



At 11.35 p.m. on September 1, 1939, radio listeners in Germany were roused from their daily routine by a loud flourish of trumpets. What followed was the very first Wehrmachtbericht, the daily news bulletin from the war theatres: 'The High Command of the German Armed Forces announces: By order of the Führer and Supreme Commander, the Wehrmacht has taken over the protection of the Reich. In fulfilment of their order to put a stop to the Polish violence, units of the German Army have started a counter-attack across the border this morning. At the same time, Luftwaffe squadrons have started to attack military targets in Poland. The Kriegsmarine is protecting the Baltic.'

It is generally accepted that the Second World War began on that first day of September when the German tank armadas poured across the border into Poland. However, the first shots of the war were actually fired six days, four hours and 44 minutes before its official outbreak.

On the night of Friday, August 25, one of the days of hectic activity which preceded the outbreak of war, Oberstleutnant Erwin Lahousen was walking restlessly through the extensive corridors of the OKW headquarters building on Tirpitzufer in Berlin, waiting for a signal which was to become the first operational message of World War II. Meanwhile, long motorised columns of dust-covered troops jammed the roads heading east, while in the other European countries reservists were called up to service.

A former officer in the Austrian Army and member of its intelligence service, Oberstleutnant Lahousen was now head of a department in the Amt Ausland-Abwehr and in charge of sabotage and sedition. The Abwehr was the intelligence department of the German Armed Forces High Command, and after 1933 the organisation came into frequent conflict with the Party and state intelligence departments, the SD and the Gestapo. When he was appointed head of military intelligence in 1935, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris succeeded in reaching an agreement with Reinhard Heydrich, head of the SD, which, while acknowledging the SD's role in state security, retained for military intelligence a central part in espionage. Abwehrstellen (Counter Intelligence Offices) in Germany were based on army districts, but when war came, more outstations opened throughout occupied Europe and in tolerant neutral countries.

INCIDENT AT MOSTY

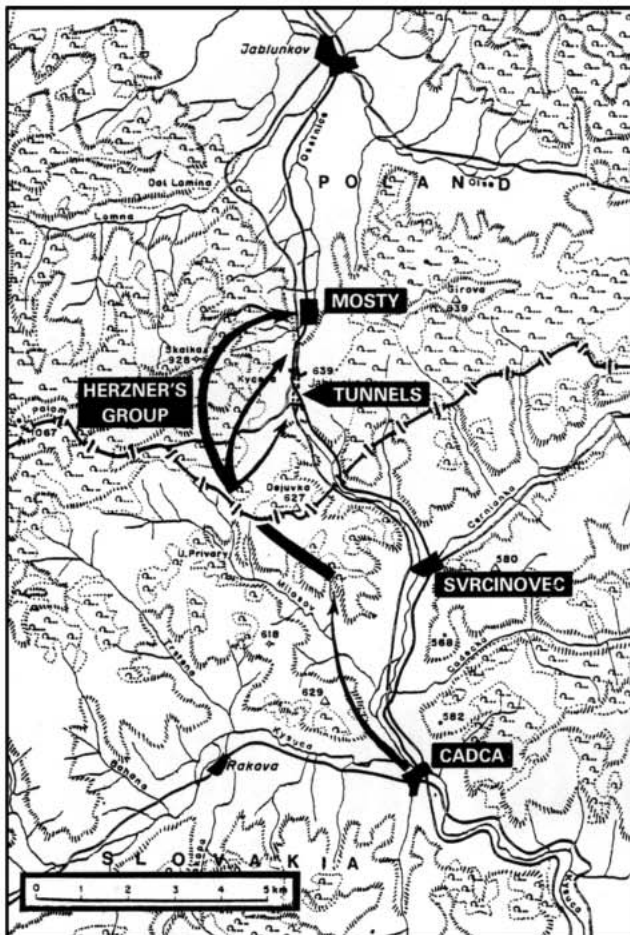
By Jan Heitmann

Since his days with the Austrian General Staff, Oberstleutnant Lahousen had been an expert in East European affairs and he and his chief, Admiral Canaris, had given the dislocation of the Polish armies their most careful consideration. Instead of assembling their armies in rear defence areas east of the Weichsel and San rivers to allow a delaying defence in depth, the Polish General Staff had placed them in blocking positions right behind the border. This deployment led to the German operational plan to destroy the Polish forces in a lightning operation. However, before this could be done, the traffic facilities which were of greatest overall importance for the German advance, had to be protected from destruction. This task was assigned to small groups dressed in civilian clothes which would penetrate the frontier in front of the advancing Wehrmacht before the real fighting began.

Throughout the preceding months, Lahousen had been recruiting ethnic Germans and dissident Slavs from several eastern European countries, and these German-born 'Volksdeutsche' and members of other ethnic minorities demanding independence from the Polish state had been specially trained and split up into small units which were now stationed in villages along the border to Poland. They were divided into KO-Groups (Kampforganisation, combat organisation) and SO-Groups (Sabotageorganisation). The KO-Groups were to prevent vital objectives being destroyed by the enemy while the SO-Groups were to demolish or immobilise targets and objectives which were of prime importance for the enemy's defence.



Above: Oberstleutnant Erwin Lahousen (seen here seated second from the right at a conference in Berlin with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem) was the Abwehr's expert on eastern affairs and the architect behind the secret operation at Mosty before the outbreak of war. **Top:** His 'troops' were ethnic Germans mostly living in eastern Europe, who were formed into combat and sabotage groups to operate in civilian clothes and pave the way for the conventional forces.



Lahousen detailed Leutnant der Reserve Dr Hans-Albrecht Herzner (*above*) to lead the attack on Mosty which was designed to capture and hold the vital railway tunnels in the Jablunka Pass (between German-occupied Slovakia and Poland) to prevent its destruction by Polish forces.

Later, most of these groups were integrated into the famous Brandenburgers, the Abwehr's own 'private army'. Officially designated Baulehr-Kompanie z.b.V. 800 (Construction Training Company 800 for Special Duties) and formed in October 1939, these were special services units, the German equivalent of the British Commandos or US Rangers. The men selected were often multilingual and were stationed on an estate near the town of Brandenburg, hence the name. They were trained both to defend and to demolish bridges or fortifications. During the war, Brandenburgers with a knowledge of the local language were often used in disguise, and one unit was also used as a long-range desert patrol in North Africa.

The General Staff had chosen two strategic objectives which were considered of vital importance for the German advance into Poland. According to the plan of Abwehrstelle Königsberg, one KO-Group was to capture the railway bridge at Dirschau near Danzig which was a vital link between East Prussia and Poland, and prevent its destruction. Meanwhile two other KO-Groups far to the south were to attack and capture the Jablunka Pass and the railway tunnel through the West Beskids, a range of the Carpathian mountains along the border of Poland and German-occupied Slovakia. The Beskids are commonly divided into the West and East Beskids. The western portion is the higher and rises to a maximum elevation of

over 1,700 metres. The range is only a minor barrier to transportation as the mountains are crossed by the Jablunka road and railway pass. Here, south of the station at the village of Mosty, traffic between east Germany and south Poland into the Balkans and Austria is channelled through two single-track railway tunnels. At the time, this line was the shortest railway connection between Warsaw and Vienna and, being in the centre of the area of operations covered by Heeresgruppe Süd, the demolition of the tunnels would be a grave handicap to the German advance. Both the tunnels and the pass, therefore, had to be captured to prevent them from being destroyed by the enemy. This task was of vital importance as movement off the few



The Jablunka Mountains are situated in the historic region of Teschen (Czech: Cesky Tesin; Polish: Cieszyn or Olsa area), which remained a part of Austria until the end of World War I when it was claimed by both Poland and Czechoslovakia. Attempts to settle the question by plebiscite failed in 1919, but the following year the Paris Peace Conference partitioned the territory between the two countries. Following the Munich Agreement of 1938, by which Germany acquired the Sudeten-



land from Czechoslovakia, Poland seized the whole of the Teschen area. *Left:* Half-way between the pass and the village of Svrcinovec is the frontier between Teschen in the north and the former Socialist Republic of Slovakia in the south. In the days of August 1939, this line marked the German border with Poland. *Right:* Huge concrete blocks which were once used to seal the route are today still lying beside the road at the northern entrance to Svrcinovec.



It was fortunate that Leutnant Herzner had a sense of history as he took along his camera to record the operation. As one of the Jablunka KO (combat) Groups got lost in the dark, only Herzner and thirteen men reached the objective. This picture of the successful party was taken by Herzner's driver, Gefreiter Jung.

roads in the area was only possible for mountain infantry because the paths through the mountains were too steep even for handcarts.

The order issued to KO-Groups Jablunka and Silles for the assault stated that the group was to take the station at Mosty and to prevent the destruction of the railway tunnels by removing the detonators and keep the tunnels and road open for the following troops. Thereafter, the tunnels were to be occupied and all explosives removed. Abwehrstelle Breslau, which was in charge of all Abwehr activities in this area, knew from an agent that there were four explosive charges buried inside the two tunnels and that the bricks hiding the charges were marked with red crosses. Agents also reported that the station was guarded by one platoon of infantry and the tunnels by about fifty pioneers who had erected a road-block on the pass road and a wire entanglement across the track at the southern entrance of the tunnels.

Leutnant der Reserve Dr Hans-Albrecht Herzner, an officer of Abwehrstelle VIII in Breslau, was the man detailed to carry out the mission. He was a reserve officer with the famous Infanterie-Regiment 9 in Potsdam and had been working for the Abwehr for some time. An active member of the resistance against the Nazi régime, he had been party to General von Witzleben's plot to remove Hitler by force in September 1938. He was known as a strong Christian and conservative and as a man of great personal bravery, reliability and with a stout fighting morale.

Leutnant Herzner had 24 Volksdeutsche of KO-Group Jablunka under his command, including a number of SA men and border police who knew the area like the back of their hands. Like the other Abwehr operatives and similar assault and sabotage teams of the SD preparing for sabotage acts over the frontier, Herzner's men lay hidden in a remote village, waiting for the order to commence operations.

Oberstleutnant Adolf Heusinger, staff officer in the General Staff, later the head of its operational department (later to become a senior officer in the West German army and chairman of NATO's Military Committee), informed Admiral Canaris and Oberstleutnant Lahousen on Friday, August 25

that Hitler had set the following day for the invasion of Poland, beginning at 4.30 a.m. Later, Hauptmann Gaedke, one of Heusinger's aides, transmitted the order that the KO- and SO-Groups were to go into action at 8.00 p.m. that evening. A few hours after this message was received, a Dr Heinrich Herzog, ostensibly a businessman, left Breslau in Germany in a private car and crossed into Slovakia. In fact, he was none other than Leutnant Herzner travelling with forged papers. After he left the border, he went directly to the divisional HQ of 7. Infanterie-Division at Cadca where he received detailed orders for the forthcoming raid.

At 9.00 p.m. on Friday, Herzner assembled his men in the barracks at Cadca. With the exception of Herzner and his driver, Gefreiter der Reserve Jung, who wore regular German military uniforms, the remaining 24 men of his group were wearing 'Räuber-

zivil' — rough-and-ready civilian clothes with a swastika armband. Each man was armed with a machine carbine, four magazines and a pistol. The group was divided into two assault parties, and both left by truck for a point north-west of Svrčinovec not far away from the border. There they dismounted and proceeded on foot to a hill called Dejvka where they were due to meet the Silles KO-Group, consisting of a hundred Hlinka (Slovak Fascist Guard) guardsmen and 40 Slovak volunteers. However, when this party failed to arrive, Herzner crossed the border alone with his men just west of Point 627 near Dejvka. The time was exactly thirty minutes past midnight.

Realising that this was a historic moment, Herzner took his message pad and wrote out the signal for which Oberstleutnant Lahousen was so anxiously waiting.

| Wahrscheinlichkeit | Wahrg. | Ort | Tag | Jahr |
|---|--------|-----|-----|------|
| Wahrg. | | | | |
| Wahrg. | | | | |
| <p>General-Kommando VIII. AK. Ic AO II, Breslau Auftrag zum 00.30 am 25. August 1938 Punkt 627 nord-nordwestl. Cadca. Herzner Hans Albrecht Herzner mit Jung</p> | | | | |

Written on an ordinary Wehrmacht message pad, this was the first operational message of the Second World War: 'Generalkommando VIII. AK. Ic AO II, Breslau. Crossing Polish border with K.O.J. [Kampforganisation Jablunka] at 00.30 hours near point 627 north-north-west of Cadca. [signed] Herzner. By army telegraph and wireless.'



Now Herzner pictures Jung with the group. Only he and his driver wore regular German military uniforms, the others being attired in 'Räuberzivil' (robbers' civvies) — rough-and-ready civilian clothes with an NSDAP swastika armband.

Successfully outflanking Polish sentries and border patrols, the men entered the forest heading north-east. Herzner's guides lost their way several times and one party got split up in the darkness, so it was not until 2.45 a.m. that Herzner, with Gefreiter Jung and twelve men, reached the hills west of Mosty railway station. During their advance they had noted that the foxholes, pillboxes and machine gun emplacements on the top of the pass were not manned, although the northern exit from the tunnels was seen to be guarded by military personnel. At about 2.00 a.m., they had heard the sound of firing coming from that direction and they later learned that the missing group had bumped into the tunnel guards and, in the exchange of fire, a Polish guard had been killed.

Herzner waited for nearly two hours for the party to arrive from along the railway track. Meanwhile, other pro-German volunteers and undercover members of KO-Group Jablunka from Mosty and the hamlets nearby had joined the attackers, but the majority melted away again following the raid. As it was beginning to get light, Herzner decided that he could not wait any longer and gathered his thirteen men together for a final briefing.

At 3.30 a.m., they launched their attack on Mosty station. The objectives were the station building, a warehouse, a hut which was used as accommodation for the tunnel guards, a domestic office and an officer's quarters located in a wooden hut. There was little resistance from the guards who were quickly rounded up and searched for weapons. The station and track were secured and the telephone and telegraph lines were immediately cut. From the interrogation of a German-born station official, Herzner learnt that the detonators and explosive charges both at the station and the tunnels had already been removed. However, although it seemed as if the Poles had done Herzner's work for him, there was no time to relax.

At 4.15 a.m., the Polish tunnel guards launched a counter-attack from the northern side of the pass. Simultaneously, the KO men were exposed to fire from the western side of the station and then from the east. This attack was repulsed as were two further assaults, one of Herzner's men being slightly wounded. Anxious to reconnoitre the tunnels and to report to Cadca on the situation,



Looking down on Mosty station — then and now.



After the war was over in 1945, a Polish officer reported on the topographical situation in the Mosty area: 'From Mosty railway station, the railway line ran for approximately 500 metres across level ground (*left*), but for the next 500 metres it approached the tunnel through a kind of cutting. At the entrance to the tunnel, the cutting was 12–15 metres deep.



Half-way between the station and the tunnel there was a level crossing and a gate-keeper's house. From this spot one had a good view of both the station building and the platforms. It was not possible to see the platforms from the tunnel entrance (*right*) or even from the top of the entrance. The two single-tracked tunnels were each 800 metres long.'



Herzner ordered one of his men, Josef Kulik, a native of Jablunka and currently a member of the Cadca border police, to man one of the locomotives waiting under steam in the station and use it to take a message to the HQ of 7. Infanterie-Division in Cadca.

However, completely unknown to Herzner and his men, that Friday the political situation had changed dramatically. While Mussolini informed Hitler that Italy would not be ready for war for another three years, Britain signed a treaty with Poland which turned the unilateral guarantee of Polish independence into a pact of mutual assistance. Fearing that France and Britain would declare war on Germany if he invaded Poland, just ten hours before the estimated time of attack Hitler ordered his generals to halt everything at once to allow more time for negotiation.

Frantic calls were made right down to battalion level. Admiral Canaris was informed by Hauptmann Gaedke that Hitler had called off the invasion of Poland for political reasons and was entreated by him to do everything humanly possible to halt his commandos. All the other groups were successfully contacted and stopped, but the Abwehr failed to reach Herzner. This led to confusion in the Abwehr HQ in Berlin and caused Canaris to personally take a hand in searching for the lost group. The thought that Herzner and his men might be approaching Mosty station at that very moment without knowing that Hitler had called the war off made him feel not a little uncomfortable. His fears that his KO-Group might be the cause of an international incident, with far-reaching consequences, grew even more when Lahousen told him that an Abwehr officer, Hauptmann Ernst zu Eicken, had reported that Oberbaustab XX ('Higher Construction Staff No. 20' — the code name for 7. Infanterie-Division during the phase of the final assembly) at Cadca had

Herzner's photograph of the northern entrance to the tunnels as seen from the level crossing. The road through the pass, leading to the border and on to Cadca, is on the right behind the trees.

heard small arms fire from the direction of the Jablunka Pass at 4.45 a.m. and that Abwehrstelle VIII at Breslau assumed its source to be the KO-Group commanded by Leutnant Herzner.

At 11.00 a.m., Meldekopf Striegau, a field agency of Abwehrstelle Breslau, eventually made contact with Herzner and reported to Lahousen: 'Leutnant Herzner is still in Poland. Tunnel undamaged. Two wounded'.

This meant that there were still German soldiers on the territory of a neutral country who had been involved in some sort of fire-fight with the Poles. In fact, Herzner had already despatched the following message to VIII. Armeekorps: 'Seized railway station Mosty at 03.55 a.m. together with Gefreiter Jung and 12 men of KOJ. One casualty. Counter-attack by tunnel guard against station repelled.'



Today the area north of the tunnels is densely overgrown with trees, bushes and brushwood.



Left: Also pictured by Leutnant Herzner, some of the members of KO-Group Jablunka sitting on top of the southern entrance to the westernmost tunnel. It was from this direction that Josef Kulik emerged aboard the train after having cut the wires to the



demolition charges. Right: Although one is still not supposed to photograph any traffic facilities in Czechoslovakia, railway workers turned a blind eye when Jan Heitmann matched the shot.

Meanwhile, events at Mosty were still proceeding apace. Accompanied by another border policeman and two Polish stokers, at about 7.00 a.m., Kulik set off towards the tunnel aboard his engine. A Polish railway policeman opened fire on the locomotive and more intense shooting came from several machine gun emplacements, but Kulik returned the fire, hitting a man in military uniform. As soon as the engine was in the tunnel, Kulik jumped off and cut the wires which led to the explosive charges with an axe. When the locomotive emerged from the other end of the tunnel, the crew was again confronted with a barrage of machine gun fire and hand grenades. The engine continued on until it was stopped by a barrier blocking the track, but Kulik forced a signalman to remove the obstruction. Immediately thereafter, Kulik and his crew came under another attack at which point the track behind them was blown up.

Arriving at Cadca at about 8.00 a.m., Kulik was taken to a battalion HQ at Rakowa, where he met Generalmajor Eugen Ott, the divisional commander. The general ordered Kulik to report to his chief operations officer, Major Paul Reichelt, who was still at Cadca station, desperately trying to get in touch with Herzner by way of the railway telephone system. Nearly driven to desperation, Major Reichelt continued in vain to get through to Mosty station, making several futile attempts using the normal telephone line via Jablunka, but all the lines to Poland were dead. It was not until 9.35 a.m. that he suddenly got through to Mosty. Herzner was ordered to release his prisoners and return immediately to the border using the shortest possible route.

There was no time to waste and Herzner and his men quickly boarded one of the remaining locomotives. Travelling south, they approached the tunnel just in time to see the Poles blowing up the line. In danger of being trapped, Herzner's group had to steam back to Mosty station under fire, where he got through to Cadca and reported to Major Reichelt on the situation. Reichelt then ordered him to force a way westwards to the Slovakian border. However, Herzner and his men encountered resistance from the south-west, west and north-west of the station, provided by the Mosty police and the tunnel guards. The KO-Group returned the fire before turning to the north-west in the

direction of Dol Lomina. They finally crossed the Slovakian border north-north-west of Rakowa at 1.30 p.m. on Saturday without having sustained any further casualties. They had been on 'enemy' territory for just over 12 hours.

Meanwhile, a high-ranking Polish officer had sent a protest to Cadca, complaining strongly against the breach of Polish neutrality. The German commanding officer apologised and stated that the raid was a mistake due to the unclear line of the border in the dense forest. At 10.00 a.m., a civilian emissary was sent to Mosty to negotiate with General Kustron, commander of the Polish 21st Division and, an hour later, Kustron himself met with staff officers of 7. Infanterie-Division at the turnpike north-west of Svrčinovec. Later, Major Reichelt ordered Josef Kulik to take three Polish policemen from Cadca to Mosty where he was told to get in touch with the local military authorities. Kulik was detained by the Polish military and subjected to interrogation. Then he was sent to Rakowa to bring a German general to the border to negotiate over the fate of those of Herzner's men who were still on the wrong side of the frontier.

Canaris breathed a sigh of relief when he received the message that Herzner had safely reached German-occupied Slovakia. Suddenly, however, the High Command, believing that Herzner's men were still in Poland, issued orders that the KO-Group was to remain in Poland for the time being, which made Canaris and Lahousen wonder if this meant that war was about to commence after all. Five days later they knew what it meant, when, at 5.30 p.m. on August 31, the order was issued to open hostilities the next morning. Canaris commented on the delivery of the order with depressing foreboding: 'This means the end of Germany.'

The next morning, the German armies swept into Poland. Preceding the conventional forces were a number of KO- and SO-Groups, including that of Leutnant Herzner. Contrary to what has been stated elsewhere, KO-Group Jablunka did not repeat the operation they had carried out the week before. This was now the responsibility of a battalion from Infanterie-Regiment 62, a regular Wehrmacht unit, which was merely accompanied by some of Herzner's men as guides. However, this time the Poles were on the alert and strong reinforcements were



The southern entrances to the tunnels, with the western tunnel on the left and the eastern on the right. This is where Kulik came under fire when the locomotive emerged from the tunnel, and must be close to the spot where the track was blown up.

Dienstreise
 des **Lt. d.R. Herzner** von 24.8. bis 28.8.1939
 nach **Ostern (Slovakien) 113.7 RM.**

Abreise am 24.8.1939 um 18⁰⁰ Uhr
Anreise am 28.8.1939 um 18¹⁵ Uhr.

Grenzüberschritt am 25.8. um 05³⁰ Uhr (Slovakien)
 • 25.8. • 05³⁰ Uhr (Polen)
 • 26.8. • 15³⁰ Uhr (Polen-slovakische Grenze)
 • 26.8. • 12⁰⁰ Uhr

| | | |
|---------------|--|-----------------|
| 24./25.8.1939 | 1 Übernachtung | 5,-- RM |
| 25.8.1939 | 1 Auslandsstagesgeld | 13,80 * |
| 26.8.1939 | 0,6 von 1 Auslandsstagesgeld (Polen) 10,40 RM = | 11,04 * |
| 26.8.1939 | 0,4 von 1 Auslandsstagesgeld (Slovakien) 13,80 = | 5,52 * |
| 27.8.1939 | 1 Auslandsstagesgeld | 13,80 * |
| 28.8.1939 | 0,5 von 1 Auslandsstagesgeld von 13,80 = | 6,90 * |
| zus. i | | 55,86 RM |

In Worten: **Funfundsünfzig 86/100 Reichsmark**
 von der Kasse der Inf. in Wehrkreis VIII
 erhalten zu haben bescheinigt.
 Breslau, den 1. September 1939.
 Lt. d.R.

Back cover: A final pose for the camera for Leutnant Herzner and his men on the station platform before pulling out — a nice picture for his victory album. However, his successful mission was to no avail, for Polish forces quickly put more explosives in the tunnels and when war came five days later the charges were set off. Repair work was not finished until 1948. **Above:** Because his operation was not an official military one, Herzner claimed all his expenses, totalling 55.86 RM (worth some £125 in today's money) — a gem example of German bureaucratic punctiliousness!

prepared to give the Germans a warm welcome. Within days, Polish engineers had placed 40 explosive charges in demolition chambers in the tunnels, each containing 500 kilograms of Trotyl. The demolition chambers were connected by gas pipes which were also filled with explosive. This enabled Lieutenant Pirszel, the Polish engineer officer in charge, to demolish the tunnels within a few seconds without any further preparation. At the southern entrance to the tunnels, parts of the rails had been either cut or removed.

Although Mosty station was captured a second time after a short battle, this time the attackers were unable to prevent the Poles from blowing up the tunnels. Many other bridges in the area were also demolished by Polish engineers. On September 2, the Wehrmachtbericht reported: 'In the afternoon of September 1, the successful advance of the German armies continued. This morning the attack is in full swing. The Jablunka Pass has been quickly seized.'


When Germany went to war again in 1939, Hitler once again revived the military award of the Iron Cross 'for the sons of Germany, as in the past great wars in the defence of the home and the fatherland'. Herzner was recommended by Admiral Canaris for the Iron Cross 2nd Class, but Generaloberst Keitel, Chief of the Armed Forces High Command, at first refused to give his approval because, according to the award regulations, it could only be won for acts performed while Germany was at war. It took nearly two months until Keitel finally relented. Thus, while Herzner was not the first soldier who *received* the 1939 Iron Cross, he was the first Serviceman who distinguished himself to be *awarded* this decoration in the Second World War.

Operation 'Barbarossa' found Herzner, since promoted to the rank of Oberleutnant, serving with Regiment Brandenburg as a company commander. Together with three other companies of anti-Soviet Ukrainians of that formation, Herzner's unit arrived in Lemberg on June 30, 1941 for Operation 'Nachtigall', the Abwehr's attempt to raise the Ukraine against Moscow. At first, Herzner and his comrades were wholeheartedly welcomed by the Ukrainians but, within a few days, the Ukrainian revolutionary leader, Stefan Bandera, declared an independent Ukraine, without consulting the 'Nachtigall' officers or the Abwehr. Berlin was outraged and the Ukrainian leaders were arrested by Gestapo, SD and SS commandos.

Like many of the other 'Nachtigall' men, Herzner was shocked, for hardly had the operation commenced than it was all over. Admiral Canaris, travelling to Lemberg on July 30 for an inspection of Herzner's unit, was unable to change the situation. Two days later he called off Operation 'Nachtigall' and Herzner and his mixed German-Ukrainian unit were sent back to Germany.

In 1942, the army used Brandenburg units to defend their rear against Soviet partisan attacks as they retreated from the Caucasus. At the same time the Brandenburgers were increased to divisional size. To meet the requirements for reinforcements, the Brandenburgers were increasingly used as ordinary infantry.

Meanwhile, Herzner had been injured in a car accident and admitted to the famous hospital in Hohenlychen. There, while carrying out swimming therapy to help mend his broken spine he accidentally drowned in September 1942. After a military funeral in the Potsdam Garrison Church, he was buried in Potsdam cemetery.



**Im Namen des Führers
und Obersten Befehlshabers
der Wehrmacht**


verleihe ich
dem


Leutnant d.R. Hans-Albrecht H e r z n e r

das

Eiserne Kreuz 2.Klasse.

Berlin, den 29. Oktober 19 39


Generaloberst
und
Chef des Oberkommandos
der Wehrmacht
(Dienstgrad und Dienststellung)



The award citation for Herzner's Iron Cross Second Class. When Canaris recommended Herzner for the decoration, Generaloberst Keitel refused to approve it because, according to the award regulations, it could only be awarded for acts performed



in time of war. Finally, Keitel relented and signed the award certificate on October 29, 1939. Leutnant Herzner broke his back in a motor accident in 1942 and drowned during swimming therapy. He was buried at Potsdam.

