

22nd Airlanding Infantry Division 1935-1945



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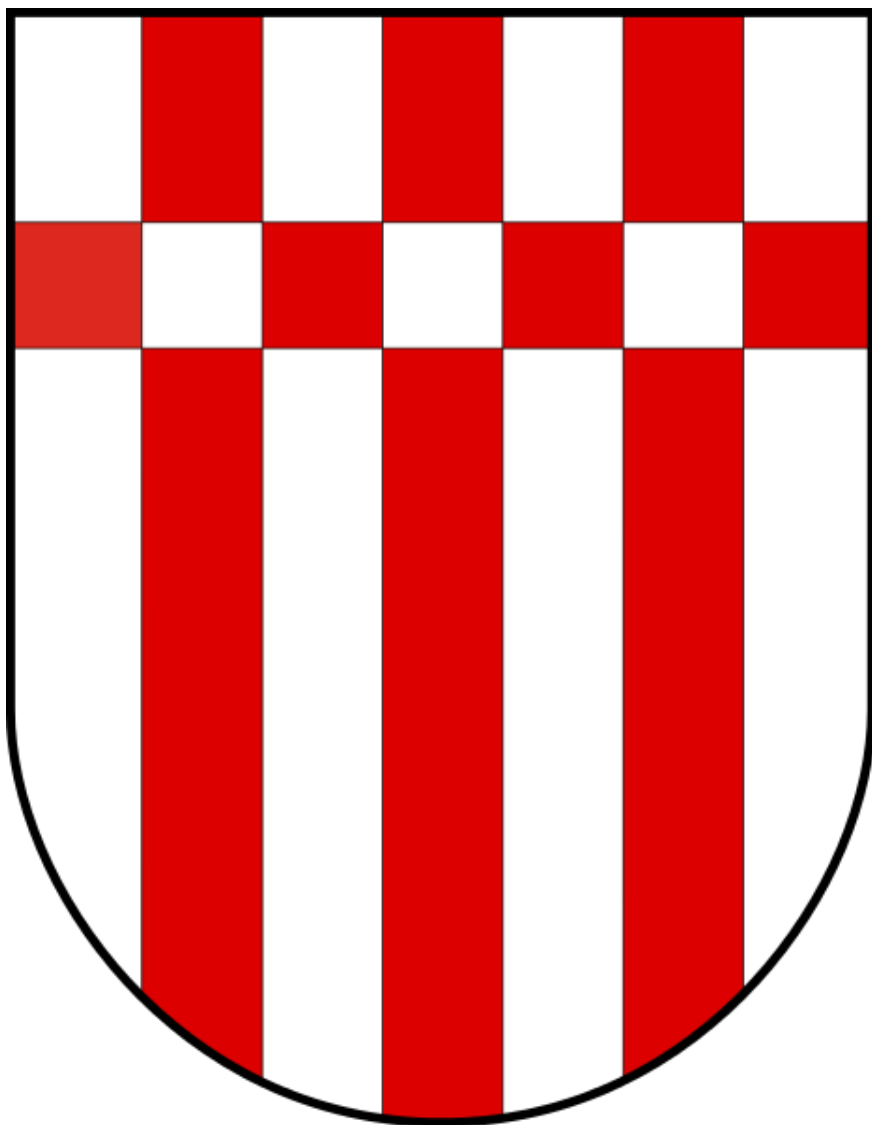
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22nd Air Landing Infantry Division 1935-1945

The formation was established as a Standard infantry unit and was given the designation of *22.Infanterie-Division* at Bremen in 1935. As part of the standing army before the outbreak of war, it was brought from a peacetime footing to full combat strength with the *Wehrmacht's* 1. *Welle* (first wave) of mobilization in August 1939. One infantry regiment, *16.Infanterie-Regiment*, took part in the fighting in Poland along the Bzura River; the rest of the division was garrisoned on the *Westwall* to guard against a preemptive French attack. In October 1939, after the end of the Polish campaign, the 22nd Division was withdrawn from active service and sent to the *Truppenübungsplatz* (troop training area) at Sennelager, where it was to undergo preparation for a special role. It emerged retrained and redesignated as *22.Luftlande-Infanterie-Division* (22nd Air Landing Infantry Division), and it was the only formation of its type in the *Wehrmacht*. The division was intended for rapid tactical deployment in transport aircraft or gliders to quickly reinforce enemy airbases captured by the *Luftwaffe's* Fallschirmjäger.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183.1.04232
Foto: o. Ang. | Mai 1940

Walter Koch

Dates: 10 September 1910 – 23 October 1943

A highly-decorated commander of the Fallschirmjäger during World War II who died in mysterious circumstances after openly criticising Adolf Hitler. Koch, who was the recipient of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for his actions during the Battle of Fort Eben-Emael in May 1940 had publicly denounced the Führer's infamous Commando Order, which ordered that all captured enemy commandos were to be executed. Shortly afterwards the *Oberstleutnant* and commander of *Fallschirmjäger-Regiment 5* died in Berlin from injuries allegedly resulting from a motor vehicle collision.

Early career

Walter Koch joined the *Landespolizei* as an officer in 3 April 1929. As a *Leutnant* he had served in the state police and a police battalion for special purposes (*Polizeiabteilung z.b.V. Wecke*). In 1935 the new commander-in-chief of the *Luftwaffe*, Hermann Göring, transferred this police unit into the reformed *Luftwaffe* and renamed it the Regiment "General Göring".



The officers of Sturmabteilung Koch being presented the Ritterkreuz for their part in the assaults on Eben Emael and the bridges over the Albert Canal on 10 May 1940. The photo was taken on 16 May at Fuhrerhauptquartier 'Felsenest', 50km south-west of Bonn. From left to right: Hauptmann Walter Koch, Oberleutnant Rudolf Witzig, Oberleutnant Gustav Altmann. Other officers present are: Oberleutnant Otto Zierach, Oberarzt Dr. Rolf Jager, Leutnant Egon Delica, Leutnant Helmut Ringler, Leutnant Joachim Meissner, Leutnant Gerhard Schacht.



Generaloberst Kurt Student

Dates: * 12. May 1890, Birkholz / Mark Brandenburg - + 1. July 1978, Lemgo / NRW

Kurt Student stepped 1901 into cadet Potsdam, where he joined the Hauptkadettenanstalt wholesale Lichtenfelde 1906th On 3 March 1910, he then joined as a cadet in the rifle battalion "Graf Yorck von Wartenburg" (Ostpreuß.) No. 1 in Szczytno one. On 1 Mai1910 he was transferred to Berlin-Johannisthal commanded to be there to complete e aviator training. Upon his return to Szczytno on 1 March 1911 he was promoted on March 20, 1911. Lieutenant, on 8 August 1913, he received his pilot license. On 1 February 1914 he became a flight station poses and the Aviator battalion commanded 2, where it was used as a pilot of 2 June 1914 to 1 August 1914th On June 2, 1914 he was transferred to Feldflieger department 17 and there carried on 18 June 1916, Lieutenant. On 10 February 1916 he was pilot in the Battle Season 19 Combat Squadron 4, which was subordinate to the Army High Command and was on 17 May 1916 to the Army Fokkerstaffel the 3rd Army. In mid-October he came to hunt Season 9, whose commander he was on 16 October 1916th After a dogfight he was so badly wounded on 2 May 1917 that he had to give up his command and was admitted to a hospital. After his recovery, he took over on July 12, 1917, the command of the fighter group of the 3rd Army.

The Armaments and Military Power of Germany	11
Blitzkrieg in Low Countries	27
22nd (Air Landing) Infantry Division	43
Campaign in the West 1939 - 40	53
Battle for Eben-Emael	78
Commanders	94
Generalleutnant Adolf Strauss	94
Generalleutnant Hans Graf von Sponeck	99
General der Infanterie Ludwig Wolff	107
General der Infanterie Friedrich-Wilhelm Müller	111
Generalmajor Heinrich Kreipe	115
Generalmajor Walter Koch	122
Generaloberst Kurt Student	126
A New Method of Attack: The 1940 German assault on Eben Emael	129
Hitler's Last Airdrop: Crete 1941	142
Annexes	168
Airborne Operations	168
The German Infantry - The Soldier	189
Structure of German Infantry Divisions	221
Hitler's War Directives 1939-1945	230
Operations in Poland	230
Hitler Directive Campaign in the West	241
Campaign in France May 1940	252
Ranks in German Army	257
Bibliography	264
Index	267

The Armaments and Military Power of Germany

TO EVALUATE the military strength of a country one examines its military system in time of peace and takes account of the potential power which it can command in time of war. In looking at Germany today, however, I shall confine myself to the purely military factors, while admitting the importance of two elements which really cannot be overlooked -- the demographic factor and industrial power.

Military Provisions of the Versailles Treaty

The military statute of the Versailles Treaty (which contained no time limit) was intended to reduce the possibility of German aggression, to facilitate the eventual application of the sanctions which were provided for in order to compel Germany to observe the Treaty, and to render possible the preparation of a general limitation of armaments by all nations. Its aims were not punitive, but merely to stabilize Europe as it was in 1919. And it marked the first step of a desired evolution in the direction of disarmament.

Let us in the first place see what the Treaty of Versailles prescribes. It gives Germany a professional army and limits its effectives and matériel both in number and by categories. It forbids her to make ready for mobilization and establishes a demilitarized zone in the Rhineland. The German Army, which is reduced to 100,000 men (officers included), must be "exclusively reserved for the maintenance of order in the country and the policing of its frontiers." Compulsory military service is suppressed. The army is to be composed of twelve-year volunteers; the term of service for the officers is twenty-five consecutive years.

The composition and armament of the seven divisions of infantry and three divisions of cavalry which are authorized are settled in detail. None of the organs charged with planning and preparing for war are to be allowed. The former General Staff and the war academies are suppressed and cannot be revived "in any form whatsoever." The army shall have no aviation, no tanks, no heavy artillery. All mobilization measures are prohibited. Materials of war exceeding the statutory amounts shall be surrendered to the Allies to be destroyed. The manufacture, import or export of war materials is forbidden. Matériel authorized for the army and navy shall be supplied by factories designated by name. The manufacture of gas for war purposes, and the use of it, are prohibited. Organizations and educational establishments are forbidden to concern themselves with military questions. Further, in order to obviate future aggression, a zone of German territory bet-

ween the western frontier of Germany and a line drawn fifty kilometers to the east of the Rhine is "demilitarized."

Lastly, independently of the control exercised in Germany by the Inter-Allied Commission, the Allied and Associated Powers decided to occupy the left bank of the Rhine and to evacuate it by degrees, the last zone to be freed in 1935, or later if necessary. It will be recalled that France accepted this progressive evacuation in exchange for a pledge that England and the United States would come to her side in the event of further aggression by Germany.

Thus the Allied and Associated Governments were unanimous in recognizing that, in the face of Germany's demographic and industrial superiority, the security of France demanded (once the left bank of the Rhine had been evacuated) that she should have an army superior in effectives to the German Army in order to be in a position to await the promised intervention of England and the United States. As we know, the guarantee was not signed; the United States did not ratify the Peace Treaty. Yet one fact remains, and that is that in 1919 the maintenance of peace in Europe was founded by the Allies, not on "parity" of armaments but on the contrary on the *inequality* of the military forces of France and Germany, in favor of the former.

The modifications agreed to by the Allies

Far from taking a narrow legal point of view, the Allied Governments, represented by the Conference of Ambassadors, interpreted the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles in a liberal and conciliatory fashion, in an effort to show Germany that they had confidence in her. A few specific illustrations will suffice to indicate this:

At Spa, for example, the Allies agreed that doctors and veterinary surgeons should be counted separately, which resulted in an increase of 500 officers, and that civilians employed in the army might be increased from 901 to 1,936, more than twice as many. The Inter-Allied Commission of Control observed that the distribution of commissioned officers violated the statute; the Allies, in a spirit of conciliation, allowed the

effectives to be reckoned as a total. Again, despite the prohibition against the reconstitution of the Berlin and Munich military academies in any form, the Ambassadors' Conference admitted special arrangements for the training of General Staff officers, and this now proceeds according to pre-war principles.

In the category of armaments, also, there were important concessions, permitting among other things an increase in the number of machine guns; a reserve of 50,000 rifles and 20 million cartridges more than the number provided; the possession of 52,000 revolvers, 166,000 bayonets, 18,000 lances, 30,000 sabres; a supplementary supply of infantry and artillery munitions equal to the requirements of an army; permission to study protective devices against "forbidden" weapons (with the proviso that models cannot be transformed into real weapons). In practice, Germany is learning the use of forbidden weapons. Certain cannon, for example, have real carriages and sights; the tube is of wood, but it can easily be replaced by a real one.

One of the most important concessions was permission to transform the state police into an armed force, with military training and equipment. In 1913 Germany had 80,000 police (30,000 state police and 50,000 local), charged with maintaining order as a separate service. This force did not differ from the police of other countries. Now the Allied Governments have allowed the German police force to be raised to 140,000 men, of whom 105,000 are state police and 35,000 local. The former are a military organization. Like the Reichswehr, they are recruited by voluntary enlistment for twelve years. Members are cadets for two years (a total of 5,000 men), and afterwards are attached to active units which correspond to infantry companies, cavalry squadrons or technical units. The radio system of the state police is the most important in Germany, and their automobile equipment is far superior to that of the army and can transport more than 20,000 men. Their arms are no longer restricted, as in 1913, to a revolver and a sword, but consist of rifles or carbines. They have 150 armored motor cars, each fitted with 2 machine guns, sub-machi-

ne guns and hand grenades. The railway police have been given authorization to be armed (8,000 rifles and pistols), and have armored trains at their disposal. It will be seen how greatly the state police have changed in character. Living in barracks, organized in units, armed and equipped like a military force, they are an important addition to the Reichswehr. Further concessions were made with regard to war factories. All factories which had manufactured or studied how to manufacture war material, other than those authorized by the Treaty, were required to disappear. But the Conference of Ambassadors decided to suppress only those factories which were built *exclusively* for the manufacture of war material. With regard to war material in excess of the amount authorized, the Ambassadors' Conference allowed material to be preserved which was not for "combat purposes." The Conference also limited the prohibition on the manufacture, importation and exportation of war material solely to material obviously destined for "war purposes" -- a very difficult thing to define. Again, the Conference allowed surplus barracks to stand, provided they were rendered unfit for military purposes.

The Conference permitted improvements to be made in the fortifications on the eastern, southern and northern frontiers, though they were contrary to the Treaty, as well as certain constructions at Königsberg, Cüstrin and Glogau. The armaments of coast towns were increased, *e.g.* the Conference granted 119 supplementary cannon and agreed that the 22 cannon at Königsberg, which were to have fixed carriages, could be placed on movable carriages, on condition that they were not to be removed from that place -- a condition which has not been respected.

In the field of *aéronautics* there were a number of concessions. The Paris agreements of May 1926 restored to Germany the right to build machines of all types, provided they are not armored, nor armed, nor capable of being turned into military machines -- a restriction which it is impossible to enforce. In addition, 36 members of the Reichswehr and the state police were separately authorized to become pilots. A Bureau of Aviation was allowed to the Ministry of the Reichs-

wehr "for the study of foreign military aëronautics and the aërial defense of the Reich."

Germany was authorized to send military bands into the demilitarized zone, as well as 9,000 state police. Military railways in those areas were to have been suppressed; an agreement on August 4, 1929, considerably modified the 1922 program. Similarly, Germany was authorized to install underground telephonic cables in the demilitarized zone, to maintain 4 airports, 16 landing fields and artillery establishments (subject to certain observations). She even obtained permission not to destroy completely certain fortifications.

The facts which I have enumerated are sufficient to destroy the legend about the harshness with which the Allies are supposed to have insisted upon the execution of the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty. They did not merely make concessions of detail; they granted Germany the right to revamp her entire military system. As a result, the present legal situation is far different from that stipulated at Versailles.

Now what is the actual situation, in contrast to the hypothetical legal situation which I have outlined?

Evolution of the Military System since 1920

Since 1920 Germany has aimed at the execution of a definite program: to create and preserve the essential foundations of a powerful military machine modelled after that of pre-war days. The elements include: (a) A Supreme Command, a General Staff and commissioned officers. (b) Military instruction with a view to offensive warfare. (c) The organization of units which increase the mobility and offensive strength of the army. (d) Matériel. (e) Trained effectives. An examination of the results obtained in 1932 in these categories reveals the military power of Germany.

(a) *Commanders and Commissioned Officers.* At the head of the army is a single commander, known as the "Chief of the Army Command," who combines all the prerogatives formerly exercised by the Emperor, the General Staff, the Ministry of War and the army inspectors. About him are grouped the 250 officers and numerous officials, most of them re-

tired officers, who constitute the Army Command. It is as powerful an organism as all the pre-war central organizations together used to be. Amongst the four major services of the Army Command, the *Truppenamt* (Troups Bureau) constitutes the present General Staff, properly speaking, and is at all points analogous to the old General Staff. The recruitment of General Staff officers is provided for as formerly. Only the titles have changed.

The lower ranks are also very numerous -- one non-commissioned officer to four men -- and their training is advanced to a point at which they are capable of fulfilling functions far superior to their assigned rank.

It is on this solid structure, out of all proportion to the number of effectives actually authorized, that the present German Army rests.

(b) *Training.* So far from accepting the position defined for the German Army by the Treaty, its organizer, General von Seeckt, has sought to make it the framework of a nation in arms. As early as September 1921, in his preface to the new Army Regulations, General von Seeckt took as his basis "the men, armament and equipment of the army of a great, modern, military Power, and not merely the German Army of 100,000 men created in accordance with the terms of the Peace Treaty." And, speaking of the modern weapons of combat which are forbidden in Germany -- aviation, tanks, heavy artillery -- the General suggested that "their absence must not make us afraid to attack."

The Reichswehr, an army of the first quality, of exalted patriotism, and convinced that it will one day be the nucleus of a nation in arms, preserves "the old military ideals of the former army" and the "warlike spirit" which its successive chiefs have always flattered themselves that they have maintained and nourished. It is being trained and organized for offensive warfare.

(c) *Increase in the offensive power of the army.* Germany has not merely maintained the framework of its former military establishment, it has modified the army's internal organization so as to increase its mobility and power on the offen-

sive. Taken singly, these changes are sometimes of only relative importance. But taken together they are seen to be part of a general plan methodically executed.

In the Infantry, the mobility and marksmanship of the units are being constantly improved. The number of machine guns, both light and heavy, is greater; a new type of machine gun has been adopted; the mine thrower has been improved; *canons d'accompagnement* and anti-tank guns are being studied and tried out.

In the Cavalry, each division now has a communications squadron (instead of a squadron of recruits), caterpillar squadrons, and armored cars.

All the cavalry squadrons are furnished with six light machine guns (whereas they legally should have none), and the high command is now arranging to have the number raised to nine. The number of machine guns in excess of what is allowed may be estimated at about two thousand. The machine gun armament of both infantry and cavalry is twice the amount provided in the Treaty.

In the Artillery, a supply squadron has been created for each division, and observation units have been formed, as defined by modern army regulations. In 1931 further artillery material was put into service. Motorized batteries appeared in the 1932 manœuvres.

In the Engineers, the battalions are increasing the number of their units and becoming partly motorized. The supply units are being grouped, and equipped with motors and modern material of every kind.

The high command has also arranged to use arms forbidden by the Treaty. With regard to heavy artillery, it has adapted coast defense matériel to mechanical transportation and is now training crews at Könisberg. As for tanks, it has created companies of "imitation" tanks, which are used at manœuvres. In the field of chemical warfare, it has created "fog sections," in part motorized, and capable of using poison gas machinery. The use of gas bombs is taken for granted in all training classes and at the General Staff.

In the field of aviation, machines for reconnaissance, obser-

vation, fighting and bombing have been constructed by various firms, officers go through training as pilots and observers, both in Germany and abroad, and in the course of manœuvres contact exercises between the land and air forces take place. The recent condemnation of a German publicist who had alluded in the *Weltbühne* to collusion between the Reichswehr Ministry and the Lufthansa Gesellschaft is confirmation of this fact.

(d) *Matériel*. In addition to authorized matériel, Germany possesses stocks of arms which were concealed from the Control Commission, and these, in the words of the Commission, constitute a "not negligible" supply. The police are constantly discovering rifle and machine gun dépôts. At Leipsig in February 1930 the Communists found more than 200 machine guns in military buildings. This fact was confirmed in the Reichstag by Deputy Kippenberger, who added that he had proof that in one garrison in the eastern part of the country more than 2,000 machine guns were stocked in seven different dépôts.

Further, the manufacture of arms has been resumed in many factories, both authorized and otherwise. The trade in arms is proof of it. In 1928 Germany exported arms to the value of 150 million pounds sterling, and in 1930, according to the "League of Nations Annual," she exported arms to the value of 1,765,000 pounds sterling. The Düsseldorf firm of "Rheinmetall," which is authorized only to make cannon, also makes light and heavy machine guns, anti-tank guns, sub-machine guns, and anti-aircraft guns. The firm of Mauser, which is prohibited from manufacturing arms, is making rifles and automatic rifles of a new model. Similar activity is observable in making other sorts of war material. The firm of Zeiss is exporting field-glasses. The firm of Siemens is selling wireless equipment and instruments for finding bearings by sound. Since the beginning of 1932 there has been a great increase in the number of other factories which manufacture war materials of divers kinds. Export requirements (export of these materials is in itself prohibited) are not sufficient to justify this increased activity, so that one is left wondering whether

part of the manufactures in question are not at the disposal of the Reichswehr.

The German chemical industry is interested in chemical warfare and is preparing for it. The German Army regulations anticipate it. Certain firms, such as Stolzenberg and Minimax, manufacture and openly sell flame-throwers and machines for releasing gas. The firm of Stolzenberg manufactures and exports poisonous gases. It offers them in its catalogs and sells sample boxes.

German aviation firms, despite the prohibition on building, possessing or importing airships fitted up for military purposes, make in Germany the prototypes of reconnoitering and pursuit machines. "H. D. 38," "H. D. 47" and "H. D. 43," built by the firm of Hinkel, are classified in a British handbook on aerial fleets as pursuit machines. Moreover, the foreign branches of the firms of Junkers and Dornier build military aeroplanes which are simply adapted from certain types of civilian planes built and used in Germany.^[i] The giant Junkers "G. 38" is a magnificent bombing-plane, according to the announcement made by Junkers after her trip to Madrid. Certain foreign affiliates of the German aeronautical industry, like the "Flyindustrie" of Malmo, sell military machines which are merely converted commercial planes.

All this activity is directed and coördinated by the bureau of the Army Command which is charged with looking after armament and matériel -- the *Waffenamt*. All the large firms are unofficially represented in the bureau, which in its turn has delegates on all the chief economic committees in Germany. A census is regularly taken of factories which would be concerned in industrial mobilization. By the accumulation of stocks of material, by making ready for a mobilization of industries, by the construction of model machines, Germany is assured of supplies of war material far in excess of those provided for in the Treaty or in subsequent agreements.

Since the Treaty did not limit military credits, the Reich has been able to increase its expenditures for these purposes at will. In 1913, for an army of 800,000 men, with 4,000 machi-

Caen.



Military Career

In 1908 Sponeck³ joined the Grenadier Guards Regiment. 5 a of the Prussian Army in Spandau and was used as a lieutenant and adjutant of the II. Battalion. During World War II he was 1915 262 displaced as regimental adjutant to Infantry Regiment. To the Eastern Front, where he was serving as a company commander later. 1916 followed its use in the General Staff of the Guard Corps and 1917 when the General Staff. Transferred to the Reichswehr in the Weimar Republic, Sponeck was on duty in various bars. U. a. He served in the General Staff of the artillery officer III and rose to 1934 on the Colonel. In 1937, he stepped over to the Air Force, where he was Gaube air Fehlhäber in Berlin and Munich. In this position on March 1, 1938 promoted to major general, Sponeck but returned in July 1938 and was appointed to the army back in November for the commander of the 22nd Infantry Division in Bremen.

Second World War

At the beginning of World War II Sponeck took part in the Polish campaign of this division, which was later trained for airborne use. In February 1940, followed by his promotion to lieutenant general. At the beginning of the campaign in France his division was involved in the failed airborne operation to capture from The Hague. The Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross [3] it was awarded on May 14, 1940. During the war against the Soviet Union in 1941, he became Commanding General of the XXXXII. Army Corps and participated as part of Army Group South part in the conquest of the Crimea peninsula.

End of December should keep Kerch one of its units, the 46th Infantry Division, the peninsula. In the course of Kerch Feo-

³ *Graf* is an historic German noble title, equivalent in rank to the French "count" or to the British "earl". In Germany today, however, *Graf* is no longer a noble title, so as a matter of law it is used only as part of the name of the person concerned.

dossijaer operation ended on 26 December the 244th Rifle Division and the 83rd Marine Infantry Brigade of the Red Army under the protection of strong naval forces on the peninsula; the 46th Infantry Division, however, managed to seal off the bridgehead. As at 29 December 1941 landed parts of the Soviet 44th Army in Feodosiya, there was a danger that the German XXXXII. Army Corps would cut back, so ordered Sponeck without consulting his superior command of the German 11th Army under the command of Erich von Manstein and the Führer's headquarters vacate the Kerch Peninsula. The rapid implementation of the command and the dismantling of radio stations, but he also made a command is canceled by the AOK 11 impossible.

On December 31, 1941 Sponeck was dismissed because of his unauthorized withdrawal of his command and placed in Berlin before a court martial under the chairmanship of Hermann Goering. In this court martial important evidence was not admitted and the accused had during the trial period become permanent. [1] Sponeck was sentenced on January 23, 1942 due to "negligent disobedience in the field" to death. The sentence was commuted on 22 February 1942, Adolf Hitler in six years' imprisonment. Sponeck spent his imprisonment in the military prison in Germersheim. Several attempts Erich von Manstein, to obtain a complete rehabilitation of General von Sponeck, however, remained unsuccessful. His family was taken into custody and seized its assets.

Although he had had no contact with the bombers of 20 July 1944, he was on 23 July 1944. Himmler's command with the active support of the Gauleiter Josef Bürckel shot without trial for an example. This demonstrative murder should all senior officers invite to unconditional obedience. Sponeck was buried in Germersheim. This was, however, not known until after the war. 1952, his body was then buried in the cemetery Dahner honor.

Eastern campaign

Before dawn on 22 June 1941, Operation Barbarossa was launched beginning the German invasion of the Soviet

Union. Sponeck commanded the 22nd Infantry Division as part of the 11th Army in the area of Army Group South attacking in the direction of the Crimean Peninsula. Two days before the invasion, on June 20, 1941, Sponeck's general staff gave orders to the division that any Jewish Red Army prisoners of war should be identified and separated from the rest of the Soviet prisoners. With the start of the invasion, Sponeck's division operated from the Romanian frontier driving into Bessarabia, Transnistria and then the southern Ukraine, taking part in heavy fighting at Beryslav to establish a bridgehead across the Dnieper River to Kakhovka in late August 1941. This enabled the 11th Army to advance southward toward the Crimean Peninsula but resulted in heavy losses for the division. In preparation for the invasion of Crimea, Sponeck's division was ordered in September and early October 1941 to pursue the Red Army east and north along the Sea of Azov to the cities Henichesk, Melitopol and Berdyansk, thereby protecting the eastern flank of the 11th Army. On October 7, 1941 Sponeck ordered his division to work closely with the SS's Security Police and SD by rounding up, identifying, and handing over Jewish civilians. Mass shootings of Jews by units of Einsatzgruppe D of the Security Police and SD are documented in both Henichesk and Melitopol shortly after these cities were occupied by the 22nd Infantry Division in October 1941. In Melitopol alone 2,000 Jewish men, women and children were massacred. In later English captivity at Trent Park, one of General von Sponeck's subordinate senior officers, Colonel (later General) Dietrich von Choltitz, admitted frankly in a surreptitiously recorded conversation that he had taken an active part in the work of killing Jews during the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

Because of sciatica and intestinal trouble, General von Sponeck took sick leave from his division on October 14, 1941. On Sponeck's return on December 3, 1941, Manstein gave him command of the 42nd Army Corps (with command of the 46th Infantry Division), which had taken the Kerch Peninsula on the extreme eastern tip of the Crimea. In Feodosia, within the area of Sponeck's command, 1,052 Jews were executed on

or around December 10, 1941 by units of Einsatzgruppe D with the active cooperation and participation of the local military field commander and military police. On December 10, 1941, General von Sponeck ordered that all Jews found within his area of command were to be treated in principle as partisans, marked with the Star of David, and "deployed as labor." He also ordered that any Red Army soldiers captured, even those in uniform, were to be shot immediately and approved reprisal actions against civilians for any local partisan activity or sabotage.

On 26 December 1941, the Red Army launched an invasion of Crimea. Their plan was to land seaborne troops at Kerch and Mount Opuk, supported by later landings at Feodosia with 42,000 troops. On December 28 the battle in eastern Crimea had developed in favour of the Germans with them having eliminated one of the two Soviet beachheads around the town of Kerch. Sponeck requested permission to retreat to avoid being cut off and captured and so to regroup, but was denied three times. On 29 December the Russians landed additional forces on the southern coast at Feodosia and Sponeck had only thirty minutes to decide on his actions. On his own initiative, he gave order for his 10,000 men to retreat. In temperatures of minus 30 degrees Celsius, in a howling snowstorm and icy winds, the battalions of the 46th Infantry Division marched west. The soldiers marched for 46 hours with only the occasional rest for coffee, to warm up. Many suffered frostbite, and most of the horses starved. Much of the Division's heavy equipment, including its artillery, remained behind on the frozen road.

On 31 December Sponeck's 46th Infantry arrived at the Parpach neck, where they established a defensive line. The following day, 1 January 1942, Red Army attacked again and were held back by Sponeck's men. The arrival of a rail-mounted unit finished off sixteen soviet T-26 tanks. Sponeck and his forces held off the enemy long enough until reinforcements arrived.



Arrest and trial

On 23 January 1942, Lieutenant General Hans Graf Sponeck's trial took place in front of the Court President Hermann Göring. It did not go well for Sponeck and the court found him guilty of disobedience of a superior officer. Sponeck maintained that he had acted, as taught, on his own initiative against orders, in order to avoid the destruction of his division. He was nevertheless given the death sentence, but Adolf Hitler (on Manstein's proposal) commuted the sentence to seven years in prison. Hans Sponeck was to serve as an example to those who disobeyed Hitler's new order of no retreat. Sponeck was sent to Germersheim Fortress where he was held as a prisoner. He was allowed into town occasionally and his wife visited him for one week per month in the fortress, with their five year old son (Hans-Christof von Sponeck, later a United Nations diplomat and Assistant Secretary General to Kofi Annan).

Last requiem

On 23 July 1999, the 55th anniversary of the execution, Sponeck's son by his second marriage, Hans-Christof Graf Sponeck, who was just six years old when his father was executed, held a requiem at his father's grave. Hans-Christof Graf Sponeck served as Assistant Secretary General and Diplomat, United Nations, until his retirement a short time ago.

Awards and decorations

Iron Cross of 1914), 1st and 2nd class

Lifesaving Medal (Prussia)

Military Merit Order, 4th class with Swords (Bavaria)

Knight's Cross, First Class of the Friedrich Order with Swords (Württemberg)

Knight's Cross Second Class of the Order of the Zähringer Lion with Swords (Württemberg)

War Merit Cross (Lippe)

Wound Badge (1918) in Silver

Iron Cross of 1939, 1st and 2nd class

Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross (14 May 1940)

Graf-Sponeck-Strasse in the district of Bremen Neue Vahr named after him

A plaque at *Parkstrasse* 3 in Neustrelitz, where he lived from 1935 to 1937 (1992)

Memorial in front of his former official residence in Bremen Horn-Lehe (2007)

General Hans Graf Sponeck Barracks in Germersheim named after him

General der Infanterie Ludwig Wolff

Dates: * 31. August 1886, Schlettstadt + 17. May 1950, Neustadt / Holstein

Ludwig Wolff came on 24 May 1904 in the 2nd top-Alsatian Infantry Regiment. 171 a. Here took place on November 1, 1904 promoted to sergeant, on December 15, 1904 to Ensign and on 9 October 1905 lieutenant.



At the outbreak of war in August 1914, he was a company commander, on September 5, 1914 he was promoted to first lieutenant. From 30 October 1914 he was employed as the regimental adjutant and promoted on September 18, 1915 to captain. He then served on 28 October 1916 to 25 February

1917 in the staff of the Chief of the field railways. On February 26, 1918 took place Wolffs displacement in the rod of the 5th Guards Infantry Division, where he remained until 19 July 1917th Subsequently served Wolff of 20 July 1917 to September 2, 1917, first on the staff of the German military mission in Turkey and was of 3 September 1917 to April 30, 1918 Chief of General Staff of Turkish Army 8th. To this end, he had been promoted on 1 September 1907 Turkish Major.

In May 1918 he returned to Germany and was held by the end of this month for use in Chief of the General Staff of the Army. May 31, 1918 Wolff moved over to the staff of Army High Command 2, where he remained until July 4, 1918. Which was then followed until January 3, 1919 its use on the staff of Army High Command 4. On January 4, 1919 Captain Wolff was again added in the 2nd top-Alsatian Infantry Regiment no. 171 before it from 22 January 1919 in the General staff of the V. army Corps was added.

Starting on October 1, 1919 was followed by the use of the staff of the military district commands IV and from January 13, 1920 at the Military District Command VI and the section command Wesel. On 15 February 1920 he was in the staff of the Cavalry Brigade 31 and June 1, 1920 placed in the staff of the 6th Division. From 1 July 1922 until the end of April 1924, he worked as an advisor in the Ministry of Defense. On May 1, 1924 Wolff was appointed company commander in the Infantry Regiment. 9 Subsequently he was employed from 1 February 1927 to 30 September 1930 the General Staff of the Group Commands 2, where he was promoted on 1 April 1928. Major. From 1 October 1930 he served until the end of September 1933 Staff of the artillery officer I and from 1 October 1933 at the headquarters of Infantry Regiment 11.

On 1 February 1933 he was until the end of February 1934 has already been promoted to lieutenant colonel. On March 1, 1934, he stepped over to the Air Force and came for incorporation into the Ministry of Aviation. A month later he was chief of staff of the air circuit commands V. On May 1, 1935, the carriage followed the Colonel. As of November 1, 1936, he was also deputy commander of the atmosphere V. On August

1, 1937 promoted to Major General, Wolff was born on October 1, 1937 Higher Aviator commander 5 and on July 1, 1938 the commander of the 5th Air Division. From 1 February 1939 he was Commanding General and Commander-in Luftgau XI, which he led during the entire Second World War. On 1 August 1939 he was promoted to lieutenant general and on 1 February 1941 Air General. On May 3, 1945, he fell into British captivity, from which he was dismissed in February 1948th

Awards and decorations

Lifesaving Medal (Prussia)

Knight's Cross Second Class of the Civil Order of Saxony with Swords

Knight's Cross of the Second Class of the Albert Order with Swords

Iron Cross (1914)

2nd Class (November 1914)

1st Class (28 June 1917)

Knight's Cross of the Military Order of St. Henry (19 September 1916)

Honour Cross of the World War 1914/1918

Clasp to the Iron Cross (1939)

2nd Class (13 May 1940)

1st Class (18 May 1940)

Wound Badge

in Black

in Silver

in Gold

Infantry Assault Badge in Silver

Eastern Front Medal

Crimea Shield

Order of Michael the Brave 3rd Class (8 May 1942)

German Cross in Gold on 8 February 1942 as *Generalmajor* in the 22 Infanterie-Division

Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves

Knight's Cross on 26 May 1940 as *Oberst* and commander of Infanterie-Regiment 192

100th Oak Leaves on 22 June 1942 as *Generalmajor* and commander of 22 Infanterie-Division (Luftlande) 51

General der Infanterie Friedrich-Wilhelm Müller

Dates: * 29. August 1897, Barmen / Westfalen - † 20. May 1947, Athen (hingerichtet)

Friedrich-Wilhelm Müller joined in 1914 as a volunteer in the 1st Pomeranian Grenadier Regiment "King Friedrich Wilhelm IV" no. 2 a. In 1915 he was promoted to lieutenant in the reserve Reserve Infantry Regiment. 266. During World War I he was awarded both the Iron Cross. After the war, he was transferred to the police. In 1936 he came as a Major in the Wehrmacht and was on 10 November 1938 commander of the III. Appointed by the Battalion Infantry Regiment 105. On May 1, 1939 followed his promotion to lieutenant colonel. At the beginning of the 2nd World War, he moved with his battalion positions in the West. He led the battalion then in the Battle of France. Both clips he was awarded his Iron Crosses. On October 1, 1940, he was appointed commander of the infantry regiment 105. In January 1941 he came with his regiment as a teaching force to Romania, after which he accepted in April 1941 part of the Balkan campaign. As of June 1941, the campaign against Russia followed. For his personal performance in the enforcement of the bug transition he received on 22 September 1941, the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

On 1 January 1942 he was promoted to colonel. The rank seniority was firmly placed on the October 1, 1941. For the cleanup of the Soviet landing at Eupatoria in January 1942 he was awarded the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on April 8, 1942. On August 1, 1942, he was appointed major-general, with the rank seniority set to the September 1, 1942. At the same time, he was appointed commander of the 22nd Infantry Division in Greece. From November 1942 to September 1944, the Airborne Division was in Crete.



On April 1, 1943, he was promoted to lieutenant general. On 18 June 1943 the German Cross was awarded to him in gold. In mid-February 1944, he resigned his command and was transferred to the reserve leaders. Earlier you had planned to kidnap him what was then with his successor, Lieutenant General Kreipe made. On May 4, 1944, he was entrusted with the leadership of the Fifth Army Corps. In early June 1944, he was the lead again and was again set to the recommended

reserve. On June 2, 1944, he took over for about a week, the leadership of the LIX. Army Corps. Then he was transferred back to the leader Reserve on June 10, 1944.

On 1 July 1944 he was promoted to General of Infantry. As such, he has now been appointed commandant of the fortress Crete. As a punishment measure after the kidnapping of Lieutenant General Kreipe he was supposed to run the following command to destroy the city Anoghia and the execution of the male inhabitants: "As the city Anoghia is a center of British espionage activities in Crete, as the inhabitants of Anoghia have run the sabotage of Damasta because the partisans of various resistance groups found in Anoghia protection and shelter and because the kidnappers have taken General Kreipe their way across Anoghia, where they used Anoghia as a base for the movement, we order, raze to the ground the place and execute every male inhabitant Anoghia, which is found within the village or around him at a distance up to one kilometer. " In September 1944, he resigned his command and was transferred again to the leader Reserve.

On 13 November 1944, he became the commanding general of the XXXIV. Army Corps appointed. On December 8, 1944, he resigned his command and was sure in exchange Luftwaffe General Hellmuth Felmy, the Commanding General of the LXVIII. Army Corps appointed. He held this now in retreat through the Balkans. For his leadership performance his swords were awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves on 27 January 1945. On 29 January 1945 he was appointed commander of the 4th Army in East Prussia. In April 1945, he fell into British captivity and was extradited to Greece. Because of the above-mentioned war crimes on the island of Crete, he was convicted by the victors' justice in Athens to death. On 20 May 1947, he was shot dead by 5 clock summarily with General Bruno Bräuer.

Crete

In August 1942 General Müller took command of the 22nd Air Landing Infantry Division, which was transferred from the Eastern Front to garrison occupied Crete. In Crete, Mü-

ller became notorious for his brutality, and he was responsible for many of the atrocities committed on the island (e.g. the holocaust of Viannos, the destruction of Anogia and the Kedros villages of Amari, the execution of civilians in Damasta, etc.). During the autumn of 1943, he led the German forces in their victory over the Italian-British forces in the Dodecanese Campaign. On the 6th of October, on the island of Kos, under his orders, German forces killed and buried in mass graves over one hundred Italian army officers captured at the end of the battle for the island, who would not side with the former allies. On 1 July 1944 he replaced Bruno Brauer as Commander on Crete.

By 1945, Müller commanded the German 4th Army on the Eastern Front. The 4th Army had already been decimated by fighting in the Heiligenbeil Pocket by the time he assumed command. Müller ended the war in East Prussia and was captured by the Soviets.

In 1946, Müller was tried by a Greek court in Athens for the massacres of hostages for reprisals. He was sentenced to death on 9 December 1946 and executed by firing squad 20 May 1947, along with former General Bruno Bräuer, on the anniversary of the German invasion of Crete.

Awards

Iron Cross (1914)

1st Class (25 May 1916)

2nd Class (29 August 1916)

Prussian Royal House Order of Hohenzollern, Knight's Cross with Swords

Wound Badge in Silver

Infantry Assault Badge

"Crimea" Shield

Bulgarian Military Order of Merit

Clasp to the Iron Cross (1939)

1st Class (22 December 1939)

2nd Class (12 June 1940)

German Cross in Gold on 18 June 1943 as *Generalleutnant* and commander of the 22. Infanterie-Division

Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves and Swords
 Knight's Cross on 22 September 1941 as Oberstleutnant and
 commander of Infanterie-Regiment 105

86th Oak Leaves on 8 April 1942 as Oberst and commander
 of Infanterie-Regiment 105

128th Swords on 27 January 1945 as General der Infanterie
 and commanding general of the LXVIII. Armeekorps

Mentioned four times in the Wehrmachtbericht (19 January
 1942, 18 November 1943, 10 March 1945 and 30 March 1945)

***Wehrmachtbericht* references**

Date

19 January 1942

In the reconquest of Feodosia, the Knight's Cross
 bearer Colonel Mueller has once again distinguished
 himself by showing excellent personal courage, deci-
 siveness and prudent leadership of his regiment.

18 November 1943

As announced by special bulletin, German troops of
 the Army and the Air Force under the command of
 Lieutenant General Müller, after four days of tough
 and changeful fighting, have against an enemy of supe-
 rior numbers and armament, conquered the British
 naval base at Leros on 16 November.

Generalmajor Heinrich Kreipe

Dates: *5 June 1895 Niedesper, Thuringia – +14 June 1976

A German general, who served in World War II. He is most
 famous for his spectacular abduction by British and Cretan
 resistance fighters from occupied Crete in April 1944. Kreipe
 was born in Niederspier, Thuringia. Upon the outbreak of
 World War I, he volunteered for the army, and rose through
 the ranks, being appointed lieutenant in December 1915. Af-
 ter the war's end, Kreipe enlisted in the Hessen-Thüringen-
 Waldeck Freikorps, and joined the new Reichswehr in Octo-
 ber 1919. He was retained in the much-reduced German ar-
 med forces permitted after the Treaty of Versailles, a testa-
 ment to his ability as a soldier. By 1939, he had risen to the
 rank of Colonel.

Kreipe was the 13th of 15 children of evangelical pastor Frie-

drich Kreipe and his wife Maria (born Pfannschmidt). He attended high school in Sondershausen.



Kreipe came a few days after the outbreak of the First World

War on August 11, 1914 the army a. During the war he was used for instance in Verdun. He most recently served as a lieutenant in the Reserve Infantry Regiment 237. Even in the Weimar Republic, he was an officer in various uses in the infantry troops, including as a teacher at the military school in Hanover.

On October 1, 1938, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel. As of August 26, 1939 he was commander of Infantry Regiment 909th

Second World War

During World War II Kreipe was involved in the siege of Leningrad. He was promoted on October 1, 1941 Colonel and awarded on 13 October 1941, the Knight's Cross. From 10 June to 24 October 1943, he commanded the 79th Infantry Division on the Eastern Front. On September 1, 1943, he was appointed major general. On 15 February 1944 he became commander of the 22nd Infantry Division in Crete (Greece).

Kreipe was spent by his captors with his official car on Heraklion in the near Anoghia, from there on foot and at times with mule above the Ida Mountains in the south of the island. There, the hijackers and Kreipe were collected from Rodakino by a British boat. The march through Crete lasted until May 15, technical problems when radio contact with Cairo and search operations of the German occupation troops forced to unwanted detours and breaks.

To protect the Cretan civilians from retaliation, the German Wehrmacht should be deceived and believe that only British and regular Greek soldiers were involved in the kidnapping. This deception was not successful. The Wehrmacht still made the Cretan population partly responsible, since the used routes and hiding places without the Cretans could not have been used.

Several villages, including Anoghia were looted by the German occupiers in "Sanctions" and destroyed and killed many people. Hans Prescher identifies six villages with 176 victims.

Originally General Friedrich-Wilhelm Müller should (Kreipes predecessor as commander of the 22nd Infantry Division in Crete) are kidnapped because he was for several already committed war crimes of the Wehrmacht against the civilian population in Crete (including destruction of several villages in Viannos) responsible. Surprisingly, however, he was dismissed and replaced by Kreipe.

Road at Archanes, was kidnapped at the Kreipe. The monument of Tsombanakis symbolizes the broken power of the Axis Powers

After Kreipes kidnapping Müller was again ordered to return to Crete and was appointed commander of the "Fortress Crete". Commander of the 22nd Infantry Division was Lieutenant General Helmut Friebe. Müller continued his brutal actions and as Bruno Bräuer executed for his war crimes in 1947.

Post	War	Period
After his release from captivity Kreipe returned to Germany. He lived up to his death with his wife Ilse, born Behrens, retired in Hanover. In Hanover-Ricklingen he is buried.		

Abduction by Greek and British agents

In the spring of 1944, a plan was laid out by the Allies to kidnap General Müller, whose harsh repressive measures had earned him the nickname "the Butcher of Crete". The operation was led by Major Patrick Leigh Fermor, together with Captain Bill Stanley Moss, Greek SOE agents and Cretan resistance fighters. However, Müller left the island before the plan could be carried out. Undeterred, Fermor decided to abduct Kreipe instead.

In the night of 26 April, General Kreipe left his headquarters in Archanes and headed without escort to his well-guarded residence, "Villa Ariadni", approximately 25 km outside Heraklion. Major Fermor and Captain Moss, dressed as German military policemen, waited for him 1 km before his residence. They asked the driver to stop and asked for their papers. As soon as the car stopped, Fermor quickly opened Kreipe's

door, rushed in and threatened him with his gun while Moss took the driver's seat. The abduction is commemorated near Archanes. Moss drove the kidnappers and the General in his car for an hour and a half through 22 controlled road blocks in Heraklion before leaving Leigh Fermor to go on and abandon the car, with suitable decoy material being planted that suggesting an escape off the island had been made by submarine. Moss set off with the General on a cross-country march supported by andartes to be rejoined by Leigh Fermor. Hunted by German patrols, the group moved across the mountains to reach the southern side of the island, where a British Motor Launch (ML 842 commanded by Brian Coleman) was to pick them up. Eventually, on 14 May 1944, they were picked up (from Peristeres beach near Rhodakino) and transferred to Egypt.

Kreipe was interrogated, and then transferred to a POW camp in Canada. Later transferred to a special camp in Wales, Kreipe was released from British captivity in 1947. General Kreipe met his kidnappers one more time in 1972 in a Greek TV show. He died at Northeim on 14 June 1976.

Generalleutnant Helmut Friebe

Dates: * 4. November 1894, Droschkau (Kreis Namslau) - † 14. January 1970, Friedrichshafen

Helmut Friebe came after his cadet training on March 22, 1914 as an ensign in the Royal Prussian Army a. He first came to the Silesian Fusilier Regiment "General-Field Marshal Count Moltke" no. 38. He was the older brother of the later Major General Werner Friebe. On August 5, 1914, he was promoted in this regiment to lieutenant. As such, it was only a few days later to the front. Two weeks later, he was very seriously wounded. In the spring of 1916, he was reinstated at a recruiting depot. In early June 1917, he came as MG officer to regimental headquarters of Silesian Fusilier Regiment "General-Field Marshal Count Moltke" no. 38. In this he represented then the next 9 months several times the regimental adjutant. In early March 1918, he was then to regimental adjutant from Silesian Fusilier Regiment "Field Marshal Count Molt-

ke" Nr. 38 appointed. He suffered in the First World War not only several wounds, which was reflected in the award of the Wounded Badge in Silver. In WW1 it also further awards were next to the Knight's Cross of the Royal Prussian House Order of Hohenzollern with swords and two Iron Crosses.

After the war, he was then transferred to the imperial army. He came first to Reichswehr Infantry Regiment 11. At 200,000 man-transition army in the spring of 1920 he was employed in this as a battalion adjutant. In the formation of the 100,000-man army of the army, he was then in the II. (Hunter) Battalion of 7 (Preuss.) Adopted Infantry Regiment. In this he was then used in the coming years as a company officer. On April 1, 1924 he was promoted to lieutenant. As such, it was used at that time as a company officer with the 5th company in Glatz. In summer 1924, he was then appointed in Swidnica to aide the training battalion of 7 (Preuss.) Infantry Regiment. On 1 October 1926, he was then placed in the bar of the 3rd Division of the army to Berlin. He then completed the next few years its leaders assistants training. Thereafter he remained employed in this bar.

On 1 February 1929 he was promoted to captain. Even as such he remained in Berlin at the headquarters of the 3rd Division of the army used. On April 1, 1933, he was treated as a company commander 1st (Preuss.) Infantry Regiment East Prussia. With the enlargement of the Reichswehr into the Wehrmacht, he was appointed on 1 October 1934 company commander in Infantry Regiment Königsberg. On 1 June 1935 he was promoted as such to the Major. In the unmasking of the organizations he was on October 15, 1935, the commander of the III. Battalion appointed by Infantry Regiment. 2 On 1 February 1938 he was promoted to lieutenant colonel. In the mobilization for World War 2 in the summer of 1939, he gave his command and was now XXI as an aide to General Command. Army Corps added. With this rod he was then employed in the Polish campaign. He has been wounded after a few days. In early December 1939, he was appointed commander of the Infantry Replacement Regiment 1 in Königsberg after his recovery. The end of May 1940, he resigned