

ADDITIONAL LESS KNOWN FACTS - WWII

LEBENSBORN SOCIETY

This was one of the most bizarre experiments of the SS. Sponsored by the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, his idea was to breed a race of super pure blooded Nordics. Tall, fair haired and blue eyed men and women, who were near perfect physical specimens, were chosen. Nursing homes were set up (mostly properties confiscated from Jews and maintained with the money from their bank accounts) to accommodate the mothers until their babies were born. They could then keep their babies or put the child up for adoption in a one hundred per cent Nazi non-Catholic family. The first home opened was at STEINHORING near Munich, on December 12, 1935. It was a place that offered an attractive alternative to a hospital birth to many women, especially single ones. The Lebensborn homes offered unwed mothers a place to go have their baby in secret, in pleasant surroundings, with top-notch pre-natal care. "We were treated like princesses," remarked one girl who brought her baby into the world at one of these homes. About 75 per cent of these girls came from the BDM or the Reich Labour Service. A number of children were born disabled and were dispatched to euthanasia clinics where they were either poisoned or gassed. Later, others were established at WERNIGERODE, at ACHERN (Baden) at KLOSTERHEIDE (Berlin) at BAD POLZIN (Pomerania) at WEINERWALD (Vienna) at VEGIMONT (Belgium) and in February, 1944, the home at LAMORLAYE, near Chantilly in France, was opened and reserved for the children of German officers and French mothers. The number of children born in these homes is not known, as records were destroyed at the end of the war. However, one set of registers was found intact and showed that more than 2,000 births were registered at Steinhoring. In the ten homes set up in Germany, nine in Norway and one each other occupied countries in Europe, it is now estimated that between six and seven thousand babies were delivered. These children were to be the advance guard of the super race of Germans that was to populate Germany in Hitler's 'Thousand Year Reich'. After the D-day landings many of the children born in these homes were evacuated to Bavaria to the Steinhoring Home. In an atmosphere of total panic the Lebensborn homes in Belgium, Holland, France and Luxembourg were abandoned. By 1946 these 'orphans of shame' were left to their fate and entrusted to anyone willing to take care of them.

KIDNAPPINGS OF CHILDREN

Initiated as early as 1940, a number of Nazi agencies became responsible for the selection of children in occupied countries whom they thought could be 'Germanized' by placing them in German homes. In Poland these children were simply kidnapped from their homes and orphanages or torn from the arms of their mothers on the street, their only crime being that they had fair hair, blue eyes, or they just 'looked Aryan'. The main reception centres for selection and racial testing of these children were set up at POZNAN, PUSHKAU, BROCKAU, POTULICE and the special home in the monastery at KALISZ in Poland, and in the Lebensborn home at BAD POLZIN. Once in these homes the children were forbidden to speak Polish, if they did they were savagely beaten. Instead they were drilled in rudimentary German before being sent to Germany already bearing the names of their designated foster parents. In Poland, over 200,000 children were kidnapped by the SS and the NSV (the female counterpart of the SA, known as the Brown Sisters) This is a rough estimate and includes children born of parents deported for slave labour to Germany.

Between 40 and 50 thousand children were kidnapped in Russia, and in the Hungarian Ukraine another 50,000 were kidnapped. Children under six years of age were adopted out to German families who were told that their parents were killed in air raids. Children from seven to twelve were placed in special institutions such as State Boarding Schools, Reich Schools, in Napolas Schools (Nazi Political Training Schools) or put in the B.D.M. (League of German Girls). This deliberate perversion of children's minds was one of the most monstrous characteristics of Hitler's Germany. Children who failed to pass the selection tests were simply put on trains leaving for Kalisz or Auschwitz, to disappear without trace. After the war, the International Refugee Organization and the International Search Service at Arolsen under the supervision of the International Red Cross, searched for these children who were put up for adoption. Only between 15 and 20 per cent of the Polish children, about 25,000, were traced and returned to their families. Britain's contribution to this Germanization programme was the illegitimate children born in the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey whose fathers were members of the occupying Wehrmacht. These children (between sixty and eighty) were placed in a Lebensborn home in France.

COMPULSORY STERILIZATION

This was definitely not a Nazi idea. It was practiced in quite a few countries in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The United States enacted laws as early as 1907, the first state to adopt these laws was Indiana. In all, close to 64,000 individuals underwent the procedure in the US. In Sweden, some 62,000 persons were sterilized over a forty year period. In Germany, inspired by the United States programme, Hitler passed a 'Law For The Protection

Of Genetically Deformed Offspring' in 1933. This was not specifically directed at Jews but at retarded and mentally ill or crippled Aryan children and adults. In the first four years of the Law being enacted, around 300,000 individuals were sterilized, the intention being the biological purification of the German race in the hope of creating a master race of disease free Germans. Realizing that sterilization would probably take generations to complete, the Nazi's expanded the programme by introducing the infamous T-4 euthanasia programme designed to rid Germany of its 'useless mouths', in other words a state sanctioned murder plan to include Jews, homosexuals, alcoholics, those suffering from Huntington's Disease and enemy prisoners of war, i.e. Russians.

OSTRACIZED

In Norway there were around 10,000 children born of parents who were members of Vidkun Quisling's pro-Nazi party and of love affairs between Norwegian girls and German soldiers stationed there. For these children the post-war period was a nightmare. Rejected as so-called 'German kids', maltreated and despised, treated with contempt, in fact refugees in their own country. Considered social misfits, few have received a proper education. To relieve Norway of this embarrassing problem, Sweden adopted a few hundred of these children and around 250 were sent to homes in Germany. Many of these children had fathers who were in the SS and were classified as war criminals. One of the children, now an adult, remarked 'My mother talked to me about my father, but other mother's didn't want to admit to anything. We were their shame.' One of the most famous of these children is Anni-Frid Lyngstad better known as Frida of the Swedish singing group ABBA. By pure chance she found her father in 1975 but later said "I can't really connect to him and love him the way I would have if he'd been around when I grew up".

Since the war, many have tried to get their Norwegian citizenship back but in each case their application has been refused. Up until 1963, any German male who wanted to visit Norway had first to prove that he had not been in the country between 1940 and 1945. In 1986, The 'League of Norwegian War Children Lebensborn' was established. Through its efforts, many of these children have found their unknown fathers. Now, 50 years later, these war children only wish 'integration and acceptance with following freedom from anguish'. Today, the League maintains contact with around two hundred former NS children. About ten Lebensborn homes were in use in Norway during the German occupation and today these former homes are among the best tourist hotels in the country. At war's end there were around 500 children still living in these homes. (Vidkun Quisling surrendered to Norwegian police in Oslo on May 9. On October 24, 1945, he was executed by firing squad)

AIR RAID SHELTERS

During the war, a total of 2,250,000 Anderson air raid shelters were erected in Britain. Named after its designer, Dr David A. Anderson, they cost seven pounds for those earning over 250 Pounds Sterling per year, free for those earning less. These shelters were made from corrugated steel and were 9 feet by 5 feet in size. The Ministry of Home Security ordered that these shelters must be up by June 11, 1940, and that they be covered by earth to a depth of 15 inches on top and 30 inches on sides and back. After the war they were used as small garden sheds or coal bunkers. In the spring of 1941, the Morrison shelter was introduced, a low steel cage for use indoors. Cost was the same as for the Anderson shelter. When the sides were folded down the steel top could be used as a table. A total of 38 million gas-masks were also distributed. By 1941, public air raid shelters in London were fitted with 462,000 bunks for adults and 11,000 for children. Bunks were also provided in 46 of London's Tube Stations. Stacked in warehouses were millions of cardboard coffins in expectations of many dead from air raids.

BOMB SHELTERS

After the German Luftwaffe was defeated in the Battle of Britain and the cancellation of 'Operation Seelowe', the planned invasion of Britain in late 1940, Germany set about protecting its own citizens from attack by enemy bombers. In October 1940, Hitler ordered the construction of bomb shelters and flak towers in all the major cities. The cost was enormous. Around 120 thousand million Reichsmarks and 200 million cubic metres of reinforced concrete was the estimate given prior to the work proceeding. Thirty major cities were included in the programme which employed some 80,000 workers and aimed at 3,000 shelters being built. In addition to this, thousands of smaller shelters were built into tunnels, caves and mines. In late 1941, construction was somewhat delayed by the building of the Atlantic Wall and construction of U-boat pens in France. After the war many of these shelters and bunkers were blown up by the Allied authorities but were used first as emergency accommodation for Displaced Persons. By the end of the war, 131 cities and towns in Germany had been bombed. Air raid deaths in Germany has been calculated at 443,000, this includes the 56,000 foreign civilians. One may ask where is the moral justification in killing hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians in the hope that doing so will force a military surrender?

HOME TO THE REICH

This was the motto on the party badge of the Luxembourg VDB party formed in July, 1940, after the German occupation. The VDB (Volksdeutsche Bewegung) was a movement whose avowed aim was to bring Luxembourg into partnership with Hitler's Third Reich. Founded by 62 year old Professor Damian Kratzenberg, son of a German father and Luxembourg mother, its membership grew to around 69,000 by the end of 1942. Most members were blackmailed into joining with the threat of losing their jobs if they refused. After the war, hundreds of Luxembourgers were brought before the courts on charges of collaboration with the enemy. Eight death sentences were actually carried out, among them Professor Kratzenberg.

A FAMOUS CHURCHILL SPEECH

In a memorable speech, Churchill asked America "Give us the tools and we will finish the job." But America wouldn't 'give' anything without payment. After two years of war, Roosevelt had drained Britain dry, stripping her of all her assets in the USA, including real estate and property. The British owned Viscose Company, worth £125 million was liquidated, Britain receiving only £87 million. Britain's £1,924 million investments in Canada were sold off to pay for raw materials bought in the United States. To make sure that Roosevelt got his money, he dispatched the American cruiser USS Louisville to the South African naval base of Simonstown to pick up £42 million worth of British gold, Britain's last negotiable asset, to help pay for American guns and ammunition. Not content with stripping Britain of her gold and assets, in return for 50 old World War I destroyers, (desperately needed by Britain as escort vessels) he demanded that Britain transfer all her scientific and technological secrets to the USA. Also, he demanded 99 year leases on the islands of Newfoundland, Jamaica, Trinidad and Bermuda for the setting up of American military and naval bases in case Britain should fall.

Of the 50 lend-lease destroyers supplied to Britain, seven were lost during the war. The first was taken over by a British crew on September 9, 1940. After 1943, when no longer useful, eight were sent to Russia, while the others were manned by French, Polish and Norwegian crews. These destroyers were renamed when they arrived in Britain. All were given the name of a town or city, hence the term 'Town Class' destroyer. During the course of the war, Britain had received 12 Billion, 775 million dollars worth of goods under the Lend-Lease program.

QUOTE

Lord Beaverbrook was later to exclaim "The Japanese are our relentless enemies, and the Americans our unrelenting creditors."

LORD HAW HAW

Born in New York of an Irish father and an English mother, William Joyce lived in England from 1921. In 1933 he joined the British Union of Fascists led by Sir Oswald Mosley. Joyce made no effort to hide his admiration for Adolf Hitler and attracted by Hitler's ideology he and his wife Margaret moved to Germany in 1939 and began broadcasting Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda from a Berlin radio station in Charlottenburg. They lived in an apartment at 29, Kastanienalle, near the radio station. British troops dubbed him Lord Haw Haw after a statement by Professor Arthur Lloyd James of London University, an authority on English language pronunciation, who said that he thought some BBC announcers were too "haw, haw" in their diction. His broadcasts later from the Hamburg studios were listened to by millions in the UK. On September 1, 1944, Joyce was awarded the German War Cross of Merit by Dr Werner Naumann on behalf of Hitler whom the Joyces never met face to face.

William Joyce was arrested on the Danish border and charged with high treason. Convicted at the Old Bailey in London he was hanged in Wandsworth Prison on January 3, 1946 and buried in an unmarked grave. His wife, Margaret, was never convicted and settled in Hamburg until 1962 then moved to London where she died an alcoholic in 1972 aged 60. Joyce's eldest daughter, Heather, finally secured permission from the Home Office to have her father's remains exhumed and flown to Ireland for burial in the New Cemetery at Bohermere Road in Galway.

SALON KITTY

Although brothels were officially outlawed in Hitler's Third Reich, Berlin's top brothel the 'Pension Schmidt' was allowed to flourish. Situated on the third floor of 11, Giesebrecht Strasse, in Charlottenburg, right next door to the apartment of Ernst Kaltenbrunner, head of the Reich Security Service. It employed sixteen hand picked girls from all over Europe, specially trained in the art of seduction and intelligence gathering and inducted into the SD. All were forbidden on pain of death to reveal what their duties were.

After renovations, the new Pension Schmidt was open for business in April, 1940. Visitors to this high-class brothel were mostly foreign diplomats, high ranking military officers and Nazi party big-wigs. Cameras and microphones were carefully concealed in walls and bedheads and every whisper was recorded through a monitoring system set up in the basement of No 10, Meinecke Strasse, just a short distance away. In January, 1941, the whole monitoring system was transferred to the Gestapo headquarters in the Prinz Albrechtstrasse. When the Pension Schmidt was damaged during an air-raid on July 17, 1942, it was moved down to the first floor of the building and renamed 'Salon Kitty' after its owner, Kitty Schmidt. (In 1988, the former Salon Kitty was in use as a guitar studio! Kitty Schmidt, born in 1882, died in Berlin in 1954).

S.O.E. (Special Operations Executive)

The S.O.E. was formed in July, 1940, on Churchill's orders to "Set Europe Ablaze." With headquarters at 64, Baker Street, London, its first recruits were originally from the armed forces but later both men and women were recruited from the civilian sector. Speaking a foreign language, especially French, was essential before being passed on to Military Intelligence for a security check. Training courses included Parachute and First Aid training at Ringwood airfield near Manchester followed by four weeks Radio and Cipher training. Physical Fitness, small arms and map reading, were conducted in the Western Highlands of Scotland where all forms of Commando and clandestine warfare were also taught. Among many of its famous secret agents were Violet Szabo and Odette Sansom. Of the 418 SOE agents sent to Europe, 118 failed to return. Only one plane, a Lysander of 161 squadron and its pilot, F/O James Bathgate of New Zealand, were lost in the French operation. In the town of Valencay, 50 kms south of Blois in central France, a memorial bearing the names of 91 men and 13 women agents of S.O.Es 'F' Section under Major Maurice Buckmaster, who from 1932 to 1936 had been General Manager of the French Ford Motor Company, are commemorated. It was inaugurated on May 6, 1991, in the presence of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. In 1946 the SOE was dissolved, its wartime role completed.

(Because of the rivalries and jealousies between SOE, SIS and other Military Intelligence units, the operations of SOE were doomed from the start. Its record was one of the poorest of the whole war, its achievements being outweighed by its many disasters ie. the collapse of the vast Prosper and Scientist networks in France. The lives it wasted, especially in Holland, the money and time it cost makes it one of the most tragic Secret Service organisation ever mounted.) Nevertheless, General Eisenhower, said the French section of SOE had contributed significantly to shortening the war by several months.

K.G.B.

The largest secret service in the world, at its peak employing around 200,000 staff. Founded by the Tsars it was then known as Okhrana and in 1917 changed its name to Cheka. In 1922 it again changed its name to O.G.P.U. then to N.K.V.D. and later to M.V.D. In 1943 another name change took place, this time to N.K.G.B and finally, in 1953, to K.G.B. Under its dreaded chief, Lavrenti Beria, it was responsible for the deaths of some 30,000 Red Army officers during the Stalin purges of the late 1930s. Soon after the death of Stalin the Soviet military arrested Beria and executed him in 1953.



Lubyanka Prison, Moscow. Former Headquarters of the KGB.

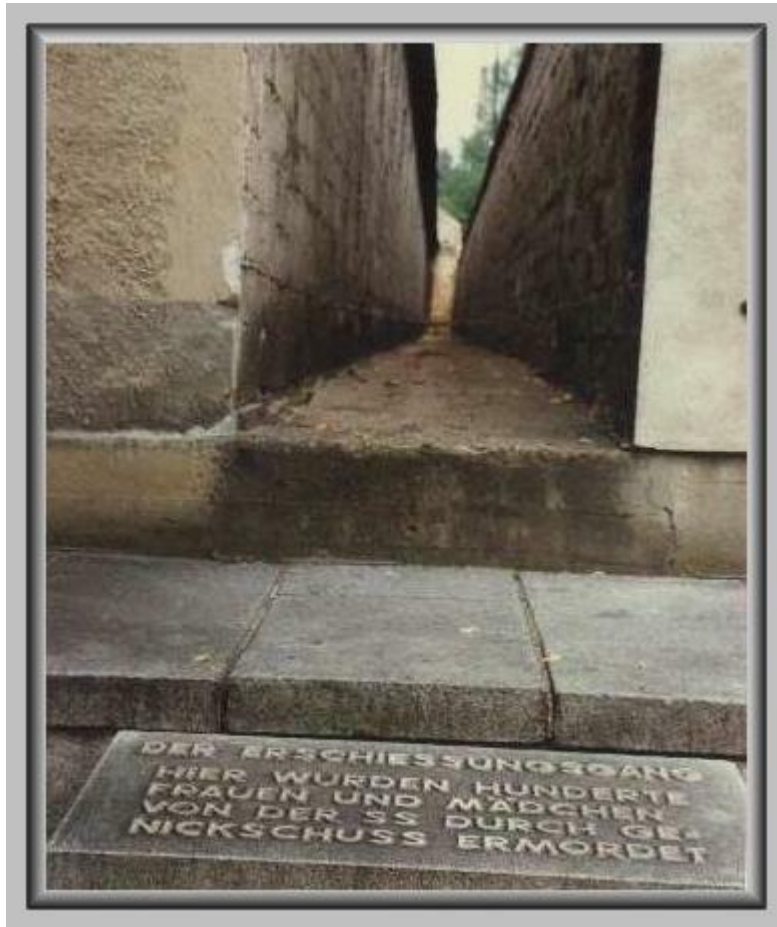
EDDIE CHAPMAN

A deserter from the Coldstream Guards in the 1930s he then turned to crime. A safecracker by profession and serving fourteen years in jail on Jersey in the Channel Islands, at that time under German occupation, he volunteered to spy for the Germans in England. He was trained at the Abwehr sabotage school at Nantes in France and then was parachuted into England on December 20, 1942, with a mission to blow up the De Havilland aircraft factory at Hatfield, in Hertfordshire, which was producing the new fighter-bomber, the Mosquito. After landing, he contacted British Intelligence who contrived a plan to blow up part of the factory not in use, giving the Germans the impression that the mission had succeeded. On returning to Jersey for more work, Eddie Chapman (Code Name 'Zigzag') was decorated with the German Iron Cross, the only Englishman thus awarded. After the war, Chapman was also given a British decoration plus a £6,000 payment from MI5. Later he set up a health farm and died aged 83 in 1997 leaving a wife Betty, and daughter Suzanne.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

There were 6,034 Jehovah's Witnesses (Jehovas Zeugen) in Germany when Hitler assumed power in 1933. Between 1933 and 1935, a total of 5,911 Witnesses were arrested as 'Enemies of the State' because of their stand of neutrality in politics, race and war. Forced to wear a purple armband they were considered traitors because they refused to sign a pledge of loyalty to the Third Reich. Over 2,000 died of ill treatment in the concentration camps. Of these, around 200 were executed under the Nazi dictatorship. Jehovah's Witnesses were among the first to be persecuted. On September 15, 1939, the first Witness August Dickman, 23, who had refused military service, was publicly shot in front of all the camp inmates. He was one of the some 600 Witnesses held in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. In 1942, Wolfgang Kuserow, age 20, was beheaded in Brandenburg prison for the same reason. This execution was supposed to set an example to others who would

refuse to serve in the German armed forces. In May of that year, the first transport of prisoners to the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp was made up of female Jehovah's Witnesses.



It was here in the narrow passageway that prisoners in Ravensbrück were murdered by a shot in the neck as they were forced to walk through. One of the victims was S.O.E. agent Violette Szabo. Her daughter, Tania, accepted the award of the George Cross on behalf of her mother, from King George VI at Buckingham Palace on January 28, 1947.

HERMANN HOMMEL

Hermann, the uncle of Albert Speer (Hitler's personal architect) was once engaged to Anneliese Henkell of the famous Champagne family. She later married Joachim von Ribbentrop who became German Ambassador to London. Ribbentrop was arrested by the British on June 14, 1945, and at the Nuremberg Trials was sentenced to death and hanged at eleven minutes past one on the morning of October 16, 1946, the first of the major Nazis to be executed.

I.S.K. (Internationalen Sozialistischen Kampfbundes)

Composed of ex-members of the German Socialist Party who were expelled from the Party and fled to England in 1928. In England, they formed their own Party, the ISK. It was led by Willi Eicher and from its ranks came many volunteers for secret service work in the Reich.

DEATH SENTENCES

Between 1933 and 1944, a total of 13,405 death sentences were passed in Germany. Of these, 11,881 were carried out. In the first few months of 1945 another 800 were executed, over half of them German nationals. By the end of the war there were 46 offences that were punishable by death.

THE ADOLF HITLER FUND

Steel Baron Gustav Krupp, proposed that all employers contribute a quarterly sum based on their payroll. Called the 'German Industry's Adolf Hitler Fund', it was administrated by Martin Bormann and added many millions to Hitler's coffers. In the twelve years of his dictatorship Hitler disposed of over 305 million Reichsmarks. Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach was unable to stand trial for war crimes because of his senility and died at Blühnbach near Salzburg on January 16, 1950. However, his son Alfred was tried as a war criminal because large numbers of concentration camp inmates were used as slave labourers in the Krupp factories. He was sentenced to twelve years in prison but was released three years later in 1951 and allowed to return to his position as head of the Krupp Steel Works. Towards the end of the war, the Krupp factories were producing more tanks than it did in previous years, proof that Allied bombing had failed. However, production had to stop because of the bombing of the German rail network. There were simply not enough trains to transport the tanks to the fronts. (Gustav Krupp is buried in the Meysenburg Cemetery at Essen-Bredeneu.)



Villa Hugel, former Home of the Krupp Family

THE BERGHOF

Three thousand two hundred and eighty one feet above Berchtesgaden, a lawyer named Winter, from Buxtehude near Hamburg, built the Bavarian style house called 'Haus Wachenfeld' (the maiden name of his wife was Wachenfeld). The house was rented to Hitler in 1928 for 100 marks per month. When he finally bought the property, after becoming Chancellor, it was shown on picture postcards as 'The little cottage of the People's Chancellor'. The architect, Alois Delgado, was called in to rebuild and enlarge the house which was then renamed 'The Berghof'.

THE DEMISE OF THE BERGHOF

In the vicinity of Hitler's chalet, houses were built for Göring, Goebbels and Bormann and a special road was constructed from Berchtesgaden to the Berghof. On April 25, 1945, a force of 318 RAF Lancaster bombers unloaded a total of 1,232 tons of bombs on the area scoring three direct hits on one wing of the Berghof and damaged nearly every other building. Of the hundreds of workers and residents who had taken shelter in the underground bunkers only six were killed.

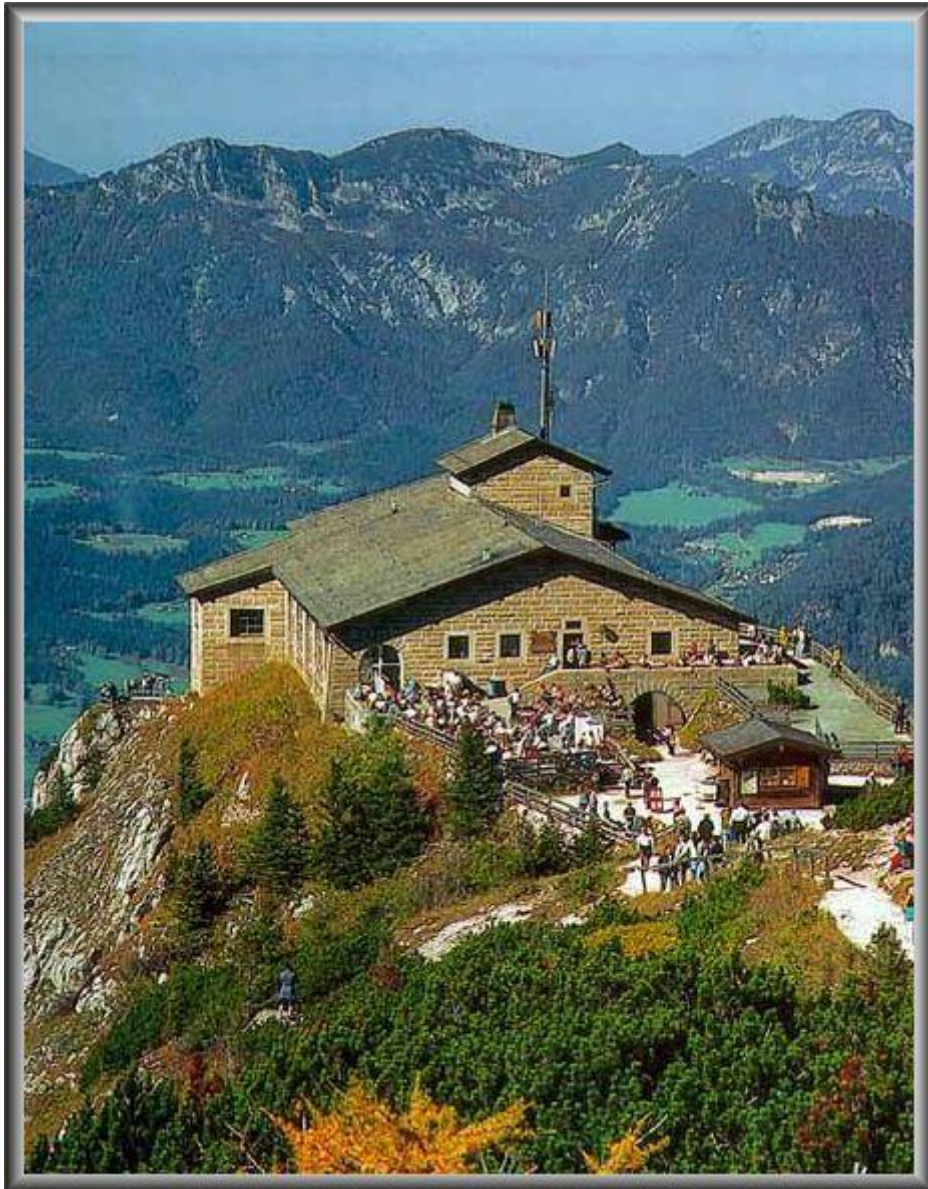
A magnetic attraction for vandals, looters, souvenir hunters and the thousands of servicemen searching for personal mementos, they moved in to ransack the place. Even the badly damaged carpets were cut up into strips and carried away. Shortly before the American troops arrived on May 4, the SS set fire to the house with gasoline. At 5.05 PM on April 30, 1952, the ruins of the Berghof were blown sky-high on orders of the Bavarian government. The ruins were removed and the area seeded and reforested. (The former site is now a level sports field and golf course with a new ultra modern hotel the 'Intercontinental Resort' built on the former site of Göring's house.)



April 30, 1952, The Anniversary Of Hitler's Death. Anything to do with the Third Reich is today being left to vandalization and nature to destroy.

THE EAGLE'S NEST

This masterpiece of construction was built on the summit of the 6,017 ft wooded Kehlstein mountain high above Berchtesgaden. Officially known as the Kehlsteinhaus, the hexagon-shaped building was built as a conference and entertainment centre for visiting diplomats at the request of Martin Bormann and presented to Hitler on his 50th birthday. The mountain road to the Eagle's Nest is about four miles long and 13ft.4ins wide and passes through five tunnels ending up at a spacious parking-place. Today it closed to ordinary traffic, the only vehicles using it are special busses carrying tourists. The name 'Eagle's Nest' was coined by Francois Poncet the French ambassador after a visit there in 1938. It was never known as a Teahouse but today gets confused with the actual teahouse Hitler used, the Mooslahnerkopf Teehaus, situated not far from his residence, the Berghof.



The Keltsteinhaus

POLAND

After the fall of Poland, Himmler issued a top secret document to all eastern Gauleiters. In it he proposed that 'racially valuable people from Poland be removed and Germanized'. The masses were to become a 'leaderless nation of common labour'. They were not to be taught anything more than simple arithmetic and how to write their own name. They could earn enough for simple living needs but the lowest German peasant must still be ten percent better off than any Pole. They could keep their Catholic priests so they would for ever remain 'dull and stupid'. All intellectuals were to be exterminated.

It was Hitler's intention to obliterate all traces of Polish history and culture. Even towns and villages were renamed in German.

MERCY KILLINGS

The first discussion on 'mercy killing' took place in the Kasino Hotel in Zoppot, near Danzig, where Hitler was celebrating his victory over Poland. At this time about a quarter of a million hospital beds were being used in Germany's mental institutions, beds that were more urgently needed for the treatment of wounded soldiers. Hitler confided to his personal surgeon, Dr. Karl Brandt, that half of the permanently hospitalized insane patients

could be put away, adding that "under no circumstances was the real cause of death to be divulged to the next of kin."

DEPORTEES

Around 400,000 Polish women were deported to Germany to work in factories or placed in German households as servants. Holland and Belgium hold the sad distinction in Western Europe of having the smallest percentage of deportees to return to their homeland. Out of 126,000 Dutch deportees only 11,000 were repatriated. Of the 25,631 Jews deported from Belgium only 1,244 survived the war. One hundred and forty died fighting with the partisans.

GYPSIES

Another group singled out for deportation were the Gypsies. Defined as non-Aryan, as were the Jews, both groups were forbidden to marry Germans. Those already married to Germans were exempted from deportation but were sterilized as were their children when they reached the age of twelve. Before the war, 1,500 Gypsies were rounded up in Germany and sent to Dachau, another 440 Gypsy women were sent to Ravensbruck. In 1940, around 30,000 Gypsies were deported to Poland and in Austria, around 4,300 were transported to the death camp at Chelmno and gassed. In 1942, a special camp for Gypsies was constructed in Auschwitz called Section B11e. During World War II about 231,800 Gypsies were put to death. On June 1, 1942, the Polish underground newspaper 'Liberty Brigade' published the first news of the gassing of thousands of Jews in the Chelmno concentration camp. This was seven months after the killings began.

W.A.S.P. (WOMEN'S AIR FORCE SERVICE PILOT)

Originally named 'Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron', an organization responsible for ferrying planes from the factories to airfields across the USA and Canada. Disbanded on December 20, 1944, after having delivered 12,650 planes of 77 different types. Of the 1,074 women who graduated, thirty eight lost their lives during the war. This was equal to one fatality in every 16,000 hours of flying. Eleven were killed while training. The first casualty was pilot Cornelia Fort, killed on March 21, 1943, in a mid-air collision near Abilene, Texas, while ferrying a Vultee BT-13 trainer. As of December 1, 2006, only about 350 of the 1,074 are still alive.

These brave women, who gave their lives for their country, were deemed ineligible for burial with military honours. They were given a second class funeral without the American flag.

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

The name given to a group of black Americans who formed the 332nd Fighter Group as part of the US Army Air Corps. Around 1,000 volunteered for pilot training at the Tuskegee and Maxwell Army Air Fields and at Moton Field in Alabama. About half of them were then sent to Italy and there escorted all-white bomber crews on raids into Austria, Hungary and Germany. They also participated in the invasion of Sicily while flying their P-51 Mustang fighters. By the end of the war, the 332nd had claimed 113 Luftwaffe planes shot down on 15,533 sorties over Europe and North Africa while at the same time fighting segregation and blatant racism at home and overseas. About 150 lost their lives during the war, 66 in actual combat. The Group accumulated 744 War Medals, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 14 Bronze Stars as well as a few Silver Stars. For every pilot there were ten Afro-American men and women supporting them on the ground. In 2006, these little known but gallant airmen were collectively awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of their service to their country during World War II. (Lt-Col Lee Archer was recognised as the only black fighter ace in World War II. He died on January 27, 2010, aged 90) Although fifty years late, on January 13, 1997, US President Bill Clinton awarded the Medal of Honor to seven black soldiers who had served with distinction in the war. At a ceremony in the East Room of the White House, the only living recipient to receive the medal was 1st Lieutenant Vernon Baker, then 77 years old. The other six were represented by their widows or close family members. (Lt. Vernon Baker, born in 1919, died on July 13, 2010, aged 90)

W.A.A.F. (WOMEN'S AUXILIARY AIR FORCE)

The women's branch of the Royal Air Force was formed on June 28, 1939. Their tasks were: general duties, office clerks, operation room plotters, radar operators, telephonists etc. To the control room they became known as 'Boarding School Girls' while many pilots referred to them as the 'Beauty Chorus'. In September of that year it comprised 230 officers and 7,460 airwomen. By 1945 its ranks numbered around 170,000.

During the war 187 WAAFs were killed and 4 listed as missing.

HIDING BRITAIN'S TREASURES

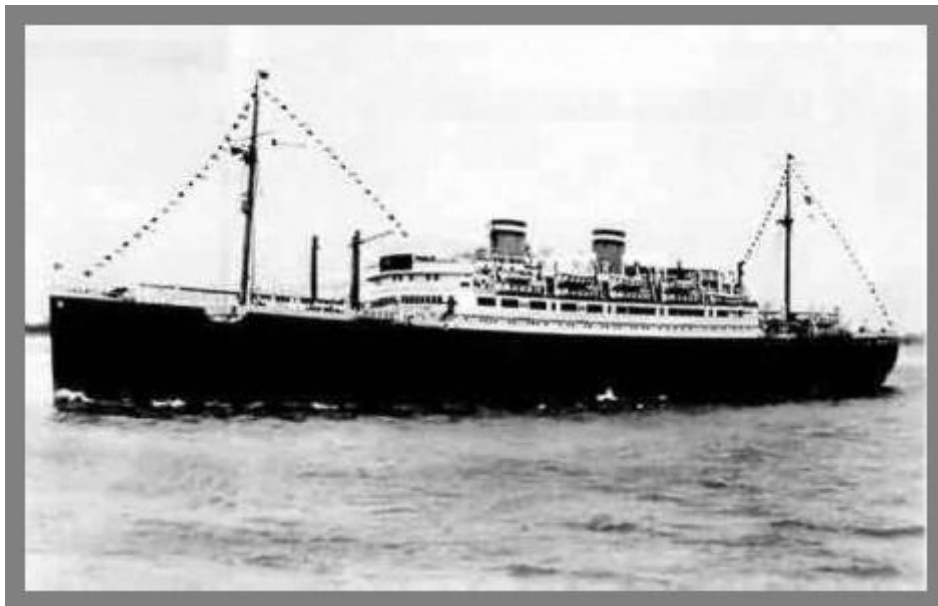
Between August 23 and September 2, 1939, Britain's art treasures and other historical artefacts were removed from the National Gallery and transported to Wales for safe keeping. They were eventually housed, 1,750 feet above sea level, in the tunnels of a slate quarry at Manod, near Festiniog in North Wales. Atmosphere was maintained at a steady 65 degrees F. with 40 degrees of humidity. All were returned safely to London in 1945. Contents of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum were stored in a deep stone quarry at Westwood in Wiltshire. But the best kept secret of all, was the destination of the Crown Jewels. To this day, the hiding place has never been revealed.

In the biggest financial traction in history, part of Britain's gold reserves, bonds and stock, valued at 7 billion US dollars, were shipped to Canada on the British light cruiser, the 7,500 ton HMS Emerald. Other ships followed with their cargo of 'fish' as it was then called. This consignment of 'fish' was stored in the specially constructed vaults of Montreal's Sun Life of Canada insurance building on what was then Dominion Square. The vaults were guarded for the next five years by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Some sources state that the Crown Jewels were also stored here but this has not been confirmed. Sun Life of Canada's strongest vaults were in their building in New York but as the USA was not in the war at this time it was considered politically incorrect to have the gold stored there.

JEWISH REFUGEES FOR CUBA?

On May 13, 1939 the 16,732 ton Hamburg American luxury liner St Louis set sail from Hamburg with 936 German Jewish refugees on board. They believed they had bought visas to enter Cuba. Arriving in Havana they were told that their visas were worthless, in fact, a confidence trick of some Cuban politicians out to make money. Not allowed to disembark, quite a few passengers committed suicide rather than return to Germany.

The ship, under the command of Captain Gustav Shroeder, then set sail for Miami in the hope that the US would accept them. This was not to be, the opposition too great as the country already had two million unemployed. Negotiations then took place between Britain, France, Holland and Belgium. England agreed to take 287, France 224, Holland 181 and Belgium 214. On June 17, the St. Louis docked in Antwerp and disembarkation began. It marked not the end of their journey but the beginning of an even more tragic episode in their lives. Those accepted by Britain survived the war but those who settled in France, Holland and Belgium, were overtaken by the Holocaust when Germany invaded these countries. (By the summer of 1941 only 167,245 Jews remained in Germany) The St Louis survived the war and in 1946 was converted to a floating hospital ship at Hamburg.



The Hamburg-America Liner, St Louis

JEWISH REFUGEES FOR JAPAN

After the German takeover of Poland, close to 15,000 Polish Jews trudged the wet and muddy roads of Poland in an attempt to escape the Nazi holocaust and reach the relative safety of Vilna in the Baltic state of Lithuania. When Russia formally annexed Lithuania in June, these desperate refugees were once again trapped. Russia didn't want its Jews, Britain was unwilling to let them into Palestine, in fact the rest of the world turned its back on these unfortunate people. In Lithuania the Soviets tried to create a communist utopia and anyone wanting to leave was considered mad or a traitor to the cause. Those who applied for permission to leave ended up in the slave labour camps of Siberia. Finally, when 2,140 visas were issued by the Japanese ambassador, Chiune Sugihara, the Intourist Office demanded 200 American dollars from each for their trip across Russia to Japan.

The first group of 72 Jews were then on their way to the Russian port of Vladivostok. From there it would be a short hop, skip and jump to Japan where it was hoped a visa for the USA would be issued. After crossing the Sea of Japan their ship docked at Tsuruga in Japan, the only country willing to welcome them. As more refugees began to arrive they found accommodation in Kobe and in Japanese controlled Shanghai where a one square mile area was set aside for them. This in effect was the creation of the first Jewish Ghetto in Asia. Before the harsh winter of 1943/44 ended around 300 Jews had died from Typhus and other diseases. Worse was to come. A Japanese radio station within the camp was targeted by US bombers. The raid killed 250 people including 31 Jews.

THE FUGU PLAN

As the war situation for Japan grew more hopeless, the big fear was what would the Japanese response be to losing the war. Japan had signed a pact of neutrality with Germany and Italy and now Germany was demanding that Japan stop treating the Jews with kid gloves. Would they all be executed as a final show of loyalty to Nazi Germany? It was then decided to reincarnate the Fugu Plan formulated in 1939 to settle the Jews in a new Jewish state in Manchukuo in Manchuria where the Japanese would co-operate with the Jews to build a better society after the war. With Japan's surrender the Shanghai Jews were lucky to survive the war. In 1948, the state of Israel was created and here the last remaining Jews of Shanghai were resettled.

KIDNAP PLANS

Believing that the Duke of Windsor was pro-German, Hitler sent his SS Intelligence Chief, Walter Schellenberg, to Spain where the Duke was on holiday. His mission, to lure the Duke back to Germany with a promise of 50 million Swiss francs. If this failed, he was to be kidnapped. Schellenberg, thinking that the whole operation was too difficult, hesitated. In the meantime, Britain got wind of the plot and on August 1, 1940, had the Duke and his wife moved, on board the SS Excalibur, to a more secure haven in the Bahamas, where he spent the rest of the war as Governor.

LILI MARLENE

The famous tune was composed by Norbert Schultz in only twenty minutes in 1938. Originally called 'Song of the Sentry' it was first sung by Lale Andersen, born Liselotte Bunnenberg in Bremerhaven, a little known German singer and then forgotten until 1941. German troops had taken over the Belgrade radio station and found they had only a few records to play to their troops in the Balkans. One was 'Lili Marlene' and it was played twice nightly for the next eighteen months. The broadcasts were picked up by Rommel's troops in North Africa and also by the British 8th Army. A British lyric writer, Tommy O'Connor, then gave the song a more sentimental wording for the British troops. (Lale Andersen died of a heart attack in Vienna, Austria, at the age of 67. She was buried at the dune cemetery on the East Frisian island of Langeoog.

Norbert Schultz survived the war and was congratulated by General Montgomery at an El Alamein reunion. He died on October 16, 2002, age 91 at Bad Tölz, Bavaria. Poor Lale Andersen (she used this name as her stage name while performing in Berlin) spent a short time in prison because she was overheard to say "All I want is to get out of this horrible country". The poem 'Song of the Sentry' was first written by Hans Leip of Hamburg in 1923. In the latter part of the war the Germans had their own version:

An der Laterne, vor der Reichskanzlie, Hängen unsere Bonzen, der Führer ist dabai , Da wollen wir bieeinander stehn, Wir wollen unsern Führer sehen, Wie einst am ersten Mai, Wie einst am ersten Mai.

THE MOTHERHOOD CROSS

This award was presented each year on the 12th of August (the birthday of Hitler's mother) to all German mothers of large families.

- The Motherhood Cross of Iron was given to mothers with four children.
- The Silver Cross to mothers of six.
- The Gold Cross to a mother of eight.
- The Cross in Gold and Diamonds for ten, plus Hitler always acted as honorary godfather.

This was a continuation of the practice initiated by President Hindenburg. Hitler Youth organizations were expected to salute mothers wearing the Cross. By 1939 around three million German mothers had been so decorated by what the ordinary man in the street called the 'Order of the Rabbit' (Kaninchenorden).



The Iron Honour Cross of the German Mother.

INTERNEED

When the French 45th Army Corps was encircled by General Guderian's armour in France in 1940, the Corps, consisting of 45,000 men was forced to seek refuge in neutral Switzerland. The 12,000 Poles who had enlisted in the Corps, remained interned until the end of the war. All the others, including 29,000 Frenchmen and Moroccans were repatriated in 1941 under an agreement between Germany and Vichy France.

SECOND CHANCE

Just before the 'Fall of France' around 400 German Air Force personnel were held in French P.O.W. camps. The majority were pilots who had been shot down by British fighters. Churchill was concerned at the prospect of their being liberated by the German armies as they advanced through northern France. He requested that they be sent immediately to a P.O.W. camp in England. The transfer was never carried out owing to the speed of German advance, and so the Luftwaffe pilots were liberated to become available once more, this time for the forthcoming 'Battle of Britain'.

Later, Churchill remarked "We had to shoot them down a second time".

GERMAN AIRCRAFT CARRIER

The building of the first German aircraft carrier Graf Zeppelin was begun in the Deutsche Werk shipyard at Kiel on Dec 28, 1936. With a displacement of 28,000 tons, it was launched on Dec. 8, 1938 by Countess Hella von Brandenstein-Zeppelin in honour of her father. Further construction of the ship was suspended in 1939 and again in 1942 because of the failure to produce an acceptable combat aircraft to operate from its deck. Work on the ship progressed slowly throughout the war but it never saw action.

At the end of the war the ship was scuttled in the Baltic Sea to prevent it falling into the hands of the Russians. However, the Russians raised the ship and loaded it with war booty. It was then towed to Leningrad in August 1947. Renamed by the Russians as the PO-101 it was then further towed to an area off Swinemünde and anchored as a training target for Russian dive bombers and torpedo ships. The carrier withstood a total of twenty-four hits including two torpedo strikes before sinking. The wreck of the Graf Zeppelin was found in August, 2006, by the crew of a Polish oil research ship belonging to Petrobaltic.

FORT BREENDONK

Situated some twelve miles south of Antwerp, the fort was part of an six mile long belt of defence fortifications protecting Belgian's largest port. Built before the outbreak of World War I, it became a notorious Gestapo prison and torture chamber when taken over by the Germans after they invaded the Netherlands in May, 1940. Prisoners included Resistance fighters, civilian criminals, Jews and anti-Fascists as well as hostages. For every German soldier killed, ten prisoners were executed tied to posts embedded before a mound of earth. The old powder magazine in the cellar was transformed into a torture chamber where interrogations took place in the most cruellest way. Altogether, 187 prisoners have been identified as having been murdered at Breendonk. Another sixty prisoners died from hardship and malnutrition just weeks before liberation. The commandant at Breendonk, SS Sturmbannführer Philip Johann-Adolf Schmitt, was arrested and tried for inhuman behaviour at the fort. He was found guilty and received the death sentence. He was the only German war criminal to be executed by the Belgians. (Today, Fort Breendonk remains practically unchanged. In 1947, the fort was renamed the Fort Breendonk National Memorial in memory of all those who suffered and lost their lives there)

LOSSES

The Norwegian Campaign cost Britain 4,400 killed. Norway lost 1,335 men and the French and Polish troops together lost 530. German casualties were 1,317 killed.

GUN ACCIDENTS

Copenhagen, in German occupied Denmark, was a favourite spot for German officers on R & R. In an effort to 'get their own back' members of a Danish resistance group opened up an Arts and Craft shop specializing in scroll work. They offered to personalize the officers side weapons by fitting ivory handles to their Lugers and cover the gun with artful designs and scroll work. Some were customized as gifts for fellow officers serving on other fronts. Trade was brisk, but what was not explained was that the barrels were being modified by reducing the diameter inside and weakening the breach of the gun, which, when fired for the first time would blow up in the officers face. Of course these guns were never fired while the officer was on leave and any 'accidents' at the front were put down to 'casualties of war'. According to Harry Jensen, the only survivor of the resistance group, hundreds of these Lugers were modified this way before they closed shop and fled.

NEUTRAL IRELAND

Although a member of the British Commonwealth, Ireland (Eire) remained neutral throughout the war. The Prime Minister, Eamonn De Valera, refused repeated requests by Britain for the use of port facilities at Cobh, Berehaven and Lough Swilly on the west coast of Ireland during the Battle of the Atlantic, ports that Britain considered essential to her survival. Eire itself depended largely upon the supplies the convoys brought in. When De Valera refused to order all German and Japanese diplomats out of the country London cancelled all travel between the Irish Republic and Britain on March 12, 1944. In December, 1941, Hitler had considered invading Ireland and using it as a platform for the assault on the British mainland. If this had proceeded it would have marked the end for Britain. It was Admiral Raeder who changed Hitler's mind, pointing out that in the face of Britain's huge naval superiority it was quite out of the question. The help De Valera gave the Germans was to refuse Britain the use of airfields and submarine bases in Ireland which would have set back the U-boat operations in the Atlantic.

The use of the Berehaven port for instance would have enabled our anti-submarine escorts to operate a further 180 miles out into the Atlantic. During the 'Emergency' enlistment in the British Army however, was popular and around 42,000 Irishmen joined the armed forces or went to sea in the Merchant Navy. Eight won the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award. These servicemen, when returning home on leave had to wear civilian clothes to avoid any embarrassment should they come home in a British uniform. If they had so, Eire would have to intern them as foreign combatants under International law. Thousands more went to England to work in British munitions factories during the war. Whenever an Irishman died in battle he was reported in the press as having died while working in Britain. (On May 2, 1945, de Valera called at the German legation in Dublin and expressed

his condolences for the death of Hitler. It was his foreign affairs department who wrongly advised him that it was the right thing to do. In neutral Portugal flags were flown at half mast after the government ordered two days of national mourning)

THE BOMBING OF BELFAST

Northern Ireland was totally unprepared for enemy air attack during the initial stages of the war. Who on earth would want to bomb Belfast? was the thought running through the minds of its citizens at the time. However, this complacency was shattered when late on April 15, 1941, over 150 German bombers rained bombs, incendiaries and parachute mines onto the streets of the city. Panic reigned as thousands of people fled to the surrounding countryside inundating small towns and villages with terrified refugees. At 1.30AM on the 16th, John MacDermott, Northern Ireland's Minister of Public Security, then did something that no government minister had ever done before nor would ever do again, he telephoned Dublin in neutral Ireland and pleaded for help. Fifteen minutes later the city's central telephone exchange received a direct hit which served all local and trunk lines out of Belfast. Back in Dublin, in a technical breach of neutrality, de Valera immediately ordered thirteen fire trucks to be sent north to help fight the devastating fires that spread around the city. Dead animals and human corpses lay sprawled all over the place.

It is doubtful whether the Luftwaffe intended to target the civilian population. The first target flares were dropped to illuminate the harbour and factory areas but had drifted in a light wind across the city and away from the intended targets. This seems to have been the case when on Sunday May 4/5 a total of 204 enemy bombers returned to finish the job on the docks and industrial area. In the first raid 745 persons were killed, in the second raid 164 persons lost their lives. This was worse than the much publicized raid on Coventry where 554 lives were lost. Northern Ireland fielded some 156,000 volunteers to the Allied cause and of these about twelve or thirteen were awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery.

COOL WELCOME

When British troops occupied Iceland on May 10, 1940, to deny the use of the island to the Germans after their occupation of Denmark, and to establish bases to protect her shipping lanes, the islanders gave the 'Tommies' a cool and icy welcome. Later, Canadian troops joined the British forces and in 1942, when an American Marine force arrived, at Churchill's request, to relieve the British and Canadians, their welcome was no less frigid. Iceland had rejected the British/Canadian presence but raised no objections to the neutral Americans but everything was done to prevent them meeting the local girls. When a black sailor from one of the visiting ships was seen strolling around Reykjavik, headlines in the local newspaper screamed 'Black Icelander?'. Does this mean, the report asked, 'that one of our girls will bring forth a black Icelander, despoiling our traditions? The Americans took the hint and from then on, no black American was ever seen again on Icelandic soil during the war. At the other side of the world, Australia had a similar problem when at the end of January 1942, an American troopship arrived in Melbourne to face the ludicrous situation of its black troops being refused permission to come ashore. At this time Australia was zealously enforcing its White Australia Policy. It took another decision of the Australian War Cabinet to have this officious ban overturned. A company of these black troops were then stationed at Mount Isa and took over Hilton Hall which was owned by Mount Isa Mines. It later became the 17th Station Hospital.

A tragedy occurred soon after when 73 black soldiers died after drinking a home brew they had made in empty drums that had preciously contained cyanide which was used in the mines. After the capitulation of Italy, the Pope, Pius 12th, asked that black US soldiers were not to guard the Vatican. In France, Allied commanders decided before D-day that only white French troops could take part in the liberation of Paris. Most French units at that time were two thirds or more North Africans. General Philippe Lederc's armoured division was chosen to be the first to enter the French capitol. It is a sad fact that black soldiers were said to be fighting two wars, one against Nazi Germany and the other war against racist commanders.

DEUTSCHE BANK

Under the direction of Dr Hermann Josef Abs (who never became a Nazi Party member) the bank was the largest in Germany after it had absorbed the Jewish-owned Mendelsohn's bank. It was responsible for financing the slave labour used by business giants such as Siemens, BMW, Volkswagen, I.G. Farben, Daimler Benz and others. The banks wealth quadrupled during the twelve years of Hitler's rule. Arrested by the British after the war for war crimes, Abs was quietly released after the intervention of the Bank of England to help restore the German banking industry in the British zone. This caused much dissension between the British and the Americans who wanted the German economy crushed. Under constant pressure from the Americans to have Abs re-arrested as

a war criminal he was again arrested and placed in Hamburg's Altona jail in cell 93. There he remained for the next three months when finally, with permission from British Intelligence, he was released and driven back to his apple orchard near Remagen. His achievement was the reopening of all German banks in the British Zone. Later, Abs became financial advisor to the first West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer. (Hermann Abs died in 1994)

THE VICTORIA CROSS

Instituted in 1856 by Queen Victoria, it has been awarded 1,351 times.

In World War II only 182 were awarded, 88 of them posthumously:

- British - 109
- New Zealand - 21 (Twice awarded to Lt. Upham of 20th Battalion)
- Australia - 19
- Indian - 17
- Danish - 1
- Gurkha - 10
- Canada - 8
- South Africa - 3
- Fiji - 1

The first VC of WWI was awarded posthumously to Lieutenant Dease of the 4th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers for an act of bravery at Mons, Belgium, on August 23, 1914. The last VC of European World War II was awarded posthumously to Guardsman Edward Charlton of the Irish Guards who won it during an action on April 21, 1945, at the village of Wistedt, near Hamburg. Canadian, Lieut. Robert Hampton Gray was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross the last VC of the war in the east for an action on August 9, 1945.

THE IRON CROSS

Germany's highest military award for heroism came in eight different classes:

- Great Cross to the Iron Cross. Only one awarded, to Herman Göring.
- Knights Cross (Ritterkreuz) with Golden Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds. Only one awarded, to the famed Stuka pilot, Hans Ulrich Rudel.
- Knights Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds. 27 awarded.
- Knights Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords. 154 awarded.
- Knights Cross with Oak Leaves. 853 awarded.
- Knights Cross to the Iron Cross. 7,361 awarded.
- Iron Cross, First Class. In WWII, 6,937 were awarded.
- Iron Cross, 2nd Class. Around 3 million were awarded including those to Germany's Allies.

OPERATION 'IRON CROSS'

One of the most ambitious of the American OSS (Office of Strategic Services) missions was the plan to recruit 175 men from the German nationals interned in France. Most were communists. After training as a German infantry unit at Saint Germain outside Paris, a hundred were picked to be parachuted into the Inn valley between Kufstein and Innsbruck. There, they would conduct sabotage and guerrilla warfare and try and capture all high ranking Nazis as they fled to the 'Redoubt' in Bavaria. The imminent defeat of Germany caused the OSS to call the whole thing off. The men were paid 60 cents a day and then returned to their holding camps, their only reward being the first to be released when the war ended.

GREAT TROPHIES!

- The 7.65 mm Walther PP pistol presented to Adolf Hitler on his 50th birthday by the Walther Waffenfabrik Weapon Factory is now owned by Andrew Wright of the Wright Historical Museum at Swift Current in Canada.

- This is not the gun used when Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945. It has been established that this gun now belongs to a German citizen who was present in the Bunker on that fateful day. However, he refuses to be identified or photographed.
- The .38 Smith & Wesson model K Military Police revolver used by Herman Göring is now in the West Point Museum, as is the .380 Colt semi-automatic pistol once owned by General Eisenhower.
- Reich Marshal Herman Göring's jewel encrusted baton, valued at \$35,000, is on permanent display in the US Military Academy at West Point.
- Goring's .38 Smith & Wesson revolver which he handed over when he was captured is also at West Point.
- The 7.65 Walther PP pistol that once belonged to Albert Speer, is now at the USAF Museum.
- The brass container, made out of a spent cartridge case in which held the phial of poison that Göring used to commit suicide is now held in the private collection of author Ben E. Swearingen of Lewisville, Texas.
- The naval baton of Grand Admiral Karl Donitz is on display at the Shropshire Regimental Museum at The Castle in Shrewsbury, England. Two pennants, the Admiral's pennant and the Reichsführer's flag, taken from Donitz's car, are displayed in the Herefordshire Regimental Museum at the Hereford TA Centre.
- General Patton's car, a 1939 French assembled Cadillac, in which he was riding when he sustained his fatal injury, can be seen in the Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armour at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The car was repaired after the accident and returned to service until the late 40s. His specially converted jeep is preserved at the Fort Lee Quartermaster Museum in Virginia. His two ivory-handed revolvers, not a matched pair, are also at Fort Knox.
- The three caravans used by General Montgomery during the North Africa and European campaigns are on view in the Imperial War Museum in London. The General was never photographed wearing the official British officer's weapon, the .380 Webley & Scott Colt semi-automatic. It was found in his safe after the war by his son and transferred to the Imperial War Museum.
- The leather greatcoat worn by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel is displayed in the Rommel Museum at Merse Matruh, Egypt, one hundred miles west of El Alamein.
- The brass container, made out of a spent cartridge case in which held the phial of poison that Göring used to commit suicide is now held in the private collection of author Ben E. Swearingen of Lewisville, Texas.
- A pair of jack-boots, dinner jacket and personal VIP guest book belonging to Adolf Hitler are displayed in the Russian Military Museum in Moscow. These were only revealed after the fall of communism in the former Soviet Union.

HITLER'S CAR

On July 8, 1940, a brand new Mercedes-Benz convertible was driven from the Daimler-Benz AG factory in Stuttgart and delivered to the Reichs Chancellery car pool in Berlin. On July 19, Hitler used the car, a 7.7 litre straight eight engine with the registration number 1A 148697, for the first time when he was driven from the Kroll Opera House where he had addressed the Reichstag. On May 5th or 6th, 1945, Technical Sergeant Joe Azara of the 20th US Armoured Division, which was fighting its way towards Salzburg, noticed a large car secured by wire ropes on a flat-bed railway wagon standing on a siding near the town of Laufen. With the help from his buddies he soon had the car on the ground and drove away. In July, 1945, the car was transported to the USA on the liberty ship George Shiras. From then on the car criss-crossed the US and Canada and exhibited as Hermann Göring's Personal Car. It was not until 1982 that the car was proved not to be Göring's but actually one of Hitler's staff cars. In 1956, the car was sold to a car dealer in Toronto and after a time and a couple of more owners, it finally ended up in the Canadian War Museum on exhibit to the public since 1971. Another of Hitler's Mercedes Benz cars (1A 148461) is on permanent display in the Imperial Palace Casino and Museum in Las Vegas. Many other 'Hitler cars' are in the hands of private collectors around the world including the one he rode in (License plate WH-32288) when he crossed the frontier into the Czech Sudetenland on October 3, 1938. The car he rode in when he visited his hometown Braunau after the Anschluss on March, 14, 1938, had a number plate WN 32290.

COLOURS OF NAZISM

Two hundred hated symbols of Nazism, the standards and flags of the German armed forces which were captured by the Red Army, were thrown down on the red marble steps of Lenin's Mausoleum on Red Square during the official celebration of the victory over Fascism on June 24, 1945. The most prized trophy was the Adolf Hitler standard found in the SS Leibstandarte 'Adolf Hitler' Barracks in Berlin-Lichterfelde. Later named 'Andrews Barracks' after Lt. General Frank Andrews, commander of the US European Theatre of Operations.

(General Andrews was killed in a plane crash in May, 1943.) Today, the standard lies on top of the huge bronze eagle which once adorned Hitler's Reich Chancellery in Berlin.

The display of captured colours is open for public inspection in the Central Museum of the Soviet Armed Forces in Moscow.

COMFORT WOMEN

The name given to over 130,000 women and young girls, many not even thirteen years old, who were forcibly taken from their homelands to serve as prostitutes for Japanese troops. About 80 percent were recruited from Korea, at that time a Japanese colony. Others were from Taiwan, Burma, the Philippines, Indonesia and China. Far from home and family these poor women, often beaten and tortured, lived a life of fear and desperation and often exposed to the dangers of daily artillery fire and bombing. The statistics are terrifying. At any point in time these 'comfort women' were often raped ten times per day over a period of three years. This meant that the 'comfort girl' would have experienced around 2,500 rapes in a single year. In some war zones these women were expected to service their menfolk thirty or forty times per day. Hundreds committed suicide rather than continue the indignity of being raped. In Shanghai, eighty-three brothels were set up each employing hundreds of women. Many Japanese prostitutes, who volunteered their services to their own countrymen (mainly higher ranking officers and generals) were then murdered to prevent them from being captured by Allied troops. Sadly, thousands of these 'Jig-a-Jig' girls died a horrible death when their ships, bringing them to the front lines, were torpedoed by Allied submarines. China, the first nation to resist Japanese aggression, suffered the greatest harm from the sex slave trade, over 200,000 women were kidnapped and forced to serve the invading troops. Today, these women are in their 80s and 90s, many are lonely, childless and living in poverty after their marriages failed because they could not produce children. They yearn strongly for some sort of justice. The Hague Convention requires that victims of war rape should be compensated.

Only in 1992 did Japan admit that her Imperial Army was involved in the prostitution of women but no apology has been forthcoming. It seems that Japan is waiting for the surviving sex slaves to die. The oldest Chinese sex slave died on February 25, 2005, aged 94. 'The names of Japanese soldiers enshrined at the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo are the very ones who did the raping' she said. Up till now Japanese school history books do not mention these atrocities committed by their soldiers during the war. Designed in the late 1800s the Yasukuni Shrine is a place to pray for the souls of those who died in wars. The Shrine lists 2,325,128 war dead from 1937 to 1945. This includes civilians employed by the government and also Taiwanese and Koreans who served in the Japanese Military forces. (According to the Shinto religion it does not honour war criminals)

CAPTURE OF THE REICHSTAG (APRIL 30, 1945)

At 10.40 pm on April 30 a Soviet victory flag was raised over the German Reichstag building in Berlin. It was not a real flag but a large piece of red cloth. The soldier who performed this act was Private Mikhail Petrovich Minin of the Soviet 3rd Army. There was no camera-man present. The Soviet propaganda photograph we see today was actually taken later on the 2nd of May. It shows a Ukrainian soldier posing for the propaganda picture. This soldier had taken no part in the storming of the Reichstag. Private Minin and a small group of five men (with a promise of the decoration 'Hero of the Soviet Union') were ordered to storm the building using a fallen tree trunk to smash down the front door. Sixty years later, Private Minin, now well into his 80s, returned to the Reichstag for a visit and while there met up with Ernest Bietscher an ex German soldier and one of the defenders of the Reichstag on that fateful day. Any animosity between the two was completely forgotten as they hugged each other and shook hands. The Soviet Medal for the capture of Berlin was awarded to 1,082,000 military persons.



The Reichstag in 1945, showing the damage caused by Russian shelling from nine thousand guns which blasted the city.

The Battle Of Berlin took the lives of 22,349 Berlin residents. In bombing raids a total of 33,420 Berlin registered civilians lost their lives during the war.

STRATEGY

The Soviet strategy for the capture of Berlin was to surround the city first in order to warn off the British and American forces now only less than 100 kilometres from the city. A most vital target for the Soviets was the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics situated off the Boltzmannstrasse, an important centre for German atomic research in the suburb of Dahlem. Reaching the centre on April 25, 1945, all the laboratory equipment and materials were hastily packed up and transported back to the USSR as Dahlem would be in the future American Zone of Berlin. Only a small amount of Atomic material was found including 250 kilos of metallic uranium, three tons of uranium oxide and about twenty litres of heavy water. Fortunately, some weeks before, most of the Institutes equipment and its scientists, had been evacuated to Haigerloch in the Black Forest.

THE FOURTH SECTOR

When French occupation troops arrived in Berlin in July, 1945, they were without a sector. The Soviets and the Americans refused to budge to accommodate them. It was up to the British to break the deadlock by giving up their two boroughs of Reinickendorf and Wedding to create a French Sector in the city.

THE LAST ACT

During a reconnaissance mission over Tokyo on August 18, 1945, two Consolidated B-32 Dominators No.s 42-108532 and 42-108578 were attacked by Japanese fighters. The American gunners claimed two kills and one probable but 42-108578 was badly shot up and one of its crew killed and two injured. This was proved to be the last combat action of World War II.

GRUESOME DISCOVERY

In February, 2006, the remains of around 4,000 German soldiers were discovered in a disused factory building in the Czech town of Ústí-nad-Labem. (Aussig an der Elbe). The remains were found piled high in numbered cardboard boxes which had been stored in the building for over sixty years. These Wehrmacht soldiers had fought and died on Czech soil during World War II but were never given a dignified burial. A cemetery in the northern town of Hlucin was chosen as their final resting place, the local council agreeing to purchase land to extend the cemetery.

TRAINING ACCIDENT

Nine miles south-west of the Australian town of Wagga Wagga in New South Wales was the location of the Royal Australian Engineer Training Centre known as Camp Kapooka. On May 21, 1945, a group of soldiers were receiving instructions on demolition work. The lecture took place in a below-ground bunker which contained a large amount of explosives which had just been delivered in time for the days training. During the lecture the Sergeant instructor, clutching a handful of detonators, walked towards the heap of explosives to demonstrate something when a massive explosion blew the bunker apart. Twenty-four soldiers died instantly and two died later in hospital from their injuries. Only one man survived the blast with severe injuries. The exact cause of this largely unknown tragedy has never been established. The funeral of those killed was the largest military funeral ever held on Australian soil. An estimated 7,000 people lined the route of the procession which included 100 trucks transporting army and air force personnel and 20 cars carrying the bereaved. The procession took forty-five minutes to pass.

TRIBUTE CHURCH

On top of the ULRICHSBERG mountain in Austria, stands a memorial church where on the first Sunday of October, each year since 1958, thousands of surviving veterans and families of the Wehrmacht and SS gather to pay tribute to their fallen comrades killed during WW11. Carved in large letters on the wall is the slogan 'Die Ehre Unserer Soldaten Heisst Treue' (The Honour Of Our Soldiers Is Their Loyalty) The leader of Austria's People's Party says "Those who come here to Ulrichsberg are not old Nazis, they are not neo-Nazis, they are not criminals'. One visitor to the site for many years was Gudrun Burwitz, daughter of the ex-chief of the SS, Heinrich Himmler.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

WING COMMANDER GUY GIBSON, VC. (1918-1944)

Hero of the Ruhr Dams raid and Victoria Cross winner. Taken off operational duties he toured the United States with Winston Churchill on a promotional visit. He finally persuaded his superiors to let him fly just one more mission and on September 19, 1944 he flew Mosquito KB-267 on a raid on the communications centre at Rheydt. Returning home, his plane was shot down by friendly fire from a Lancaster, whose rear-gunner mistook the Mosquito for a German fighter a Junkers JU 88 and shot it down, it crashed in Holland. The bodies of Gibson and his navigator, Squadron Leader J. B. Warwick, were buried together in the Roman Catholic Cemetery at Steenberg by the townspeople.

MAJOR RICHARD BONG (1903-1945)

America's leading air ace with 40 kills in the Pacific theatre. In 1942 he served in New Guinea with the 'Flying Knights' Fighter Squadron. A Congressional Medal of Honorwinner, he was killed on August 6, 1945 when his P-80 Shooting Star suffered a flame-out on take off and crashed. Major Richard Ira Bong is buried in the Poplar Cemetery in Wisconsin.

COLONEL DAVID SCHILLING (1918-1956)

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American pilot with 25 kills in the European theatre. He survived the war and returned to the USA. In 1948 he returned to England with the 56th Fighter Group. Whilst in England, he was killed on August 14, 1956, near Eriswell in Suffolk, when his sports car hit a concrete bridge-post.

SQD. LDR. THOMAS PATTLE (1914-1941)

South African. His score of 41 kills made him the highest scoring RAF pilot. On April 20, 1941, while covering the Allied withdrawal from Greece, he shot down two German fighters before being shot down himself, his Hurricane diving into the waters of Eleusis Bay

HANS-JOACHIM MARSEILLE(Luftwaffe)(1909-1942)

Top scoring pilot against the Allies, with a score of 158. (including Russia) He shot down 101 Tomahawks and Kittyhawks, 30 Hurricanes, 16 Spitfires and 4 bombers. Born in Charlottenburg, Berlin, he achieved fame in North Africa when he shot down 17 RAF planes in one day. Returning from a patrol near Cairo on September 30, 1942, his engine caught fire. Baling out, he was hit in the chest by the planes rudder. Unable to deploy his parachute, he fell to his death about three miles south of Sidi Abdul Rahman. (He now lies buried in the Dorf-Kirche Cemetery in Schöneberg, Berlin). Germany's and the world's top scoring fighter pilot was Erich Hartmann with a score of 352 mostly on the Russian front.

F/O 'COBBER' KAIN (1918-1940)

A New Zealander and the RAF's first 'ace'. By 1940 he had scored 17 kills. Ordered back to England for a rest, he took off in his Hurricane from Bois airfield and as a farewell to his unit, he attempted to 'beat up' the airfield. Misjudging his roll, his plane cart wheeled into the ground and he was killed. (Edgar James Kain is buried in the Chology War Cemetery at Meurthe-et-Moselle.)

HEINZ BÄR (Luftwaffe) (1913-1957)

German ace with 220 kills including 16 Allied aircraft with his Jet ME 262. On the Western Front he was the highest scorer with 124 kills. Achieving 9th place in the listings of top German aces, Heinz Bar died in a light plane crash in April, 1957.

PADDY FINUCANE (1920-1942)

Born in Dublin 1920, at the age of 21 he became the youngest Wing Commander in the RAF. Returning from a sweep across France, his Spitfire was hit by machine-gun fire from the sand dunes near Pointe au Touquet. With the engine overheating, he was forced to ditch in the sea but the plane sank before he could get out and he drowned. His score stood at 32.

HELMUT LENT (Luftwaffe)

Night fighter ace with 94 kills. Co-inventor of the vertically firing cannon. His BF 110 hit a power line when landing at Paderborn killing his crew. Lent survived two more days before dying of his injuries. (Helmut Lent is buried in the Old Garrison Cemetery at Stade, Germany.)

FLT. LT. GEFREY ALLARD

Twenty-five victories to his credit. On March 13, 1941, he and two companions arrived at RAF Debden to collect a new Douglas Havoc night fighter. On take off, a nose panel flew off and jammed the rudder. The Havoc flicked over and ploughed upside down into the ground, killing all occupants.

LIEUTENANT AUDIE MURPHY (1924-1971)

American war hero and star of over forty Hollywood Films, he first saw action in Sicily when his Infantry Company landed there. Following the landings in Southern France, his unit finally reached Strasbourg. During a fierce action at Holtzwihr he won the Congressional Medal Of Honor. Returning to the USA he was awarded 23 other decorations, including five from France and Belgium, making him the most decorated soldier in the US Army. Introduced to film acting by James Cagney, he left the film business in the late 60s to go into business.

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On May 28, 1971, he and four others were flying from Atlanta to Virginia when the plane, an Aero Commander, crashed near Roanoke. Audie Murphy was buried with full military honours in the Arlington National Cemetery in Washington.

LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN (1900-1979)

Appointed Chief of Operations on March 18, 1942 and on August 25, 1943, appointed Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia. Post war he became Viceroy of India and later Governor General in 1947/48. Admiral of the Fleet, Earl Mountbatten of Burma as he was now known, was assassinated by an IRA bomb placed on board his boat as he prepared to go fishing in Donegal Bay, County Sligo, in Ireland. (His grave can be seen in the Abbey Church, Romsey, Hampshire).

H.R.H. THE DUKE OF KENT (1903-1942)

Gave up his rank of honorary Air Vice Marshal to accept a post as Group Captain in the RAF Welfare Branch. His last assignment was a tour of RAF bases in Iceland. On August 24, 1942, the Duke and his party took off from Alness near Invergordon in Scotland for the 900 mile flight to Iceland. AS the plane flew up the east coast of northern Scotland it flew into a heavy mist and crashed into a hillside near Berriedale. Of the fifteen passengers and crew, only one survived, the tail gunner. (The Duke of Kent is buried in the Royal Burial Ground at Frogmore in Berkshire. He was 39 years old)

AIR MARSHALL SIR ARTHUR CONINGHAM (1895-1948)

Former Commander-in-Chief of the RAFs 2nd Tactical Air Force in Europe, previously commander of the Western Desert Air Force and later C-in-C Flying Training Command. His plane, a Tudor IV named 'Star Tiger' flying from the Azores to Bermuda, disappeared completely in the so-called Bermuda Triangle on January 29, 1948. No trace of the plane has ever been found.

MAJOR-GENERAL ORDE WINGATE (1903-1944)

Commander of the guerrilla forces known as the 'Chindits', a unit comprising the 77th Indian Brigade and trained to operate behind enemy lines in the Burmese jungles. After a conference in Imphal with Air Marshal Sir John Baldwin, commander of the 3rd Tactical Air Force, he was returning to his H/Q when his plane, an American Mitchell B-25H bomber, with an American crew of five, crashed into the slopes of the Silchar Plain in Assam, north-east India, (now Bangladesh) on March 24, 1944, killing Wingate and all eight others on board. When found, the nine bodies were unidentifiable and were buried in Burma. After the war the remains were disinterred and reburied in a common grave in the Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, USA, on November 10, 1950. (In April, 1996, the ten war medals of General Wingate was sold at Sotheby's for £56,500)

GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON (1885-1945)

Commander of the US 3rd Army and later the US 7th Army in the invasion of Sicily. On Sunday, December 9, 1945, he was being driven by twenty-three old Private Horace Woodring in a 1939 Cadillac for an afternoon of pheasant shooting on the estate of a German friend. At 11.45am they were passing through the outskirts of Mannheim when a US Army truck turned left in front of the Cadillac to enter the Quartermaster Corps camp. It appeared to be a minor accident but the collision broke the neck of the flamboyant General who died a few days later at the US Military Hospital in Heidelberg from a pulmonary embolism in the left lung. (Patton's grave can be seen in the American War Cemetery at Hamm, outside Luxembourg)

FIELD MARSHAL ERWIN ROMMEL (1891-1944)

German commander of Army Group B. The famous 'Desert Fox' was recuperating at his home in Herrlingen, from wounds received when his car was strafed on a road in France, when he was visited by three high ranking officers from Berlin. Accusing him of complicity in the July 20 plot against Hitler he was given a choice, suicide by poison or court martial. Bidding his wife Lucie and son Manfried a fond farewell, he drove off with the three officers. On the road to Wipplingen, the car stopped and the three officers walked up the road for some distance. When they returned to the car, Field Marshal Rommel was slumped, dead on the back seat. He was given a state funeral with all the trimmings, the German radio announcing that he had died from his wounds. Dr. Friedrich Brederhoff, chief physician at the reserve military hospital at Ulm was forced on the threat of death to him and his family, to falsify the death certificate and write 'Heart Attack' as the cause of death to cover up the forced

suicide. Manfred Rommel, the only son of the famous Desert Fox died at the age of 84 after a long friendship with the only son of his father's adversary, F.M. Bernard Montgomery (Erwin Rommel is buried in the local cemetery at Herrlingen, near Ulm)



Grave Site of Field Marshal Rommel

ADMIRAL SIR BERTRAM RAMSAY (1883-1945)

Allied Naval C-in-C for liberation of Europe. On January 2, 1945, he was due to fly from his H/Q near Paris to a meeting with General Montgomery in Brussels. At 11.30, he and four others took off from Toussus-le-Noble airfield in his private plane, a Hudson bomber. The plane climbed slowly as if the engines were labouring, then banked sharply to the left and crashed straight into the ground killing all on board. (Admiral Ramsay, the mastermind behind the Dunkirk evacuation, is buried in the Nouveau Cemetery at St. Germain-en-Laye)

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR TRAFFORD LEIGH-MALLORY (1892-1944)

Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Expeditionary Air Forces in Europe and the highest ranking officer to serve in the Royal Air Force during WWII, was killed when his aircraft, an Avro York, crashed into the rock face of a mountain in the French Alps on November 14, 1944. Sir Trafford was on his way to Ceylon to take up his new appointment as Air Commander for South-East Asia. His wife, Lady Mallory and all crew died in the crash. Buried in snow, the wreck was not found until June, 1945. (Leigh-Mallory's brother, George Mallory, also died on a mountain in 1924 while attempting to climb Mt. Everest)

GENERAL FRANK MAXWELL ANDREWS (1884-1943)

Often referred to as the 'father of the United States Army Air Force'. In February, 1943, he took over from General Eisenhower as Commanding-General of the European Theatre of Operations. Iceland was part of the ETO and an inspection of the bases there was scheduled for April. A Liberator B-24 bomber named 'Hot Stuff' was put at his disposal for the flight to Iceland. The plane and crew had completed 29 of its 30 missions and was due to return to the US for a triumphant tour. The crew were disappointed that their last mission was not to be a bombing raid over Germany. At 8 PM on Monday May 3, 1943, General Andrews and staff took off from Bovington airfield. Over Iceland they encountered foul weather, low cloud, mist and rain. The aircraft crashed

into the slope of a 1,600-foot high mountain. Of the 15 persons on the plane, there was only one survivor, Flight Sergeant George Eisel, the tail gunner.

GENERAL EBERHARD KINZEL

German Chief-of-Staff of OKW-Führungsstab Nord (Operational Staff North) and member of the German delegation at the signing of the unconditional surrender instrument at Montgomery's headquarters on Luneburg Heath on May 4, 1945. Kinzel, married with two children but separated from his wife and family, was living with his long time girl friend, Erika von Ashoff, in Glucksburg Castle near Flensburg. When on June 24, he was ordered to report to an Allied internment camp within two days, he requested that his car, a BMW, be brought to him. He then drove off with Erika, whom he always introduced as his wife. In a letter left behind with his landlady he had written 'I cannot admit being separated from my wife, to go into endless British captivity'. Included in the letter were instructions as to where to find his car. That evening the car was found on the right hand side of the road coming from Idstedt along the north bank of the Lake Langsee. Just outside the car were two bodies, both showed gunshot wounds in the head. In the car was another letter, 'I have committed suicide together with my wife by my own will'. General Kinzel is buried in the German War Cemetery at Karberg and Erika von Aschoff is buried in Plot 32 in the Friedenshugel Cemetery in Flensburg.

GENERAL ADMIRAL HANS-GEORG VON FRIEDEBURG (1895-1945)

Member of the short-lived Donitz Government at Flensburg he was arrested by the British along with around 6,000 other German officials and officers of the armed forces. After having his identity documents examined he asked permission to collect his belongings from his billet. When permission was granted he returned to his quarters accompanied by a small detachment from the Cheshire regiment. Escorted up to his room on the first floor he then asked permission to use the toilet in the corridor. About 45 seconds later the escorts heard the sound of groaning but finding the door locked succeeded in breaking in only to find Friedeburg lying on the floor. He had crushed a phial of cyanide between his teeth and seconds later he died.

RUDOLF HESS (1896-1987)

Hit the headlines in 1941 when the Fuhrers deputy flew to Scotland in an attempt to contact the Duke Of Hamilton and make him persuade Churchill to surrender before Britain was annihilated. Sentenced to life imprisonment in Spandau Prison in Berlin, he committed suicide on August 17, 1987 at the age of 93 and was buried in the family grave in Wunsiedel, Bavaria. In 2004, an estimated 4,500 neo-Nazis from around the world visited the grave-site and many acknowledged the grave with the Nazi salute. The Lutheran Church, which supervises the cemetery, then terminated the Hess family's lease on the plot. The body was then exhumed and cremated, the ashes spread over the sea.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL W.H.E. GOTT (1897-1942)

Killed when his plane was attacked and shot down by Luftwaffe fighters on August 8, 1942. He was about to take command of the British 8th Army in North Africa, to replace General Auchinleck. The command was now given to General Montgomery who assumed command on August 15, 1942. On August 19, Monty was directed by General Alexander to hold the line at El Alamein until his manpower build-up was completed.

CARLO EMANUELE BUSCAGLIA (1915-1944)

Italian air ace and Commander of the 132nd Autonomous Torpedo Group was born in Novara on November 29, 1915. He was the youngest and most decorated officer in the Royal Italian Air Force. In 1942 his aircraft was shot down in flames by RAF Spitfires during a raid over Bougie Bay in Algeria. Badly burned, he was rescued by a British ship which took him to the USA for internment at Fort Meade. In 1944 he choose to fight on the Allied side and was freed. He became commander of the 28th Bomber Group of the Italian Co-belligerent Air Force now fighting on the Allied side. On August 23, 1944, at Campo Vesuvio Air Base, he entered a Martin Baltimore bomber and started the engines while his friends watched from the canteen. He took off from the landing strip, zoomed and fell back to the ground and caught fire. He survived only one day before he died. He probably wanted to show his companions, or to prove to himself, that he was still able to fly.

ROCHUS MISCH

Former member of Hitler's bodyguard and later chief switchboard operator during the last days of the war in Hitler's bunker. One of the last persons to leave the bunker and was a key witness to the macabre events that took place there including the murder of the Goebbels children. He recalled one day at Berchtesgaden when Hitler was talking to Rudolf Hess and discussing a possible armistice with Britain, Hitler said "I cannot go there and go down on my knees". Hess replied "I can my Fuhrer". As Misch escaped from the bunker he was apprehended by Red Army soldiers only to spend three years in the dreaded Lubyanka prison followed by six years in the Russian gulags before being released in 1954. Rochus Misch died on September 5, 2013, at the age of 96.