

Here are some of those lesser-known facts that you may be unfamiliar with and are seldom, if at all, mentioned in official history books.

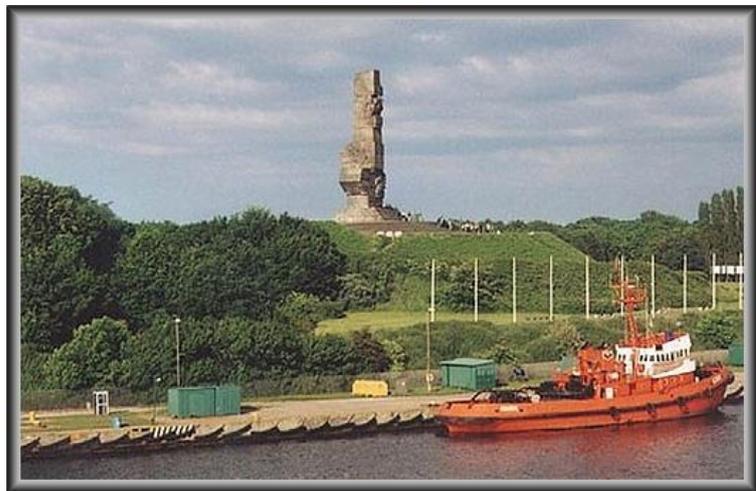
#### PRE-WAR TO 1939

##### THE FIRST SHOT

The first shot of World War II in Europe was fired 20 years, 9 months, 19 days and 18 hours after the last shot of World War I was fired. It was fired from the 13,000 ton German gunnery training battleship Schleswig Holstein (Captain Gustav Kleikamp) which was on a visit to Poland to honour the sailors lost on the German cruiser Magdeburg sunk in 1914, some of whom were buried in Danzig. It was anchored in Danzig (now Gdansk) harbour at the mouth of the River Vistula. At 4.30 am on September 1, 1939, the ship moved slowly down the Port Canal and took up position opposite the Westerplatte (an area containing Polish troop barracks, munition storage and workshops) and at 4.47 am, at point blank range, the order to "Fire!" was given. World War II had begun. Seven days later, on September 7, after a heroic defence by Major Henryk Sucharski and his troops, and a devastating attack by Stuka dive bombers, the 209 man strong Westerplatte Garrison surrendered. Losses were 14 men killed and 53 wounded. A Polish soldier, Staff Sergeant Wojciech Nazzarek was killed by machine gun fire, becoming the first Polish victim of the war.

The Schleswig Holstein berthed at Gdynia (Gotenhafen) till the end of the war. Attacked by the RAF on December 18, 1944, twenty eight crew members were killed. Attacked again in March, 1945, the burning ship was scuttled near the port on March 21.

Where World War II began. Site of the Westerplatte Garrison.



##### TRIGGER OF THE WAR

Hitler's revenge for Germany's defeat of 1918 brought about the cataclysm that was Europe between 1939 and 1945. The incident which triggered World War II was the fake simulated attack by the Germans on their own radio station near Gleiwitz on the Polish border. To make it appear that the attacking force consisted of Poles, SS officer Alfred Naujocks secured some condemned German criminals from a nearby concentration (protective custody) camp and dressed them in Polish uniforms before being shot and their bodies placed in strategic positions around the radio station. A Polish-speaking German then did a broadcast from the station to make it appear that Poland had attacked first. On January 26, 1934, Germany and Poland signed a ten year non-aggression pact but the refusal of Poland to comply with Germany's request for the return of Danzig and the Polish Corridor, which was granted to Poland in the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, led to the Gleiwitz incident. Hitler had stated 'Danzig was German and sooner or later would return to Germany'.

This gave Hitler the excuse he needed to invade Poland, which he did on September 1, 1939, an act which was to develop into a war embracing 56 nations and causing the deaths of some 55,014,000 persons, military and civilians. About 85 million men and women of all nationalities served as combatants in this, the world's first total war, in which more than twice as many civilians died than did uniformed soldiers.

Three days later in Britain, one and a half million civilians were successfully evacuated from the largest cities into the country. Also on this day, Britain, France, India, Australia and New Zealand, declared war on Germany. In the House of Commons Prime Minister Chamberlain said with a trembling voice 'For no one has it been a sadder day than for me, everything I worked for has crashed in ruins'. On October 19, 1939, Hitler incorporates the western half of Poland into the German Reich. In the town of Bydgoszez the German 111 Corps units found hundreds of German residents massacred in their homes by the Poles fleeing to the east to be succumbed there to the Russian forces. About 694,000 Poles were captured by the Germans. On September 18, German forces joined up with the Soviet Russian forces which had invaded from the east (In spite of a non-aggression treaty signed on November 27, 1932) and quickly formed plans to divide Poland up between them along the Brest-Litovsk line. Germany obtained an area of around 73,000 square miles, the Russians about 78,000. In its

invasion of eastern Poland the Russians lost 737 men. (The campaign in Poland cost the Germans 13,111 killed or missing and 27,278 wounded.)

#### RELEASED UNCONDITIONALLY

In London's three largest prisons, Wandsworth, Pentonville and Wormwood Scrubs, all prisoners (about 1,000) with less than three months to serve were pardoned and released, each given five shillings and their civilian clothing returned to them. Prisoners with longer sentences were transferred to other prisons outside London. A few of the empty cells at Wormwood Scrubs were taken over by the Radio Security Service (R. S. S.) to detect enemy agents supposedly operating a radio guidance system for communicating with Germany. Two of the personnel working at the R.S.S. actually managed to crack low grade German cyphers even before the setup at Bletchley Park began operating.

#### FIRST ALLIED SHOT

The first Allied shot of the war in the Far East was actually fired over the bows of the Australian coaster Woniora (Captain F. N. Smale) from a twin 6-inch gun emplacement at Point Nepean, guarding the entrance to Melbourne's Port Phillip Bay. The 823 ton coaster had entered the bay at 9.15 pm on September 3, 1939, after a trip from Tasmania. Ordered to heave-to for inspection, the coaster gave her identity but continued on without stopping. A 100 lb shell, fired across her bow, soon changed her captain's mind.

By a remarkable coincidence, this was the actual, same guns that had fired the first shot of World War I when, hours after war was declared, it fired on the German Norddeutscher Lloyd 6,500 ton steamer Pfalz while it attempted to leave Australian waters on August 5, 1914. The Pfalz was then returned to Williamstown where the crew was detained. The captured vessel served out the rest of World War I as the Australian troopship HMT Boorara.

The six-inch guns of Port Nepean.



#### GERMAN WORKERS PARTY

In 1919, over forty different political parties existed in and around Munich. The German Workers Party was founded by 35 year old railway locksmith, Anton Drexler. In all, its membership was around fifty. To give the impression that the number was higher, membership cards started at number 500. When Hitler joined the party he was given number 555. This was on September 12, 1919, when he attended a meeting in the Sterneckerbrau Tavern in Munich. (On the Party membership form he signed his name as Hittler) In February 24, 1920, at its first mass meeting in the Hofbräuhaus the party expanded its name to the Nationalist Socialist German Workers Party. Popular name at the time was 'Nazi Party'. Its membership at this time had risen to 3,000. It was the American socialists who promoted the straight-arm salute inside the USA in 1892 in the original pledge of allegiance to the US flag. This form of salute was copied by all German Socialist Party members who never called themselves 'Nazis'. The only thing Hitler ever said concerning the swastika was in 1920, when he decided that the National Socialist German Workers Party needed its own insignia.

#### NAZI PARTY

First formed by Anton Drexler in Munich in 1919. Hitler was the 55th person to join the party then called the German Workers Party. In 1930 there were 129,583 members of the National Socialist German Workers Party or Nazi Party for short - (NAtionalsoZiAlstische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei - NSDAP). The word 'Nazi' is an acronym formed from the first syllable of NAtional and the second syllable of SoZiAlstische. This practice was common in

the Third Reich, even before the Nazi Government came to power. Another example being 'Gestapo' (Geheime Staatspolizei) and 'Kripo' for the Kriminalpolizei. The word 'Nazi' however was rarely used by Hitler or his followers. By 1933 membership of the Nazi Party had jumped to 849,009 and in the early war years this had reached to more than five million.

#### THE ANCIENT SWASTIKA SYMBOL

The Swastika is a very old sacred symbol from near-prehistoric times and referred to in Germany as the Hakenkreuz. There is no evidence that Hitler ever used the word "Swastika". It was traditionally a sign of good fortune and well-being, its name is derived from the Sanskrit 'su' meaning 'well' and 'asti' meaning 'being'. For thousands of years the Swastika symbol had given courage, hope and security to millions. It predates all former known religions and it is well-known in Hindu and Buddhist cultures and used by the Aryan nomads of India in the Second Millennium B.C. Unfortunately, Nazism has turned the Swastika into a hate symbol. Hitler displayed the symbol on a red background 'to win over the worker' and it had an hypnotic effect on all those who supported the Nazi movement. In his book Mein Kampf, Hitler wrote "In the red we see the social idea of the movement, in the white, the Nationalist idea and in the Hakenkreuz the vision of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man."

The Black, Red and Gold flag of the Weimar Republic was abolished on March 12, 1933, and replaced with the Black, White and Red tricolour flag which had been the flag of Imperial Germany, the 'Second Reich, 1871-1918. On September 15, 1935, the Swastika was incorporated into the Third Reich flag and became the official national flag. (The Soviet Union's red flag with its Hammer and Sickle represents an ideology that has been responsible for ten times as many deaths as Nazism. Why is this symbol not equally reviled and shunned?)

(In Ontario, Canada, there is a small mining town named Swastika. In 1911, two brother's discovered gold at a nearby lake and named the mine after a visitors good luck charm, a swastika. When World War II broke out, Ontario changed the name to 'Winston' after the British wartime leader. The name change did not please the residents who removed the sign and replaced it with the original and other signs saying 'To hell with Hitler, we came up with our name first'. The name Swastika, stayed. The new sign read: Swastika, Population 545.)

#### WHY THE THIRD REICH?

This was the name for the Nazi period of government from January 1933 to May 1945. The official name was "Deutsches Reich" or (only from 1943 on) "Grossdeutsches Reich".

- The First Reich (or 'Empire') was the Holy Roman Empire period of the German Nation begun in A.D. 962 when Otto the Great was crowned in Rome. This Empire, of course, did indeed last - more or less intact - for around a thousand years.
- The Second Reich was founded by Otto von Bismarck in 1871 after the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War. When the Hohenzollern dynasty collapsed in 1918 with the abdication of Emperor William II, the Second Reich came to its end.
- This was followed by the Weimar Republic proclaimed by the Social Democrats or Labour Party at the end of 1918 and which lasted until 1933.
- In turn, it was followed by Hitler's Third Reich which he regarded as an empire that would also last for a thousand years. On January 30, 1933, President von Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler as Chancellor of Germany. Hitler had adopted the term 'Third Reich' in the early 1920s after the German writer, Arthur Moeller von der Bruck, used it as a title for one of his books.

Hitler's "Thousand Year Reich" created amid boasts that it would endure for a thousand years actually ended up lasting only 12 years, 4 months, and 8 days (2,191 days).

#### MEIN KAMPF

The original title of Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' was 'My 4 & 1/2 Year Struggle, against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice'. The first part was written while he was incarcerated in Landsberg prison after the 1923 Beer-Hall Putsch. His publisher, Max Amann, later changed the title to Mein Kampf (My Struggle). The first volume was published on July 18, 1925. By 1939, the book had sold over 5 million copies, making Hitler a millionaire. Up to 1945, the book had a total printing of just over 10,000,000 copies, outsold only by the Bible. His official salary was 60,000 Marks per annum. In 1934, Hitler declared his income for 1933 as 1,232,355 Marks but the tax on 600,000 of this amount was never paid. Most of this was from royalties from his book. He also received a fraction of a cent for

every postage stamp sold bearing his image. Today, the rights to Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' is owned by the Finance Amt Bayern. (Bavarian Finance Office.)

## BLOOD ORDER

The most prestigious of Nazi decorations was the 'Blutorden', (Blood Order) Blood imagery was a technique used by Hitler and among its uses were 'Blut und Boden' (Blood and Soil), 'Blutschande' (Blood Shame), referring to intermarriage, and Blutfahne (Blood Banner) the primary flag of the Nazi Party used at most rituals. This flag was supposed to have been drenched in the blood of the martyrs who died during the Beer-Hall Putsch in 1923. Party colours were consecrated by Hitler touching them with one hand and grasping the Blutfahne with the other.

## HITLER'S FATHER, ALOIS SCHICKELGRUBER (1837-1903)

Born in Strones, Austria, he was the illegitimate son of a Johann Georg Hiedler and his peasant girl friend, Anna Marie Schickelgruber. In May 1842, they became man and wife but Alois continued to use his mother's name. He was brought up by his father's brother Johann Hiedler who, in 1876, took steps to legitimize Alois who then started to use the name Hitler. A witness at Alois's legitimization was a relative by the name of Johann Hüttler and it is possible that Alois used the name after the parish priest confused the two names Hiedler and Hüttler and wrote 'Hitler' in the registry. By this time Alois was thirty-nine years old. After his mother died his father married for the third time on January 7, 1885, to his second cousin, Klara Poelzl (1860-1908) twenty-three years younger than he. Alois and Klara Hitler became the parents of Adolfus Hitler. Klara bore her husband five children, three of whom died young: Gustav (1885-1887), Ida (1886-1888), Adolf (1889-1945), Edmund (1894-1900) and Paula (1896-1960). Their mother died following an operation for breast cancer on December 21, 1907.



The Gravesite at Leonding. For years the grave had been maintained by an elderly woman, a descendant of Alois, first wife Anna. Now too old to attend the site she gave up the lease partly because the grave was being abused by neo-Nazis from Austria and around the world who visited the site. The headstone was removed on March 28 2012, but no remains were exhumed. The plot is now again available for lease. Any takers?

## FIRST CASUALTIES

One hour and fifty minutes after Britain declared war on Germany, a Bristol Blenheim fighter-bomber, piloted by Pilot Officer John Noel Isaac of 600 Squadron, crashed on Heading Street in Hendon near London at 12.50pm. P/O John Isaac became the first British military subject to die in the Second World War. On September 6, 1939, just three days after Britain went to war with Germany, a young Shropshire pilot, John Hulton-Harrop, age 26, became the first operational casualty of Fighter Command when he was shot down in a tragic case of 'Friendly Fire' soon after he took off from North Weald fighter station. The first Prisoner Of War was Sergeant George Booth, an RAF observer with 107 Squadron. He was captured when his Bristol Blenheim was shot down over the German coast on September 4, 1939.

## THE AXIS

An alliance of the two countries, Germany and Italy. Benito Mussolini, the dictator of Fascist Italy, first used the term in 1923 when he wrote 'The axis of European history runs through Berlin.' After his meeting with Hitler in October, 1936, at Berchtesgaden, he used the term again in a speech at Milan in November when he said "This vertical line between Rome and Berlin is not a partition but rather an axis round which all European states animated by the will to collaboration and peace can also collaborate." (The grave of Mussolini is in the San Cassiano Cemetery in Predappio.)

## ARYANS

A group of people whose language is derived from a common source. They came from Eastern Europe and Central Asia but their parent tongue is now extinct. Some of these nomadic tribes eventually reached northern India and settled there around 1500 B.C. to enjoy the warmer climate. Others went further west and settled in Europe. However, their language gave rise to Sanskrit, the ancient language of the Hindus, who called themselves Aryans meaning 'Noble'. This form of speech is allied to Persian, Greek, Latin, and the languages spoken by the Germanic, Celtic and Slavonic races who are now called Aryans but they are not a race. An 'Aryan' race does not exist!

#### A"BIG BROTHER" SYSTEM AHEAD OF ITS TIME?

Early in Hitler's career, Germany was divided into 42 districts called 'Gau'. Each Gau was supervised by a District Leader (Gauleiter) e.g. the Gauleiter for Berlin was Dr Joseph Goebbels. Each Gau was subdivided into circuits (Kreise) led by a Kreisleiter (Circuit Leader). Berlin had 10 Kreise and each Kreise was then divided into Local Groups (Ortsgruppe) headed by an Ortsgruppenleiter of which Berlin had 269. This was further subdivided into Street Cells (Zellen) supervised by the Zellenleiter whose duty was to report on all anti-government activities within the families living in that street. German civilians living abroad were regarded as the 43rd Gau. All leaders were required to swear unconditional allegiance to their Führer, Adolf Hitler.

#### HORST WESSEL AND HIS SONG

An early convert to the Nazi party was 19 year old Bielefeld-born Horst Wessel (1907-1930) who gave up his law studies to join the SA (Storm Troopers). Working as a taxi driver and builder's labourer, he soon became a leading orator at SA rallies and leader of Sturmabteilung Unit No. 5. In 1929, he married Erna Jaenicke, an 18 year old prostitute. On the evening of January 14, 1930, a group of communist thugs, led by Jaenicke's former boyfriend and pimp, Albrecht Höhler, called at their lodgings at 62 Grosse Frankfurter Strasse, Berlin, and in a fit of jealous anger Höhler drew a pistol from his pocket and shot Wessel in the mouth. He died five weeks later on February 23. Höhler was arrested and sentenced to a term in prison but when the Nazis came to power in 1933 he was taken from his cell and executed.



Before his murder, Wessel had composed a poem 'Die Fahne Hoch' (Fly the Flag High) which later was changed to 'The Horst Wessel Song' and introduced into Nazi Party ritual. It soon became Nazi Germany's second anthem and played after 'Deutschland Über Alles' (Germany Before All). In the town of Stralsund, near Stettin, a citizen was sentenced to two weeks in prison for failing to give the Nazi salute and standing with his hands in his pocket while the band was playing the Horst Wessel Song. Wessel was buried in the Nikolaifriedhof cemetery in Berlin but after the war, in common with all other Nazi graves, the headstone was removed in 1955 and his remains were disinterred and cremated. The new occupant of the grave is a Pauline Mertsching who died on November 2, 1956.

#### NAZIS AWARD PROMINENT AMERICANS

On his 78th birthday, the prestigious German Grand Service Cross of the Golden Eagle was presented to Henry Ford, the famous and fabulously wealthy American car manufacturer, by a German diplomat in the USA on July 30, 1938, on behalf of Adolf Hitler himself. Ford is actually the only American that Hitler even mentions in his book 'Mein Kampf'. In his book, 'Entnazifizierung in Bayern' the German author, Niethammer, suggests that the "failure" of the Americans to destroy the Ford car plant (Ford Werke) outside Cologne, was all a part of a "capitalist plot" of some kind. Many other well-researched authors have since drawn exactly the same conclusion. By 1941, the Ford Werke plant became one of the largest suppliers of military vehicles to the German Army. In April, 1939, Ford Werke presented Hitler with a birthday gift of 35,000 Reichmarks.

In that same year, the senior executive of the General Motors (German branch) also received the Grand Service Cross of the Golden Eagle award for his 'distinguished service to the Reich'. This referred to the synthetic fuel technology provided by General Motors. Coincidentally, his firm had also invested very heavily in Germany. In 1929, General Motors had bought up 80% of the German automobile firm of Opel in Russelheim. The same Golden Eagle award was presented by Herman Göring to the wildly popular American aviation hero, Charles

Lindbergh in October, 1938, during his third visit to Germany. (Lindbergh was the first to fly solo non-stop from New York to Paris, a distance of 3,600 miles in 33 hours and 15 minutes).

#### POPULAR SUPPORT

Before Hitler was appointed to lead the nation, massive unemployment fuelled the need for social change. Over seven million were without jobs and support for the Communist Party continued to grow. The introduction of conscription on March 16, 1935, reduced the labour market considerably and by the end of 1936 there were reports of labour shortages. Marriage loans were introduced to encourage young couples to marry and have children, the repayments were reduced by one quarter on the birth of every child. When Hitler withdrew Germany from the League of Nations in 1933, he had the support of over 90% of the population.

With the return to full employment, and with drunks, beggars, vagrants and prostitutes cleared off the streets, vast work programs were introduced such as the building of super highways. (Autobahns) Even the opponents of the Nazi Party were impressed with the accomplishments of the regime. The widely-published news of arrests and protective custody camps did little to dampen the enthusiasm of the populace for the Hitler movement which in 1933 cast 40 million votes for the party. They could hardly do anything else as all other parties were outlawed. Nevertheless, around three and a half million voters cast an invalid vote, presumably to show their opposition.

#### BLACK ORCHESTRA

Also known as the Schwarze Kapelle. An Anti-Hitler conspiracy whose members prepared a positive plan for a coup d'etat as early as 1937. The plan was to arrest Hitler and other Nazi big wigs and place them on trial thus ending the Nazi Regime. This could only be done with the help of Britain. In August, 1938, an envoy of the Schwarze Kapelle flew to London and contacted members of the British Government, to tell them that all was ready for a takeover if Britain gave an open warning to Hitler prior to the invasion of Czechoslovakia (Case Green). Nobody in London was prepared to take this path stating "It is not possible under the British Constitution to commit ourselves on a situation that has not yet arisen" Consequently the envoy returned to Berlin empty-handed.

If only Britain had given active support to the conspiracy at this stage perhaps World War II would never have taken place. This failure culminated in the greatest political blunder of the century, D-Day. If the allies had only listened to the pleas of the resisters "it is quite possible that Montgomery and Eisenhower could have walked ashore and Rommel would have been there to salute them". (One of the greatest tragedies of the war was that the Anglo-Saxon world was committed to end the Nazi ideology by brute force when a single pistol shot, no doubt, would have achieved the same end)

The hundreds of members of the Schwarze Kapelle included names such as Canaris, Oster, Fellgiebel, Beck, Steulpnagel, Witzleben, Dohnanyi, Goerdeler, Kluge, Sauerbruch, Stauffenberg etc. The majority were not members of the Nazi Party. After the war it was found that only nine members of the conspiracy had survived.

#### LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The League Of Nations functioned throughout World War II but before or during the war did little to prevent the conflict. The League was kept going in a few rooms in the Palais des Nations in Geneva, under the direction of one-time Irish journalist, Sean Lister, acting as secretary-general with a staff of about 100. With very little funds, even the Swiss stopped their modest contribution, the League's radio station was closed down. In 1942, the majority of German people, decided through a plebiscite, to withdraw from the The League of Nations. Its successor, The United Nations, came into being at a session in the San Francisco Opera House on January 26, 1945, and was signed by 50 nations. Lister and a small delegation from the League attended but were made to feel unwanted and given seats in the back row. Returning to Geneva, a final assembly was held at which the League Of Nations passed into history on April 19, 1946.

#### EMBARRASSING SWASTIKA TREES

In 1937, a local businessman, an ardent follower of Adolf Hitler, planted a 60 by 60 metre area of Larch trees in a forest near the town of Zernikow about 110 km north of Berlin. The trees were planted in the shape and format of a Swastika and could only be seen from the air. During Autumn, when the Larch



trees changed their colour to orange and yellow they stood out strikingly against a green forest of surrounding pine trees. Discovered many years after the war, this long-forgotten symbol of the Nazi era was finally removed by cutting down 27 of the 57 trees that made up the Swastika design. This was done in 2001 by the Brandenburg State Forest authorities. Local farmer, Joachim Schultz, remarked "It was quite embarrassing, we were afraid that it would become a pilgrimage site". Displaying the Swastika symbol is forbidden in Germany today. Owning a copy of Hitler's book 'Mein Kampf' a copy of which was presented to all newly married couples, is permitted but with certain reservations, i.e. it is illegal to buy or sell it.

## POLES ESCAPE

On September 17, 1939, the Soviet Union invaded the eastern part of Poland while Polish forces were fully engaged against the German onslaught in the West. After the fall of Poland, remnants of the Polish Army (over 70,000 men) those not taken prisoner by the Soviets, made their way through Romania and Hungary to France where they regrouped as the Polish 1st Division under General Duch.

When Germany invaded that country, around 24,300 of these Polish soldiers escaped from France and finally to Britain and reformed in Scotland as the 1st Polish Army Corps. It was while in Scotland, in 1941, that Polish signals officer, Lt. Jozef Kozacki, designed the first practical electronic mine-detector called the Mine Detector Polish Mark 1. It was soon mass-produced and 500 were issued to the British Army in time for use prior to the Battle of El Alamein in October, 1942. The all Polish RAF 303 Fighter Squadron began operations in Britain in 1940. At the end of the war the squadron was credited with 126 'kills' the highest score in Fighter Command. (Of the 17,000 Polish airmen who served in the RAF, 1,973 gave their lives.)

## AXIS "GUESTS"

At the outbreak of war, around 70,000 Germans and Austrians were living in Great Britain. Most were refugees from the Nazis and considered 'safe'. Others, about 11,000, were restricted in their movements around the country and ordered to report to their local police daily and to obey an 8pm to 8am curfew. Some 230 persons from the eastern counties of England and Scotland were interned in special camps set up throughout the country. When Britain and Italy went to war in June, 1940, at least 19,000 Italians were living in Britain. All were rounded up despite the fact that most had lived in Britain for decades. By the end of 1940 around 14,000, classed as 'enemy aliens' were interned on the Isle of Man. Thousands of these detainees were in fact Jewish but were treated as Italian Enemy Nationals. More than 7,000 of these detainees were deported to Canada and some to Australia. The passenger liner 'Arandora Star' was torpedoed on her way to Canada and sank with the loss of 714 lives.

At the beginning of the war, many government officials and crowned heads of Europe sought refuge in Britain. By 1941, those that set up residence in the capital included Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, Poland's former Prime Minister, Wladyslaw Sikorski, King Haakon of Norway, King Peter of Yugoslavia, King George 11 of Greece, President Benes of Czechoslovakia, Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg, Prime Minister Pierlot of Belgium and Charles de Gaulle of France. Through the services of the BBC they were able to speak and encourage their people at home. Often depressed by the uncompromising attitude of de Gaulle, Churchill is reported as having said "My heaviest cross is the Cross of Lorraine."

## "NON-BRITISH" IN AUSTRALIA

A total of 52,000 non-British persons were registered in Australia during the war, 22,000 of them regarded as 'Enemies of the State', i.e. Germans and Italians, many of whom were interned for the duration. After Pearl Harbor, Japanese residents were interned solely on the basis of their nationality and many were deported back to Japan at war's end. When Italy capitulated in 1943, most Italians were released including the 17,000 prisoners of war captured in North Africa and shipped to camps in Australia.

## AUSTRIAN JEWS

Before the war there were around 206,000 Jews living in Austria. Only 5,500 survived the Nazi occupation. Many who had converted to Judaism through marriage were forced by the Nazis to renounce their faith and be reclassified as non-Jews. Over 24,000, who had renounced Judaism but had Jewish ancestry, were again

classified as Jews. In Nazi occupied Europe all Jews had to wear the yellow Star of David on their clothes to identify them as 'Jude' (Jew). The practice of wearing a yellow identifying mark began around the year 717 when the 'Pact of Umar' suggested that Christians would gain safety and security under the shadow of Islam if they wore a yellow seam on their upper garments. In 807 in Persia, Jews were ordered to wear a yellow belt. In the years between 1315 and 1326 Jews in Granada were forced to wear a yellow badge as an identity symbol.

#### BATTLESHIP BOMBING TRAGEDY

On August 14, 1937, during the Japanese invasion of China, the Japanese battleship Isuma (10,000 tons) was tied up at the dock in Shanghai, off what was called the Shanghai Bund. In an attempt to sink the Isuma, Chinese air force planes bombed the harbour but mistakenly the bombs hit the crowded city streets, a department store and other adjacent buildings along the Bund killing nearly 1,200 people and wounding 1,400.

#### JEWISH BANS

From 1933 onwards, the music of German Jewish composer Mendelssohn was banned. Soon after, all Jews were dismissed from symphony orchestras and from the Opera. Books published by Jewish authors such as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Heinrich Heine were burned in April, 1934, in front of the University of Berlin. One of the leading newspapers, the 'Vossische Zeitung' was forced out of business because it was owned by the 'House of Ullstein' a Jewish firm. The same thing happened to the German Jewish newspaper, the 'Judische Rundschau'. The Jewish owned 'Berliner Tageblatt' was forced to close in 1937. The well known and respected Frankfurter Zeitung was allowed to flourish but its Jewish owners were sacked. On April 7, 1933, a Civil Service Law was passed in Germany. This law banned all persons with a Jewish grandparent from public employment, an action which caused great distress in the Jewish community. By the end of the year around 31,000 of Berlin's Jews were living on charity. (Of the 503,000 Jews living in Germany when Hitler came to power around 319,900 had fled the country by 1939. By the war's end only about 23,000 Jews were living in Germany.)



The spot where the book burning took place. Visitors can look down through the glass and see a room lined with empty bookshelves with enough space for around 13,000 books, the number of books burned.

#### FIRST RAF RAID: A NEAR-DISASTER

The first RAF raid of the war ended in near disaster. The day after war was declared, RAF Wellington and Blenheim bombers attacked the German naval ports of Wilhelmshaven and Brunsbuttel. Ten bombers returned to base after failing to find the target. Seven were shot down by German anti-aircraft batteries. Three of the planes prepared to attack British warships in the North Sea until they discovered their mistake, then went home. Eight bombers found the target and attacked the battleships Scheer and Hipper and the cruiser Emden one of the bombers crashing on the ships' deck. By a strange coincidence the pilot's name was Flying Officer H. L. Emden. Seventeen Royal Air Force men were killed in this raid.

#### FIRST PLANE SHOT DOWN IN BRITAIN

The first enemy plane shot down over the British Isles was a Heinkel 111, built at the Heinkel-Werke in Oranienburg in October, 1938. It crash-landed at Humbie, near Dalkeith, in south eastern Scotland on October 28, 1939. Two of the crew survived while two others were killed during the attack, which is credited to Spitfires of 602 and 603 Squadrons.

#### THE 'V FOR VICTORY' SIGN

This was the idea of a Belgian refugee in London, Victor De Laveleye who suggested adding 'V' (Vrijheid, meaning Freedom) to the 'RAF' letters they were chalking up. In a short-wave broadcast from London, he urged his countrymen to chalk the letter 'V' on all public places as a sign of confidence in ultimate victory. This was plugged in all BBC foreign language programs and later supported by the two finger 'V' sign of the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. The V sign has been used in Britain for centuries originating from the wars with the Welsh during the reign of Henry 11. The Welsh archers used a Longbow with a bodkin point. The practice was to give the V sign as they ran away after releasing the arrow, the V sign being the two fingers that released the Bowstring. English practice at the time was the amputation of those fingers on captured rebels.

#### MARRIAGE LOAN (Ehestanddarlehen)

In Germany, financial aid was given to encourage young couples to marry and set up house and help raise the birth-rate. Between August 1933 and the end of 1936, a total of 694,367 marriages were financed. After the fourth child was born the loan was cleared. From these marriages, 485,285 children were born.

#### RAF FIGHTER COMMAND'S FIRST KILL

On October 16, 1939, German JU 88s from the island of Sylt, attacked naval ships in the harbour at Rosyth, Scotland. About to enter dry dock for repairs was the battle cruiser HMS Hood, but the pilots had strict orders not to attack. A personal order from Hitler stated "Should the Hood already be in dock, no attack is to be made, I won't have a single civilian killed." After the raid, in which the 9,100 ton cruiser HMS Southampton was damaged, Spitfires from RAF Turnhouse, near Edinburgh, attacked the departing JUs and one was shot down, hitting the sea off Port Seton. This was the first enemy plane to be brought down by RAF Fighter Command.

#### INVASION WARNING

On November 5, 1939, Colonel Hans Oster, Chief of Staff in the Abwehr (German Military Intelligence) under Admiral Canaris, warns Colonel Jacobus Sas, the Dutch military attaché in Berlin, that Hitler plans to invade Holland and Belgium within the next few days. In fact the attack (Operation Gelb) did not take place until May 10, 1940. Oster and Canaris, both dedicated anti-Nazis, were arrested after the 20th July Plot, 1944, and hanged on April 9, 1945, at the Flossenbürg concentration camp.

#### AWFUL RETRIBUTION AGAINST THE POLES

On December 27, 1939, two German Army non-commissioned officers were killed by Poles during a scuffle in a Warsaw bar. The bar owner was immediately hanged and 120 Polish men and boys were selected at random and shot. Thirteen men survived the massacre by feigning death beneath the pile of bodies.

#### YOUTH ALIYAH

In 1936, the 'Youth Aliyah' (Movement of Children) organization, concerned itself with the emigration of Jewish children from Germany and Austria, to stay with British families who had agreed to care for them. The British Home Office had given permission for them to come to Britain, and many of them lived with families in Kent and in Scotland. They attended the special Youth Aliyah schools which were set up and where they learned about their future lives in Palestine. Founded in Germany in 1933 by Recha Freier, teacher and pianist, wife of a Rabbi, to help Jewish children and young adults emigrate from Nazi Germany to Palestine and other countries. During the war years the Youth Aliyah organization saved the lives of around 22,000 German Jewish children.

#### WARTIME BRITISH LIFE: TOUGH & FRUGAL

- In July, 1939 petrol was rationed to 200 miles per month.
- Brand names disappeared, only 'Pool' petrol was available at four shillings and two pence a gallon.
- In 1940 the manufacture of new cars was stopped.
- In 1942 petrol for private use was disallowed.
- The average wage in 1939 for men was £3 and nine shillings.

## VSM24125769 - GPFARS

- The average wage in 1939 for women was £1 and twelve shillings.
- For newly-enlisted servicemen, the pay was two shillings a day.
- A bottle of whisky cost 13 shillings and sixpence.
- The price of gold was £8 (about 16 dollars) an ounce.
- To conserve wood the Government requested all women to wear flat-heeled shoes and light clothes in order to save dye for forces uniforms. Many non-essential factories were closed.
- Eggs were rationed to two eggs per person per week. The rich still had an advantage, lobsters were not rationed.
- A packet of five 'Woodbine' cigarettes cost only two and a half pence.

## HERMANN'S INFAMOUS QUOTE

On August 9, 1939, Hermann Göring boasted about the strength of the German Luftwaffe. He said "Not a single bomb will fall on the Ruhr. If an enemy plane reaches the Ruhr, my name is not Hermann Göring, you can call me Meier." He even boasted that Berlin would never be subjected to air attack from the enemy. Hitler also proclaimed "Just give me ten years and you will not recognize your cities." For once he spoke the truth!

## CZECH BRIBERY

At the time of the Munich crises, Czechoslovakia was paying some senior British politicians and journalists the sum of 2,000 Pounds Sterling per year in return for a promise to topple Neville Chamberlain and his Government.

## AMERICAN GUN SALES

Until 1933, the German S.A. (Brownshirts) were equipped with revolvers and machine guns which were proudly embossed 'MADE IN USA'.

## CHURCHILL'S PRE-WAR INCOME

Churchill's pre-war gross incomes from his writings alone were:

- 1933 - £13,981.
- 1934 - £6,572.
- 1935 - £13,505.
- 1936 - £16,321.
- 1937 - £12,914.

Later, as Prime Minister, he received £10,000 per annum

## A DESPERATE CHURCHILL BAILED OUT

In March of 1938, Churchill was broke, his share account with his stockbrokers was £18,000 in the red. He asked The Times to advertise his home 'Chartwell' for sale, inviting offers of £20,000. A few days before the ad was to appear, Sir Henry Skrakosch, a South African gold mining millionaire, agreed to pay off his debts and Chartwell was withdrawn from the market. Skrakosch was a Jew, born in Czechoslovakia.

## OCEAN LINERS' CLOSE CALL

On December 17, 1939, five ocean liners carrying 7,450 men of the First Canadian Division, arrived at Liverpool. Unknown to them, they had narrowly escaped what could have been a major sea disaster. The passenger liner Samaria, showing no lights, had passed right through the convoy unaware of the convoy's position! It struck the wireless masts of the escorting carrier HMS Furious on her port side, struck a glancing blow on the port side of the next ship astern, the liner Aquitania, then passed close down the starboard side of the third and fourth ships sailing in line ahead. If the Samaria had collided head on with the Furious, the ships following would have all crashed into her. During the last three years of war, the Cunard liners Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth carried a total of 1,243,538 American and Canadian soldiers across the Atlantic.

#### WHAT! BOMB GERMAN INDUSTRY?!

On hearing of a proposal to fire-bomb the Black Forest, a British cabinet minister, Kingsley-Wood, said in September, 1938, "Oh, we can't do that, that's private property, next you will be insisting that we bomb the Ruhr!"

#### FIRST U-BOAT CAPTURE (September 14, 1939)

The first German U-Boat captured was the U-39. The British destroyers HMS Firedrake, Faulkner and the Foxhound forced the U-39 to the surface with depth charges after the U-boat had fired two torpedoes at the aircraft carrier Ark Royal. The U-39 was damaged and sank after the crew was removed. This was Germany's first naval loss of the war.

#### HITLER, ON PLANNING FOR THE NEXT WAR

In 1939, Hitler said "Whoever succeeds me must be sure to have an opening for a new war. In future peace treaties, we must therefore always leave open a few questions that will provide a pretext. That's Statesmanship!"

#### FIRST BOMB DROPPED ON GERMAN SOIL

The first bomb of the war to land on German soil was dropped on December 3, 1939. A Wellington bomber of 115 Squadron, attacking German shipping in the North Sea, suffered a 'hang up' when one of its bombs failed to drop. It fell off on the return trip over the island of Heligoland.

#### FIRST NIGHT BOMBLOAD WAS HARMLESS

The first night of the war (September 3, 1939) a force of ten Whitley bombers from 51 and 58 Squadrons of No. 4 Bomber Group dropped thirteen tons of propaganda leaflets over Hamburg and Bremen. Later, Berlin and the Baltic ports were showered with these leaflets. A week before Christmas, 1939, the 200 ton mark had been reached. Little opposition was met from enemy defence. As no bombs were being dropped, no doubt they were anxious not to give away their gun and searchlight positions. On September 30, leaflet-carrying balloons were launched from France by Britain's No 1 Balloon Unit. These messages to the German people urging them to help overthrow Hitler seemed less appropriate than toilet rolls would have been.

#### REPORT FROM OSLO

In November, 1939, a mysterious package was discovered on the window ledge of the office of the British Naval Attaché in Oslo, Norway. Contained in the package was highly secret information on the latest weapons being developed within Germany. These documents were passed on to the British Secret Service Office (MI-6) and were deemed authentic. The documents mentioned Peenamunde where the latest V2s were being developed and tested. Details were given about the 'smart' bomb Fritz-X, cruise missiles, anti-aircraft missiles, jet engines and rocket powered planes. This information helped the British to develop measures to combat these missiles from reaching their target i.e. Electronic Beams etc. To this day, the identity of the person who delivered the package to the Naval Attaché in Oslo has never been discovered but assumed that he was a high ranking officer in the Luftwaffe.

Peenamunde was bombed by the RAF on August 17/18, 1943, (Operation Hydra). In its first raid on the island, 560 planes took part, dropping 1,800 tons of bombs. About 180 German technicians and scientists were killed and around 550 foreign workers, mostly Polish, lost their lives. The RAF lost 40 planes. The bombing caused the Germans to move the whole rocket research facility to underground tunnels in the Harz mountains, near Nordhausen. All this took up precious time and by the time full production was attained, the Allies had landed in Normandy. (Operation 'Overlord') Seven days later the first rocket, the V1 'Doodlebug', was fired against London.

On the 27th of August, 1939, the German HE-178 became the world's first jet plane to fly. The first British jet, the Gloster E28/39 was flown successfully on April 7, 1941.

#### VOLUNTEERS

When the Soviet Union attacked Finland on November 30, 1939, over 8,000 men and women in Britain offered their services to fight the Soviets. Around 228 men of the British section of the International Volunteer Force was on its way to Finland when the armistice was signed on March 12, 1940. They arrived at Lap on March 19 and by June, 1942, the last of the volunteers had left Finland for home. Thirteen men were left behind and became prisoners of war in Germany. Following the British ultimatum to end their conflict with Soviet Union, the governments of Britain, Canada, New Zealand and India declared war on Finland, Hungary and Rumania. In Britain, 150 Finnish nationals were arrested, and in the USA six Finnish ships were seized and placed under protective custody. In their battle with the Soviets in 1939/40 the Finns suffered 24,923 killed, the Soviet forces, around 48,000 killed.

#### GERMANS IN CUSTODY

In 1939, there were 302,535 Germans in protective custody in Germany for their political views. By the end of the war, over 800,000 Germans had spent time in prison or in concentration camps.