

## The Great Crusade

America's real danger — her primary objective — was Hitler and his sidekick, Mussolini. If they were not defeated without delay, then their scientists might develop some super weapon which could prove decisive in enabling them to win the war.

The beat-Germany-first strategy, once agreed upon, was never deviated from until the combined forces of the Allies had brought Hitler's Third Reich crashing down into the dust.

### *Hitler's Junior Partner*

Compared with the Axis powers, the Allies had a celestial honeymoon. Hitler was frequently disgusted with his partner Mussolini. He had to rescue him and his faltering army more than once.

In fact, Hitler probably would not have left the African campaign to Mussolini had he realized just how weak Il Duce's army was. Hitler thought that Mussolini, with a third of a million troops, ought to be able to easily wrest control of North Africa and Egypt from the British, who had an army of about one-tenth the size of Mussolini's.

But the British were soon badly mauling Mussolini's inept army, and Hitler was forced to hurriedly send one of his most brilliant generals, Erwin Rommel, to Africa to rescue his Italian comrades-in-arms from an early, humiliating defeat.

America and Britain got along splendidly during the war. Roosevelt and Churchill had the very best of relationships, and their honeymoon continued to the end.

Stalin kept urging the Allies to open a major front against the Axis in Western Europe. The Western Allies, however, wanted to attack the Nazis at their weakest point first — striking at the "soft underbelly" (as Churchill termed it) of the Axis Powers. That is why the Allies first decided to attack the Axis through Sicily and Italy — driving northward to Rome and on toward the heart of Germany.

### *Planning to Invade Europe*

In August, 1942, the Western Allies had to settle for a commando raid on Hitler's Fortress Europe (*Festung Europa*). They planned for a

large raiding force of five thousand men, primarily Canadians, to attack the French port of *Dieppe*. This military operation ended in *disaster* for the Allies — with over half the airborne force being killed, wounded or captured. They had tested the strength of Hitler's Fortress Europe, and had learned some valuable lessons — the most important being that, to be successful, an invasion would have to be a well planned, massive, coordinated attack against Hitler's fortified Atlantic Wall.

In late 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill informed Stalin (while at the Teheran Conference) that they definitely planned a cross-channel invasion in the *spring of 1944*. This invasion became known as Operation Overlord, and late in 1943 Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that Dwight D. Eisenhower should command the operation.

Eisenhower had commanded the Allied operation in North Africa (Operation Torch), in Sicily (Operation Husky) and the invasion of Italy. His experience, martial talents — and above all else — his unusual ability to get along with others made him the ideal choice.

General Eisenhower had exhibited unusually high talent for strategic planning and for organization. But his great talent was that of being able to reconcile differences between military leaders of the Allies. This unusual ability put him head and shoulders above the other military leaders as the natural choice for the overall command of this mighty assault operation.

There was fertile ground for rivalry among Britain's top military men, as well as among the American generals; and there was naturally a certain amount of Anglo-American rivalry and bickering. But it was believed that Eisenhower was just the man to work with all of these men, to keep heads cool, to reconcile their differences; and he certainly commanded the respect of all. In short, he was the perfect man for the job.

General Eisenhower had already been functioning as Supreme Commander in England for about a month before he was officially given (on February 12, 1944) a directive from the Combined (American-British) Chiefs of Staff that formally assigned to him this important command.

"You will enter the Continent of Europe," said the directive, "and, in conjunction with the other United Nations, undertake operations aimed at the heart of Germany and the destruction of her Armed Forces."

On the following day, Eisenhower publicly announced the names of his main subordinates. British Air Chief Marshal, Sir Arthur W. Tedder, would be Deputy Supreme Commander. In command of the British Ground Forces would be Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery. Directly under Montgomery would be Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, Commander of the American Ground Forces.

In command of the combined naval forces would be British Admi-



General Dwight D. Eisenhower briefs President Franklin D. Roosevelt during a plane trip to Sicily in December, 1943.

ral, Sir Bertram H. Ramsay. Admiral Harold R. Stark would serve under him as Commander of U.S. Navy forces in the theater.

British Air Chief Marshal, Sir Tafford Leigh-Mallory, would be in charge of the combined U.S.-British air forces, and under his direct command would be U.S. Lt. Gen. Carl Spaatz (Commander of the U.S. Air Forces), with Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle commanding the powerful U.S. 8th Air Force. U.S. Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell ("Beetle") Smith would be Eisenhower's Chief of Staff.

With this able group of military men, Eisenhower was confident that Operation Overlord would succeed — if they all did their homework thoroughly.

### *Fortress Europe Before Invasion*

The Allies knew that Hitler's Fortress Europe was strongly fortified all the way from Norway to Spain. This much-touted "Atlantic Wall" would be difficult to breach. Field Marshal Rommel was put in charge of beefing up the defenses in the Normandy area. He set about his task with gusto.

Over five million mines were laid along the coast. Heavy gun emplacements were multiplied and further strengthened. Many areas of the coast bristled with guns and invasion obstacles: jagged steel triangles, wooden metal-tipped stakes, concrete cones, gate-like structures of iron with deadly saw-teeth. These and other objects were placed just below high- and low-tide water marks — for the purpose of impaling or obstructing an invading enemy.

Well ahead of the planned invasion, the Allies had achieved almost complete mastery of the skies over France. The *Luftwaffe* had virtually been driven from the air.

One thing which helped the Allies was a serious difference among German generals concerning how best to meet the soon-expected Allied assault on Hitler's Atlantic Wall.

Field Marshal von Rundstedt was in charge of the entire stretch of Western Europe's defenses, but Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was the one directly in charge of the area where the invasion was expected.

Von Rundstedt believed that it would be best to let the Allies achieve their landing, permit them to move inland just far enough to mass their men and machines — then the Germans could hit them with everything they had and deal them a crushing defeat! He believed it was best to keep Germany's panzers back far enough from the coast so that they could be dispatched quickly to whatever area needed them most badly.

Field Marshal Rommel was in charge of 500,000 troops manning the defenses from the dikes of Holland to the Brittany peninsula — 800 miles of strategic defenses. Rommel disagreed with von Rundstedt's

defense plan. He believed the might of the German Army ought to be kept close to the coast — so the Germans could crush the Allied forces *immediately* when they landed. “Later” would be “too late!” After the Allies secured a landing, they would become *invincible*. Better not let them get a foothold in the first place.

The defense of Normandy fell squarely on the 51-year-old Rommel’s shoulders — yet he would be absent at the crucial moment of invasion.

Rommel said:

*The war will be won or lost on the beaches.* We’ll have only one chance to stop the enemy and that’s while he’s in the water, struggling to get ashore. Reserves will never get up to the point of attack and it’s foolish even to consider them. The *Hauptkampflinie* (main line of resistance) will be here. . . . Everything we have must be on the coast. Believe me . . . the first twenty-four hours of invasion will be decisive. . . . For the allies, as well as for Germany, it will be the longest day.

Hitler had approved Rommel’s plan of defense.

### *The Big Buildup*

The Allies built up huge supplies for many months in anticipation of the Normandy invasion in the spring of 1944. Much of southern England looked like an armed camp. It had become a mammoth arsenal. The whole area swarmed with military personnel, camouflaged tanks, half-tracks, bulldozers, army trucks, ducks (amphibious trucks), jeeps, armored cars, ambulances, self-propelled guns and other military hardware — over 50,000 items in all.

There was a buzzing beehive of military activity going on. Over 10,000 airplanes jammed dozens of airfields. Mountains of ammunition, long lines of howitzers and anti-aircraft guns, large stacks of prefabricated materials for building huts and airstrips, sat waiting to be used. About 1,000 locomotives and nearly 20,000 railroad wagons and tankers dotted the landscape. Artificial harbors were built.

Shipping choked the ports of south England. Over 5,000 ships and landing craft, including six battleships, twenty-two cruisers, hundreds of destroyers, submarines, mine-sweepers, freighters, attack-transport, ocean liners, Channel steamers, hospital ships, tankers, coasters, landing-craft, tugs, sloops, gunboats, corvettes and other fire-support craft, waited in English harbors.

This mighty armada, the world’s largest, rendezvoused off England’s south coast near the Isle of Wight — which was quickly nicknamed “Picadilly Circus.”

Never before in the history of the world had so many men and machines been assembled in so small a place for so great a military undertaking!

Nearly three million men were ready and waiting to make the invasion assault on Hitler's Europe. The initial landings were to include thirty-seven divisions, and about 600 tons of supplies per day were required to supply just one division.

Two large, artificial, prefabricated harbors (with the code name of "Mulberry") were readied, and twenty underwater pipelines, sufficient to pump one million gallons of gasoline a day from England to France, were readied. A complete railway system had to be transported and set up across the channel. Such was the preparation for Operation Overlord. General Eisenhower later referred to this massive military build-up as "a mighty engine of righteous destruction."

Eisenhower and his subordinates tried to leave nothing out of the picture. Every known risk was evaluated.

### *The All-important Weather*

But there was one unknown quantity. What would the weather be like on the crucial day of the invasion?

D-Day was finally set for Monday, June 5th — but it was understood that it could be postponed to the 6th or 7th if need be. But for the landings to be a complete success, they had to be made when there was a late-rising moon (for the airdrops), and the tides had to be just right, otherwise much havoc and needless loss of lives would result.

What would the weather be like on the critical day?

Eisenhower and his staff were apprehensive to learn that the long-range weather forecast, which had been *optimistic* on May 29th, was *pessimistic* by Friday, June 2nd. It now looked as though high winds, rough seas and low clouds might make the landings difficult, and might interfere with the naval fire support, and could conceivably even render air support impossible. *This was the worst June weather for the past 20 years.*

Because of bad weather reports, Eisenhower decided to postpone the invasion by one day — moving it to June 6th. It would take several days to get all the men and equipment mobile, and ready for the crossing. So the order to begin preparing for the assault had to be given several days before D-Day.

Then, suddenly, the weather looked more optimistic. The meteorologist told General Eisenhower and his staff: "Gentlemen, there have been some rapid and unexpected developments in the situation. . . ." Now, a high-pressure area was expected to produce clearing of the skies, a moderate wind over the Channel, and over the assault areas throughout the next day; and clear or partly cloudy skies and moderate seas were expected on the morning of the invasion — June 6th!

There was a sudden break in the weather which would give the

Allies barely over 24 hours to make the landings on June 6th. "Monty" said: "I would say — go." General "Beetle" Smith also thought the 6th was a gamble, but should be taken. Tedder and Leigh-Mallory thought that to decide to invade on the 6th was "chancy." What would General Eisenhower decide?

*"OK, We'll Go. . . ."*

In order to get the invasion plans readied in time, and to get everything rolling on schedule, the final decision had to be made — and quickly! After much deep thinking, General Eisenhower said to his men: "I am quite positive we must give the order. . . . I don't like it, but there it is. . . . I don't see how we can do anything else." Early on the next morning, June 5th, was the very latest that invasion plans could be *reversed*. After considering the latest weather report, General Eisenhower finally made the irreversible decision: "OK, we'll go. . . ."

Years later, General Eisenhower revealed what an "agonizing decision" that had been. He stated: "If there were nothing else in my life to prove the existence of an Almighty and Merciful God, the events of the next twenty-four hours did it."

To have waited any longer would have meant a long postponement in order to have another time which would be favorable, so far as the full moon and the tides were concerned. Furthermore, so many men had already been alerted and had actually begun moving toward the invasion, that it would be virtually impossible to keep the invasion date secret — if it had to be put off.

### *A Complete Tactical Surprise*

For the invasion to be successful, a complete tactical surprise had to be achieved. The Allies planted many false rumors, and also used dummy tanks and other military vehicles to throw the Germans off. Their efforts were amply rewarded for the mighty amphibious operation — the mightiest ever — was a complete surprise!

Hitler and his generals disagreed as to where and when the Allied invasion would occur. Postwar reports showed just how well the Allies succeeded in throwing the Germans off the trail. They were quite confused by the many false reports of various proposed landings.

When the Nazi secret service under the command of Himmler tried to assess the mass of invasion data, they made over two hundred guesses — all of which were wrong!

Why did Operation Overlord achieve a complete surprise?

Hitler and his generals didn't believe the Allies would be so fool-

hardy as to launch an assault on Hitler's Atlantic Wall — on a day when the weather was so bad!

It was the abominable weather, more than anything else, which put the Germans off — which made them think an invasion wasn't imminent. The continuing bad weather acted soothingly — lulling the Germans into a false sense of security.

The thorough, methodical Germans had carefully studied the meteorological data immediately preceding the Allied landings in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. German weather experts noted that in each of the Allied invasions, they had waited until there was the almost certain prospect of favorable weather. The methodical-minded Germans believed the Allies would not deviate from this pattern. There would be no invasion unless weather conditions were *just right*.

Though Rommel had already departed for Germany on June 4th, his Chief of Staff, Major-General Hans Speidel, thought it was quiet enough at Army Group headquarters in La Roche-Guyon to have a little dinner party.

Major Friedrech Hayn (the intelligence officer) was arranging a party for the Commander of the 84th Corps, headquartered in Saint Lo. The Commander's birthday just happened to fall on the 6th of June — D-Day.

This little surprise birthday party was to be held at daybreak, since the Commander and all the other senior commanders in Normandy were to take part in an important map exercise (*Kriegsspiel*) that was to begin early Tuesday morning. This big map exercise was considered as both interesting, and important, for it would outline a theoretical "invasion" of Normandy.

But Brigadier-General Max Pemsel, the 7th Army's Chief of Staff, was worried about this big gathering for the *Kriegsspiel*. He thought it was bad for all his senior commanders in Normandy and the Cherbourg peninsula to be away from their commands at the same time, and he considered it highly dangerous if they were to be away overnight! He feared that some officers might plan to leave for the map exercise (to be held at Rennes) before dawn. He therefore warned all those due to participate in the map exercise not to leave before dawn: "Commanding generals and others scheduled to attend the *Kriegsspiel* are reminded not to leave for Rennes before dawn on 6th June."

Unfortunately the warning was too late. A number had already left early. Army Group B's operations officer, Colonel Hans Georg von Tempelhoff, was also away in Germany. Major-General Heinze Hellmich, Commander of the 243rd Division (holding one side of the Cherbourg peninsula), had departed early for Rennes; and so had Major-General Karl von Schlieben of the 709th Division.

Von Rundstedt's intelligence officer, Colonel Wilhelm Meyer-Det-

ring, was on leave; and the chief of staff of a whole division was away hunting — with his French mistress — and couldn't possibly be reached.

And there were others who were away. It was as though the strange hand of fate had engineered the departure of many of the top German officers in the whole Normandy area.

### *Moving the Luftwaffe Back*

Furthermore, with the top officers in charge of the beach-head defenses scattered over much of Europe, the German High Command made the incredible decision to transfer the *Luftwaffe's* last remaining fighter squadrons in France out of range of the Normandy beaches. This decision was greeted with incredulous disbelief by the German pilots.

Why had the German High Command decided to move the *Luftwaffe* back into Germany?

At that very time, Allied bombers had been heavily bombing many targets situated deep inside Hitler's Third Reich. The High Command didn't think it reasonable to leave these vital planes on exposed airfields in France, merely to be destroyed by Allied air attacks. Better use them in the defense of Germany's heartland.

Accordingly, the High Command gave the order for the transfer of the planes. By the 4th of June, there were only 183 day fighter planes in France, and only about 160 were considered serviceable.

Of those 160, one wing of 124 (the 26th Fighter Wing) was to be moved back from the coast on the very afternoon of June 4th. This left all of France without any German air cover. Hitler had promised his generals that 1,000 planes would be ready to bomb the beaches on the day the Allies invaded Europe. Now, it was clear for everyone to see — there would be no effective air cover whatsoever.

When Colonel Josef "Pips" Priller (a top German ace who had shot down 96 Allied planes) heard of this idiotic command to move the *Luftwaffe*, he stood on the airfield and fumed. He was stationed at the headquarters of the 26th at Lille, in the zone of the 15th Army.

A furious Priller called his group commander:

This is mad. If we're expecting an *invasion*, the squadrons should be moved *up*, not *back*! And what happens if the attack comes during the transfer? My supplies can't reach the new bases until tomorrow or maybe the day after. You're all crazy!

His commander replied: "Listen, Priller. The invasion is out of the question. The *weather is much too bad*." At that instant, Priller slammed down the receiver. Only two planes were left on the airfield. Priller was then heard to say:

What can we do? If the invasion comes, they'll probably expect us

(2 pilots with only 2 planes) to hold it off all by ourselves. So we might as well start getting drunk now.

Field Marshal Rommel, the Allies later learned, had not even been in France when the invasion began. He had concluded that the bad weather would make a major cross-Channel operation impossible, and had therefore returned to Germany to celebrate his wife's birthday (which happened to be on D-Day), and to speak with Hitler.

When Rommel got word of the Normandy landings, he quickly returned to his post, but he didn't actually get back to his headquarters until 6 p.m. on D-Day. This was too late for him to direct the operations during the crucial first daylight period of the Allied invasion — too late to thwart the Allied landings.

Rommel had previously stated that, "The war will be won or lost on the beaches. . . . The first twenty-four hours of the invasion will be decisive." How true his words proved to be.

### *The Five Landings*

As the world's mightiest assault armada moved slowly, secretly across the Channel on the night of the invasion, paratroopers and airborne gliders landed troops behind enemy lines. 13,000 American men, belonging to the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions, headed for six drop zones. At approximately the same time about 9,000 English and Canadian airborne troops were landed behind the expected invasion areas of the British and Canadians.

There were five landing sites — two American, and three British and Canadian. The Americans would land at *Utah* and *Omaha* beaches, while the British and Canadian troops would land at *Gold*, *Juno* and *Sword*.

In the main, the landings went better than planned. One fortunate accident was that the landings at Utah beach missed their intended landing spot by nearly a mile. But there was comparatively little opposition at this point, and the fortifications were not nearly so strong as they would have been at the spot where the invasion was supposed to have taken place.

The Americans who landed at Omaha met stiffer resistance than planned, and about 2000 died in the struggle to secure that beachhead. At one point the operation was about to be called off.

The British and Canadians also met stiff resistance, but were successful in establishing their beachheads at Gold, Juno and Sword.

Finally, with the airborne troops secure behind the German forces manning the Atlantic Wall, and with the Allies firmly established on all five of their beachheads, it was only a matter of time until the Allies

would break out and begin driving the Germans back toward Paris, and toward their Fatherland.

Even though nearly three million Allied soldiers, sailors and airmen were ready for the assault by early June, the actual initial invasion was to be accomplished by only 176,475 men, equipped with 20,111 vehicles, 1,500 tanks, and 12,000 planes.

### *"The Longest Day"*

This mighty force, conveyed to the assault beaches by the world's mightiest assault armada, was a terrifying sight. The noise of the engines of the ships and planes, the firing of the guns, the explosions from bombs, and the din of the assault was deafening.

D-Day has often been called "the longest day" because of the nervous suspense and the long anxious moments the men experienced as they were conveyed to their respective points of assault.

On D-Day, General Eisenhower's order of the day stated: "The tide has turned. The free men of the world are marching together to victory." And a few hours later, President Roosevelt led the American nation in *prayer* as he appealed for the safety and success of their undertaking:

Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our Nation, this day have set out upon a mighty endeavor, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion, and our civilization and to set free a suffering humanity....

General Eisenhower issued a written message to the Allied troops just before the invasion. His message was addressed to the "Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!"

In that important message, the Supreme Commander said:

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the *destruction of the German war machine*, the *elimination of Nazi tyranny* over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and *security* for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

... The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than *full Victory*!

Good Luck! *And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.*

Ike's signed message appealed to "Almighty God" to bless the Allied undertaking in order that the "Nazi tyranny" might be eliminated from the earth.

On the Eve of D-Day, King George VI told the peoples of Britain:

Four years ago our nation and Empire stood alone against an overwhelming enemy, with our backs to the wall. Tested as never before in our history, in God's providence we survived that test; the spirit of the people, resolute, dedicated, burned like a bright flame, lit surely from those Unseen Fires which nothing can quench.

Now once more a supreme test has to be faced. This time the challenge is not to fight to survive but to fight to win the final victory for the good cause. . . .

That we may be worthily matched with this new summons of destiny, I desire solemnly to call my people to prayer and dedication.

We are not unmindful of our own shortcomings, past and present. We shall ask not that God may do our will, but that we may be enabled to do the will of God; and we dare to believe that God has used our nation and Empire as an instrument for fulfilling His high purpose.

### *Unbelieving Nazis*

Interestingly, many of Hitler's top generals didn't believe that Normandy would be the site of the main invasion. They thought the Allies were merely using the Normandy invasions as a feint. Two weeks after the June 6th assault, von Runstedt finally became convinced that this was *not* a diversionary feint, but was in fact the main assault area.

But many influential Germans continued to believe that there was another army under Patton still awaiting embarkment from England. They believed that the main attack would come at *Pas de Calais*, and they refused to release the troops in Northern France — troops which were badly needed to crush the assault landings.

Hitler himself didn't change his mind and accept Normandy as the main invasion area until *August* — and by then it was much too late. By then, the Allies were well on their way in their drive toward the very heart of Germany.

If the weather had been clement — as Eisenhower and the Allies hoped and prayed — the Germans would have been expecting the invasion, and the slaughter would have been infinitely greater! The One who controlled the weather was responsible for the success of the landings. Providence intervened. One might also ask: Was it merely coincidental, or Providential, that the brilliant and aggressive Rommel was away on the day of the Allied invasion — that his wife's birthday just happened to fall on June 6th — the crucial date of the war?

### *Hitler's Vengeance Weapon*

Hitler's fury boiled over when he learned of the Allied invasion of Normandy. He determined to get revenge. On June 13th, only one week after D-Day, Hitler ordered that London be destroyed — and began

sending V-1 rockets (*Vergeltungswaffe* — Vengeance Weapon) against that city. These *buzz-bombs* were not all that dangerous, but they did create panic at first. At least Londoners had time to take cover once they heard the rockets buzzing overhead.

Later, however, the Germans unleashed the deadly V-2 rockets against England. These rockets were much faster and more accurate than the V-1's. Hitler hoped to the very last that his scientists and his armament makers would come up with a secret super-weapon with which he could snatch Germany back from the jaws of defeat.

The Allies captured Cherbourg on June 27th — only three weeks after D-Day. Their vital oil pipeline, called *Pluto*, ran under the English Channel to Cherbourg. Then Saint Lo fell to Allied troops on July 18th. This made it possible for Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley's U.S. First Army to break out of the Normandy peninsula and sweep across France.

### *"Old Blood and Guts"*

Undoubtedly, America's most aggressive and colorful general during World War II was Lt. General George S. Patton. He was certainly one of the most dramatic and outspoken. Patton's outspoken manner and his reckless behavior won both criticism and applause. His well-known toughness and his rough speech earned him the nickname of "Old Blood and Guts."

His toughness almost cost him his army career. Lt. General Patton had commanded the Seventh Army during the invasion of Sicily. Not long after the Sicily invasion, while inspecting army hospitals, he slapped two soldiers who were suffering from battle fatigue — calling one of them a coward. One of the soldiers actually had malaria at the time. Later, Patton said he thought they were pretending.

General Eisenhower later forced Patton to apologize, and because of the incident, the U.S. Congress held up Patton's permanent promotion to major general.

After the Normandy invasion, General Eisenhower sent Patton swinging through France in an endeavor to entrap the German forces in the area. As Patton's command car moved through the battlefields, he surveyed the burning rubble and the blackened corpses of the fallen Germans. Shouting above the roar of the artillery, General Patton was heard to say: "Compared to war, all other forms of human endeavor shrink to insignificance. God, how I love it."

Within only days after the breakout began on July 25th, General Patton's armored divisions had swept westward through Brittany, while others swung south and east to partially close the neck of a trap around the German Seventh Army, commanded by Field Marshal von Kluge.

But Field Marshal Montgomery, coming down rather slowly from

the north to meet Patton and finish closing the neck of the trap, moved too slowly. To Patton's utter dismay, much of the German Army escaped through the gap at the town of Falaise. Patton was furious at Montgomery's slowness.

### *Allied Victories*

Montgomery and Bradley became group commanders on August 1st. Lt. General George S. Patton's U.S. Third Army had raced south and cut off the Brittany Peninsula by August 6th, 1944.

Canadian forces, after capturing Caen, rolled toward Falaise, where they linked with U.S. First Army units under Lt. Gen. C. Courtney H. Hodges and trapped or killed 60,000 Germans. Patton had hoped to see Montgomery race south to close the trap, but he moved too slowly. To Patton's disgust, the Allies missed a golden opportunity of capturing a large part of the German army.

One of those Germans who escaped the trap was Marshal Gunther von Kluge (having recently replaced von Runstedt as Commander in Chief).

An amphibious landing, (code named Operation Anvil) under the command of Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch's U.S. Seventh Army and Gen. Jean de Lattre de Tassigny's French First Army, was made near Cannes in southern France on August 15th.

### *Paris Liberated*

Though Eisenhower, Patton, and the Allied generals intended to bypass Paris for the time being, not wanting to waste valuable time and equipment, eager Frenchmen in Paris began to rise up against the Germans. General De Gaulle, disobeying his Supreme Commander, ordered French troops to disobey orders and liberate Paris. On August 25th, French and U.S. soldiers of the American First Army entered Paris from the northwest.

Allied armies continued driving forward in the north, and succeeded in smashing across the Seine River to the Somme and Marne rivers, then drove straight toward the Belgian border.

Belgium's capital, Brussels, fell to British and Canadian troops in early September, 1944. General Eisenhower fervently hoped the Allies could quickly capture Antwerp, thereby knocking out many of the V-2 rocket launching sites. The Supreme Commander gave priority to this project, but before long his northern armies and the hard-driving armored units of the Third Army were halted in Lorraine.

Field Marshal Montgomery's forces pushed on into the Netherlands. General Hodges' First Army advanced into Luxembourg and crossed the German border on September 12.

Lt. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton's First Allied Airborne Army (the largest airborne operation ever attempted) dropped three paratroop divisions (using 5,500 planes and gliders) into The Netherlands in order to seize bridges in advance of the ground forces. Their mission was only partly successful.

Allied troops continued their sweep up the Rhone Valley from southern France, and joined the Third Army near Dijon on September 15th. Field Marshal Montgomery's men ran into stiff opposition and suffered heavy casualties when they seized Walcheren Island in the North Sea.

The German forces put up fierce resistance as the First Army battled savagely for Aachen and the Huertgen Forest in Germany.

### *Battle of the Bulge*

By now, the Russians also were closing in on the Third Reich. Hitler painfully realized that his glorious Reich would not last the boasted 1000 years. It was fast crumbling around him.

The Western Allies were driving toward the very heart of Germany from the west. Germany's fate seemed to be sealed. Her doom certain — and imminent!

At this point, the Führer was driven to desperation. He decided to make a mad, desperate attempt to send the Western Allies reeling back toward the Channel. The Allies would have to fight at least one fierce battle before they would be able to cross the Rhine.

Hitler personally planned and supervised to an extent the desperate Battle of the Bulge. He would show the upstart American soldiers what it was like to run up against the steel and fire of the mighty German panzers.

The Führer personally planned to have the German panzers make a swift breakthrough to capture Antwerp — hoping to split the Allied armies in two. Field Marshal Walter Model was appointed ground commander under von Rundstedt. Model was to direct the surprise assault — which was code-named Operation Grief.

On December 16th, under cover of heavy fog, 38 German divisions struck along a 50-mile front. This sector of the American-held front was considered not so important, and was therefore manned by weaker units of the U.S. Army.

One element which helped the Germans to succeed as much as they did during the Battle of the Bulge was that they had put a number of American-speaking German soldiers (dressed in U.S. army uniforms) into the battle, behind U.S. lines. This put confusion and a certain amount of panic in the Americans who for a short while were not certain which among them were American soldiers, and which ones were Germans, masquerading as Americans.

This surprise German counter-attack sent the American forces reeling back. Model's armies drove the Allies almost to the Meuse River, and surrounded Bastogne, Belgium, in the southern Ardennes.

*"Nuts!"*

The U.S. Commander of the American forces at Bastogne, Brig. Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe of the 101st Airborne Division, was asked to surrender. His historic contemptuous reply — "Nuts"! — at first puzzled the Germans.

It was General Patton's Third Army armored units which pierced the German lines from the south and relieved Bastogne.

The desperate German offensive (the Battle of the Bulge) began in mid-December. It took about one month for the Allies to drive the Germans back to the starting position which they had held on the 16th of December — the date when they first made their break-out. By January 26th, 1945, the Allies were fully back in control of the situation. They had learned a valuable lesson.

This German offensive became known as the Battle of the Bulge because of the bulging shape of the battleground which the Germans' offensive formed as it advanced. But this desperate attempt on the part of Hitler and the Germans to break through the Allied lines not only failed, it cost the Germans heavily. About 110,000 Germans were captured, and they sustained approximately 100,000 other casualties. The Allies suffered some 77,000 casualties.

### *East of the Rhine*

In early February 1945 Allied troops cleared the west bank of the Roer River, west of the Rhine. The First Army then captured Cologne, and advanced toward Remagen. To the surprise and delight of the Allies, on March 7th, they found the Ludendorff Bridge which crossed the Rhine at Remagen still intact. German soldiers who tried to destroy the bridge bungled the job, leaving the Allies a vital artery to cross directly to the east of the Rhine. When Hitler learned of this strategic blunder, he was furious and ordered those responsible shot.

After finding the Remagen Bridge across the Rhine still intact, units of the First Army raced across and set up a bridgehead east of the Rhine.

Shortly afterward Patton's Third Army crossed the Rhine to the south, and then three other Allied armies crossed the river to the north.

Lt. Gen. William H. Simpson's First Army made contact near Paderborn with the Ninth Army on April 1st — thus isolating the Ruhr Valley and trapping over 300,000 German soldiers.

As the combined armies of America, Britain and the other Western Allies raced eastward toward the very heart of Germany, Marshal Zhukov's Russian Armies continued rolling toward Berlin from the east.

### *Russian Victories*

Hitler's last major German offensive in Russia (in July, 1943) had utterly failed. Within a year the seasoned Russian troops had recaptured the Crimea, the Ukraine, White Russia, eastern Poland and most of Lithuania. Then the irresistible Russian forces drove into Romania, Bulgaria, and the Baltic states.

Tiny Finland (which had joined Germany in attacking Russia in 1941) again surrendered to the Russians and promptly declared war on Germany.

Stalin's Russian armies then swept into eastern Hungary and joined forces with Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia. Next, the Russians rumbled north and captured Vienna and eastern Austria. In just five short months, the mighty Russian army had knocked out four Axis satellites — Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary and Romania.

Pushing on relentlessly, the Red Army surged into Warsaw and Krakow in early January 1945.

The end of Hitler's invincible Third Reich was near. The Germans continued fighting desperately — hoping that their Führer would be able to work a miracle at the last minute and save them from the Allies. But Hitler was unable to perform any miracles. This man who had made the world tremble was himself now trembling. Secure in his Berlin bunker, the Führer's head, hands and feet trembled. He suffered painful stomach cramps. Now prematurely aged, his mind and body racked with illness, he persisted in his maniacal delusion that he would yet lead the Germans to ultimate victory.

By April 1945 the Russians had assembled a mighty army of over four million for the final onslaught against Germany. Marshal Georgi Zhukov's First White Russian and First Ukrainian Army groups rumbled relentlessly toward Berlin. Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky's Second White Russian Army group drove into northern Germany.

In desperation, Adolf Hitler appointed Heinz Guderian to command the fast-crumbling German eastern front. Even young German boys and old men were forced to take up arms to defend the remnants of Hitler's Third Reich.

### *Victory at Last*

Allied armies began closing in on the Germans from all directions. General Bradley's four armies raced eastward to the Elbe River to meet

the Russians. There, Russian and American troops toasted their leaders and countries, and the troops danced together.

General Henry D. G. Crerar commanded Canadian troops which liberated The Netherlands, and Lt. Gen. Miles C. Dempsey's British Second Army headed straight for Bremen in the north.

Allied armies in the south, under the command of Gen. Jacob L. Devers, rolled toward Austria and Czechoslovakia. They planned to cut Berlin off from the Bavarian Mountains — where according to rumor, many fanatical Germans hoped to make a last-ditch stand.

During the latter part of April a scared Heinrich Himmler (head of the dreaded S.S.) tried to negotiate a peace settlement with Britain and the U.S.

The Allies had agreed not to sign separate peace agreements with Germany, but to press for "unconditional surrender" to all the Allies. The Allied leaders, therefore, demanded that the Germans surrender on all fronts.

On April 28, 1945 Italian partisans captured Mussolini and his mistress, who had disguised themselves. After a trial, they were stood up against a wall and shot. Their bodies were then trucked to Milan, beaten, kicked and in a final gesture of detestation, Italian patriots strung them up by the feet in front of a gasoline station.

### *Hitler's Ghastly End*

But what would happen to the mad Führer who more than anyone else had plunged all Europe into the vortex of World War II — resulting in the deaths of scores of millions?

Near the end of his life, Hitler was a pathetic figure. General Hasso von Montevffel was impressed by Hitler's "stooped figure with a pale and puffy face, hunched in his chair, his hands trembling, his left arm subject to violent twitching which he did his best to conceal, a sick man apparently borne down by the burden of his responsibility." Others said he had a glassy stare in his eye.

When Hitler saw his Third Reich crumbling around him he could not stand the thought of letting the Russians take him alive. As Soviet troops pulverized Berlin and fought their way ever nearer to the underground bunker of the Führer and his mistress, Eva Braun, they celebrated a hasty marriage and then both committed suicide — on April 30, 1945. First, Eva Braun took poison and died. Then Hitler also took poison, but decided to do a good job of it, so he also shot himself by sticking the muzzle of a pistol in his mouth and pulling the trigger.

Eyewitnesses later described the gory scene. Hitler's blasted, mangled head was described as "repulsive in the extreme."

Loyal Nazis took the bodies of Hitler and Eva, doused them with

gasoline and set them alight. This was repeated several times until the bodies were charred beyond recognition.

One eye-witness who happened to stumble onto the scene of their funeral pyre described Hitler's exposed shinbones from which the flesh had been burned away.

The Führer, who had no heir, had made this significant statement sometime before his own grisly death in 1945:

To put the matter briefly, someone who has *no heir* for his house would do best to *have himself burned* with everything that is in it — as if on a *magnificent pyre*.

Later, faithful Nazis buried their bodies in the Reichchancellery garden in a hole which had been made by a Russian shell.

Thus ended the life of the man who caused more suffering, death and destruction than any other man in the history of the earth. The world could at last breathe a sigh of relief. The oppressor of the peoples of the earth had met a horrible fate. Hitler's chief lieutenants all came to a horrible end, too. Dr. Joseph Goebbels had an S.S. orderly shoot him and his wife — after she had poisoned their six children.

Berlin finally fell to the invading Russian armies on May 2, 1945. Contemporary accounts of the pillaging, rape and brutality of some of the Red Army soldiers are horrifying.

A Russian major described what happened:

... But the looting and raping in a big way did not start until our soldiers got to Germany. Our fellows were so sex-starved that they often raped old women of sixty, or seventy or even eighty.... But I admit it was a nasty business, and the record of the Kazakhs and other Asiatic troops was particularly bad.

### *Germany's "Unconditional Surrender"*

Col. Gen. Alfred Jodl of the German high command entered Allied headquarters in a red school building at Reims, France, early on the morning of May 7th. Then, on behalf of the German government, he signed the terms of "unconditional surrender."

Eisenhower refused to be present at the signing. But Lt. Gen. Walter B. Smith, Eisenhower's Chief of staff, signed for the Allies.

Another signing ceremony occurred in Berlin on the following day — May 8th — when the Russians and the Germans signed a similar document. May 8th became V E Day.

### *Germany "Will Survive Even Me"*

In 1933 Hitler had said: "Give me ten years and you will not be able to recognize Germany."

How right he was. When Allied bombers and armies were finished with Germany, much of it lay in smouldering ruins. It was a far different Germany from that which Hitler found when he came to power in 1933.

In 1938, Adolf Hitler — with uncanny vision — prophesied:

A man once said to me: "Listen, if you do that, Germany will fall apart in six weeks."

I said: "What do you mean by that?"

"Germany will just collapse."

I said: "What do you mean by that?"

"Germany will just cease to exist."

I answered: "Once upon a time the German people survived the wars with the *Romans*. The German people survived the *Great Migrations*. The German people survived later great battles of the Early and Late *Middle Ages*. The German people survived the *wars of religion* at the dawn of modern times. The German people survived the *Thirty Years' War*. The German people later survived the *Napoleonic Wars*, the *Wars of Liberation*; it even survived *a World War*, even *the Revolution* — *it will survive even me!*"

Germany did survive even Hitler. But much of the old Germany had died in the cataclysmic throes of World War II.

### *Victory Message to the Troops*

At the conclusion of the Second World War in Europe, General Dwight D. Eisenhower gave a victory message. He declared:

The route you have traveled through hundreds of miles is marked by the graves of former comrades. Each of the fallen died as a member of the team to which you belong, bound together by a common love of liberty and a refusal to enslavement. Our common problems of the immediate and distant future can best be solved in the same conceptions of cooperation and devotion to the cause of human freedom as have made this Expeditionary Force such a mighty engine of righteous destruction.

Let us have no part in the profitless quarrels in which other men will inevitably engage as to what country, what service, won the European war. Every man, every woman, of every nation here represented has served according to his or her ability, and the efforts of each have contributed to the outcome. This we shall remember — and in doing so we shall be revering each honored grave and be sending comfort to the loved ones of comrades who could not live to see this day.

— DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

World War II in Europe, officially over on May 8th, was quickly celebrated in Europe and over the world as V E (Victory In Europe)

Day. After five long agonizing years, eight months, and seven days the European phase of World War II was over.

The lights could now go back on again. But it was not till near the end of the war when the world learned just how dark it had been.

### *Nazi Concentration Camps*

There is nothing in recorded history to equal the horror or the scope of Hitler's infamous concentration camps. Some of them were nothing but extermination camps. The world little suspected their existence — but as Allied troops pushed into Germany, they were appalled at what they saw.

When and how did the Nazis begin operating their death camps?

Hermann Wilhelm Goering (1893-1946) was one of Hitler's most trusted lieutenants. Goering was the real architect behind the infamous German concentration camps.

Herman was only in his twenties when the First World War was fought. He was one of the very first infantry officers to see active duty on the Western Front.

In 1915 he was transferred to the German Air Force, and soon became an ace pilot (with 22 kills to his credit). Later, he commanded the famous "Death Squadron."

Hermann Goering joined the Nazi Party in 1922 and was in command of Hitler's storm troopers at the time of the abortive Munich beer hall *putsch* in 1923. Before that *putsch*, Goering gave these orders: "Shoot anyone who makes difficulties!" During the *putsch*, Goering himself ended up with a bullet in his groin, and decided to exile himself in Sweden the next few years.

By 1926, Hitler was out of prison, and was well on his road to power in Germany. Goering decided to return to Germany and again join the charismatic Nazi leader. Hermann Goering became one of the 12 Nazi deputies to the Reichstag in 1928 and in 1932 he became President of the Reichstag.

When Adolf Hitler swept into the seat of German political power in 1933, Goering entered the Nazi government.

### *Founder of the Nazi Death Camps*

Hermann Goering is credited with instigating the Reichstag fire as a flimsy pretext for outlawing his Communist opponents. It was he who founded the *Gestapo*. He set up the Nazi German's infamous concentration camps for political, racial and religious suspects.

But the real ruler over the Nazi concentration camps was Heinrich Himmler. Himmler was not impressive to look at. He was in fact, quite

an ordinary looking man. He had small blue (rather piggish-looking) eyes, soft white hands, and sloping shoulders. Furthermore, with his pince-nez (eyeglasses clipped onto his nose) he had a rather sinister look.

Himmler came from a respectable German middle class family background. He was brought up a Roman Catholic. His father had been a schoolmaster. Himmler grew up under an authoritarian type of home atmosphere. But there was nothing in his early life to even so much as hint at sadism, or to reveal any tendency toward brutality — which later came to distinguish him as the Minister of the Interior and *Reichsfuhrer-S.S.*

In 1919, Himmler studied at the Munich Technical College, and then found employment in a nitrate works. He had received an *agricultural diploma* as a young man. He had a keen interest in agriculture, but since his health was not good enough for him to endure the rigors of small farming, he decided to become a chicken farmer.

When Goering decided to open up the German concentration camps, he hand-picked this chicken farmer to be in charge of both the *Gestapo* and the whole concentration camp system throughout Germany and the German-occupied portions of Europe.

Under Himmler's sinister guidance, the German concentration camps were the most efficient, most sadistic, most inhuman camps in the long history of man's inhumanity. The gas chambers, firing squads, torture chambers were all part of his diabolically hatched plot of mass genocide of Jews, Poles, Slavs, Gypsies, and other "undesirables."

Adolf Hitler saw in this man, Himmler, a perfect tool for attaining power through stark *terrorism*. After Himmler won the undoubted trust of Herr Hitler, he was given in 1929 the task of creating the S.S. (*Schutzstaffel*, protective force) — that devilish embodiment of Hitler's will. His control over the powerful Gestapo gave him the power of life and death over nearly three hundred million people in Europe!

### *Mass Deportations*

By February 1940 Himmler was ordered to remove all Jews and "hostile elements among the Polish population." Their lands were to be resettled by incoming Germans.

All Jews and Poles to be "resettled" were only permitted to take hand baggage with them, and were expressly forbidden foreign currency, precious metals, works of art, jewelry, furniture, household items and other valuables.

Lieutenant-General Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski was given the task of the Germanization of the province of Silesia in southeastern Poland. Working with him was the notorious Adolf Eichmann in the Gestapo department.

The Nazi masters in Poland now began the resettlement of many of the peoples of Poland. They were forced out of their cities, or off their farms, and were taken by the Nazis (often in cattle trains) to the infamous concentration camps. Brutal scenes accompanied all these deportations. Victims were beaten with rifle butts and truncheons as they were herded into the cattle wagons.

### *Concentration Camps Mushroom*

Before long many concentration camps had mushroomed all over Poland. During the next few years over six million Polish citizens (including about three million Jews) would be murdered in Himmler's infamous extermination camps.

It is impossible to faithfully describe the many scenes of callousness, inhumanity and outright brutality which occurred thousands of times daily during the next few years.

Hitler's concentration camps and extermination camps were simply large centers of *genocide*. Through them, the Nazis destroyed millions of human beings. The Nazi masters showed no regard to age, sex, denomination, social standing, or religious status. Anyone who incurred their wrath was deported to one of their extermination camps.

Without question, the most notorious of the Nazi extermination camps was the one at *Oswiecim*. It was converted into a concentration camp from a Polish military barracks. This infamous death camp was given the German name of *Auschwitz*. The first miserable trainload of prisoners arrived there on June 14, 1940.

When the travel-weary, terrified victims arrived at Auschwitz they were welcomed to the camp with the following words — spoken by K. Fritzsche (Langerfuhrer of the Auschwitz camp):

You have come here not to a sanatorium but to a German concentration camp from which there is *no other way out than through the chimney*. If someone doesn't like it, he may at once go to the barbed wire; if there are any Jews in this transport, they have no right to live any longer than two weeks; if there are any priests, they may live one month, the others — three months.

It was clear from the beginning that the inmates of Auschwitz were going to have a very difficult time. It would take a miracle for them to remain alive very long.

At Auschwitz, like so many other extermination camps, conditions were inhuman. Very poor nutrition led to epidemics. The Nazis used every form of violence, cruelty and almost every form of torture. Their extreme cruelty — their bestial murders and mass exterminations in the gas chambers and crematoriums is beyond human comprehension.

### *Camp Atrocities*

Even though the prisoners were constantly mistreated both physically and mentally, and though they were often half-naked, half-starved, emaciated, overworked, and lived under the threat of constant death — they began to organize a resistance movement in the camps.

The concentration and extermination camps were surrounded by barbed wires through which passed a high-voltage current. Any who tried to escape found themselves electrocuted — if they weren't first shot by the guards.

One form of abuse was the prolonged roll-call. In some concentration camps a roll-call could last 18 hours without a single break.

The prisoners were often made to work fourteen hours or longer, and they were frequently made to do their work on the double. As payment for their work they frequently received blows from the *Capos'* truncheons, the Gestapo agent's whip, were put in underground isolation — or killed.

At the Treblinka extermination camp the Nazi brutes forced mothers carrying their own children to parade naked en route to the gas chamber. It was not uncommon to see Nazis shooting at mothers with children in their arms. Actual pictures exist of this taking place.

Many hundreds of thousands of human bodies were incinerated in the crematorium furnaces.

At numerous concentration (or extermination) camps such as at Auschwitz-Birkenau and Dachau humans were used as guinea pigs so that the perverted Nazi doctors could experiment on them. Doctor Mengele performed sadistic "scientific" experiments on mere children. At the Ravensbruck concentration camp, doctors performed experimental operations on the legs of female inmates.

### *Victims Stripped of Everything*

When inmates arrived at the extermination camps, they were stripped of all their worldly possessions. Since millions were involved, the amount of valuables and other usable materials which accumulated as a result of stripping the corpses was enormous. There were giant piles of glasses, combs, hair, dentures, artificial limbs, shoes, shaving brushes, tooth-brushes, dishes. At some camps there were even giant heaps of baby shoes.

The Governor-General of one extermination camp once remarked:

... If I were to put up a poster for every seven Poles that have been shot, the forests of all Poland would not suffice to produce the paper needed for them — Yes, we had to act ruthlessly.

When the victims arrived at one of the camps, the elderly, the infirm and the very young were liquidated immediately. The Nazis did not want the burden of having to clothe, house and feed them. Only the able-bodied survived, and they survived only so long as they could maintain reasonably good health (on woefully inadequate rations) so that they could work long hours.

### *"We Cannot Forget"*

An interesting book entitled *We Have Not Forgotten* (edited by Tadeusz Mazur, Jerzy Tomaszewski, Stanislaw Wrzos-Glinka, and published by the Polonia Publishing House, Warsaw, Poland, 1960) reveals many photographs (with brief comments) of the Nazi atrocities committed in Poland during the Second World War.

In the introduction to the second edition of this book we read:

We cannot forget the things that have happened. Never before in the annals of history have such crimes been committed against humanity and never on such a scale as those that followed in the wake of the march of German militarism. . . .

In order to warn the young generation against the recurrence of genocide, to protect young minds from racial hatred and a desire for revenge, we shall continue to disseminate the truth about the Third Reich and its policy of national extermination which led to such horrible results.

It is especially upon us, the Polish nation, which suffered, survived and conquered, that the responsibility rests to remind, even at the price of opening healed wounds, about the things that happened under the sign of the swastika. Today, when we know that Nazism did not die with the defeat of the Third Reich, no effort in this respect is too great. It must be undertaken in tribute to those who had perished and in warning to those who have survived.

### *"The Long Night"*

In *We Have Not Forgotten*, we read:

More than 6,000,000 Poles were murdered after being submitted to torture and cruel humiliation; they died a martyr's death in mass annihilation camps, by execution, in prisons and at slave labour. 10,200 industrial establishments, 2,677 hospitals and other health service centers, 6,000 *schools*, 3,337 museums, theaters and cinemas were among the many buildings destroyed throughout the country during the period of German occupation.

This shocking figure of human victims, plus the enormous material losses and unprecedented *destruction* of monuments of culture, the *deportation* of people from their homes, the *plunder* of their personal belongings and the barbarous exploitation at *slave labor* — all this is

only part of the picture of the long night that descended on Poland under Nazi occupation.

Nazi terror kept growing in intensity and fierceness. Poles perished in the gas chambers, in crematoriums, under machine-gun volleys. The more and more cruel methods resorted to by the Hitlerites aimed at the biological extermination of the Polish people. . . .

The five horrible years of Poland's occupation were one continuous period of Nazi savagery and barbarianism which, forever recorded in the minds of the living and in the form of material evidence — constitute a tragic document of historical truth for generations to come. . . .

Yet there are some who would like the nightmare of the years of war and occupation to be effaced from the minds of people. . . . It is necessary to look at the stages of the sufferings, as shown briefly in our album, in order to grasp the full magnitude of the Nazi crimes and of the martyrdom of the Polish people, in order to see in the child bent over the body of its murdered mother, in the prisoner who died on the barbed-wire fence, in the woman sobbing over a mass grave, the thorny road to the tortured nation which survived, came out victorious and did not forget. . . .

In the conclusion of *We Have Not Forgotten*, we read:

The enemy employed ruthless police methods, and made open, brutal terror the main instrument of power. The system of intimidation held sway over the entire country; deportations to concentration camps, expulsions, public executions and mass murders were a daily occurrence.

The Oswiecim (Auschwitz) camp was organized on June 14, 1940, and liberated by the Soviet Army on January 27, 1945. In less than five years about *four million people* — men, women and children — met their death in the gas chambers of Oswiecim-Birkenau camp.

. . . . Of the three and a half million *Jews* living within the boundaries of pre-war Poland, the Hitlerites murdered about 3,200,000.

The millions of emaciated bodies of the half-starved, the mass graves filled with the bodies of pathetic human corpses, mortal remains stacked up like cordwood, the shooting of mothers with babes in their arms, the forcing of Jews and others to dig their own graves, the fiendish Nazi "experiments" on both children and adults, the inhuman living conditions of the extermination camps, the savage brutality of the camp guards, the indescribable acts of sadism and perversion committed on inmates, the vast cremations, the mass gassing of large groups of inmates, the sight of the living dead hanging onto life by the merest thread, the wanton slaughter and mass genocide — these atrocities stamped the *Nazi reign of terror* as the darkest page in man's long, lamentable chronicle of inhumanity toward his fellow man!

As the Allied forces drove deep into Germany they were aghast at what they found at *Buchenwald*: the bodies piled in heaps, the living who were little more than skin drawn over skeletons, the gas chambers, the crematories that had burned day and night. Buchenwald was only

four or five miles from the Weimar, the cultural center of Germany, but when the residents of Weimar were forced to tour Buchenwald, they protested that they had not the slightest idea these horrors took place.

On April 14th, the British reached Belsen and found 55,000 still alive. Dead, by the thousands, lay everywhere — in open mass graves, scattered about the grounds, even sharing bunks with the living.

As camp after camp was liberated, a cold anger filled the Allied troops. But everywhere the German civilians insisted that they had not known of these enormities, although it was said that the stench of the camps and the odor of the crematories had carried far over the countryside.

In these concentration camps, the Nazis incarcerated, starved and murdered ten million human beings, including at least 5,700,000 of Europe's Jews. All of Germany's efficiency was employed to perfect operation of these camps. Men, women and children were forced to work for the slave empire, were tortured in its name, were finally killed by it. Often, most appalling of all, their corpses were boiled for soap, their hair was used for mattresses and the fillings of their teeth for gold. Their tattooed skins were even used to decorate lamp shades.

Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower after seeing his first concentration camp near the aristocratic German town of Gotha, cabled Washington and London to send as quickly as possible members of Congress and Parliament and journalists to Germany to be eye-witnesses of the Nazi atrocities.

"I felt," General Eisenhower later wrote, "that the evidence should be immediately placed before the American and British public in a fashion that would leave no room for cynical doubt."

### *Forget the Past?*

There are those who take an amnesic view of the Nazi extermination camps and their long catalog of atrocities. No one in his right mind should harbor any bitterness or ill-will toward the Germans, the Japanese or the Italians. But, neither should we turn a blind eye to the past — totally forgetting the long dark nightmarish period of Nazi brutality.

It has been said: "He who forgets history, is bound to repeat it!" Those nations and peoples which suffered most are bound to remember the longest. Poles, Russians and Jews still have vivid memories of Hitler's racial genocide.

Has mankind forgotten what it was like to live under the suffocating blanket of totalitarianism? Has man already forgotten what it was like to live under a repressive regime? — where human dignity and freedom are subject to the whims of a despot?

Will the peoples of the earth forget or ignore the lessons of World War II — is it possible that a new generation will have to re-write those lessons, on a far greater scale?

Will we forget the important lessons of history? Or will we, like the Jews and Poles, make sure that *we never forget?*