

Donald P. Burkel
Guest lecturer

German Officer Corps, World War Two
Paul Schulte's American History, 20th Century (HIS-204) class

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Q: We are fortunate today to have Don Burkel Jr. come in to talk to us. If you remember, his father came in and gave us a presentation on the Civil War. Young Mr. Burkel here is a 1978 graduate of GCC and has gone on to get his bachelors at [unclear], working on his masters. The family has been involved in going back and forth to Europe, particularly Germany, over quite a number of years. The Burkel family has made connections with a number of the German officers, the German high-command in WWII. Mr. Burkel has done considerable research in Europe on the German military staff. On his master's thesis is going to be on modern Germany, so he has done quite a bit of research. What he is here today to talk to us about is the German high-command and the German military in WWII. It's interesting to understand then, particularly in the light of obviously Adolf Hitler who never rose above the rank of corporal in WWI being their boss and essentially giving them military orders. And here are men who are trained in the military profession who know some of the things he is suggesting probably won't work. And it caught very early on when something did work and what do you do. Let me turn it over to Don and he can tell us about the German high-command in WWII.

DB: Thank you, Paul. First of all, I would like to say I will be talking about the German Officer Corp. But I think it is essential that we understand what the German Officer Corp is or was. In terms of 1939 to 1945, which is what the wars years were for the German military in WWII. We would be looking at an officer corps, a general staff which not only at that particular time for its immediate dominance in the military role of Germany. But we have to look back. It is made up of more than that. It is two-hundred-seventy years of tradition. It is not just twelve years. It was two-hundred-seventy years. Mostly, you will find written stories or histories on the German Officer Corp about WWII. Little is said about why these men did what they did. It was made up of individuals, but within that individual framework, there was an institution which was their guideline. And this is what I am going to focus on today using two or three of the main characters that I worked with. In fact, two of the gentlemen, who I can point out to you did come to Batavia and one of them was at GCC here in the library in 1972.

We will start off by pointing out what the whole institution was about. The German Officer Corp was guided by a whole philosophy, a tradition, a set of values of two-hundred-seventy years. When we look at this, we see...for example, a gentleman like this. [shows an elderly [Hermann] Balck] What I would like to ask first of all is, someone out here, what does this gentleman look like to you or what might he represent to you? This gentleman right here in the front row.

Unknown speaker: He looks like a banker.

DB: A banker. Ok. The lady across from him. What would your impression be?

Unknown speaker: [unclear]

DB: Well, he was someone's grandfather, yes. Ironically, his great-great-grandfather came from Finland in about the fourteen-hundreds. He became one of the leading generals in WWII. His name is Hermann Balck. But this man, whose family evolved through the military system was a gentleman who himself made a quote once to me and it's quite interesting. He said "Outsiders do not ever understand the German military. Especially the officer corps because our discipline and our actions are something that are more within our tradition and we understand them better."

[shows a younger Hermann Balck as a General] And here is how he evolved from that picture prior to looking as a grandfather as a German officer in WWII. He was a three-star general. But he did maintain and abide by the disciplines of the German Officer Corp.

[shows Hitler with a group of men looking at a map] When Adolf Hitler took power in 1933, things changed for the German Officer Corp in one sense. It tried to maintain its tradition. General Balck, of course, was abiding by those rules of tradition and the values set down. But during this period, the greatest change for the German army took place. And that is it became a mass army introduced to the various levels of society. Prior to this for over two-hundred and some years, it had been a very elite army corps.

[shows slide of Frederick the Great] It stems back to this man here, Frederick the Great. Approximately 1740 to 1788 he reigned. He is probably well known for his mastery in military tactics and also discipline. The traditions of Balck go back to this gentleman, even to his father, Frederick William I, who first initiated the German Officer Corp. Setting down that it will be an elite group of individuals who will be my officers. Primary those men who came from Prussia across the river Elbe. They were known as Junkers. And the revolution began.

[shows slide of Scharnhorst] Men such as [Gerhard] von Scharnhorst. He was the man who developed or created the German general staff, which in 1945 came to an abrupt end, but was based on tradition and class.

[shows slide of von Clausewitz] We see [Carl] von Clausewitz, a famous writer on military tactics and strategy and philosophy most of all. Who at one time said “War is just a another means of continuing diplomacy; however, he did not promote war as many of his successors would.

[shows slide of Edwin von Manteuffel] This was a man who, throughout the evolution and about 1850 to 1880 presented probably one of the greatest threats to the bourgeoisie middle-class liberal elements in Germany. The German general staff and the German Officer Corps were based primarily on an elite caste system. They were isolated from the average person. If you were a middle-class individual, you could not participate or you could not join to become an officer in the German Officer Corps. This is the way it was. This man here, Edwin von Manteuffel. He was a baron who later became a field marshal was primarily the man who set the tone for over thirty years for the German Officer Corps. In that he cleansed it with any liberal elements. He wanted a pure German Officer Corps based on the Junker or Prussian nobility.

[shows slide of Hasso von Manteuffel] This, ironically enough, in 1944 is his great-grandson. It’s interesting to note in seeing the field marshal and his grandson how the evolution was taking place. From about 1860 until 1945, many of the men who participated in the German Officer Corps or were in the German army of WWII, had relatives back to the 1860’s and even further. General Hasso von Manteuffel was the gentleman who was here at GCC in 1972. His family goes back in German history to about 1215 in Pomerania. So, they had a very long history in Germany being prime ministers, military men and this was part of the evolution. Part of the whole structure of the German Officer Corps. He was a nobleman, so he was entitled to be an officer. This was another interesting fact. If you were a nobleman or had been a noble, you were entitled to be in the officer corps. It was also a way of life. We have to remember that there wasn’t a whole lot for these individuals to do. They were not well-educated men. I’m saying, generally prior to his generation, they were not well-educated. They did not have a lot of money. What they did have were large estates and this provided them the background and perhaps the basis for the military education because it was cheap. If you were in the calvary, it was a little more expensive, but this was a profession for them. Otherwise, what were they going to do?

[shows slide of Eccard von Manteuffel] As we evolve through the time, we see that General von Manteuffel’s father had been an officer as well. This is Eccard von Manteuffel. So, his son naturally would have followed. Great-grandfather, son, and now grandson.

[shows slide of cadet Hasso von Manteuffel] Here is General [Hasso] von Manteuffel as a cadet. They entered at a very early age. The whole process was

through heritage, through privilege and through an occupation. In this case General von Manteuffel at this age didn't have much choice. It was chosen for him. He is at the age of nine when he entered the cadet school. The rest of his life would be dedicated to the German Officer Corps.

[shows a younger Balck as a general] This again is General [Hermann] Balck, who you saw earlier. His family is a little bit different now. He was not a nobleman. But if you were an officer or you came from an officer's family, you were also entitled to be an officer or enter the cadet school.

[shows a slide of Balck's great-grandfather] General Balck's great-grandfather who came from Hanover, which was another military capital, you might say in Germany where many outstanding officers came. There was a very well-known military school there. Again, began the evolution.

[shows a slide of Balck] This was General Balck's father [William]. In the first World War, he was a division commander. So, naturally it would be for General [Hermann] Balck to follow in his father's footsteps and become a cadet as well.

[shows a slide] We are seeing this whole development at this elite group of officers who are isolated from the mass who had controlled the monarch, who had controlled government because they were not under the constitution of Germany. They had always remained aloof. They remained under the power of the monarch, the Kaiser. They could even change the budget if they wanted. And, as we will see a little bit later, in WWI they could even take the advisor of the Kaiser, the emperor, and dismiss him. They had that much power. They were better known as a state within a state.

[shows an image of Hindenburg, Kaiser, Ludendorff looking at a map] Here we see in WWI, from about 1890 to 1914, beginning the evolution again was based upon the German Officer Corps and its dominance. However; changes were taking place. Modern Europe was seeing that technologies were entering in. Financial markets were booming. Industrialization was occurring. And due to all of this, again the idea of modern warfare entered the picture. Germany could no longer remain idle. The German Officer Corps had to become educated somewhat. Again, engineering was taking a primary role. Artillery was becoming very sophisticated. The introduction of the airplane, things like this. So, consequently at this juncture in the history of the German Officer Corps, changes were about to take place. They had to loosen the belt and allow certain middle-class elements in. Upper middle-class. At this particular time too, it was predominant for many people, for example if you were a lawyer, to wear a German officer's uniform. This was prestige. This was honor. Not necessarily were you interested in war. That was the least of their thoughts. But the prestige that it represented in the German society because the uniform had always been

this tradition and always stood out. As we move into the period of WWI, here we see the Kaiser [Wilhelm II] in the middle, we see [Paul] von Hindenburg on the left and [Erich Friedrich Wilhelm] Ludendorff on the right.

The German Officer Corp at this time, even though allowing other elements into it, became a very powerful force. At this time, they could even dictate to the Kaiser who his advisors were going to be. Eventually, by 1918 they had taken over. It was known as a silent dictatorship. They actually were controlling the war effort. The Kaiser at one time had said to one of his advisors "You realize, I'd be [unclear] and pick apples. I have nothing else to do. These men are totally in control." This was the beginning of the twentieth century and the changes that were going to lead up to the Third Reich and what eventually happened. This was the beginning or the demise of the German Officer Corps as it had been known.

[shows slide of General von Manteuffel] Here is another photo of General [Hasso] von Manteuffel. This was during the WWI period. This type of officer who was an elite cavalry man had always distinguished themselves. You can see by his appearance here. They were a very proud type of men. But yet they were not ready for the defeat of WWI. And with the end of WWI, they lost the one solid pillar that had always kept them an elite group of men. They did not have to worry about a constitution. Civil control by a parliament or anything else. Because the monarch had always been there to protect them and said "I run the army." But at this time, the monarch had to abdicate in 1919. He had to go to the Netherlands. Therefore, men like General Hasso von Manteuffel, as a young lieutenant, in a hussar regiment had lost the pillar by which the officer corps had developed and by which he had been educated primarily prior to WWI and into the twentieth century.

[shows slide of von Seeckt] Along came Reichswehr government and with that government following WWI, came a whole new set of rules. It developed for the first time a constitution and with this constitution the German Army was bound to a constitution. Civil government. What a change. At first there had been revolution. There was a threat of revolution. There was even a mutiny by the German soldiers returning from France and from Russia. However; General [Hans] Von Seeckt was a man who pulled the German Army together. He was a nobleman as well. He was putting himself into a position which was going to be extremely difficult by unifying those men who were noblemen who had been the core of the German Officer Corps. In getting them to understand that the constitutional government is what is necessary and that the German Officer Corps and Army would be the core for the Reichswehr and for the future. He had quite a job. The one thing he did do apart from organizing them over a short few years was the fact that he did isolate the German Officer Corps from politics. Because they had become quite political in their motivation with the Kaiser. They did interfere in foreign affairs, they dictated to the German government, they

were able to decide on chancellors pretty much. In fact, in WWI, they forced a chancellor out of government because he did not agree with their thinking, militarily. The chancellor had no way around dealing with the German Officer Corps. He had to concede. However; Von Seeckt make it very plain that the German soldier and officer were not to participate actively in any type of political party or to take part in the government in any way. And that includes voting. During this period from about 1923 up to about 1932, the German Officer Corps, again, even though they were subjected to a parliamentary form of government, rose to a position this time with the content of more middle-class and lower-class individuals who were able to become officers. Their strength as a state within a state did arise because again, who were they led by, a nobleman. So, Von Seeckt brought them into a new period in preparation for the Third Reich which they weren't aware of at this time. Only the rumblings of Adolf Hitler in 1923 with the Putsch. And of course, there are activities politically in the streets with riots with the communist elements and all.

The German Army at this time, you must also keep in mind, due to the upheaval and change in government, primarily was the guardian of the state. They were going to protect against the elements which were trying to overthrow, such as the communists or the socialists.

[shows slide with Hitler, Keitel and Jodl] Here, we see Adolf Hitler with two of his higher command officers. On the far right is Field Marshal [Wilhelm] Keitel. And in the middle is Generaloberst [Alfred] Jodl. and on course on the left is Adolf Hitler. When the movement of the Nazi Party and Hitler coming to power in 1933, the German Officer Corp saw one thing. They had risen to a state, which even though under civil government, had power. They were primarily made up of noblemen with other elements mixed in. However, Adolf Hitler saw them as his answer to success. The German Officer Corps and their tradition, which had evolved, now up to this point in 1933 is something that he really disliked tremendously. He didn't like noblemen. He was basing his whole platform on the common man. The ideals of the common person and how we can bring them from unemployment and develop a society that way. The men that surrounded him in the German Officer Corps in these early stages, he had to rely on simply because they were the answer to what he wanted to achieve. But he disliked them tremendously.

[shows slide of von Manstein] And therefore, men like Field Marshall [Eric] von Manstein, whose family went back to about thirteen-hundred, was a nobleman, but yet he was one of the more senior officers of the German Officer Corps. And he couldn't do without them, otherwise where would he have that stabilizing element.

[shows slide of von Fritsch] We see another gentleman who became a very predominant element in his military. This is [Werner] Freiherr von Fritsch. Freiherr in German means baron. However, this gentleman who represented the nobility in 1938 was dismissed by Hitler. It was a plot to get him out because things would change as we will see.

[shows slide of von Manteuffel] This is General [Hasso] von Manteuffel. He being a nobleman was the younger generation in this traditional set of officers. Of the three men that I showed you, it is rather interesting to note that they represented one of three groups. This was the traditional group, men who believed in the state. By the state, I mean the old monarchial way of doing things [unclear] with discipline. Nothing to do with the Third Reich in the sense of politics, Adolf Hitler or the blind obedience that he was going to demand with the political orientation to it.

[shows slide of Balck, von Mellenthin and 2 other men] And this is General [Hermann] Balck on the left here, on his right is his chief of staff, a nobleman as well. His name was [Wilhelm] von Mellenthin. In fact on the bibliography that I've given you, the man on the right has written two books that are very interesting. But here again, you have two men who were elements of that younger generation of noblemen who were supporting the German Army. And in this case, they were front-line officers as General von Manteuffel was.

[shows slide of von Blomberg] This is the second group. This was a group that perhaps some have said dominated the Officer Corps. I don't believe so. I feel that they were an element but not a great element. These were the party men. Men who adhered to Adolf Hitler for several reasons perhaps to gain position. To maybe rise in rank in some way or another. There were several different theories to why such a man as [Werner] von Blomberg who became the Minister of Defense would adhere to Adolf Hitler's way of thinking. But if one thinks about it, Adolf Hitler went about coming to power in a very unique way. He never really set forth his dialogue as far as the traditional element of the German Army. The Officer Corps was always going to play a role. Blomberg was a man who, I believe in good faith, felt that this was the way it was going to be. However; he too was dismissed after a number of years simply because he was a noble element and he had been used as far as he could be used. Even so, he did continue to support Hitler from behind the scenes as a private citizen. The intrigue behind his dismissal was a bit off-color. They, and I will tell you this quickly. In order to get men, like him out, they would perhaps say that your wife had been a former woman of the streets. They would have documentation. And this was the case with [unclear]. And of course, if you had that type of reputation or wife you were not a noble general staff officer and you would be dismissed.

[shows slide of Waffen SS soldier] This is another part of that party element. But this group here, and you will see the skull and crossbones represents a political military group known as the SS or Waffen SS. Waffen in German means combat. This element was a very strong force in two ways. First of all, it did support Adolf Hitler. It was Adolf Hitler's praetorian guard if you want to say this. They also were a young group of individuals. A new military organization which had been developed under him. They believed firmly in what Adolf Hitler had to say, especially the officers. Many of the men who joined the Waffen SS were former officers in the Army. But they were not noblemen, generally. There were very few noblemen that joined the Waffen SS. They were more from the middle-class, lower-class element. Many men who had even been non-commissioned officers. One man who rose to a position in the Waffen SS was Sepp Dietrich. I don't know if the name is familiar to you or not. He had at one time been Hitler's chauffeur. He had been a sergeant in WWI who rose to a four-star general in the Waffen SS. It was brought to my attention one time in discussing with General von Manteuffel, who had served along with Dietrich in the Battle of the Bulge, he said to him "What kind of man was Dietrich, was he qualified?" I've always heard that it was always a very politically oriented corp. He said "Oh, yes, he was a talented man, beyond being Hitler's chauffeur, he did have some military insight. However; beyond the regiment, I don't think he could have done much." He said he commanded an army in the Battle of the Bulge of about four-hundred-thousand men. So, from a regiment to four-hundred-thousand men, one can imagine that his skills were a little bit limited when he got to that level.

But the second group and with the Waffen SS made up a very strong threat to the German Officer Corps and Army. It was politically oriented; it did support Adolf Hitler and it came pretty close to a million men with all of its divisions. They had tank divisions, infantry divisions, grenadier divisions. They were well equipped and their officers were very well trained. You might make a comparison that they were like the Green Berets in many aspects. They were extremely trained in combat and they were well indoctrinated in combat as well. They had severe losses. But this element here was another stabilizing factor for Adolf Hitler. It was also a destabilizing factor for the German Officer Corps and the Army as we know it.

[shows slide of Rommel] This is the third group. This man, I don't know if you recognize, you should. I'm positive you have heard about him. Films. Books have been written about him, numerous ones. This is Erwin Rommel. Erwin Rommel was the son of a school teacher. He came from a background of a middle-class German family in southern Germany, actually south-west Germany in Wurttemberg. Where several officers came from who served in the German Officer Corps. He did not come from an officer family where their heritage went back two or three-hundred years. He did not come from a noble family. He did get in because of qualifications prior to WWI to a cadet school and worked his

way up. This type of officer, the third element in the Third Reich or the German Officer Corps at this time was more of a passive, a neutral type of officer. Who, professionally did what they had to do and had blinders on much of the time. Even though Adolf Hitler used him as a propaganda element, he really did not pay a tremendous amount of attention to Hitler. He was not politically oriented to any degree. His main focus was his activity at the front. He was a front-line commander, did very well tactically and of course, Hitler could make a hero of him. Which he did. This eventually backfired, as you might well know, in 1944, after the plot against Adolf Hitler to kill Hitler, Rommel was implicated. Not necessarily was he a main element, which he was not, but his name had been mentioned. He was given the choice; do you want a dishonorable discharge and be disgraced or do you want to take poison. He took the poison. In order to maintain his honor as a German officer and a field marshal.

[shows slide of Halder] This is how the third element evolves. This is another gentleman in that group. He was a passive individual and more or less a man who evolved again from a middle-class background. His name is Franz Halder. Franz Halder came from Bavaria. He succeeded a man who had been a nobleman. Hitler chose him simply for one reason. Because he was not a nobleman and he had a rather passive way about him. He did not feel that there would be any resistance. This third group represents an element where professionally they will do their job but I won't get any flak. There will be no major questions. I will dictate what I have to militarily and they will accept it. However; Halder was involved in a plot to kill Adolf Hitler in 1938. It was not a plot which did evolve to fruition in a sense of actually attacking Hitler or a movement to assassinate him at any one point. But he was in a group which focused on the idea of eliminating him. At the juncture when it became important to make a decision about this, this gentleman backed out. He continued in utter silence to do his professional duty up until 1942 when Adolf Hitler did not really care for his opinion about the war in Russia. Franz Halder's career ended in 1942. Later to end up in a concentration camp and at the end of the war be released by the Allies. In fact, this gentleman worked for the U.S. Historical Division following WWII up until about 1968. This is where I came in contact with him.

[shows slide of a battlefield] With the three elements described, you can have a better understanding now as we get into the development of the war. We go on through a period where Hitler was making a choice of who was going to serve in his Army. He needed the tradition but yet as he moved closer to building the army that he wanted in 1936, mass conscription took place. This brought about a whole change in the Officer Corps as well. All of a sudden, any element could be within the German Officer Corps. Any element. And also, you have an Army that was made up of a cross section of the German population. This was something the German Officer Corps prior had never known. It finally had to come into contact socially with the lower level of German society. That means non-

commissioned officers and privates. And to develop a relationship because the Third Reich and the ideology that Hitler espoused to [Alfred] Rosenberg, his philosopher, was that that the mass had to develop this unification. As we evolve through this time, the dismissal of certain noble officers, the heterogeneous movement of Hitler's philosophy to unify the German military and political military, the Waffen SS, into one massive machine, the war takes on a whole new dimension.

Because the Officer Corps itself was really not prepared for war, mentally and physically. Especially mentally. They had advised Adolf Hitler many times against attacking France, even Poland in 1939. Their apprehension was dispelled by the mere fact that Hitler was victorious with blitzkrieg. As we near the point of 1941 and the attack on Russia, they are very weary. They realize that they have to have time to build an army. And they are advising Hitler of this. But here comes the real collapse of the German Officer Corps. Hitler didn't want to hear negativity [unclear]. And again, it was based on the nobility is the element, their traditional and they are trying to discourage. And they are negative and I don't want them to head my officer corps any more. With the attack on Russia in 1941, many of the officers who were noble or of old officer traditional culture were dismissed within the first year of the attack on Russia.

[shows slide of soldiers] As things become more involved and as the German military discovered that it did not have the wealth of materials that it needed, as most of the old officers understood, they were positive of one thing, that you cannot win, especially against a country of this size. You cannot have a two-front war. That was already proven in WWI.

[shows slide of von Manteuffel, German officer and a tank] But Hitler had dismissed most of these men and those who were left were men such as General [Hasso] von Manteuffel. A younger element and that first group that I pointed out to you. Here seen in Romania in 1944, he was a division commander. The Russian front was collapsing. We would soon see too in June of 1944; the Allies would set foot in mass on the shores of Normandy. The German Army knew that the two-front war was failing. It was men like General von Manteuffel who did see one optimistic note in all of this. It was not to have victory, it was not to support Adolf Hitler, but it was to bring about an end to WWII in such a way that there wasn't chaos, that there was not disaster and that they could withdraw to the borders of Germany and perhaps stabilize, under Allied control, some kind of new government and Germany would remain somewhat intact. The officers on the western front were more in a passive way able to justify their situation with the Allies because of the lack of severity in the attitude. The men on the eastern front were certainly in a situation where they had to defend every inch of ground even though it was defensive not offensive. Simply because of the nature of the Russian. We have to remember that approximately twenty-two million Russians

died in WWII. As the onslaught had taken place in the early years in the Russian campaign, the Russians remembered this well now that they were on the offensive. This type of officer from the first group who was really rather offensive to Hitler still in many ways being noble, he had to come to rely on. Because they were the last hope for defending Germany, his ideals and they were well aware of what the situation was and capable of perhaps bringing it to a negotiated end.

[shows slide of von Manteuffel shaking hands with Hitler] Here is a picture of General [Hasso] von Manteuffel with Adolf Hitler. This was in 1944 as well. I'm pointing out the fact that Hitler had to rely on these men. Years prior after he had dismissed the majority of the older, more superior officers from the Officer Corps, he would not have associated with these men or taken them into his confidence. Manteuffel and General Balck were two which he had to rely on. That was the last bastion.

[shows slide of D-Day landing] As we see here, this is a shot of D-Day. The movement towards the end is near. The Allies have reached the shores in 1944.

[shows slide of Blumentritt] A man such as General Gunther Blumentritt, who represents the third group. Men who were professionals. Demonstrated professionally as officers that they would defend Germany because they knew ultimately what the end would mean. And in this particular case, General Blumentritt, who was a bit more passive professional group, very commendable man in the sense of standards, as far as a general staff officer, demonstrated, even though he knew about the plot against Adolf Hitler shortly after the invasion in 1944, that it was better to allow the Allies a foothold and to attrition to wear down rather than to support Adolf Hitler's demands to hold the Allies at the shores. In a way, the Officer Corps now, which was in its demise, his men realized it was pretty much over, their position as a state within a state, since about 1935, had really diminished. That finally the tradition was going to be coming to an end. But they were doing everything in their power to preserve Germany as a country and the civilian population.

[shows slide of von Manteuffel and Model and 2 officers looking at a paper] This is a photo of the Ardennes and General von Manteuffel. Along with [Hasso] von Manteuffel, the second to the right and the second from the left was a great supporter of Adolf Hitler. His name was field marshal [Otto] Model. Ironically enough this picture kind of symbolizes something here. Manteuffel was the younger Prussian officer who represented the last hope. Adolf Hitler had selected him to head a Panzer Army of three-hundred-thousand men to defend against the...to assault the Allies in the Ardennes. The last hope of cutting them off and making a defense in Antwerp. Field Marshal Model represented a man of middle-class origin who had risen to be a field marshal. Yet, was of middle-class stock and supported Adolf Hitler. The irony of this picture comes down to the fact that

Model, I don't know if you can see it too well, but in his left eye is wearing a monocle. In 1942, General von Manteuffel had refused to take, this was on the Russian front, I should clarify that. Serving under Field Marshal Model, General von Manteuffel refused to send his troops into battle without proper winter clothing. White. So, that they couldn't be shot down. All they had on was their drab green and it was not winter clothing either. And he said "I refuse to send my troops into battle." At that time, Model, who was a very ardent supporter of Adolf Hitler, wanted him court marshalled. Fortunately, through internal politics of the Officer Corps, Manteuffel was sent back to France for rest and relaxation and the issue was dismissed. He was dismissed simply because an uncle of Manteuffel's intervened, who was a nobleman. And for some reason changed the course of action; however, this is 1944. Here are these two gentlemen. Von Manteuffel came to Field Marshal Model's headquarters to talk for the first time. There was a question mark on his mind. First of all, this man was a supporter of Hitler, he will fight to the last man and what can I expect? He wanted to court marshal me at one point. He came in and they discussed the situation as it was. Model in his parting words said "Manteuffel, you are a nobleman, you wear regular glasses." And you can see his glasses on him there. He said "You, know, being a nobleman, you should wear a monocle like I wear." And he handed him one. Manteuffel said "Herr Field Marshal, I am not accustomed to squinting like this and contorting my face. It would be very uncomfortable. Furthermore, I don't know if I can read this with just one glass." He left and Model didn't say anything after that. When I saw Manteuffel he pulled out this monocle one time at his home and said to me "This is the only decent thing he tried to do and it yet it would never work. I could never understand how these men could do this." And yet he came from the aristocracy. He was supposed to be wearing these. Yet, here was an officer who did not come from that tradition and was wearing one. So, it's kind of ironic. At this point in Model's career, he was becoming more convinced than ever that the war was lost. And did support Manteuffel throughout their last efforts. And it is kind of ironic too that Model, shortly after this photo, a month or so, did commit suicide.

[shows slide of Ardennes battle] This is the evolution of the Ardennes offensive. As we can see here in this picture, which is symbolized by these SS soldiers, defeat was eminent.

[shows slide of city in rubble] And of course, defeat proceeded to hamper the move of weapons, the supply lines and communication lines to Germany. The retreat across the Rhine and things were closing in and we end up with rubble. This primarily is what happened to the German Officer Corps. That its decline turned into rubble because they were a dysfunctional institution. They no longer had a corps. Hitler died in April of 1945 and they no longer even had a military leader who they had sworn an oath to. Admiral [Karl] Doenitz had taken over but there was very little confidence in him because of the lack of time.

That's pretty much an outline of how the German Officer Corps was. It was based on militarism. I would like to part with this quote which was written by the name of Alfred Vagts. He is an expert and has written a book on militarism about really what the German Officer Corps represented up until the last. His quote "Militarism on the other hand presents a vast array of customs, interests, prestige, actions, thought associated with armies in war and yet transcending true military purposes. Indeed, militarism is so constituted that it may hamper and defeat the purposes of the military way. Its influences are limited in scope and it may permeate all of society and become dominant wherever it's focused."

This is kind of an interesting statement because they were an influence on all facets of German society. And as we see at the very end what it turned into. The whole German society succumbed to the defeat. And never again would the German Officer Corps arise because it never would have that impetus, never had that tradition of two-hundred-seventy years behind it. At that point WWII really was the last of the German Officer Corps as one had known it for that period of time. So, that is all I have to say. Are there any questions you care to ask? None?

[unknown speaker] Who was the chancellor that was forced to resign?

DB: His name was [unclear] He was a man who had originally had supported the Kaiser and the German Officer Corps in WWI. But as 1916 became a year of collapse and Ludendorff and Hindenburg were taking over, they did not necessarily see him as the man that they wanted. Because he did not condone the idea of increasing U-boat warfare. And they wanted to annex more of the Soviet Union or Russia. They wanted these annexations and he was not in compliance with that. So, they decided to send a note to the emperor that he should be replaced and so he was.

[unknown speaker] They had a movie out. I think it was called "Hitler, the last ten days". Is that really how it happened in the end? How he killed himself [unclear]?

DB: Yes. You are referring to Hitler? Yes, Hitler did kill himself with a cyanide capsule and also a revolver was supposedly used too. There are several sources who will verify the fact that he was dead. Even though they like to maintain the mystique and perhaps he is somewhere. Is he really dead? Is he in South America, like Borman. Two officers that I did know who were in the bunker; it was verified to them after they left the bunker that he was dead. They are pretty sure that he did die in there simply for the fact that he was not going to leave Berlin. Anybody else?

Q: Thank you very much, Don.