

Wiener Edelknaben



March on Berlin!

Kraus pleads for death's sweet release rather than to have to continue dealing with the current offering of dunderheads

March 2018, Lugoff SC

Photo: Jai Kat

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„Hoch- und Deutschmeister“



Photo: Jai Kat

IN THIS ISSUE

03 **After Action Report**
On The Attack: H-uD at WWIIHA
Battle of the Bulge 2018

12 **After Action Report**
Grundausbildung 2018

08 **Feldpost**
Letter from the Eastern Front

14 **Equipment Study**
Zeltbahn im Dienste
der Wehrmacht

09 **Research Article**
Resistance to Hitler within the Abwehr

18 **Book Review**
Order in Chaos
by Hermann Balck

IT'S FINALLY HERE!

After hurricanes, disease, familial obligations and work struggles, the first edition of *Wiener Edelknaben* is finally complete. Words can't describe how excited we are to finally have our efforts bear fruit. We hope that the members of *Hoch- und Deutschmeister* have as much fun reading this first issue as we had making it. We would like to specifically thank all of our contributors whose submissions helped fill out these pages, as well as the Stabs of H-uD who provided their support for the project.

Working on *Wiener Edelknaben* has been a challenging experience, but also a fun and educational one. It gave us the opportunity to learn more about our hobby, our reenacting family, and the history that we strive to portray. We researched original publications like *Signal* and *Die Wehrmacht* to develop period-inspired article layouts. We read through various history books and articles to get a clearer picture of the topics we were writing about. We conducted interviews of reenactors, both within H-uD and from other units, in order to get clearer pictures of past events. Experiences like these helped us develop and expand our own knowledge and gave us greater appreciation for reenacting as a whole. We look forward to continuing this with future issues of this publication.

2018 has been a turbulent year for the hobby. Through no fault of our own, the H-uD lost our biggest annual event, Fort Indiantown Gap. This is certainly a great loss for us. However, with that being said, we sincerely believe that H-uD is in a great place from which to move forward. We've undergone a command restructure, and our new Hauptfeldwebel and Zugführer are taking on their new roles with great enthusiasm. Our build and training events over the summer were extremely productive; both the men of H-uD, and the Lugoff bunker complex itself, are now prepared for the upcoming fall reenacting season. This next year will be an important one for the Reichsgrenadier-Regiment *Hoch- und Deutschmeister* as we look to expand our operations, improve our impressions, and continue to bring our hard-hitting combat performance to tactical events. The future is looking bright.

Thank you all for reading, and we look forward to seeing you *im Feld*!

HuD Vor!
- The Editors

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ON THE ATTACK:

H-uD at WWIIHA Battle of the Bulge 2018

By Grenadier Werner Fuchs

In early February, landsers of the Reichsgrenadier-Regiment *Hoch- und Deutschmeister* travelled from all over the country to gather at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. They had prepared for weeks, and in some cases months, for the yearly Battle of the Bulge reenactment being held there, organized by the WWII Historical Association. Some members had driven from as far as Florida for the chance to take the field in the freezing temperatures.

As always, the *Hoch- und Deutschmeister* played a key role among the Axis forces attending FIG. The Stabs of H-uD had been in planning for months

for this event. Herr Major Wilhelm von Heinze was again chosen to be overall field commander of Axis forces, which comprised a regiment formed from reenactors all over the United States. Von Heinze portrayed an Oberstleutnant at the event, to reflect his greater command role. Meanwhile, it fell to the Hauptfeldwebel Rudolf Brandt and Zügfuhrer Leopold Kraus to organize the troops, logistics, and time table. H-uD fielded two squads for this event, totaling nineteen men. While historically, the actual *Hoch- und Deutschmeister* was not a part of the Battle of the Bulge, the H-uD reenacting unit would be portraying one of the many

Heer infantry units that did. The H-uD followed the WWIIHA's strict rules for ammunition and weapons handling; all ammo was bagged and organized with an attendant's unit and name. No ammo was allowed in the barracks. The H-uD had no rules or safety violations for the entirety of the event.

The majority of unit members arrived Wednesday night, having travelled up from the southeastern United States in two rented vans. A shared road trip is a feature of these events. Landsers continued to trickle in until Thursday night. While the two-day tactical event is arguably the main draw of the FIG

event, the barracks are also open to the public for several days. As such, the barracks was set up with an eye towards a period-correct garrison presentation. Soldaten organized their gear and beds in a uniform manner, so any visitors would see the discipline that accompanied military life. Command and common areas were outlined, and with a long row of tables available for the men to converse and eat. Lights were strung up, which allowed for a more period ambience. Soldaten spent their time mending uniforms, repairing gear, playing period games, and engaging in friendly conversation and kameradschaft. Food had been prepared and served by HptFbw Brandt, who made an excellent menu for the week.



The H-uD barracks display was unique compared to those established by other attending units. A guardhouse was erected outside the entrance, and guard duty was assigned to unit members on a rotational basis. Upon entering the barracks, one immediately encountered a H-uD member manning a duty desk. It was this soldat's duty to keep track of the duty board, write day passes for the base, and keep an eye on order and discipline. The duty desk was set up by H-uD 3 Kompanie's HptFw Johan Keifer, who brought



his excellent display with him to FIG. "I would call my display a combination of Schreibstube and Hauptquartier," said HptFw Keifer. "My favorite part of FIG is the barracks and comradeship." The display included original radios, stamps, propaganda photos, and a squad duties board. Landsers were given chits to place on their current location or duty, and were required to check in and out as they came to and from the barracks. Duties were shared amongst the lower enlisted, with Stabs keeping busy at meetings and conferences with other Axis units.

Thursday was spent focusing on the barracks impression and public display. The soldaten of H-uD took up guard and desk duty, and relaxed between duties by browsing the many vendors and displays. While his unit relaxed, Oberstlt von Heinze was preparing for the attack. Planning had begun last year, and ramped up in the months closer to FIG. Herr Oberstleutnant was the regimental commander, and had the responsibility for battlefield success of the Axis forces. Axis unit commanders spent four hours walking the battlefield, scouting over terrain, matching it with orders, and adjusting plans. Two hours were then spent reworking and finalizing orders. A reception from the overall Axis commander, Herr Generalmajor Egon Spengler, was also attended. Finally, a formal briefing was given to all Axis kompanie commanders. Guarding Herr Oberstleutnant on these

tasks were Gefreiter Alexander Herzog and Unterfeldwebel Walt Sommer. They accompanied him between his many tasks and appointments, seeing first-hand the effort put into the event. Security was paramount; lists were kept of the personnel permitted to attend these meetings. Ufw Sommer acted as security for regimental headquarters and only allowed individuals on the list to access the planning room



Frauenschaft Wien depicted Stabshelferin at the event. In this role, the women of the Frauentruppe provided much-needed support at the regimental headquarters. They organized the layout of the upstairs headquarters room, put up period-correct decorations, typed up and sealed orders, and provided much-needed hot coffee and snacks to Stabs. At times, it could be argued that they worked harder than the Landsers in the field.

Friday was the day of the tactical event. In the early darkness of morning, the H-uD had a morning appell. Temperatures were below freezing, with a strong and bitter wind blowing across the Gap. Dressed warmly, loaded for the fight, the unit had to carry everything they would need for battle. The sun was just starting to rise as the unit fell in with rest of the regiment, collected ammo, and boarded the buses.

Herr Oberstleutnant led the regiment, which was comprised of eight kompanies of SS and Heer units. 7 Kompanie, which H-uD was a part of, was made up of multiple Heer units. The Kompanie commander was Hauptmann Otto Landrik, commander of Infanterie-Regiment 208 and a friend of the H-uD. The H-uD contingent was led by Unterfeldwebel Kraus. While the Zug was diminished by soldaten not being able to make the event, morale was high amongst the two gruppe.

After a short bus ride, the H-uD was deployed onto the field as a part of the Kampfgruppe. Trucks, Hanomag halftracks, and a Sturmgeschütz IV rumbled by, carrying a variety of troops. H-uD marched into position, awaiting the start of the battle. Soldaten smoked and took photos, nervous with excitement and eager for the battle to

begin. The Amis and Tommies were west of the Axis position, and between the two forces was miles of rough training ground: hills covered in woodland, brush, creeks, and crisscrossed by a few roads. A dark grey sky seemed to match the color of the German uniforms.

Axis forces moved forward as the battle commenced. 7 Kompanie moved southwest along a road, before breaking off and heading north-west, over a creek and through heavy brush. The foliage here was thick enough even to daunt veterans of the thick undergrowth endemic to southern forests. Landsers who had been freezing now sweated through their many layers. Their objective: a strategic crossroads, around which the battle would focus. It wasn't long before the first sounds of battle were heard. Random rifle shots turned into prolonged bouts of gunfire backed with machine gun bursts.

Afforded an excellent vantage point from which to command, Herr Oberstleutnant describes the view: "Regimental command was in a field post on a hill, looking at [units] move like they were chess pieces, watching the plan work out, with units acting like they were under fire. We were listening to units chatter on the radio, tracking

them on the map, making adjustments, and seeing the plans from the whole year unfold in real time." Regimental command was a prime target for the Allies, who were rumored to have deployed killteams solely to destroy it. It was guarded well by Unterfeldwebel Walt Sommer, a member of the H-uD Feldgendarmarie. Ufw Sommer recalled that moving through the tall grass, protecting senior officers from any possible attack, was the highlight of the event for him.

Coming out the other side of thick brush, 7 Kompanie went through dense woods, skirted road, and attacked the crossroads from the south. This objective was held by Commonwealth troops, supported by some American jeeps. Caught in a pincer, the Tommies and Canadians fought bravely but were overwhelmed. 7 Kompanie launched the attack from the center. "We slowly approached the main road from the valley. The Tommies were dug in on the far side of the road behind some large berms and up the hill," recalled Grenadier Erhard Schenck. "Erste Gruppe approached in two small groups. The one on the right layed down heavy fire on the Tommies while the one on the left conducted a fire and advance." The air was filled with yelled German commands and whistle blasts, punctuated by the constant sound of gunfire. After short but fierce fighting, 7 Kompanie, along with an SS Kompanie and support from the StuG, had taken the objective.

7 Kompanie took a well-deserved rest and held the crossroads. Landsers took a moment to smoke, snack, and drink water before improving their field positions. An unlucky American scout jeep attempted to drive through the lines, causing landsers to drop cigarettes and blaze away at them. They rolled to a stop, shot up.

Branches and grass was placed along an embankment, to camouflage positions. In order to slow down any potential advance by Allied vehicles, logs





were piled to establish a roadblock. The range rules forbid the use of shovels that soldiers carried from their belts. Fighting was taking place to the north, and the noise of battle was everywhere. Yet 7 Kompanie's position seemed almost tranquil. The sun had finally broken through the overcast skies. Landsers who had been freezing while waiting, then sweating in the attack, now enjoyed a fine medium between the two extremes. The sanitäter of 7 Kompanie, Grenadier Hans Zöllner, kept busy during this

quiet time; he constantly ran between positions, lugging a heavy trinkwasser can, seeing to the needs of the soldiers. He provided water, snacks, even extra warming layers for kameraden in need. While the lower enlisted rested and waited, NCOs and officers discussed the next step of the battle. Regimental command had come to the crossroads to assess the situation up close. The Allies had to counter-attack - but when?

The answer was had fast. A light American armored column started

down the road from the west, headed by a greyhound scout car. 7 Kompanie reacted by repositioning to push back supporting Allied infantry. Small arms fire was traded along the road, and the Americans realized they would be facing a ready defense. The StuG was recalled immediately to repel the Allied vehicles. With a roaring engine, it swerved onto the main road. "I watched the StuG powerslide, and take out the American vehicles," witnessed Obergrenadier Vin Turger. Landsers cheered as the StuG's 75mm cannon roared, annihilating the Allied column and halting their attack.



Due to a medical emergency, the battle had to be stopped there – with all objectives firmly in control by the Axis forces. Allied and Axis units took the proper steps to make sure the issue was taken care of. Soldiers of all sides rallied and waited at the crossroads, staying out of the way of emergency personnel and chatting amongst each other. While both sides were frustrated at not being able to see the battle resolved, there was strong comradery between all reenactors there.

The H-uD was brought back to garrison, tired yet flush with satisfaction. After turning in ammunition, they returned to the barracks. Duties were resumed, and all units awaited a debriefing from Axis leadership. The regimental appell occurred later that night, in freezing darkness. Regimental command praised the performance of the units, and laid out the plans for the rest of the event. Saturday's battle would be canceled, and instead units would focus on their barracks presentation for the public. Tired, the H-uD marched back to the barracks, where they were released for the night. However, most landsers showered, changed, and headed out for one of FIG's most fun traditions: the Café Trois.

Café Trois is a place mocked up to represent a café in a 1940's German-occupied French village. Open throughout the whole week, it was packed on Friday and Saturday night. Two excellent musicians played live music for the customers, with many joining in to sing along. It was also "in play" as well - all ranks entering had to present their liberty pass and soldbuch, and guards were posted to inspect passes and enforce the rules. Gefreiter Viktor Weiß of the H-uD volunteered to be one of these guards; he ensured that no-one got past him without showing proper paperwork. "Pulling guard at the Café was my favorite memory of FIG," he said. "It felt very historical to pull duty there, and I received compliments for contributing to the atmosphere." Battle stories were shared over drinks and food. Discussions were had on a variety of period topics, ranging from the war itself to minutia about fabric. Over all of the conversation and singing were loud and repeated toasts to the success of all the hard work before and during the event, both on and off the battlefield: *"To the Regiment!"*

The unit got up early on Saturday morning, and prepared for the barracks display. Duties were drawn for the day, and soldaten prepared their answers for the many questions the public was

prepared to ask. Families, couples, groups of students, JROTC units and sea cadets entered in, looking at the equipment, the uniforms, and the layout of the display. H-uD reenactors answered questions and also let them safely handle weapons and equipment. The weather was bright and sunny on Saturday, drawing in plenty of the public despite the cold.

That night, the H-uD held a final appell. The barracks display had been broken down and put away, and most of the unit was packed. A group photo of 7 Kompanie was taken on the steps of the shared barracks. An awards and promotion ceremony was held, intimate in the cold, dim light of the barracks porch. Smiles and cheery conversation were subdued by the bittersweet feeling of the final night of the event. At the Café, the men celebrated heartily, and were some of the last ones out. Sunday morning, the H-uD woke early, packed their cars, and checked over the barracks. The snow followed them as they drove home safely, closing out a truly memorable event. ||



An Update from the Eastern Front!

Good Morning, Afternoon, or Evening to you all!

Gef. Malte Schultz writing from Ansbach, Germany. Things have been rolling along for the past few months. Simply put Germany is an amazing country with rich culture and history. Being able to see this country in-depth and for such an extended period of time is truly a gift (If it weren't for the Big Green Weenie I dare say it would be a blessing).

The highlight being an exercise in Poland that lasted about a month. We worked alongside the Polish directly and I was fortunate to see quite a lot of equipment and tactics that I otherwise would not be privy to. Overall it was a great exercise and both sides seemed to take many lessons learned back to their home units. It is rather amazing to see the difference that 75 years can make, enemies becoming steadfast friends and even brothers in arms. The culture of the warrior is still alive and well and it truly knows no language barriers.

I look forward to returning to a rejuvenated H-uD in 2019 (Jan. if I'm lucky) and hope that everyone is well. I have seen great things from the unit in the past 6 months and know I can expect this trend to continue.

HuD Vor!

-Gef. Malte Schultz
(SPC Arthur)



Resistance to Hitler within the Abwehr

Anti-Nazi resistance within the Military Intelligence Service

By Grenadier Erhard Schenk



The presence of a circle of anti-Nazi resisters embedded within Germany's military intelligence service, the *Abwehr*, has long been known to scholars. This circle was largely centered around the *Abwehr's* head, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, as well as his second-in-command, Colonel Hans Oster. Through their positions they were able to maintain foreign contacts, plot and support coups against Hitler, smuggle Jews out of Germany, as well as place anti-Nazis in important positions within the *Abwehr*. These anti-Nazis recruited into the *Abwehr* include resisters such as Erwin von Lahousen, Hans von Dohnanyi, Helmuth James von Moltke, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Furthermore, resistance within the *Abwehr* was among the most consistent, even through the years of Hitler's success. Despite this, it is largely overlooked. Actions of those within the *Abwehr* have been cast as the background to the larger names such as Ludwig Beck and Claus von Stauffenberg. Others see their role in the *Abwehr* overlooked due to their participation in other areas of the German resistance. Ultimately, their consistency was their undoing, as their activities brought about the arrest of the majority of the resisters within the *Abwehr*, and the organisation's subordination to the SS and their competing intelligence agency, the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*.¹

The core of resisters within the *Abwehr* began their opposition to the Nazi regime at different times. Canaris did not oppose Hitler until after 1935. Oster did not oppose Hitler until 1934, after the Rohm Purge. Both men had initially welcomed the NSDAP's rise. Others, such as Bonhoeffer and Dohnanyi, were opponents of the Nazis before they seized power.² Even so, by the *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938, Canaris had committed to recruiting anti-Nazis into the *Abwehr*, including Austrian intelligence officer Erwin von Lahousen, specifically instructing him "not to bring any National Socialists to Berlin with him."³

Later that year, members of the *Abwehr*, especially Oster, were heavily involved in a plot to overthrow Hitler. Members of the 1938 coup plot included General Beck, General Franz Halder, and Reichsbank President Hjalmer Schacht. The plot was a response to Hitler's bellicose attitude towards the Czechs, and his decision to spark the Munich Crisis. During this period, *Abwehr* headquarters became the center for the plots activity, as "all conspiratorial threads were gathered in there."⁴ Oster, in particular, was a key force behind this conspiracy, initiating several trips to London in order to receive assurances from the British that it would guarantee Czech independence. Ultimately, however, the plot failed, as Britain allowed Germany to annex the Sudetenland without war. A coup had to wait, as support for Hitler climbed with his diplomatic victory. Germany was not plunged into war, and so many members of the plot ceased their opposition to Hitler.⁵

Oster, however, remained steadfast in his opposition to the regime. In early 1939 he called Hitler "one of the greatest criminals of all time" while admonishing Lahousen for giving the Nazi salute.⁶ He further resisted through his Dutch contact, Major Bert Sas, the military attache to the Berlin embassy. Oster passed along detailed information regarding German plans to invade the Low Countries. Even so, Sas was largely ignored in the Hague, and the German plans were able to proceed.⁷



Colonel Hans Oster

Oster was not necessarily alone in his resistance at this time, nor was he alone within the *Abwehr*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, through his position in the *Abwehr* was able to secure a meeting with George Bell, Bishop of Chichester in Stockholm on May 31, 1942. The meeting largely resulted in Bell understanding the resistance and acting as an intermediary between the German resisters and the

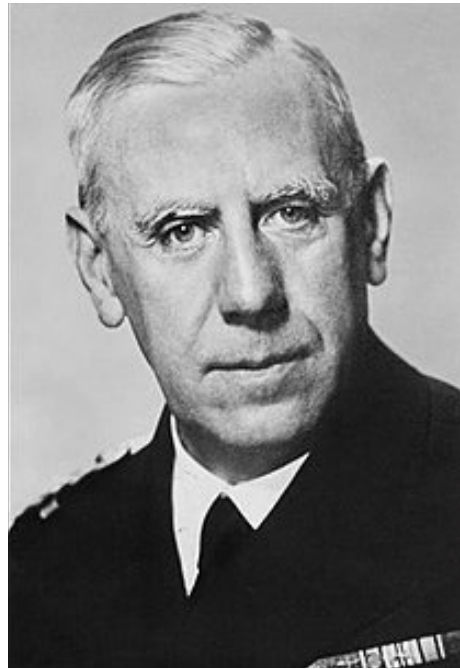
British government. Bell also met with Hans Schonfeld, behind whom stood “an opposition group around Helmuth James, Count von Moltke,” who was also a member of the *Abwehr*.⁸ This therefore shows how the members of the *Abwehr* resistance were interwoven throughout the resistance.

Later in 1942, Bonhoeffer was again involved in a major act of resistance, along with Oster and Dohnanyi. Though it had been planned since 1941, Operation Seven was carried out between August and September of 1942. The operation saw fourteen Jews smuggled out of Germany and into Switzerland using *Abwehr* funds. These Jews were ostensibly to become agents of the *Abwehr*, but in truth were not expected to actually send information back to the *Abwehr*.⁹

Several months later, members of the *Abwehr* resistance became involved in Operation Spark, as members of the military again saw the need to overthrow Hitler. Hitler was visiting the Eastern Front during March 1943, and so a number of officers within Army Group Center hatched a plot to assassinate him. Von Lahousen acquired special British-made fuses that were attached to bombs disguised as bottles of Cognac. Upon Hitler’s death the military was to seize control of Germany. The bombs, however, failed to explode, though Lahousen’s successor played a similar role in the July 20th plot.¹⁰

The consistency of the *Abwehr* plotters ultimately proved to be their downfall. Inquiries into Operation Seven brought about the arrest of many of the conspirators, from Oster to Dohnanyi and Bonhoeffer. Others, such as Lahousen, Moltke and Canaris remained, but in a more limited capacity after the RSHA largely absorbed the *Abwehr*. Subsequently, Lahousen transferred into the infantry and commanded a regiment on the Eastern Front, where he was severely wounded. Because of his wounds, he was not arrested in the later purges of the *Abwehr* and the purges of

the German military following the July 20th plot, rather he spent the remainder of the war recuperating, and even joked that, had he not transferred out of the *Abwehr*, he would be “a head shorter.”¹¹ By the time of the July 20th plot, Moltke had been arrested for his other actions, and Canaris was eventually dismissed in February, and the *Abwehr* was officially dissolved.¹² Oster, Bonhoeffer, and Canaris were executed at Flossenbug prison on April 9, 1945, mere days before American troops liberated the camp.



Admiral Wilhelm Canaris

Within the historiography, the resistance within the *Abwehr* has been largely overlooked. While Canaris has received a great deal of attention, others are often glossed over. Oster is rarely mentioned in discussions of the 1938 coup plot, despite being a driving force behind its organization. This has several causes. One is that the *Abwehr* was too consistent for its own good, and was neutered before the July 20th plot. Additionally, several *Abwehr* resisters are notable for other reasons. Bonhoeffer, though a member of the *Abwehr* resistance, is also notable for his role in organizing the confessing church in order to stifle Nazi control over religion. His theological role in

resistance is largely the focal point of the historiography, with occasional mentions that he worked in the *Abwehr*.¹³ Similarly, von Moltke’s work in the Kreisau circle largely overshadows his work in the *Abwehr*, and his contacts with the American OSS are rarely mentioned, and almost never connected with the other elements of the resistance.

While Harold Deutsch explained Oster’s role well in “German Soldiers in the 1938 Munich Crisis,” considering Oster the most noteworthy of the “prime movers of revolt,” many other parts of the historiography either ignore Oster’s role in the coup or gloss over it.¹⁴ For example, Oster’s role in the coup is not at all mentioned in Spielvogel’s *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, and his name is briefly mentioned in connection with it in Leonidas Hill’s “The Pre-War National Conservative Opposition.”¹⁵ Similarly, General von Lahousen is never mentioned, despite being closely linked with Oster and the other conspiracies, as well as playing a role in the eventual execution of a number of Nazi war criminals due to his testimony at the Nuremberg Trials.¹⁶ However, neither Oster nor Lahousen were still in the *Abwehr* by the time of the July 20th plot. Oster was in prison and Lahousen was severely wounded. Because much of the historiography focuses on the July 20 plotters, whether to portray them as heroes or defeatists, the more consistent element of the military resistance is largely overlooked.

Historians focus on the major names of July 20 and their role in earlier resistance. General Beck is, understandably, cast as the main actor the 1938 coup plot, and the members of the *Abwehr* are seen as background actors. Peter Steinbach, for example, calls Beck “the head of the military opposition.”¹⁷ The *Abwehr*’s role in the plot is portrayed as eyes and ears, rather than an active force behind the coup. Indeed, Steinbach only considers Oster to have entered the realm of military resistance in 1941 as part of “the last phase of conservative resistance.”¹⁸

The consistency of the *Abwehr* was largely overlooked as well. While the erstwhile head of military resistance lived in retirement, the core group of *Abwehr* plotters continued to work against the regime. Hans Oster's leaking of German plans to the Dutch is noted in both in Ger van Roon's "Dutch Contacts with the Resistance in Germany" and Spielvogel's *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, but the former was the only work that attempted to provide any insight into Oster's actions.¹⁹ Furthermore, nowhere within the books was Operation 7 mentioned, despite being the catalyst for the organization's fall. Indeed, the majority of the *Abwehr* resistor's activities between the Munich crisis and Operation Spark were largely overlooked. Even Lahousen's actions during Operation Spark are ignored. While it is true that Spark should be credited to Henning von Tresckow, Lahousen was never once mentioned.



Generalmajor Erwin von Lahousen

While studies of the conservative military resistance focused on the July 20th plot, other members of the *Abwehr* were studied for different reasons. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as previously mentioned, is largely celebrated for his theological work and his struggle in the *Kirchenkampf*, or church struggle.²⁰ His work in the *Abwehr*, therefore, is written of as secondary to his other accomplishments. This is especially clear in that he is not generally included with the rest of the *Abwehr* resistance, despite

similar participation in activities after recruitment, including in Operation 7. Similarly, Helmuth von Moltke is tied to the Kreisau Circle. Though Oster's role in the *Abwehr* is mentioned in the context of Dutch contacts, Moltke's similar role in Germany was not mentioned by Roon.²¹ Additionally, when discussing Schoenfeld's visit to Bishop Bell, Blasius also does not mention the fact that both visits to Bell had their roots within the *Abwehr*.²² While it is true both resisters were far more impactful in their own spheres, it remains unfortunate that the historiography largely neglects their roles within the *Abwehr*.

Ultimately, as the *Abwehr* was largely dissolved by the July 20 plot, they do not feature heavily in those discussions. Because July 20 was such a visible aspect of the conservative military resistance, the role of the *Abwehr* in maintaining consistent opposition to Hitler is often overlooked. Only Harold Deutsch offered a meaningful analysis of the *Abwehr* leadership, and their pitfalls. Otherwise, they were not factored into the Munich Crisis as much by other authors, and similarly their actions after 1938 were overlooked. This differed greatly from the rest of the military resistance who survived until July 1944, as they are made the main characters, for good or ill, of the drama that unfolded around Operation Valkyrie. ||

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„Achtung!!“ Feldwebel Kraus gives the orders for the day

Photos: Werner Fuchs

GRUNDAUSBILDUNG 2018

Looking into the H-uD
training event at Lugoff
By Grenadier Werner Fuchs

In August, the unit held its yearly basic training event, known in German as “Grundausbildung”. Training is key to keeping unit knowledge and abilities sharp and ready for events. With this in mind, Stabs planned and implemented a new training model this year. The event warning order included training materials to educate Grenadiers before the event. The weather was hot, but this did not deter good attendance – the Zug had 19 individuals, not counting leadership personnel. As always, Stabsgefreiter Weimann kept the unit well-fed, and the unit enjoyed his cooking all weekend.

Attendees started arriving early Friday, and enjoyed an evening of Kameradschaft. Getting sleep in the summer heat was not easy, and the day of training started early Saturday morning. Unterfeldwebel Herzog called appell, and from there the new training plan was put into action. The unit started by practicing rifle drill, and marching in formation. Feldwebel Kraus provided instruction, aided with pointers from Stabsfeldwebel Gotz. Pre-event studies helped with success in training.

With the men now warmed up, Unteroffizier Joachim Ulmer formed the men into a gruppe, and gave a class on commands and tactical movement. Immediately afterwards, the men were formed up and put through their paces in a mile-long course. Veteran members were mixed in with new members, and helped them focus on keeping distance and passing orders. The Lugoff terrain was in fine summer form, with grenadiers having to deal with insect nests, briar-filled brush, and the oppressive heat. Tough conditions help give reenactors insight into the sheer effort the actual combatants had to make day after day. Morale was high as the gruppe marched back for a break.

In the shade of the pines, grenadiers took their tunics off, smoked and watered themselves, and gathered up for more classes. Unterfeldwebel Herzog taught a class on uniforms, equipment, and how to improve an impression. The focus was not on the specifics of uniform details, but rather methods for developing a kit for an impression, where to look for historical examples,

and how to wear it. Feldwebel Kraus led a class on pocket litter, using his personal items as examples. While the grenadiers waited for lunch, Feldwebel Kraus finished the morning with a class on safety – an important topic for all reenactors. Safely handling weapons and blanks was taught, along with examples of their danger, and how to take and give hits safely at close range.

In the afternoon, the Zug was split into 3 groups. Three classes were held simultaneously, giving the instructors smaller numbers to teach their topics. The class topics were the IG-37 Infantry Gun, the MG-34, and German grenades, particularly Steilhandgranates. The classes focused on their history and



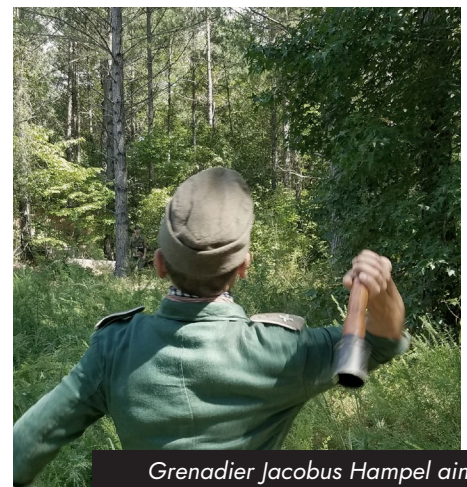
With utmost discipline, the landsers listen to instruction and take a chance to relax



Hört zu! Unterfeldwebel Herzog teaches a class in the morning shade

use in the Wehrmacht, and then practicing how to use them at events. Obergefreiter Klamps brought his infantry gun, showing how to work it safely, and drilled the grenadiers as crews. Obergefreiter Hauck demonstrated the employment and use of the MG-34, the main firepower of a German infantry squad. Everyone got a chance to manipulate and fire the weapon, using his personal rounds! Feldwebel Kraus taught the final class, on employment of stick grenades. Commonly called potato mashers, more than a few grenadiers were surprised at how rusty they were at throwing – the practice turned into a makeshift competition!

After the classes, an AAR session was held to determine which training practices were effective and what improvements could be made for the future. After this discussion was held, a final appell was called. Promotions were given out, and the Zug had a chance to put to practice the drill they learned. Stabs was happy with the effort of the troops and the success of the event overall. Landsers toasted to the upcoming event season, and look forward to continuing their training at the Grundausbildung next year. ||



Grenadier Jacobus Hampel aims...



...and lets it fly in an arc towards the target!

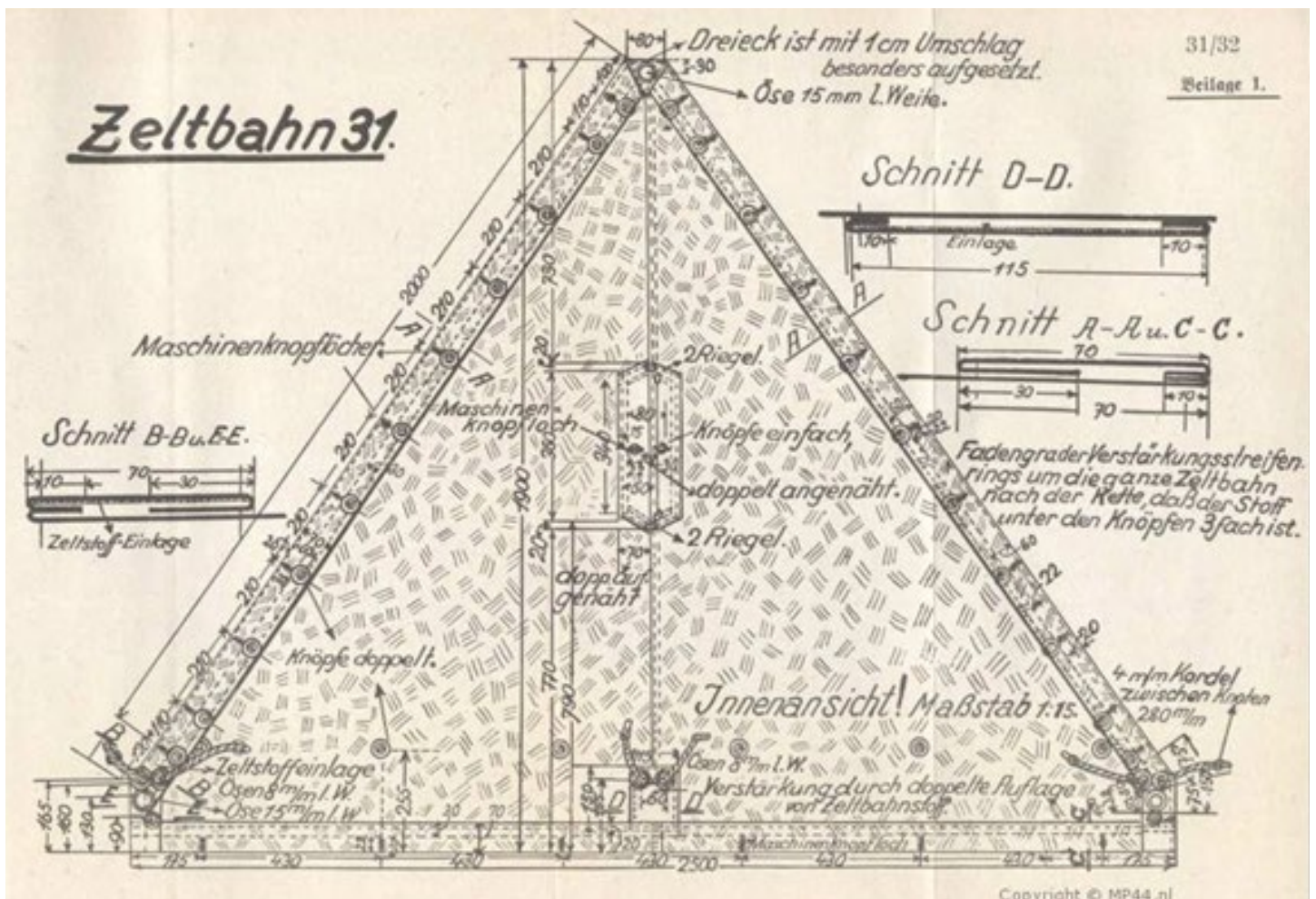
Zeltbahn im Dienste der Wehrmacht

By Gefreiter Malte Schultz

Walter Reichert first issued the patent for a piece of field gear that would become ubiquitous to the German Military in 1929. The *Zeltbahn*, an isosceles triangular piece of equipment made from *Makostoff* (a water resistant fabric) could provide several utilitarian services to a soldier in the field including but not limited to field housing, rain protection, and a makeshift flotation device. By 1931 the German military would issue the first examples of the *Zeltbahn* in *Heeres Splitter Muster 31* known to most reenactors and historians as *Splinter Camouflage*. Throughout the war the *Zeltbahn* would go through several changes from camouflage pattern to construction techniques and would eventually make its way into nearly every military and

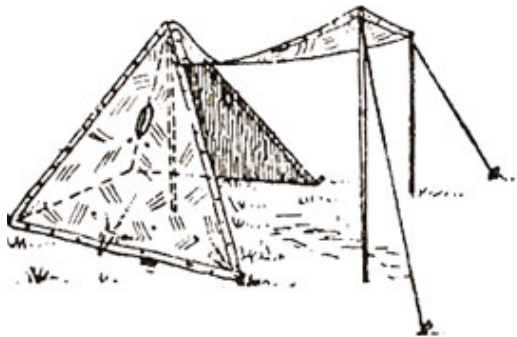
paramilitary organization within Germany in the periods before, during, and even after the war.

The first examples of the *Zeltbahn* measured 250 x 200 x 200 cm. Each side of the *Zeltbahn* had a row of 11 buttons which could be Aluminum, Zinc, or Steel depending on manufacturer and time of production. The base had a single button as well as a row of 6 buttons to connect a tent made of four shelter quarters (*Viererzelt*) to a house tent (*Hauszelt*). Directly in the middle of the *Zeltbahn*, there is a head hole with overlapping flaps secured by a single button when not in use.

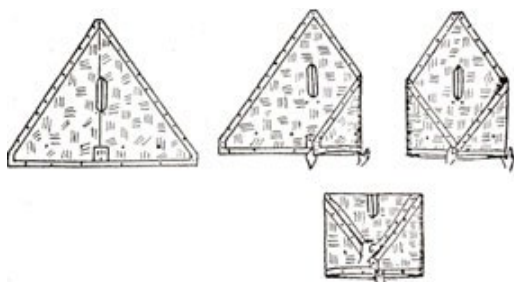


The two primary uses of the *Zeltbahn* were for shelter and rain protection. As stated previously there are other uses that are covered in *H. Dv. 205/1 Vorschrift für die Zeltausrüstung des Mannes* which is the field manual for utilizing the *Zeltbahn* published April 20, 1932. As with most things in German military culture, the *Zeltbahn* had the side effect of promoting *Kameradschaft* as the construction of a full tent required the use of four *Zeltbahnen*. In typical equipment issue, the *Zeltbahn* would be issued to each individual Soldat along with 1 Tent rope (*Zeltleine* 92), 1 Tent Pole (*Zeltstock* 01), and 2 Tent stakes (*Zeltpflocke* 29) all carried in an accessory pouch (*Zeltzubehörtasche*). Note: the accessory pouch wasn't always carried and often the items were simply bundled in the *Zeltbahn* when in storage. These equipment packages were supposed to be combined with that of three other *Soldaten* to allow a single tent to be constructed.

There are many other construction possibilities that are enabled with larger numbers of *Soldaten*. However, generally speaking, this is the most common layout that you would see in the field.



The second use of the *Zeltbahn* was its use as rain gear. As with the tent construction, there were multiple ways that the Soldat could wear his *Zeltbahn*. For dismounted troops, the process was very simple: fold the outside points of the triangle into the center and button along the two sides leaving the "base" of the triangle open. Then, unbutton the head hole and place over the head. This could be done before putting gear on, or after. There are picture examples of "hunchbacks" walking around with their *Zeltbahnen* over their rucksacks and field gear. There are other methods of buttoning the *Zeltbahn* for mounted troops on motorcycles, bikes, and horseback. These allowed a soldier to mount the seat/saddle without having to expose more of their legs to the elements.



The initial construction of the *Zeltbahn* was maintained throughout the duration of the war. Most *Zeltbahnen* had different colors on both sides called *Hellerer Buntfarbenaufdruck* (Brighter) and *Dunklerer Buntfarbenaufdruck* (Darker). These two colors can cover a broad spectrum of colors from a bleached tan to a muddy brown. This trend seems to be on par with those colors found within the spectrum of *Feldgrau* and as such there is no "true" color combination for *Zeltbahnen*.



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The vast majority of *Zeltbahnen* were also stamped with some types of identification. In the 30's and early 40's this could include manufacturer name, number, and year of manufacture. Furthermore, you could find the unit of issue stamped near the manufacturer information. As time went on, you would generally see all but the manufacturer number removed, and at the end of the war, it was not uncommon to find all markings gone. These stamps vary greatly in visibility but are almost always found on the base of the *Zeltbahn*.



From 1931 to 1943 the construction and aesthetic of the *Zeltbahn* in use to the Wehrmacht would change very little. There was, however, a single change that has led both the collector community and historians alike on a wild goose chase for decades. A few examples of a "brown side" have been discovered from a single factory in Berlin: *L. L. G. der Segelmacher, Berlin* between 1938 and 1943. Debates have raged for a significant amount of time over why this example was made. At first, many believed it to be an experimental pattern for use in the African and Italian campaigns, but this theory is generally rejected as of time of writing. Now, there are two general beliefs about this particular *Zeltbahn*. The first is that

the inks used for producing the various *Waffen SS* camouflage patterns were simply applied to the rollers that produced the reverse side of the *Zeltbahn*. This is corroborated in part by the existence of one of these alternate colored *Zeltbahn* with an Oakleaf repair/piece in the neckhole. The second theory is simply that the desire for a more pronounced spring/fall side was wanted following in line with *Waffen SS* camouflage patterns.

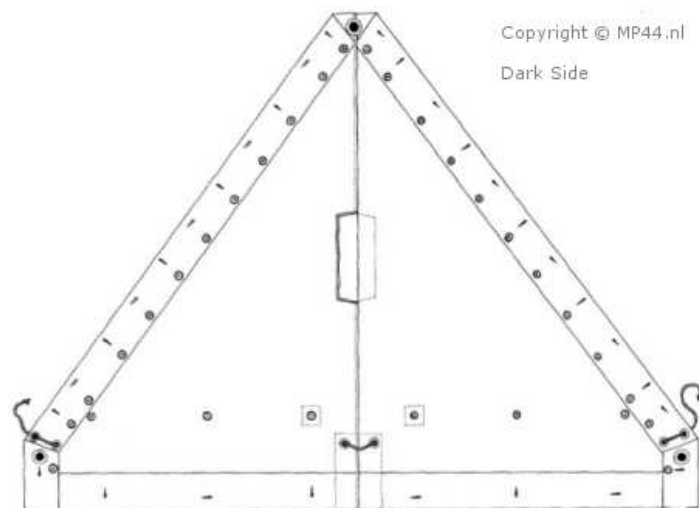


Towards the Middle/Late parts of the war the construction of *Zeltbahnen* would begin a pattern typical of most German equipment at this period of the war. Buttons went through a simplification process as materials began to be diverted to more critical industrial efforts. At some point, authorization was given to begin production of *Zeltbahnen* with Bakelite buttons stripped/reused from Italian shelter halves and produced in lieu of increasingly scarce metals. As with virtually everything else, the quality of the later war *Zeltbahnen* becomes significantly degraded.

With the capitulation of Italy in 1943, the Germans came into ownership of large quantities of *Telo Mimetico* camouflage fabric and shelter halves that they would ultimately scavenge and reuse. While rare, there are a few examples of triangular-shaped *Zeltbahnen* in this camouflage pattern. Typical examples are single sided and appear to be 4-piece constructions. Several examples have manufacturer numbers and Splinter Camouflage reinforcements in the neck hole and on the middle grommet. Most surviving examples are heavily faded due to the instability of Italian camouflage ink at the time. There is not much rhyme or reason to how these were issued as far as documentation has revealed, but it is safe to say that it was a rare occurrence due to lack of photographic evidence of field use.



The buttonholes were changed in May 1944 by order of O.K.H. to alternating positions, but was almost immediately nullified following an order in July 1944. The construction of the *Zeltbahn* itself including stitching, attention to detail, ink quality, and print pattern would also change significantly. Several examples of “four-piece” *Zeltbahnen* have been found with later war makers marks possibly constructed from recycled parts.



Shortly after these designs started to show up, two final major changes would be made. The first of these changes was the development of the “Carbon Overprint” pattern. Carbon Overprint Pattern was developed at roughly the same time that the Germans began implementing Infra-Red technologies that were starting to make their way on the battlefield. This pattern is somewhat difficult to notice upon cursory inspection, but upon deeper inspection the telltale signs of the pattern become visible. The rounded patterns of *Telo Mimetico* can be seen in the lighter portions of the camouflage. It is generally accepted that Italian fabric rollers used to make *Telo Mimetico* camouflage were used to make these hard to see patterns. These examples are extremely rare and tend to fade rapidly, a trait also found with Italian Camouflage in general. Furthermore, most examples of this *Zeltbahn* are four-piece construction instead of two.



Along with Jackboots, Stahlhelms, and the MG42; the *Zeltbahn* was a ubiquitous piece of equipment that helped to define the German emphasis on practicality and utility (and even overcomplication) when waging warfare. From the fields of Poland to the steps of the Reichstag, the *Zeltbahn* could be seen providing protection, shelter, and camouflage to Wehrmacht troops.

Keep on the lookout for the next issue, where we will delve into the development (and differences!) of German Camouflage during the war!

A special thanks to Tom with *MP44.nl* for giving me permission to utilize his fantastic images for this article. I highly recommend anyone looking for in-depth information on a vast array of equipment to visit his web page at: www.mp44.nl ||



One of the last - if not the last - production variants may not actually be a variant at all, but could be an example of absolute last-ditch production where the grommets are left off of the *Zeltbahn* entirely. These examples have the buttonholes and buttons, but lack the grommets necessary for construction of tents. Again, most theories here are speculation, but even still, it is almost guaranteed that any surviving examples are from the extreme late portions of the war.

Order in Chaos:

The Memoirs of General of Panzer Troops Hermann Balck

Reviewed by Obergrenadier Wilhelm Reiter

Order in Chaos represents an excellent and insightful firsthand account of Germany's military operations through World War I, the tumultuous interwar Weimar period, and World War II. It also covers a number of topics beyond the military sphere, such as domestic and international politics; the author's impression of various notable contemporaries; and appraisals of the cultures and doctrines of other countries that participated in these conflicts. The end result is a publication of vital historical importance, which provides a clear picture of the 20th century struggle for power in Europe from the German perspective.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the author of *Order in Chaos*, General der Panzertruppe Hermann Balck, was one of modern Germany's most capable military leaders. Mathematician Freeman Dyson called him "perhaps the most brilliant field commander on either side during World War II." Balck's longtime chief-of-staff Friedrich von Mellenthin stated that Balck "has strong claims to be regarded as our finest field commander." Heinz Guderian described him as an "energetic, judicious, and unusually courageous officer." Yet, bizarrely, Balck remains "the greatest German general no one has ever heard of" - he was never romanticized in the same way that Rommel or Guderian were, and

his exploits remain largely unknown by most casual students of military history. All but forgotten in the West, it took over thirty years for his memoirs to be translated into English.

The cause may lie with Balck's postwar attitude toward the victors. Unlike many of his colleagues, after the war Balck refused to participate in the US Army European Command Historical Division's interviews. He was largely ignored in immediate postwar analyses, and was mischaracterized in the US Army's official history of the Lorraine campaign as "arrogant," "ruthless," "a strutting martinet," and an "ardent Nazi" who over-optimistically misinterpreted realities in order to curry favor with Hitler.

These descriptions could not be further from the truth. Balck was not a member of the Nazi party, and postwar denazification courts cleared him of political wrongdoing, saying that he "only served the Wehrmacht faithfully" and "made no concessions to the National Socialist principles". It seems that, in the absence of a clear understanding of Balck's character, the Historical Division was content to resign him to the footnotes of history as another cartoonish caricature of a showy, sycophantic Prussian officer.

Despite these negative portrayals, in reality Balck was an exceedingly capable soldier and a man of unusually strong character. He was a highly decorated

ORDER IN CHAOS

The Memoirs of General of Panzer Troops Hermann Balck

Edited and Translated by
Major General
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Foreword by Carlo D'Este

HERMANN BALCK



[Balck] was one of the Third Reich's most brilliant panzer leaders, and one of only twenty-seven recipients of the Diamonds to the Knight's Cross.

infantry officer in the First World War, earning both the Iron Cross First Class and the Wound Badge in Gold. He was also nominated for the Pour le Merite, but it was never awarded to him, as the war ended before his citation was processed. During the Second World War, he was one of the Third Reich's most brilliant panzer leaders, and one of only twenty-seven recipients of the Diamonds to the Knight's Cross. Reliable and hardworking, he was known as an active commander who would always lead from the front; in times of crisis he would spend his days driving between subordinate units to personally assess their situation and deliver orders face-to-face. Balck twice rejected offers to join the General Staff, preferring instead to remain a line officer so he could be closer to the troops.

Perhaps his greatest achievement came in December 1942, while he was in command of the 11th Panzer

Division as a *Generalmajor*. Acting in support of XLVIII Panzer Corps in holding the Axis lines at the Chir River, approximately 40 miles west of the 6th Army's encirclement at Stalingrad, Balck led 11th Panzer in mobile defensive operations against a force that outnumbered his in almost every measure. Despite the Soviets holding an 11-to-1 advantage in infantry, 7-to-1 advantage in armored vehicles, and 20-to-1 advantage in artillery guns, 11th Panzer managed to repeatedly surprise, surround, and destroy the Soviet units that were attempting to break through. In roughly 3 weeks, Balck's mere division almost completely annihilated Soviet General P.L. Romanenko's Fifth Tank Army.

Thankfully, various books and academic works published since the end of the war have redeemed Balck and acknowledged him as one of Germany's most gifted generals. In the late seventies and early eighties, Balck and von Mellenthin even participated in a series of seminars and panel discussions with senior NATO leaders at the US Army War College. Recognizing their achievements and experiences on the Eastern Front, Western military theorists were eager to get their opinion on how best to fight the Soviets in conventional warfare.

Balck's memoirs were finally published in English in 2015. They are particularly useful for reenactors, as Balck often directly quotes passages from his diaries, giving the reader an on-the-ground, at-the-time understanding of his experiences. Of specific interest to the reenactors of the *Hoch- und Deutschmeister* is the fact that Balck was in command of the 6th Army in Austria and Hungary at the end of the war, and the 44th Infanterie-Division was one of his subordinate units. *Order in Chaos: The Memoirs of General of Panzer Troops Hermann Balck* is both an insightful and thoroughly enjoyable read, and is highly recommended to all who have an interest in the Second World War. ||



Staff of the XLVIII Panzer Corps, Brusiliv, Ukraine, 1944. Left to right: Major Erasmus; General der Panzertruppe Balck; Major Kaldrack; Oberst Mellenthin.



Generalleutnant Hermann Balck in command of the Großdeutschland Division, 1943.



Oberst Balck in a command vehicle, Greece, 1941. Note the New Zealand captive seated on the rear of the vehicle.