cabinet meeting held later in the morning, February 28th, Chancellor Hitler demanded an emergency decree to overcome the crisis. He met little resistance from his largely non-Nazi cabinet. That evening, Hitler and Papen went to Hindenburg and the befuddled old man signed the decree "for the Protection of the people and the State."

The Emergency Decree stated: "Restrictions on personal liberty, on the right of free expression of opinion, including freedom of the press; on the rights of assembly and association; and violations of the privacy of postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications and warrants for house searches, orders for confiscations as well as restrictions on property, are also permissible beyond the legal limits otherwise prescribed."

Immediately, there followed the first big Nazi roundup as truckloads of SA and SS roared through the streets bursting in on known Communist hangouts and barging into private homes. Thousands of Communists as well as Social Democrats and liberals were taken away into 'protective custody' to SA barracks where they were beaten and tortured.

"I don't have to worry about justice; my mission is only to destroy and exterminate, nothing more!" Hermann Göring declared on March 3rd, 1933.

Fifty-one anti-Nazis were murdered. The Nazis suppressed all political activity, meetings and publications of non-Nazi parties. The very act of campaigning against the Nazis was in effect made illegal.

"Every bullet which leaves the barrel of a police pistol now is my bullet. If one calls this murder, then I have murdered. I ordered this. I back it up. I assume the responsibility, and I am not afraid to do so," declared Hermann Göring.

Nazi newspapers continued to print false evidence of Communist conspiracies, claiming that only Hitler and the Nazis could prevent a Communist takeover. Joseph Goebbels now had control of the State-run radio and broadcast Nazi propaganda and Hitler's speeches all across the nation.

The Nazis now turned their attention to election day, March 5th.

All of the resources of the government necessary for a big win were placed at the disposal of Joseph Goebbels. The big industrialists who had helped Hitler into power gladly coughed up three million marks. Representatives from Krupp munitions and I. G. Farben were among those reaching into their pockets at Göring's insistence.

"The sacrifice we ask is easier to bear if you realize that the elections will certainly be the last for the next ten years, probably for the next hundred years," Göring told them.

With no money problems and the power of the State behind them, the Nazis campaigned furiously to get Hitler the majority he wanted.

On March 5th, the last free elections were held. But the people denied Hitler his majority, giving the Nazis only 44 percent of the total vote, 17, 277,180. Despite massive propaganda and the brutal crackdown, the other parties held their own. The Center Party got over four million and the Social Democrats over seven million. The Communists lost votes but still got over four million.

The goal of a legally established dictatorship was now within reach. But the lack of the necessary two-thirds majority in the Reichstag was an obstacle. For Hitler and his ruthless inner circle, it was obstacle that was soon to be overcome.

As for Van der Lubbe, the Communist arsonist, he was tried and convicted, then beheaded.

After the elections of March 5, 1933, the Nazis began a systematic takeover of the state governments throughout Germany, ending a centuries-old tradition of local political independence. Armed SA and SS thugs barged into local government offices using the state of emergency decree as a pretext to throw out legitimate office holders and replace them with Nazi Reich commissioners.

Political enemies were arrested by the thousands and put in hastily constructed holding pens. Old army barracks and abandoned factories were used as prisons. Once inside, prisoners were subjected to military style drills and harsh

discipline. They were often beaten and sometimes even tortured to death. This was the very beginning of the Nazi concentration camp system.

At this time, these early concentration camps were loosely organized under the control of the SA and the rival SS. Many were little more than barbed-wire stockades known as 'wild' concentration camps, set up by local Gauleiters and SA leaders.

For Adolf Hitler, the goal of a legally established dictatorship was now within reach. On March 15, 1933, a cabinet meeting was held during which Hitler and Göring discussed how to obstruct what was left of the democratic process to get an Enabling Act passed by the Reichstag. This law would hand over the constitutional functions of the Reichstag to Hitler, including the power to make laws, control the budget and approve treaties with foreign governments.

The emergency decree signed by Hindenburg on February 28th, after the Reichstag fire, made it easy for them to interfere with non-Nazi elected representatives of the people by simply arresting them.

As Adolf Hitler plotted to bring democracy to an end in Germany, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels put together a brilliant public relations display at the official opening of the newly elected Reichstag.

On March 21st, in the Garrison Church at Potsdam, the burial place of Frederick the Great, an elaborate ceremony took place designed to ease public concern over Hitler and his gangster-like new regime.

It was attended by President Hindenburg, foreign diplomats, the General Staff and all the old guard going back to the days of the Kaiser. Dressed in their handsome uniforms sprinkled with medals, they watched a most reverent Adolf Hitler give a speech paying respect to Hindenburg and celebrating the union of old Prussian military traditions and the new Nazi Reich. As a symbol of this, the old Imperial flags would soon add swastikas.

Finishing his speech, Hitler walked over to Hindenburg and respectfully bowed before him while taking hold of the old man's hand. The scene was recorded on film and by press photographers from around the world. This was precisely the impression Hitler and Goebbels wanted to give to the world, all the while plotting to toss aside Hindenburg and the elected Reichstag.

Later that same day, Hindenburg signed two decrees put before him by Hitler. The first offered full pardons to all Nazis currently in prison. The prison doors sprang open and out came an assortment of Nazi thugs and murderers.

The second decree signed by the befuddled old man allowed for the arrest of anyone suspected of maliciously criticizing the government and the Nazi Party.

A third decree signed only by Hitler and Papen allowed for the establishment of special courts to try political offenders. These courts were conducted in the military style of a court-martial without a jury and usually with no counsel for the defence.

On March 23rd, the newly elected Reichstag met in the Kroll Opera House in Berlin to consider passing Hitler's Enabling Act. It was officially called the "Law for Removing the Distress of the People and the Reich." If passed, it would in effect vote democracy out of existence in Germany and establish the legal dictatorship of Adolf Hitler.

Brown-shirted Nazi storm troopers swarmed over the fancy old building in a show of force and as a visible threat. They stood outside, in the hallways and even lined the aisles inside, glaring ominously at anyone who might oppose Hitler's will.

Before the vote, Hitler made a speech in which he pledged to use restraint.

"The government will make use of these powers only insofar as they are essential for carrying out vitally necessary measures...The number of cases in which an internal necessity exists for having recourse to such a law is in itself a limited one," Hitler told the Reichstag.

He also promised an end to unemployment and pledged to promote peace with France, Great Britain and Soviet Russia. But in order to do all this, Hitler said, he first needed the Enabling Act. A two-thirds majority was needed, since the law would actually alter the constitution. Hitler needed 31 non-Nazi votes to pass it. He got those votes from the Catholic Centre Party after making a false promise to restore some basic rights already taken away by decree.

Meanwhile, Nazi storm troopers chanted outside: "Full powers – or else! We want the bill – or fire and murder!!"

But one man arose amid the overwhelming might. Otto Wells, leader of the Social Democrats stood up and spoke quietly to Hitler.

"We German Social Democrats pledge ourselves solemnly in this historic hour to the principles of humanity and justice, of freedom and socialism. No enabling act can give you power to destroy ideas which are eternal and indestructible."

Hitler was enraged and jumped up to respond.

"You are no longer needed! The star of Germany will rise and yours will sink! Your death knell has sounded!"

The vote was taken – 441 for, and only 84, the Social Democrats, against. The Nazis leapt to their feet clapping, stamping and shouting, then broke into the Nazi anthem, the Hörst Wessel song.

Democracy was ended. They had brought down the German Democratic Republic legally. From this day onward, the Reichstag would be just a sounding board, a cheering section for Hitler's pronouncements.

Interestingly, the Nazi Party was now flooded with applications for membership. These latecomers were cynically labelled by old time Nazis as 'March Violets.' In May, the Nazi Party froze membership. Many of those kept out applied to the SA and the SS which were still accepting. However, in early 1934, Heinrich Himmler would throw out 50,000 of those 'March Violets' from the SS.

The Nazi Gleichschaltung now began, a massive coordination of all aspects of life under the swastika and the absolute leadership of Adolf Hitler.

Under Hitler, the State, not the individual, was supreme.

From the moment of birth one existed to serve the State and obey the dictates of the Führer. Those who disagreed were disposed of.

Many agreed. Bureaucrats, industrialists, even intellectual and literary figures, including Gerhart Hauptmann, world renowned dramatist, were coming out in open support of Hitler.

Many disagreed and left the country. A flood of the finest minds, including over two thousand writers, scientists, and people in the arts poured out of Germany and enriched other lands, mostly the United States. Among them – writer Thomas Mann, director Fritz Lang, actress Marlene Dietrich, architect Walter Gropius, musicians Otto Klemperer, Kurt Weill, Richard Tauber, psychologist Sigmund Freud, and Albert Einstein, who was visiting California when Hitler came to power and never returned to Germany.

In Germany, there were now constant Nazi rallies, parades, marches and meetings amid the relentless propaganda of Goebbels and the omnipresent swastika. For those who remained there was an odd mixture of fear and optimism in the air.

Now, for the first time as dictator, Adolf Hitler turned his attention to the driving force which had propelled him into politics in the first place, his hatred of the Jews. It began with a simple boycott on April 1st, 1933, and would end years later in the greatest tragedy in all of human history.

Adolf Hitler Dictator

Once in power, Hitler established an absolute dictatorship. He secured the president's assent for new elections. The Reichstag fire, on the night of February 27, 1933 (apparently the work of a Dutch Communist, Marinus van der Lubbe), provided an excuse for a decree overriding all guarantees of freedom and for an intensified campaign of violence. In these conditions, when the elections were held (March 5), the Nazis polled 43.9 percent of the votes. On March 21 the Reichstag assembled in the Potsdam Garrison Church to demonstrate the unity of National Socialism with the old conservative Germany, represented by Hindenburg. Two days later the Enabling Bill, giving full powers to Hitler, was passed in the Reichstag by the combined votes of Nazi, Nationalist, and Centre party deputies (March 23, 1933). Less than three months later all non-Nazi parties, organizations, and labour unions ceased to exist. The disappearance of the Catholic Centre Party was followed by a German Concordat with the Vatican in July.

Adolf Hitler had no desire to spark a radical revolution. Conservative "ideas" were still necessary if he was to succeed to the presidency and retain the support of the army; moreover, he did not intend to expropriate the leaders of industry, provided they served the interests of the Nazi state. Ernst Röhm, however, was a protagonist of the "continuing revolution"; he was also, as head of the SA, distrusted by the army. Hitler tried first to secure Röhm's support for his policies by persuasion. Hermann Göring and Heinrich Himmler were eager to remove Röhm, but Hitler hesitated until the last moment. Finally, on June 29, 1934, he reached his decision. On the "Night of the Long Knives," Röhm and his lieutenant Edmund Heines were executed without trial, along with Gregor Strasser, Kurt von Schleicher, and others. The army leaders, satisfied at seeing the SA broken up, approved Hitler's actions. When Hindenburg died on August 2, the army leaders, together with Papen, assented to the merging of the chancellorship and the presidency—with which went the supreme command of the armed forces of the *Reich*. Now officers and men took an oath of allegiance to Hitler personally. Economic recovery and a fast reduction in unemployment (coincident with world recovery, but for which Hitler took credit) made the regime increasingly popular, and a combination of success and police terror brought the support of 90 percent of the voters in a plebiscite.

Hitler devoted little attention to the organization and running of the domestic affairs of the Nazi state. Responsible for the broad lines of policy, as well as for the system of terror that upheld the state, he left detailed administration to his subordinates. Each of these exercised arbitrary power in his own sphere; but by deliberately creating offices and organizations with overlapping authority, Hitler effectively prevented any one of these particular realms from ever becoming sufficiently strong to challenge his own absolute authority.

Foreign policy claimed his greater interest. As he had made clear in *Mein Kampf*, the reunion of the German peoples was his overriding ambition. Beyond that, the natural field of expansion lay eastward, in Poland, the Ukraine, and the U.S.S.R.—expansion that would necessarily involve renewal of Germany's historic conflict with the Slavic peoples, who would be subordinate in the new order to the Teutonic master race. He saw fascist Italy as his natural ally in this crusade. Britain was a possible ally, provided it abandon its traditional policy of maintaining the balance of power in Europe and limit itself to its interests overseas. In the west France remained the natural enemy of Germany and must, therefore, be cowed or subdued to make expansion eastward possible.

Before such expansion was possible, it was necessary to remove the restrictions placed on Germany at the end of World War I by the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler used all the arts of propaganda to allay the suspicions of the other powers. He posed as the champion of Europe against the scourge of Bolshevism and insisted that he was a man of peace who wished only to remove the inequalities of the Versailles Treaty. He withdrew from the Disarmament Conference and from the League of Nations (October 1933), and he signed a nonaggression treaty with Poland (January 1934). Every repudiation of the treaty was followed by an offer to negotiate a fresh agreement and insistence on the limited nature of Germany's ambitions. Only once did the Nazis overreach themselves: when Austrian Nazis, with the connivance of German organizations, murdered Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss of Austria and attempted a revolt (July 1934). The attempt failed, and Hitler disclaimed all responsibility. In January 1935 a plebiscite in the Saarland, with a more than 90 percent majority, returned that territory to Germany. In March of the same year, Hitler introduced conscription. Although this action provoked protests from Britain, France, and Italy, the opposition was restrained, and Hitler's peace diplomacy was sufficiently successful to persuade the British to negotiate a naval treaty (June 1935) recognizing Germany's right to a considerable navy. His greatest stroke came in March 1936, when he used the excuse of a pact between France and the Soviet Union to march into the demilitarized Rhineland—a decision that he took against the advice of many generals. Meanwhile the alliance with Italy, foreseen in *Mein Kampf*, rapidly

became a reality as a result of the sanctions imposed by Britain and France against Italy during the Ethiopian war. In October 1936, a Rome–Berlin axis was proclaimed by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini; shortly afterward came the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan; and a year later all three countries joined in a pact. Although on paper France had a number of allies in Europe, while Germany had none, Hitler’s Third Reich had become the principal European power.

In November 1937, at a secret meeting of his military leaders, Hitler outlined his plans for future conquest (beginning with Austria and Czechoslovakia). In January 1938 he dispensed with the services of those who were not wholehearted in their acceptance of Nazi dynamism—Hjalmar Schacht, who was concerned with the German economy; Werner von Fritsch, a representative of the caution of professional soldiers; and Konstantin von Neurath, Hindenburg’s appointment at the foreign office. In February Hitler invited the Austrian chancellor, Kurt von Schuschnigg, to Berchtesgaden and forced him to sign an agreement including Austrian Nazis within the Vienna government. When Schuschnigg attempted to resist, announcing a plebiscite about Austrian independence, Hitler immediately ordered the invasion of Austria by German troops. The enthusiastic reception that Hitler received convinced him to settle the future of Austria by outright annexation (*Anschluss*). He returned in triumph to Vienna, the scene of his youthful humiliations and hardships. No resistance was encountered from Britain and France. Hitler had taken special care to secure the support of Italy; as this was forthcoming he proclaimed his undying gratitude to Mussolini.

In spite of his assurances that *Anschluss* would not affect Germany’s relations with Czechoslovakia, Hitler proceeded at once with his plans against that country. Konrad Henlein, leader of the German minority in Czechoslovakia, was instructed to agitate for impossible demands on the part of the Sudetenland Germans, thereby enabling Hitler to move ahead on the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. Britain’s and France’s willingness to accept the cession of the Sudetenland areas to Germany presented Hitler with the choice between substantial gains by peaceful agreement or by a spectacular war against Czechoslovakia. The intervention by Mussolini and British prime minister Neville Chamberlain appear to have been decisive. Hitler accepted the Munich Agreement on September 30. He also declared that these were his last territorial demands in Europe.

Only a few months later, he proceeded to occupy the rest of Czechoslovakia. On March 15, 1939, he marched into Prague declaring that the rest of “Czechia”

would become a German protectorate. A few days later (March 23) the Lithuanian government was forced to cede Memel (Klaipeda), next to the northern frontier of East Prussia, to Germany.

Immediately Hitler turned on Poland. Confronted by the Polish nation and its leaders, whose resolution to resist him was strengthened by a guarantee from Britain and France, Hitler confirmed his alliance with Italy (the “Pact of Steel,” May 1939). Moreover, on August 23, just within the deadline set for an attack on Poland, he signed a nonaggression pact with Joseph Stalin’s Soviet Union—the greatest diplomatic bombshell in centuries. Hitler still disclaimed any quarrel with Britain, but to no avail; the German invasion of Poland (September 1) was followed two days later by a British and French declaration of war on Germany.

In his foreign policy, Hitler combined opportunism and clever timing. He showed astonishing skill in judging the mood of the democratic leaders and exploiting their weaknesses—in spite of the fact that he had scarcely set foot outside Austria and Germany and spoke no foreign language. Up to this point every move had been successful. Even his anxiety over British and French entry into the war was dispelled by the rapid success of the campaign in Poland. He could, he thought, rely on his talents during the war as he relied on them before.

Germany’s war strategy was assumed by Hitler from the first. When the successful campaign against Poland failed to produce the desired peace accord with Britain, he ordered the army to prepare for an immediate offensive in the west. Bad weather made some of his reluctant generals postpone the western offensive. This in turn led to two major changes in planning. The first was Hitler’s order to forestall an eventual British presence in Norway by occupying that country and Denmark in April 1940. Hitler took a close personal interest in this daring operation. From this time onward his intervention in the detail of military operations grew steadily greater. The second was Hitler’s important adoption of General Erich von Manstein’s plan for an attack through the Ardennes (which began May 10) instead of farther north. This was a brilliant and startling success. The German armies reached the Channel ports (which they had been unable to reach during World War I) in 10 days. Holland surrendered after 4 days and Belgium after 16 days. Hitler held back General Karl von Rundstedt’s tanks south of Dunkirk, thus enabling the British to evacuate most of their army. But the Western campaign as a whole was amazingly successful. On June 10 Italy entered the war on the side of Germany. On June 22 Hitler signed a triumphant armistice with the French on the site of the Armistice of 1918.

Hitler hoped that the British would negotiate an armistice. When this did not happen, he proceeded to plan the invasion of Britain, together with the elimination of British air power. At the same time preparations were begun for the invasion of the Soviet Union, which in Hitler's view was Britain's last hope for a bulwark against German control of the continent. Then Mussolini invaded Greece, where the failures of the Italian armies made it necessary for German forces to come to their aid in the Balkans and North Africa. Hitler's plans were further disrupted by a coup d'état in Yugoslavia in March 1941, overthrowing the government that had made an agreement with Germany. Hitler immediately ordered his armies to subdue Yugoslavia. The campaigns in the Mediterranean theatre, although successful, were limited, compared to the invasion of Russia. Hitler would spare few forces from "Operation Barbarossa," the planned invasion of the Soviet Union.

The attack against the U.S.S.R. was launched on June 22, 1941. The German army advanced swiftly into the Soviet Union, corralling almost three million Russian prisoners, but it failed to destroy its Russian opponent. Hitler became overbearing in his relations with his generals. He disagreed with them about the object of the main attack, and he wasted time and strength by failing to concentrate on a single objective. In December 1941, a few miles before Moscow, a Russian counteroffensive finally made it clear that Hitler's hopes of a single campaign could not be realized.

On December 7, the next day, the Japanese attacked U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor. Hitler's alliance with Japan forced him to declare war on the United States. From this moment on his entire strategy changed. He hoped and tried (like his idol Frederick II the Great) to break what he deemed was the unnatural coalition of his opponents by forcing one or the other of them to make peace. (In the end, the "unnatural" coalition between Stalin and Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt did break up, but too late for Hitler.) He also ordered the reorganization of the German economy on a full wartime basis.

Meanwhile, Himmler prepared the ground for a "new order" in Europe. From 1933 to 1939 and in some instances even during the first years of the war, Hitler's purpose was to expel the Jews from the Greater German Reich. In 1941 this policy changed from expulsion to extermination. The concentration camps created under the Nazi regime were thereby expanded to include extermination camps, such as Auschwitz, and mobile extermination squads, the *Einsatzgruppen*. Although Catholics, Poles, homosexuals, Roma (Gypsies), and the handicapped were targeted for persecution, if not outright extermination, the Jews of Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union were by far the most numerous

among the victims; in German-occupied Europe some 6,000,000 Jews were killed during the war. The sufferings of other peoples were only less when measured in their numbers killed.

At the end of 1942, defeat at El-Alamein and at Stalingrad and the American landing in French North Africa brought the turning point in the war, and Hitler's character and way of life began to change. Directing operations from his headquarters in the east, he refused to visit bombed cities or to allow some withdrawals, and he became increasingly dependent on his physician, Theodor Morell, and on the large amounts and varieties of medicines he ingested. Yet Hitler had not lost the power to react vigorously in the face of misfortune. After the arrest of Mussolini in July 1943 and the Italian armistice, he not only directed the occupation of all important positions held by the Italian army but also ordered the rescue of Mussolini, with the intention that he should head a new fascist government. On the eastern front, however, there was less and less possibility of holding up the advance. Relations with his army commanders grew strained, the more so with the growing importance given to the SS (*Schutzstaffel*) divisions. Meanwhile, the general failure of the U-boat campaign and the bombing of Germany made chances of German victory very unlikely.

Desperate officers and anti-Nazi civilians became ready to remove Hitler and negotiate a peace. Several attempts on Hitler's life were planned in 1943–44; the most nearly successful was made on July 20, 1944, when Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg exploded a bomb at a conference at Hitler's headquarters in East Prussia. But Hitler escaped with superficial injuries, and, with few exceptions, those implicated in the plot were executed. The reduction of the army's independence was now made complete; National Socialist political officers were appointed to all military headquarters.

Thereafter, Hitler was increasingly ill; but he did not relax or lose control, and he continued to exercise an almost hypnotic power over his close subordinates, none of whom wielded any independent authority. The Allied invasion of Normandy (June 6, 1944) marked the beginning of the end. Within a few months, eight European capitals (Rome, Paris, Brussels, Bucharest, Sofia, Athens, Belgrade, Helsinki) were liberated by the Allies or surrendered to them. In December 1944 Hitler moved his headquarters to the west to direct an offensive in the Ardennes aimed at splitting the American and the British armies. When this failed, his hopes for victory became ever more visionary, based on the use of new weapons (German rockets had been fired on London since June 1944) or on the breakup of the Allied Powers.

After January 1945 Hitler never left the Chancellery in Berlin or its bunker, abandoning a plan to lead a final resistance in the south as the Soviet forces closed in on Berlin. In a state of extreme nervous exhaustion, he at last accepted the inevitability of defeat and thereupon prepared to take his own life, leaving to its fate the country over which he had taken absolute command. Before this, two further acts remained. At midnight on April 28–29 he married Eva Braun. Immediately afterward he dictated his political testament, justifying his career and appointing Admiral Karl Dönitz as head of the state and Josef Goebbels as chancellor.

On April 30 he said farewell to Goebbels and the few others remaining, then retired to his suite and shot himself. His wife took poison. In accordance with his instructions, their bodies were burned.

Hitler's success was due to the susceptibility of post-war Germany to his unique talents as a national leader. His rise to power was not inevitable; yet there was no one who equalled his ability to exploit and shape events to his own ends. The power that he wielded was unprecedented, both in its scope and in the technical resources at its command. His ideas and purposes were accepted in whole or in part by millions of people, especially in Germany but also elsewhere. By the time he was defeated, he had destroyed most of what was left of old Europe, while the German people had to face what they would later call "Year Zero," 1945.

Adolf Hitler's Place in history.

At the turn of the 21st century more books had been written about Hitler since his death than about Napoleon during the half-century after the latter's demise. Time and distance from the events of World War II have also affected the historical interpretation of Hitler.

There is a general consensus about his historical *importance* (a term that does not imply a positive judgment). Hitler was principally, and alone, responsible for starting World War II. (This was different from the various responsibilities of rulers and of statesmen who had unleashed World War I). His guilt for the implementation of the Holocaust—that is, the shift of German policy from the expulsion to the extermination of Jews, including eventually Jews of all of Europe and of European Russia, is also obvious. Although there exists no single document of his order to that effect, Hitler's speeches, writings, reports of

discussions with associates and foreign statesmen, and testimony by those who carried out the actions have often been cited as evidence of his role. Many of his most violent statements were recorded by his minions during his “Table Talks” (including the not entirely authentic “Bormann remarks” of February–April 1945). For example, on January 30, 1939, to celebrate the sixth anniversary of his rule, Hitler told the Reichstag: “Today I will once more be a prophet: If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more in a world war, then the result will not be the Bolshevization of the Earth and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.”

In his final will and testament, written just before his suicide in April 1945, he charged the Germans to continue the struggle against the Jews: “Above all, I enjoin the government and the people to uphold the race laws to the limit and to resist mercilessly the poisoner of all nations, international Jewry.”

Despite the immense mass of surviving German documents (and the large volume of his recorded speeches and other statements) Hitler was, as he himself said on a few occasions, a secretive man; and some of his views and decisions differed at times from his public expressions.

For a long time historians and other commentators took it for granted that Hitler’s wishes and ambitions and ideology were clearly (and frighteningly) set forth in *Mein Kampf*. In the first, autobiographical, portion of *Mein Kampf*, however, he twisted the truth in at least three matters: his relationship to his father (which was very different from the filial affection he had set forth in *Mein Kampf*); the conditions of his life in Vienna (which were less marked by abject poverty than he had stated); and the crystallization of his worldview, including his anti-Semitism, during his Vienna years (the evidence now suggests that this crystallization occurred much later, in Munich).

The popular view of Hitler often involves assumptions about his mental health. There has been a tendency to attribute madness to Hitler. Despite the occasional evidences of his furious outbursts, Hitler’s cruelties and his most extreme expressions and orders suggest a cold brutality that was fully conscious. The attribution of madness to Hitler would of course absolve him from his responsibility for his deeds and words (as it also absolves the responsibility of those who are unwilling to think further about him). Extensive researches of his medical records also indicate that, at least until the last 10 months of his life, he was not profoundly handicapped by illness (except for advancing symptoms of

Parkinson disease). What is indisputable is that Hitler had a certain tendency to hypochondria; that he ingested vast amounts of medications during the war; and that as early as 1938 he convinced himself that he would not live long—which may have been a reason for speeding up his timetable for conquest at that time. It should also be noted that Hitler possessed mental abilities that were denied by some of his earlier critics: these included an astonishing memory for certain details and an instinctive insight into his opponents' weaknesses. Again, these talents increase, rather than diminish, his responsibility for the many brutal and evil actions he ordered and committed.

His most amazing achievement was his uniting the great mass of the German (and Austrian) people behind him. Throughout his career his popularity was larger and deeper than the popularity of the National Socialist Party. A great majority of Germans believed in him until the very end. In this respect he stands out among almost all of the dictators of the 19th and 20th centuries, which is especially impressive when we consider that the Germans were among the best-educated peoples in the 20th century. There is no question that the overwhelming majority of the German people supported Hitler, though often only passively. Their trust in him was greater than their trust in the Nazi hierarchy. Of course, what contributed to this support were the economic and social successes, for which he fully took credit, during his early leadership: the virtual disappearance of unemployment, the rising prosperity of the masses, the new social institutions, and the increase of German prestige in the 1930s—achievements unparalleled in the histories of other modern totalitarian dictatorships. In spite of the spiritual and intellectual progenitors of some of his ideas there is no German national leader to whom he may be compared. In sum, he had no forerunners—another difference between him and other dictators.

By 1938 Hitler had made Germany the most powerful and feared country in Europe (and perhaps in the world). He achieved all of this without war (and there are now some historians who state that had he died in 1938 before the mass executions began, he would have gone down in history as the greatest statesman in the history of the German people). In fact, he came very close to winning the war in 1940; but the resistance of Britain (personified by Winston Churchill) thwarted him. Nevertheless, it took the overwhelming, and in many ways unusual, Anglo-American coalition with the Soviet Union to defeat the Third Reich; and there are reasons to believe that neither side would have been able to conquer him alone. At the same time it was his brutality and some of his decisions that led to his destruction, binding the unusual alliance of capitalists and communists, of Churchill and Roosevelt and Stalin together. Hitler thought he was a great statesman, but he did not realize the unconditional

contemptibility of what he had unleashed; he thought that the coalition of his enemies would eventually break up, and then he would be able to settle with one side or the other. In thinking thus he deceived himself, though such wishes and hopes were also current among many Germans until the end.

Open and hidden admirers of Hitler continue to exist (and not only in Germany): some of them because of a malign attraction to the efficacy of evil; others because of their admiration of Hitler's achievements, no matter how transitory or brutal. However, because of the brutalities and the very crimes associated with his name, it is not likely that Hitler's reputation as the incarnation of evil will ever change.

The Führer committed suicide the 30th of April 1945 at 15.30 hrs. He was aged 56.

Adolf Hitler's remains were reburied eight times: The first burial took place on April 30th, 1945 by Führerbunker aides. The Fuhrer, Eva Braun, and his two dogs were buried in the garden of the Imperial Chancellery. A Russian soldier Ivan Churakov found two unidentified corpses in a crater on May 4th. The Russians removed the remains but put them back into the ground on the same day. On May 5th the remains were dug out and moved to a clinic in the town of Buch. The remains were interred for the 4th time in a town of Finov, to which the department of SMERSH was re-deployed. The remains were inhumed for the 5th time on May 17th following data re-examination conducted by General Meshik. As the army headquarters changed locations the remains were laid into the ground two more times. Finally, the caskets containing the remains were laid in the grave in Magdeburg, near the house No36 in Westendstrasse. There Hitler's remains were annihilated on April 5th, 1970. The remains were destroyed by fire, reduced to ashes, mixed with charcoal, and thrown into the river Bideritz.

The End of Adolf Hitler at length

The Death of Adolf Hitler

In April of 1945, Hitler moved into the Führerbunker, located 50 feet below the Chancellery buildings in Berlin. In this underground complex containing nearly thirty rooms on two separate floors, Hitler held daily briefings with his generals amid reports of the unstoppable Soviet advance into Berlin. He issued frantic orders to defend Berlin with armies that were already wiped out or were making a hasty retreat westward to surrender to the Americans.

On April 22, during a three hour military conference in the bunker, Hitler let loose a hysterical, shrieking denunciation of the Army and the 'universal treason, corruption, lies and failures' of all those who had deserted him. The end had come, Hitler exclaimed, his Reich was a failure and now there was nothing left for him to do but stay in Berlin and fight to the very end.

His staff attempted without success to convince him to escape to the mountains around Berchtesgaden and direct remaining troops and thus prolong the Reich. But Hitler told them his decision was final. He even insisted a public announcement be made.

Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels then brought his entire family, including six young children, to live with Hitler in the bunker. Hitler began sorting through his own papers and selected documents to be burned.

Personnel in the bunker were given permission by Hitler to leave. Most did leave and headed south for the area around Berchtesgaden via a convoy of trucks and planes. Only a handful of Hitler's personal staff remained, including his top aide Martin Bormann, the Goebbels family, SS and military aides, two of Hitler's secretaries, and long-time companion Eva Braun.

On April 23, Hitler's friend and Minister of Armaments, Albert Speer, arrived for his final meeting with the Führer. At this meeting Speer bluntly informed Hitler that he had disobeyed the Führer's scorched earth policy and had preserved German factories and industry for the post-war period. Hitler listened in silence and had no particular reaction, much to the surprise of Speer.

That afternoon, Hitler received a surprise telegram from Göring who had already reached safety in Berchtesgaden.

My Führer!

In view of your decision to remain in the fortress of Berlin, do you agree that I take over at once the total leadership of the Reich, with full freedom of action at home and abroad as your deputy, in accordance with your decree of June 29, 1941? If no reply is received by 10 o'clock tonight, I shall take it for granted that you have lost your freedom of action, and shall consider the conditions of your decree as fulfilled, and shall act for the best interests of our country and our people. You know what I feel for you in this gravest hour of my life. Words fail me to express myself. May God protect you, and speed you quickly here in spite of all.

Your loyal
Hermann Göring

An angry Hitler, prompted by Bormann, sent Göring a return message saying he had committed "high treason." Although the penalty for this was death, Göring was to be spared, due to his long years of service, if he would immediately resign all of his offices. Bormann then transmitted an order to the SS near Berchtesgaden to arrest Göring and his staff. Before dawn on April 25, Göring was locked up.

The next day, April 26, Soviet artillery fire made the first direct hits on the Chancellery buildings and grounds directly above the Führerbunker. That evening, a small plane containing female test pilot Hanna Reitsch and Luftwaffe General Ritter von Greim landed in the street near the bunker following a daring flight in which Greim had been wounded in the foot by Soviet ground fire.

Once inside the Führerbunker the wounded Greim was informed by Hitler he was to be Göring's successor, promoted to Field-Marshal in command of the Luftwaffe.

Although a telegram could have accomplished this, Hitler had insisted Greim appear in person to receive his commission. But now, due to his wounded foot, Greim would be bedridden for three days in the bunker.

On the night of April 27, Soviet bombardment of the Chancellery buildings reached its peak with numerous direct hits. Hitler sent frantic telegrams to Keitel demanding Berlin be relieved by (now non-existent) armies.

The final blow came on the 28th when Hitler received word via Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry that British news services were reporting SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler had sought negotiations with the Allies and had even offered to surrender German armies in the west to Eisenhower.

According to eyewitnesses in the bunker, Hitler "raged like a madman" with a ferocity never seen before. Himmler had been with Hitler since the beginning and had earned the nickname "der treue Heinrich" (faithful Heinrich) through years of fanatical, murderous service to his Führer, who now ordered Himmler's arrest.

As an act of immediate revenge, Hitler ordered Himmler's personal representative in the bunker, SS Lt. Gen. Hermann Fegelein, who was also the husband of Eva Braun's sister, to be taken up to the Chancellery garden above the bunker and shot.

Now, with the desertions of Göring and Himmler and the Soviets advancing deep into Berlin, Hitler began preparing for his own death.

Late in the evening of the 28th he dictated his last will and a two-part political testament (shown below) in which he expressed many of the same sentiments he had stated in *Mein Kampf* back in 1923-24. He essentially blamed the Jews for everything, including the Second World War. He also made a reference to his 1939 threat against the Jews along with a veiled reference to the subsequent gas chambers...

"I further left no one in doubt that this time not only would millions of children of Europe's Aryan people die of hunger, not only would millions of grown men suffer death, and not only hundreds of thousands of women and children be burnt and bombed to death in the towns, without the real criminal having to atone for this guilt, even if by more humane means."

Just before midnight, he married Eva Braun in a brief civil ceremony. There was then a celebration of the marriage in his private suite. Champagne was brought out and those left in the bunker listened to Hitler reminisce about better days gone by. Hitler concluded, however, that death would be a release for him after the recent betrayal of his oldest friends and supporters.

By the afternoon of April 29, Soviet ground forces were about a mile away from the Führerbunker. Inside the bunker the last news from the outside world told of the downfall and death of Mussolini, who had been captured by Italian partisans, executed, then hung upside down and thrown into the gutter.

Hitler now readied himself for the end by first having his poison tested on his favorite dog, Blondi. He also handed poison capsules to his female secretaries while apologizing that he did not have better parting gifts to give them. The capsules were for them to use if the Soviets stormed the bunker.

About 2:30 in the morning of April 30, Hitler came out of his private quarters into a dining area for a farewell with staff members. With glazed eyes, he shook hands in silence, then retired back into his quarters. Following Hitler's departure, those officers and staff members mulled over the significance of what they had just witnessed. The tremendous tension of preceding days seemed to suddenly evaporate with the realization that the end of Hitler was near. A lighthearted mood surfaced, followed by spontaneous displays of merry-making even including dancing.

At noon, Hitler attended his last military situation conference and was told the Soviets were just a block away. At 2 p.m., Hitler sat down and had his last meal,

a vegetarian lunch. His chauffeur was then ordered to deliver 200 liters of gasoline to the Chancellery garden.

Hitler and his wife Eva then bid a final farewell to Bormann, Goebbels, Generals Krebs and Burgdorf, other remaining military aides and staff members.

Hitler and his wife then went back into their private quarters while Bormann and Goebbels remained quietly nearby. Several moments later a gunshot was heard. After waiting a few moments, at 3:30 p.m., Bormann and Goebbels entered and found the body of Hitler sprawled on the sofa, dripping with blood from a gunshot to his right temple. Eva Braun had died from swallowing poison.

As Soviet shells exploded nearby, the bodies were carried up to the Chancellery garden, doused with gasoline and burned while Bormann and Goebbels stood by and gave a final Nazi salute. Over the next three hours the bodies were repeatedly doused with gasoline. The charred remains were then swept into a canvas, placed into a shell crater and buried.

Back inside the bunker, with the Führer now gone, everyone began smoking, a practice Hitler had generally forbidden in his presence. They next began collectively plotting daring (but fruitless) escapes out of Berlin to avoid capture by the Soviets.

On the following day, May 1, Goebbels and his wife proceeded to poison their six young children in the bunker, then went up into the Chancellery garden where they were shot in the back of the head at their request by an SS man. Their bodies were then burned, but were only partially destroyed and were not buried. Their macabre remains were discovered by the Soviets the next day and filmed, the charred body of Goebbels becoming an often seen image symbolizing of the legacy of Hitler's Reich.

The Last Will of Adolf Hitler

As I did not consider that I could take responsibility, during the years of struggle, of contracting a marriage, I have now decided, before the closing of my earthly career, to take as my wife that girl who, after many years of faithful friendship, entered, of her own free will, the practically besieged town in order to share her destiny with me. At her own desire she goes as my wife with me into death. It will compensate us for what we both lost through my work in the service of my people.

What I possess belongs - in so far as it has any value - to the Party. Should this no longer exist, to the State; should the State also be destroyed, no further decision of mine is necessary.

My paintings, in the collections which I have bought in the course of years, have never been collected for private purposes, but only for the extension of a gallery in my home town of Linz on Donau.

It is my most sincere wish that this bequest may be duly executed.

I nominate as my Executor my most faithful Party comrade,

Martin Bormann

He is given full legal authority to make all decisions.

He is permitted to take out everything that has a sentimental value or is necessary for the maintenance of a modest simple life, for my brothers and sisters, also above all for the mother of my wife and my faithful co-workers who are well known to him, principally my old Secretaries Frau Winter etc. who have for many years aided me by their work.

I myself and my wife - in order to escape the disgrace of deposition or capitulation - choose death. It is our wish to be burnt immediately on the spot where I have carried out the greatest part of my daily work in the course of a twelve years' service to my people.

*Given in Berlin, 29th April 1945, 4:00 A.M.
[Signed] A. Hitler*

[Witnesses]

Dr. Joseph Goebbels

Martin Bormann

Colonel Nicholas von Below

First Part of the Political Testament

More than thirty years have now passed since I in 1914 made my modest contribution as a volunteer in the First World War that was forced upon the Reich.

In these three decades I have been actuated solely by love and loyalty to my people in all my thoughts, acts, and life. They gave me the strength to make the most difficult decisions which have ever confronted mortal man. I have spent my time, my working strength, and my health in these three decades.

It is untrue that I or anyone else in Germany wanted the war in 1939. It was desired and instigated exclusively by those international statesmen who were either of Jewish descent or worked for Jewish interests. I have made too many offers for the control and limitation of armaments, which posterity will not for all time be able to disregard for the responsibility for the outbreak of this war to be laid on me. I have further never wished that after the first fatal world war a second against England, or even against America, should break out. Centuries will pass away, but out of the ruins of our towns and monuments the hatred against those finally responsible whom we have to thank for everything, International Jewry and its helpers, will grow.

Three days before the outbreak of the German-Polish war I again proposed to the British ambassador in Berlin a solution to the German-Polish problem - similar to that in the case of the Saar district, under international control. This offer also cannot be denied. It was only rejected because the leading circles in English politics wanted the war, partly on account of the business hoped for and partly under influence of propaganda organized by International Jewry.

I have also made it quite plain that, if the nations of Europe are again to be regarded as mere shares to be bought and sold by these international conspirators in money and finance, then that race, Jewry, which is the real criminal of this murderous struggle, will be saddled with the responsibility. I further left no one in doubt that this time not only would millions of children of Europe's Aryan people die of hunger, not only would millions of grown men suffer death, and not only hundreds of thousands of women and children be burnt and bombed to death in the towns, without the real criminal having to atone for this guilt, even if by more humane means.

After six years of war, which in spite of all setbacks, will go down one day in history as the most glorious and valiant demonstration of a nation's life purpose, I cannot forsake the city which is the capital of this Reich. As our forces are too

small to make any further stand against the enemy attack at this place and since our resistance is gradually being weakened by men who are as deluded as they are lacking in initiative, I should like, by remaining in this town, to share my fate with those, the millions of others, who have also taken upon themselves to do so. Moreover I do not wish to fall into the hands of an enemy who requires a new spectacle organized by the Jews for the amusement of their hysterical masses.

I have decided therefore to remain in Berlin and there of my own free will to choose death at the moment when I believe the position of the Führer and Chancellor itself can no longer be held.

I die with a joyful heart, aware of the immeasurable deeds and achievements of our soldiers at the front, our women at home, the achievements of our farmers and workers and the work, unique in history, of our youth who bear my name.

That from the bottom of my heart I express my thanks to you all, is just as self-evident as my wish that you should, because of that, on no account give up the struggle, but rather continue it against the enemies of the Fatherland, no matter where, true to the creed of a great Clausewitz. From the sacrifice of our soldiers and from my own unity with them unto death, will in any case spring up in the history of Germany, the seed of a radiant renaissance of the National Socialist movement and thus of the realization of a true community of nations.

Many of the most courageous men and women have decided to unite their lives with mine until the very last. I have begged and finally ordered them not to do this, but to take part in the further battle of the Nation. I beg the heads of the Armies, the Navy and the Air Force to strengthen by all possible means the spirit of resistance of our soldiers in the National Socialist sense, with special reference to the fact that also I myself, as founder and creator of this movement, have preferred death to cowardly abdication or even capitulation.

May it, at some future time, become part of the code of honor of German Army officers - as is already the case in our Navy - that the surrender of a district or of a town is impossible, and that above all commanders must march ahead as shining examples, faithfully fulfilling their duty unto death.

Second Part of the Political Testament

Before my death I expel the former Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring from the party and deprive him of all rights which he may enjoy by virtue of the decree of June 29th, 1941; and also by virtue of my statement in the Reichstag on September 1st, 1939, I appoint in his place Grossadmiral Dönitz, President of the Reich and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

Before my death I expel the former Reichsführer-SS and Minister of the Interior, Heinrich Himmler, from the party and from all offices of State. In his stead I appoint Gauleiter Karl Hanke as Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police, and Gauleiter Paul Giesler as Reich Minister of the Interior.

Göring and Himmler, quite apart from their disloyalty to my person, have done immeasurable harm to the country and the whole nation by secret negotiations with the enemy, which they have conducted without my knowledge and against my wishes, and by illegally attempting to seize power in the State for themselves...[Hitler then names the members of the new government].

Although a number of men, such as Martin Bormann, Dr. Goebbels, etc., together with their wives, have joined me of their own free will and did not wish to leave the capital of the Reich under any circumstances, but were willing to perish with me here, I must nevertheless ask them to obey my request, and in this case set the interests of the nation above their own feelings. By their work and loyalty as comrades they will be just as close to me after death, as I hope that my spirit will linger among them and always go with them. Let them be hard but never unjust, but above all let them never allow fear to influence their actions, and set the honour of the nation above everything in the world. Finally, let them be conscious of the fact that our task, that of continuing the building of a National Socialist State, represents the work of the coming centuries, which places every single person under an obligation always to serve the common interest and to subordinate his own advantage to this end. I demand of all Germans, all National Socialists, men, women and all the men of the Armed Forces, that they be faithful and obedient unto death to the new government and its President.

Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, International Jewry.

Given in Berlin, this 29th day of April 1945, 4:00 A.M.

[Witnesses]

Dr. Joseph Goebbels Wilhelm Burgdorf
Martin Bormann Hans Krebs

Epilogue

Whatever lessons we can take from Adolf Hitler's life, aims and work, we cannot deny, and I will never deny, the holocaust of so many innocent victims Jews and others even the White. The holocaust did take place, and should have never happened. Even if one considers Adolf Hitler as a archetypal god, he should never have allowed the holocaust, murdering twenty-five million.

Adolf Hitler announced at many occasions the "annihilation of the Jews" living in the territory under his control. In his mind, murdering millions of Jews could only be accomplished under the confusion of war - from the beginning he was planning a war that would engulf Europe. World War Two caused the greatest loss of life and material destruction of any war in history, killing twenty-five million military personnel and thirty million civilians.

Approximately eleven million people were killed because of Hitler's genocidal policy and his Nazi Regime led to the annihilation of more than six million Jews during the Holocaust. The Third Reich would survive him for one week - the nightmare he had unleashed was over.

The Holocaust was the systematic annihilation of six million Jews during the Nazi genocide - in 1933 nine million Jews lived in the 21 countries of Europe that would be occupied by Nazi Germany during World War 2. By 1945 two out of every three European Jews had been killed.

The number of children killed by the Nazis is not fathomable and full statistics for the tragic fate of the children will never be known. Estimates range as high as 1.5 million murdered children during the Holocaust. This figure includes more than 1.2 million Jewish children, tens of thousands of Gypsy children and thousands of institutionalized handicapped children.

Plucked from their homes and stripped of their childhoods, the children had witnessed the murder of parents, siblings, and relatives. They faced starvation, illness and brutal labour, until they were consigned to the gas chambers.

Dachau was the first concentration camp established in Nazi Germany - the camp was opened on March 22, 1933. The first inmates were primarily political prisoners, Social Democrats, Communists, trade unionists, habitual criminals, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses.

KZ Dachau served as a prototype and model for the other Nazi concentration camps that followed. Its basic organization, camp layout as well as the plan for the buildings were developed by Theodor Eicke and were applied to all later camps. In total, over 200,000 prisoners from more than 30 countries were housed in KZ Dachau, more than 25,000 prisoners are believed to have died in the camp and almost another 10,000 in its subcamps.

In 1933 approximately nine million Jews lived in the countries of Europe that would be occupied by Germany during the war. By 1945 two out of every three European Jews had been killed by the SS Men. The Holocaust was the systematic annihilation of six million Jews.

The number of children killed during the Holocaust is not fathomable and full statistics for the tragic fate of children who died will never be known. Estimates range as high as 1.5 million murdered children. This figure includes more than 1.2 million Jewish children, tens of thousands of Gypsy children and thousands of institutionalized children.

Adolf Hitler surrounded himself with a small clique of fanatical, ruthless henchmen - a violent group of outsiders who rose to power in the Third Reich and established political and economic institutions of legitimized terror.

Hitler's henchmen were found to be quite psychologically normal. They were men of fine standing, husbands who morning and night kissed their wives, fathers who tucked their children into bed.

But they were men often seen as the very personifications of evil. Inhuman acts were an everyday occurrence - killings, mass gassing of men, women and children, brutalities, cruelties, tortures, atrocities, medical experiments ..

The Nazi doctors would torture Jewish children, Gypsy children and many others. *Patients* were put into pressure chambers, tested with drugs, castrated, frozen to death, and exposed to various other traumas.

At Auschwitz Josef Mengele, *The Angel Of Death*, did a number of twin studies, and these twins were usually murdered after the experiment was over and their bodies dissected.

Adolf Hitler, murderer of millions, master of destruction and organized insanity, announced at many occasions the "annihilation of the Jews" living in the territory under his control. His Nazi Regime led to Holocaust - the systematic annihilation of six million Jews during World War 2. In 1933 approximately nine million Jews lived in the 21 countries of Europe that would be occupied by Germany during the war. By 1945 two out of every three European Jews had been killed. The European Jews were the primary victims of the Holocaust.

The number of children killed during the Holocaust is not fathomable and full statistics for the tragic fate of children who died will never be known. Some estimates range as high as 1.5 million murdered children. This figure includes more than 1.2 million Jewish children, tens of thousands of Gypsy children and thousands of institutionalized handicapped children who were murdered under Nazi rule in Germany and occupied Europe.

But the Jews were not the only group singled out for persecution by Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime. As many as one-half million Gypsies, at least 250,000 mentally or physically disabled persons, and more than three million Soviet prisoners-of-war also fell victim to Nazi genocide.

Homosexuals, Social Democrats, Communists, partisans, trade unionists, Polish intelligentsia and other *undesirables* were also victims of the hate and aggression carried out by the Nazis.

The death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau became the killing centre where the largest numbers of European Jews were killed. After an experimental gassing there in September 1941 of 850 malnourished and ill prisoners, mass murder became a daily routine. By mid 1942, mass gassing of Jews using Zyklon-B began at Auschwitz, where extermination was conducted on an industrial scale with some estimates running as high as three million persons eventually killed through gassing, starvation, disease, shooting, and burning.

Timeline of World War II in Europe

1918

November 11 - World War I ends with German defeat.

1919

April 28 - League of Nations founded.

June 28 - Signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

1921

July 29 - Adolf Hitler becomes leader of National Socialist (Nazi) Party.

1923

November 8/9 - Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch.

1925

July 18 - Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" published.

1926

September 8 - Germany admitted to League of Nations.

1929

October 29 - Stock Market on Wall Street crashes.

1930

September 14 - Germans elect Nazis making them the 2nd largest political party in Germany.

1932

November 8 - Franklin Roosevelt elected President of the United States.

1933

January 30 - Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

February 27 - The German Reichstag burns.

March 12 - First concentration camp opened at Oranienburg outside Berlin.

March 23 - Enabling Act gives Hitler dictatorial power.

April 1 - Nazi boycott of Jewish owned shops.

May 10 - Nazis burn books in Germany.

In June - Nazis open Dachau concentration camp.

July 14 - Nazi Party declared Germany's only political party.

October 14 - Germany quits the League of Nations.

1934

June 30 - The Nazi "Night of the Long Knives."

July 25 - Nazis murder Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss.

August 2 - German President Hindenburg dies.

August 19 - Adolf Hitler becomes Führer of Germany.

1935

March 16 - Hitler violates the Treaty of Versailles by introducing military conscription.

September 15 - German Jews stripped of rights by Nuremberg Race Laws.

1936

February 10 - The German Gestapo is placed above the law.

March 7 - German troops occupy the Rhineland.

May 9 - Mussolini's Italian forces take Ethiopia.

July 18 - Civil war erupts in Spain.

August 1 - Olympic games begin in Berlin.

October 1 - Franco declared head of Spanish State.

1937

June 11 - Soviet leader Josef Stalin begins a purge of Red Army generals.

November 5 - Hitler reveals war plans during Hossbach Conference.

1938

March 12/13 - Germany announces 'Anschluss' (union) with Austria.

August 12 - German military mobilizes.

September 30 - British Prime Minister Chamberlain appeases Hitler at Munich.

October 15 - German troops occupy the Sudetenland; Czech government resigns.

November 9/10 - Kristallnacht - The Night of Broken Glass.

1939

January 30, 1939 - Hitler threatens Jews during Reichstag speech.

March 15/16 - Nazis take Czechoslovakia.

March 28, 1939 - Spanish Civil war ends.

May 22, 1939 - Nazis sign 'Pact of Steel' with Italy.

August 23, 1939 - Nazis and Soviets sign Pact.

August 25, 1939 - Britain and Poland sign a Mutual Assistance Treaty.

August 31, 1939 - British fleet mobilizes; Civilian evacuations begin from London.

September 1, 1939 - Nazis invade Poland.

September 3, 1939 - Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand declare war on Germany.

September 4, 1939 - British Royal Air Force attacks the German Navy.

September 5, 1939 - United States proclaims its neutrality; German troops cross the Vistula River in Poland.

September 10, 1939 - Canada declares war on Germany; Battle of the Atlantic begins.

September 17, 1939 - Soviets invade Poland.

September 27, 1939 - Warsaw surrenders to Nazis; Reinhard Heydrich becomes the leader of new Reich Main Security Office (RSHA).

September 29, 1939 - Nazis and Soviets divide up Poland.

In October - Nazis begin euthanasia on sick and disabled in Germany.

November 8, 1939 - Assassination attempt on Hitler fails.

November 30, 1939 - Soviets attack Finland.

December 14, 1939 - Soviet Union expelled from the League of Nations.

1940

January 8, 1940 - Rationing begins in Britain.

March 12, 1940 - Finland signs a peace treaty with Soviets.

March 16, 1940 - Germans bomb Scapa Flow naval base near Scotland.

April 9, 1940 - Nazis invade Denmark and Norway.

May 10, 1940 - Nazis invade France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; Winston Churchill becomes British Prime Minister.

May 15, 1940 - Holland surrenders to the Nazis.

May 26, 1940 - Evacuation of Allied troops from Dunkirk begins.

May 28, 1940 - Belgium surrenders to the Nazis.

June 3, 1940 - Germans bomb Paris; Dunkirk evacuation ends.

June 10, 1940 - Norway surrenders to the Nazis; Italy declares war on Britain and France.

June 14, 1940 - Germans enter Paris.

June 16, 1940 - Marshal Pétain becomes French Prime Minister.

June 18, 1940 - Hitler and Mussolini meet in Munich; Soviets begin occupation of the Baltic States.

June 22, 1940 - France signs an armistice with Nazi Germany.

June 23, 1940 - Hitler tours Paris.

June 28, 1940 - Britain recognizes General Charles de Gaulle as the Free French leader.

July 1, 1940 - German U-boats attack merchant ships in the Atlantic.

July 5, 1940 - French Vichy government breaks off relations with Britain.

July 10, 1940 - Battle of Britain begins.

July 23, 1940 - Soviets take Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

August 3-19 - Italians occupy British Somaliland in East Africa.

August 13, 1940 - German bombing offensive against airfields and factories in England.

August 15, 1940 - Air battles and daylight raids over Britain.

August 17, 1940 - Hitler declares a blockade of the British Isles.

August 23/24 - First German air raids on Central London.

August 25/26 - First British air raid on Berlin.

September 3, 1940 - Hitler plans Operation Sea Lion (the invasion of Britain).

September 7, 1940 - German Blitz against Britain begins.

September 13, 1940 - Italians invade Egypt.

September 15, 1940 - Massive German air raids on London, Southampton, Bristol, Cardiff, Liverpool and Manchester.

September 16, 1940 - United States military conscription bill passed.

September 27, 1940 - Tripartite (Axis) Pact signed by Germany, Italy and Japan.

October 7, 1940 - German troops enter Romania.

October 12, 1940 - Germans postpone Operation Sea Lion until Spring of 1941.

October 28, 1940 - Italy invades Greece.

November 5, 1940 - Roosevelt re-elected as U.S. president.

November 10/11 - Torpedo bomber raid cripples the Italian fleet at Taranto, Italy.

November 14/15 - Germans bomb Coventry, England.

November 20, 1940 - Hungary joins the Axis Powers.

November 22, 1940 - Greeks defeat the Italian 9th Army.

November 23, 1940 - Romania joins the Axis Powers.

December 9/10 - British begin a western desert offensive in North Africa against the Italians.

December 29/30 - Massive German air raid on London.

1941

January 22, 1941 - Tobruk in North Africa falls to the British and Australians.

February 11, 1941 - British forces advance into Italian Somaliland in East Africa.

February 12, 1941 - German General Erwin Rommel arrives in Tripoli, North Africa.

February 14, 1941 - First units of German 'Afrika Korps' arrive in North Africa.

March 7, 1941 - British forces arrive in Greece.

March 11, 1941 - President Roosevelt signs the Lend-Lease Act.

March 27, 1941 - A coup in Yugoslavia overthrows the pro-Axis government.

April 3, 1941 - Pro-Axis regime set up in Iraq.

April 6, 1941 - Nazis invade Greece and Yugoslavia.

April 14, 1941 - Rommel attacks Tobruk.

April 17, 1941 - Yugoslavia surrenders to the Nazis.

April 27, 1941 - Greece surrenders to the Nazis.

May 1, 1941 - German attack on Tobruk is repulsed.

May 10, 1941 - Deputy Führer Rudolph Hess flies to Scotland.

See also: Biography of Rudolph Hess (another publication)

May 10/11 - Heavy German bombing of London; British bomb Hamburg.

May 15, 1941 - Operation Brevity begins (the British counter-attack in Egypt).

May 24, 1941 - Sinking of the British ship Hood by the Bismarck.

May 27, 1941 - Sinking of the Bismarck by the British Navy.

June 4, 1941 - Pro-Allied government installed in Iraq.

June 8, 1941 - Allies invade Syria and Lebanon.

June 14, 1941 - United States freezes German and Italian assets in America.

June 22, 1941 - Germany attacks Soviet Union as Operation Barbarossa begins.

In June - Nazi SS-Einsatzgruppen begin mass murder.

June 28, 1941 - Germans capture Minsk.

July 3, 1941 - Stalin calls for a scorched earth policy.

July 10, 1941 - Germans cross the River Dnieper in the Ukraine.

July 12, 1941 - Mutual Assistance agreement between British and Soviets.

July 14, 1941 - British occupy Syria.

July 26, 1941 - Roosevelt freezes Japanese assets in United States and suspends relations.

July 31, 1941 - Göring instructs Heydrich to prepare for the Final Solution.

August 1, 1941 - United States announces an oil embargo against aggressor states.

August 14, 1941 - Roosevelt and Churchill announce the Atlantic Charter.

August 20, 1941 - Nazi siege of Leningrad begins.

September 1, 1941 - Nazis order Jews to wear yellow stars.

September 3, 1941 - First experimental use of gas chambers at Auschwitz.

September 19, 1941 - Nazis take Kiev.

September 29, 1941 - Nazis murder 33,771 Jews at Kiev.

October 2, 1941 - Operation Typhoon begins (German advance on Moscow).

October 16, 1941 - Germans take Odessa.

October 24, 1941 - Germans take Kharkov.

October 30, 1941 - Germans reach Sevastopol.

November 13, 1941 - British aircraft carrier Ark Royal is sunk off Gibraltar by a U-boat.

November 20, 1941 - Germans take Rostov.

November 27, 1941 - Soviet troops retake Rostov.

December 5, 1941 - German attack on Moscow is abandoned.

December 6, 1941 - Soviet Army launches a major counter-offensive around Moscow.

December 7, 1941 - Japanese bomb Pearl Harbour; Hitler issues the Night and Fog decree.

December 8, 1941 - United States and Britain declare war on Japan.

December 11, 1941 - Hitler declares war on the United States.

December 16, 1941 - Rommel begins a retreat to El Agheila in North Africa.

December 19, 1941 - Hitler takes complete control of the German Army.

1942

January 1, 1942 - Declaration of the United Nations signed by 26 Allied nations.

January 13, 1942 - Germans begin a U-boat offensive along east coast of USA.

January 20, 1942 - SS Leader Heydrich holds the Wannsee Conference to coordinate the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question."

January 21, 1942 - Rommel's counter-offensive from El Agheila begins.

January 26, 1942 - First American forces arrive in Great Britain.

In April - Japanese-Americans sent to relocation centres.

April 23, 1942 - German air raids begin against cathedral cities in Britain.

May 8, 1942 - German summer offensive begins in the Crimea.

May 26, 1942 - Rommel begins an offensive against the Gazala Line.

May 27, 1942 - SS Leader Heydrich attacked in Prague.

May 30, 1942 - First thousand-bomber British air raid (against Cologne).

In June - Mass murder of Jews by gassing begins at Auschwitz.

June 4, 1942 - Heydrich dies of wounds.

June 5, 1942 - Germans besiege Sevastopol.

June 10, 1942 - Nazis liquidate Lidice in reprisal for Heydrich's assassination.

June 21, 1942 - Rommel captures Tobruk.

June 25, 1942 - General Dwight D. Eisenhower arrives in London.

June 30, 1942 - Rommel reaches El Alamein near Cairo, Egypt.

July 1-30 - First Battle of El Alamein.

July 3, 1942 - Germans take Sevastopol.

July 5, 1942 - Soviet resistance in the Crimea ends.

July 9, 1942 - Germans begin a drive toward Stalingrad in the USSR.

July 22, 1942 - First deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto to concentration camps; Treblinka extermination camp opened.

August 7, 1942 - British General Bernard Montgomery takes command of Eighth Army in North Africa.

August 12, 1942 - Stalin and Churchill meet in Moscow.

August 17, 1942 - First all-American air attack in Europe.

August 23, 1942 - Massive German air raid on Stalingrad.

September 2, 1942 - Rommel driven back by Montgomery in the Battle of Alam Halfa.

September 13, 1942 - Battle of Stalingrad begins.

October 5, 1942 - A German eyewitness observes SS mass murder.

October 18, 1942 - Hitler orders the execution of all captured British commandos.

November 1, 1942 - Operation Supercharge (Allies break Axis lines at El Alamein).

November 8, 1942 - Operation Torch begins (U.S. invasion of North Africa).

November 11, 1942 - Germans and Italians invade unoccupied Vichy France.

November 19, 1942 - Soviet counter-offensive at Stalingrad begins.

December 2, 1942 - Professor Enrico Fermi sets up an atomic reactor in Chicago.

December 13, 1942 - Rommel withdraws from El Agheila.

December 16, 1942 - Soviets defeat Italian troops on the River Don in the USSR.

December 17, 1942 - British Foreign Secretary Eden tells the British House of Commons of mass executions of Jews by Nazis; U.S. declares those crimes will be avenged.

December 31, 1942 - Battle of the Barents Sea between German and British ships.

1943

January 2/3 - Germans begin a withdrawal from the Caucasus.

January 10, 1943 - Soviets begin an offensive against the Germans in Stalingrad.

January 14-24 - Casablanca conference between Churchill and Roosevelt. During the conference, Roosevelt announces the war can end only with "unconditional German surrender."

January 23, 1943 - Montgomery's Eighth Army takes Tripoli.

January 27, 1943 - First bombing raid by Americans on Germany (at Wilhelmshaven).

February 2, 1943 - Germans surrender at Stalingrad in the first big defeat of Hitler's armies.

February 8, 1943 - Soviet troops take Kursk.

February 14-25 - Battle of Kasserine Pass between the U.S. 1st Armored Division and German Panzers in North Africa.

February 16, 1943 - Soviets re-take Kharkov.

February 18, 1943 - Nazis arrest White Rose resistance leaders in Munich.

March 2, 1943 - Germans begin a withdrawal from Tunisia, Africa.

March 15, 1943 - Germans re-capture Kharkov.

March 16-20 - Battle of Atlantic climaxes with 27 merchant ships sunk by German U-boats.

March 20-28 - Montgomery's Eighth Army breaks through the Mareth Line in Tunisia.

April 6/7 - Axis forces in Tunisia begin a withdrawal toward Enfidaville as American and British forces link.

April 19, 1943 - Waffen-SS attacks Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto.

May 7, 1943 - Allies take Tunisia.

May 13, 1943 - German and Italian troops surrender in North Africa.

May 16, 1943 - Jewish resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto ends.

May 16/17 - British air raid on the Ruhr.

May 22, 1943 - Dönitz suspends U-boat operations in the North Atlantic.

June 10, 1943 - 'Pointblank' directive to improve Allied bombing strategy issued.

June 11, 1943 - Himmler orders the liquidation of all Jewish ghettos in Poland.

July 5, 1943 - Germans begin their last offensive against Kursk.

July 9/10 - Allies land in Sicily.

July 19, 1943 - Allies bomb Rome.

July 22, 1943 - Americans capture Palermo, Sicily.

July 24, 1943 - British bombing raid on Hamburg.

July 25/26 - Mussolini arrested and the Italian Fascist government falls; Marshal Pietro Badoglio takes over and negotiates with Allies.

July 27/28 - Allied air raid causes a firestorm in Hamburg.

August 12-17 - Germans evacuate Sicily.

August 17, 1943 - American daylight air raids on Regensburg and Schweinfurt in Germany; Allies reach Messina, Sicily.

August 23, 1943 - Soviet troops recapture Kharkov.

September 8, 1943 - Italian surrender to Allies is announced.

September 9, 1943 - Allied landings at Salerno and Taranto.

September 11, 1943 - Germans occupy Rome.

September 12, 1943 - Germans rescue Mussolini.

September 23, 1943 - Mussolini re-establishes a Fascist government.

October 1, 1943 - Allies enter Naples, Italy.

October 4, 1943 - SS-Reichsführer Himmler gives speech at Posen.

October 13, 1943 - Italy declares war on Germany; Second American air raid on Schweinfurt.

November 6, 1943 - Russians recapture Kiev in the Ukraine.

November 18, 1943 - Large British air raid on Berlin.

November 28, 1943 - Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin meet at Teheran.

December 24-26 - Soviets launch offensives on the Ukrainian front.

1944

January 6, 1944 - Soviet troops advance into Poland.

January 17, 1944 - First attack toward Cassino, Italy.

January 22, 1944 - Allies land at Anzio in Italy.

January 27, 1944 - Leningrad relieved after a 900-day siege.

February 15-18 - Allies bomb the monastery at Monte Cassino.

February 16, 1944 - Germans counter-attack against the Anzio beachhead.

March 4, 1944 - Soviet troops begin an offensive on the Belorussian front; First major daylight bombing raid on Berlin by the Allies.

March 15, 1944 - Second Allied attempt to capture Monte Cassino begins.

March 18, 1944 - British drop 3000 tons of bombs during an air raid on Hamburg, Germany.

April 8, 1944 - Soviet troops begin an offensive to liberate Crimea.

May 9, 1944 - Soviet troops recapture Sevastopol.

May 11, 1944 - Allies attack the Gustav Line south of Rome.

May 12, 1944 - Germans surrender in the Crimea.

May 15, 1944 - Germans withdraw to the Adolf Hitler Line.

May 25, 1944 - Germans retreat from Anzio.

June 5, 1944 - Allies enter Rome.

June 6, 1944 - D-Day landings on the northern coast of France.

June 9, 1944 - Soviet offensive against the Finnish front begins.

June 10, 1944 - Nazis liquidate the town of Oradour-sur-Glane in France.

June 13, 1944 - First German V-1 rocket attack on Britain.

June 22, 1944 - Operation Bagration begins (the Soviet summer offensive).

June 27, 1944 - U.S. troops liberate Cherbourg, France.

July 3, 1944 - 'Battle of the Hedgerows' in Normandy; Soviets capture Minsk.

July 9, 1944 - British and Canadian troops capture Caen, France.

July 18, 1944 - U.S. troops reach St. Lô, France.

July 20, 1944 - Assassination attempt by German Army officers against Hitler fails.

July 24, 1944 - Soviet troops liberate first concentration camp at Majdanek.

July 25-30 - Operation Cobra (U.S. troops break out west of St. Lô).

July 28, 1944 - Soviet troops take Brest-Litovsk. U.S. troops take Coutances.

August 1, 1944 - Polish Home Army uprising against Nazis in Warsaw begins; U.S. troops reach Avranches.

August 4, 1944 - Anne Frank and family arrested by the Gestapo in Amsterdam, Holland.

August 7, 1944 - Germans begin a major counter-attack toward Avranches.

August 15, 1944 - Operation Dragoon begins (the Allied invasion of Southern France).

August 19, 1944 - Resistance uprising in Paris.

August 19/20 - Soviet offensive in the Balkans begins with an attack on Romania.

August 20, 1944 - Allies encircle Germans in the Falaise Pocket.

August 25, 1944 - Liberation of Paris.

August 29, 1944 - Slovak uprising begins.

August 31, 1944 - Soviet troops take Bucharest.

September 1-4 - Verdun, Dieppe, Artois, Rouen, Abbeville, Antwerp and Brussels liberated by Allies.

September 4, 1944 - Finland and the Soviet Union agree to a cease-fire.

September 13, 1944 - U.S. troops reach the Siegfried Line in western Germany.

September 17, 1944 - Operation Market Garden begins (Allied airborne assault on Holland).

September 26, 1944 - Soviet troops occupy Estonia.

October 2, 1944 - Warsaw Uprising ends as the Polish Home Army surrenders to the Germans.

October 10-29 - Soviet troops capture Riga.

October 14, 1944 - Allies liberate Athens; Rommel commits suicide.

October 21, 1944 - Massive German surrender at Aachen, Germany.

October 30, 1944 - Last use of gas chambers at Auschwitz.

November 20, 1944 - French troops drive through the 'Belfort Gap' to reach the Rhine.

November 24, 1944 - French capture Strasbourg.

December 4, 1944 - Civil War in Greece; Athens placed under martial law.

December 16-27 - Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes.

December 17, 1944 - Waffen-SS murder 81 U.S. POWs at Malmedy.

December 26, 1944 - Patton relieves Bastogne.

December 27, 1944 - Soviet troops besiege Budapest.

1945

January 1-17 - Germans withdraw from the Ardennes.

January 16, 1945 - U.S. 1st and 3rd Armies link up after a month long separation during the Battle of the Bulge.

January 17, 1945 - Soviet troops capture Warsaw, Poland.

January 26, 1945 - Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz.

February 4-11 - Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin meet at Yalta.

February 13/14 - Dresden is destroyed by a firestorm after Allied bombing raids.

March 6, 1945 - Last German offensive of the war begins to defend oil fields in Hungary.

March 7, 1945 - Allies take Cologne and establish a bridge across the Rhine at Remagen.

March 30, 1945 - Soviet troops capture Danzig.

In April - Allies discover stolen Nazi art and wealth hidden in German salt mines.

April 1, 1945 - U.S. troops encircle Germans in the Ruhr; Allied offensive in northern Italy.

April 12, 1945 - Allies liberate Buchenwald and Belsen concentration camps; President Roosevelt dies. Harry Truman becomes President.

April 16, 1945 - Soviet troops begin their final attack on Berlin; Americans enter Nuremberg.

April 18, 1945 - German forces in the Ruhr surrender.

April 21, 1945 - Soviets reach Berlin.

April 28, 1945 - Mussolini is captured and hanged by Italian partisans; Allies take Venice.

April 29, 1945 - U.S. 7th Army liberates Dachau.

April 30, 1945 - Adolf Hitler commits suicide.

May 2, 1945 - German troops in Italy surrender.

May 7, 1945 - Unconditional surrender of all German forces to Allies.

May 8, 1945 - V-E (Victory in Europe) Day.

May 9, 1945 - Hermann Göring is captured by members of the U.S. 7th Army.

May 23, 1945 - SS-Reichsführer Himmler commits suicide; German High Command and Provisional Government imprisoned.

June 5, 1945 - Allies divide up Germany and Berlin and take over the government.

June 26, 1945 - United Nations Charter is signed in San Francisco.

July 1, 1945 - American, British, and French troops move into Berlin.

July 16, 1945 - First U.S. atomic bomb test; Potsdam Conference begins.

July 26, 1945 - Atlee succeeds Churchill as British Prime Minister.

August 6, 1945 - First atomic bomb dropped, on Hiroshima, Japan.

August 8, 1945 - Soviets declares war on Japan and invade Manchuria.

August 9, 1945 - Second atomic bomb dropped, on Nagasaki, Japan.

August 14, 1945 - Japanese agree to unconditional surrender.

September 2, 1945 - Japanese sign the surrender agreement; V-J (Victory over Japan) Day.

October 24, 1945 - United Nations is born.

November 20, 1945 - Nuremberg war crimes trials begin.

1946

October 16 - Hermann Göring commits suicide two hours before his scheduled execution.

Statistics of World War II Including the European and Pacific Theatres

Countries	Total Deaths	Percent of Prewar Population	Military Deaths	Civilian Deaths
USSR	20,600,000	10.4%	13,600,000	7,000,000
CHINA	10,000,000	2.0%		
GERMANY	6,850,000	9.5%	3,250,000	3,600,000
POLAND	6,123,000	17.2%	123,000	6,000,000
JAPAN	2,000,000	2.7%		
YUGOSLAVIA	1,706,000	10.9%		

FRANCE	810,000	1.9%	340,000	470,000
GREECE	520,000	7.2%		
UNITED STATES	500,000	0.4%	500,000	
AUSTRIA	480,000	7.2%		
ROMANIA	460,000	3.4%		
HUNGARY	420,000	3.0%		
ITALY	410,000	0.9%	330,000	80,000
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	400,000	2.7%		
GREAT BRITAIN	388,000	0.8%	326,000	62,000
NETHERLANDS	210,000	2.4%	198,000	12,000
BELGIUM	88,000	1.1%	76,000	12,000
FINLAND	84,000	2.2%		
AUSTRALIA	39,000	0.3%		
CANADA	34,000	0.3%		
ALBANIA	28,000	2.5%		
INDIA	24,000	0.01%		

NORWAY	10,262	0.3%
NEW ZEALAND	10,000	0.6%
LUXEMBOURG	5,000	1.7%
TOTAL	52,199,262	

Holocaust Timeline

1933

January 30, 1933 - Adolf Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany a nation with a Jewish population of 566,000.

February 22, 1933 - 40,000 SA and SS men are sworn in as auxiliary police.

February 27, 1933 - Nazis burn Reichstag building to create crisis atmosphere.

February 28, 1933 - Emergency powers granted to Hitler as a result of the Reichstag fire.

March 22, 1933 - Nazis open Dachau concentration camp near Munich, to be followed by Buchenwald near Weimar in central Germany, Sachsenhausen near Berlin in northern Germany, and Ravensbrück for women.

March 24, 1933 - German Parliament passes Enabling Act giving Hitler dictatorial powers.

April 1, 1933 - Nazis stage boycott of Jewish shops and businesses.

April 11, 1933 - Nazis issue a Decree defining a non-Aryan as "anyone descended from non-Aryan, especially Jewish, parents or grandparents. One parent or grandparent classifies the descendant as non-Aryan...especially if one parent or grandparent was of the Jewish faith."

April 26, 1933 - The Gestapo is born, created by Hermann Göring in the German state of Prussia.

May 10, 1933 - Burning of books in Berlin and throughout Germany.

July 14, 1933 - Nazi Party is declared the only legal party in Germany; Also, Nazis pass Law to strip Jewish immigrants from Poland of their German citizenship.

In July - Nazis pass law allowing for forced sterilization of those found by a Hereditary Health Court to have genetic defects.

In September - Nazis establish Reich Chamber of Culture, and then exclude Jews from the Arts.

September 29, 1933 - Nazis prohibit Jews from owning land.

October 4, 1933 - Jews are prohibited from being newspaper editors.

November 24, 1933 - Nazis pass a Law against Habitual and Dangerous Criminals, which allows beggars, the homeless, alcoholics and the unemployed to be sent to concentration camps.

1934

January 24, 1934 - Jews are banned from the German Labour Front.

May 17, 1934 - Jews not allowed national health insurance.

June 30, 1934 - The Night of Long Knives occurs as Hitler, Göring and Himmler conduct a purge of the SA (storm trooper) leadership.

July 20, 1934 - The SS (Schutzstaffel) is made an independent organization from the SA.

July 22, 1934 - Jews are prohibited from getting legal qualifications.

August 2, 1934 - German President von Hindenburg dies. Hitler becomes Führer.

August 19, 1934 - Hitler receives a 90 percent 'Yes' vote from German voters approving his new powers.

1935

May 21, 1935 - Nazis ban Jews from serving in the military.

June 26, 1935 - Nazis pass law allowing forced abortions on women to prevent them from passing on hereditary diseases.

August 6, 1935 - Nazis force Jewish performers/artists to join Jewish Cultural Unions.

September 15, 1935 - Nuremberg Race Laws against Jews decreed.

1936

February 10, 1936 - The German Gestapo is placed above the law.

In March - SS Deathshead division is established to guard concentration camps.

March 7, 1936 - Nazis occupy the Rhineland.

June 17, 1936 - Heinrich Himmler is appointed chief of the German Police.

August 1, 1936 - Olympic games begin in Berlin. Hitler and top Nazis seek to gain legitimacy through favourable public opinion from foreign visitors and thus temporarily refrain from actions against Jews.

In August - Nazis set up an Office for Combating Homosexuality and Abortions (by healthy women).

1937

In January - Jews are banned from many professional occupations including teaching Germans, and from being accountants or dentists. They are also denied tax reductions and child allowances.

November 8, 1937 - 'Eternal Jew' travelling exhibition opens in Munich.

March 12/13, 1938 - Nazi troops enter Austria, which has a population of 200,000 Jews, mainly living in Vienna. Hitler announces Anschluss (union) with Austria.

In March - After the Anschluss, the SS is placed in charge of Jewish affairs in Austria with Adolf Eichmann establishing an Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna. Himmler then establishes Mauthausen concentration camp near Linz.

April 22, 1938 - Nazis prohibit Aryan 'front-ownership' of Jewish businesses.

April 26, 1938 - Nazis order Jews to register wealth and property.

June 14, 1938 - Nazis order Jewish-owned businesses to register.

In July - At Evian, France, the U.S. convenes a League of Nations conference with delegates from 32 countries to consider helping Jews fleeing Hitler, but results in inaction as no country will accept them.

July 6, 1938 - Nazis prohibited Jews from trading and providing a variety of specified commercial services.

July 23, 1938 - Nazis order Jews over age 15 to apply for identity cards from the police, to be shown on demand to any police officer.

July 25, 1938 - Jewish doctors prohibited by law from practicing medicine.

August 11, 1938 - Nazis destroy the synagogue in Nuremberg.

August 17, 1938 - Nazis require Jewish women to add Sarah and men to add Israel to their names on all legal documents including passports.

September 27, 1938 - Jews are prohibited from all legal practices.

October 5, 1938 - Law requires Jewish passports to be stamped with a large red "J."

October 15, 1938 - Nazi troops occupy the Sudetenland.

October 28, 1938 - Nazis arrest 17,000 Jews of Polish nationality living in Germany, then expel them back to Poland which refuses them entry, leaving them in 'No-Man's Land' near the Polish border for several months.

November 7, 1938 - Ernst vom Rath, third secretary in the German Embassy in Paris, is shot and mortally wounded by Herschel Grynszpan, the 17-year-old son of one of the deported Polish Jews. Rath dies on November 9, precipitating Kristallnacht.

November 9/10 - Kristallnacht - The Night of Broken Glass.

November 12, 1938 - Nazis fine Jews one billion marks for damages related to Kristallnacht.

November 15, 1938 - Jewish pupils are expelled from all non-Jewish German schools.

December 3, 1938 - Law for compulsory Aryanization of all Jewish businesses.

December 14, 1938 - Hermann Göring takes charge of resolving the "Jewish Question."

1939

January 24, 1939 - SS leader Reinhard Heydrich is ordered by Göring to speed up the emigration of Jews.

January 30, 1939 - Hitler threatens Jews during Reichstag speech.

February 21, 1939 - Nazis force Jews to hand over all gold and silver items.

March 15/16 - Nazi troops seize Czechoslovakia (Jewish pop. 350,000).

April 19, 1939 - Slovakia passes its own version of the Nuremberg Laws.

April 30, 1939 - Jews lose rights as tenants and are relocated into Jewish houses.

In May - The St. Louis, a ship crowded with 930 Jewish refugees, is turned away by Cuba, the United States and other countries and returns to Europe.

July 4, 1939 - German Jews denied the right to hold government jobs.

July 21, 1939 - Adolf Eichmann is appointed director of the Prague Office of Jewish Emigration.

September 1, 1939 - Nazis invade Poland (Jewish pop. 3.35 million, the largest in Europe). Beginning of SS activity in Poland.

September 1, 1939 - Jews in Germany are forbidden to be outdoors after 8 p.m. in winter and 9 p.m. in summer.

September 3, 1939 - Great Britain and France declare war on Germany.

September 4, 1939 - Warsaw is cut off by the German Army.

September 17, 1939 - Soviet troops invade eastern Poland.

September 21, 1939 - Heydrich issues instructions to SS Einsatzgruppen (special action squads) in Poland regarding treatment of Jews, stating they are to be gathered into ghettos near railroads for the future "final goal." He also orders a census and the establishment of Jewish administrative councils within the ghettos to implement Nazi policies and decrees.

September 23, 1939 - German Jews are forbidden to own wireless (radio) sets.

September 27, 1939 - Warsaw surrenders; Heydrich becomes leader of RSHA.

September 29, 1939 - Nazis and Soviets divide up Poland. Over two million Jews reside in Nazi controlled areas, leaving 1.3 million in the Soviet area.

In September - Quote from Nazi newspaper, Der Stürmer, published by Julius Streicher - "The Jewish people ought to be exterminated root and branch. Then the plague of pests would have disappeared in Poland at one stroke."

In October - Nazis begin euthanasia on sick and disabled in Germany.

October 6, 1939 - Proclamation by Hitler on the isolation of Jews.

October 12, 1939 - Evacuation of Jews from Vienna.

October 12, 1939 - Hans Frank appointed Nazi Gauleiter (governor) of Poland.

October 26, 1939 - Forced labour decree issued for Polish Jews aged 14 to 60.

November 23, 1939 - Yellow stars required to be worn by Polish Jews over age 10.

In December - Adolf Eichmann takes over section IV B4 of the Gestapo dealing solely with Jewish affairs and evacuations.

1940

January 25, 1940 - Nazis choose the town of Oswiecim (Auschwitz) in Poland near Krakow as the site of a new concentration camp.

In January - Quote from Nazi newspaper, Der Stürmer, published by Julius Streicher - "The time is near when a machine will go into motion which is going to prepare a grave for the world's criminal - Judah - from which there will be no resurrection."

February 12, 1940 - First deportation of German Jews into occupied Poland.

April 9, 1940 - Nazis invade Denmark (Jewish pop. 8,000) and Norway (Jewish pop. 2,000).

April 30, 1940 - The Lodz Ghetto in occupied Poland is sealed off from the outside world with 230,000 Jews locked inside.

May 1, 1940 - Rudolf Höss is chosen to be kommandant of Auschwitz.

May 10, 1940 - Nazis invade France (Jewish pop. 350,000), Belgium (Jewish pop. 65,000), Holland (Jewish pop. 140,000), and Luxembourg (Jewish pop. 3,500).

June 14, 1940 - Paris is occupied by the Nazis.

June 22, 1940 - France signs an armistice with Hitler.

In July - Eichmann's Madagascar Plan is presented, proposing to deport all European Jews to the island of Madagascar, off the coast of east Africa.

July 17, 1940 - The first anti-Jewish measures are taken in Vichy France.

August 8, 1940 - Romania introduces anti-Jewish measures restricting education and employment, then later begins "Romanianization" of Jewish businesses.

September 27, 1940 - Tripartite (Axis) Pact signed by Germany, Italy and Japan.

October 3, 1940 - Vichy France passes its own version of the Nuremberg Laws.

October 7, 1940 - Nazis invade Romania (Jewish pop. 34,000).

October 22, 1940 - Deportation of 29,000 German Jews from Baden, the Saar, and Alsace-Lorraine into Vichy France.

In November - Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia become Nazi Allies.

In November - The Krakow Ghetto is sealed off containing 70,000 Jews.

November 15, 1940 - The Warsaw Ghetto, containing over 400,000 Jews, is sealed off.

1941

In 1941 - Hans Frank, Gauleiter of Poland, states, "I ask nothing of the Jews except that they should disappear."

In January - Quote from Nazi newspaper, Der Stürmer, published by Julius Streicher - "Now judgment has begun and it will reach its conclusion only when knowledge of the Jews has been erased from the earth."

In January - A pogrom in Romania results in over 2,000 Jews killed.

February 22, 1941 - 430 Jewish hostages are deported from Amsterdam after a Dutch Nazi is killed by Jews.

In March - Hitler's Commissar Order authorizes execution of anyone suspected of being a Communist official in territories about to be seized from Soviet Russia.

March 1, 1941 - Himmler makes his first visit to Auschwitz, during which he orders Kommandant Höss to begin massive expansion, including a new compound to be built at nearby Birkenau that can hold 100,000 prisoners.

March 2, 1941 - Nazis occupy Bulgaria (Jewish pop. 50,000).

March 7, 1941 - German Jews ordered into forced labor.

March 26, 1941 - The German Army High Command gives approval to RSHA and Heydrich on the tasks of SS murder squads (Einsatzgruppen) in occupied Poland.

March 29, 1941 - A 'Commissariat' for Jewish Affairs is set up in Vichy France.

April 6, 1941 - Nazis invade Yugoslavia (Jewish pop. 75,000) and Greece (Jewish pop. 77,000).

May 14, 1941 - 3,600 Jews arrested in Paris.

May 16, 1941 - French Marshal Petain issues a radio broadcast approving collaboration with Hitler.

June 22, 1941 - Nazis invade Russia (Jewish pop. 3 million).

June 29/30 - Romanian troops conduct a pogrom against Jews in the town of Jassy, killing 10,000.

Summer - Himmler summons Auschwitz Kommandant Höss to Berlin and tells him, "The Führer has ordered the Final Solution of the Jewish question. We, the SS, have to carry out this order...I have therefore chosen Auschwitz for this purpose."

In July - As the German Army advances, SS Einsatzgruppen follow along and conduct mass murder of Jews in seized lands.

In July - Ghettos established at Kovno, Minsk, Vitebsk and Zhitomer. Also in July, the government of Vichy France seizes Jewish owned property.

July 17, 1941 - Nazi racial 'philosopher' Alfred Rosenberg is appointed Reich Minister for the Eastern Occupied Territories to administer territories seized from the Soviet Union.

July 21, 1941 - In occupied Poland near Lublin, Majdanek concentration camp becomes operational.

July 25/26 - 3,800 Jews killed during a pogrom by Lithuanians in Kovno.

July 31, 1941 - Göring instructs Heydrich to prepare for Final Solution.

In August - Jews in Romania forced into Transnistria. By December, 70,000 perish.

In August - Ghettos established at Bialystok and Lvov.

August 26, 1941 - The Hungarian Army rounds up 18,000 Jews at Kamenets-Podolsk.

September 3, 1941 - The first test use of Zyklon-B gas at Auschwitz.

September 1, 1941 - German Jews ordered to wear yellow stars.

September 6, 1941 - The Vilna Ghetto is established containing 40,000 Jews.

September 17, 1941 - Beginning of general deportation of German Jews.

September 19, 1941 - Nazis take Kiev.

September 27/28 - 23,000 Jews killed at Kamenets-Podolsk, in the Ukraine.

September 29/30 - SS Einsatzgruppen murder 33,771 Jews at Babi Yar near Kiev.

In October - 35,000 Jews from Odessa shot.

October 2, 1941 - Beginning of the German Army drive on Moscow.

October 23, 1941 - Nazis forbid emigration of Jews from the Reich.

In November - SS Einsatzgruppe B reports a tally of 45,476 Jews killed.

November 24, 1941 - Theresienstadt Ghetto is established near Prague, Czechoslovakia. The Nazis will use it as a model ghetto for propaganda purposes.

November 30, 1941 - Near Riga, a mass shooting of Latvian and German Jews.

December 7, 1941 - Japanese attack United States at Pearl Harbor. The next day the U.S. and Great Britain declare war on Japan.

December 8, 1941 - In occupied Poland, near Lodz, Chelmno extermination camp becomes operational. Jews taken there are placed in mobile gas vans and driven to a burial place while carbon monoxide from the engine exhaust is fed into the sealed rear compartment, killing them. The first gassing victims include 5,000 Gypsies who had been deported from the Reich to Lodz.

December 11, 1941 - Hitler declares war on the United States. President Roosevelt then asks Congress for a declaration of war on Germany saying, "Never before has there been a greater challenge to life, liberty and civilization." The U.S.A. then enters the war in Europe and will concentrate nearly 90 percent of its military resources to defeat Hitler.

December 12, 1941 - The ship "Struma" leaves Romania for Palestine carrying 769 Jews but is later denied permission by British authorities to allow the passengers to disembark. In February 1942, it sails back into the Black Sea where it is intercepted by a Russian submarine and sunk as an "enemy target."

December 16, 1941 - During a cabinet meeting, Hans Frank, Gauleiter of Poland, states - "Gentlemen, I must ask you to rid yourselves of all feeling of pity. We must annihilate the Jews wherever we find them and wherever it is possible in order to maintain there the structure of the Reich as a whole..."

1942

In January - Mass killings of Jews using Zyklon-B begin at Auschwitz-Birkenau in Bunker I (the red farmhouse) in Birkenau with the bodies being buried in mass graves in a nearby meadow.

January 20, 1942 - Wannsee Conference to coordinate the "Final Solution."

January 31, 1942 - SS Einsatzgruppe A reports a tally of 229,052 Jews killed.

In March - In occupied Poland, Belzec extermination camp becomes operational. The camp is fitted with permanent gas chambers using carbon monoxide piped in from engines placed outside the chamber, but will later substitute Zyklon-B.

March 17, 1942 - The deportation of Jews from Lublin to Belzec.

March 24, 1942 - The start of deportation of Slovak Jews to Auschwitz.

March 27, 1942 - The start of deportation of French Jews to Auschwitz.

March 28, 1942 - Fritz Sauckel named Chief of Manpower to expedite recruitment of slave labour.

March 30, 1942 - First trainloads of Jews from Paris arrive at Auschwitz.

In April - First transports of Jews arrive at Majdanek.

April 20, 1942 - German Jews are banned from using public transportation.

In May - In occupied Poland, Sobibor extermination camp becomes operational. The camp is fitted with three gas chambers using carbon monoxide piped in from engines, but will later substitute Zyklon-B.

May 18, 1942 - *The New York Times* reports on an inside page that Nazis have machine-gunned over 100,000 Jews in the Baltic states, 100,000 in Poland and twice as many in western Russia.

May 27, 1942 - SS leader Heydrich is mortally wounded by Czech Underground agents.

In June - Gas vans used in Riga.

June 1, 1942 - Jews in France, Holland, Belgium, Croatia, Slovakia, Romania ordered to wear yellow stars.

June 4, 1942 - Heydrich dies of his wounds.

June 5, 1942 - SS report 97,000 persons have been "processed" in mobile gas vans.

June 10, 1942 - Nazis liquidate Lidice in retaliation for Heydrich's death.

June 11, 1942 - Eichmann meets with representatives from France, Belgium and Holland to coordinate deportation plans for Jews.

June 30, 1942 - At Auschwitz, a second gas chamber, Bunker II (the white farmhouse), is made operational at Birkenau due to the number of Jews arriving.

June 30 and July 2 - *The New York Times* reports via the *London Daily Telegraph* that over 1,000,000 Jews have already been killed by Nazis.

Summer - Swiss representatives of the World Jewish Congress receive information from a German industrialist regarding the Nazi plan to exterminate the Jews. They then pass the information on to London and Washington.

July 2, 1942 - Jews from Berlin sent to Theresienstadt.

July 7, 1942 - Himmler grants permission for sterilization experiments at Auschwitz.

July 14, 1942 - Beginning of deportation of Dutch Jews to Auschwitz.

July 16/17 - 12,887 Jews of Paris are rounded up and sent to Drancy Internment Camp located outside the city. A total of approximately 74,000 Jews, including 11,000 children, will eventually be transported from Drancy to Auschwitz, Majdanek and Sobibor.

July 17/18 - Himmler visits Auschwitz-Birkenau for two days, inspecting all ongoing construction and expansion, then observes the extermination process from start to finish as two trainloads of Jews arrive from Holland. Kommandant Höss is then promoted. Construction includes four large gas chamber/crematories.

July 19, 1942 - Himmler orders Operation Reinhard, mass deportations of Jews in Poland to extermination camps.

July 22, 1942 - Beginning of deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto to the new extermination camp, Treblinka. Also, beginning of the deportation of Belgian Jews to Auschwitz.

July 23, 1942 - Treblinka extermination camp opened in occupied Poland, east of Warsaw. The camp is fitted with two buildings containing 10 gas chambers, each holding 200 persons. Carbon monoxide gas is piped in from engines placed outside the chamber, but Zyklon-B will later be substituted. Bodies are burned in open pits.

In August - The start of deportations of Croatian Jews to Auschwitz.

August 23, 1942 - Beginning of German Army attack on Stalingrad in Russia.

August 26-28 - 7,000 Jews arrested in unoccupied France.

September 9, 1942 - Open pit burning of bodies begins at Auschwitz in place of burial. The decision is made to dig up and burn those already buried, 107,000 corpses, to prevent fouling of ground water.

September 18, 1942 - Reduction of food rations for Jews in Germany.

September 26, 1942 - SS begins cashing in possessions and valuables of Jews from Auschwitz and Majdanek. German banknotes are sent to the Reichs Bank. Foreign currency, gold, jewels and other valuables are sent to SS Headquarters of the Economic Administration. Watches, clocks and pens are distributed to troops at the front. Clothing is distributed to German families. By February 1943, over 800 boxcars of confiscated goods will have left Auschwitz.

October 5, 1942 - Himmler orders all Jews in concentration camps in Germany to be sent to Auschwitz and Majdanek.

October 5, 1942 - A German eyewitness observes SS mass murder.

October 14, 1942 - Mass killing of Jews from Mizocz Ghetto in the Ukraine.

October 22, 1942 - SS put down a revolt at Sachsenhausen by a group of Jews about to be sent to Auschwitz.

October 25, 1942 - Deportations of Jews from Norway to Auschwitz begin.

October 28, 1942 - The first transport from Theresienstadt arrives at Auschwitz.

In November - The mass killing of 170,000 Jews in the area of Bialystok.

December 10, 1942 - The first transport of Jews from Germany arrives at Auschwitz.

In December - Exterminations at Belzec cease after an estimated 600,000 Jews have been murdered. The camp is then dismantled, plowed over and planted.

December 17, 1942 - British Foreign Secretary Eden tells the British House of Commons the Nazis are "now carrying into effect Hitler's oft repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people of Europe." The U.S. declares those crimes will be avenged.

December 28, 1942 - Sterilization experiments on women at Birkenau begin.

1943

In 1943 - The number of Jews killed by SS Einsatzgruppen passes one million. Nazis then use special units of slave labourers to dig up and burn the bodies to remove all traces.

January 18, 1943 - First resistance by Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto.

January 29, 1943 - Nazis order all Gypsies arrested and sent to extermination camps.

January 30, 1943 - Ernst Kaltenbrunner succeeds Heydrich as head of RSHA.

In February - The Romanian government proposes to the Allies the transfer of 70,000 Jews to Palestine, but receives no response from Britain or the U.S.

In February - Greek Jews are ordered into ghettos.

February 2, 1943 - Germans surrender to Russian troops at Stalingrad in the first big defeat of Hitler's armies.

February 27, 1943 - Jews working in Berlin armaments industry are sent to Auschwitz.

In March - The start of deportations of Jews from Greece to Auschwitz, lasting until August, totaling 49,900 persons.

March 1, 1943 - In New York, American Jews hold a mass rally at Madison Square Garden to pressure the U.S. government into helping the Jews of Europe.

March 14, 1943 - The Krakow Ghetto is liquidated.

March 17, 1943 - Bulgaria states opposition to deportation of its Jews.

March 22, 1943 - Newly built gas chamber/crematory IV opens at Auschwitz.

March 31, 1943 - Newly built gas chamber/crematory II opens at Auschwitz.

April 4, 1943 - Newly built gas chamber/crematory V opens at Auschwitz.

April 9, 1943 - Exterminations at Chelmno cease. The camp will be reactivated in the spring of 1944 to liquidate ghettos. In all, Chelmno will total 300,000 deaths.

April 19-30 - The Bermuda Conference occurs as representatives from the United States and Britain discuss the problem of refugees from Nazi-occupied countries, but results in inaction concerning the plight of the Jews.

April 19, 1943 - Waffen-SS attacks Jewish Resistance in Warsaw Ghetto.

In May - SS Dr. Josef Mengele arrives at Auschwitz.

May 13, 1943 - German and Italian troops in North Africa surrender to Allies.

May 19, 1943 - Nazis declare Berlin to be Judenfrei (cleansed of Jews).

June 11, 1943 - Himmler orders liquidation of all Jewish ghettos in occupied Poland.

June 25, 1943 - Newly built gas chamber/crematory III opens at Auschwitz. With its completion, the four new crematories at Auschwitz have a daily capacity of 4,756 bodies.

July 9/10 - Allied troops land in Sicily.

August 2, 1943 - Two hundred Jews escape from Treblinka extermination camp during a revolt. Nazis then hunt them down one by one.

August 16, 1943 - The Bialystok Ghetto is liquidated.

In August - Exterminations cease at Treblinka, after an estimated 870,000 deaths.

In September - The Vilna and Minsk Ghettos are liquidated.

September 11, 1943 - Germans occupy Rome, after occupying northern and central Italy, containing in all about 35,000 Jews.

September 11, 1943 - Beginning of Jewish family transports from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz.

In October - The Danish Underground helps transport 7,220 Danish Jews to safety in Sweden by sea.

October 4 - Himmler talks openly about the Final Solution at Posen.

October 14, 1943 - Massive escape from Sobibor as Jews and Soviet POWs break out, with 300 making it safely into nearby woods. Of those 300, fifty will

survive. Exterminations then cease at Sobibor, after over 250,000 deaths. All traces of the death camp are then removed and trees are planted.

October 16, 1943 - Jews in Rome rounded up, with over 1,000 sent to Auschwitz.

In November - The Riga Ghetto is liquidated.

In November - The U.S. Congress holds hearings regarding the U.S. State Department's inaction regarding European Jews, despite mounting reports of mass extermination.

November 3, 1943 - Nazis carry out Operation Harvest Festival in occupied Poland, killing 42,000 Jews.

November 4, 1943 - Quote from Nazi newspaper, Der Stürmer, published by Julius Streicher - "It is actually true that the Jews have, so to speak, disappeared from Europe and that the Jewish 'Reservoir of the East' from which the Jewish pestilence has for centuries beset the peoples of Europe has ceased to exist. But the Führer of the German people at the beginning of the war prophesied what has now come to pass."

November 11, 1943 - Auschwitz Kommandant Höss is promoted to chief inspector of concentration camps. The new kommandant, Liebehenschel, then divides up the vast Auschwitz complex of over 30 sub-camps into three main sections.

December 2, 1943 - The first transport of Jews from Vienna arrives at Auschwitz.

December 16, 1943 - The chief surgeon at Auschwitz reports that 106 castration operations have been performed.

1944

January 3, 1944 - Russian troops reach former Polish border.

January 24, 1944 - In response to political pressure to help Jews under Nazi control, President Roosevelt creates the War Refugee Board.

January 25, 1944 - Diary entry by Hans Frank, Gauleiter of Poland, concerning the fate of 2.5 million Jews originally under his jurisdiction - "At the present time we still have in the General Government perhaps 100,000 Jews."

In February - Eichmann visits Auschwitz.

March 19, 1944 - Nazis occupy Hungary (Jewish pop. 725,000). Eichmann arrives with Gestapo "Special Section Commandos."

March 24, 1944 - President Roosevelt issues a statement condemning German and Japanese ongoing "crimes against humanity."

April 5, 1944 - A Jewish inmate, Siegfried Lederer, escapes from Auschwitz-Birkenau and makes it safely to Czechoslovakia. He then warns the Elders of the Council at Theresienstadt about Auschwitz.

April 6, 1944 - Nazis raid a French home for Jewish children.

April 7, 1944 - Two Jewish inmates escape from Auschwitz-Birkenau and make it safely to Czechoslovakia. One of them, Rudolf Vrba, submits a report to the Papal Nuncio in Slovakia which is forwarded to the Vatican, received there in mid June.

April 14, 1944 - First transports of Jews from Athens to Auschwitz, totaling 5,200 persons.

In May - Himmler's agents secretly propose to the Western Allies to trade Jews for trucks, other commodities or money.

May 8, 1944 - Rudolf Höss returns to Auschwitz, ordered by Himmler to oversee the extermination of Hungarian Jews.

May 15, 1944 - Beginning of the deportation of Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz.

May 16, 1944 - Jews from Hungary arrive at Auschwitz. Eichmann arrives to personally oversee and speed up the extermination process. By May 24, an estimated 100,000 have been gassed. Between May 16 and May 31, the SS report collecting 88 pounds of gold and white metal from the teeth of those gassed. By the end of June, 381,661 persons - half of the Jews in Hungary - arrive at Auschwitz.

In June - A Red Cross delegation visits Theresienstadt after the Nazis have carefully prepared the camp and the Jewish inmates, resulting in a favorable report.

June 6, 1944 - D-Day: Allied landings in Normandy on the coast of northern France.

June 12, 1944 - Rosenberg orders Hay Action, the kidnapping of 40,000 Polish children aged ten to fourteen for slave labor in the Reich.

Summer - Auschwitz-Birkenau records its highest-ever daily number of persons gassed and burned at just over 9,000. Six huge pits are used to burn bodies, as the number exceeds the capacity of the crematories.

In July - Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg arrives in Budapest, Hungary, and proceeds to save nearly 33,000 Jews by issuing diplomatic papers and establishing 'safe houses.'

July 24, 1944 - Russian troops liberate the first concentration camp, at Majdanek where over 360,000 had been murdered.

August 4, 1944 - Anne Frank and family are arrested by the Gestapo in Amsterdam, then sent to Auschwitz. Anne and her sister Margot are later sent to Bergen-Belsen where Anne dies of typhus on March 15, 1945.

August 6, 1944 - Lodz, the last Jewish ghetto in Poland, is liquidated with 60,000 Jews sent to Auschwitz.

October 7, 1944 - A revolt by Sonderkommando (Jewish slave labourers) at Auschwitz-Birkenau results in complete destruction of Crematory IV.

October 15, 1944 - Nazis seize control of the Hungarian puppet government, then resume deporting Jews, which had temporarily ceased due to international political pressure to stop Jewish persecutions.

October 17, 1944 - Eichmann arrives in Hungary.

October 28, 1944 - The last transport of Jews to be gassed, 2,000 from Theresienstadt, arrives at Auschwitz.

October 30, 1944 - Last use of the gas chambers at Auschwitz.

November 8, 1944 - Nazis force 25,000 Jews to walk over 100 miles in rain and snow from Budapest to the Austrian border, followed by a second forced march of 50,000 persons, ending at Mauthausen.

November 25, 1944 - Himmler orders destruction of the crematories at Auschwitz.

Late 1944 - Oskar Schindler saves 1200 Jews by moving them from Plaszow labor camp to his hometown of Brunnlitz.

1945

In 1945 - As Allied troops advance, the Nazis conduct death marches of concentration camp inmates away from outlying areas.

January 6, 1945 - Russians liberate Budapest, freeing over 80,000 Jews.

January 14, 1945 - Invasion of eastern Germany by Russian troops.

January 17, 1945 - Liberation of Warsaw by the Russians.

January 18, 1945 - Nazis evacuate 66,000 from Auschwitz.

January 27, 1945 - Russian troops liberate Auschwitz. By this time, an estimated 2,000,000 persons, including 1,500,000 Jews, have been murdered there.

April 4, 1945 - Ohrdruf camp is liberated, later visited by General Eisenhower.

April 10, 1945 - Allies liberate Buchenwald.

April 15, 1945 - Approximately 40,000 prisoners freed at Bergen-Belsen by the British, who report "both inside and outside the huts was a carpet of dead bodies, human excreta, rags and filth."

April 23, 1945 - Berlin is reached by Russian troops.

April 29, 1945 - U.S. 7th Army liberates Dachau.

April 30, 1945 - Hitler commits suicide in his Berlin bunker.

April 30, 1945 - Americans free 33,000 inmates from concentration camps.

May 2, 1945 - Theresienstadt taken over by the Red Cross.

May 5, 1945 - Mauthausen liberated

May 7, 1945 - Unconditional German surrender signed by General Alfred Jodl at Reims.

May 9, 1945 - Hermann Göring captured by members of U.S. 7th Army.

May 23, 1945 - SS-Reichsführer Himmler commits suicide while in British custody.

November 20, 1945 - Opening of the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal.

1946

March 11, 1946 - Former Auschwitz Kommandant Höss, posing as a farm worker, is arrested by the British. He testifies at Nuremberg, then is later tried in Warsaw, found guilty and hanged at Auschwitz, April 16, 1947, near Crematory I. "History will mark me as the greatest mass murderer of all time," Höss writes while in prison, along with his memoirs about Auschwitz.

October 16, 1946 - Göring commits suicide two hours before the scheduled execution of the first group of major Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg. During his imprisonment, a (now repentant) Hans Frank states, "A thousand years will pass and the guilt of Germany will not be erased." Frank and the others are hanged and the bodies are brought to Dachau and burned (the final use of the crematories there) with the ashes then scattered into a river.

December 9, 1946 - 23 former SS doctors and scientists go on trial before a U.S. Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. Sixteen are found guilty, with 7 hanged.

1947

September 15, 1947 - Twenty one former SS-Einsatz leaders go on trial before a U.S. Military Tribunal in Nuremberg. Fourteen are sentenced to death, with only 4 (the group commanders) actually being executed - the other death sentences having been commuted.

1960

May 11, 1960 - Adolf Eichmann is captured in Argentina by the Israeli secret service.

1961

April 11 - August 14 - Eichmann on trial in Jerusalem for crimes against the Jewish people, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Found guilty and hanged at Ramleh on May 31, 1962. A fellow Nazi reported Eichmann once said "he would leap laughing into the grave because the feeling that he had five million people on his conscience would be for him a source of extraordinary satisfaction."

Statistics of the Holocaust

Country	Initial Jewish Population	Estimated Percent Killed	Estimated Killed	Number of Survivors
POLAND	3,300,000	91%	3,000,000	300,000
USSR	3,020,000	36%	1,100,000	1,920,000
HUNGARY	800,000	74%	596,000	204,000
GERMANY	566,000	36%	200,000	366,000
FRANCE	350,000	22%	77,320	272,680
ROMANIA	342,000	84%	287,000	55,000
AUSTRIA	185,000	35%	65,000	120,000
LITHUANIA	168,000	85%	143,000	25,000
NETHERLANDS	140,000	71%	100,000	40,000
BOHEMIA MORAVIA	118,310	60%	71,150	47,160

LATVIA	95,000	84%	80,000	15,000
SLOVAKIA	88,950	80%	71,000	17,950
YUGOSLAVIA	78,000	81%	63,300	14,700
GREECE	77,380	87%	67,000	10,380
BELGIUM	65,700	45%	28,900	36,800
ITALY	44,500	17%	7,680	36,820
BULGARIA	50,000	0%		50,000
DENMARK	7,800	.8%	60	7,740
ESTONIA	4,500	44%	2,000	2,500
LUXEMBOURG	3,500	55%	1,950	1,550
FINLAND	2,000	.03%	7	1,993
NORWAY	1,700	45%	762	938
TOTAL	9,508,340	63%	5,962,129	3,546,211

Adolf Hitler Youth Movement

The Hitler Youth was a logical extension of Hitler's belief that the future of Nazi Germany was its children. The Hitler Youth was seen as being as important to a child as school was. In the early years of the Nazi government, Hitler had made it clear as to what he expected German children to be like:

"The weak must be chiselled away. I want young men and women who can suffer pain. A young German must be as swift as a greyhound, as tough as leather, and as hard as Krupp's steel."

Nazi education schemes part fitted in with this but Hitler wanted to occupy the minds of the young in Nazi Germany even more. In 1922, whilst still in its infancy, the Nazi Party established the Hitler Youth. By 1933, thirty percent of young Germans were members. Once the Nazis came to power, great pressure was brought to bear on families to encourage young people to be members. By 1939 over 80 per cent of Germany's youth had joined.

Boys in the German Young Folk (10-14 yrs) and Hitler Youth (14-18 yrs) participated in physical activities to develop both fitness and fearlessness. In order to become members, boys had to be able to run 60 metres in twelve seconds and carryout a number of other physical tests.

Movements for youngsters were part of German culture and the Hitler Youth had been created in the 1920's. By 1933 its membership stood at 100,000. After Hitler came to power, all other youth movements were abolished and as a result the Hitler Youth grew quickly. In 1936, the figure stood at 4 million members. In 1936, it became all but compulsory to join the Hitler Youth. Youths could avoid doing any active service if they paid their subscription but this became all but impossible after 1939.

The Hitler Youth catered for 10 to 18 year olds. There were separate organisations for boys and girls. The task of the boys section was to prepare the boys for military service. For girls, the organisation prepared them for motherhood.

Boys at 10, joined the Deutsches Jungvolk (German Young People) until the age of 13 when they transferred to the Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth) until the age of 18. In 1936, the writer J R Tunus wrote about the activities of the Hitler Jugend. He stated that part of their "military athletics" (Wehrsport) included marching, bayonet drill, grenade throwing, trench digging, map reading, gas defence, use of dugouts, how to get under barbed wire and pistol shooting.

Girls, at the age of 10, joined the Jungmadelbund (League of Young Girls) and at the age of 14 transferred to the Bund Deutscher Madel (League of German Girls). Girls had to be able to run 60 metres in 14 seconds, throw a ball twelve metres, complete a two hours march, swim one-hundred metres and know how to make a bed.

The whole Hitler Youth movement was overseen by Balder von Shirach. To the outside world, the Hitler Youth seemed to personify German discipline. In fact, this image was far from accurate. School teachers complained that boys and girls were so tired from attending evening meetings of the Hitler Youth, that they could barely stay awake the next day at school. Also by 1938, attendance at Hitler Youth meetings was so poor - barely 25% - that the authorities decided to tighten up attendance with the 1939 law making attendance compulsory.

Young Girls League

Following Nazi ideas, girls would join the League of Young Girls (10-14 yrs) or League of German Girls (14-18 yrs). Girls' membership of the League of German Girls included a year of farm work or domestic service. Likewise, boys in the Hitler Youth would take part in the National Labour Service. The Young Girls League (Jungmädelbund or JM) was part of the League of German Girls (Bund Deutscher Mädels) but catered for young girls aged from ten years to fourteen years. Once girls in the Young Girls League had reached fourteen they moved to the League of German Girls the BDM. The Jungmädel organisation was all part of the umbrella Hitler Youth movement that was separated into boys and girls sections. The girls who acted as leaders in the Young Girls League were from the League of German Girls (the BDM) – older girls who had done their time in the Young Girls League.

The Young Girls League (JM) was all part of the policy of Gleichshaltung – coordination – introduced by Adolf Hitler. This was a policy where everyone, as the title suggested, did what everyone else did and what the state wanted. Within Nazi Germany girls had a very specific role to play. Girls were seen very simply as the future mothers of Germany and part of the grand plan for the Reich to exist for 1000 years. If boys were educated to be warlike, girls were trained for a future of domesticity.

Membership of the Young Girls League became compulsory in 1936 when the First Hitler Youth Law made it so.

However, as with all youth organisations that existed in Nazi Germany, there were strict criteria as to membership. Young girls who joined the JM

(Jungmädelbund) had to be racially pure, free of hereditary diseases and hold German citizenship.

An 'entrance exam' was also held which consisted of attending a lecture about what the JM stood for and the satisfactory completion of a bravery test.

All new members of the JM joined on the same day of the year – April 20th, Hitler's birthday.

“One day, fittingly enough on Hitler's birthday, my age group was called up and I took the oath: “I promise always to do my duty in the Hitler Youth, in love and loyalty to the Führer.” (Marianne Gartner in ‘The Naked Years: Growing up in Nazi Germany’)

Over the next six months girls were also expected to participate in the ‘JM Challenge’. The successful completion of this, which was essentially oriented around success in sport and the creation of a fit and healthy Nazi youth, meant that girls became full members of the JM until they were old enough to transfer to the Bund Deutscher Mädel – the League of German Girls (sometimes referred to as the League of German Maidens).

In fact, both boys and girls were indoctrinated in Nazi ideology and swore an oath of love and loyalty to Adolf Hitler.

Kindertransport organised by British Government

Kindertransport was the title given to the efforts made by the British government prior to the outbreak of World War Two to bring out of Nazi Germany and occupied Austria and Czechoslovakia Jewish children. Kindertransport was an attempt to remove these children from an increasingly perilous situation whereby war looked almost inevitable. During a nine-month period, 10,000 Jewish children aged between one and seventeen were transported to the UK. Though these children were separated from their families, many of them would have faced the same fate as their families if they had stayed. The vast majority of the Kindertransport children never saw their parents again. On arrival in the UK after a journey by train and boat, they stayed with British families – few could speak English – though some boarded at schools such as Oswestry in Shropshire.

In the immediate aftermath of Krystalnacht, many Jews were in real danger. The Nazi regime had given a green light to Nazi thugs to attack Jews seemingly at will and with no possibility of being punished for doing so. Those parents who could get their children out of Germany did so. In this British diplomats helped them. While the total number was small compared to the number of children

who remained, it may be safely concluded that many of these 10,000 would not have survived the war and would have been victims to the Holocaust. The first of the children left Nazi Germany barely a month after Krystalnacht. The British government required a £50 bond per child to ensure their ultimate resettlement. The last group of children left on September 1st 1939. The declaration of war on September 3rd led to the end of the project.

A number of the children joined the armed forces based in the UK once they had reached the age of 18 effectively taking their fight back against Nazi Germany. It is thought that between 20% and 25% of all those involved in the Kindertransport project later left the UK and emigrated to America or Canada.

Marion Charles, then a nine-year old girl living in Berlin, took part in Kindertransport. Many years later she told us her story:

“On July 4th, 1939, eight months after Kristalnacht, I got up extremely early and went into the kitchen to say goodbye to my dolls. I was to be sent abroad under the auspices of the Kindertransport – a rescue operation that helped nearly 10,000 Jewish children escape Nazi rule and find new homes in Britain.

The authorities allowed the children to take only a small suitcase with them, so I could only take one of my dolls. My mother stood at the garden gate and waved goodbye to us. (Marion’s older sister accompanied her)

My father took us to the station. My sister and I were travelling with 200 other children and there was almost no time to say goodbye, as the parents were not allowed to wait for the train to leave. However, many of them – including my father – sped to the next stop in Berlin for one last glimpse of their children.

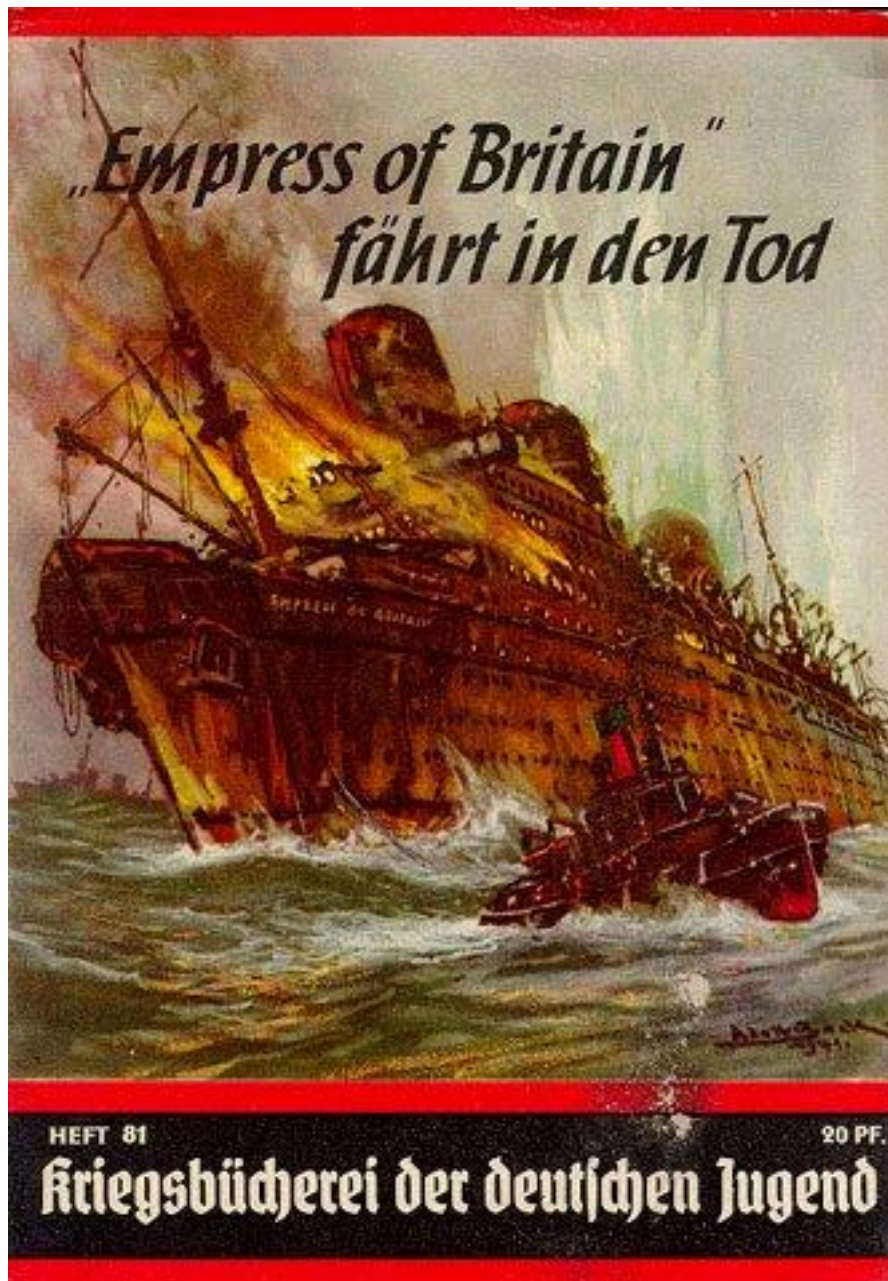
As the train pulled into the station, I saw my father coming to me, wanting to kiss me goodbye one last time. I leaned out of the window, about to kiss and stroke his face once more, when a group of SS men with large dogs and truncheons strode up to the train and pushed him and the other parents away from the train.

My father stumbled and a lady fell. I stayed as strong as I could, took one last look at my father as the platform receded, and prayed that I would see him and my mother again soon.”

Magazines for German Youth

National Socialism published an extensive series of booklets on the war intended for the youth. There were at least one-hundred fifty-six of them, appearing at weekly intervals. They presented the war in an exciting manner, and usually ended with an appeal to join the military. That which follows includes the covers of ten of them, with translations of the full text of three and some interior illustrations.

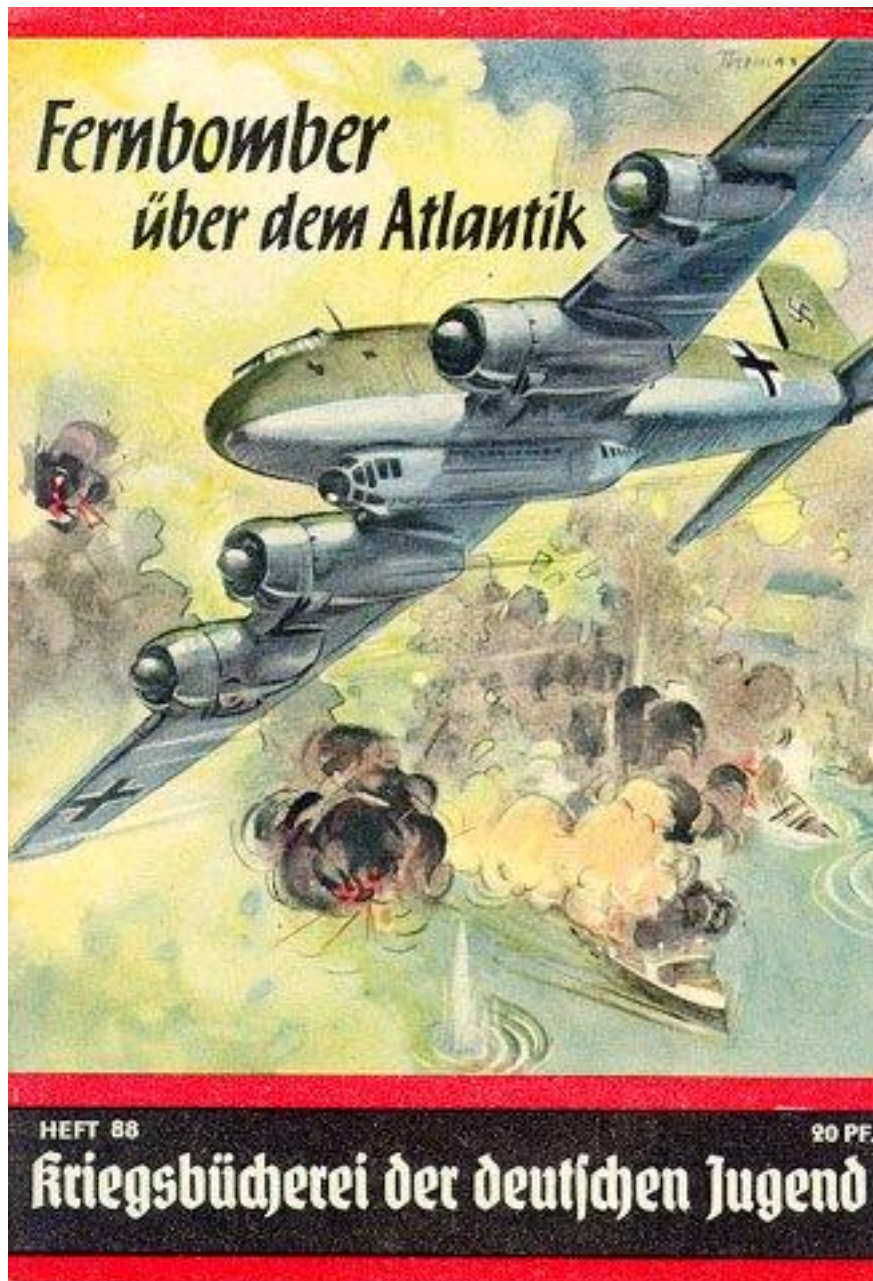




The death of the Empress of Britain (no. 81)



Bombs over Coventry (UK) (no. 84)



"Long-Range Bombers over the Atlantic": A story about the crew of a long-range bomber attacking British shipping. (no. 88)

Long-Range Bombers over the Atlantic:

Experiences of a Condor Crew in the Fight against England
by Carl G. B. Henze

The thick milky fog hangs over the northwest coast of France, extending into the countryside beyond. One can scarcely see ten meters, and sounds disappear into the mist. Occasionally one hears voices. A truck honks over there, a dog barks in the distance, and a ship's horn blows shrilly on the water. But there is nothing to see. The sounds sound hollow and mysterious, coming from nothing and returning to it.

It is January 1941. The fog has hidden the water and land for days, hindering reconnaissance efforts by German aircraft and naval units. It hides the enemy's convoys that — loaded with war material and food for the blockaded island — are coming from Canada or the U.S.A. The freighters and tankers travel slowly, but securely, through the thick fog. The curtain of fog stops the German long-range bombers that seek out enemy ships in the Atlantic and send them to the bottom. The planes could take off easily enough, since fog is no hindrance for planes today — but how could the crews spot enemy ships?

Several kilometers from the coast, the big birds of a long-range bomber squadron remain in their hangers. The airfield is somewhere in the north of France. The fog conceals the huge hangers and tents.

One hears hammering and pounding, and the occasional bit of a song that the men are whistling. Now and again one hears the call of the guards or the soft sound of a motorcycle carrying a messenger to headquarters. Only these sounds suggest that behind the fog, the life of the squadron continues.

In the ready room, squadron leader Captain Schindler walks back and forth, speaking at times to his aide sitting at the table reviewing the mail. The captain regularly looks out the window, taps with all ten fingers the pane, looking into the gray and hoping to see a shimmer of light announcing the end of this damned fog. He puffs on his cigar, the smoke of which follows him as he moves about the room, until it joins with the smoke from the aide's short pipe.

Captain Schindler paces about. Then he stops by Lieutenant Behrenbrook's desk.

“Behrenbrook, this is awful! All kinds of fat convoys are slipping through the soup out there and we sit here twiddling our thumbs or doing paperwork! This is the third day we’ve had this peasouper. I’ve never seen anything like it. Well, I do remember in Flanders back in 1917 we could not fly for five days. We had to sit in the junk and wait. I was 18 years old then — a newcomer — and could not either smoke or play cards. I learned how to do both perfectly in those five days.

The lieutenant shoves the stack of mail to the side and taps the smoldering tobacco with the bottom of his fountain pen.

“Captain, I think it will clear up today. I have a feeling that we will have lovely sunshine by afternoon.”

“And what do you base your feelings on, Mr. Behrenbrook? Have you looked at the barometer?”

“Yes, Captain, this morning at eight and now,” looking at his wristwatch, “at ten, it has risen four points.”

He smiles and points with his pipe to the instrument hanging on the wall.

The captain leans over the desk and raps the barometer with his knuckles. The dial moves up nearly two points.

“Right — Great! The meteorologists seem to have it right today when they predicted the fog’s end. But think of the fat convoy that reached the British Isles under its protection! — Well, if we can fly today and find some targets for our bombs, I’ll buy a few bottles after dinner this evening. Remind me!”

The lieutenant laughs.

“Will do, Captain. I think I can order the bottles already!”

Captain Schindler puts his cigar out in the ashtray and opens the window.

“Let’s at least get rid of the fog we’ve caused in here.”

He leans out the window, gazing into the gray fog that conceals the field and the hangers.

“The wind is blowing,” he says. “You may be right about those bottles.”

He turns around.

“Come on, Behrenbrook, let’s have breakfast. After that We’ll check things out.”

The two officers take their coats and caps. They walk through the fog, feeling an occasional bit of fresh air, to the dining hall.

Most of the pilots and observers have gathered there. Some write, others play cards or chat.

Captain Schindler and his aide sit down at a round table, joining Lieutenant Mayer, Lieutenant Seebohm, Lieutenant Wendler, pilot Lieutenant Herrmann, Corporal Jaksch and Corporal Springer, who are in the midst of a lively conversation. As the squadron leader and his aide eat breakfast, the “shop talk” continues.

Lieutenant Wendler, a young, boyish-looking blond officer who has already earned the Iron Cross, First Class, during a mission over England, is speaking. “Well, comrades, I’ve been there only three days and still do not know your large- four-engined planes very well. But I am looking forward to our first flight over the Atlantic.” Turning to Lieutenant Herrmann, he says: “ I hear that you were flying the ‘Condor’ even before the war?” Lieutenant Herrmann, a thin North German of about 28 years, takes a sip of coffee and lights a cigarette, since the Captain and his aide are done eating.

“You’re right, Wendler. I was an engineer back home, and was a test pilot for Focke-Wulf back in Bremen for several years. I flew some of the first ‘Condors.’ When they were remodeled into long-range bombers during the war, I was transferred here from a reconnaissance group. I was delighted when the captain gave me command of his machine.”

“Well,” the captain said, “when I saw from your papers that you knew the big bird from back home, I wanted you for my pilot. My former pilot had to leave after a long illness. But tell us something about the “Condor.” The others will be interested, I’m sure.”

“Certainly, Captain. The growth of air traffic required long-range aircraft that could withstand hard use. Focke-Wulf, which had a long history of good passenger aircraft, went to work on a four-engined plane. I think you know that our ‘Condor’ was designed by their Focke-Wulf’s lead engineer, Kurt Tank. He also designed other first-rate military aircraft.

The construction process was kept quiet until one fine day the big four-engined bird stood on the runway. We test pilots had our chance. Beginning with short

flights that grew longer, we flew the ‘Condor’ over all of Germany. We saw how high it could go, and tested all the safety elements. After a while, we were ready for the first long flight. You may recall that Captain Henke and Captain v. Moreau, who later was successful in the Spanish Civil War, earned international attention by flying from Berlin to New York and back again.

That was on 10.8.1938. The 6371 kilometer flight took 20 hours from Berlin to New York, and 24 hours the other way. There were no problems in either direction. The ‘Condor’ had proved its ability as a long-distance aircraft.

Passenger traffic across the ocean was nearer than anyone had expected. Not long after that flight, the same crew — along with designer Tank — flew the same machine to Tokyo.

The results of these two long flights were evaluated as the series was constructed.

When the war began, nothing at first was heard of the ‘Condor.’ But when we had to show the English that the Luftwaffe could reach their convoys in the Atlantic, we needed planes that could operate hundreds of miles off the Irish coast. That’s where the new version of the ‘Condor’ came in. We’re lucky to be able to fly it far out into the ocean in search of victory!”

“Good. Now we know our long-range bomber’s history. As soon as the fog lifts, we will take off. I am sure we will find a few convoys and individual ships that we can go after. — Gentlemen, the barometer has been rising since this morning. The fog is lifting. Get ready, everyone. As soon as we can see anything, we will take off. We will meet in half an hour!”

*

Two hours later. The barometer was right, as were the weathermen. The fog has vanished. A fresh wind blows from the east. Scattered clouds at 400 to 500 meters are moving quickly west. A sunbeam shines through the gray clouds occasionally. A patch of blue sky is seen occasionally through the clouds.

Things are busy on the airfield. After meeting with the commander, the squadron leader has given orders in the operations room to the pilots and observers. Each crew has its operating area outlined on the large map of the Atlantic.

The aide is in his workroom. Like all other officers, he has tasks that have to be completed to ensure the squadron’s smooth operation.

Captain Schindler has organized his squadron such that they take off together, then separate after a time to head in groups for their respective areas. The groups will then split up too, but will remain in radio range to assist each other in attacking large groups of ships. The captain leads the first group.

While the mission is planned in detail in the operations room, the ground crews have received their orders. A successful mission depends on their conscientious efforts. They make the final preparations, loading heavy bombs and ammunition for the machine guns and other guns before rolling the planes to the runway. The motors are warming up. Their thousands of horsepower fill the field with a melodious noise. The mechanics in each plane check out their engines.

The crews arrive, six for each plane. Wearing their thick clothing, they find their places as the mechanics leave the machines and the pilots announce their readiness.

The engines roar as one huge bird after another rises into the air. They circle above the field, raising their landing gear as they wait to take their place in the formation.

Captain Schindler and his pilot Lieutenant Herrmann stand alongside his aide, who will fly on the left of the first group, and watch their comrades take off. Lieutenant Behrenbrook runs to his plane, which quickly takes off. The squadron captain's plane takes off too, and takes its position at the head of the group. They head toward the enemy. The nine enormous planes, all identical, are a wonderful sight. The 36 engines rumble over the countryside. The ground crews watch "their" planes disappear into the distance. Their engines fade. Over the coast, the long-range bombers disappear into the grayish-white clouds. Now and again sun flashes off a wing, then there is nothing more to hear or see. A German long-range bombing squadron is looking for the enemy. —

The airfield is now quiet. Occasionally a messenger arrives on a motorcycle. The ground crews roll away the bomb carts and haul away the boxes. Then they head for the hangers to clean up the fuel and oil. The guards march between the entrance and the hangers. The gunners at the flak posts shift from one leg to the other in the cold, watching through binoculars as the sky clears. The clouds break up and disappear to the west. A cold pale winter sun shines over the field and through the windows of the quarters and hangers.

Hours will pass before the big planes return to their home field.

*

Far out in the Atlantic, hundreds of kilometres from the east coast, a British convoy is sailing. It has about fifty ships steaming behind each other. The convoy stretches over many kilometres. Several destroyers protect its flanks, like sheep dogs protecting a flock of sheep. They are there to protect against submarines and naval vessels. Many English convoys have already learned the value of this “protection” as they encountered German submarines.

Besides thousands of tons of merchant shipping, several destroyers usually hit the bottom too.

Huge masses of important war supplies are shipped from Canada and the U.S.A. There are about 35 freighters and 10 tankers carrying the supplies that will let the “island” keep fighting. They are carrying a total of 36,000 to 38,000 tons of valuable cargo.

The captain and first officer stand on the bridge of an 8,000-ton steamer. They scan the clearing skies.

“God damn,” the captain says, “I wish we were there. So far things have gone well. No submarines. The fog hid us for several days. The fog was no fun, and I’m surprised we had no collisions, but it did hide us from the enemy. But now, before reaching the Irish coast, we have to worry about German flyers. My colleague Br. in Boston told me that he barely escaped being sunk by a German plane 100 kilometers west of Ireland. They won’t miss our long convoy now that the fog has lifted.”

“You’re right, Captain,” replies the first officer. “They haven’t come this far yet, but I fear the Germans will cause us trouble. Who knows what surprises they may have. Back in 1938, they flew a four-engined machine nonstop from Berlin to New York and back. One of these days they will attack our convoys in the middle of the ocean.”

Similar conversations were taking place on the bridges of numerous ships in the convoy on this January afternoon. England could not forever conceal its rising losses at sea. Sailors at least talked about it constantly. Many had already experienced attacks by German submarines or planes.

The convoy steamed at full speech through the waves to reach the safety of the coast as soon as possible. But that was difficult, since the convoy was limited to the speed of its slowest vessel. The destroyer’s officers kept watch on the air and sea. They know well that they are of limited help in protecting their flock against air or submarine attacks. What can they do against a submarine that launches its torpedoes? And even though they are well armed, what can they do

to hinder attacks by German flyers? They are more or less there for moral support. The English officers know that, as do the captains and sailors on the merchant ships.

But they have to try anyway. The naval yards, factories, war industries and military leadership in England is waiting nervously for the ships that were loaded in Canada or the United States. Without them, the war cannot be continued. Though thousands of tons are already at the bottom of the sea, the attempt has to be made.

As the convoy steams on, the captain of the previously mentioned 8000-ton steamer suddenly sees something in the sky. High on the eastern horizon he spotted some black spots, and watched as they become three large airplanes heading for the convoy.

“German flyers!” he shouts. The destroyers and other steamers have also seen the rapidly nearing German planes. Sirens sound everywhere. The flak crews head for their stations. The convoy breaks up. Some captains lose their nerve and zig-zag, a foolish action. The ships pass close to one another, and more than once a collision is narrowly averted. The German planes have arrived, and are dropping bombs before the destroyers can start firing their flak.

*

The Condor squadron leaves its airfield behind. The wintry landscape passes below. The big planes climb slowly, the BMW engines sing their song. The sunlight dances on the windows. The nine enormous planes are powerful testimony to German military might. They fly in formation over France. The soldiers beneath watch in admiration as the powerful bombers carry their loads of bombs against England’s shipping. The crews of the flak batteries below are delighted by the tight formation of splendid aircraft high overhead. They fly against England!

The commander and his squadron captain sit alongside the pilot. The engineer, radioman and both gunners are at their battle stations. The gunners keep careful watch, though no English fighters will show up in German airspace. In the rear, the heavy bombs are being carried by the four powerful engines.

Now they are over the coast. The white beach shimmers alongside the steel-blue ocean. Hours of flying are ahead of them. Their great range and high speed enable them to operate hundreds of kilometres from the coast.

The high quality of the engines ensures that these planes can operate safely far from land.

The squadron captain gives his orders. The squadron should separate into three groups and head for their assigned areas. One group is ordered to head for the Portuguese coast, the second should head right along Ireland's coast to the Hebrides and Orkneys. Captain Schindler orders his own group straight out into the Atlantic, about the level of the southern tip of Ireland.

The three groups head off in their respective directions. Comrades disappear to the left and right into the light mist of an almost cloudless January sky, while the three planes of Squadron 1 fly onward. The sea is free of ships in every direction. The waves roll on endlessly. But the sea seems almost motionless from the planes. Only occasional white caps can be seen, a sign that the wind is increasing. Nothing of that is noticeable in the planes. A slight adjustment to the steering deals with any strong gust of wind.

Captain Schindler leans back in his seat in satisfaction. They have been flying for some time, and the land behind them has vanished into the mist. There is only water and sky around them. The captain says "Eat!" Each takes out his rations.

But they don't stop watching. At any moment someone may spot smoke from an enemy steamer on the horizon. But the ocean is still clear.

As the captain takes a gulp of tea from his thermos, the radio announces:

"Smoke ahead!" The food is set aside. Right! There is a dark cloud of smoke to the left. The steamer is soon plainly visible. It zigs back and forth excitedly.

An English ship of about 4500 tons! It sits deep in the water, seemingly heavily loaded. Does it have "friends" in the vicinity? But there is nothing visible. It seems to be alone. What is its cargo? Well, that makes no difference. It has to be sunk!

Captain Schindler gives the plane to the left the order to sink it. While the other plans circle slowly, Lieutenant Behrenbrook, the plane's commander, carries out the order.

He glides directly toward the Englishman and drops a light bomb before the bow. He circles around to give the crew time to launch their lifeboats. The ship's two guns are clearly visible. The ship stops as the sailors hurriedly lower the

boats. The Tommies row as fast as they can. Perhaps they will be rescued by a passing steamer, perhaps not. It is war!

When Lieutenant Behrenbrook is sure that the boats are far enough away from the steamer, he drops down.

A mid-sized bomb hits the ship. A thick cloud of smoke rises up, flames spring out. A hit.

The ‘Condor’ circles the damaged steamer again. Its name is clear on the stern. The lieutenant takes a few pictures of the sinking ship. The last shows the bow in the air and the foam as the ship sinks.

The lieutenant brings his plane back to join the other two airplanes. England has one ship less.

Captain Schindler looks at the map and determines the position. He orders over the radio: “Split up. If you see a convoy, let me know and we will resume formation!”

The other planes head off to the right and left, and Schindler’s plane heads straight. The sea seems dead in every direction. Albion’s command of the seas has already suffered major blows from German airplanes and submarines.

What is that? A submarine! Schindler turns his plane and heads for the submarine. The sub has no reason to dive. A comrade! The ‘Condor’s’ crew recognizes a German submarine keeping watch far out in the Atlantic. Several men on the tower wave to their comrades above while the large plane circles the sub.

Comrades, we just snatched a victim from you!

You’ll find others. There is no envy in the German armed forces. The Luftwaffe and navy are both fighting England, and they attack whenever they meet it.

The “Condor” is again flying at the normal altitude.

The submarine has vanished, lost in the lonesome ocean.

Captain Schindler is back in his position. The “Condor” is far to the west of Ireland. The sun is gradually sinking — the short winter day will soon be over. That means a long night flight back home, but the moon is full and the crew of

the “Condor” is just as familiar with night flying as their comrades flying fighters.

After a while the captain suddenly spots smoke on the horizon. The dark smoke is spread across the horizon. There must be a lot of steamers — a convoy! The captain radios the other two planes, and also the other two squadrons that should not be all that far away. The whole squadron is needed to attack the convoy on the horizon. The radio brings the answer of the others.

In half an hour, they will all be there.

The two other planes have arrived meanwhile, and Captain Schindler decides to attack the convoy immediately. There will certainly be enough left for the other planes.

The smoke on the horizon grows clearer. The captain tries to count them. There must be at least 40 or 50 steamers in a long line.

And they are coming from the west. They must be heavily loaded.

Now several freighters and tankers are visible. Destroyers circle about. The three planes head for the convoy. The radio announces the remaining comrades are coming. Schindler decides he can attack with his three machines.

The comrades will arrive soon and join in. Let’s get going!

The other planes move into a favorable attack position. They can head directly toward the targets. By now, they must have been spotted.

Several steamers are zigging, coming dangerously near each other. The convoy is falling apart. Captain Schindler sees that there are more than 40 vessels below, including some big ones. “Well, let’s go!”

The destroyers and some freighters are firing as the three planes fly over the line of steamers. Tracers from machine guns and light flak sizzle through the air, and the small guns of the freighters also send their greetings. That doesn’t hinder the attack. Well aimed dark gray clouds pop up to the left and right, but the planes are above the ships.

Ignoring the fragments hissing through the fuselage and wings, Captain Schindler’s plane is over a big freighter of around 5,000 tons. The comrades have also found their victims. A light push on the trigger and the “gifts” are on their way.

Captain Schindler hit the 5000-tonner amidships. Thick white smoke climbs up, showing a hit in the engine room. A 3000-ton tanker is spilling black smoke, hit by a bomb from Lieutenant Behrenbrook's plane. The third plane has hit a remodelled passenger steamer of over 8000 tons. It is dead in the water, and has been rammed by another freighter.

The destroyers and other ships are keeping up heavy flak and machine gun fire. Shells explode dangerously close to the large, but agile planes. Shell fragments whiz by, hitting the metal and tearing holes in the fuselage.

The pilots manoeuvred to avoid the enemy fire and circle above the convoy. Bombs keep falling! Several ships are dead in the water with holes in the deck or hulls.

The men fire the flak and machine guns frantically, hoping to bring down one of the "damned Germans." But their efforts are in vain. The three long-range bombers fly low over several ships, their guns firing at the crews below and destroying their weapons.

The squadron captain breaks off the attack and the planes climb higher. The other two groups radio that they will arrive shortly. The first three planes quickly appear in the light of the sinking sun, then the other three. After brief radio conversations, they renew the attack on the enemy.

The convoy has completely fallen apart. The steamers are heading in every direction. The destroyers are firing every gun at the nine large planes. Each plane looks for a target, and bombs are falling everywhere from various heights. A few fall in the ocean, but most hit their targets. Gray, white and black clouds rise from the ships. Burning tankers glow red. Parts of ships fly through the air. Hell is breaking loose below. There are sinking, burning ships. Others are still in the water. The others are heading in every direction, not knowing how to escape the hail of bombs.

New bombs are exploding everywhere. A steamer blows up with a direct hit. In seconds, it vanishes. Lifeboats are cut in two by the bows of onrushing steamers.

England wanted war. He who sails for England sails into death!

The long-range bombers keep circling. Bomb after bomb falls on the confusion below. The ships' guns continue firing. A destroyer has been hit. It disappears behind a white cloud. After a while there is a circle of foam, then nothing.

The air reeks of powder, smoke and fire. Clouds of black, gray-white and greenish-yellow smoke hang over the damaged ships. Here and there foam indicates where a steamer has been sent “to the fish.” Here the bow of a ship is above the waves, there one has split in the middle.

Nine land-based aircraft are attacking an enemy armada, hundreds of kilometres from the coast. What are those down below thinking? The powerful modern German weapons over the Atlantic battlefield once again show the English which side has the stronger weapons.

Some of the steamers have made their escape. We’ve dropped all our bombs. They can form a new convoy over night. We or our comrades will be back tomorrow, or our submarines will find them. That will take care of the ones that got away today. Those that make it to England can report how “safe” British convoys are in the middle of the Atlantic.

This is the “break” in the war, according to English thinking. German flyers and German long-range bombers are not taking a break. They keep flying in winter and summer, regardless of the weather. They know how to find Churchill’s fleet—and hit it!

While several ships keep firing flak impotently, the squadron captain gathers his flock together for the flight home. The sun has sunk in the west.

The sky and sea are gray and colorless. In several places, flames and red-gray smoke clouds are visible. The flashes of guns are also visible. They hope to shoot down a German plane as it flies into the night toward home. Hours of flying through the cold winter night are before them, but all is well. The fires of seriously damaged English ships light up the Atlantic darkness behind them,

The hours pass slowly, despite the great speed of the long-range bombers. The sky and sea are dark, until light appears in the east — the moon. It rises slowly. Its silver light shines on the windows and metal of the planes. Occasional white clouds drift past the planes. The captain occasionally checks the condition of the wounded. The answers over the radio are reassuring. The one seriously wounded man is doing well after his thigh wound was treated.

Time passes. The clouds increase. The moon hides behind light gray high cloud cover. A light rain hits the windows, that gradually gather a layer of ice. The planes themselves ice up somewhat, but the de-icing equipment ensures that there is no danger.

Everything comes to an end, this mission included. In the dim light the coast appears below. No light shines from the villages and towns below. Now and again a searchlight stabs up. The German flak batteries are on the alert. They know that German planes are flying, but it is best to be safe.

The captain radios the landing field. They will be at X in 20 minutes. The answer comes quickly: everything is ready. Schindler gives the order to land. Fifteen minutes later the planes are in the hangers and are attended to by the ground crews. They will work all night, since the planes have to be ready for action again in the morning.

The crews freshen up, eat dinner, and go to bed. But work is not yet done for the squadron leader and his aide.

Reports on the successful mission to superiors must be made. While the captain is on the phone, the aide deals with the dispatches. The orders for the next day are discussed. Only then can both officers take their well-earned rest.

The next day the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht announces:

“German long-range bombers attacked a protected British convoy 500 kilometers west of Ireland. They sank a total of nine ships totalling 58,000 tons. Five ships were so severely damaged that they will probably sink. Four other ships were seriously damaged.”

*

It is several weeks later. The long-range bomber group has had steady successes against the British merchant fleet in the Atlantic. Thousands and thousands of tons of British shipping have been sunk or seriously damaged. From the Hebrides to Cadiz and off the Irish coast, the large “Condor” planes are flying, whatever the weather. In clear weather, fog or rain, or at night, they attack a convoy here, or sink a tanker or transport there.

Captain Schindler and his second pilot Herrmann, who has since been promoted to lieutenant, have dropped their bombs over and over again. Both officers have alternatively flown the plane. With their squadron or alone, they have flown their reliable big bird with its four splendid engines, which have never failed them. The squadron captain has sent nearly 70,000 tons of enemy shipping to the bottom, giving the squadron particular pride.

The pilots and observers are sitting in the operations room on a rainy February evening. Their mission is to seek out individual tankers and freighters. They are

large, fast ships that hope to escape German submarines and planes. They avoid the slower-moving convoys. Schindler's squadron has been ordered to seek out these ships. The captain explains the situation and give the orders. They will take off between three and four in the morning and fly individually over the Atlantic.

The planes will be ready. The meteorologists predict the weather will not improve; in fact, it may worsen. Since there is no moon, they will fly in pitch darkness.

That is something different for the men of the long-range bomber squadron. Flying alone in such weather! That will show what the men and machines can do.

The captain stands. "Well, men, now you know. We have to sink at least one or two ships. We don't have a real quota — but we sink what we see. I will come along. You know your positions. Be ready to take off at 3:30. Until then, good night!"

"Well," Lieutenant Wendler says to Lieutenant Herrmann as they leave, " we will have to watch out that you and the captain don't snatch the best targets from under our nose again. We're pleased at your success, of courser, but would like our share!"

Herrmann laughs and claps his comrade on the shoulder. "You have no need to complain that someone beats you to the prey. You've sunk 12,000 tons yourself in the short time you've been with the squadron. I won't be surprised if you return tomorrow with some sinkings!"

"Hey, guys, stop fighting," shouts the captain with a smile. Tommy still has a few ships for you. But get to bed. It will be tough flying in this weather. We need our sleep."

By 9:00 p.m., the barracks are quiet. The mechanics are at work in the hangers. Soon the motors will be roaring again and the planes flying into the dark night. A strong west wind blows over the field. It howls through the trees behind the hanger, shakes the windows and doors, and whips the rain before it. — — —

3:30 a.m.! The planes are ready in the pouring rain. The crews are on board, and the signal to take off has been given. One after the other, the planes climb into the dark night and head for their destinations.

The wind blows strongly. It is nearly a storm. The captain's plane, with him at the controls, takes off. The four engines roar, the propellers throwing the streaming rain against the windows and wings. The darkness is so thick that one can't distinguish the sky from the ground. They fly blind. The instrument panel glows dimly, but the cabin otherwise is nearly black. The crew feels as if they are flying in a hermetically sealed room. The legendary darkness of Egypt cannot be any blacker.

The big plane fights against the rain. Schindler has to keep tight grip on the controls of the normally easy to fly "Condor," which leaps through the air. No one is concerned; they know their captain and their plane.

Lieutenant Herrmann and his commander keep their eyes on the instruments. The lives of the crew depend on them. German workmanship proves itself again. The radioman, even more important than usual, keeps in touch with the base. Occasionally he hears from their comrades, gradually growing further away.

The sea is now visible below. The whitecaps make a remarkable sight in the dim light.

They fly for hours. Now and again the captain gives the controls to the lieutenant and looks over the map and reads the compass and the instruments.

Gradually it lightens up. The horizon is misty. Water and sky seem to merge. The plane is just under the clouds, and the rain is still pouring down. The altimeter reads 600 meters. Now the ocean is clearly visible. It's quite a storm down there. The enemy ships will be having a rough time.

It won't be easy to find those ships on the vast sea with such bad visibility.

The day is brighter now, at least as bright as it can get under such conditions. The sky above is gray, the water below endless. But no one is worried. The four reliable engines will keep them going.

"Ship to starboard," shouts the lieutenant. The captain sees it too. A fat tanker is sailing near the gray horizon. The storm rips its smoke from the stack. Schindler looks more carefully: bright gray smoke, a short smokestack? It is a tanker, at least 10,000 tons. It is coming from the west — oil for England! Attack it!

The captain calmly gives his orders. Everyone is at his post as the plane plows through the storm toward the ship. One has to be careful in this damned weather that the bombs do not fall into the ocean. The aim has to be good.

The ship begins to zig. It looks like a new ship. But its maneuvering does little good. The captain knows how to get it.

They drop two bombs on the first attack. They bank as tightly as possible and watch! Did they hit? There, on the stern, and on the starboard side. Detonations. Two clouds of smoke and water rise up and are whipped away by the storm. There is a big hole in the side! But that is not enough. Another attack! Two more bombs fall and hit amidships. Gray-white steam rises everywhere. Oil leaks from the torn sides onto the wild sea around the ship.

It has had it. But Schindler is in the mood to attack. He turns and flies at the prey once more. All the guns are firing. He banks again and repeats the attack. The bridge and deck go flying under the fire. Then the captain stops. The tanker has had enough.

As they fly on they hear the tanker's SOS. It is the 10,354 ton tanker "Taria," first put in service by the Dutch in 1939. It is one of the largest and newest British tankers. It carried 15,000 tons of oil from the United States to England. But the 15,000 tons are now floating in the ocean.

The mission in the storm was worth it. The loss of the "Taria" and its valuable cargo will be a painful blow for Mr. Churchill. The ship is lost; it is too seriously damaged to reach port.

The captain holds the course for a time. The storm weakens, but the rain keeps falling. The clouds drop lower to about 300 meters. Visibility is bad. Maybe they will not find another steamer. There is not a ship or smoke cloud to be seen. Finally the captain, who has taken the controls again, spots smoke in the distance. The ship slowly draws nearer, and turns out to be a heavily loaded old 7,000 ton freighter. It sits deep in the water and is making headway with difficulty. It plows straight on. Either the captain has not seen the plane, or thinks that it is English.

Whatever the reason, the ship keeps going, and lets the plane come nearer. The captain decides that the ship is English, and probably loaded with grain. The front guns fire a few shots to encourage the crew to abandon the vessel. Now Tommy seems to have recognized the seriousness of the situation. The crew hurriedly piles into the lifeboats as the plane circles overhead.

Schindler plants two bombs on the steamer's deck. The old ship breaks in half. The bow and stern are visible for a time. Then there is only white foam and lifeboats.

Oil and grain — two important products for England! The captain is satisfied and gives orders to head home.

The home flight is uneventful at first. The enemy ships have vanished again. The captain makes notes for his report. The crew eats. Soon they are near England's southwest tip.

The tip of land is under them. The tail gunner shouts into the radio: "English fighters!"

Instantly, everyone is ready for battle. The lieutenant holds the course, while all the guns prepare to welcome the Tommies.

"Three Spitfires," the tail gunner shouts into the radio. The guns are already firing on the attackers.

Several bullets from enemy machine guns cut through the fuselage and fly out the other side, ripping big holes in the side of the airplane. But that is not dangerous, and does little harm to the loyal craft. The holes can be repaired easily.

The English aren't bad shots, and stay behind the big plane.

The commander gives the tail gunner a brief order, then banks sharply. He wants to see the enemy fighters himself. The battle lasts a while, but the Tommies seem to have great respect for the large craft. They keep a healthy distance.

The tail gunner succeeds in hitting one of the three broadside.

The Spitfire is quickly in flames and breaks up before the Tommy has time to bail out.

His two comrades circle around the "Condor" for a while before disappearing in the direction of England. One trails a white cloud of gasoline behind him. He took a hit.

"Well, we're done with them," the captain says, and sits up in his seat. "They certainly punched some holes in us, but thank God don't seem to have hit anything serious."

"The mission was worth it, captain," replies the lieutenant. "We can chalk up two more ships on our tail and a considerable number of tons. And we can add another Tommy fighter to the four we already have."

Soon they reach the northern coast of France. Schindler's planes have returned, though one lost an engine to flak. The crew is safe and landed the plane. The comrades sunk another two ships. They can be satisfied with the night's work.

The field is underneath. The captain shakes the wings three times, and the plane is greeted with cheers.

Soon they will be back in action. German long-range bombers are doing their part to bring England to its knees.

Long-Range Bombers

As the name suggests, long-range bombers are planes capable of flying long distances. The German Luftwaffe is using such aircraft for the first time in history to attack British merchant shipping far out in the Atlantic. Their range reaches far into the north, hundreds of miles off the Irish coast, and down to the African coast. German long-range bombers have proven to be very successful at destroying enemy commerce, making major contributions to the Battle of the Atlantic.

The four-engined Focke-Wulf "Condor," developed from the passenger plane of the same name, is particularly well-known. Before the war, it set world records. Its high speed, bombing load, and wide range have made it a dangerous weapon. Many English convoys have been surprised by it, losing their biggest and most valuable ships to its bombs. Long-range bombers often disrupt convoys, making them easy prey for German submarines.

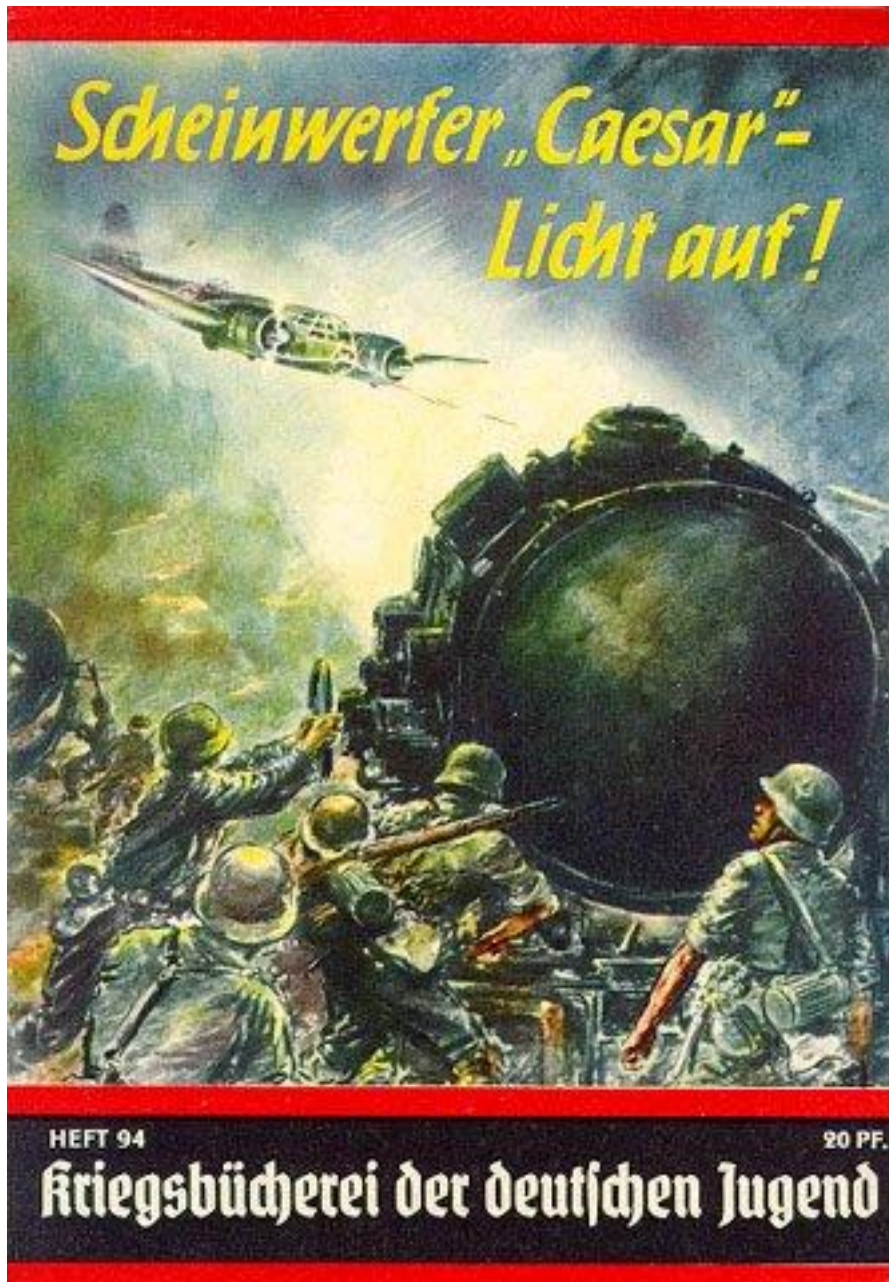
Great Britain quickly realized that the long-range bombers were a threat to its merchant fleet and to its supply lines. The British Admiralty has armed its merchant ships with flak guns of every variety, used barrage balloons, and increased the escort force. The increased defences makes attacking ships in the Atlantic one of the most difficult missions. The long flights alone can exhaust the crews. Finding the convoys spotted by reconnaissance plants demands a high level of skill. Flying blind in bad weather and in icy conditions is a daily necessity. Often they fly distances that would have earned world records in peace time, when it was not necessary to fulfill military tasks as well.

Attacking armed merchant ships, particularly in convoys, requires courage and skill. They must fly low to hit the small targets, disregarding the heavy fire from the ships they are attacking. If the first bombs do not hit directly, they have to try a second and third time. Convoys are often accompanied by long-range planes. Along the coast, they even have to reckon with enemy fighters.

Long-range flyers know that attacking hundreds of kilometers out into the Atlantic, far from home, is dangerous. If they are brought down by enemy fire, they have to rely on themselves. In most cases, an emergency landing at sea means death. Still, the quality of the planes and their pilots' abilities have brought some long-range aircraft back home, even with an engine destroyed. Each mission requires full readiness for action. Every ton of enemy shipping sunk or damaged testifies to that.

Source: Carl G. B. Henze, *Fernbomber über dem Atlantic. Erlebnisse einer 'Condor'-Besatzung im Kampf gegen England* (Berlin: Steiniger-Verlage, no date, but 1941). This is #88 in the series "Kriegsbücherei der deutschen Jugend."

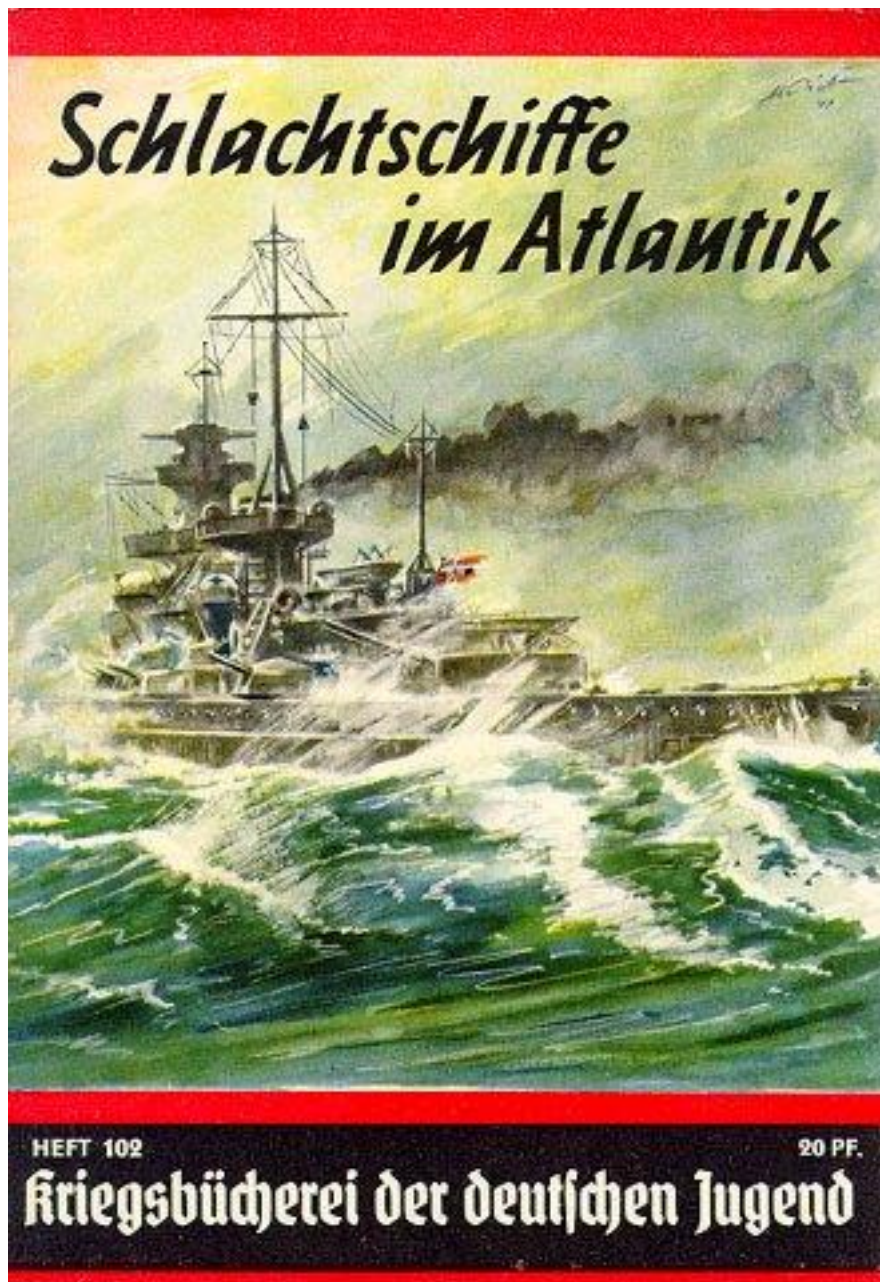




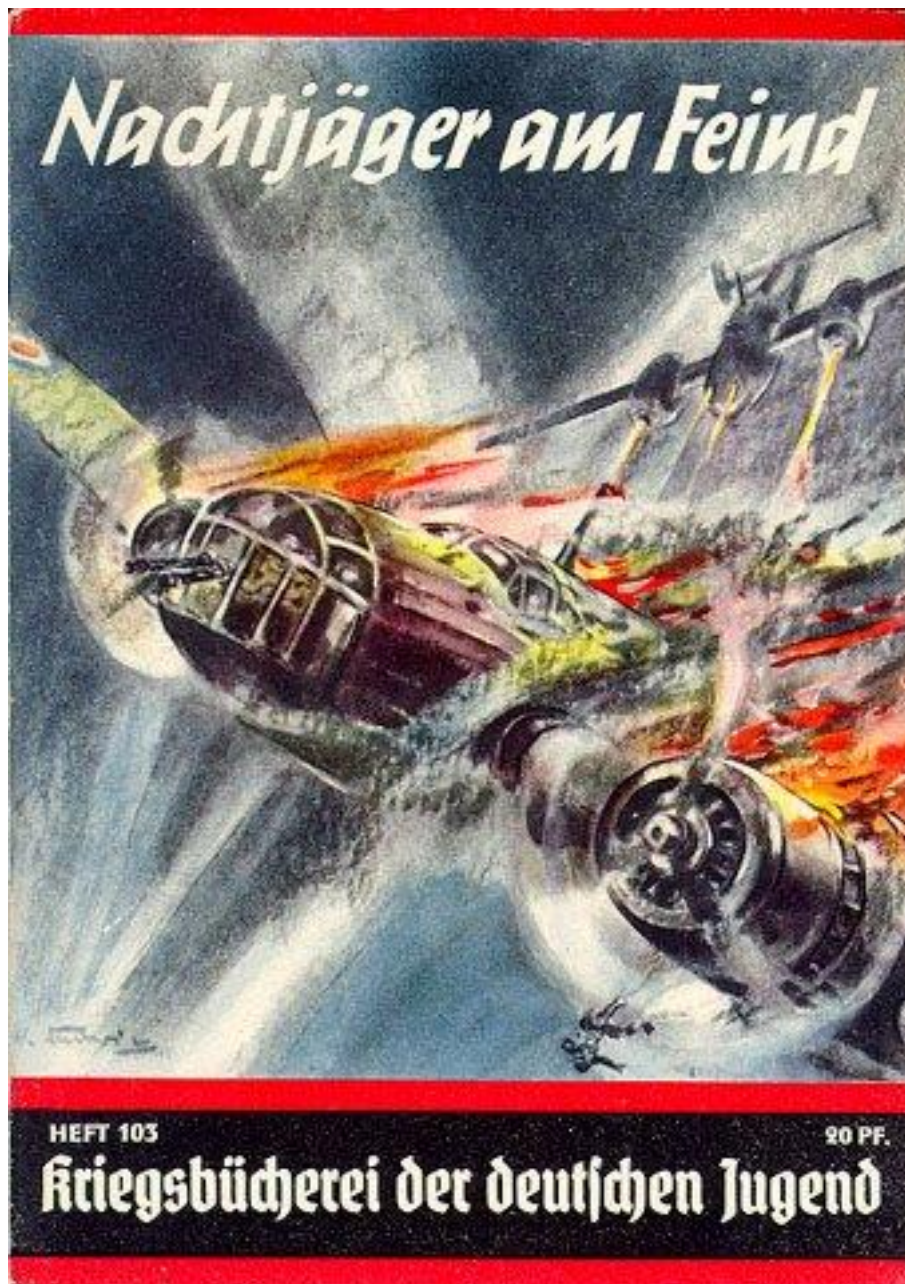
"Spotlight 'Caesar' in Action" (no. 94)



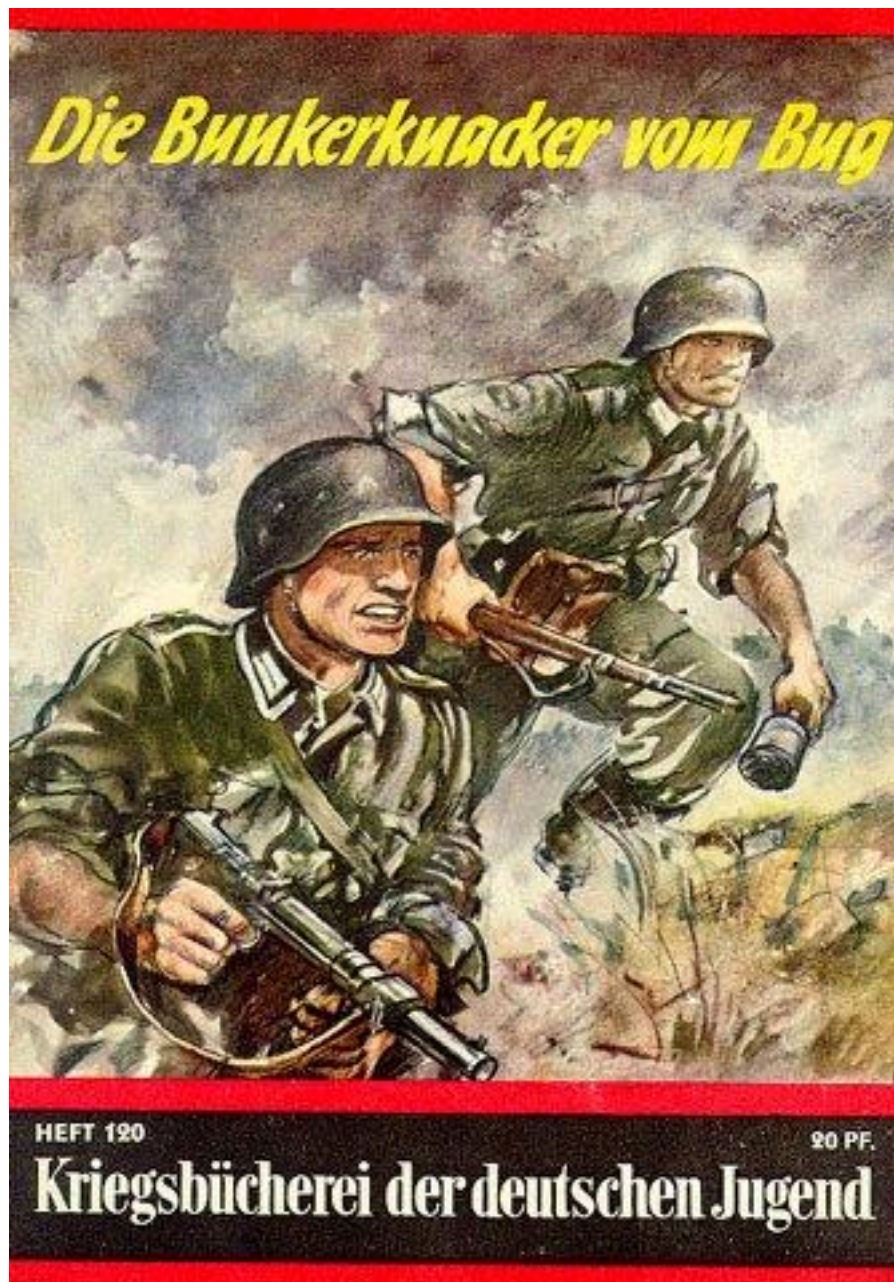
"Flamethrowers in action!" (no. 98)



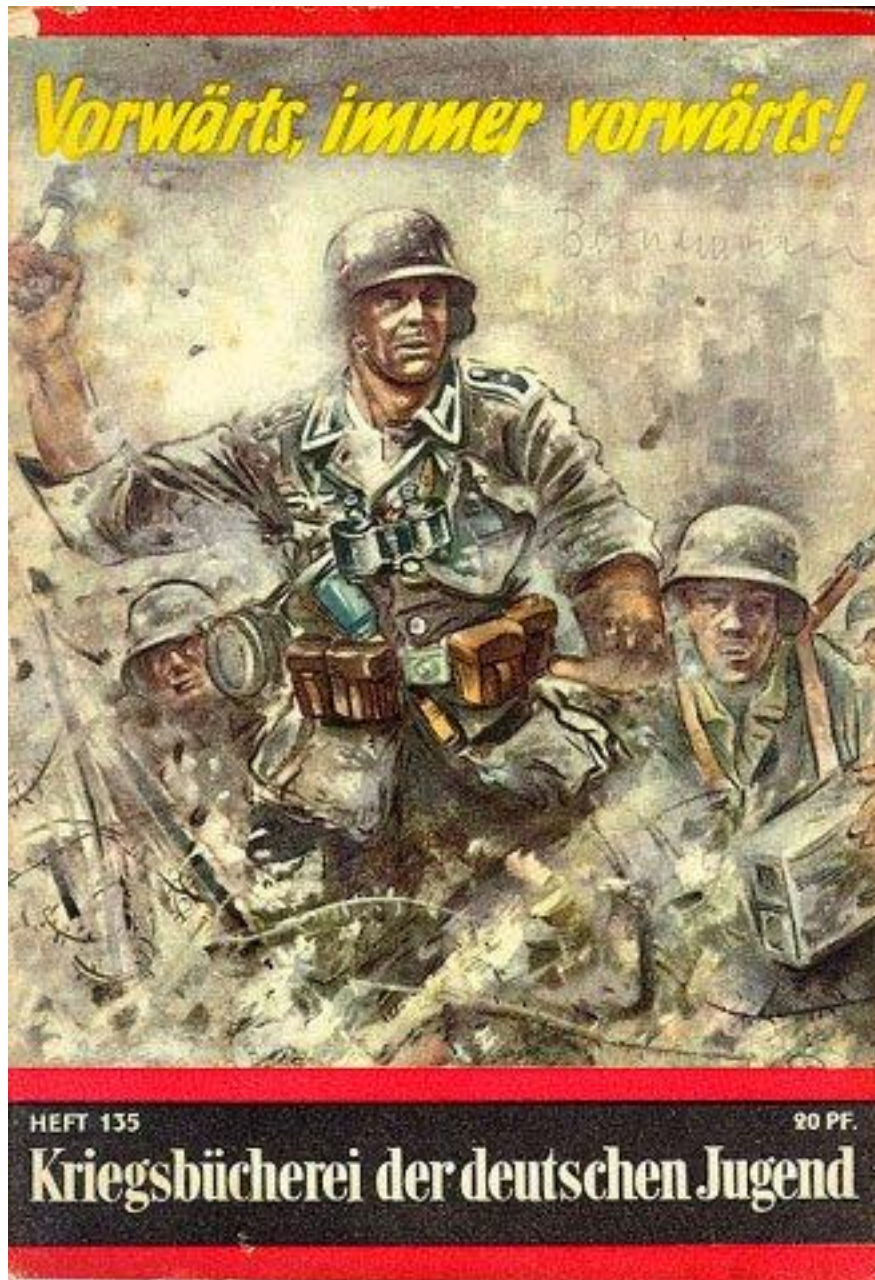
"Battleship in the Atlantic" (no. 102)



"Night Fighters Attack the Enemy" (no. 103)



"The Bunker Cracker of the Bug River" (no. 120)



"Onward, Ever Onward!" A story about the early months of the infantry campaign in Russia. This includes the illustrations, which means the page will take a while to load. (no. 135)

Onward, Ever Onward!

by Walter Memmingen

The sun beats down mercilessly from the cloudless sky. For weeks its scorching rays have struck the parched earth. The air shimmers above the waves of grain. The dull green leaves on the trees hang limply. The sap oozes from the pines and firs. The reflected light from the streams and small lakes is so bright that it hurts the eyes. The roads are bright yellow ribbons. Dust clouds rise above them. The fields and meadows to either side are almost covered with a thick layer of dirty gray dust. The landscape is almost lifeless under the heat. The only cooling comes during the brief nights. There is even frost at times. As the large fireball of the sun sets in the evening, a light mist rises from the marshy forests and the lakes. In the morning, the dew covers the grass and branches, almost as if it had rained during the night. An hour after sunrise, all again is dry, and the long pitiless heat covers the forests and fields. This is summer in the Soviet Union, through which the long columns of German infantry are marching.

At dawn on 22 June they broke through the Bolshevik lines along a front that stretches thousands of kilometers. By mid-day, as they were resting by the side of the road, their comrades in the armored divisions were chasing the retreating enemy. They marched, and kept marching. The heat dried out their bodies. Their canteens were usually empty before noon. There was not enough for long, thirsty gulps, only enough to wet dried out lips. Dust covered their uniforms. Their faces are dripping with sweat. Their sun burned their skin. Their feet are burning. The roads and paths are torture. For kilometers they march through sand. They sink to their knees. The boots slip. They may follow a stretch almost like cobblestones that shake the bones. Each stone can be felt. A forest seems to promise shade to the weary columns, but brings new problems. Most forests are marshy and breed multitudes of bloodthirsty insects. Swarms descent on the troops. Smoking does not help, nor do slaps with broken off branches, nor a handkerchief over the face and neck. The only rescue is to march out of the forest into open, unshaded fields.

The day begins early. The first light is scarcely visible when the men are wakened from a short, exhausted sleep. The column reforms, and soon the columns are on the move again, another day of burning heat, dust, sweat, burning thirst, and millions of bloodthirsty insects. Each day's goals are murderously far apart. The panzer units are ahead. The infantry must follow. Late at night they seek a place to sleep. The men sink down exhausted. Many are so weary that they do not even want to eat. Yet they are not finished. The weapons must be cleaned, the equipment cared for, watches posted. "Water" is

their first cry. Not water to drink, for the water in the streams is not potable. The men take turns pouring pails of dirty gray water over each other to wash away the dust and sweat. That raises their spirits. When the sun has set, the men sleep on the bare ground. The summer nights are short. It really never gets dark. The last glimmering of the sunset blends in to the first rays of dawn. Who can comprehend what the German infantry has accomplished in this burning summer days of 1941? No one who has not marched with them, hour after hour, day after day, week after week. And as the forward detachments needed help, they were there. The difficult march is followed by hard battle against a pitiless, determined enemy. Weeks of marches and battles follow. Powerful storms occur often. Then the roads and pathways turn into rivers of mud.

The tough loam almost sucks boots off the men's feet. The shoulder aches under the burden of the weapon, the arms grow limp from carrying heavy cases of munitions. When the sun breaks through again, the columns steam as the



soaked and sweaty uniforms dry. They move every forward toward the rolling thunder of battle. The enemy must be thrown back, surrounded, destroyed. The enemy must have no rest, even if they almost collapse from the effort. They know the enemy, a threatening monster beyond human understanding. The decayed and brutish air of Bolshevism surrounds them, full of hatred and malice. The mass of the enemy are dull and vicious, armed with primitive weaponry. But their weaponry, their tanks, their guns, their airplanes, their landmines, are inexhaustible. Thrown back a thousand times, they were always back for more. The enemy, an offspring of hell, wants to transform the

world into hell. As a result, all of our troops are filled with the drive to destroy this threat to humanity, regardless of difficulty and death, despite endless effort and plagues. In destroying the enemy's masses and equipment, they want also to destroy the spirit behind this devilish tool, to frustrate its destructive plans.

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Lieutenant Volker's company has been marching since early morning. The paths are bad throughout the country. The company commander gave the order to loosen the uniforms early in the morning. The men opened their collars and rolled up their sleeves. Their faces drip with sweat. The dust almost covers their

eyes. It hangs over them like a dull cloud and descends again on them. They march forward, hour after hour. The company has been sent on a mission to P. Bolshevist stragglers attacked German supply troops there the previous night. The partisan base is known. The mission is to destroy the enemy. The mission gives spring to their step. Finally, something other than eternally following after the faster units.

Corporals Lenz, Gellert and Petermann march at the head of the first unit. Their firm, steady tread determines the company's pace. They are experienced men. They know how important it is to keep up a steady, machine-like march. No tripping! That unsettles those behind. Nothing is more exhausting than moving unsteadily. The march is almost easy if the leaders are relaxed and steady. The three corporals can do that. They have years of experience. Their legs do the work automatically. That leaves the mind free to dream and think.

Corporal Lenz, on the right, is a tall, smiling Westphalian farmer. He is thinking of the letter he got last evening. His mother had written about the goings on at home.

The grain is being harvested. The crop is good. Unfortunately, there are too few hands. Perhaps he could help, as he did last year after the campaign in France? Will they soon be done in this distant enemy land too? What a good mother, thinks Corporal Lenz. She is dreaming! A leave for him to help with the harvest? Not likely. They were done by now in France a year ago. Then too he marched at the front of the company. Day after day. The achievements were astonishing. But the country was entirely different. There were roads there! They were good roads, even if they seemed to run on forever. Whenever one came to the top of a rise, the road stretched into the distance. These roads seemed almost endless. One could only keep marching.

The land was rich and beautiful. There were lovely villages and beautiful cities. It was almost too elegant for the farmer's son, who was used to hard work from morning to evening to earn his daily bread. But everything in the Soviet Union is different. The roads are awful, the cities and villages decaying. The land should be rich, yet there is only wretched poverty and hopelessness. Is that the result of Bolshevism, Corporal Lenz wonders. He has read and heard so much about it. What a dreadful doctrine it must be, to allow the land, the people's source of food, to decay, to make people so dull and indifferent. God save us from such a danger, Lenz thinks, as he shakes his head.

"Hey, are you dreaming again?" It is his friend Corporal Gellert. He marches in the center. He is short, but strong as a bear. He is a soldier with body and soul.

His comrades are too, but Gellert came to his profession with true passion. He has had no rest since the campaign against Bolshevism began. He envies his comrades in the panzer units, who face the enemy every day. As they got their orders this morning, he stretched out and said to his friends: "Finally!" He is thinking about how he will deal with these treacherous partisans. They have had no direct contact with the enemy since the morning of 22 June, when they broke through the enemy lines. They are always marching, always behind the panzer units. Corporal Gellert knows that the infantry's day will come. He says it all the time. No one can stop him. When his comrades tire of the endless marching, he consoles them with his standard line: "We're not done yet." Today will probably be Corporal Gellert's chance to face the enemy. He is eager, and would prefer to be marching double quick.

"So what are you thinking about?", Gellert asks his friend.

Lenz answers: "Nothing important, Gellert."

"Well, OK," Gellert laughs. He is not concerned. He knows that no one can get Lenz to talk when he does not want to. He turns to his friend on the left, Corporal Petermann. The prospect of combat has put Gellert in a good mood. The hard marching has gone on long enough. The "long hours of contemplation" of his friend Lenz is not his style. He always says marching is easier when one is talking and when a song "oils the joints."

Corporal Petermann is as tall as Lenz, and even quieter. That makes him a wonderful conversational partner. Gellert is happy to be the only one talking. Petermann, who always has a pipe in his mouth, grunts "Hm!" or "Yup!", which convinces Gellert that he has an attentive listener. Petermann always has his pipe. He smokes it "cold" and "hot," in sunshine and rain. His comrades claim he never takes it out of his mouth even when he is sleeping. One cannot talk with a pipe in one's mouth, which explains Petermann's silence. But his comrades are deceived. Petermann is quite capable of talking, and his silence is no evidence of an inability to think. He is always alert. If he says something, it hits the nail on the head. The company's knowledge of Bolshevik Russia comes from Petermann, though no one has realized it. And the men know a lot about the meaning and goal of the battle in the east. They have been able to compare the order and industry at home with the disorder and indifference in this country.

They have seen how dreadful and dangerous a system is that has ruined all areas of human life and unleashed the basest human drives. Every last man in the company is filled with the will to destroy the Bolshevik enemy. That is

Petermann's work, though his comrades think him a quiet man who is always smoking.

"What do you think, Petermann"?, Gellert asks, "Do you think we'll encounter Bolsheviks today?"

Petermann shrugs his shoulders and says nothing. Gellert was not expecting an answer. He talks, his comrade Petermann listens, as his opinions of the cowardly partisans who attacked his comrades from the rear develop. "It's fine with me if the Bolsheviks fight at the front. They are soldiers and are fighting as best they know how. But to fight behind the lines, robbing, murdering and plundering, they are not soldiers. They are wild animals. Or do you disagree, Petermann?"

Petermann shakes his head, and Gellert keeps talking. "If we meet such a band, they had better write their wills. I wish we there there already!"

Gellert gazes ahead. The land looks the same. The sun burns down. The march continues, the ranks loosen up. Gellert looks back and notices.

"The company is slowing down," he says to Lenz and Petermann. "But we have to keep moving!"

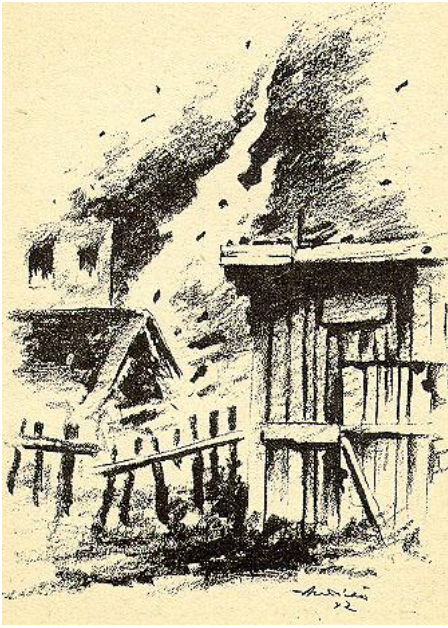
"Start singing," Petermann mumbles through his pipe. Those are his first words of the day.

Gellert begins immediately. "Let's sing a song," he shouts back. He sings the first lines by himself, then the men start joining in, and soon the whole company is singing. The march picks up, the ranks close. The men sing of home, of their loved ones, of fighting and dying, as they march firmly onward.

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The long hot days of summer are over. Heavy rains began at the end of August. They brought with them cool days and cold nights. A foretaste of fall is in the air. The sun still shines at times between high white clouds, but its strength is gone. Dust and heat are gone. But the roads are softened by heavy rains. Mud and mire are unpleasant marching companions. The knee-deep muck makes marching a torture. No road service is of any help. After a column of heavy vehicles has passed by, any improved road is left in ruins. The roads are insatiable, a thick surface over a swamp.

Volker's company has been in battle for a long while now. Corporal Gellert was right. The infantry was needed. The company had some sharp skirmishes with



scattered Bolshevik troops in late summer. The panzers could not pursue the enemy through the marshy forests. They had to be destroyed by infantry. They fought through the forests, chasing down thousands and thousands of Bolshevik soldiers. Bloody action had to be taken when some of these scattered forces carried on partisan warfare in civilian clothing behind our lines. The war was hard and pitiless. There was no alternative. The company was often roused in the middle of the night when such bands attacked villages, burned houses and bridges, drove off the animals. They also attacked German supply columns, messengers, railway lines, trains. The German infantry put a hard and unforgiving end to this banditry.

One day, the order came to march south. There was a large lake down there where an encirclement battle was in progress. The march demanded everything they had. Those who believed they knew everything about marching learned differently. The company broke all previous records. Their work was rewarded. Numerous Bolshevik divisions and huge amounts of weapons and equipment were captured or destroyed. The company suffered its first painful losses during the bitter battle. Captain Volker, only recently promoted to that rank, fell. His successor was seriously wounded the next day. A lieutenant now commanded the company. They still called themselves the "Volker Company." Captain Volker had formed the company two years earlier. They owed the best of their training and spirit to him. They would remain the "Volker Company," even if someone else commanded them. They buried their commander on the banks of the lake, along with their other fallen comrades. They planted birch trees around the graves and decorated them with flowers. They built a simple, tall cross. The company had changed. Reinforcements from home had arrived. Corporal Petermann had been promoted to sergeant, and led the first platoon. Corporal Lehmler had taken over his unit. Lehmler was a gain for the first platoon. Everyone agreed. He knew his way around. He was a practiced soldier, expert in using every weapon. No one was his equal in gathering provisions. No matter how picked over the area, Lehmler always came back with a cap full of eggs, a chicken or two, or something else edible. "If there is a chicken, there are eggs, and if there are eggs, there will be chickens," as he always said. No one objected. The first platoon soon got the job of finding something to eat if supplies failed. The two other platoons took on preparing camp, the watch, and maintaining weapons and equipment. It was a good division of labor.

Lehmler managed to provide variety in the nourishing, but rather monotonous rations. It was amazing what he could do with a few eggs! A hot plump chicken breast after a dreary rainy day is wonderful! The fields provided vegetables, the forest mushrooms and berries. Lehmler's ability to satisfy the stomach was as important for the platoon's morale as Petermann's pointed remarks on the depravity of the Bolshevik foe and the necessity of his annihilation.

After the encirclement battle in the south, the company moved around. First to the east, then north, then west. Here and there there was a battle. Usually the company was with the battalion. Sometimes the whole regiment was at the front, or in a defensive position. Many men could not understand why all this everlasting marching was necessary. "What is going on?", they complained. "We're always marching around the countryside without getting anywhere." Sergeant Petermann always said: "Shut up, you chatterboxes. Let me tell you a story. It happened at the Battle of Tannenburg in 1914. A regiment had been marching around for days. The troops were beginning to think something was wrong, and complained about the leadership. The regiment stopped on the fourth day. The commander rode past and shouted to the company: "Men, thank you for your work these past few days. You had a decisive role in a big victory. A whole Russian army has been surrounded and destroyed. Nearly a hundred thousand men were captured, along with huge masses of material."

The men began to understand. One of the brighter lads figured out what had happened, and said: "Comrades, the leadership has the head, we've got the legs. Both won the battle." And he was right. "And today?" Petermann drew the conclusion. "Has the leadership made a mistake so far? Can we march?"

"Good guy," said Corporal Gellert, and punched his neighbor in the ribs.

A laugh rolled through the ranks. Yes, that is how it was! Don't complain about the leadership, the head. Everything was in order. And their legs would not fail either.

Gradually the company moved north. There was talk of a new battle of encirclement. What that true? The officers did not say anything. There was no point in asking them. Even if they knew anything, they would not say so. That is how it has to be. One does not tell the enemy weeks in advance that one is planning to attack him where he least expects it.

Bad news from the south reached the company one day during its midday rest. The company commander himself brought the news. A band of partisans had crossed the lake and attacked the clean-up troops. The Bolsheviks tore down the

trees they had planted around their comrades' graves and leveled the graves. A Bolshevik commissar had mockingly destroyed the large cross the company had built. The news enraged the company. They clenched their fists in anger. Corporal Gellert bellowed like a bull: "The damned crooks!" Sergeant Petermann too had something to say: "The beasts! They don't even respect the grave or the cross. This is the fruit of 25 years of Bolshevik education. Bolshevism is the embodiment of evil, and the commissars are its bloodhounds. The only thing to do is exterminate them!"

The company was in a new position at the beginning of September. It was clear that something was in the works. The company was on the south side of a 120-meter wide river, which had to be crossed. Even the dumbest could see the preparations. Numerous big guns arrived, and began shelling. Heavy infantry weapons were accumulating on the banks.

Pioneer groups appeared every evening. Their rubber boards were well concealed. The bridge-building equipment had arrived. But nothing happened during the day. The enemy had to be kept in the dark, since surprise is the best guarantee of success. The company stayed in its foxholes and waited with growing excitement. When? When? That was their only question. One evening the answer came unexpectedly: "Tomorrow morning."

*

The night was dark and dismal. Only occasionally did a star shine through the clouds. The hours crept by. The men had tried to get to sleep early, but the tension kept them awake. One after another crept to the riverbank. Nothing was to be seen, no shooting, no flares. The war seemed to be slumbering. Just after midnight the attack positions grew lively. The pioneers were readying their equipment. The men had something to do. The first shock troops climbed into their boats. The pioneer officers readied the second wave, along with the equipment barges. Orders were given as to when the platoons and companies should cross. If possible, heavy weapons should cross with the first wave, mortars above all.



The staffs, reconnaissance and medical personnel took their places. The hours

flew past. By 5:00 a.m., all was ready. Quiet prevailed. The attack would begin at 5:30. The heavy weapons would open fire. Every artillery and infantry gun had its target. Luftwaffe bombers would appear at 6:00 a.m. and drop their death-bringing cargo on infantry and artillery positions. By 6:10, the artillery fire would move forward. Two minutes before, the pioneers and their equipment would begin crossing the river. The first wave would be unloaded, and the boats would go back for others. The infantry would follow.

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It is 6:15. Sergeant Petermann's platoon is next to the pioneer boats. The plans are done. The whole platoon will go over with the first wave. The mission is to destroy enemy bunkers on the far side, then with comrades from other platoons to break through the enemy positions. A bridgehead must be established quickly to enable the battalion to bring the heavy weapons over.

Sergeant Petermann lies on his back next to the boat that will carry him and his platoon over. He smokes his pipe and stares into the darkness. His men understand. Everything that needs to be said has been said. Only Corporal Gellert is still moving around saying this and that. He talks with the boat leader about the plan. It is a matter of honor for him to be the first across. He has practiced the signals with his people.

"Get into the boat fast and stay out of the way while we are crossing," he had said over and over again. The minutes pass slowly. The men know what they have to do. First the big guns have to speak. Then it is time to get ready. It is still dark. The enemy's bank is almost invisible. The water shines and rustles past softly.

At 5:30 the silence ends. The German side comes alive. Along the whole front, the heavy guns open up. As the sound reaches the bank, the explosions are already visible on the far side. Then the thunder is on the far side. The individual shots can no longer be distinguished. There is a single loud crashing, whirring, banging and whistling. Earth and rock fall into the river. Splinters whiz past. "Nose in the mud!", Gellert orders. Are the Bolsheviks answering? In the midst of the hellish noise it is impossible to tell. Hands grip their weapons and hand grenades. A few more minutes to go. The Pioneers are ready. It is getting lighter. The shellbursts on the far side are easily visible. They rise from the bank.

Sergeant Petermann has risen from his position. He hides behind a tree. His eye is fixed on his watch. A pioneer lieutenant, the commander of the boats is next to him. A minute before the attack. The pioneers have their equipment stowed in

the boats. They wait for their lieutenant's signal. He raises his hand with the flare pistol. Petermann and his men are ready. Corporal Gellert is watching the bank. Green flares rise all along the front, the signal for the attack. As soon as they are fired, the attack begins. The troops plunge into the river and climb onto the boats. The motors start with a roar. The boats move faster and faster. The water piles high in front of the boats. The pioneers stand upright as if made of iron, the troops crouch down, their eyes shaded by their steel helmets as they gaze toward the far bank. The whole river is alive. The motors sing and other sounds join in. Machine guns are firing from the far side. Pillars of fire rise up in the middle of the river. The Bolshevik artillery is trying to stop the crossing. But the attack is unstoppable. Despite the losses, the pioneers keep going. The first boats charge up the banks at full speed. Corporal Gellert has succeeded in being the first. He and his men are the first to climb up the bank. Already German hand grenades are exploding in a Bolshevik machine gun position. Sergeant Petermann has reached the bank 50 meters further to the right. He has been slightly wounded by a splinter in his left hand. A bandaid is enough. This is no time to worry about minor matters. Two men in Lenz's platoon are seriously wounded, Lehmler's platoon has one dead. The returning boats took the dead and seriously wounded back to the other side. Helping hands are waiting.

Corporal Gellert has destroyed the Bolshevik machine gun with hand grenades. He climbs up the bank with his men. They use every tuft of grass, every depression, as they creep higher. They make it. Soon the first machine gun rounds are reaching their new position. The two other groups are in a tough fight with a Bolshevik bunker. More men are injured. Sergeant Petermann hurries with his men to Gellert's breakthrough. They head over toward the bunker. Meanwhile the boats have returned with the second wave, and a heavy gun. The crew brings the gun forward, protected by the second wave. Petermann creeps toward the bunker and fires toward the slit. Shot after shot hits the bunker. The bunker's crew is silent. Lenz's and Lehmler's platoons charge forward. The bunker is captured. A brief pause for breath. Petermann gathers his platoon in the captured bunker. To the right and left, the other platoons also gain the high ground. Individual Bolsheviks flee. They scatter under Corporal Gellert's machine gun fire. The company to the battalion's right continues its attack. The shock troops are advancing to the right and left. There is still heavy artillery fire at the riverbank. But the boats continue to bring over their cargo. The Pioneers are already at work on a bridge. Petermann's platoon is continuing its advance. Corporal Gellert's platoon is still ahead of them. Once the top of the riverbank has been captured, the enemy fire becomes weaker. The platoon gains ground quickly. Ground is being won to the right and left, even if the battle is still hot in some places. There are still Bolshevik bunkers in action.

The first target of the battalion to which the Volker company belongs is Village N. It is 800 meters from the river. The attacking company is in sight of it. It is ablaze. But the troops see something else. There is a second Bolshevik line just outside the village, with bunkers, anti-tank ditches, barbed wire. They are already encountering heavy fire.

"That is going to be a tough nut to crack," mutters Gellert, who is next to Sergeant Petermann. The platoon leader explains the goal to his subordinates.

"We will move forward 250 meters. That will take an hour. By then some heavy weapons will have arrived. They will support us. The artillery will fire on the positions. The battalion will help with its big guns. We'll pick the best spot to break through the Bolshevik position. The other two platoons will cover us and follow as soon as we have broken through. My platoon will drive through the village, the other two will go around both sides."

Corporal Gellert nods and crawls back to his men to explain. Sergeant Petermann instructs the two other group leaders. There is finally time to care for his injured left hand. While that is being done, he manages to fill his pipe with the right hand. He had kept it between his teeth all the while, but it was cold.

The first rays of the morning sun are breaking over the battlefield. The shells of German artillery thunder past overhead. They are directed to the Bolshevik batteries. Artillery spotters fly past overhead. Three, four, six heavy shells land in the middle of the battlefield, throwing up towers of dust and iron. Splinters whiz past. The infantry is in action again. Here and there a group charges forward for thirty or forty or fifty meters. The machine gun fire increases. The enemy at the village edge intensifies his fire. He can see the approaching soldiers more clearly as they creep through the potato and cornfields. The clattering of his machine guns is no longer noticeable. The artillery thunders over constantly. Gellert is right. It will be a tough nut to crack. It is almost impossible to advance in the face of this wall of iron. The enemy is a master of concealment, and his fortifications are almost invisible. Yet slowly, surely, the attackers near the enemy positions. Many a brave comrade lies wounded or dead, but the others gain the protection of the tiniest shelter of a furrow or hillock. Step by step they advance. Now heavy German artillery is targeting the Bolshevik positions. The battalion is directing its big guns at the new obstacle.

Will the grenade throwers, mortars and infantry guns be enough? What is going on back at the river? Are reinforcements coming?

Between the furrows, in the corn, between the potatoes, the men listen and roll over on their backs to look at the lightly cloudy sky. Help is coming. Group after group of heavy bombers are arriving. Are they going after the enemy positions? Yes! The first are dropping their bombs. They heavy caliber bombs plunge down on the positions. Flames spring up. A deafening noise fills the air. The explosions rise upwards, fall, and rise up again.

One group after another drops its destruction-bringing load. The position collapses under the hail of bombs. Iron, wood, stone and earth fly in all directions, and black and gray clouds of smoke cover the area. The shock troops are ready to move. To take advantage of the enemy's confusion to totally destroy him is the thought that drives them forward now.

Petermann's platoon races toward the smoke. It is like a wall that denies the enemy sight. Corporal Gellert is at the head of his men. He has a hand grenade in one hand as he jumps over ditches, hedges and fences.



He is already vanishing into the cloud of smoke. The sounds of exploding hand grenades show that he is encountering the enemy. Petermann's platoon has broken through.

The men press forward through the ruins. Any remaining resistance is beaten down. Machine guns are firing. Petermann drives a group of startled Bolsheviks before him with his machine gun. Lenz's and Lehmler's platoons capture a whole series of fortifications in which the enemy was beginning to gather after the bombardment. The other platoons are to the right and left of the village. And Gellert?

"Where is Gellert?" Petermann shouts. "Has anyone seen Gellert?"

No one knows anything. In the midst of the fury of battle, and the smoke and explosions of hand grenades, no one could keep an eye on the others.

"Lehmler, gather the prisoners and send them to the rear. Everyone else, follow me."

Petermann hurries to the edge of the village. Past burned down houses and destroyed buildings, the men head for the village centre.

"Do I hear shooting?" Petermann shouts, and speeds up. "That will be Gellert."

They find Gellert in the village square. He is standing by the fountain, holding twenty Bolsheviks captive with his machine gun. Eight of his men are bring new captives from every direction.

"Glad you're here," yells Gellert and jumps up. "I'm cleaning up the place. Lots of stuff here. Chickens too. Where is Lehmler?"

The men can't help laughing. Gellert is quite a guy. There is still shooting going on all around, but he is thinking of hot chicken soup.

The company commander arrives. "The area is secure," he says. "The battalion is ready for a new attack. In the meantime, we will secure the area. The third platoon will bright the captives to battalion quarters.

*

By evening of the first day, the new offensive has gained four kilometers along a broad front. The Volker Company has dug in on a small, wooded hill. There was hard fighting through the afternoon. The Bolsheviks mounted a strong counterattack with tanks. The recognized the danger of the German attack in this area, and attempted to stop the bridgehead, regardless of losses in men and material. The situation as critical at times. But in the end they succeeded in holding the ground and turning back the Bolsheviks. The booty in captives and weapons is large. The attack is to continue at dawn the next day. The pioneers have been at work since afternoon to build a bridge. They are working from both sides. The bridge is to be finished by midnight. Panzer units are ready to cross. They will lead the morning attack. Motorized guns will follow, and the artillery will begin crossing as well. Material was ferried across all day long, and will continue through the night. Trucks to haul the guns, the staff, and communication equipment have been brought over. The field kitchen will follow. Things are lively all along the river. Numerous flak batteries are setting up to protect the bridge and the river traffic.

Petermann's men watch the enemy from their foxholes. The enemy lobs a shell over occasionally to tear up the ground. It has been a hard day. Some comrades have fallen. And Corporal Lehmler has done his duty. A stove is at work in a safe corner. Since nightfall, a dozen chickens have been cooking in the put. Petermann sits with the platoon leaders in a ditch that serves as headquarters. He

smokes, and is as quiet as ever. Lehmler checks the pot from time to time. He is secretive. Does he have a surprise? He's up to it. Perhaps -- -- -- ? Does he not always say: "Where there are chickens there are eggs?" Lenz is writing in his diary with a candle. Only Gellert is talking. The day's events are vivid once more as he recalls them. "Listen," he says. "Tomorrow the Army Supreme Command's report will once again say: 'In the East, things are going according to plan.' And in a week? Well, the home front will be astonished, I think."

*

The Volker Company is on the march again. It is the third day of the big new offensive. Yesterday morning panzer units joined in the attack. Late in the morning the breakthrough happened, and the tanks had open space before them. The battle with Bolshevik artillery was the day's high point. Bombers joined in once more, and in conjunction with artillery and the tanks destroyed the batteries that were giving the last resistance. The long lines of motorized columns rolled past. The infantry got to rest for the rest of the day. "Good," Corporal Gellert said. "If we rest today, we will be ready for action again tomorrow."

He was right. New orders came that evening: "The division will follow the panzer formations on 7 September to D., then turn to the west and take the high ground by T. on the same day." As they studied the map, they realized that meant a march of about 60 kilometres.

"We're spoiling our superiors," Corporal Gellert said. "They always want more. Well, we'll put new soles on the shoes."

The company leaders gathered that night to tell the men the plan. A big success was coming. It depended on reaching their goal tomorrow.

The company has been marching since early morning. There was a short rest at mid-day, just long enough to get lunch from the field kitchen and eat it by the roadside.

A fine rain had been falling since 10 a.m. The road turned slowly into mud. The heels sunk in with each step. It was miserable. Lenz, Gellert and Lehmler, the group leaders, marched at the head of the whole company. They marched unswervingly onward. The men followed. Corporal Gellert began singing when the rain started; the men laughed, then joined in. Then Gellert told jokes to keep morale up. Now it was 4:00 p.m. The company had been silent for hours, and the men were grim. Several comrades hung on to the baggage wagons and let themselves be pulled along. Men and animals were at the end of their strength.

The general was waiting at the intersection where the division was to turn west. He had been standing there in the rain over an hour.

With his hand on his cap, he greeted the exhausted men. His bright eyes sparkled. The eyes seemed to say: "Keep it up men, there will be fighting today."

The message was understood. The shoulders straightened, the step firmed up, the ranks closed. The column stopped. The men stand by the roadside, scarcely able to raise their heads to see the reason for the break. A motorcycle messenger approaches. The rider is moving fast. Several men become alert. The officers stand in a group and raise their binoculars. An enemy, the men wonder?

Suddenly the order comes.

"The regiment will attack the height in front of us. The first battalion goes right, the second battalion left. The third battalion follows the first."

The company heads slowly toward the height. The lead men are under fire. The city behind the height seems to be occupied by strong enemy forces. The enemy is completely surprised that German troops are here, and is thrown into confusion. Its uncertain leadership has no idea what to do. As evening falls, the first Bolshevik scouts head up the hill by T., only to meet the devastating fire of German infantry. The height is firmly in German hands. Now everyone realizes



which this forced march was necessary. The height near T. is close to the crossing at D. The important Bolshevik retreat route to the east runs through it. They've closed off the retreat route by seizing the most favorable position.

Although exhausted by the march, the men cannot think of rest. They spend hours establishing their position. They know that the enemy will try to break through in the morning. That will mean hours of heavy artillery fire, and attack after attack of the Bolshevik masses whom their commissars brutally order to attack German positions a dozen times or more. They also know that no power on earth will drive them from the position. The area is made for defence.

There is a long, steep cliff in the direction of T. Any enemy movement is easily visible. If the enemy masses approach from the city, they will be exposed to German fire. The city itself will soon fall under German artillery fire. The approach to the city from the west is visible for kilometers. The Bolshevist divisions will try to escape from that direction. They will not succeed.

*

The infantry division has been a living barrier on the height by T. for two days and three nights. They have stopped desperate Bolshevist attempts to break through. The long cliff is battered by constant firing from Bolshevist artillery. The enemy attempted attack after attack, and attack after attack was broken by the fire of the German defense. Their corpses pile up in front of the German lines. They attempted to attack, with and without artillery support, at every hour of the day and during the protecting darkness of the night. The ever watchful German defence drove them back. The iron ring holds. From the west German forces are constantly attacking the surrounded divisions, forcing them together more and more. The enemy pocket is growing smaller. Devastating German artillery fire and bombs fall on it day and night, from every side. The surrounded Bolshevists are growing desperate. The infantry on the height sense that from the continual desperate attempts to break through the ring. They do not spare men or material.

Waves of five, ten or fifteen groups of dull masses are driven against the fire-spewing German wall. They stagger forward, climb of the hill of fallen comrades, and fall on top of them.

"This is a terrible waste, these constant attacks by dumb masses against our machine guns," says Corporal Lenz. "This is the third day or it."

Sergeant Petermann nods. "It is terrible, but is is typically Bolshevist. The criminal commissars who drive them on care nothing for human life. It means nothing to them. They are trying to save their own skins. This time they won't succeed. They are trapped. We're just waiting for the right moment."

The enemy artillery fire intensifies noon on the third day.

"They are at it again," Corporal Gellert shouts. "They'll be coming soon." The defenders on the height near T. load their machine guns. The heavy infantry weapons are supplied with ample munitions. The artillerymen are ready to fire. The Bolshevist artillery fire lasts longer than usual this time. Shells of every caliber are falling. The height vanishes in a cloud of smoke. The barrage lasts an hour. The infantry hides in their foxholes. The splinters whiz past. The medics

have work to do. Someone needs help here, and there a direct hit has seriously wounded four, five men. The division's reserves are ready and waiting. Still there is no infantry attack. After two hours of murderous artillery fire the forward troops report heavy losses. The reserves prepare to move in.

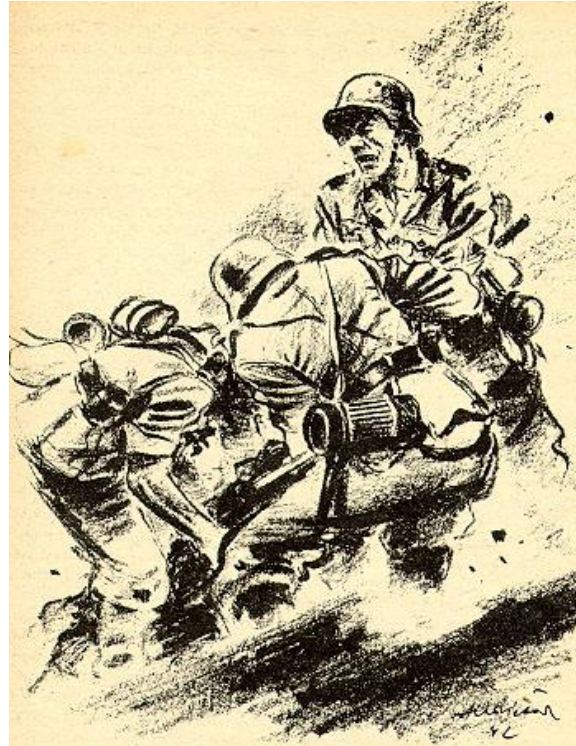
Things have gone reasonably well with Petermann's platoon. One is dead, four with slight wounds have been sent to the rear. The platoon's position is a long ditch. They have some protection. Sergeant Petermann and Corporal Gellert are dug in neck deep, keeping an eye on the valley. The men keep their eyes on the officers. Gellert lowers his binoculars suddenly, pokes Petermann and points to the street. He yells over the noise of the battlefield: "Tanks! Prepare anti-tank defenses!"

A squadron of Soviet tanks is leaving the city, heading toward the height. They plunge through houses and gardens, flattening them. Noisily, the tanks begin to climb the height, spreading out as they climb. There is a gap only where the cliff is too steep for the tanks to climb. The enemy avoids that area. Their weapons could not reach the heights from there. They have yet to open fire. The tank crews may think that the long artillery barrage has flattened the German positions and eliminated the defenders. They may be saving their munitions until they are at the top, and can direct it to the enemy territory beyond. They are wrong. Forward observers direct German artillery fire on the targets, to the satisfaction of the infantry. Round after round falls on them. The first victims are already ablaze. But new tanks keep coming from the city. Now the anti-tank weapons spring into action. The other guns join in firing on the steel giants. The Soviets have a battle on their hands; the height will not be taken without a fight. The guns of the heavy tanks are firing. The large shells make life difficult for the gun crews, and force the infantry into their foxholes. The medium tanks keep moving up. At least a dozen are already smoking or motionless. The others keep moving, coming nearer and nearer to the saddle between the two summits. Their goal is clear: the gap through which the road from the east to the crossroads at D. runs. The regiment's second battalion holds the position. Its position is threatened. The enemy fire is causing losses, while the heavy armor repels the defensive fire. The Volker Company is on the left flank of the first battalion. Petermann's platoon is in the middle. Petermann and Gellert have followed the tank attack with growing concern. The first battalion's guns are getting hot. The higher the Bolsheviks get, the more their flanks are exposed to the first battalion. That will prove fatal to the Soviets. One tank after another is destroyed; they cannot get past a certain point. But now the 52 ton tanks, previously firing on the height, begin moving. If they reach the high ground, the situation will be critical. The defender's losses will be heavy. Gellert crawls toward Petermann. "Petermann, we have to do something about those 52-

tonners. They must not reach the top. They are easier to deal with on a slope. The company must counterattack."

Petermann nods. Gellert is right. But the whole company? That might take too long. And it would involve too many men. They would be a good target for the machine guns of the medium tanks.

"Gellert," he says, "not the whole company. You and I and six or eight others. With hand grenades and machine guns!" Gellert leaps up. He heads for the trench. He rapidly shouts a series of names and gives orders, gathers a bundle of hand grenades and machine guns and ammunition, then dashes back to Petermann. He in the meanwhile has made his plans. The group will follow the heights to approach the 52-tonners. They will have to watch out for their own fire, since that cannot be stopped. They will be between their own and the enemy fire. That can't be helped, as unpleasant as it may be. The 52-tonners must be put out of action.



The ten men climb over the top of the trench. A messenger leaves to report what is happening to the company commander. The men storm toward the cliff. They run alongside the tank, which doesn't notice them in the middle of its battle with the big guns above. German shells are bursting below, and there they must go. Corporal Gellert is twenty or thirty meters ahead. He stops near a 52-ton tank that is firing toward the summit. Movement is slow. The group must try to avoid German artillery fire, and also avoid being seen through the tank's observation slit. The crews of the guns above meanwhile have realized what is happening. They direct their fire such that Petermann's and Gellert's path is open, giving them covering fire. Gellert and three of his men have reached a 52-tonner. Petermann and the others reach a second. The comrades above follow the action breathlessly. Gellert suddenly leaps up the side of the tank. He looks like a fly on the side of the monster. He clambers up to the smooth top of the turret and tries to break open the hatch.

That takes a few minutes. One of his men has followed him, and has a hand grenade ready. When the tank fires, both are tossed around. They can hardly

keep their grip. But they manage it. From above, the men see Gellert and his comrade leap from the tank and head for cover. Scarcely have they vanished when white smoke pours from the turret. Gellert has succeeded in tossing a grenade inside. The first explosion is followed by a second. The tank is covered by a thick black cloud, and suddenly it is on fire. Gellert has moved on. The men have to dive for cover constantly. The German shells force them to take whatever cover they can find. Petermann's group has also dispatched a tank. As Sergeant Petermann leaps from the destroyed tank, a Bolshevik tank's machine gun finds them. The brave soldiers have been spotted. Petermann falls to the ground near the destroyed tank. He has a serious breast wound, and light wounds on both thighs.

Although two are slightly wounded themselves, the men haul their wounded platoon leader to cover next to the tank, through heavy machine gun fire. First aid is administered. What can they do with the seriously wounded Petermann? They look up. It is impossible to take him up there. Should they get Corporal Gellert? He is nowhere to be seen. The German artillery fire increases in intensity. But that signals the end of the misery of these brave men. If they survive the fire, they will be rescued.

Even before Petermann and Gellert decided on their brave attack, the division had resolved on a general attack on T. The desperate tank attack, which was not accompanied by infantry, showed that the enemy was at the end of his strength. The forces in the valley did not believe their eyes. Suddenly the height was alive with advancing comrades. Corporal Lenz brought together both groups of Petermann's unit and charged down to where he had seen his comrades vanish. He did not think about the battle, or on the danger to himself and his men, but only on the comrades he wanted to rescue. Sweaty and breathless, they find the small group around Petermann. The eyes of the seriously wounded man brighten, and he smiles a little. Six men carefully carry him up, followed by the other wounded, who are supported by their comrades. Lenz meanwhile looks for Gellert. He has destroyed a second tank, but then had to take cover under the German fire. He is twenty meters from his last victim, caring for two comrades who cannot be saved. He has a serious wound in his head that drips blood over his face and uniform. He looks awful. At first, he does not recognize Lenz. Then he shouts: "Where are you coming from?" He topples like a falling tree and loses consciousness.

*

The battle of encirclement is over. Back at home, the fanfares of a special announcement announce a huge victory.

The German infantry are on the march again. Petermann's company too. Petermann is missing, and Gellert too, along with some others. Petermann may return. Gellert certainly will. But many others rest in the field that saw their victory.

The German infantry marches and fights. The enemy has not yet been destroyed. The feet may burn. It may be hot or cold, dusty or rainy. There may be marching and fighting. Onward, ever onward!

Source:

Walter Menningen, *Vorwärts, immer vorwärts! Vom Siegeszug unserer Infanterie im Osten* (Berlin: Steiniger-Verlage, no date). This is #135 in the series "Kriegsbücherei der deutschen Jugend."





"Dust Cloud and Neptune: Hunting Convoys in the Mid-Atlantic": A story about a submarine mission. This includes the illustrations, which means the page will take a while to load. (no. 136)

Dust Cloud and Neptune: Hunting Convoys in the Mid-Atlantic

by Herbert Sprang

In gray-green camouflage in an Atlantic harbor, there are enormous concrete bunkers with large bays. They were built almost overnight by thousands of workers from the Organisation Todt or the Reich Labor Service. The harbor water flows slowly through the gaping doors, which allow a little light to reach the interior. That and the electric lights provide just enough illumination to turn the midnight darkness into mysterious twilight.

Like horses in their stalls, here the submarines lay next to each other. One submarine is in dry dock. Hammers fall, welders are at work, and one hears drills. Damage is being repaired. The crew is leaving another submarine, tossing their packs into a waiting truck. A submarine has returned from its mission, and is resting now, safe in the bunker from enemy air attacks. The crew gets a leave after a long mission. A third submarine is taking on torpedoes. Another bay is empty, waiting for a boat that is due to return today.

Things are lively on “U ...” All the hatches are open. Dim light shines from the interior. Boatswain R, the Number One, and several crewmen are loading fresh provisions. Sacks of potatoes disappear inside, as do a case of apples, grapes, meat, sausage, cheese, butter, cabbage and eggs. The fresh fruit is the last of it. The boat is ready, since the fresh provisions are the last that is loaded. Here and there Number One tosses another piece of paper on board and cleans up.

Everything must be in order. The captain is due any minute.

The C. E. [chief engineer] Lieutenant v. E. and the I WO. [first watch officer] Lieutenant L. are talking. Like everyone else, they are wearing the yellowish-green submarine uniform. The responsible officer for the electrical equipment, Engineering Machinist B., steps up to the L. I. A short announcement:

“Electrical systems ready!” — “Yes!”

Diesel engines ready!” — “Yes!”

Diesel Machinist K. goes back to his two diesels. They are named “Mosquito” and “Elephant.”

“Control ready!”

Staff Machinist H., the oldest on board, stays above for a moment. He will not see the light of day for a long time, for once at sea there is rarely opportunity for him to come above.

“Upper deck ready!”

Number One reports to the I. WO.

Everything is ready. The minutes pass slowly. In the distance, a tall slender figure appears. He clammers over the construction, carrying a brief case in his left hand. A blood-red scarf show through a fur vest. The thin face is tense. The captain’s cap is a dirty white.

The crew lines up. They are over forty battle-tested and experienced soldiers who are not sailing against the enemy for the first time with their captain. The L. I. as senior officer takes command.

“Line up! Attention! Look straight ahead!”

As he announces the captain: “Eyes right!”

Captain G. steps over the small plank that is the only connection between the boat and the shore.

“As ordered, the crew is all present. Everything is ready to sail!”

“Thank you! Heil U ...!”

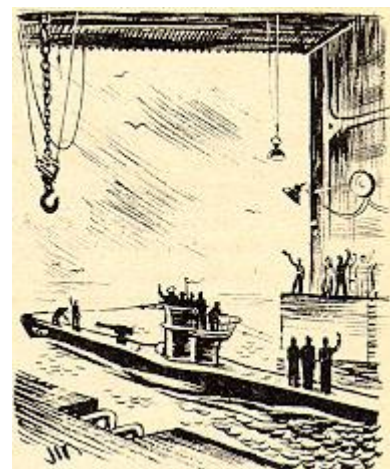
“Heil, Captain!”

“Eyes ahead! At ease!”

The captain speaks to his men. He spares himself a lot of words. He knows them, and that he can depend on them, and what he can expect of them.

The men know him. In brief, he says: “The war begins and ends for us in the locks.”

The I. WO handles the departure.



“All lines are free!”

“Both engines, all ahead slow!”

“OK, Neptune, close the hatches!”

Boatswain R. does his usual duty. Neptune—that is Able Seaman F.—neatly rolls up the lines on deck. They’ll be needed again in the lock. A shudder runs through the ship: both engines, which were silent while in port, are running. They will cease only when the boat returns from its mission against the enemy after many weeks.

The boat glides slowly through the harbor. Comrades from other boats wave.

“A degree to starboard!”

The submarine glides smoothly into the lock and ties up. The closest friends are there, comrades from other boats.

The water gurgles through the lock. Finally the water level has reached sea level. The gates open slowly. The sea is ahead.

“Secure all lines!” — “Both engines all head slow!” — “Course 220 degrees!”

“West! West!”

“Secure upper deck!”

Quickly, all the lines and gear are stowed. The hatches are closed and tested.

I. WO to the captain: “Upper deck clear!” — “Yes!”

Below deck is also secured. Machinist K. is at work. His blond head slips like a weasel through the cargo, stashing a vegetable crate here, the jams there, securing the potato sacks and the spices. The chief engineer checks once again the fore and aft torpedo tubes.

L. I. to the captain: “Lower deck secure!” — “Yes!”

The men on the pier grow smaller.

To the signal station: “U ...” has left!

Neptune does the signaling. A powerful escort leads the way, accompanied by minesweepers. Woe to the enemy pilot that tries to attack! He would be dispatched quickly.

Guarded by the escort, “U ...” heads for the open sea. The first evening clouds are on the horizon. The minesweepers have turned back. Now the escort signals:

“I’m leaving. Good luck!”

“Thank you!”

“Neptune, get up! It is quarter to six!”

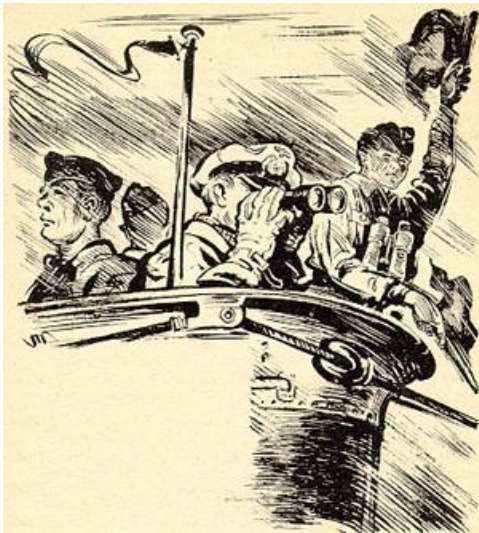
Neptune shifts in his bunk, which is next to the reserve torpedoes.

“Man, what’s up! Are you crazy?”

“No, no, really! We are at sea!”

Erwin, the “Dust Cloud,” does not relax. He always lisps to his comrades. He whispers quietly so as not to wake the others. Neptune stretches wearily and then groans. He has a headache from the hammering of the diesel engines and the boat’s odor. In half sleep, he has confused dreams amidst the ship’s monotonous hammering. He forces his feet into the felt boots. He pulls his greenish-gray leather jacket over his lederhosen and wool jumpers, which he never takes off during a mission. He rinses out his mouth. Taking care of teeth is

essential. His morning chores are done. He takes a quick look in the mirror. Does he have a beard after one night? To his annoyance, there is nothing to see. Neptune is much too young. He is barely 20. His greatest regret is that he has never yet succeeded in growing a proper submariner’s beard.



“To the fore!”

With practiced skill, he climbs up the tower and sticks his head through the hatch. He looks around and sees the black shadow of the old watch standing out against the sky.

Neptune takes over the lookout post.

“All clear!”

First he surveys the horizon. Then he looks up into the night sky. The Atlantic is clear, no steamer, not a ship in sight. The four lookouts on the first watch have the “coffee watch,” as it is jokingly called. For Boatswain R, who takes this watch, always calls down: “A cup of coffee for Germany’s best watch!”

Then Erwin dashes so quickly that “the dust flies,” like a living “dust cloud,” to make the coffee.

The four lookouts examine the horizon centimetre by centimetre. Nothing in sight! What a disappointment!

The sea grows rougher. Close together, the four lookouts stand in the cramped tower, four lost souls in the endless sea. In the twilight one must watch with special care. Twilight is the best time to attack, and the worst time to be attacked. Spray hits their faces. Three hours pass. Finally the first gray appears, the first day at sea.

“To the captain: Dawn!”

The call goes from the bridge to the tower, from the tower to control, from control to the captain’s quarters, and wakes him from deep sleep. He is up in a flash. Pulling his cap over his ears, he heads for the bridge. He is always on the bridge at dawn and dusk.

A form in a blue jumper follows the captain to the bridge, First Mate M. He examines the sky. Good cover. The horizon to the east is clear. The North Star, Procyon and Vega are clear. He repeatedly checks the sextant, then disappears down below.

The sky changes. The silver streak of the moon comes out. The silhouette of the boat is clear.

“Watch out, Heini! don’t write your name in the water!”

The voice of the Boatswain growls down through the tower to the helmsman, who had daydreamed a bit and “written” a long S-curve in the water behind.

“The guy is chiseling his name in the Atlantic!”

The boatswain mutters. The captain has something to say:

“Listen to me up there! Or to the devil with you! You depend on the men down below to do their duty if things get tense up there. More than 40 comrades are depending on you. It’s a damned lousy feeling when someone is up there who we don’t think it watching hour by hour, second by second, without someone always standing behind him with a club. Lookout is not only a question of seeing, lookout is a question of character! Do you understand me!”

“Yes, captain!”



The captain goes below. Silence prevails. The mood is past. Bright day is coming. The fourth hour of watch will soon be over. The eyes are tired and red from the salt spray. The relief is due. They all scan the horizon. Hey!

“Alarm!”

The bell rings shrilly. The watchers jump below in precise order to control. After a last look around, the I. WO closes the hatch.

“Hatch is shut!”

Neptune is already at his station, the aft rudder. From rear control, Dust Cloud’s deep voice

sounds:

“Rear control ready to flood!” — “Flood”

The voice of the L. I. cuts through control. Dust Cloud opens the fast air valves to the dive bunkers, turns a handle and opens the air release. The air hisses out and water pours in. The boat dives. The L.I. watches the depth gauge fall. Lights blink to show him that everything is in order, and that water cannot get in anywhere. The boat sinks like a stone. The boat still pounds.

“Level at x meters! Both engines ahead full!”

The L. I. repeats the captain’s command. The two aft steersman watch the water levels and balance the boat until all the air is out of the dive tanks and they are filled with water.

“Close air valves!” — “Air valves closed!”

Erwin, the Dust Cloud, instantly closed the air valves. The L. I. trims the boat.

“A hundred liters!” — Trim 50 liters fore!”

Erwin turns the handles or runs the pumps. The aft battle station requires rapid action and precise action.

“A man from the bow to control!” — “Aye!”

A man from the tower to the hatch room!” — “Aye!”

Every movement must be reported to the L. I.! The boat must be trimmed for each small shift in weight.

“To the captain: the boat is at x meters!”

“Go to y meters!”

The boat descends slowly. Its second, underwater, life has begun. Silently, all do their duty, Orders are given and repeated in whispers. Each feels as if he is sneaking up on the enemy. The Atlantic rolls over the boat. Safely and surely, the boat moves through the depths of the sea.

After a long time in port, the captain wants to test the crew before crossing swords with the enemy. He wants to know just how far he can trust his boat. Many look tensely to the hull, wondering if it will hold. A foolish question, really; the responsible men know it will hold. Water drips from a grate: drip — drip — drip.

“External exhaust port is leaking!” The announcement sounds a bit too excited.

“Question from the L. I.: Is the interior secure?” — “Yes, the interior is secure!”

The boat goes deeper. The captain, the L. I. and the central machinist watch the gauges, metes and valves carefully. They alone know how far they can depend on the boat. Everyone else trusts them blindly. More and more leaks appear, more and more valves drip. A novice on his first voyage nervously announces:

“Water entering through a stop valve!”

Erwin punches him in the side.

“Shut up! Nothing will happen with our old man!”

The chief machinist also grumbles.

“Are your legs in the water yet? The captain rubs his hands in comic desperation.:

“The young lad is boasting! Great!”

Everyone laughs, because they know everything is OK. The “old man” knows what he is doing, after all. The boat shifts. The enormous pressure of the water has compressed it. Meter by meter the boat creeps deeper. The captain is at full attention.

“Bang!”

A rib has made itself known. The limit has been reached. The captain gives a last look at the depth gauge.

“To the L. I.: surface!”

The captain disappears behind the curtain that separates his space from the rest of the boat. The L. I. brings the boat up.

“Clear the upper deck for surfacing!”

The sea watch is ready to spring up and see what is there and, if necessary, to fight.

“The tower is up!” — “Equalize Pressure!” ...”Pressure equalized!”

The ears pop. the I. WO opens the hatch. Air, air, fresh air streams in! The lungs suck it in. “Both engines full speed ahead!”

“U ..,” presses on into the Atlantic. The danger of air raids is over. Now there is opportunity for a cigarette on the tower. Only one at a time can head up, since each one requires a few seconds to get back down — and seconds can be crucial.

Dark cloud cover brings a magical Atlantic night that weighs on the heart and draws the true sailor back to the sea.

Close together, the men of the first watch stand together. No human soul fails to be silenced by the unending sea and its incomparable wonder.

“There, Neptune, near the horizon, that bright star is Spica.”

So, that is Spica. Neptune dreams a bit. His thoughts wend their way homeward. Can those back home see Spica? What about the small truck in which he had so often ridden? His comrades named him after it. An insult, really. Suddenly he stiffens. Almost automatically, he had been surveying the horizon, no matter where his thoughts were. He sees a light, a ball of light, spouts of flame.

“Lights on the horizon! Signals!”

“You’re dreaming, Neptune. It’s only phosphorescence. Pay more attention!”

Phosphorescence! The sparks of a thousand diamonds, a million emeralds, and sapphires cannot compare with the splendour of the sea. Silver and gold shines around the boat, and a thousand shining sparkles are in the wake.

No one knew who started. First one, then two, then the entire watch was singing.

“In the barracks by the big gate, there stood a lamppost, and it stands there still...” and “Then we sailed around Cape Horn...” and “Off Madagascar...” and again and again the boat’s favourite song: “and if something happens to me, who will stand by the lamppost with you, Lili Marleen?”

Lured by “his” song—he has a picture of Lale Anderson in his pocket—the L. I. comes up top and joins in with his clear baritone. It gets more comfortable. “A cup of coffee for the Führer’s best watch!”

One, two, three fish swim like torpedoes alongside the ship courting each other.. A small black shadow flashes past—a frightened gull. Where do they hatch? The nearest land is thousands of kilometres away. Can they get there? If one of these creatures could rise up and see this monster glide past with its singing watch in the middle of the Atlantic, it would believe in the devil or in Lützow’s wild wide or in the bogey man...

“New watch! Oiled garb!”

The old watch finds its bunks. Soon they are sleeping deeply.

Oops! Suddenly both of Neptune’s legs are hanging in the air. He curses and raises the “railing,” a small bar that keeps him from flying into the neighbor’s bunk in rough seas.

“Shit!” Another has fallen out of his bunk and pulls himself painfully back. Neptune presses both arms and legs against the sides. He lays this way for hours,

defending himself against the boat's tossing. It is easy enough with practice, but it is tiring.

Crash! Crunch! An empty can slides through the room.

Tsschhh!! Heels shift from left to right and back again.

Rumble! A stool in the officers' mess tips over. The devil is loose in the back of the mess. Knives, plates, forks and spoons, glasses and coffee tins are flying about in a wild dance.

Click ... click ...click... Milk cans are falling to the ground. Everyone hears the noise, but each pretends to be fast asleep!

Get out of the bunk again? Let someone else do it!

“L. I.!”

“Captain?”

“What's going on here? Do I have a crew of children? Report to me in ten minutes that everything is back in its place, understand??”

The “entertainment” comes to an end after the captain's sharp command. But the “old man” is right. Had he not ordered last night that everything should be made secure? Look what happened! Everyone's sleep is disturbed!

“Sailor A...!~”

“Lieutenant???...”

“Didn't I tell you to secure everything? Were you asleep all day?? You have five minutes!”

Now he gets to work in the officer's mess.

“Dust Cloud!!!!”

“Boatswain's mate?”

Dust Cloud gets to control. One can't describe what falls on his innocent head. But he dashes through the boat like greased lightning, securing what can be secured, stapling what can be stapled. Finally he cleans up the remaining mess and throws it overboard.

“Boatswain’s mate, all is secured!”

“Boatswain’s mate to Lieutenant: Boat is secure!”

“Captain, all is...”

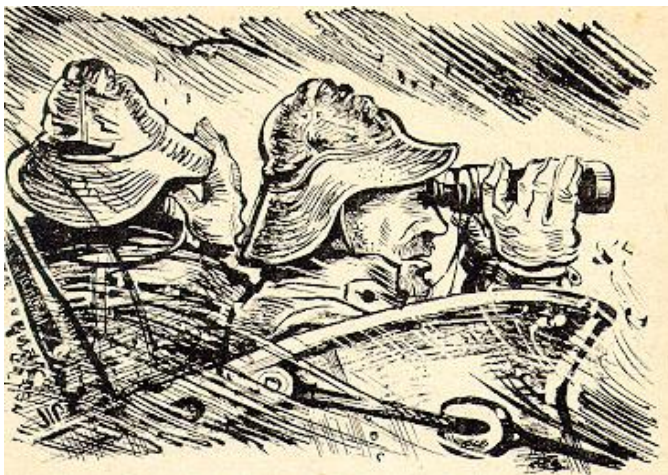
But he is sound asleep again. The noise did not disturb him. But he knew that many of his men could not sleep, and besides, an order carried out poorly is a bad thing.

Morning comes slowly. The boat is bumping along like an old Ford on a rough road. Knives, forks, cups and saucers clatter. Dust Cloud is working in the kitchen. Suddenly the I. WO springs from his bunk with a powerful curse. The whole boat laughs. The bow can hardly quiet down. A particularly rough wave sent a soup bowl filled with morning porridge right into his bunk as a welcoming greeting.

Breakfast can only be eaten standing up. That takes practice. One puts the back against one wall, and the feet look for bracing on the other, and the plate has to be balanced so that the soup doesn’t spill over the edge.

“First watch to the deck! Wear oil coats!”

As Neptune goes above, Mother Nature has prepared a wild scene. Waves five, six or seven meters high surround the tiny boat. The white foam is high above the boat, now it dives down on it and drives it to the side like a toy. A submarine, however, is a stand-up toy. It is the most seaworthy of all ships. It rights itself every time, despite the sea.



It takes all of Neptune’s strength to hold firm. Suddenly a comrade holding watch slips through the green sea, and clings to the periscope. His knuckles are white, but he holds on. The sea won’t get him! The waves roll under the boat. Now it is high above the bridge and has a wide view of the raging sea. He almost seems to be clinging to the

heavens. The blue-gray sea slams into the four once more. The two rear lookouts close the hatch, but a lot of water has already poured into control and into the bilge. More water pours down. They can hardly hear each other.

“Central? — “Attention!”

Dust Cloud’s blond head appears.

Security straps to the bridge!

Four security straps are passed up from below. The men tie themselves in. Now at least they can no longer be washed overboard.

“What time is it?”

Just an hour has passed. Legs and arms grow slowly weary from the waves’ eternal pounding. Three hours to go.

“A cup of coffee for the Führer’s snappiest watch!”

Despite the storm, Dust Cloud manages to get excellent coffee to the bridge. It has to be drunk quickly between two waves, however, or...

The I. WO hums to himself: “The ocean is beautiful when tossed by wind and waves...”

The Boatswain is a bit annoyed. “I’d like to have the guy who writes songs like that here...”

“Well, Boatswain, the song is still lovely. And despite it all, the landlubbers envy us our experiences.”

“Well, I’ve had enough. I’d like to be sitting in a good pub! A hot sun, a thick green oak above, and a tasty cold beer would be nice too!”

Silence again. Each watches his sector.

They all quietly curse the captain. Why have an underwater vessel? Why not build a duck? Why sit up here when it is so calm down below? But that is a mistake. A submarine is not really an underwater vessel. True, when it gets tough, when destroyers are around, one seeks the safety of the depths. Otherwise? Diving means being blind and wasting electricity. That is not why one goes to war. The captain is tough in this regard. They are hunting for

convoys. He doesn't even consider diving, regardless of how the sea rages. Submarine warfare calls for real men.

"Hey, Neptune, if we had beer at sea we'd all be drunk, yes?"

The Boatswain can't stop thinking about it. He plans to buy a village pub later. The I. WO hums on.

"A sea voyage...." Oops! A wave washes the rest of the words from his mouth.

"...is a delight!" Sploosh! He is wet from top to bottom.

"A sea voyage..." Slap! The sea hits the side of the bridge like a sword, and sprays the I. WO in the face.

"...is lovely!!" The I. WO can't be stopped.

"A cigarette to the bridge!" "A cigarette is lit and handed to the Boatswain. It is soggy before it reaches his mouth. He dries his hands and gets another. He gets one puff before the sea puts it out. The cigarette is soaked.

The minutes pass slowly. 240 minutes have to pass in this shitty weather. And one can't daydream even for a second. A second's inattention, and forty comrades lose their lives. One second's inattention may miss the sliver of mast on the horizon, perhaps visible only in that second. A whole convoy may as a result be missed, and with it the success of the entire mission. It is the same on every boat. Everything depends on each individual.

But submarine life is also wonderful. Men who have served on them want to stay with it, even if the sea rages, the potatoes fly off the plates, and the boat is not still for days.

Days have passed since the storm. Still no freighter has been sighted.

"Rear engine! All ahead slow!"

Like a giant whale, the boat sails slowly to the west. The watch scans the horizon with their binoculars. But the Atlantic remains empty.

"I hope nothing has happened to keep the English from showing up?"

But curses or grim jokes do the captain no good. Nothing comes. The men begin to avoid him. During such waiting periods, no real submarine captain can get

along with those around him. He wanders around like a caged lion, snapping at anyone who comes near him. The boat continues along its assigned course toward England's last remaining convoy lines.

The first days of November are over. The sun still burns hot, and the water that sprays in the face is lukewarm. The off-duty watch takes it easy. Recorded music plays over the loudspeakers throughout the boat, awakening longings. It is late in the evening. Inside, one knows that only by looking at the clock. The same yellow light always burns. The crew has the same cramped space at its disposal. Each crewmember gets only one cigarette break a day, and the chance to see the sky.

The captain lies on his bunk and pages through the guidebook to the German Art Exhibition. Suddenly the music stops. The radio has switched it off. The captain listens to the code.

Dit dit dit dah dit dah dit...

Signals fly through the room are caught and quickly written down on paper. The radio mate brings the message to the captain. Captain G. reads. His brow furrows.

“This is ‘U ...,’ ...This is ‘U ...’ Convoy in quadrant zdax attacked. Passenger steamer burning, 5,000 tons sunk. Losing contact. Convoy course is 180 degrees.”

To the south!

“First mate to Captain!!”

“First mate, how far are we from quadrant zdax?”

“X miles, Captain!”

“Good. New course is y degrees. Both engines ahead full!”

The water pours over the bow. Bright white foam streams on both sides. The wake bubbles. “U ...” is on the hunt.

Dit dit dit dah dit...

More radio messages. This time from headquarters.

“To U... To U...! To U...! Attack convoy z!”

The grey wolves gather. From all sides they head toward quadrantzdax. They seek rich prey and speed through the whole night toward the target. “U...” is part of it. The captain is a changed man. His bad mood is gone. Things are happening! Things are happening!

Everyone has the fever of the hunt.

The first masts should be visible on the horizon at about noon, if the calculations are correct. The lookout stares until his eyes pop out. Each wants to be the first to spot the convoy. And it is important to see without being seen.

Ship to the starboard!

Neptune points. The captain does not see anything. But Neptune is his best lookout. He looks through the binoculars again. Nothing? No, is there is a small black stripe?? There it is again!

A German submarine!

They are both searching for the convoy. But it has zig-zagged, and is elsewhere in the ocean. It has vanished, and must be found again. The captain has a difficult job, since the convoy can be anywhere in an area that is about half the size of the old Reich.

Both crews wave and wish each other good hunting. Then both boats go their ways and disappear into the Atlantic. More hours pass. A new radio message from headquarters.

“The weather will be clearing after z o’clock in the area of convoy z.”

The midday sun is high when a dark spot nears from the east at great speed. With roaring motors the airplane glides over the boat heading west to the convoy. More waiting.

The boat changes course.

The captain heads further south, presuming correctly that the convoy will change course as a result of the loss of cover.

There!

Neptune once again is the first.

“Masts on the horizon!”

It is true! There are one, two, three, four small masts. They look like matchsticks. The convoy is there!

Now comes the hard part. Maintain contact, and wait for other boats to arrive. It is a battle of nerves between the convoy leader and the captain! If nothing unexpected happens, the battle will end with a new German submarine success.

Watching the horizon is tiring work. As the best lookout, Neptune takes the prime position and does not let his gaze wander for a second.

“The masts are getting larger!” — A degree to starboard!”

The masts are getting smaller!” — “One degree port!”

The masts are still getting smaller!” — “Two degrees port!”

“Three masts have disappeared over the horizon! Only one is still visible, but it is getting larger!” — “One degree starboard!”

Carefully, carefully the captain surveys the horizon.

“Well, an old escort is suspicious, like a bull elephant. If he sees anything he’ll alarm the whole group!”

The captain knows exactly what he has to do. Captain G. is an old submariner. The large mast on the horizon is still moving about. He looks to the sky with concern. Will the sun stay behind the clouds until dusk? Otherwise the boat will stand out against the horizon. Finally, darkness begins to come. Take care! The transition from light to dark is so fast that even full speed sometimes cannot hinder losing contact. How can one find the convoy then?

“The convoy is zigging to the east!”

Thank God!! Keep an eye on them. Success will come. But what is that?

Suddenly there is a rising cloud of smoke next to the mast on the horizon. It grows minute by minute. A destroyer is heading toward the submarine at full speed. The course is changed. Now there is only one escape:

“Alarm!” — “Dive!”

The boat dives. It surfaces after a short while. The surface is clear. But the convoy has been lost. Other submarines have not yet arrived. God knows where Tommy has gone.

The captain isn't giving up. He chases after the convoy. The sea may pound the tower, everything inside may fly about, even those with good sea legs may tire, but the captain keeps at it. After days and nights of dogged hunting, the convoy is lost. This time, the prey got away.

Those are the last masts the boat sees for weeks. The weeks that follow are really typical of submarine life. For every moment of battle, there are a hundred moments of ordinary life.

One evening a stiff wind blows from the west, straight ahead. The sea pounds over the bow. The wind rises to hurricane strength. Life becomes difficult. Everyone glares at everyone else. These are the hardest days of the mission, but they must be endured. The storm lasts for weeks. What more is there to say.

Always the same faces. They know every detail. K... is bored. Only Erwin, the Dust Cloud, tries to lighten things up with a joke occasionally. Or he just smiles, and the mood lightens up.

“Change of watch! Third watch with jackets and southwesters!”

The first watch comes down wet as dogs. Neptune gets out of his wet coat as fast as he can and gives it to his comrades to dry in the battery room. They he runs like a madman...

Well, four hours of watch are a long time. And one can't get away. And if one can't go above...one must wait until one is below... Neptune runs like a bullet to the head, only to stare.

A small lamp is red: occupied!

Damn! Who's in there?

He has reason to curse. The unwritten law is that the head is left free for the watch. And now someone is sitting in there...!

Neptune pounds the door. Nothing happens inside. He is much too happy to have had the chance. Neptune pounds the door again.

“What's going on there?”

The captain sticks his head out of his cabin. Well, enough pounding. Neptune must wait. He shifts from one leg to the other. He gets cramps. If only it were not red! Every time he needs to ... red! More than forty souls have learned to wait. But now he swears. When the guy comes out, Neptune will strangle him, murder him in cold blood! Enough! Is he going to sit there forever? Three or four comrades are already waiting. All eyes gaze longingly at the lamp.

Finally!

The lamp goes out. Slowly and guiltily, the door opens. Neptune is ready. He has a stream of insults waiting for the guilty party. His best friend comes out and smiles.

“All yours!”

Neptune dashes past like soccer ball heading for the goal.

The daily battle with the red light is one of the many aspects of submarine life.

It is nearly midnight. All is silent. Dim night lights are burning. In the dark bow, the hammocks swing back and forth. In the bunks on either side, the sleepers shift uncomfortably, since the ship is constantly rolling, up and down, port to starboard, up and down, port to starboard.

A light is burning in the officers' mess, where the L. I. is still working on tables and reports and other paperwork.

Finally he closes the books and stands up. He thinks a moment. Should he head for the bunk? He was in the engine room today. The controls really need to be tested. Well, to work!

He goes through the darkened control room to see the night watch. Dust Cloud is sitting tiredly on a sack of potatoes. All this stuff to do!

“Dust Cloud, there is work to do in the engine room today, understand?”

“Yes, Sir. Should I get some food together? And make coffee?”

“Certainly, Erwin!”

The L. I. goes through the officers' quarters past the small kitchen and opens the hatch to the engine room. The noise is deafening. Only the rear diesel is operating, the starboard engine is quiet. The engine thunders to the same rhythm

hour after hour, day after day, week after week, There has not been an hour of quiet since the voyage began.

“Machinist K, prepare to inspect the controls!”

“Yes, Sir, Lieutenant!”

The diesel’s cover is removed. The oily-black interior is visible. The diesel machinist and his men shine lights into the dark and measure to the millimeter the crankshaft.

Nothing escapes their trained eyes. Now and again their oil-stained faces rise, and they reach for some tool or another, or check to see that everything is tight. Then they continue working, tough and doggedly.

Dust Cloud is in control. One pot before him is filled with potatoes, another with sea water. Across from him is his friend Lands, Machinist Corporal L. They are both peeling. The chief machinist watches. His dirty face is weary. He is weary from the eternal life at sea, from eternal watches, from learning and training.

He is the oldest on board, and does not sleep so well any longer. He hardly lies down in his cot before he is back at “his” station. One can tell he has many missions behind him. Also many, many years of training and learning. He always had to learn the hard way. Now he is a stern teacher himself. They have all learned from him, Dust Cloud and Lands included, along with Little Hörst and Slow Bremer, and more besides. He is an excellent trainer for them all. Day and night, and in particular in moments like these, he always has something to say. He may show his walking stick that belonged to a comrade who fell in Poland, and is his constant companion, or it may be maps, drawings, valves, hand wheels, knives. No one knows it all as well as he, and no one on board has as much experience..

The hours pass slowly. A mountain of potatoes have been peeled. The men are still at work in the engine room. Dust Cloud stands up with a sigh.

“Well, that’s enough.”

“Lands, chop the onions. And get some butter. And there must be a little ham left from this noon. I saw it earlier. Bring it along.”

Dust Cloud disappears into the tiny kitchen. Soon a pan of butter is sizzling. With acrobatic skill, Dust Cloud slips in the potatoes. Lands is behind him with the onions.

The noise of the diesel pounds next to the kitchen. The engine check is finished. Both engines are running smoothly. “Mosquito” and “Elephant” are chugging along like old reliable companions.

Dinner in control. The chief machinist is looking through the periscope. The first mate is already holding his fork. The L. I. is sitting on a sack of potatoes. The men are sitting around wherever they can find a place. The big pot of potatoes is in the middle. Dust Cloud is carrying a big pot of coffee around. It all disappears into their stomachs quickly. Everyone goes back to their bunks.

Only Erwin, the Dust Cloud, and Lands remain on watch.

It’s been going on this way for weeks. No freighter in sight. It is as if Tommy has vanished from the seas. One day it comes to this:

” L. I. report to the captain!”

“L. I. how much fuel do we have left?”

“This morning we had ... cubic meters!”

“What do we need to continue slowly with one engine?”

“We need ... cubic meters a day!”

“So we still have ... days!”

“First mate and I. WO to the captain!”

In a moment, they are all in the captain’s tiny cabin. It is a difficult moment. The crew has held up well for weeks, not complaining as the storm hammered against the hull. Their hope in victory kept them going. But the hour has come when the fuel situation forces a return to port. The captain argues with each. He tries to find with the L. I. a way to reduce fuel consumption. He asks the first mate how far they are from port. He has a long conversation with the I. WO about the possibility of continuing west for a few days. In vain! They all know too well how things are. Facts are hard.

“Reverse course! We’re done!”

The joke is grim, and doesn’t work. They’ve been sailing about for weeks. Toward Greenland, then the Azores. They tried their luck close to England’s coast, then far to the west. In vain.

The storm is long gone. All is calm on the boat. A pump sucks away slowly. The lookouts are quiet. Each is thinking his own thoughts. Now and again someone looks with binoculars toward the horizon. Nothing!

Wait a minute! Isn't there something moving? A shadow?

Neptune takes another look.

“Lieutenant! There's a shadow on the port side!”

“The I. WO takes a quick look. He's right! A big form is coming toward them. Keep calm! They can stay opposite the moon.

“Hard starboard! All engines full ahead!”

“To the captain: Something to starboard!”

The boat comes alive. The captain springs from his bunk, jumps in his shoes and is on the bridge in no time. The L. I. is woken from sound sleep. He has long practice in becoming alert instantly. Everyone's eyes sparkle. Control tests everything. Is the air pressure in the boat sufficient? What about oxygen? What is battery capacity? The diesels are singing their song. Action! Action! murmurs the “Elephant.” Finally! Finally! Finally! answers the “Mosquito.”

The captain evaluates the situation instantly. A shadow is coming out of the emptiness, a something, a ship, a prey! First, go after good light.”U ...” heads past the giant, then turns to an attack course.

“Wonderful! Wonderful! Our position is good!”

The captain rubs his hands. It can't go wrong now!

“Battle stations!”

The order reaches every corner of the boat clearly. Everyone is alert. Everyone is at his battle station. No one speaks. Only the orders are repeated. Someone checks the fire control. The I. WO announces:

“Torpedoes ready!” — “Thank you!”

The shadow grows darker, more threatening, blacker.

“My God, it’s a monster! At least 15,000 tons!” “It’s got a big gun on the port side!” “And another starboard!” “It’s got a big smokestack!” “There! All the life boats are hanging outside!”

The lookouts note the characteristics of the ship.

“Starboard 15!” — “Now at starboard 15!” — “Turn!”

The compass turns slowly.”

“Rudder midships!” — “Rudder midships!” — “Good!”

The boat is now stationed such that its tubes are perpendicular to the course of the oncoming freighter. The captain is delighted. It has to work! The I. WO as torpedo officer gives steady commands.



X meters! X meters!

“Damn! It zigged!”

The steamer made a course change at the last minute and is heading off with growing speed.”

“All engines ahead full!”

It won’t get away! Once again, the submarine turns to fire. Again, the enemy changes course at the last second. Again, and again. Captain G. doesn’t give up. They still haven’t noticed anything. An hour has already passed.

Once again “U ...” is in attack position. The huge silhouette is outlined against the moon. The thing must be at least 20,000 tons! It’s a giant!

“I. WO, are you ready to fire?”

“Yes, sir, Captain!”

“What is your plan?”

“Two torpedoes, Captain!”

“Agreed! You have permission to fire!”

“Tubes one and two..Ready!”

“Tubes one and two...Fire!”

“Tubes one and two have fired!”

As in a well practiced exercise, the announcement goes calmly through the boat. All look toward the enemy, seeking to piece the dark night.

“What happened? It changed course again!” “Damn! The fish will miss!”

The fish swim past. “U ...” changes course to keep on the heels of the prey. Once again it is in firing position. Once again two torpedoes are fired. The seconds pass.

Suddenly the steamer seems to stop. The fish have hit???? No! The steamer changed its speed. Once again, the fish swim past.

“The dog!” The captain slams his fist.

“I’ll get him if it takes every torpedo I have!”

“Rudder hard to port!”

The captain has turned at just the right time. The steamer has turned and is heading straight toward the boat.

“Have we been spotted?” Nervous moments pass. But all is well!

“He has to sink! Load the tubes!”

Above water the tubes are loaded while “U ...” speeds toward the enemy once more. The men work feverishly in the bow. Bare-chested and sweaty, the men push the one and half thousand kilogram torpedo into the tube. It is beastly work that has to be done quickly ... and is done! Four fish have already missed! That’s almost a disgrace! And there is all the tension built up over weeks.

The hunt goes on for hours. Morning is dawning. But mist comes with the morning. A gray blanket is over the sea. The steamer’s outlines grow unclear. It vanishes.

“We have to have it, whatever the cost!”

“I. WO, is everything ready? Can you fire immediately if we have a clearing in front of us?”

“Everything is ready, Captain!”

“Good. All engines ahead full!”

“U ...” plunges through the mist with full speed in pursuit of the prey.

“To the port — a big shadow!”

“Neptune points to it. There he is again! Four pairs of eyes turn toward it and look through their binoculars. The enemy is heading straight at them.

“Port 15!” — “Rudder is 15 to the port!”

“Have they seen us?”

“I don’t think so, captain! There is still fog at their bridge level!”

“Good! Let’s get closer! He won’t get away from us this time!”

The distance narrows. Nerves tense. Nearer and nearer. Now or never!

“Permission to fire!”

“Tube one, tube 2 ... ready!”

“Tube one, tube 2 ... Fire!”

“U ...” turns. As it does so, there are two hard, metallic blows:

“A hit!”

Both fish hit! A visible shudder goes through the enormous ship. Even the mast shakes. It is tipping to starboard.

Now they must have seen the submarine!

The captain keeps his eyes to the binoculars. Is the enemy preparing the guns? Or is he abandoning ship?

Alarm!! — Dive!!

The boat is underwater in a moment. Neptune is in the rear at the controls of the aft rudder, steering the boat. The boat has to be at periscope depth quickly so that the captain can see ... and fire. It is not easy to hold the boat level. But Neptune is experienced. In a few moments the boat is at an even keel at periscope depth.

“Aha! I thought so! The thing has hoisted the war flag! We’ve got an auxiliary cruiser!”

The cheers resound through the boat. This flag will see the sinking of a British warship this morning!

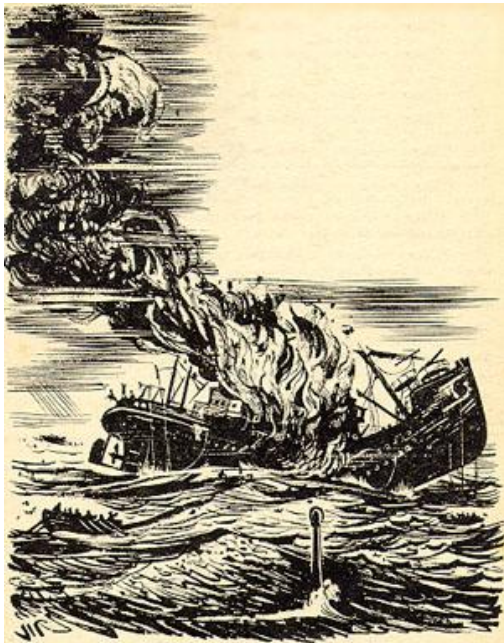
“Crash! Crunch! Crack!”

What is happening?

It is dark in the boat. The lights have gone out. The L. I. questions the ship:

Damage Report?”

The reports come in. “No damage!”



The boat’s hull held. A depth charge must have gone off in the vicinity. The captain looks through the periscope. He gives the crew a brief report.

“All hell is breaking loose!: — “They are lowering the boats!”

“They are working like the Devil!”

The auxiliary cruiser is still not sinking. It might be towed back home.

“Tube — Ready!”

“Tube — Fire!”

A fish swims toward the sinking giant with its death-bringing cargo.

“Boom!”

Another metallic blow shows that the fish hit. The colossus jumps again to the side. But it still does not sink. It must have a lot of wood as ballast in its belly!

“Load the tubes!”

The men work quickly. Each moment is dangerous. Surely it has called for help. Destroyers are surely racing to help from all directions to rescue the sailors and hunt the submarine.

“He’s going down if I have to fire every torpedo I have!” I. WO, are the torpedoes ready?”

“The torpedoes are loaded and ready!”

“Good! ... Tube one ... Ready! ... Fire!”

“Ping!”

A short, loud sound. Then there is a deafening detonation. The ship is tossed about.

“We apparently hit the munitions chamber!” “Now it’s breaking in two!” “Yes! The masts are tipping toward each other!” “It’s sinking!” “The bow is in the air!” “It’s going down!” “The stern is up!” “Prepare to dive!” “Dive!”

The excitement is tremendous.

The battle between the 20,000 ton auxiliary cruiser and the “U ...” lasted seven hours. A dirty oil spot is all that remains of the trophy. The course is fixed toward home.

Dit dah dit dit dah....

A radio message!

“U ...” here, “U ...” here! Convoy in quadrant xaf!

Quadrant xaf is along the course. Perhaps one can have another shot at the convoy!

“All engines ahead full!”

Hours of hunting pass. Finally! “Masts on the horizon! Six, seven, eight, nine...” It’s the convoy!

But its course is the worst possible. One could follow for hours without getting a shot in.

Hey, what's happening? The convoy is zigging!

Alarm!

Dive! It is daylight, and any surface attack will mean the loss of the boat.

“Go to periscope depth!”

Slowly, carefully, the captain raises the periscope by centimetres until it is just above the water. The waves repeatedly wash over the lens. Nothing can be seen. Now it is clear again! Now it's gone! There it is again! Careful use of the periscope is necessary to success.

There! In the center of the convoy!

“Tube ... Fire!”

The torpedo hisses out of the tube toward a 5,000 ton freighter. Nervous seconds pass.

“Boom!” A detonation is heard.

The giant tips over and sinks within a few seconds.

Course 90 degrees!

The course toward home, to the east.

“Land ho!”

Eyes eagerly look for the strip of land on the horizon, a small, dark band. Land! For the first time in weeks!

Everyone who is off duty heads to the tower. The tower sways back and forth, Everyone wants to be there when the proud hour of return comes. From weary faces, from faces with blond, brown, black and red beards, happy eyes sparkle. The crowd waiting on the pier is already visible through the binoculars. There in blue is the base commander. There are girls from the vicinity with flowers. Why, even the commander is there with his staff to welcome the home comers. Music plays as the boat enters the lock.

“Tie the lines!”

The boat is connected to the land. For the first time in weeks the engines are quiet. The commander comes on board, hears a report, and looks each member of the crew carefully and knowingly in the eye.

The captain stands before his men once more. In his hand he holds the certificates for the iron crosses earned on this voyage. There are many this time, for many sailors have already been on some successful missions,

“Corporal F.!”

“Here, Captain!”

Neptune springs forward and receives the Iron Cross, Second Class from his captain.

“Sergeant K.!”

Dust Cloud steps forward. The commander awards the cross. Then a short speech:

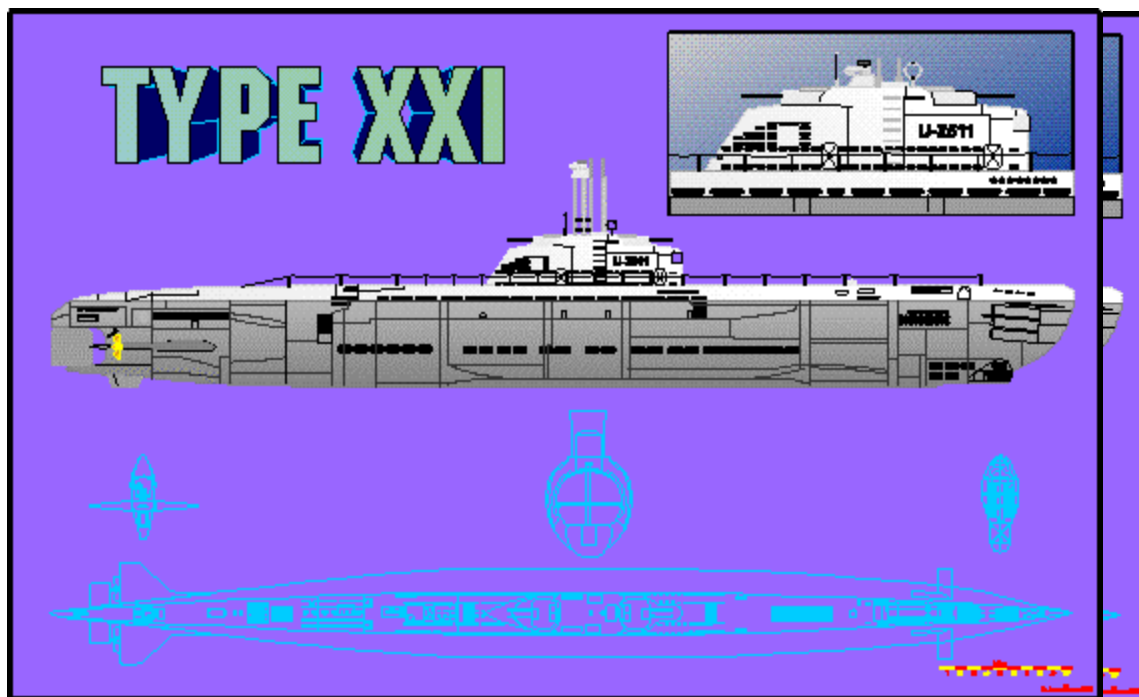
“Comrades! The voyage is over! We have been successful! That may not always be the case! But always on every voyage, there must be the reliable work, brave conduct and unbreakable camaraderie for which I have been happy to award these decorations! Heil ‘U ...!’”

The hunt is over.

The last page of the book has the following encouragement to enlist:

Greater Germany’s sons from every district, north and south, east and west, sail against England, the enemy of German unity, freedom and greatness. They will certainly defeat the enemy and win victory for the Führer and people. Do you, German lad, want to enter the navy as an officer candidate? If so, report to the office of education of the navy (Admissions Department) in Kiel. There you will receive the necessary forms. If you, German lad, want to join the ranks of our brave submariners and sailors on battleships, armored ships, cruisers, destroyers, torpedo boats, speed boats and scouting vessels, or the ranks of the naval artillery that protect the coast, report to the nearest recruiting office or district army office. There you will learn all the details.

The Electro Boat Development



118 Commissioned

U-boat	Builder	Werk #	Built:
U-2501 - U-2531	Blohm & Voss, Hamburg	2501 - 2531	1944- 1945
U-2533 - U-2536	Blohm & Voss, Hamburg	2533 - 2536	1944- 1945
U-2538 - U-2546	Blohm & Voss, Hamburg	2538 - 2546	1944- 1945
U-2548	Blohm & Voss, Hamburg	2448	1944- 1945

U-2551 - U-2552	Blohm & Voss, Hamburg	2551 - 2552	1944-1945
U-3001 - U-3035	AG Weser, Bremen	1160 - 1194	1944-1945
U-3037 - U-3041	AG Weser, Bremen	1196 - 1201	1944-1945
U-3044	AG Weser, Bremen	1204	1944-1945
U-3501 - U-3530	Schichau, Danzig	1646 - 1676	1944-1945



U-2540, now called Wilhelm Bauer, as seen in Bremerhaven.

This was the boat that perhaps could have won the war in the Atlantic for the Germans had she been in the water maybe 2 years earlier. She was the first real combat submarine that was meant to dwell in the deep and not just retreat to it once in danger.

These boats had much better crew facilities than previous classes, much more silent underwater, freezer for foodstuffs, a shower and a basin and little things like that. Also they had hydraulic torpedo reload system that enabled the

commander to reload all 6 tubes in something like 10 minutes which was even less than it took to reload one tube on the VIIC normally.

3-times the electrical power of the VIIC gave the boat enormous underwater range compared to the older types and this boat could submerge far beyond the Bay of Biscay from the French bases so the **Valley of Death** was a thing of the past for them really. It took the boat 3-5 hours to re-charge the batteries with the Schnorchel once every 2-3 days if travelling at moderate 4-8 knots and was thus much less in danger from aircraft which sank about 56% of all U-boats lost in the war.

sm = submerged, sf = surfaced, ph = pressure hull,
oa = overall, hp = horsepower.

* If she carried the TMC mines she could also carry 14 torpedoes

The Electro boats

1. Origins

The development of the German U-boat fleet in 1935-39 was based entirely on the First World War principles. However, it had already been known that England was in possession of the underwater location device (ASDIC) which was to counter the submarine threat. Not surprisingly, the Second World War started with great speculations about the effectiveness of the U-boats.

Soon it had become apparent, that ASDIC was not so effective as claimed and certainly it was of no use against a surfaced U-boat. And it was a surfaced group attack at night, known as **Rudeltaktik**, that proved itself so lethal to convoys. Without a surface location device the escorts were not able to see a narrow silhouette of the surfaced U-boat at night or in bad weather. The same applied to aircraft.

The U-boat training programme was adopted to the principle of **Rudeltaktik**. The emphasis was on the skills of the commander and crew as it was believed that the experience was the main decisive factor in the battle.

The technical development was somewhat left behind. Doenitz got acquainted with Professor Walter and was quite impressed with the idea of a closed circle engine. Such an engine required no air intake and therefore could run when a

submarine was submerged and at the same offered enough power to achieve speed around 25 knots. The idea was further developed and in 1940 the prototype V80 indeed travelled submerged at the speed of 26 knots! Therefore, the concept was regarded as the right answer for the need of high underwater speed. The amount of technical difficulties made it clear that it would take a long time to convert the prototype into an ocean-going attack U-boat. At that time, however, no one seemed to be worried as the conventional U-boats still enjoyed a high rate of success when operating on the surface at night.

However, there were early warnings that this situation might change dramatically. On the pitch black night 30th November - 1st December 1941 while attempting to penetrate the Straits of Gibraltar, U-96 was accurately located and bombed by the radar-equipped Sqdn. 812 Swordfish. Her commander, Heinrich Lehmann-Willenbrock, insisted that the aircraft must have been using a new location device. In spite of the fact this statement was made by one of the most experienced U-boat commanders, no one believed it was the case. In particular, no one believed an accurate radar set can be so small, it could fit in an aircraft.

Another warning came also in December 1941. It was the convoy battle around HG-76. The convoy was protected by an aggressive support group including an aircraft carrier, lead by an ASW expert, Capt. Walker. Although a total of 14 U-boats were assembled in the area, only 5 ships were sunk at a cost of 4 U-boats directly involved in the operation (U-131, U-434, U-574 and U-567). A shocking exchange rate which later became normal. In fact a few more were sunk in the area at the same time. U-567 was commanded by Engelbert Endrass, an experienced Knight Cross Holder, while other boats by relatively inexperienced commanders. BdU was convinced that the success was entirely depending on the experience of attacking U-boats. This is why when Doenitz was sending Endrass, in whom he had great confidence, he had also signalled: "Hold on to that convoy. I'm sending Endrass". In vain.

There were a few more warnings. It was clearly demonstrated that with the arrival of the radar-equipped aircraft and escorts, especially when put together in a support group with a carrier, the conventional U-boats may achieve nothing but heavy losses. Unfortunately for the Germans, these warnings were not taken into consideration serious enough to affect the development plans for new U-boats, their weapons and electronic equipment. It was almost a year later, when the losses in the North Atlantic convoy battles became alarmingly high, when something finally happened.

November 1942 was the best month in the in terms of tonnage sunk during the U-boat War. The majority of sinkings happened along the North Atlantic convoy routes, in the so-called Atlantic Gap, out of the reach of land-based Allied aircraft. U-boats returned to the North Atlantic in the second half of 1942, when gradually stronger US anti-submarine forces made operations in the Western Atlantic and the Caribbean impossible. However, the British had enough time to increase the number of escorts, aircraft and develop new techniques. The Germans also increased the number of U-boats and in the second half of 1942 on average a hundred were at sea every day. All these factors inevitably lead to fierce convoy battles of previously unknown proportions.

Although the overall sinkings increased, the average tonnage sunk daily per U-boat at sea dropped dramatically. Due to strong convoy escort and increasing air cover relatively very few U-boats managed to engineer an attacking position and score a hit. It has been clearly demonstrated that the U-boat Arm needed boats with better underwater performance - greater range (particularly to pass the dangerous Bay of Biscay) and higher speed (to evade escorts and gain an attacking position underwater). Therefore, a conference was organized by BdU in November 1942 in order to discuss possible solutions to the dangerous situation. Professor Walter and representatives of the Naval Construction Office were invited. This conference turned out to be a turning point in the U-boat technical development.

In World War Two the scientist became more important to the outcome of the war than ever before. This was of course so on the German side, the Enigma cipher system, the Walter propulsion system and of course the German jets, rockets and missiles are just few of the items they came up with. In these pages we'll attempt to explain most technologies relevant to the U-boat war. We'll eventually also cover the allied technologies that eventually doomed the conventional U-boat in 1943-1945.

Weapons

The Electro boats

Here you'll find a good overview of the revolutionary Elektro boats that saw service in the final months of the war. These were to influence submarine design for decades afterwards.

Torpedoes

At this time a short overview page on the U-boat's main armament. From the original compressed air driven T1 (G7a) to the advanced electrical acoustic T11 torpedo. Also gives examples of the LUT and FAT pattern running torpedoes.

Deck Guns

Explains the secondary armament of the U-boat force and gives examples of unusual gunfire activities such as shore bombardments.

Flak - Anti Aircraft weapons

Covers the many variations in anti-aircraft experiments on the U-boats, esp. the many changes in the conning tower (Wintergarten).

Mines

An introductory page on submarine mines and their use during WWII.

Technical items

Enigma and the U-boats

A set of pages dealing with the impressive Enigma cipher machine used by the Germans before and during the war. Also deals with the relevant U-boat ciphers used.

U-boat and Torpedo batteries

Without those there would have been no U-boat war :) The allies lost a great opportunity to effectively cripple the U-boat fleet when they ignored those plants during their strategic bombing of Germany.

The Schnorchel

This was an apparatus which enables the U-boat to stay submerged while running the diesels to recharge the batteries and also to ventilate the boat. Over 214 U-boats were fitted out with the equipment in 1943-1945.

The Bachstelze

This was an U-boat observation rotor kite used to expand the U-boat's line-of-sight.

U-boat Radars

Deals with the efforts to equip the U-boats with radars and also covers land-based supporting radars.

Radar Detectors and Decoys

After 1941 or so radar detection became vital for the U-boat's survival. Here you'll find most of the German developments in the war.

Radio direction finders of German U-boats in WWII

How radio direction finders work and their use by U-boats.

Underwater sound detectors in WW1 and WW2

Maintenance and usage of submarine batteries

German Industries and the U-boat offensive

Aircraft

The Focke-Wulf FW-200 Condor

The U-boat's eye-in-the-sky for many of the earlier convoy battles.

The Junkers Ju-290 and Ju-390

An effort to improve the Luftwaffe support to the U-boats, but it was too little and too late.

The Junkers Ju-88

One of the most successful aircraft of the war. It played a role in assisting the U-boats by fighting the British over the Bay of Biscay.

Hermann Hoffmann

Oberleutnant zur See (Crew X/39)

No ships sunk or damaged.

Born 27 Apr 1921 Hannover



Kriegsmarine Crew photo

Ranks

16 Sept. 1939	<i>Offiziersanwärter</i>
1 Jul 1940	<i>Fähnrich zur See</i>
1 Jul 1941	<i>Oberfähnrich zur See</i>
1 Mar 1942	<i>Leutnant zur See</i>
1 Oct 1943	Oberleutnant zur See
1 Oct 1943	<i>Oberleutnant zur See</i>

U-boat Commands

U-boat	From	To	
U-172	1 Nov 1943	13 Dec 1943	1 patrol (22 days)

Oblt. Hermann Hoffmann was one of the youngest U-boat commanders during WWII when he left for his patrol with U-172 from Lorient, France on 22 Nov 1943. He was only 22 years old at the time. His boat was sunk 22 days later (Niestlé, 1998).

Note:

On 21 April, 2003 uboat.net corrected the mistake found for this officer where he was said to have died on 1 Nov, 1982. He is very much alive on this day as it turns out.

What happened in this case was that another U-boat man (also born in 1921) by the same name, Hermann Hoffmann, but of a lower rank (unknown to us at this time) passed away on Nov 1, 1982. Thus the confusion was born and reported in the newsletter of the VdU (Verband Deutscher U-Bootfahrer) and many, many years later ended up on uboat.net as well.

The other man was born on 24 Oct, 1921, about 6 months after the former commander of U-172 was born. We regret the confusion this may have caused.

The U-boat bases

The Bases in France

The French harbours on the west coast were captured by the German army after the stunning victory over the allied forces in May-June 1940. Almost right away widespread preparations for an all-out U-boat deployment from those bases went into action.

5 U-boat bases were established in the Bay of Biscay in 1940 and 8 U-boat flotillas were either moved to France or formed there in 1941 and 1942. The first were the 1st at Brest, the 2nd at Lorient and the 7th in Saint Nazaire in June 1941, followed by the 3rd at La Rochelle and the 9th at Brest in October 1941. In 1942 the last 3 flotillas appeared in France with the 10th at Lorient in January, the 6th at St. Nazaire in February and finally the 12th flotilla was formed in Bordeaux in October 1942.

The bases in France gave the Kriegsmarine major advantage in the U-boat war in the Atlantic, no longer would the boats have to circumnavigate the British Isles just to reach the convoys nor pass through the dangerous Channel. This greatly increased their fighting range and striking power when compared to the German bases. From late 1940 and early 1941 most of the famous U-boats operated from the French bases.

The Kriegsmarine completed 1,149 major U-boat overhauls and operated hundreds of U-boats from the French bases in the Biscay during the war.

In 1943 a base was also established at Toulon in the French Mediterranean. It was the home of the 29th Flotilla for over a year.

The Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor



An Fw 200C-8 with FuG 200 Hohentwiel search radar on its nose

Details:

On 27 July 1937 a new and graceful aircraft made its first flight, from the airfield of Neuenlander. The pilot was the designer of the aircraft, Kurt Tank, and the aircraft was the Fw 200 Condor. It belonged to a new generation of four-engine, long-distance transports.

The Condor had been designed for the Deutsche Lufthansa, which wanted a airliner for a route to South America. Its high aspect ratio, long-span wing was characteristic of long-range aircraft, sail planes, and the Condor bird that the aircraft was named after. Its modern, flush-riveted light alloy construction aimed for maximum efficiency. With four Pratt & Whitney Hornet S1E-G engines, later replaced by BMW 132L engines (licence-built Hornets) and up to 4360 liters of fuel the Condor was intended to fly 26 passengers over long distances. That it could do so was demonstrated in August 1938 by a flight from Berlin to New York in 20 hours, non-stop. Later that year a Fw 200 flew to Tokyo, with three stops, in 46 hours.

Production began in 1938 with the Fw 200A-0 transports. One of them became Hitler's personal aircraft, D-2600 *Immelmann III*. Other aircraft went to the Lufthansa, the Condor Syndicate (a German-owned airline in South America), and the Danish DDL. Focke-Wulf followed up with the more powerful, heavier

Fw 200B and the Fw 200D that had even more fuel. But meanwhile, the Condor was developed in another direction.

The Imperial Japanese Navy had expressed an interest in a long-range reconnaissance version of the Condor. Tank modified a Fw 200B-1 to create the Fw 200V10 prototype, with more fuel, three machine guns, a short ventral gondola with fore-and-aft gunner positions, and a lot of additional equipment. It was never delivered to its customer. In 1939 the Luftwaffe decided that the Fw 200 could meet its own requirement for a long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft, and instructed Focke-Wulf to develop the Fw 200V10 into a more robust aircraft with a bomb-carrying capacity.

The answer was the Fw 200C, with some modest structural reinforcements, improved cowlings containing 850hp BMW 132H-1 engines with three-bladed propellers, and bomb crutches on the wings. A longer ventral gondola, with a bomb bay, was planned but not fitted to the first production aircraft. When fitted, the gondola, which was offset to starboard, housed a 20mm MG FF cannon in front and a 7.9mm MG 15 machine gun aft. Another MG 15 was in a position above and behind the cockpit, and one in

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An Fw 200C-1

The Fw 200s were delivered to Kampfgruppe 40, which from June 1940 operated from Bordeaux-Merignac. Systematic anti-shipping operations began in August. Flights lead over the Bay of Biscay, around Ireland, and ended in Norway. The sinking of 90,000 tons of shipping was claimed in the first two months, and 363,000 tons by February 1941. Churchill called it the "Scourge of the Atlantic".

But the Fw 200C-1 made itself very unpopular by breaking its back on landings. At least eight Fw 200Cs were lost when the fuselage broke, just aft of the wing. Obviously, the strength of the airframe was insufficient to cope with the additional weight and stress. The Fw 200C was always an improvised combat aircraft, with many deficiencies. The crews also complained about inadequate armament and an vulnerable fuel system.

The Fw 200C-3 introduced some more reinforcements, although still insufficient, a gun turret to replace the fairing above the cockpit, two beam guns, an increase in bomb load, and an additional crew member. It also had 1200hp BMW 323-R2 engines to compensate for the weight increase. Soon a number of variations in armament appeared, as the MG FF and MG 15 were replaced by far more powerful 15mm and 20mm MG 151 cannon, or the 13mm MG 131. With these changes, the later Condors were very well armed.

For offensive purposes the Fw 200C was equipped with the low-altitude Revi bombsight, or the Lofte 7D sight for attacks from between 3500m and 4000m. Radar appeared, on the Fw 200C-4, in the form of *Rostock* or *Hohentwiel* anti-shipping radars. These modifications increased the weight and reduced the speed. the max level speed of the Fw 200C-4 was a very unimpressive 330km/h at 4800m, down to 280km/h at sea level. The speed of 450km/h was not be exceeded, and brusque evasive manoeuvres could results in structural failures. Endurance was 14 hours, for a range of about 3860km, or 18 hours if additional fuel tanks were carried instead of bombs, and cruising speeds were around 250km/h. The common bomb load on long-range missions was just four 250kg bombs.

In mid-1941 a change of tactics occurred. The Fw 200 crews were now instructed not to attack, and to evade all combat unless unavoidable. The Condors were used to report allied shipping movements. To guide the U-boats to the convoys they shadowed they transmitted direction finding signal, but they did not directly communicate with the submarines. This was a more effective use of the available numbers, and it also helped to conserve the aircraft: Production was low, and some Fw 200s were diverted to other roles, notably VIP transports. But worse was to come. On 20 September 1941 a Condor was

lost when it attacked a convoy escorted by *HMS Audacity*, the first escort carrier. During the second voyage of the carrier, four Condors were shot down. Although the *Audacity* was primitive, and soon sunk by U-751, it announced the beginning of the end. The vulnerable Condor was increasingly confronted by enemy fighters, based on catapult-equipped merchant ships (CAM ships), merchant ships with small flight decks (MAC ships), or small escort carriers.

In 1943 the Condors were recalled to be used as transports on the Eastern front, during the Battle of Stalingrad. They later returned to the Atlantic coast, but only a few continued to serve as maritime reconnaissance aircraft. In this role, the Condor was now being replaced by the Ju 290. The Fw 200s returned to anti-shipping strikes. For this purpose, the Fw 200C-6 and C-8 were equipped with the Henschel Hs 293A anti-ship missile, but the type's career was clearly over. The Condor served until the end of the war, but mainly as a transport aircraft.

Production ceased in early 1944, after the Luftwaffe had received 263 out of a total production of 276.

Specifications

Focke-Wulf Fw 200C-3/U4

Four 1200hp BMW-Bramo 323R-2 Fafnir nine-cylinder radial engines

Wing span	32.84m, length 23.46m, height 6.30m, wing area 118.0m ² .
Empty weight	12950kg, max take-off weight 22700kg.
Max. speed	360km/h at 4800m, 306km/h at sea level.
Range	3556km with standard fuel, 4440km with overload fuel.
Service ceiling	5800m.
Armament:	Forward dorsal Fw 19 turret with a 7.9mm MG 15 machinegun, 13mm MG 131 machinegun in aft dorsal position, two MG 131 guns in beam

positions, one 20mm MG 151/20 cannon in front of the ventral gondola, and one MG 15 in the aft section of the gondola.

Maximum bomb load 2100kg: two 500kg, two 250kg and two 50kg bombs.

Sources

- **Incidental Combattant**, by Ken Wixey, in Air Enthusiast No.66 and 67.
- **Wings of the Luftwaffe**, by Capt. Eric Brown, published by Pilot Press, 1977.

The Encyclopedia of German Military Aircraft, by Brian Philpott, published by Arms and Armour Press, 1980.



German U-boat

U-boat Radars



FMG 41G (gU) Seetakt **FuMO 29 Seetakt**

The original version of the Seetakt radar was developed by Gema (Gesellschaft fu'r Elektroakustische Mechanische Apparate. A Navy-sponsored firm set up by admiral Mertens, by coincidence a WWI U-boat commander.) in 1935 as one of the first operational German radars. It operated on 82cm, and its antenna was an array of horizontal or vertical dipoles. Versions of Seetakt were used on land or carried by surface ships, such as the 'Graf Spee' and 'Bismarck'.

After two abortive attempts to construct a radar small enough to be fitted in an U-Boot, Gema in 1941 produced a version of Seetakt small enough to be installed in the conning tower. Two horizontal rows of vertical dipoles were installed in a half-circle, following the curve of the conning tower, and the transmitter was installed next to the conning tower ladder -- a location which guaranteed that it was flooded with water nearly every time the hatch was opened! It had a maximum range of about 7km, with a field of view of 60 degrees.

It was fitted to U-156, U-157 and U-158, all Type IXC U-boats. It was generally unsuccessful.

In 1942 the antenna array was replaced with one fitted on a retractable, rotating mast. A reflector shield was installed behind the dipoles, and the "W-Anz. g2 (FuMB 9) Cypern II" radio detection system was installed on the other side. The mast was stored in a compartment on the side of the conning tower. Little is known about the effectiveness of this system.

FMG 42 G (gU) FuMO 30

This was an improved version of the rotating mast version of FMG 41G (gU), with a direction finder added, ready in late 1942. It was built into all U-Boote. However, it was easily disabled by depth charges or bombs, and the antennas corroded in the salt water. Commanders did not like to use it, because they feared that it gave away their position.

FuMO 61 Hohentwiel U FuMO 65 Hohentwiel U1

Hohentwiel was developed for installation in aircraft, to be used against surface ships. The first working radar in this series appeared in September 1942, and from August 1943 onwards the radar was installed in naval reconnaissance aircraft such as the Fw 200 and He 177. Hohentwiel radars operated on 550MHz (55cm), and later models were tunable between 525 and 575MHz.

In 1943 Lorentz was instructed to adapt Hohentwiel for naval use, and soon Hohentwiel appeared on U-Boote, small surface ships, and coastal installations. These Hohentwiel radars contained only 19 valves and, by the standards of the time, were easy to maintain and reliable. The U-Boat FuMO 61 version had a 1 by 1.4 meter rotating antenna (again an array of dipoles) on a mast. Size of the antenna and height of the mast were restricted by installation on an U-boat, and range was 10km against ships and 20km against aircraft; installations on surface ships had double that range. Resolution was about 3 degrees, and at short range its range accuracy was 100 meters. FuMO 65 replaced the traditional radar display, which had separate oscilloscope screens indicating range and azimuth, by a PPI (Plan Position Indicator) screen, known to the Germans as 'Drauf'. This is kind of radar display most familiar to us today, a circular display on which the position of a target is directly indicated as the radar beam sweeps round. FuMO 65 was installed in only a few Type XXI submarines. It was considered a very useful piece of equipment, especially for navigation in coastal waters.

FuMO 83 Berlin U I

FuMO 84 Berlin U II

The Berlin series of centimetric (9cm) radars, built by Telefunken, was based on the British development of the cavity magnetron, as found in a British bomber shot down near Rotterdam on 3 February 1943. This was a painful surprise for the Germans. Not only were they far behind in the development of centimetric radar, they had just abandoned it, in the belief that it would not be effective. Tests of the captured radar, codenamed Rotterdam, revealed its performance, and it was quickly copied under the name 'Berlin'. As was typical, the German copy was better engineered than its British equivalent, and thus considerably lighter and smaller.

FuMO 83 had four ceramic stub antennas (whatever those are?) in a plastic sphere, which was again installed on top of a rotating mast. It could be used for panoramic scanning or for direction finding. The system was tested on an U-Boot (alas it is not said which one!), and gave a view as "from a balloon 200 metres above the boat", according to its skipper.

FuMO 84 was the final version, which did not use a retractable mast. The system never went into production.

Ballspiel

Ballspiel was a gunnery radar for U-boats. Like most German radars at the end of the war, it was a development of Berlin. It had a range of 25km, but for practical gunnery only 8km was used. It had an azimuth accuracy of about 1 degree and a range accuracy of 500 meters. It is known that Ballspiel was used in active service, but there are no data about its effectiveness.

Devices not covered here include Wanze, Fliege, Bali, Samon and others.

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Supplement

The National-Socialist Honour Knife

(Excerpts from *Reichfolk* by David Myatt)



The principles of personal honour, loyalty and duty to one's folk or race, are fundamental to National-Socialism, and without these principles, an individual lives a profane life. The life of an individual only has meaning and significance if they uphold these principles, for they enshrine the true nature of the cosmic Being. Every National-Socialist must remind themselves of these principles every day of their life, for without these principles they are fundamentally nothing. National-Socialism represents these three principles in a practical way by a knife which all National-Socialists are expected to carry at all times. This

knife, in a simple ceremony, is dedicated by the National-Socialist to the cosmic Being, and as such enshrines and symbolizes the personal honour, loyalty and duty of the individual. In a very important sense, this knife then is, or represents, these principles for that individual and accordingly that individual must not lose this knife, be without it, or have it taken from them. To give it up or surrender it willingly is to become dishonoured. To carry or wear this knife symbolizes their National-Socialist faith - their commitment to the three principles and their obligation to live in accord with the divine will. To not carry or wear this knife, once a person has sworn an oath to the Cause of National-Socialism, is a dishonourable act.

Accordingly, this knife serves a religious purpose, and a National-Socialist carrying such a knife is carrying it for a religious reason.



Heil Hitler

Ceremony for the Dedication of the NS Honour Knife

Except for ceremonial occasions such as *fests* (when an SA/SS type dagger can be used) the NS Honour Knife is a hunting/sheath type knife with a natural staghorn covering over the handle and a blade at least 4 inches in length. This should be worn or carried in a leather sheath. The workmanship of the knife, and the steel used for the blade, should be of the highest quality. However, an acceptable and temporary alternative (until the above can be obtained) is a folding lock-knife, with a natural staghorn covering and a blade at least 4 inches in length.

The staghorn symbolizes Nature and her creations; the blade the consciousness, and thus the inventiveness, of our race; and the handle which joins the staghorn to the blade and makes the knife useful, symbolizes the creative intervention of the cosmos which produced both Nature and ourselves, and which we both depend on to survive.

After the making/purchase of the knife, the National-Socialist should, at dawn on a suitable day, lay it upon a swastika banner placed below a photograph or painting of Adolf Hitler. While standing in front of this and giving the Hitler salute, the National-Socialist says:

"I am here to dedicate this knife and swear upon it, by my honour, and before the cosmos whom I revere, that I will keep to and uphold the Nine Principles of the National-Socialist faith. I shall treasure and guard this knife and let no one take it from me since it is my honour."

The individual then takes hold of the knife, holds it in his outstretched hand, turns toward the direction of the rising sun, and says:

"Thus do I consecrate this knife and myself to the cosmos."

So saying, the National-Socialist reads aloud the Nine Principles as hereunder.

The knife is then dedicated.

The Nine Fundamental Principles of National Socialism

The following nine principles express the practical essence of National-Socialism. They are meant to be a guide to individual National-Socialist living: a means whereby individuals can enhance their own lives and live in a National-Socialist way.

By living in this way, an individual is upholding and expressing what is sacred and divine. They are living and acting as human beings - in accordance with the will of the cosmos. Any other way of living is fundamentally sub-human and profane: an insult to what makes us human, and a destruction of the very essence of our humanity.

There is nothing complicated about an individual becoming a National-Socialist. All they need to do is accept the fundamental tenets of the National-Socialist philosophy, and strive to uphold, in their everyday life, the Nine Fundamental Principles of the National-Socialist philosophy as given here. They must also make a solemn affirmation of their National-Socialist ideal by performing the simple 'Ceremony for the Dedication of the NS Honour Knife'.

- 1) In everything that you do or undertake, strive for excellence.**
- 2) Do your duty by placing the welfare and well-being of your race and culture before your own self-interest, and seek to preserve and extend your race by marrying among your own kind, and by producing/nurturing healthy children.**
- 3) Uphold the noble ideal of honour in your own personal life, and strive to live, and die, in an honourable way.**
- 4) Strive to uphold the noble, human, ideals of fairness and courtesy by being fair and courteous toward others, regardless of their race and culture, and strive to treat animals in a humane way.**
- 5) Be loyal to those you have sworn loyalty to, if necessary unto death. Your word, once given, should not be broken since to break your word is a dishonourable act.**
- 6) Be intolerant of what is harmful and unhealthy to, and what endangers, your race, and what is detrimental to the other creations of the divine.**

7) Reverence Nature and be respectful toward what reveals or expresses the divine.

8) Always be ready, willing and physically fit enough to defend yourself and your family - and thus your own personal honour - and always carry a defensive weapon to enable your honour to be saved.

9) Seek always to make the world a better, a more noble, place by striving to make others aware of the noble ideals of honour, loyalty and duty.



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