

War Dept Hist Com

Dictated by Dr. Mason - 2 translators

Circumstances of the Attempt of 20 July 1944

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WW-4

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By General Warlimont, 3 Aug 45

The Fuehrer's Headquarters was removed from Berchtesgaden to East Prussia (a wood near Rastenburg) on 14 July 1944, in connection with the recently resumed Russian attack. The Staff moved into the quarters already used there since the summer of 1941. During the stay of some months at Berchtesgaden these had meanwhile been provided with considerably stronger anti-aircraft defenses. The project was still not completed and several thousand laborers of the Todt organization were still at work.

On 20 July the midday situation meeting took place as on previous days in a barrack whose walls, originally constructed of wooden boards, between the windows, had been covered with a layer of concrete about a meter thick. The conference room was situated at the eastern end of the barrack. Along one side of its length and both short sides were numerous windows, and along the other long side was separated from the neighboring rooms by a plain wooden door and thin walls of plaster. On entering the door one saw a heavy oak table, about 5 or 6 meters long, running with its length parallel with the long side of the room. Apart from a few chairs there were no other articles of furniture in the room.

When the Fuehrer entered the room about 1230 the participants in the situation meeting were as usual already collected. General HEUSINGER, who represented the Chief of the Army General Staff, had already begun with a report on the situation in the East, when the door again opened, a thing in itself not unusual, and the Colonel, Count von STAUFFENBERG, entered the room. He did not belong to Headquarters but was rather present at Headquarters on his own initiative or on the orders of Field Marshal KEITEL to give a report on questions within his field of activity as Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief of the Replacement Army. In accordance with a usage that officers temporarily present, of the higher ranks, should attend this meeting, and in a given case report to the Fuehrer personally, Field Marshal KEITEL had ordered Von STAUFFENBERG to take part on this day.

None of the officers present had particularly noticed or taken any objection to the fact that STAUFFENBERG was carrying with him a strikingly big briefcase and, as the later evidence showed, placed it under the right-hand half of the big oak table (at the middle of which the Fuehrer was standing, with his back to the door) and leaned the case against a table leg. Nor, so far as I know, was any greater attention paid to the fact that STAUFFENBERG again left the room a few minutes later.

About 1250 a terrific explosion suddenly occurred, which seemed to cover the whole room in dust, smoke and fire, and threw everything in all directions. When I got up, after a short period of unconsciousness, I saw that Hitler was being led backwards out through the door, supported by several attendants. He did not seem to have been seriously hurt. As it turned out later he had suffered an injury to his ears and a bone-bruise of the right arm, which latter soon healed. The ear injuries had no further consequences thanks to the treatment by Prof. von Eicken who was summoned from Berlin, and the ear specialist Dr. GIESING.

Serious injuries had only been experienced in a few cases. As a result of these injuries one man died the same day and three other deaths resulted later. The balance came through with light injuries, apart from some persisting scars from burns.

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During the early afternoon suspicion was cast by a NCO of Headquarters on Colonel Count von Stauffenberg who had been observed entering the barrack with the heavy brief-case and soon afterwards leaving it without it. Stauffenberg had in the meantime flown back to Berlin and on that same evening he had a considerable number of other conspirators met ~~the~~ end.

As a result of later investigation the following state of affairs appeared: the attempt had been agreed on for a long time already in connection with the intention to overthrow the National Socialist regime. The explosive had been procured already about half a year previously and kept hidden ever since. Stauffenberg had already made an attempt to accomplish the assassination some two weeks earlier on the Berghof. He had however abandoned it because on the day in question Goering and Himmler, who were to be put out of the way at the same time, were absent.

On 20 July Stauffenberg flew in the early morning from Berlin, carrying two bombs, each of which, if I am not mistaken, contained a kilogram of explosive. He brought the fuse into Headquarters and put it in in an ante-room. He then laid the case, containing one of the two bombs, down, about one or two meters from Hitler, in the manner described.

If the injuries suffered were comparatively minor, that is ascribable principally to the circumstance that the floor was laid over a cellar and that the force of the explosion also escaped through the numerous windows and the thin walls in many directions.

Stauffenberg observed the effects from close by, but clearly substantially overestimated them, and then drove to a nearby air field before steps could be taken to prevent it. En route he threw the second bomb, which was later found, from the car. On reaching Berlin he reported to the fellow conspirators that he had been successful and that the Fuehrer was dead, whereupon the other steps prepared by the conspirators were set in operation.

NOTE: Besides the Fuehrer there were present at the attempted assassination:

The Fuehrer's Aides: General SCHMUNDT
Admiral Von PUTTKAMER
Oberst Von BELOW
Oberstlt. B (later fatally injure

From the OKW: Field Marshal KEITEL
Generaloberst JODL
General WARLIMONT
General BUHLE
Oberstlt. WAIZENEGGER
Major BUECHS
Oberstlt. Von JOHN

From the OKH: General HEUSSINGER
Oberst BRANDT

Other HQ Staff: General SCHERFF
General BODENSCHATZ
Admiral VOSS
Gruppenfuehrer FEGELEIN

Chief of Luftwaffe: General KORTEN
General Staff

Two stenographers
(List not exhaustive perhaps)

Died of their wounds: General SCHMUNDT
General KORTEN
Oberst BRANDT
A stenographer