

WOMEN OF THE THIRD REICH

EVA BRAUN (1912-1945)



At twenty-five minutes past two on the morning of February 7, 1912, Eva Anna Paula Braun was born in Munich. Later in life she was to become the mystery woman of Hitler's Third Reich. Wife of Hitler for one day and his mistress for twelve years, she first met Hitler in 1929 while she was assistant to the beer-loving Heinrich Hoffmann the Third Reich's official photographer who had his shop at No 50 Schellingstrasse, Munich. He had already joined the Nazi party with party card number 427. After discussing suicide, Eva Braun died with Hitler on April 30, 1945, in his underground bunker in the Reich Chancellery gardens in Berlin. It was her third attempt, the first having been in November 1932 when she was found, with a bullet in her neck. On May 28, 1935, Eva, who often complained of Hitler's neglect, decided in desperation to take twenty-five sleeping pills just to 'make certain'. Late that night she was found unconscious on her bed by her sister, Ilse, (1909-1979) who called a doctor just in time to save her life. After her recovery, Hitler bought her a six room villa in Weidermeyerstrasse in Munich and supplied her with a car and chauffeur. Although she knew about the persecucution of the Jews there is no evidence that she knew of what went on inside the concentration camps. Eva's mother, Franziska Braun, lived to the ripe old age of 96 and died in

Ruhpolding, Bavaria, in January, 1976. Her father, Fritz Braun, died on January 22, 1964.

It is interesting to note that Eva never became a Nazi Party member and never appeared as a couple with Hitler in public. Outside of Hitler's close circle of cronies she was completely unknown to the general public until after the war.

GRETLL BRAUN



Youngest of the three daughters of Fritz and Franziska Braun, her real name was Margarete and was born three years after Eva. They lived in an apartment on the second floor of No. 93 Hohenzollernstrasse, in Munich, (the house still stands). An adventurous and carefree girl, Eva nicknamed her 'Mogerl' because she was often sulking. She spent considerable time with her sister at the Berghof, which Eva loved to call the Grand Hotel. She married Hans Georg Otto Hermann Fegelein (37) a lieutenant general in the Waffen SS, on June 3, 1944, in the Salzburg town hall. The reception was held at the Berghof and later at Hitler's mountain retreat on the Kehlstein (The Eagles Nest) the only real party ever held there.

During the last days of the Third Reich, Fegelein, concerned for his own safety, tried to escape from Berlin but was discovered and arrested soon after he left his apartment at 10/11 Bleibtreu Strasse, Charlottenburg, with a large suitcase containing passports, jewellery and money. Next day, Hitler ordered him shot and he was taken out into the Chancellery garden and executed. An effort was made by Eva Braun to save him but to no avail. His body has never been found. Gretl Fegelein survived the war and gave birth to a daughter, Eva Barbara Fegelein, named after her aunt Eva Braun, on May 5,

1945. (Eva Barbara Fegelein committed suicide in 1975 after an unhappy love affair) Her mother, Gretl Fegelein, married her second husband, businessman Kurt Berlinghoff, on February 6, 1954, and lived at Agnes-Bernauer-Strasse 60, in Munich-Laim. The name Fegelein was never mentioned again in the Braun household. Gretl (Margarete) Berlinghoff died on October 10, 1987, in Steingaden at the age of 73.

WINIFRED WAGNER

Born Winifred Williams in 1894 at Hastings, England, to an English father and German mother. When her parents died she was brought up by distant relatives in Germany. In 1915 she married Siegfried Wagner, twenty-five years her senior, and son of composer Richard Wagner. She became entranced with Hitler and his Nazi movement in the early 20s. When Siegfried died in 1930, she became a close friend and staunch supporter of Adolf Hitler whom she first met in 1923. It was rumoured that a marriage between Adolf and Winifred was in the offing, but nothing came of it. Such an event would have solicited great support from the German people. The Führer himself entertained such thoughts believing that a union of the names Hitler and Wagner would ensure the adulation of the masses for time immemorial. In fact he once proposed marriage to her but on becoming Chancellor in January, 1933, he felt there was no need now for him to marry. He felt himself already 'married' to his adopted country, Deutschland.



A frequent visitor to her home, the 'Villa Wahnfried', where her three children knew him by the nickname 'Wolf', Hitler was often seen with her at various performances during the Bayreuth Festival, the last time in the late summer of 1940 when they attended a performance of 'Götterdämmerung'. Winifred Wagner died in Uberlingen on March 5, 1980, unrepentant of her relationship with Hitler.

PAULA HITLER



Born in 1896 in Hafeld, Austria, younger sister of the German Führer and the fifth and last child of Alois and Klara Hitler. At one time she worked as a secretary for a group of doctors in a military hospital but kept her identity a secret. When she would see a small chapel when travelling in the mountains, she would go in and say a silent prayer for her brother. Each year Hitler would send her a ticket to the impressive Nuremberg Rally and every month he would send her a thousand marks.

In March, 1941, Hitler was staying at the Imperial Hotel in Vienna and it was here that Paula met him for the last time. It was always her opinion that it was a pity her brother had not become the architect he always wanted to be. Paula was seven years younger than her brother, but he never mentioned her in his writings because of his embarrassment at her weak mental state.

In April, 1945, the SS took Paula from her home in Weiten, Austria (20 kms south of Melk) to Berchtesgaden and a two-bed unit at 52 Schonburgasse. Here she lived, unmarried, till after the war, her main interest being the Catholic Church. When the war ended she was interviewed by US Intelligence officers in May, 1945. Reluctant to talk she said tearfully, "Please remember, he was my brother". She lived under the name of Frau Wolf (Hitler's nickname) a name he asked her to adopt after the Anschluss with Austria in 1938. After the war, it was discovered that she was once engaged to an Austrian, Dr. Erwin Jekelius, one of the Third Reich's euthanasia doctors, but when he approached Hitler for permission to marry he was promptly arrested and sent to the Russian front where he was reportedly killed. It seems unlikely that she ever became a member of the Nazi party. She died on June 1, 1960, without ever being invited to the Berghof. Her grave is in the Bergfriedhof in Berchtesgaden.

HANNA REITSCH (1912-1979)



Born in Hirschberg, Silesia, (now Jelenia Góra, Poland) she became Germany's leading woman stunt pilot and later in 1937, chief test pilot for the Luftwaffe. She worshipped Hitler and the Nazi ideology and became the only woman to win the Iron Cross (First and Second class). Hanna Reitsch spent three days in the Bunker just before Hitler's suicide on April 28, then flew out with the newly appointed Chief of the Luftwaffe, General Robert Ritter von Greim, whose orders were to mount a bombing attack on the Russian forces who were now approaching the Chancellery and the Führerbunker. Hanna Reitsch survived the war and resided in Ghana from 1962 to 1966 where she founded and ran a gliding school. She died on August 24, 1979, aged 67, in Frankfurt from a heart attack. Von Greim was arrested and while awaiting trial committed suicide in a Salzburg hospital on May 24, 1945. (The graves of Von Greim and Hanna Reitsch can be seen in the Kommunal Friedhof in Salzburg.)

LENI RIEFENSTAHL (1902-2003)



Born Leni Helene Bertha Amalie Riefenstahl on August 22, 1902. Ballet dancer, actress, film director and producer, she was born in Berlin and founded her own film company in 1931 to produce 'The Blue Light'. She was appointed by Hitler to produce films for the Nazi Party such as 'The Triumph of the Will' and her masterpiece 'Olympia', the famous documentary of the 1936 Olympic Games held in Berlin. She has always insisted that she was never a member of the Nazi party but neither was she an opponent of Hitler. Before the war her films received all the international awards but after the war Leni was castigated because of it and spent almost four years in Allied prisons. Boycotted and despised, she has never been able to make another feature film. Editing the film she says, "nearly ruined my health".

In 1952 she was cleared of war-crimes charges by a German court. In 1962 she travelled to Africa and spent eight months living with the Nuba tribe. At the age of 70 she undertook an underwater scuba diving course and for the next 18 years filmed hundreds of undersea documentaries. At age 90, Leni Riefenstahl became a member of Greenpeace. She regrets ever having made 'Triumph of the Will'. (Leni Riefenstahl died at age 101 on September 8, 2003 and her ashes buried in Munich's Ostfriedhof Cemetery.)

GERTRAUD (TRAUDL) JUNGE (1920-2002)

Born Gertraud Humps in Munich. For two years and four months she was the youngest of Hitler's three secretaries. In late 1942, she applied for a secretarial job in the German Chancellery in Berlin. Soon she was short listed for a position as personal secretary to Hitler. At the age of 22 she worked at Hitler's HQ at Rastenburg in East Prussia. In June 1943, she married Hans Junge, Aide-de-Camp to the Führer, who was killed a year later when a Spitfire strafed his company on the Normandy front. On January 15, 1945, Hitler and his staff moved into the underground bunker in the grounds of the Berlin Chancellery. Frau Junge survived the last chaotic days in Berlin typing Hitler's last Will and Testament, an assignment that assures her name in history books.

She was arrested by the Russians and then the Americans and interrogated for hours. Exonerated as a 'youthful fellow traveller' by Germany's denazification commission she then worked as a secretary and journalist for various publishing companies. In 1954, her mother, Hildegard, emigrated to Australia but stayed only two years before returning to Munich where she died in 1969. Traudl Junge visited Australia several times but her application for permanent residency was rejected. She last visited Australia in 1992 and again in 1995 for a family wedding. Alone, unmarried and childless, Traudl Junge died of cancer on February 11, 2002, at the age of 82 in a hospital in her native city. She died wracked with guilt for having expressed a liking for 'the greatest

criminal who ever lived'. In 2004, her memoirs 'Bis Zum Letzen Stunde' (Until the Final Hour) was published. (Traudl Junge is buried in the Nordfriedhof cemetery in Munich.)

LUCIE WOLF

Conscripted into the Luftwaffe in 1939 and owing to her secretarial skills became personal secretary to Reich Marshal Göring for a period of five weeks during the closing stages of the war. She knew at that time that Göring's art treasures were stolen but was afraid to talk to anybody about it. While at Brechtesgaden she was issued with a pistol and a cyanide pill with instructions to shoot as many Russians as possible before taking the poison pill. (It was believed that the Red Army would reach Brechtesgaden before the Americans) Placed under house arrest by the Gestapo when they came to arrest Göring, she was then arrested again when the Americans arrived. All her belongings were taken from her and placed in a heap, doused with petrol and set alight. She was then interned in a P.O.W. camp for the next ten days from which, with the help of an American guard, she escaped and started out on the long walk of around 1,000 kms to her home on the shores of the Baltic Sea, a journey which took her seven weeks. Some years after the war, Lucie Wolf emigrated to Australia and became an Australian citizen.

MARTHA WERTHEIMER

Journalist with the Offenbacher Zeitung in Frankfurt. Because of her Jewish faith she was dismissed from her job in the mid 1930s. Taking up social work she became director of the Centre of German Jewish Children at the Frankfurt Jewish Congregation office. In this capacity she helped thousands of Jewish children to escape to England and other European countries during the Kindertransport period of 1938-39. Martha accompanied many of these transports to England. Back in Frankfurt she helped operate a soup kitchen and eight old peoples homes which cared for 570 elderly Jews. On June 10/11, 1942, a total of 1,042 Jews of Frankfurt and 450 from Wiesbaden were assembled in the Frankfurt Grossmarkthalle prior to boarding trains for deportation to the east. Martha Wertheimer was assigned by the Gestapo to take charge of this transport. A few weeks later, a postcard sent to a friend already in the Lodz ghetto, was the last the Jewish community ever heard of this courageous woman or of the victims on the train.

SOPHIE SCHOLL (1921-1943)

Martyr of the anti-Nazi movement at Munich University where she studied biology and philosophy. A member of the BDM (League Of German Girls) she was arrested with her brother Hans, a medical student and Hitler Youth member from 1934, after dropping anti-Nazi leaflets from the balcony of the Ludwig Maximilian University's inner court in Munich on February 18, 1943, both were arrested and taken to Munich's Stadelheim Prison. Sentenced to death by the People's Court on February 22, 1943, 22 year old Sophie Magdalene Scholl and her brother Hans, 25, were beheaded by guillotine next day. They were instrumental in organizing the resistance group known as the 'White Rose' (Weisse Rose) and encouraged by the professor of philosophy at the university, Dr Kurt Huber, who was also arrested and executed on July 13. In one of their illegally printed pamphlets, she wrote "Every word that comes from Hitler's mouth is a lie". The graves of Hans and Sophie Scholl can be seen in the Perlach Forest Cemetery, near to the Stadelheim prison.

HILDE MONTE (MEISEL) (1914-1945)

Jewish poet and writer for the Berlin paper 'Der Funke representing the Socialist International. Born in Vienna she grew up in Berlin. Living In England when Hitler became Chancellor, she joined the campaign of resistance against the Nazis (ISK: Internationalen Sozialistischen Kampfbundes, led by Willi Eichler) To carry on the struggle against Hitler she decided to return to her homeland and in 1944 had reached Switzerland via Lisbon. In Vienna, she established a secret intelligence chain with a group of anti-Nazis. In attempting to cross the border into Germany she stumbled into an SS patrol near Feldkirch. A shot was fired that shattered both her legs. As the SS rushed to arrest her, Hilde Monte (Meisel) code-named 'Crocus,' bit hard into her suicide pill. She died instantly. (The ISK was dissolved on December 10, 1945. A memorial plaque to Hilde Meisel can be seen at Landhausstrasse 3, Berlin Charlottenburg, where she lived for a time)

HANNAH SZENES

Born in Budapest, Hungary, on November 7, 1921, she and her brother emigrated to Palestine in 1939. There, in 1943, she joined the British Army and trained as a parachutist and volunteered along with another 33 trainees to be dropped behind enemy lines to help rescue Jews about to be deported to Auschwitz, and also to help save downed British pilots. She was parachuted into Yugoslavia in 1944 and spent three months with Tito's partisans.

On June 7 of that year she crossed the border into her homeland, Hungary, but was arrested by the Hungarian police and German Gestapo agents. Over the next few months she was tortured repeatedly but refused to give any information as to her mission. Brought before the Hungarian court she was charged with treason. Found guilty, she was executed by firing squad on November 7, 1944. She was then only 23 years old. Her remains were later brought to Israel and interred at the Military Cemetery on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. In November, 1993, Hannah Szenes was officially exonerated by Hungary of the charge of Treason.

ANNE KAPPIUS

Trained in Britain, along with fellow member Hilde Meisel, as a secret agent for ISK, she travelled to Switzerland to serve as a courier for her husband Jupp Kappius, a German national who worked for the American O.S.S and who was the first OSS agent to be parachuted into Germany. Anne travelled twice from Switzerland deep into the heart of the Reich, disguised as a Red Cross nurse to bring back valuable intelligence collected by her husband in Bochum, his hometown. In mid January, 1945, she brought back a thirteen-page account of the growing cells of resistance building up in the Ruhr. One startling statistic brought back by Frau Kappius was that in a bombing raid on the Gottingen railway station one in three of the 300 five-thousand-pound bombs dropped failed to explode. Anne and her husband survived the war and returned to Germany after the war to settle.

ANDREE de JONGH

Born in Schaerbeek, a suburb of Brussels, Belgium, in 1916, where her father was a schoolmaster. In 1940, twenty-four year old Andree decided to hit back at Nazi Germany after the invasion of her country. Together with her father, Frederic de Jongh, they formed the Comète Line, a 1,000 mile route for escaped Allied soldiers and shot down airmen, through France to the British consulate in Madrid, Spain, and then on to Gibraltar. She personally accompanied 118 of them over the Pyrenees mountains to Spain. Hundreds of Allied fighting men, particularly shot down airmen, were able to get back home. In Brussels, the airmen were hidden in attics and cellars before being passed through a network of hundreds of people who guided them through France and into Spain and Gibraltar from whence they made the final journey back to England. During the war over 800 Allied airmen and soldiers were helped this way. Over one hundred of these helpers were arrested and executed including Andree's father, Frederick, who was arrested by the Gestapo in Paris in June 1943. In January 1944, Andree was arrested and sent to Fresnes prison near Paris. She spent the rest of the war in the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp north-east of Berlin where she survived until liberation by the Red Army in April, 1945. After the war, Andree moved to the Ethiopia where she worked in a leper hospital in Addas Ababa. (She was awarded the British George Cross and the American Medal of Freedom. In 1985 she was created a Countess by King Baudouin of Belgium.) Countess Andree de Jongh died unmarried in Brussels on October 13, 2007, aged 94.

LISEOTTE HERRMANN

Born in Berlin on June 23, 1909, she studied chemistry and biology at the Berlin University and In 1928 she joined the Communist Youth Association. Because of this she was expelled from the university in 1933. Working as a nanny in Berlin she kept close contact with the German Communist Party. In May, 1934, she gave birth to her son Walter and went to Stuttgart to work as a typist in her father's engineering office. Receiving secret information from the illegal Communist Party in Wurttemberg about the rearmament program in the Dornier plant in Friedrechshafen and the construction of secret underground ammunition factory near Celle, she passed the information on to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Switzerland. Arrested on December 7, 1935, she spent the next nineteen months in prison awaiting trial. During this time her son was being taken care of by her grandparents. On June 12, 1937, she was sentenced to death by the People's Court for treason. Twelve months later she was brought to the death cell in Plötzensee Prison, Berlin, and there executed on June 20, 1938.

IRENA SENDLER

Born in Otwock near Warsaw in 1910, daughter of a respected physician whose patients included many poor Jews. Irena was expelled from Warsaw University in the 1930s for standing up for her Jewish friends who were forced to sit separately from other students. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, Irena was working for the Warsaw Social Welfare Department in charge of soup kitchens providing meals to the poor and elderly. Involved in acquiring forged documents she registered many Jews under Christian names listing them as sufferers of Typhus and Tuberculosis so they could obtain financial assistance and meals from the Welfare Department. As a member of the 'Council For Aid To Jews' she helped smuggle food and clothing to the Jews incarcerated in the Warsaw Ghetto. Entering the Ghetto wearing the yellow 'Star of David' she and her helpers smuggled out hundreds of children and found homes for them with Polish families who had to promise that the children would

be returned to any surviving family members after the war. This successful operation lasted two years, then on October 20 the Gestapo caught up with her. She was arrested and imprisoned in the notorious Pawiak Prison where she was tortured and had her feet and legs broken but she refused to reveal the whereabouts of the children. Offered a bribe by her friends, a guard recorded her name on a list of those who had been executed then helped her to escape. She spent the rest of the war in hiding, just like the children she had saved. Irena Sendler continued her social work after the war and was awarded Poland's highest distinction the 'Order of White Eagle' and the Yad Vashem medal for the 'Righteous Among The Nations'.

MARLENE von EXNER

In May, 1943, an electrocardiogram revealed no improvement in Hitler's heart condition. A stomach ailment also troubled him and he discussed this at a meeting with Romania's Marshal Antonescu who recommended to him a well-known dietitian from Vienna, Frau Marlene von Exner. She took up her duties to cook exclusively for the Führer with an inducement of a 2,000 Reichsmark cash payment and a tax free salary of 800 marks a month. While serving at Hitler's headquarters she became engaged to an SS adjutant and it was through this that Hitler learned that her great grandmother was Jewish. Hitler had no option but to sack her immediately "I cannot make one rule for myself and another for the rest" he explained.

ERIKA MANN (1905-1969)

Writer and daughter of Thomas Mann the novelist. Born in Munich, she fled from Germany to Switzerland in 1933 in a car given to her by the Ford Motor Company after she won a 6,000 mile race through Europe. In 1935 she married the English poet W. H. Auden. This marriage of convenience was arranged to give her British nationality. She returned to Europe and continued to attack the Nazi regime in her writings. Her 1938 book 'School for Barbarians' described to the world the true nature of the Nazi educational system. This was followed by a series of lectures in America titled 'The Other Germany'. In 1950 she returned to Switzerland where she died in Kilchberg, near Zurich, on August 27, 1969, after surgery for a brain tumour. One of her brothers, Klaus Mann, also opposed to the Nazi regime, emigrated from Germany in 1933. He continued his critical writings on Adolf Hitler when he moved to the USA and took American citizenship. He enlisted in the American armed forces as a correspondent for the US Army newspaper 'Stars and Stripes'. While holidaying in Cannes on May 21, 1949, Klaus Mann committed suicide.

ELIZABETH von THADDEN (1890-1944)

Teacher and activist in the anti-Hitler movement. Born in Mohrunen, East Prussia now Morag, Poland, she taught in a Protestant boarding school at Wieblingen Castle near Heidelberg which she founded in 1927. Forced to resign in 1941 by new state regulations, she started working for the Red Cross. She was reported to the Gestapo for things she said during a discussion on the regime at her home on September 10, 1943. She was arrested, charged with defeatism and attempted treason and sentenced to death by the Peoples Court. On September 8, 1944, she was executed. Her half brother, Adolf von Thadden, survived the war and became a member of the Bundestag and later chairman of the National Democratic Party (NPD) formed in the early 1960s.

LAGI COUNTESS BALLESTREM-SOLF

Daughter of diplomat Dr. Wilhelm Solf, ex Ambassador to Japan. In 1940, she married Count Hubert Ballestrem, an officer in the German military. At her mother's house a group of anti-Nazi intellectuals met regularly to discuss ways to help Jews and political enemies of the regime. Many Jews were found hiding places by the Countess and her mother, Frau Solf. Documents and forged passports were obtained to help them emigrate to safety. At a birthday party given by their friend, Elizabeth von Thadden, a new member was introduced to the circle. It later turned out that the new member, Dr. Reckzeh, was a Gestapo agent and all members of the Solf Circle had to flee for their lives.

The Countess and her mother went to Bavaria but the Gestapo soon caught up with them. Incarcerated in the Ravensbruck concentration camp the Countess only saw her husband once when he came on leave from the Russian front. In December, 1944, they were sent to the Moabit Remand Prison to await their trial before the People's Court. On February 3, 1945, Berlin was subjected to one of the heaviest air raids of the war. Next morning the word got around that the notorious Judge Freisler was killed in his own court-room by a falling beam during the raid. The trial was postponed to April 27 but a few days before, all prisoners were discharged as Judges and SS guards fled the city as the Soviet Army approached. Frau Solf went to England after the war and her daughter was reunited with her husband and lived in Berlin.

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All told, seventy-six friends and acquaintances of the Countess and her mother were killed during the last few months of the war. Countess Ballestrem-Solf died while in her mid forties through trauma caused by her husband's imprisonment by the Soviet authorities.

LILO GLOEDEN (1903-1944)

Elizabeth Charlotte Lilo Gloeden was a Berlin housewife, who, with her mother and her architect husband, helped shelter those who were persecuted by the Nazis, by sheltering them for weeks at a time in their flat. Among those sheltered was Dr. Carl Goerdeler, resistance leader, Jurist and Lord Mayor of Leipzig until 1936. Lilo Gloeden, her mother and husband Erich, were all arrested by the Gestapo, and Lilo and her mother subjected to torture under interrogation. On November 30, 1944, all three were beheaded by guillotine, at two minute intervals, in Plötzensee Prison, Berlin.

STELLA GOLDSCHLAG

A Pretty blonde Jewish woman born and raised in Berlin and a pupil of the Goldschmidt Jewish Private School. While working in a factory she witnessed many other Jews being taken away to labour or concentration camps. Being blonde she escaped the round-up as the Gestapo believed that being blonde she could not be Jewish. Her husband was arrested and taken to Auschwitz, never to be seen again. When her parents were next to be arrested and were being shipped off to Auschwitz she hoped to save them, and after being tortured to point out other Jews, she was forced to become 'Catcher'. (A Jew who betrays other Jews to the Gestapo) During her seven months as a 'catcher' she received 200 marks per head. In one week alone, Stella pointed out 62 Jews to the Gestapo. She was later arrested by the Soviets and spent ten months in prison. After her release she lived in West Germany under an assumed name. Consumed by her guilt, she committed suicide by jumping out of her bedroom window.

MAVIS BATEY

In May, 1940, then a student if 19, Mavis Batey (born Mavis Lever) was recruited for a top secret job, first at the British Government Code and Cipher School and later joining the team of code-breakers at Bletchley Park, north of London. Owing to her fluency in the German language and facility for words she became a key contributor to the wartime project 'Enigma'. Regarded as a national heroine in England, her code breaking efforts helped the Allies to cripple the Italian fleet at the Battle of Cape Matapan in 1941. She also helped crack the complex Enigma codes used by the German Abwehr and helped confirm the success of the Double-Cross system in which captured spies were used to transmit false information to the Axis. Mavis Lever (Batey) died in November 2013 at Dulwich, London, aged 92.

Dr. Gertrude Luckner(1900-1995)

Born in Liverpool, England, to German parents, she was later formally adopted by a German catholic family named Luckner. When this family returned to Germany, Gertrude studied political economy, receiving her doctorate in 1938. She then consecrated her life to saving Jews from Nazi prosecution. Seen by the Gestapo to be visiting Jewish areas many times she was arrested and interrogated for nine weeks before being interned for two years in the Ravensbruck concentration camp. She was liberated by the Red Army on May, 3, 1945. After her release she flew to Israel to help migrated Jews to settle in their new homeland. The Jewish Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashen, bestowed on her the title of Righteous Among Nations.

LILO HERMANN (1909-1938)

Liselotte Hermann was a 29 year old German student who became involved in anti-Nazi activities. She was arrested and sentenced to death for high treason for passing information about a secret underground munitions factory being built near the town of Celle, to a Communist Party cell in Switzerland. She became the first woman to be executed in Hitler's Third Reich. For this offence Lilo Hermann was guillotined on June 20, 1938.

CHARLOTTE SALOMON (1917-1943)

Born in Berlin, daughter of surgeon Professor Albert Solomon. In 1933, being Jewish, he was deprived of his right to practice medicine. Charlotte was admitted to the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts in 1935 (some Jewish students were admitted whose fathers had fought in World War I) After Kristallnacht, father and daughter were given permission to leave Germany. They settled in Villefranche in the South of France. After Italy signed the

surrender, German troops marched into Villefranche and on 21 September, 1943, the Gestapo arrested Charlotte and her husband, Alexander Nagler. Deported by train to Auschwitz both were gassed on arrival. Professor Solomon survived the war and in 1971 presented to the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam a total of 1,300 paintings done by Charlotte in the three years before her arrest.

VERA WOHLAUF

Resident of Hamburg, married Captain Julius Wohlauf on June 29, 1942. Captain Wohlauf was the commanding officer of First Company, Police Battalion 101, at that time conducting mass executions of Jews in eastern Poland. After the first major killing action in the town of Józefów, Frau Wohlauf joined her husband for a delayed honeymoon. During the next few weeks, Vera Wohlauf, now pregnant, witnessed several killing operations at her husband's side. Accompanied by Frau Lucia Brandt, wife of Lieutenant Paul Brandt, also of Police Battalion 101, they were witnesses to the day-long massacre and deportation of the Jews in Miedzyrec on August 25. Other wives of officers were party to all this as were a group of Red Cross nurses.

After the killings, the wives and their husbands sat outdoors at their billets, drinking, singing and laughing and discussing the day's activities. This was how Frau Vera Wohlauf spent her honeymoon.

MARGARET WHITE

Born in Manchester, England, and at age 26 married William Joyce, the leader of the British National Socialist League and became the League's assistant secretary. In August, 1939, she accompanied her husband to Germany and made her first broadcast from Berlin on November 10, 1940 under the name Lady Haw Haw (her husband was already well known as Lord Haw Haw) In 1942 she appeared under her real name with weekly talks about women's economic problems. Both were arrested on May 28, 1945 and taken to London for trial on charges of treason. William Joyce was found guilty and hanged in 1946. Margaret Joyce was spared a trial on the basis that she was a German citizen (her husband having become a naturalized German citizen in 1940). She was deported to Germany and interned as a security suspect for a short while. After her release she returned to London where she died in 1972.

ELENORE BAUR(1886-1981)

Born in Augsburg, Germany. A fervent follower of the Reich leader she was the only woman to march with Hitler through the streets of Munich during the Putsch of November 9, 1923. Trained as a nurse, she tended the wounded that day and later joined the SA becoming the first Brown Shirt sister. She served as a nurse during the war years as Sister Pia of Munich and in 1944 joined the staff at the Dachau concentration camp supervising medical experiments conducted by SS doctors. Arrested after the war she spent five years in interment by the Allies as a Nazi sympathiser. She died at Oberhaching in 1981 aged 95 never having renounced her belief in Nazism.

LINA HEYDRICH

Born Lina Mathilde von Osten, daughter of a minor German aristocrat, she lived on the island of Fehmarn where she owned a restaurant. She first met her husband, Reinhard Heydrich, Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, in December, 1930, and were married on December 26, 1931. They had four children. After her husband's assassination she later met and married Finnish theatre director, Mauno Manninen in 1965 while she was on a holiday trip to Finland. Till the very end she claimed that she knew nothing about her former husband's terrible crimes, committed or ordered to be committed, while he was head of the Reich Security Service. Lina Heydrich died in 1985.

ODETTE SANSOM (1912-1995)

Born Odette Marie Celine in Amiens, France, in 1912. She married Roy Sansom, an Englishman, to whom she had three daughters and made her home in England in 1932. When war broke out she joined the First Aid Yeomanry (F.A.N.Y) and was later recruited into the French Section of the SOE (Special Operations Executive) Given the code name 'Lise' she was sent to France and joined up with a resistance circle headed by British agent Peter Churchill. Arrested by the Gestapo on April 16, 1943, Odette, posing as Peter Churchill's wife, was taken to Fresnes Prison near Paris. Tortured and badly treated during fourteen interrogations, she refused to give away her friends. She was then sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp north of Berlin on July 18, 1944 to be executed, but the camp commandant, Fritz Sühren, believing her to be a relation of Winston Churchill, used her as a hostage to reach the Allied lines to give himself up.

On August 20, 1946, Odette Sansom was awarded the George Cross by the King and the Legion d'Honneur from France. When her first husband died she married Peter Churchill and in 1956 when that marriage was dissolved she later married wine importer Geoffrey Hallowes who had also served in the SOE in France. In 1994, the year before she died, she paid an emotional visit to the concentration camp at Ravensbrück (now a memorial site) her first visit since she left the camp in 1945.

VERA CHALBURG

One of the most outstanding female German secret agents of the war and the only female Nazi agent captured in Scotland. Born Vera Staritzka in 1912 in Kiev, the daughter of a Danish merchant. As an infant she was adopted and after the Bolshevik Revolution her adopted family settled in Copenhagen, Denmark. She trained as a dancer and later took up night club work in Paris. We next hear of Vera in Hamburg, as the mistress of Major Hilmar Dierks, the naval intelligence expert of the Hamburg Abwehr (the counter-intelligence department of the German High Command under Admiral Canaris) Her elder brother, Christian Frederik Schalburg, became a prominent member of the Danish Nazi party but was later killed on the Eastern Front in 1942 while a member of a Waffen SS unit. (An uncle of theirs, Ernest Schalburg, had lived in London for thirty years and became a pilot officer in the Royal Air Force). Recruited by Dierks into the Abwehr, Vera soon made a name for herself as Germany's most beautiful spy.



In September, 1940, she and two other agents were landed on the north-east coast of Scotland 'Operation Lena'. Under her code-name Vera Erikson she soon caught the attention of the Scottish police and she and her two companions were arrested at Portgordon near Banff as they tried to buy a train ticket to London. When asked to write her name she wrote 'Vera de Cottani de Chalbur'. Her two companions, Karl Druegge and Werner Walti, were brought to trial and charged with spying. Found guilty they were both hanged as spies in Wandsworth Prison on August 6, 1941. Vera, then aged 28, was never brought to trial but interned for the duration of the war. While in prison she had a miscarriage, the suspected father being Druegge. After the war she was repatriated to Germany under an assumed name where all trace of her was lost, she simply disappeared. Her family in Denmark never heard from her again.

It is assumed that she 'turned' and worked for British Intelligence until the end of the war. Parts of the Military Intelligence (MI5) files (now the UK National Archives) on Vera Chalburg, have still to be released.

CLARA ZETKIN (1857-1944)

Born Clara Eissner in Weiderau, Saxony in 1857. A strong campaigner for women's suffrage she married the Marxist Ossip Zetkin. Clara became a member of the Reichstag from 1920 to 1933, she was leader of the political movement against the Nazi Party. An early member of the German Communist Party she visited Moscow in 1920. In 1932, after a slashing attack on Hitler and the National Socialists in the Reichstag, she was denounced as a Fascist menace. She died on June 20, 1933, at age seventy-six, a few months after Hitler became Chancellor. Her ashes were laid to rest in the wall of the Kremlin.

IRMA GRESE (1921-1945)

Irma Ilse Ida Grese, twenty-two year old concentration camp guard, after initial training at Ravensbrück, served at Auschwitz and later at Belsen where she was arrested by the British. Condemned to death at the Belsen Trial, held at 30 Lindenstrasse, Lüneberg, she was hanged at Hamelin Goal on Friday, December 13, 1945, by the British executioner, Albert Perrepoint. As she stood composed on the gallows, she spoke one last word as the white hood was pulled down over her head, "Schnell (Quick)" she whispered. Once when home on a short leave from Auschwitz, she was beaten and turned out of the house by her father for proudly wearing her camp guard uniform. A cruel sadist, she was said to have had love affairs with Dr. Josef Mengele and the Belsen camp commandant, Josef Kramer. Her body was buried in the Hamelin Goal prison yard but later reburied in the Am Wehl Cemetery.

ILSE KOCH (1906-1967)

A medical doctor at the Ravensbrück concentration camp she carried out experiments on female prisoners by oil and evipan injections, then removing limbs and other vital organs. She then rubbed dirt, sawdust and ground down glass into the wounds to simulate battle wounds of German soldiers in the hope of finding better cures. At

the Nuremberg Medical Trials in 1946 and 1947 she was sentenced to twenty years in prison but served only ten years before being released in April, 1952. She then set up practice as a family doctor in Stocksee, Schleswig-Holstein, but her license to practice medicine was revoked in 1958 after a Ravensbrück survivor recognised her. She died on January 24, 1978, aged sixty-seven.

VALENTINA BILIEN

A German national, at one time married to a Russian and formally a teacher in Russia. In 1944, she was appointed to the post of matron at a newly established children's home in Velpke, a village near Helmstedt, Germany. She had no previous experience whatever in running a children's clinic. Assisted by four Polish and Russian girls, the health of the infants soon deteriorated to the extent that within months more than eighty children died through gross negligence. The infants had been forcibly removed from their Polish mothers (who were working on farms as slave labour) at four months old. At a British Military Court, held at Brunswick in March/April, 1946, Frau Valentina Bilien was found guilty of a war crime and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.

HERMINE BRAUNSTEINER

Female guard in various camps, and one-time supervisor of the Ravensbrück concentration camp and later served in the extermination camp of Maidanek in Poland. While at Maidanek she enjoyed ordering women to lie down and then trampling them with her hobnailed boots. In 1949, she served three years in prison in Austria for infanticide. After her release she was granted an amnesty from further prosecution in that country. In 1959 she married an American electrical engineer named Russell Ryan and settled in New York. An Austrian citizen, born in Vienna in 1919, she was granted US citizenship in 1963, this was revoked in 1973 when a warrant for her arrest was issued in Dusseldorf, her real identity being discovered by the famous Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal. Arrested by US marshals she was held without bail before being sent back to Germany. At her trial in Germany she was sentenced to life imprisonment, the first US citizen to be extradited for war crimes. Hermine Braunsteiner Ryan was released from prison in 1990 and died in April 1999 from diabetes.

HERTA OBERHEUSER

Born May 15, in Cologne. Dr Oberheuser she was a physician at the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp. Her speciality was performing gruesome and lethal experiments on 86 female prisoners, who were kept fully conscious until the last moment. 74 of these victims were Polish nationals. She was the only female defendant at the Medical Trial at Nuremberg. She received a sentence of 20 years but was released 1958 and set up a practice as a family doctor in Stocksee, Germany. Her license was revoked in 1958 by the German government. She died in January, 1978, at the age of 66.

UNITY MITFORD (1914-1948)

'Bobo' to her friends, and one of six children of the second Baron Redesdale (David Ogilvy Freeman-Mitford). She was introduced to Hitler in 1935 while studying art in Munich. This 21-year-old British aristocrat became his frequent companion and supporter and together with Eva Braun, often stayed at Winifred Wagner's house during the Bayreuth Festival. She often discussed with Hitler the need for good relations between their two countries but the German Fuhrer declined to discuss politics with her. When Britain declared war on Germany, Unity's dreams were shattered and she tried to commit suicide by shooting herself in the head while sitting on a bench in the Englisher Garten in Munich. Severely wounded, she was hospitalized on Hitler's orders and for months lay in a state of coma. Hitler visited her twice in room 202 in the Nussbaumstrasse Clinic but she showed no sign of recognition. On April 16, 1940, she was sent back to England in a special railway carriage via Switzerland. Back in England it was considered too dangerous to operate due to the position of the bullet in her head. Nothing more was heard of Unity Valkyrie Mitford till the end of the war. She died on May 28, 1948, of meningitis, never having fully recovered from the gunshot wound. She is buried in the graveyard of St. Mary's Church in the village of Swinbrook.

Unity's sister, Diana, married Brian Guinness of the Irish brewing family. When later they divorced, Diana studied fascism and joined the British Union of Fascists. There she met its leader, Sir Oswald Mosley and they married in secret in 1936 in the Berlin home of Nazi propaganda chief, Joseph Goebbels. Adolf Hitler was one of the guests.

ANNE FRANK (1929-1945)

German-Jewish girl who hid from the Gestapo in a loft in Amsterdam for two years. Born in Frankfurt on June 12, 1929, daughter of businessman Otto Frank. The Frank family, Otto, his wife, daughters Margot and Anne, left Frankfurt for Amsterdam in the summer of 1933. The German army invaded Holland in May, 1940, and in 1942 the Franks went into hiding when the Gestapo started rounding up the Jews. On August 4, 1944, their hiding place was betrayed by a family friend. Anne and her family were arrested and imprisoned in Westerbork. On September 3, 1944, they embarked on a three day journey, along with 1,019 other Jews, to Auschwitz in Poland. On arrival, 549 of the deportees were immediately gassed. Some weeks later, Anne and her sister Margot were sent back to Germany to the Belsen concentration camp where Margot died of typhus at the beginning of March 1945. Anne died a few days later. Anne's mother died in Auschwitz on January 6, 1945.

Anne's diary, found in the hiding place after their arrest, was returned to her father, Otto Frank, who survived the war. When published, it caused a sensation. Translated into thirty two languages it became a successful stage play and film. Today, the secret hiding place in the house at 263 Prinsengracht by the Prinsengracht Canal, has become a place of pilgrimage and is visited by thousands every month.

ILSE STÖBE

Working in the German Foreign Office, 31 year old Ilse Stöbe became involved with the Red Orchestra spy organization. Early in 1941, under her code name 'Alta', she warned the Soviet leaders of a planned attack on their country. She also wrote various anti-Nazi articles in a newspaper in Switzerland and elsewhere. Her warnings were intercepted by the Gestapo and Stöbe was arrested. At her trial she was charged with treason, found guilty and sentenced to death. In the evening of December 22, 1942, at 8.27pm she was executed by guillotine in Berlin's Plotzensee Prison along with ten other members of the spy ring. Ilse Stöbe was the only woman to be featured on a special coin issued by the East German Ministry of State (Stasi) to commemorate important spies in Communist service during the war. In 1949, the Soviet Union posthumously awarded her the 'Order of the Red Banner'. Today, Germany is considering honouring her name by placing her name on its list of 'active resistance fighters'.

EDITH STEIN (1891-1942)

Born in Breslau (now Wroclaw in Poland) the seventh child of Siegfried and Auguste Stein a Jewish timber merchant. She rejected Judaism and became a Catholic nun on January 1, 1922 and in 1932 she was appointed lecturer at the German Institute of Scientific Pedagogy, a post from which she was dismissed because of her Jewish parents. She then entered the Carmelite Convent in Cologne as Sister Teresa Benedicta. In the elections of 1933 she refused to vote and was prohibited from voting in the elections of 1938. Transferred to a convent at Echt in Holland, she and her sister Rosa were arrested by the Gestapo when Germany invaded that country. Interned in the Westerbork transit camp with many other Jews, they were sent to Auschwitz where on August 9, 1942, they were put to death in the recently built gas chambers. Edith Stein was later proclaimed a saint by Pope John Paul II, an act which infuriated many Jews who think that she is not an appropriate representative of Jewish victims. (Of the seven members of her immediate family, four died in concentration camps.)

VERA ATKINS 1908-2000

Of Jewish decent, Vera was born Vera Maria Rosenberg in Bucharest, Romania. on June 16, 1908. Her family moved to London in 1933. At the outbreak of war Vera, who spoke perfect French, joined the S.O.E. (Special Operations Executive) as assistant to Colonel Maurice Buckmaster, head of the French Section. She briefed all secret agents before being sent to France and personally watched as they took off from a secret airfield. Of around 400 agents she waved goodbye to, 118 were listed as missing when France was liberated in 1944. After the war, she went to Germany to investigate the fate of the missing agents. She was successful in 117 cases. Vera, who had changed her name to Atkins (Her mother's maiden name) died on June 24, 2000 in Hastings, England, aged 92. She was honoured with the French title 'Commandant of the Legion of Honour'. Her remains are buried in the Zennor Churchyard in Cornwall.

MILDRED ELIZABETH GILLARS (1901-1988)

An American citizen born in Portland, Maine, she studied music in Germany in the 1920s and taught English at the Berlitz Language School in Berlin. During World War II she broadcast Nazi propaganda from a Berlin radio station. Aimed at American GIs, she was soon nicknamed "Axis Sally" by the Allied troops. Her last broadcast was on May 6, 1945. Arrested after the war by the US Counter-Intelligence Corps, she was flown back to America and after a six-week trial sentenced to twelve years in prison for treason in the Federal Reformatory for Women in Alderson, West Virginia, where she converted to Catholicism. Paroled in 1961, she started teaching German,

French and Music in a Roman Catholic school in Columbus, Ohio. In 1973 she completed her bachelor's degree in speech at the age of seventy-two. Five years later she died of colon cancer.

MAGDA GOEBBELS (1901-1945)

Johanna Maria Magdalena Goebbels, First Lady of the Third Reich and wife of Propaganda Minister and Gauleiter of Berlin, Joseph Goebbels. In 1930 she divorced her first husband, millionaire Gunter Quandt, from whom she was granted the custody of their son, Harald, four thousand marks monthly allowance and fifty-thousand marks to purchase a house. She eventually leased a seven room luxury top floor apartment at 2, Adolf Hitler Platz, (Later Reichskanzler Platz, now Theodore Heuss Platz) in Charlottenburg, Berlin. She became secretary to Goebbels whom she married on December 12, 1931. In the Bunker with Hitler during the last days of the war, she committed the unpardonable sin of poisoning her six children, Helga, Hilda, Helmut, Holde, Hedda and Heide. SS Doctor Kunz gave the children an injection of morphine to help them sleep but could not face up the act of giving poison to the sleeping children. Hitler's personal physician, Dr Stumpfegger, was called in and he, with the help of Magda, opened the mouths of the children and slipped an ampoule of cyanide between their teeth. Magda and her husband then committed suicide in the garden of the Reich Chancellery. A great admirer of Hitler, she decided to name all her children with a name beginning with H. Earlier, Magda had confided to her trusted friend, her sister-in-law, Ello Quandt, "In the days to come Joseph will be regarded as one of the greatest criminals Germany has ever produced. The children will hear that daily, people would torment them, despise and humiliate them. We will take them with us, they are too good, too lovely for the world which lies ahead".

Magda's stepfather, Richard Friedlaender, whom her mother, Auguste Behrend, had divorced when she was young, was Jewish. He was arrested and imprisoned in the Buchenwald concentration camp where he died a year later in 1939. Prior to his suicide, Hitler named Joseph Goebbels to succeed him as German Chancellor. He held the position for only one day before he committed suicide together with his wife and six children.

LIDA BAAROVA (1914-2000)

Czech film actress, born Ludmila Babkova in Prague on September 7, 1914. Mistress to Goebbels during the late thirties whom she first met in 1936 during the Berlin Olympics when Lida was 21 years old. The affair ended in 1938 when his wife Magda demanded a divorce and Hitler ordered that he give up the actress. A reconciliation between Goebbels and Magda took place when Lida returned to Czechoslovakia under 'advice' from the Gestapo. When the war ended she served 16 months in prison on account of her Nazi past. In later years Lida lived in Salzburg, under the name Lida Lundwall. In 1970 she had married her second husband, Kurt Lundwall, a gynaecologist. She died in Salzburg at the age of 86 on October 27, 2000, from Parkinson's disease. Her body was cremated and the ashes interred in the Stranice Cemetery in Prague, Czech Republic. She was never forgiven in her native land for her affair with Goebbels. In 1995 she had her autobiography "The Sweet Bitterness Of My Life" published.

EMMY GÖRING (1893-1973)

Born in Hamburg as Emmy Sonnemann she became a well known actress at the National Theatre in Weimar. She divorced her first husband, actor Karl Köstlin, and became Hermann Göring's second wife on April 10, 1935. Adolf Hitler acted as best man. In 1937 she gave birth to a daughter and named her Edda, believed to be after Mussolini's daughter, Countess Ciano, who had spent some time at their home Karin hall, a hunting lodge north of Berlin. In 1948, a German denazification court convicted her of being a Nazi and sentenced her to one year in jail. When she was released, thirty percent of her property was confiscated and she was banned from the stage for five years. She was unable to revive her acting career so she moved to Munich with her daughter Edda and lived in a small apartment until she died on June 8, 1973. Edda, believing that her father was wrongly judged by the Allies, became active in the neo-Nazi movement and attends many of their meetings and reunions.

BETINA Goering

Great-Niece of Herman Goering. She chose to be voluntary sterilised, along with her brother, to ensure the family name of Goring did not continue. "In do not want to raise another monster" she said. She left Germany after the war and settled in a remote house in Sante Fe, New Mexico, where she now practises oriental medicine.

EDDA CIANO

Eldest daughter of the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. In 1941, Edda was serving on board the Italian hospital ship 'Po' as a Red Cross nurse when it was hit by an aerial torpedo from a British plane while in harbour at

Valona and sank. She was rescued from the water. Her husband was Count Galeazzo Ciano, her father's Foreign Minister. He was later found guilty of treason by voting against his father-in-law and was executed by firing squad along with seventeen other Fascist leaders after their trial in Verona in 1944. After Ciano's execution Edda disavowed her father and fled to Switzerland where she was interned. While there she wrote to her father 'You are no longer my father for me. I renounce the name Mussolini' Returning to Rome after the war she was sentenced to two years imprisonment for 'aiding fascism'. She then went to France where she wrote her memoirs 'My Testimony'. She never reached a reconciliation with her mother Donna Rachele. Her father, Benito, and his mistress, Clara Petacci, died in an execution style murder by partisans on April 28, 1945. Countess Edda Ciano died on April 10, 1995 at age 84.

EMILIE SCHINDLER (1907-2001)

Wife of Czech-born German industrialist, Oskar Schindler, who, together with her husband, saved 1,100 Jewish workers from the Holocaust. Born in a German speaking village in what is now the Czech Republic, she married Oskar in 1928 and in 1942 moved to Krakow in Poland. There they established a factory at Plaszow, later at Brunnlitz in Czechoslovakia, producing domestic kitchen utensils and employing over 1,100 Jews who they planned to save. Food was the main problem and Emilie worked day and night to procure food for their workers. In 1949 Oskar and Emilie moved to Argentina where she was abandoned by her husband who returned to Germany with his mistress in 1957 and died there in 1974. Emilie returned to Germany in July, 2001, with the intention of settling down in a retirement home in Bavaria but suffered a stroke and died in a hospital near Berlin in October 2001. She was 94 years old. In 1993, Emilie Schindler was awarded the honour of 'Righteous Gentile' by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem. (Oskar Schindler is buried in the Catholic Cemetery, on Mount Zion, Jerusalem.) The youngest of the 1,100 Jews saved, Leon Leyson, died on January 12, 2012, in California. He was aged 83.

The title 'Righteous Gentile' has now been changed to 'Righteous Person'. Up till 1999 there were 16,552 names on this list.

ILSE HIRSCH

Born in the industrial town of Hamm in 1922 she joined the BDM at age sixteen and soon became one of its principle organizers in the town of Monschau. She trained at Hülchrath Castle for her part in Operation Carnival, the assassination of the American appointed Burgermeister of Aachen, the first German city to fall to the Allies. Dropped by parachute near the outskirts, the five man and one woman team made their way into the city guided by Hirsch who knew the area well.

At 251, Eupener Strasse, lived Franz Oppenhoff, a forty-one year old lawyer, his wife Irmgard and their three children. Oppenhoff had recently been appointed chief Burgomeister by the Americans and by accepting this appointment he had signed his own death warrant. Regarded as a traitor by the Nazi resistance movement, the so-called Werewolves, he was a prime candidate for assassination. Guided by Hirsch to the house, the actual murder was carried out by the leader of the team, SS Lt. Wenzel and their radio operator, Sepp Leitgeb, who fired the fatal shot as Oppenhoff stood on the steps of his residence. Ilse Hirsch took no part in the actual assassination but acted only as guide and lookout. Making their escape from the city, Hirsch caught her foot on a trip-wire attached to a buried mine which severely injured her knee and killed her companion, Sepp Leitgeb. Spending a long time in hospital she eventually returned to her home in Euskirchen. After the war, the survivors of the assassination team, with the exception of SS Lt. Wenzel, were tracked down and arrested. At the Aachen 'Werewolf Trial' in October, 1949, all were found guilty and sentenced to from one to four years in prison. Ilse and one other team member were set free. In 1972, Ilse Hirsch was happily married, the mother of two teenage boys and living only a score of miles from the scene of the most momentous event in her life.

KITTY SCHMIDT (1882-1954)

Owner of Berlin's top brothel the "Pension Schmidt" located at 11, Giesebrecht Strasse. It was later renamed "Salon Kitty" when taken over by the S.D. (Secret Service). It became the very epitome of relaxation for high ranking officers and visiting diplomats. Fitted out with hidden microphones, this sophisticated surveillance system became the main source of Gestapo intelligence. Twenty women were specially trained for work in Salon Kitty. During a bombing raid in 1944, Salon Kitty was badly damaged and was moved down to the ground floor. Kitty Schmidt died in Berlin in 1954 at the age of seventy two. Next door, at No. 12, was the apartment of Ernst Kaltenbrunner, head of the SD.

In 1988, the former "Salon Kitty" was in use as a Guitar Studio!

GERDA BORMANN

Wife of Martin Bormann, head of Party Chancellery. A fanatical adherent to Nazi ideology, she bore her husband ten children, the first being named Adolf, after his god-father. Of her husband's mistress, Manja Behrens, she wrote "See to it that one year she has a child and next year I have a child, so that you will always have a wife who is serviceable". After the war, the search for Gerda Borman ended when she was located in the village of Wolkenstein, twenty kilometres north east of Bolzano. With her were fourteen children, nine of her own and five who were kidnapped by her husband in order that his wife could travel posing as the director of a children's home.

In her final days Gerda converted to the Catholic faith and when found was ill from cancer and was operated on in Bolzano Civil Hospital. She died in March 1946. The five kidnapped children were returned to their parents and her own children placed in Roman Catholic homes. Her husband, Martin Borman, is believed to have committed suicide, along with Dr Stumpfegger, during their attempt to escape the bunker and his remains were discovered in 1972. His family refused to have anything to do with the bones so they lay in a cardboard box in the cellar of the District Prosecutor in Frankfurt for years. In 1999 the remains (still unclaimed) were cremated and the urn, containing the ashes, dropped in the Baltic Sea outside German territorial limits. The cremation and burial cost the German Government \$4,700.

GERTRUD von HEIMERDINGER

Daughter of a Prussian aristocrat, she was employed in the German Foreign Office as assistant Chief of the Diplomatic Courier Section. An anti-Nazi, she secretly arranged for special passes to enable diplomat Fritz Kolbe (the main Allied source of intelligence) to make frequent trips to Switzerland to pass on information to Allen Dulles, head of American O.S.S.

GERTRUUD SEYSS-INQUART

Wife of the Nazi Reichskommissar for Holland, Dr. Arthur Seyss-Inquart. She fled Holland on September 3, 1944, a day before her husband made it an offence for anyone to leave. She was last seen leaving The Hague with five suitcases, bound for Salzburg in Austria.

CORRIE TEN BOOM

Heroine of the Dutch resistance, Cornelia Ten Boom was born in Haarlem on April 15, 1892. She grew up to become the first woman in Holland to qualify as a watchmaker. Up till 1940 she ran the Haarlem Girls Clubs and also founded a Christian organization for girls with thousands of members in Holland and in Indonesia. When Germany invaded Holland in May, 1940, the Boom family, all devout Christians, collaborated with the resistance in helping Jews escape the clutches of the Gestapo. A small room was built behind the walls of their house in which many Jews hid during the police searches. In doing so she saved many Jews from certain death at the hands of the Gestapo. As with the Anne Frank saga, a member, believed to be a friend, reported the Boom family to the Gestapo. Arrested and imprisoned at Scheveningen, Corie's father died ten days later. He was 84 years old. Corrie and her sister were later moved to the Ravensbruck concentration camp near Berlin where her sister 'Betsie' died just a few weeks before Christmas, 1944. Due to a clerical error, Corrie was released on December 31, 1944 and after the war started rehabilitation work with Holocaust victims and other camp survivors. For over fifty years, Corrie travelled the world telling of her experiences and wrote her own story in a book titled 'The Hiding Place' which was made into a movie. In 1977, Corrie settled in California, USA, and there in 1983, died on her 91st birthday on April 15.

JOHANNA KIRCHNER

Born in Frankfurt-on-Main in 1889, she became a member of the Socialist Young Workers movement. In 1933 she helped many Jews and others to flee the Reich. In 1935, she aided those engaged in resistance work, from her home in Alsace. After the capitulation of France in 1940, she was arrested by the Vichy Government and handed over to the Gestapo. Brought before the People's Court in Berlin in 1943, she was sentenced to ten years penal servitude. In 1944 the case was reopened and the death sentence pronounced. On June 9, 1944, she was executed in Plötzensee Prison, Berlin. In her last letter she wrote "Be cheerful and brave, a better future lies before you."

ERNA GRUHN

A shorthand typist with the Reich Egg Marketing Board, she married Hitler's Minister of War, Field Marshal Werner von Blomberg. The Führer and Göring were witnesses at the wedding on January 12, 1938. When the police reported that Erna had worked as a prostitute and had posed for pornographic pictures, Hitler flew into a rage and sacked von Blomberg on the spot. The disgraced Field Marshal and his wife retired to the Bavarian village of Weissee where they lived out the war and where the Field Marshal now lies buried in the local cemetery.

MARGARETE BODEN

Daughter of a West Prussian landowner, blonde and blue eyed, Marga, as she was called, worked as a nurse in the first World War, then went to live in Berlin. There she met and married Heinrich Himmler on July 3, 1928 and set up a chicken farm at Waldtrudering, near Munich. Eight years older than Himmler, their marriage ran into financial problems and they started to live apart. They had one child, a daughter named Gudrun.

HEDWIG POTTHAST

Attractive daughter of a Cologne businessman, she became secretary to Himmler and later his mistress when he lost all affection for Marga, his wife. In 1942, Hedwig gave birth to her first child, her second was born in 1944, another daughter. Himmler, not wishing the scandal of a divorce, borrowed 80,000 marks from the Party Chancellery and built a house for Hedwig at Schonau, near Berchtesgaden. They called it 'Haus Schneewinklehen'. There she became friends with Bormann's wife Greda, who lived nearby.

INGE LEY

A ravishing blonde and much admired by Hitler. Wife of the drunkard Robert Ley, head of the Arbeitsfront, with whom she was very unhappy. An actress and ballerina by profession, she once took refuge from her husband in the Obersalzberg. After writing a letter to Hitler, which left him very depressed, she attempted suicide in 1943 by jumping out of a window. On October 24, 1945, her husband committed suicide while awaiting trial at Nuremberg. He had knotted together a sling from the zip-fasteners of his army jacket and hanged himself from the toilet in his cell. His suicide note stated that he could "no longer bear the shame." The villa of Robert and Inge Ley still stands on the Mehringdamm in Berlin's suburb of Templehof. (In the state of Bavaria, on June 3, 1947, all the wives of those prominent Nazi leaders who were imprisoned or executed at Nuremberg, were arrested and taken to a camp at Göggingen, near Augsburg)

HELENE MAYER

Daughter of physician Dr. Ludwig Mayer of Offenbach. In 1930, she became Germany's woman fencing champion. Soon after Hitler came to power, his Propaganda Minister, Joseph Goebbels, portrayed Helena Mayer, now a national heroine, as the perfect specimen of German womanhood. Tall, blonde and blue eyed, she was described as the apotheosis of German racial purity. The campaign was abruptly abandoned when it was discovered that Helene had a Jewish father and grandparents. She went to the USA to study international law but was invited to take part in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin where she won a silver medal. After the Olympics she settled in the US and became an American citizen winning the US Women's National Fencing Championship eight times. In 1952 she returned to Germany and married an engineer from Stuttgart. She died after a long illness on October 15, 1953.

NINA, COUNTESS SCHENK von STAUFFENBERG

Born Elizabeth Magdalena 'Nina' von Lerchenfeld in Kovno, then part of Russia, now Kaunas, Lithuania, on August 27, 1913. Daughter of the German consul-general she first met Claus Stauffenberg at the age of sixteen while in boarding school. They were married in 1933 and during the next seven years produced four children. Arrested after the failed July 20, 1944 attempt on Hitler's life, in which she was not involved, she was imprisoned in the notorious Alexanderplatz prison in Berlin, where she gave birth to her fifth child, Konstance, on January 17, 1945. All her children were taken from her and put into a children's home, under the false surname of 'Meister' in Sachsa, Thuringia, to await adoption procedures into National Socialist family homes. The imminent end of the war prevented this fate. Spared the fate of other family members, Nina was later transferred to the Ravensbruck concentration camp where she was rescued by the Soviet forces at war's end. Eventually, the children were re-united with their mother on the Stauffenberg family seat in Lautlingen. Her eldest son, Berthold, became a general in the post war German Army. Nina von Stauffenberg died on Sunday, April 9, 2006, at Bamberg in Bavaria, at the age of 92.

IRMGARD KEUN

Born in Berlin in 1905, this German novelist had her books banned by the Nazis when she criticized them for their defamation of German womanhood. In 1933 her books were confiscated and burned and newspapers were forbidden to publish her short stories. Forced to emigrate to Holland so she could continue her writing, she again went back to Germany in secret when the Nazis invaded the Netherlands. In Cologne she went underground and began writing again making no secret of her opposition to the Nazis. After the war nothing was heard of her till 1976 when she was discovered living in poverty in an attic room in Bonn. She had spent six years in a Bonn hospital and four and a half months in the state hospital for alcoholism. In 1972 her books were republished and she died of a lung tumour on May 5, 1982.

RENATA MUELLER

A film actress and singer, one of Hitler's earlier infatuations. The relationship did not last long. After spending an evening in the Chancellery where, as Renata confided to her director Adolf Zeissler, Hitler threw himself on the floor and begged her to kick him and inflict pain. Shortly after this experience, Renata Mueller was found unconscious on the pavement in front of her hotel, forty feet below the window of her room. Renate's sister, Gabriel, maintains that she did not commit suicide but that she died from complications following an operation to her leg at the Augsburg Strasse Clinic.

HELENE BECHSTEIN

Wife of wealthy piano manufacturer Carl Bechstein. Hitler was often invited to their Berlin home where she lavished maternal affection on him. The Bechstein's donated large sums of money to the Party and to help Hitler's career by introducing him to influential people. It was Helene who introduced him to Berchtesgaden where they had a villa. It was always her expectation that Hitler would marry her daughter, Lotte.

MARIA (MITZI) REITER

Born in 1911, the youngest of four daughters of the co-founder of the Social Democratic Party in Berchtesgaden. She met Hitler while exercising her sister's dog in the Kurpark in 1926. She later visited him in his Munich apartment and the friendship developed. But in 1927, when she heard that Hitler was courting another girl, his niece Geli Raubal, blind jealousy drove her to attempt suicide. The attempt failed. In 1930, she married an innkeeper in Innsbruck and divorced him some years later. Her second marriage was to SS Hauptsturmführer Georg Kubisch. In 1938 she met Hitler again, and when Kubisch was killed at Dunkirk during the French campaign he sent her one hundred red roses. There was no further contact between them. After the war, Maris Reiter Kubisch lived for a while with Hitler's sister Paula and found work as a maid in a hotel. In 1977 she was living in Munich.

MARTHA DODD

Daughter of the US Ambassador in Berlin (1933-1937) Professor William E. Dodd. She was very much attracted to Hitler and was invited to have tea with him at the Kaiserhof Hotel on a number of occasions. She once declared that she was in love with him and wanted to organize a tour of the US for him. This did not meet with the approval of Göring, who spread the rumour that Martha was a Soviet agent (she had visited Moscow and Leningrad in July, 1934). Hitler refused to see her again and banned her from all future diplomatic receptions. Soon after, reports circulated that Martha Eccles Dodd had attempted suicide by slashing her wrists. No details of this has survived, it is possible that the affair has been hushed up 'diplomatically'.

In 1938 she married American millionaire investment broker, Alfred Kaufman Stern and became active in left wing politics working closely with Vassili Zubilin, second secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Washington. Attracting the attention of the McCarthy House un-American Activities Committee, the Sterns fled to Cuba and then to Prague, Czechoslovakia. Alfred Stern died in Prague in 1986 and Martha Dodd Stern died in August 1990 at the age of 82.

MILDRED FISH-HARNACK

Born in Milwaukee, USA, on September 16, 1902, daughter of merchant William Cooke Fish. In 1926, she married the German Rockefeller scholar Arvid Harnack whom she met while studying literature at Wisconsin University. She insisted on keeping her maiden name. In 1929 she and her husband moved to Germany where

she taught American literature history at the University of Berlin. In Berlin, she became friends with Martha Dodd and through this friendship, she and her husband were often invited to receptions at the American Embassy where she met many influential Germans. When the war started, Arvid and Mildred supported the resistance movement against the Nazi regime through their friendship with Harro Schulze-Boysen and the spy ring the Nazis dubbed 'The Red Orchestra.'

On September 7, 1942, she and her husband were arrested while on a short vacation in Priel, a seaside town near Königsberg and taken to Gestapo headquarters at No. 8, Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse, Berlin. At their trial on December 15-19, 1942, Mildred was sentenced to six years in prison for 'helping to prepare high treason and espionage'. Arvid and eight others were given the death sentence and on December 22 Arvid and three others were hanged from meat hooks suspended from a T-bar across the ceiling of the execution chamber at Plötzensee Prison. The others were beheaded by the guillotine. On December 21, Hitler reversed the sentence on Mildred and at her second trial on January 13/16, 1943, she was given the ultimate penalty, death. At 6.57pm on February 16, 1943, Mildred Elizabeth Harnack, nee Fish, was beheaded by guillotine in Plötzensee, the only American woman to be executed for treason in World War II. Her last words were reported to be "and I loved Germany so much." By September, 1943, most of the members of the 'Red Orchestra' had died, two by suicide, eight by hanging and forty-one beheaded by guillotine. The well known writer, Adam Kuckhoff, his wife Grete and pianist Helmut Roloff were among the few survivors. In January, 1970, the Russians posthumously awarded Arvid Harnack the Order of the Red Banner, and Mildred, the Order of the Fatherland War, First Class, the highest civilian award. Sadly, in the US the Harnacks were forgotten.

MARLENE DIETRICH

Born Maria Magdalena Dietrich in the Schöneberg district of Berlin on December 27, 1901. Started a career in minor films, her big break came in October, 1929 when she screen tested for the part of Lola in 'The Blue Angel'. The film premiered at the Gloria Palast in Berlin on April 1, 1930. When Hitler came to power she was asked to broadcast Nazi propaganda. She refused and fled to the USA where on January 4, 1941, she became a naturalized American citizen. During WWII she spent much of her time entertaining US troops around the world and selling war bonds as well as doing anti-Nazi propaganda broadcasts aimed at German soldiers. Her singing of the famous song 'Lili Marlene' was a favourite of both Allied and Axis troops.

In 1960 she returned to Germany for a series of concerts, one at which she was pelted with rotted tomatoes and called a traitor. She vowed never to return. In her later years she moved to Paris and became a recluse. She died on May 6, 1992, aged 90. Her last wish was to be buried beside her mother in Friedhof 111 at Friedenau, Berlin. She married Rudolf 'Rudy' Seber in 1924, a marriage which lasted until her husband's death in 1979 and with whom she had a daughter, Maria Riva.

ZARAH LEANDER

Soon after Marlene Dietrich fled to America, Zarah Leander became the toast of Nazi Germany. Singer, dancer and actress, Zarah was born in Sweden and being fluent in German was employed by UFA in Berlin where she completed ten films. Her continuous role in German films reflected the strong support she had from the Nazi hierarchy. She became Germany's highest paid actress which did not please the propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, who thought that a German born actress should have filled this role. A great favourite of Hitler, and despite her love of aquavit, her independent attitude, and her insistence that half her salary be paid in Swedish kroner, she soon came to be known as the 'Diva of the Third Reich'. Although she never socialized with Nazi party members she was shunned when she first returned to Sweden but eventually managed to land roles on the Swedish stage but never regained the popularity she enjoyed before the war and in her years working in Germany. In her film 'Die Grosse Liebe' the director could not find suitable female actors to match her build and looks, so, believe it or not, some SS men appeared in drag and with proper make-up and wigs, took part in a dance scene. (Born in Karlstad, Sweden in March, 1907, Zarah Leander died in Stockholm in June, 1981)

GERTRUD SCHOLTZ-KLINK

Born in Aelsheim in 1902, married three times she bore eleven children, six from her first husband. She became Leader of the Nazi Women's Group, responsible for directing all women's organizations during the Nazi era including the Frauenwerk (a federal organization of women) Women's League of the Red Cross and the Women's Labour Front. She maintained that the traditional place for women in the Third Reich, in which women had little influence, was symbolized by the slogan 'Kinder, Kirche, Küche' (Children, Church, Kitchen). When she visited the United Kingdom in 1939, she was billed as the 'Perfect Nazi Woman'. Arrested in 1948 by the French police she served eighteen months in prison for working under an assumed name and forging documents. Released from

prison in 1953 she settled in Bebenhausen where she died on March 24, 1999. In 1950 the German Government banned her from public office. Her book 'A Woman in the Third Reich' was published in 1978.

GERDA CHRISTIAN

Born in Berlin in 1913, she became one of Hitler's secretaries from 1933 to 1945. She was married to General Eckard Christian, Chief of Staff to the Luftwaffe whom she divorced in 1946. Gerda was previously married to Erich Kempka, Hitler's private chauffeur. (Her maiden name was Daranowsky.) After the war she settled in Düsseldorf but has remained noncommittal about her time in the court of the German Führer.

GERTRUD SEELE (1917-1945)

Nurse and social worker, she was born in Berlin on September 22, 1917, and served for a time in the Nazi Labour Corps. She then turned to a career in public health and social service. Arrested in 1944 for helping Jews to escape Nazi persecution, and for 'defeatist statements designed to undermine the morale of the people'. She was tried before the People's Court in Potsdam and executed in Plötzensee Prison, Berlin, on January 12, 1945.

GERTRUD WIJSMULLER

A Dutch national who, when hearing of the German threat to refuse permission for the refugee Children's Transports to cross the border into Holland, went to Vienna and confronted Adolf Eichmann, head of the Central Bureau for Jewish Emigration. She persuaded him to issue a collective exit visa for 600 Austrian Jewish children. The children eventually arrived in England. In all, Gertrud Wijsmuller organized a total of forty-nine transports to Britain. Another transport she organized, her 50th, was from the port of Danzig on August 24, 1939. On September 1 Germany invaded Poland and occupied Danzig. Back in Holland, Gertrud continued to help in the transfer of Jewish children to England until May 10, 1940, when Germany invaded the Netherlands. After Kristallnacht, over 9,000 German, Austrian and Czech Jewish children were brought to Britain by these Kindertransports. The first transport arrived in Harwich on December 1, 1938.

CHRISTINE GRANVILLE

Born in Poland, Krystyna was the daughter of Count Jerzey Skarbek. Became involved in espionage and sabotage after the German invasion of her country. Christine and her husband escaped to England and were recruited by the S.O.E. (Special Operations Executive) and in July, 1944, she was parachuted into France to join up with the 'Jockey' Network under the codename 'Jacqueline'. When two members of the Jockey Network were arrested by the Gestapo, Lieutenant Francis Cammaerts (Roger) and one other SOE agent, Christine secured their release by bribing a Gestapo officer, Belgian Max Waem, who acted as an interpreter for the German secret police, with two million francs. The money was dropped by parachute after an urgent request to the allied headquarters in Algiers. All three escaped through Spain to England where Christine was awarded the George Medal and an OBE. Working as a salesperson in Harrods department store in London she later took up a position as stewardess on the liner SS Rauhine plying between Southampton and Australia. It was on this ship she first met Irish steward, Dennis George Muldowney, who proclaimed his love for her. Rejecting his advances, Muldowney stabbed her in the heart with a knife while visiting her at the Shelbourne Hotel in Kensington, where she lived between voyages, on June 15, 1952. Muldowney was hanged for her murder on September 30, 1952. (Christine Granville is buried in the Kensal Green Roman Catholic Cemetery)

In all, 53 S.O.E women agents were put in the field. Twelve were executed by the Gestapo and 29 were either arrested or died in concentration camps. A total of 37 women agents were sent to France by the SOE including Noor Inayat Khan. In France, life expectancy in the field was only six weeks.

NOOR INAYAT KHAN

Born on New Years Day, 1914, in Moscow. Her father was an Indian mystic and leader of the Sufi sect. Her mother was Ora Baker, a niece of Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Scientists. In England when war broke out, she joined the women's branch of the Royal Air Force (WAAF) and trained as a wireless operator using the name Nora Baker, (LAC No 424598). Later she joined the S.O.E. and under the code name 'Madeleine' was parachuted into France from a Lysander aircraft on June 16, 1943 and made contact with Cinema network in Paris. In Paris she transmitted from various addresses such as at 98, Rue La Faisanderie posing as a French woman, Jeanne Marie Regnier. Denounced by a French woman informer she was arrested and taken to Gestapo headquarters at 84 Avenue Foch, to a room on the fifth floor where she was beaten and tortured. After her escape attempt on November 25 she was taken to the reception centre at Badenvieler and then to the Karlsruhe

Women's Prison, Pforzheim, where she was kept in chains until she was transferred to Dachau on September 12, 1944.

Next morning, along with three other S.O.E agents, were taken out to a sandy courtyard and told to kneel down by a wall. An SS man approached from behind and shot each one through the back of the neck. Noor Inayat Khan was posthumously awarded the George Cross, one of only three awarded to women in World War II. The others were SOE agents Odette Sansom and Violette Szabo.

VIOLETTE SZABO

Born Violette Raine Elizabeth Bushell in Paris on June 26, 1921, daughter of an English father and a French mother. In August, 1940, she married Etienne Michel Szabo a French military officer who in October, 1942, was killed in action at El Alamein. She joined the ATS (Army Territorial Service) and volunteered for special duties with SOE. Her second mission to France, under the code name 'Corinne', was on June 10, 1944, just a few days after the Normandy landings. Near Limoges, in company with Jacques Dufour, a French Maquis leader, they were involved in a gun battle with a unit of the Das Reich SS Division. Both were captured and Violette was imprisoned in Fresnes Prison near Paris prior to her transfer to the Ravensbrück concentration camp in company with two other agents, Denise Bloch and Lilian Rolfe. On January 26, 1945, all three were executed. In December, 1946, she was posthumously awarded the George Cross, accepted by her four year old daughter, Tania, on behalf of her mother, from King George VI. Some months later, in 1947, France posthumously awarded her the Croix de Guerre. The Violette Szabo story is dramatized in the film 'Carve Her Name With Pride'.

DENISE BLOCH

Denise Madeleine Bloch, a French citizen, was executed at the Ravensbrück concentration camp on February 5, 1945. In 1942, Denise, from a Jewish family, was recruited to work for the SOE while other French Jews were being rounded up for deportation. Trained as a wireless operator in England she was parachuted into France on March 2, 1944 and started work with fellow SOE agent, Robert Benoist in the Nantes region. Three months later, she and Benoist were arrested by the Gestapo. Benoist was executed and Denise imprisoned at Konigsberg in Brandenburg before transported to Ravensbrück. There she was executed when only 29 years old. Two other SOE agents, Lillian Rolfe and Violette Szabo were also executed at the same time. After the war, Denise Bloch was posthumously awarded the French 'Legion of Honour' and the 'Kings Commendation for Brave Conduct' by the British.

NANCY WAKE

New Zealand born Nancy Fiocca, nee Wake, moved to Australia with her parents when she was only one year old. Became a journalist in Europe and married French industrialist Henri Fiocca. In 1940 she joined the French resistance (Maquis) She set up escape routes for hundreds of Allied soldiers and shot down airmen. Known to the Gestapo as the 'White Mouse' she escaped after her arrest in 1943 and fled over the Pyrenees to Spain and on to England. There she trained as a spy and was parachuted back into France on February 29, 1944 along with S.O.E. agent Major John Hind Farmer (Code name 'Hubert') to lead a group of resistance fighters (Maquis) to distribute weapons and sabotage German military installations. After the war she learned that her husband was killed by the Gestapo in 1943 when he refused to betray her. Returning to Australia she married former RAF pilot John Forward who died in 1997. She did not have any children. Nancy Wake received the highest decorations from the French, British and the Americans but not from Australia because she was born in New Zealand and never fought as an Australian servicewoman. She left the country in 2001. Three years later the Australian Government changed its mind and awarded her the Companion of The Order of Australia. Nancy Wake died in a London hospital on August 7, 2011, from a chest infection, she was 98.

YOLANDE BEEKMAN

Another SOE heroine of WWII was Yolande Elsa Maria Unternahrer. Born in Paris and educated in London she became fluent in English and German languages. After joining the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) and trained as a wireless operator she was soon recruited by the 'F' section of the SOE under the control of Colonel Maurice Buckmaster. In 1943 she married Dutch army Sergeant Jaap Beekman just a short time before being dropped by parachute behind enemy lines in France. While operating the wireless for Canadian Gustave Bieler in charge of the 'Musician' network at Saint Quentin the two were arrested while they talked over a cup of coffee in the Cafe Moulin Brule. Sergeant Beekman was imprisoned but survived the war and Yolande (Codename-Mariette) transported to Fresnes prison in Paris. Interrogated and brutalized repeatedly she was then transferred to the women's prison at Karlsruhe in Germany along with three other SOE operatives. The four were then

transferred to the Dachau concentration camp where at dawn on September 11th 1944, the four were taken to a small courtyard next to the crematorium and executed by a shot to the head, their bodies then burned. Yolande

ANTONINA MAKAROVA

The eldest child of the Parfenovs family. At school she forgot her last name and the teacher wrote down Makarova as her father's name was Makar. In the autumn of 1941, as German troops were approaching Moscow she volunteered to help the soldiers at the front. After the fighting had passed she took shelter in the village of Lokot. There she met up with a German policeman who offered her a job as a machine gunner with good payment. Her job was to execute partisans and traitors. Each morning she would visit the local prison and peer into the faces of those she was about to execute. The first group of prisoners she shot into a deep pit that had been previously dug. While manning the machine-gun she was absolutely drunk hardly realizing what she was doing. Later, when Soviet troops were liberating the Bryansk Region, where Antonina lived and worked, they discovered the remains of around 1,500 bodies of men, women and children whom Antonina had shot. After the war, KGB officials searched for her but drew a blank as they were searching for a Makarova, not her real name of Parfenovs. It was not until 1976 that they found a Antonina Makarova who had the last name Gunsburg, (after her marriage in 1945) At this time Antonina was a 55 year old woman with two children and living in Tepel, Belarus. Antonina was arrested and soon confessed to working for the Nazis during the war. Brought to trial the courts decision was death by shooting. Antonina Ginsburg (Makarova) was executed on August 11, 1978 the only woman ever to be executed by shooting on a court decision in the USSR.

LILY LITVAK

A legend of Russia's 'Great Patriotic War' (WWII) Born in Moscow in 1921. As a teenager she joined a local Aero Club and learned to fly. In 1942 she became a member of the 296 Fighter Division and shot down her first two German planes on her second mission while flying a YAK-1 fighter plane. During the war, she scored a total of twelve kills and was wounded three times. Lily Litvak was awarded the 'Order of the Red Banner' for her exploits. On August 1, 1943, her plane was shot down by a squadron of Messerschmitt 109s while on her 168th mission. Aged only twenty-two, her remains were not found until 1979 near the village of Dmitriyevka, near Donetsk. She was given an official funeral and awarded the title 'Hero of the Soviet Union'. (In all, Ninety-one women in the USSR received this award)

YELENA MAZANIK

A Native of Minsk, USSR, she was born in 1921 and at age twenty-two became a member of the Belarusian partisan movement after the Nazi invasion. She managed to get a job as housemaid to the family of Wilhelm von Kube, the Gauleiter of the district. With help from the partisans she was supplied with an explosive device which she placed under the mattress of Kube's bed. At 1.20am on September 23, 1943, the bomb exploded killing Kube, but his wife, who was in bed with her husband, survived with minor injuries. Yelena escaped the German retaliation and became a Soviet propaganda hero with the award of 'Hero of the Soviet Union'.

MADEZHDA POPOVA

Female bomber pilot of the 588th Night Bomber Regiment and Hero of the Soviet Union. She flew a 1920s vintage PO-2 two-seater biplane carrying two bombs, when she was only 19 years old. On one night she flew 18 sorties. Promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel she flew 852 missions. Shot down and forced to land several times she emerged one of the luckiest. Born on December 17, 1921, she was awarded many other decorations including the Order of Lenin, the Soviet Medal Of Honour, and the Order Of The Red Banner, (3 times). Madezhda Popova died on July 8, 2013, aged 91 leaving a son now a general in the Belarussian Air Force.

LUCIE ROMMEL

Wife of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel (The Desert Fox) was born on June 6, 1894. In February, 1944, the family moved into a large rented villa in the village of Herrlingen about eight kilometres west of Ulm where her husband was to spend some time on convalescent leave from the injuries he received when his staff car was strafed in France. Frau Rommel found it very strange that no one in the government or Army High Command took the trouble to telephone to inquire about his injuries. For nearly thirty years they had a good and happy life together. Lucie, her husband and their son Manfred were at home on that fateful day, Saturday, October 14, 1944, when they received a visit from the two Nazi generals, General Burgdorf and General Maisel. They told General Rommel 'You have been accused of complicity in the plot on the Führers life'. He was given ten minutes to say goodbye to his wife and son. Lucie, heartbroken and in tears, stayed in her room, the walls of which were

covered with paintings and photographs of her husband. Downstairs, Manfred helped his father into his leather coat before a last handshake. Manfred, after studying law at Tübingen University, later became Lord Mayor of Stuttgart. On February 1, 1967, a West German Navy destroyer 'Rommel' was launched and baptised by Lucie Rommel who met her future husband while he was training at the Officer Cadet School in Danzig. Frau Lucie Rommel, born Lucia Maria Mollin, died on September 26, 1971. Neither she or her husband had Nazi Party membership.

HEDWIG HOESS

Hedwig Hoess was born Hedwig Hensel 1908 and in 1929 she met and married Rudolf Hoess. During the time he was commandant of the Auschwitz concentration camp they produced four children. To protect his family from any future 'finger pointing' he consciously lied to his wife about the goings on in the camp. They lived in a villa not far from the camp but she never made a visit to the place. No wonder then that Hedwig often referred to Auschwitz as 'paradise' as they lacked for nothing. Food and clothing were confiscated from the Jews luggage before they were gassed. In order to protect their children from future stigma and fingerprinting her husband consciously lied about his work in the camp and especially about the gassings. When she overheard comments made by Fritz Bracht, Gauleiter of Silesia, of what went on in the camp, she refused to share the same bed with her husband. Discovered living north of Flensburg with her eldest son, they were taken into custody by the British Army's 92 Field Security Section. They were interrogated for six days as to where her husband was, but she repeatedly said that he was dead. She finally relented and wrote down the address where he was living. He was at this time working as a farm labourer under the name of Franz Lang. After his arrest Hedwig Hoess and her son were released.

ROSA ROBOTKA

A heroine of the Jewish resistance movement, 21 year old Rosa was sent to Auschwitz in November, 1941 after her family had been liquidated. Selected as fit for slave labour she was assigned to the Personal Effects Depot (Effektenslager) There she made friends with other girls working in the munitions factory especially in the 'Pulverraum' (Powder Room). She encouraged them to steal minute quantities of the gunpowder which she passed on to male members of the underground. This was how the men of the Sonderkommando Squad 59 B (those whose duty was to remove the bodies from the gas chamber and then into the incinerating ovens) armed themselves prior to the uprising. On October 7, 1944, Crematorium IV at Auschwitz was blown apart something the British and American air forces were unable to do. Three days later, Rosa and three other suspected underground fighters were arrested and interrogated, beaten and tortured for the next three months. On January 6, 1945, Rosa and her three friends were hanged. Two were hanged before the assembled day shift and two were hanged before the assembled night shift. Eleven days later the Germans evacuated Auschwitz prior to the Soviet occupation. Thousands of Jews living today owe their being to the bravery of Rosa and her accomplices who had summoned the courage to resist the months of inhumane treatment without revealing the identities of their accomplices. (Jewish prisoner, Salman Leventhal, recorded these events in small notebooks which he buried in the ground near Crematorium 111. The jar containing these notebooks was discovered on October 17, 1962)