

# A Generaloberst of Nazi Germany

## Memoir of Generaloberst Heinrich von Albrecht

### **April 20th 1945 11am**

Gudrun dead; Ilse and Gisela lost; the house in ruins. This pales in comparison with the fall of Germany. I am sitting in the ruins of my study, perched on what I believe used to be my dining table. I wait for Allied soldiers to appear. Yesterday I visited high command for the last time, Hitler has secreted himself away inside his bunker safe from bombings. I see no reason to return. I went to all the bomb shelters I could, not one had seen my girls. So now I sit here, flipping through my diaries, waiting for someone to find me.

### **September 2nd 1940**

Gudrun sacked our cook today. She was Jewish. I had never even seen this woman, only Gudrun knew her. A part of me feels disgusted that we are forced to sack people for their religion, another part of me wants to do all I can to avoid suspicion. We shall have to hire another cook yet with the war our chances of finding one are slim. Perhaps Gundrun could cook?

### **September 1st 1939**

It is happening again. Another war: they said that the Versaille Treaty would stop a war like this happening ever again. I do not know if I can do this all over again. I can see, even now, the screams, the explosion, the violence. I wonder if we go to such lengths can we ever return. Did we doom ourselves to re-visiting this horror? I wonder whose husbands or sons will die out on the battlefields.

### **6th June 1944**

I could barely move under the reports coming this morning. Allied forces landing at Normandy: it has all gone disastrously wrong. High command was breathing down my neck, despite their insistence that an attack would arrive at Calais. Our only hope at holding France now is my panzer divisions. The Atlantikwall can only hold for so long. I find it hard to see how anything but my panzers will stall this onslaught, the Kriegsmarine is all but nonexistent and the Luftwaffe are barely active. No, it is up to my troops. I hope to god they can do something, anything.

### **24th June 1941**

The Invasion of the Soviet Union. Operation Barbarossa. It sounds so grand in my head yet now I feel like a fool- I have been sent to the Soviet Union to oversee the beginning phases of the invasion. I wonder if high command and the Fuhrer really want to rule

over such a cold and lifeless place. The panzers often fail to start due to the cold and progress along the small dirt roads is so painfully slow I doubt if this invasion is worth it. Too many divisions have been pushed into this and I fear many will not leave. All being said, I cannot wait to return to Berlin and then onto Paris with the luxury of Gudrun's food and warm housing. I pity the soldiers left to fight here.

### **25th July 1942**

Paris, France and the Atlantikwal are a stark contrast to the Eastern front. Food is in abundance as many soldiers illegally trade cigarettes or other rations for luxury items. I found it hard to deny them: most soldiers in France and here specifically are those too young, too old, suffer from some disability or are on a break from the Eastern front. Today was Gisela's birthday; to tell the truth I would have forgotten if Gudrun hadn't sent her letter. One thing after another takes precedence and it is so easy to forget somethings. I sent an aide out in the morning to buy a present. A doll I believe, and I sent it on via high urgency post. I do feel bad about not having more time for her, but my duties beckon and more and more I am finding it hard to turn away- if only to save my troops lives.

### **3pm**

The bombs have stopped falling. It can only mean that Allied soldiers are close enough to Berlin that the bombing would hit them. Just a while ago I watched a cluster of officers stumble pass, dejected and beaten. Amongst themselves they took bets on the first army to reach Berlin. I do not particularly care. None of them will find my daughters. Hunger gnaws at me but there is no food. None for my decimated troops. None for the innocents across Germany. And so there is none for me.

### **14th May 1943**

Erwin Rommel. A good riddance. I have met him only occasionally but he seemed a man embroiled in Nazi politics using his position and victories to slip his way into power. Men like him give the proper soldiers a bad name: the casual waste of material and men in the pursuit of victory. My panzers no less, my panzers. Gudrun only frowned when I told her, not realising the significance of his actions. Rommel has not only destroyed his reputation in one fell swoop but ruined the entire North Africa campaign as well. I did not know why I told her, as if she would understand the complexities of the Wehrmacht and the battles it fights. In some ways I am glad she does not, for I wonder how her opinion would change upon knowing what I have ordered done.

### **19th March 1938**

I am told a new age is coming to Germany. Czechoslovakia has been annexed and the world does nothing. The British Prime Minister calls it "Peace in Our Time" but all I see is a power-hungry man in control of an unstable nation. I cannot imagine this lasting long at all. No matter how fragile Germany is, surely we will not be so blind as to allow this Hitler to carry out his mad schemes. The army wants me back again, with a promotion and all. For so many years the army was my life, then the panzer development squad and now a generaloberst of the Panzer Lehr division. There is much good I can do there, yet something holds me back. Gudrun was not keen on the idea either- I think she rather likes me being around more instead of consumed in my duties.

### **7pm**

It's getting late now and I dare not light a candle for fear of being spotted. There isn't enough light to read anymore. In my diary from 1935 I found an old image of Gudrun smiling away in front of a snowy mountain: our happiest moment. I would give everything to be back there again.

