



ULLSTEIN

Of the many Führerhauptquartiere built during the war, the one at Margival, eight kilometres north-east of Soissons in France, was used by Hitler only once. It was known under the code-name 'Wolfsschlucht 2' (or 'W 2' for short). By the time this picture was taken of Hitler chatting with Admiral Karl Dönitz, C-in-C of the

Kriegsmarine, Generaloberst Wilhelm Keitel, chief of the OKW, and foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop in front of a heavy bunker at Führerhauptquartier 'Wolfsschanze' in East Prussia in September 1944, the Organisation Todt had completed 16 Führer headquarters and three more were under construction.

FÜHRERHAUPTQUARTIER 'WOLFSSCHLUCHT 2'

By Jean Paul Pallud

Recent events have prompted us to revisit the Führerhauptquartier 'Wolfsschlucht 2' at Margival, eight kilometres north-east of Soissons in France, which the late Dr Richard Raiber described in *After the Battle* No. 19. Firstly, a document of major importance titled *Zusammenstellung der wichtigsten Daten über die von der OT gebauten Quartiere des Führers und der Wehrmachtteile* (Résumé of the most important data with respect to the HQs built by the OT for the Führer and the Wehrmacht arms of service) has recently become available at the Bundesarchiv at Koblenz. In November 1944, Siegfried Schmelcher, the Senior Construction Engineer of the Führerhauptquartier Projects at Organisation Todt (Chefbaumeister der Führerhauptquartieranlagen), filed a detailed report on the 16 Führer Headquarters which had by then been built, and of the three still under construction. Schmelcher retained a copy of this report which only came to light when, before his death in 1991, he passed his papers to Professor Franz Seidler requesting that they be published. This came to fruition in 2000 when the professor, in conjunction with Dieter Zeigert, authored *Die Führerhauptquartiere 1939-1945*.

Although Dr Raiber searched all available sources for illustrations to include in his account in issue 19 published in 1977, none could be found but historian Bruno Renoult has recently unearthed a series of photos taken at Margival just a few days after the departure of the last Germans that shows the headquarters in a remarkable state of preservation.

Finally, the base, which has been off limits for decades because it was located in a restricted military area, can now be visited by appointment, thanks to the efforts of the ASW 2 Association (Association de Sauvegarde du 'Wolfsschlucht 2') which campaigned long and hard to have the headquarters preserved.

After the outstanding success of the Wehrmacht offensive in the West in 1940, when the Netherlands and Belgium were conquered and three French armies and one British wiped out in three weeks, on May 31 the German command issued operational orders for the second phase of the campaign. As set out in Führer Directive No. 13 issued a few days earlier, the object was 'to destroy in the shortest possible time the remaining enemy forces in France'. It was about this time that it was decided to establish a new field headquarters for Hitler, closer to the battlefield than the present Führerhauptquartier 'Wolfsschlucht' at Brûly-de-Pesche.

The first mention of a replacement HQ appears in the Führerhauptquartier war diary on June 11. The site chosen was at Rilly, just south of Reims, where a railway tunnel appeared to offer suitable shelter for the Führersonderzug, Hitler's personal railway train. On June 12 Hauptmann Erich Bertram was sent ahead with a motorcycle detachment to reconnoitre the tunnel and the following day Reichsminister Dr Fritz Todt arrived to inspect the site with Generalmajor Rudolf Schmundt, Hitler's senior Wehrmacht adjutant, and Oberstleutnant Kurt Thomas, the commander of the Führerhauptquartier. (After having founded

the civil engineering body, Organisation Todt, Dr Todt had been appointed Minister for Armaments and Munitions in March 1940; by then, Xaver Dorsch had taken over as head of the OT.) On the 14th another motorcycle unit was sent to occupy the southern end of the tunnel at Germaine but, when three days later France requested terms for an armistice, there appeared no need for a new headquarters. Consequently, the troops occupying the tunnel were recalled this same day to Führerhauptquartier 'Wolfsschlucht'.

Since the war there has been confusion over the location of this proposed HQ as some accounts mix up the tunnel at Rilly with a similar one at Margival, north-east of Soissons. However, the Führerhauptquartier war diary makes it clear that it was at Rilly. Also the Margival tunnel would not have been available for use for the French Army had blown the entrances about June 6 as the Germans crossed the Aisne river just to the north. Although the northern charge failed to explode, the southern one collapsed the hillside, completely blocking the tunnel, so if this had been the location visited by Schmundt and Thomas, they would have immediately rejected it. Work to clear the tunnel started only in November 1940 and it took several hundred workers, most of them French prisoners of war, over a month to complete the task. By mid-December railway traffic had been restored though only on a single track.



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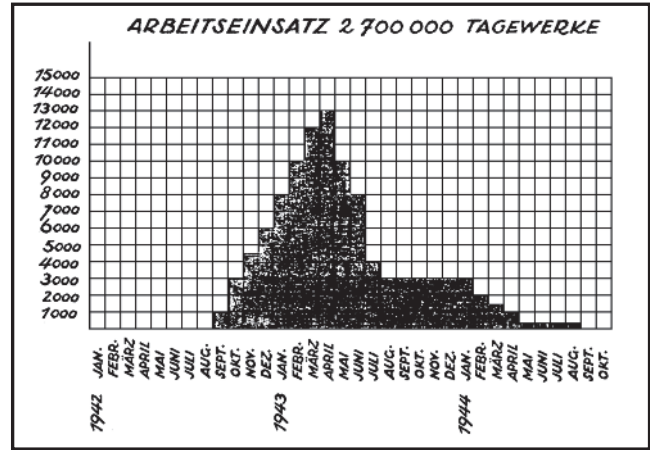
It has also been written that plans were made in the summer of 1940 to use Margival for Hitler's headquarters for Operation 'Seelöwe', the invasion of Britain. However, in his Directive No. 16 covering 'preparations for a landing operation against England' issued on July 16, Hitler designated 'Adlerhorst' as his headquarters. Code-named 'Mühle' by the Organisation Todt, construction of 'Adlerhorst' near Bad Nauheim in the Taunus mountains had already begun back in September 1939.

As an invasion attempt by the Allies was expected at some stage, in the spring of 1942 the building of the 'Atlantic Wall' began after Hitler issued his Directive No. 40 for the conduct of the defence of the West. He decreed that the defences along the coast should be organised in such a way that any invasion attempt could be smashed before the actual landing or certainly immediately after. Strong defences were to be built in the places suit-

able for landing, sectors threatened by small-scale attacks to be defended by a series of strong points and less threatened sectors to be patrolled. At the same time it was decided to establish a battle headquarters in France from where Hitler could conduct operations personally when the expected invasion by the Western Allies took place. Although it is not clear when the decision to establish this advanced HQ was precisely reached, the first mention of 'Anlage W 2' appears in the war diary of the Führerhauptquartier in June 1942. In May, Oberstleutnant Thomas and Major Walter Spengemann flew from FHQu 'Wolfsschanze' at Rastenburg in East Prussia, where Hitler and his entourage were then in residence, to Brussels and Paris to discuss the setting up of the new Führerhauptquartier and to reconnoitre possible sites. In the end they settled on Margival as, just north of the village, the tunnel that was necessary to provide shelter for the Führersonderzug had

now been repaired. Although Hitler had seen action in this sector in May 1918 when he was a soldier with the Bayerische Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment 16, it is doubtful that he chose the Margival site himself. Possibly he agreed with the recommendation because of his personal experiences in the area.

In September 1942 the director of the OT, Xaver Dorsch, gave the 'Wolfsschlucht 2' project to Siegfried Schmelcher. As the Chefbaumeister der Führerhauptquartieranlagen (Senior Construction Engineer of the Führerhauptquartier Projects) he had the responsibility of planning and building all of Hitler's headquarters. With a staff of about 30, he delegated engineers to plan the various technical areas involved, such as heating, sanitation, water supply and camouflage. When specialised services were required, he turned to private companies such as Drägerwerk at Lübeck for ventilation and air conditioning. From August 1940, the Schmelcher



Left: Hitler delegated responsibility for the construction of his field headquarters to an informal committee consisting of his senior Wehrmacht adjutant, Generalmajor Rudolf Schmundt (right), his three military adjutants and the commandant of the FHQu, Oberst Kurt Thomas. Construction of the Führerhauptquartiere was entrusted to the Organisation Todt, the Nazi civil engineering body, and in September 1939 architect Siegfried Schmelcher was appointed Chefbaumeister der Führerhauptquartieranlagen (Senior Construction Engineer of the Führerhauptquartier Projects) and tasked to plan all the new FHQu ordered by Hitler. *Above:* This sketch from Schmelcher's report filed in November 1944 describes the workforce engaged in the construction of the Führerhauptquartier at Margival from September 1942 through August 1944, a peak of 13,000 workers being reached in April 1944. The table also shows that the construction of 'Wolfsschlucht 2' involved a total of 2.7 million working days.



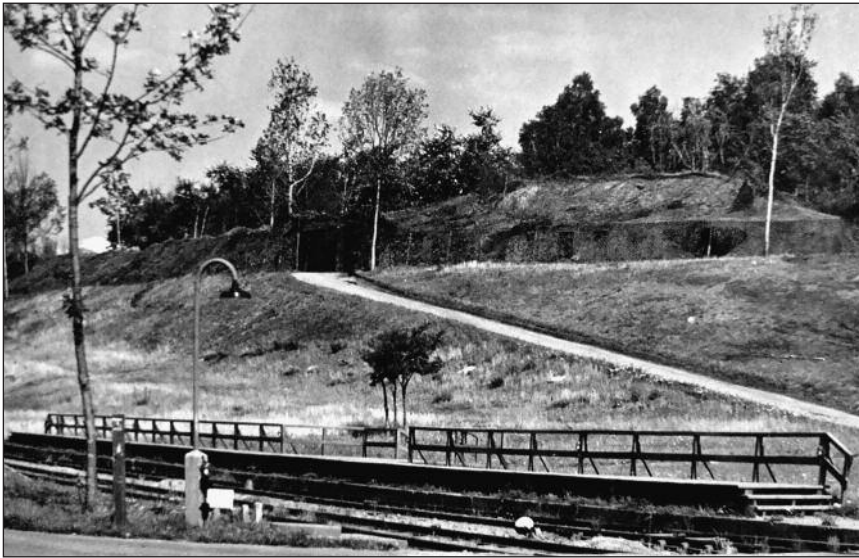
LEO MÜLLER

Left: Taken late in 1942 by Oberbauleiter Leo Müller, Schmelcher's deputy, this is the only photograph showing 'Wolfsschlucht 2' during German tenure that we could trace. It shows that the Teehaus (tea house), the wooden chalet visible high on the hillside, was one of the first buildings to be erected in the compound and that construction of the large bunkers



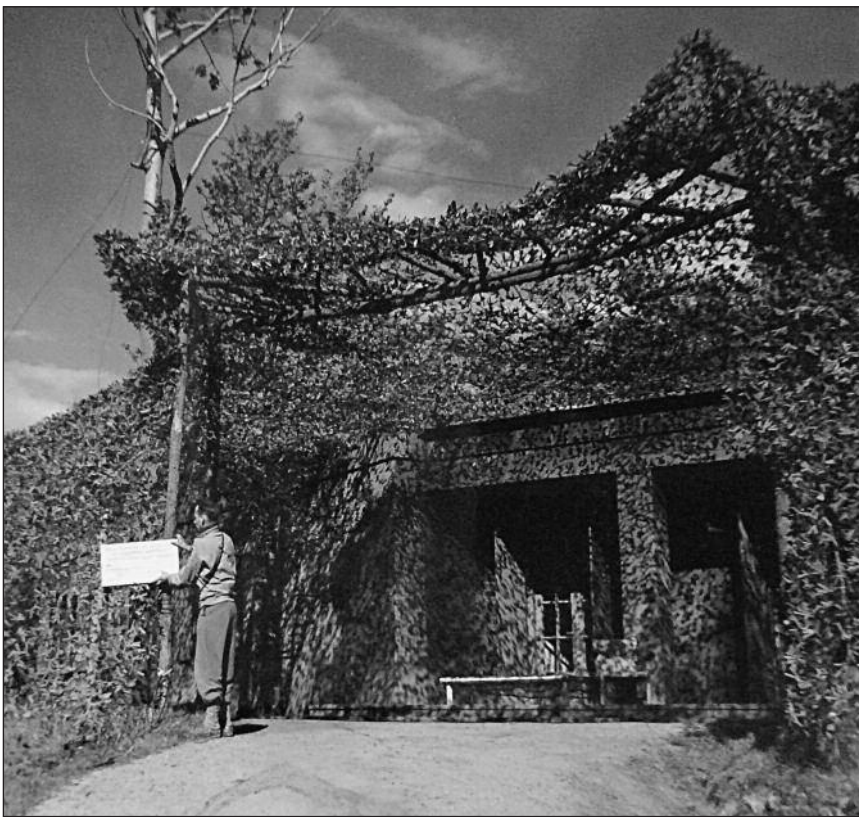
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had apparently not yet begun. *Right:* The long wooden platform, built by the Germans for the benefit of the Führersonderzüge (Hitler's special trains), disappeared many years ago. The Teehaus on the hillside has also vanished, but two of the buildings constructed later — Bau 1 and Bau 5 — still stand and are just visible between the trees.



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In September 1944, an investigation team from the US 602nd Engineer Camouflage Battalion surveyed the 'W 2' compound and took this picture of the camouflaged Bau 1 which blended remarkably well with the tree-lined slope behind.



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These photos taken a few days after the last Germans had left show 'Wolfsschlucht 2' as it appeared under German occupancy. Above: The American engineers captioned this picture of Bau 1 simply as an 'entrance to the headquarters building', which indicates that they had no idea that this was actually the Führerbunker. The picture illustrates well the words of Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Kearney in his report to the US First Army: 'The camouflage measures taken throughout this area were excellent'. Right: The whole compound has been off limits for decades but the French ASW 2 Association has now obtained permission to organise group visits and also offers guided tours. These start at the southern entrance of the camp located at the village of Margival, and visitors are first taken along a series of large bunkers, Bau 18 through to Bau 9. Then, having reached the former FHQu railway station, one is taken to the northern sector, with stops at Bau 5 and Bau 8, and then at Bau 1 (the Führerbunker) and Bau 2 (the OKW bunker). The guides then proceed to point out the nicely refurbished Type 105A bunker (No. 81) and the former site (now-overgrown) of the Teehaus.



BRUNO RENOUULT

team established its offices in the Organisation Todt offices at No. 3 Pariser Platz, Berlin.

To manage the construction of the new Führerhauptquartier at Margival, a local command of the OT — Oberbauleitung 'Wolfsschlucht 2' — was set up at Soissons under Oberbauleiter Friedrich Classen.

Construction work began in September 1942 and from then on the railway tunnel was closed to normal traffic. Ventilation shafts were installed with smoke extractors providing a fresh air supply even when locomotives under steam were parked inside. Two sets of armoured doors were fitted, one 80 metres from the exit at Margival while the other was 120 metres inside the Vauxaillon entrance. Each door was made of two sections which slid into recesses cut into the sides of the tunnel. The small railway station at the southern end, which had been established in 1921 to serve the villages of Laffaux and Neuville-sur-Margival, was enlarged and the existing platform lengthened. On October 25, 1942, Hitler's Heeresadjutant, Oberst Gerhard Engel, with Schmelcher and his deputy, Oberbauleiter Leo Müller, visited Classen to discuss the expansion of 'Wolfsschlucht 2', abbreviated 'W 2'. On December 17 Engel returned a second time to give Müller further instructions.

The construction of 'Wolfsschlucht 2' was a masterpiece of logistics. Because local material was unsuitable for making concrete, sand, ballast and cement had to be imported, mainly by barge from Belgium, being unloaded at Missy-sur-Aisne, about eight kilometres away. Other materials like iron and timber arrived by rail at Crouy station, between Margival and Soissons.

As 'W 2' lay in a remote rural area, the telephone network had to be extended from Paris to reach it using some 115 kilometres of cabling. From the French capital there were two trunk lines to Germany, one to Aachen via Brussels, the other to Saarbrücken through Reims and Metz. A further trunk line via Charleville was also extended through Belgium to Prüm in Germany so the HQ would have a third point of access to the Reich network.

Electricity was provided from the French civilian grid by underground cables. To avoid the possibility of power cuts, emergency diesel generators housed in three separate concrete shelters were installed. Water was pumped in from springs in the surrounding hills and piped from there into a 500-cubic-metre reservoir. Three sewage farms were provided for dealing with waste water.

In December 1942 the work-force comprised 7,000 men but this was progressively increased to 10,000 by February 1943, 12,000 by March, reaching a peak of 13,000 in April. It then decreased to 4,000 in July to reach 3,000 for the remainder of the year. Much of the labour was provided by French building firms contracted to the Organisation Todt



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Left: Another bunker camouflaged to merge in with the hillside behind. The Teehaus appears in the top left corner. Right: Without the Teehaus, it would have been difficult to identify this



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particular bunker for they were all built along the same general lines. It is in fact the western end of Bau 5, the bunker housing the complex's telephone exchange.

but in addition French, Belgian, Dutch, and later Italian, prisoners of war and forced labour were also employed. While the OT employees were quartered either in the Charpentier Barracks in Soissons, commuting by train to Margival, or in huts, the impressed workers were housed in camps set up close to the building site. Oberbauleiter Classen and his engineers had established their offices and quarters in Le Moulin, just west of the village.

On March 20, 1943, Müller and Classen met with Oberst Engel and Oberstleutnant Gustav Streve, the new Führerhauptquartier Commander, in Berlin to consider progress, Müller seeing Engel again on April 4, this time at the Obersalzberg, to discuss outstanding matters. On the 22nd, Müller and Classen had a site meeting to discuss electrification and camouflage and on May 27 Müller flew over the site in a Fieseler Storch to check the latter from the air. In November, when an impending inspection by Hitler's Luftwaffenadjutant, Oberstleutnant

Nicolaus von Below, was announced, Müller called on his supervisors to urge them to step up the pace. Then, before returning to Munich, Müller called at the Paris office to confer with Oberbaudirektor Weiss, the head of OT Einsatzgruppe West (Assignment Group West), which was the OT operational command covering France, Belgium, Holland and the Channel Islands. Müller made his last visit to Margival on January 10, 1944, to inspect the air conditioning system. By then, the construction of Führerhauptquartier 'Wolfsschlucht 2' was nearly complete.

Numerous Flak batteries and a belt of ground defences protected the headquarters out as far as Vauxaillon in the north to Chivres-Val to the south, a distance of some ten kilometres, and about four kilometres from Tergny-Sorny in the west to Laffaux in the east. The defence of the inner compound was the responsibility of the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon, which manned the control posts and sentry points on the perimeter.

In March 1944, the entire population of seven local villages — Laffaux, Margival, Neuville-sur-Margival, Vauxaillon, Tergny-Sorny, Vregny and Vuillery — were evacuated, the German Wirtschaftsüberleitung (or WOL for short) taking over to run the farms in the area. Some minor defence work took place in the early summer when it was planned to incorporate the HQ into a defensive line across France.

It ought to be explained that the construction of a second Führerhauptquartier in France was also started in 1942 at Montoire-sur-le-Loir, 15 kilometres west of Vendôme. There, too, the heart of the headquarters complex was a railway tunnel. The work on this 'Wolfsschlucht 3' ran for almost a year in parallel with that for 'W 2' until all work was suspended in August 1943. By then, only a few bunkers had been built at 'W 3', plus a number of Flak positions. Also, from November 1943, a third FHQu, code-named 'Zigeuner' in OT files, was being worked on at Thionville (Diedenhofen) in Lorraine.



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With a length of over 100 metres, Bau 5 is the largest of the constructions at 'W 2'. The 'Vorbau' (annex) along its front masks

the 'Baustärke A' (build-strength A) heavy bunker lying behind. In the right background is Bau 6 of lighter construction.

A FÜHRERHAUPTQUARTIER FOR ONE DAY

On June 15, 1944, having received yet another unrealistic order from Berlin to free seven panzer divisions for offensive action without weakening any part of the front, the Commander-in-Chief West, Generalfeldmarschall Gerd von Rundstedt, requested that either the Chief of the Operations Staff of OKW, Generaloberst Alfred Jodl, or his deputy, General der Artillerie Walter Warlimont, come to France to discuss the future conduct of operations in more realistic terms. Instead, Hitler decided to come in person to meet with von Rundstedt and Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel, the commander of Heeresgruppe B.

Hitler flew from Berchtesgaden to France on the evening of June 16 together with Jodl, Generalleutnant Rudolf Schmundt, his Senior Wehrmacht Adjutant, and a few staff officers. Landing at Frescaty, near Metz, Hitler was driven to Margival early next morning. The party was greeted at the Teehaus, the wooden chalet on the hillside that served as the Officers' Mess. Von Rundstedt and Rommel then arrived with their Chiefs-of-Staff, General Günther Blumentritt and Generalleutnant Hans Speidel. The meeting then began at 9.30 a.m. in the large conference room of Bunker No. 1.

Unfortunately no photographs appear to have been taken that day and the only surviving minutes are those noted by Major i. G. Arthur von Ekesparre of the staff of Heeresgruppe B. However both Blumentritt and Speidel later wrote down their recollections of the day. Speidel described how 'Hitler looked pale and sleepless, playing nervously with his glasses and an array of coloured pencils which he held between his fingers. He sat hunched upon a stool while the field mar-



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On the evening on June 16, 1944, an unexpected telephone call ordered Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel, commander of Heeresgruppe B, and his Chief-of-Staff Generalleutnant Hans Speidel (both pictured here in April 1944) to report to 'Battle Headquarters Wolfsschlucht 2' at Margival at 9 a.m. on June 17 to give a report in person to Hitler. Generalfeldmarschall Gerd von Rundstedt, the Commander-in-Chief in the West, received the same instruction.

shals stood. His hypnotic powers seemed to have waned.'

Following a curt and frosty greeting, Hitler expressed his dissatisfaction with the attempt to counter the Allied landings, finding fault with the local commanders. He ordered that fortress Cherbourg be held at any cost. For their part, the field-marschals sought to obtain freedom of action, including permission to

draw reserves at will from coastal areas not immediately threatened by invasion. They also recommended certain withdrawals in order to shorten their lines and concentrate their forces.

To this Hitler made no direct reply but instead changed the subject to claim that the tide would soon be turned by the V-weapons. Introducing General Erich Heinemann, the



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Having flown to Metz on the evening of June 16, Hitler was driven to Margival early next morning. No photos appear to have been taken during the journey but Hitler had driven these



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very same roads south-west of Laon in June 1940 when he toured the locations where he had fought during the First World War (see *After the Battle* No. 117).



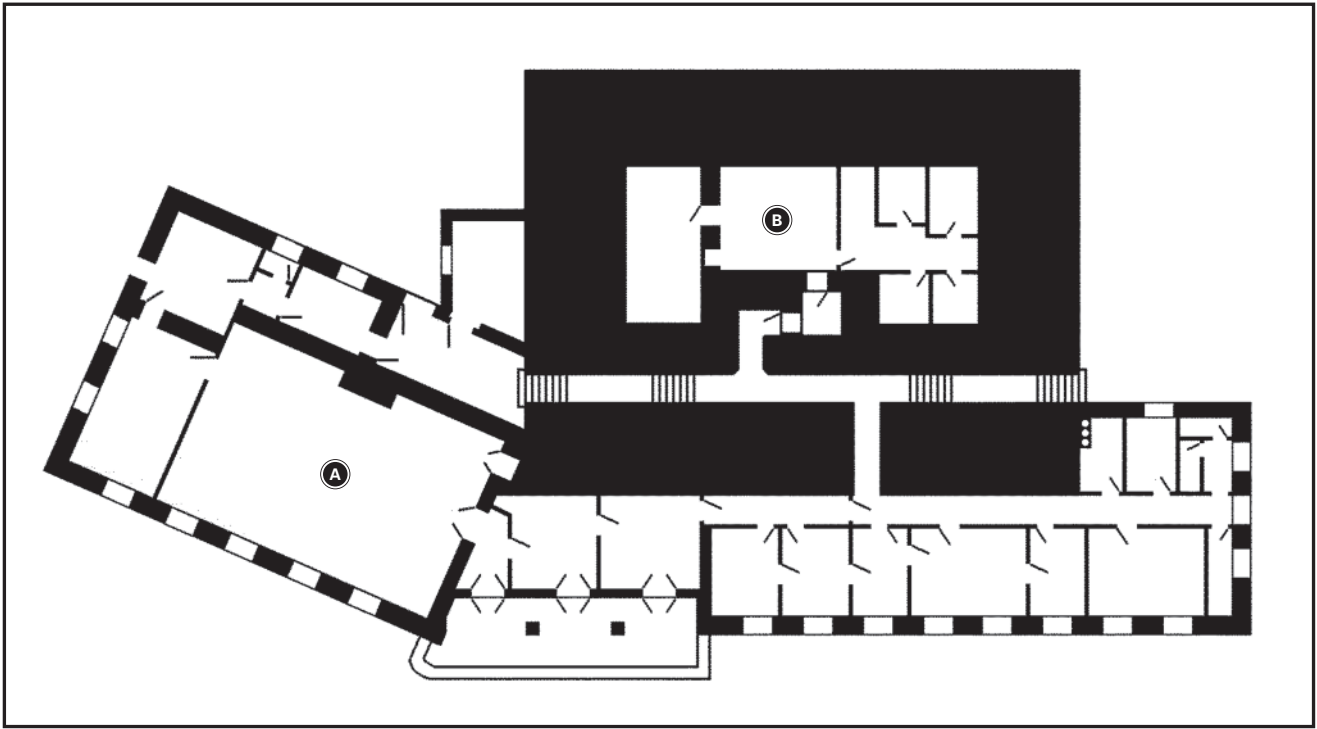
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Left: A crowd of German soldiers cheer Hitler at Laon in June 1940 as he leaves the city after a brief visit to its cathedral. However, his passage in the early hours of June 17, four years



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later, was no doubt much less noticed. Right: The house on the corner of the Place du Parvis is now a café but the inclement weather in our comparison has left the city almost deserted.



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commander of the LXV. Armeekorps that had been formed specifically to command the V-weapon offensive, Hitler warmly thanked him for the successful opening of the campaign against England. 'The impression arose', wrote Blumentritt later, 'that Hitler diverted himself by this means from the bitter knowledge of the real situation'. The meeting broke up about half past midday without any decisions having been made.

Lunch was served in the Teehaus. Speidel: 'A one-dish meal at which Hitler bolted a heaped plate of rice and vegetables after it had been previously tasted for him. Pills ranged around his place and he took them in turn. Two SS men stood guard behind his chair.' After the meal, a presentation was given to publicise the introduction of the VI campaign that had begun on June 13.

The conference was resumed after lunch when Rommel dared to suggest that it was time to come to terms with the Western Allies. Jodl later recalled how Hitler heard him out in silence before sharply retorting: 'That is a question which is not your responsibility. You will have to leave that to me.' An air raid warning was then sounded and Hitler and the rest of the delegates entered the shelter at the side of the bunker where they remained for an hour, hardly a word



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The meeting began at 9.30 a.m. in the conference room in the 'Vorbau' of Bau 1 [A] and lasted till 12.30 p.m. when lunch was served in the nearby Teehaus. The talks resumed in the afternoon, but were interrupted by an air raid warning, which sent Hitler and the two field-marschals to the shelter in the heavy bunker [B]. They remained there for about an hour, finally emerging about 3 p.m., and von Rundstedt and Rommel left soon thereafter. Above: The US engineers photographed the conference room, simply captioning it as 'interior of one of the headquarters buildings'. But for the horseman sculpture on the chimney breast, the room was quite sparsely furnished, with a nondescript table, chairs, bookshelves and a lamp standard that might be found in any house. Obviously, the soldiers of the US 1st Infantry Division who visited the compound at about the same date, allowed their imaginations to run free when they reported: 'luxuriously furnished' offices and quarters! In 2007 vandals lit a fire in this bunker and the conflagration which raged for hours completely gutted the interior. Because of the presence of toxic materials, particularly asbestos, the bunker is now completely closed off and all entry forbidden. Right: Pierre Rhode and Werner Sünkel were lucky to be able to visit the bunker in the 1980s when the conference room was still in fairly good shape, though the equestrian statue had by then already been broken by vandals.



P. RHODE AND W. SÜNKEL

In 1993 Rhode and Sünkel published *Wolfsschlucht 2, Autopsie eines Führerhauptquartiers*, their remarkably detailed study of the Marginal headquarters (see www.wehrtechnikmuseum.de).

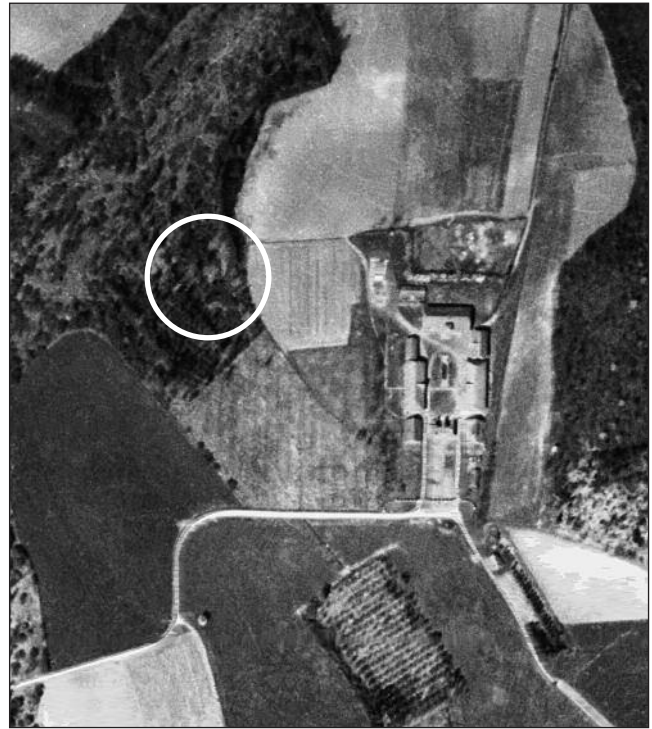
Fernschreib - Fernschreiben - Funkbrief

Träger-Bezeichnung: HM E 72
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 GEHEIME KOMMANDOSACHE
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Empfänger: AN CHEF DES STABES ROEM. 65. A. K.
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AP 17.6. GEGEN 04.30 UHR IST ANSCHEINEND 1 FZG. 76
 IN 2 KM ENTFERNUNG VON ANLAGE W 2 EINGESCHLAGEN.
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GEZ.: JODL CHEF WFT, OKW/WST NR. 77 1959/44
 G. K. CHEFS.
 ERMASSIGT AT. QUESBERG HMBX 244
 BSL ERHALTEN 2015 OBLT. NORRBOZEN



Left: This is the telex sent on the evening of June 17 by Generaloberst Alfred Jodl: 'On June 17, about 0430 hours, what was probably a FZG 76 crashed about two kilometres from Camp W 2'. Right: The terrain where the V1 crashed, close

to the Saint-Guislain farm, was marshy and the impact crater had soon disappeared. Absolutely no trace of it is visible at the position circled on this aerial photograph taken by the French Institut Géographique National in 1949.

being spoken. They emerged some time before 3 p.m. Speidel wrote that 'before the conference ended, Hitler's chief adjutant, Generalleutnant Schmudt, apparently impressed by Rommel's repeated warnings that the High Command had to have first-hand knowledge of the front, asked the Chief-of-Staff of Heeresgruppe B to prepare for a visit on June 19 by Hitler to La Roche-Guyon or some other suitable headquarters'.

Once the two field-m Marshals had departed, Hitler and his party carried out a short inspection tour of the headquarters before leaving for Germany later that evening having suddenly cancelled the meeting planned for the 19th. There is some doubt as to the precise route they took to return to Germany. Nicolaus von Below said that the party returned by car to Metz, arriving in the early morning, from where they flew to Salzburg, but local unsubstantiated accounts claim that the party took off from a local airfield, Juvin-court or Laon-Couvron.

In his book *Invasion 1944: Rommel and the Normandy Campaign* published in 1950, Speidel stated that it was the crash of a rogue V1 nearby that alarmed the Führer and his staff and precipitated their departure. However this is incorrect for the V1 incident occurred during the early hours of June 17 before the Hitler party arrived. The proof is given in a telex from Jodl to the LXV. Armeekorps later that day: 'On June 17, about 0430 hours, what was probably a FZG 76 crashed about two kilometres from Camp W 2. The remains found at the site of the impact have been impounded by Criminal-Inspector Schmidt, RSD W 2. The LXV. Armeekorps will immediately start an investigation and report the result to the chief of the WFSt.'

This V1 is believed to have been launched from a ramp at Vignacourt, near Abbeville, but instead of flying north, went off course and flew 120 kilometres south-east before crashing about four kilometres east of the Führerhauptquartier. FZG 76 was a code-name for the V1; RSD W 2 stands for Reichssicherheitsdienst at W 2, the Reichssicherheitsdienst being the security service which



Mrs Louise Cyri, the niece of André Leleu, the owner of the Saint-Guislain farm in 1944, clearly remembers where the V1 crashed. Then 19 years old, she visited the farm a few days afterwards and saw the crater a few dozen metres west of the field which was at the time planted with potatoes. However, nothing remained to be seen of it when Jean Paul visited the farm in 2009 in the company of Didier and Rémy Ledé of the ASW 2 Association and Marc Henneveux, the mayor of Allemant.

provided protection for high Nazi officials; and the chief of the WFSt (Wehrmacht-führungsstab) was Jodl himself. All the times are in Central European Summer Time which in June 1944 was GMT + 2.

The time of the crash is also supported by witnesses recently found by the ASW 2 Association. Bernard Adam, a farmer living in the nearby village of Vaudesson, heard and saw the pulse of the missile's engine in the sky, then the silence before the huge explosion at Allemant, less than two kilometres from where he stood. Then André Leleu, who ran the Saint-Guislain farm at Allemant, remembers the tremendous shock of the V1 exploding just a few hundred metres from the farm, leaving an eight-metre-wide crater in the marshy ground. He was checking for damage to the farm build-

ings when German troops arrived within ten minutes or so after the crash, asking where the 'aircraft' had crashed. M. Leleu gave them the few pieces of twisted metal that he had found and they started to systematically collect what else remained of the missile.

Although Hitler's reason for cancelling the meeting at La Roche-Guyon has not been recorded, possibly he was not in a mood to continue the argument with the two field-m Marshals, and Rommel's suggestion for a political solution was the last straw. Talking about this meeting to Albert Speer, his Armaments Minister, on his return to the Obersalzberg, Hitler told him how Rommel had lost his nerve and become pessimistic. He also commented that 'Wolfsschlucht 2' was not safe, 'lying as it was in the middle of France infested by Partisans'.



USNA

On August 25, the US XX Corps attacked north-eastwards from the bridgehead across the Seine at Melun. The leading troops crossed the Marne river on the 28th, wheeled eastwards, and by noon on the 31st were at Verdun and across the Meuse. Having taken over the Melun bridgehead from XX Corps, the US VII Corps attacked in turn on the 26th with the 3rd Armored Division leading. The leading elements reached the River Marne on the 27th and two days later the division's Combat



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Command B crossed the Aisne at Soissons. They were now just eight kilometres from 'Wolfsschlucht 2' which had been abandoned by the Germans just a short time before. *Left:* Here, an M5 light tank of CCB crosses the Place de la République in Melun, with a Sherman and Jeep in the background. The tanks were heading for the Aisne bridge which lies about 500 metres off to the right. *Right:* Looking north-west across the square from the Avenue de Reims today.

THE CAPTURE OF 'WOLFSSCHLUCHT 2'

The 'W 2' installations were finally used as a command post for Heeresgruppe B that re-established itself at Margival on August 19 after having pulled out from La Roche-Guyon under American artillery fire earlier that morning. When the US VII Corps launched their attack from the Melun bridgehead on the River Seine on August 26, it quickly unhinged the LVIII. Panzerkorps, and by the 28th, the 3rd Armored Division was speeding through Château-Thierry and Soissons (see *After the Battle* No. 119). As a result, Generalfeldmarschall Walter Model (Commander-in-Chief West and commander of Heeresgruppe B since mid-August) and the staff of the Heeresgruppe B headquarters quit Margival late that evening having been operational there for just ten days. There was no time to destroy the installations and they were all left intact save for the radio station on the top of the hill. Although the garrison withdrew in good time, taking with them the 20mm and 37mm guns, the heavier 105mm weapons had to be spiked and abandoned where they were.

Elements of the 3rd Armored Division reached and passed through Margival on the afternoon of August 29, en route to Laon. Following the leading armour, the 1st Infantry Division cleared Soissons, finding two trains standing in the station, one of them loaded with food. 'First Division messes for several days were enlivened by

Westphalia hams and noodles, and tinned asparagus and some of the best canned cherries that ever dazzled a soldier who had seen nothing like that for months, and would not see anything like that for still longer'.

North-west of Soissons, off the main route of advance, infantrymen then came upon 'the almost unbelievable creation at Margival, the newly completed and never occupied headquarters for the German Commander in the West'. The divisional historian wrote that: 'It was such a triumph of camouflage that even from a moderate distance at the ground level one would fail to see it, and such a triumph of secrecy in building (by the Organisation Todt) that even the occupants of a nearby village had never seen it and knew only vaguely that some kind of building had been going on with imported workmen. Yet beneath the forest of painted camouflage strips and netting lay broad concrete streets with lamp-posts for night illumination. Beside the road lay the well-designed buildings of reinforced concrete walls reaching far below ground-level, roofed with armour comfortably and even luxuriously furnished for the great number of staff officers who were to have offices and quarters in this model headquarters. The council room designed for von Rundstedt with its map-cases and huge table, perfectly lighted, almost made one wish that the war would halt around here long enough to permit its use by the Division. Fire extinguishers were in their places, engravings on the neat walls

(labels on the backs were invariably those of looted art-shops in Paris), comfortable work chairs and easy chairs in each officer's room and (model of German thoroughness) in each wardrobe a bootjack. About the edge of Margival were defence-post pillboxes but for precaution's sake no large anti-aircraft installations: those we later saw on the surrounding hills. It was all like a stage set, save for its decidedly permanent character, a truly perfect headquarters completed, by a jocular Fate, just too late to be of any use to its builders.'

In 2007 historian Bruno Renault was researching the history of the XIX Corps in the US National Archives for his series of books dealing with the battles on the River Seine (see www.vexinhistoirevivante.com). 'I came across a file with reports by a camouflage unit operating with the 30th Infantry Division. The study of this file was somewhat boring, with details like the covering of artillery guns with foliage, until I came across a study of the camouflage of the German headquarters at Margival. A few days after the end of the bitter fighting in the Seine bridgehead and the general German withdrawal, the camouflage unit of the 602nd Engineer Camouflage Battalion was moving eastwards in the Soissons sector. At Margival they came across the Führerhauptquartier intact. It was a golden prize, the first headquarters of Hitler to fall into Allied hands! An engineer team was detailed to carefully inspect and photograph the various types



USNA

An M7 105mm howitzer motor carriage photographed crossing the Aisne on August 30 using a ramp over the small breach made by the Germans in their attempt to destroy the bridge.



ATB

Our comparison is taken looking south-west from the end of Boulevard Gambetta with the Abbey of Saint Jean des Vignes in the background.



No. 25

POOL

Nos. 6-7-8

No. 32

No. 2

No. 5

Nos. 9-10

No. 23

Nos. 3-4

No. 1

No. 11

Nos. 13-14-15

No. 26

No. 18

No. 19

No. 20

No. 10b

No. 11b

No. 16

No. 17

No. 27

Nos. 21-22

No. 99



USNA

Left: Men of the 602nd Engineer Battalion soon came across the abandoned German headquarters and at Vauxaillon, near the northern entrance of the railway tunnel, they took this shot of a



ATB

Type 108A ammunition storage bunker. Right: There were actually two bunkers of this type close to one another and both still stand in an open field in front of the Vauxaillon railway station.

and techniques of camouflage used by the Germans. Bunkers covered with nets made of ropes and wire mesh, plastic materials, natural plants and bushes, etc. The report included a sketch plan which included the railway tunnel, positions of the Flak guns, and field defence positions.'

On October 30, 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Kearney sent his report to the First Army: 'The area was observed from the air at altitude of 1,500 and 3,000 feet. It was easy to locate because of the proximity to the rail-road tunnel. From these heights the artificial grass, trees and rock were easily discernible. This was due to the colours used. Generally, the materials were darker than the surrounding foliage. Texturing however was good, and the camouflage blended well on photographs. The material used for the dummy roofs gave an excellent imitation of tile. It was also noted that although a great deal of excavating had been done, no spoil was in evidence. It must have been hauled away, or added to a hillside and covered with sod. No signs of construction work were visible.

'In general, the camouflage measures taken throughout this area were excellent. Although in many cases the artificial materials were evident, neither photography nor direct observation revealed the nature nor the exact location of the structures being camouflaged, and accurate observation of the installations would have been difficult.'

The report also noted how each end of the tunnel was hidden under camouflage covering over the tracks to a distance of about 150 metres.



GOOGLE EARTH

Trees now hide most of the 'W 2' bunkers from aerial observation but the pair of bunkers at Vauxaillon show up clearly. Type 108A ammunition bunkers measured 16.8 by 18 metres, with walls and ceiling three metres thick, and featured two storage rooms, each six by three metres. The road from the bunkers to the tunnel (seen on the left alongside the railway line) is the original German concrete road.



USNA

Another picture from the US engineers report, showing a ventilation shaft from one of the underground installations.



ATB

In many places near the 'W 2' compound — such as at Laffaux, Neuville and Vauxaillon — the Germans used ancient underground quarries to store equipment, supplies and food. They concreted the entrance for some distance, and sometimes installed Decauville narrow railway tracks to service the interior. Above: This is one of the three ventilation and escape exits built by the Germans for the quarry at Vauxaillon.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

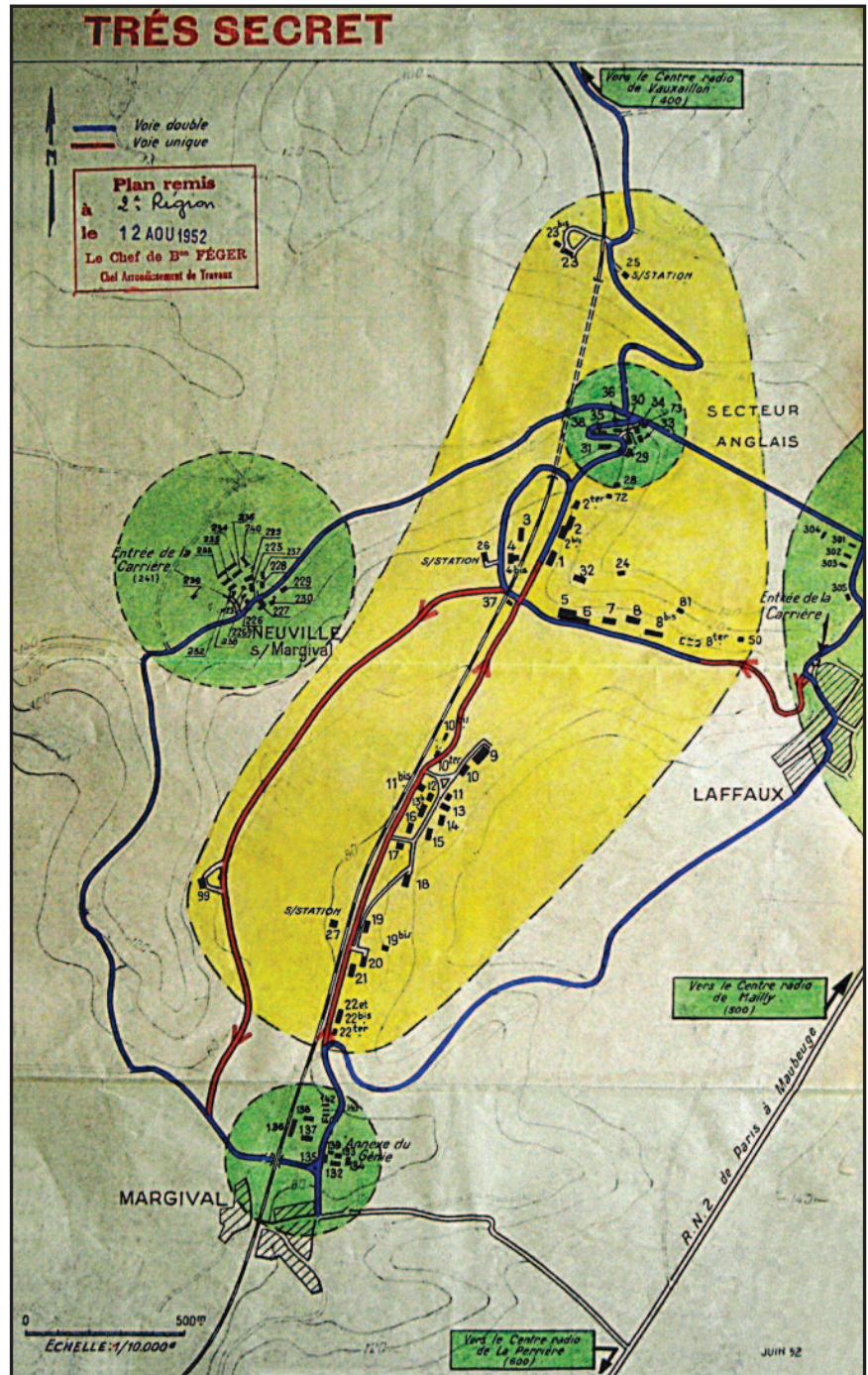
American forces occupied the HQ for some months but when war ended it was used to house displaced persons, Italians, Czechs and Yugoslavs, and finally elements of Polish troops who had served with the British Army. Some time later, Margival was used as a base to assemble and train Indo-Chinese troops as France was then becoming involved in the war in Indo-China. Later female units of the French Army were trained there.

Following NATO's North Atlantic Council decision in September 1950 to create an integrated European defence force, the establishment of SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) proceeded quickly and in April 1951 General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Allied Commander Europe, with Field-Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery as Deputy. In July, a brand new headquarters was inaugurated for SHAPE at Rocquencourt, near Versailles, south-west of Paris. Subordinated commands for Northern and Southern Europe were established in Oslo and Naples respectively and the Central Europe command was established at Fontainebleau, south of Paris. Ensuring the survivability of senior command staffs in a nuclear environment was an immediate concern and Margival's extensive infrastructure was soon chosen to serve as a primary static war headquarters for the Central Europe command. A considerable amount of work was undertaken to renovate and modernise the old bunkers of the former 'W 2' HQ, but few new buildings were constructed. Extensive communication links were established, including in the late 1950s the tropospheric network then being built across Western Europe to link SHAPE with its subordinate commands.

By a queer twist of fate, General Hans Speidel then returned at Margival. After the war, he had served for some time as Professor of Modern History at Tübingen University, his book referred to above being published in October 1950. One month earlier, the three Western occupation powers — Britain, France and the United States — had accepted in principle that West Germany could contribute military forces to the security of Europe and Speidel became involved in the development and creation of the Bundeswehr. West Germany joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1955 and in April 1957 Speidel was appointed Commander Allied Land Forces Central Europe. In June, he was promoted to four-star rank just as the first three German divisions joined NATO forces. He immediately brought new perspectives, challenging the Allies to think innovatively about the relationship between conventional and nuclear forces in the conduct of land operations. Speidel remained at this post until September 1963, an impressive achievement considering he had been a general under Hitler only 15 years before!

However, the Margival complex soon proved to be a heavy burden on the NATO budget. In spite of costly efforts to make the HQ adequate in an NBC environment, being above ground it never proved to be fully satisfactory. Also the extensive site required a large guard force to secure the perimeter, and the demands for electricity, water and maintenance proved to be difficult to satisfy.

In 1966 President Charles de Gaulle decided to withdraw from the integrated military command of NATO as he wanted France to be able to act independently (although the country was to remain a member of the organisation and of the North Atlantic Pact). Consequently, NATO vacated its former headquarters in Rocquencourt and Fontainebleau in April 1967 to relocate in Belgium, the personnel at Margival following in June. (It would not be until



This plan, which is the earliest one of 'Wolfsschlucht 2' that we have been able to trace, was drawn up in June 1952 by French Army engineers when it was planned to use the former German headquarters for the French National Air Defence Command Centre. The plan indexes each construction from north to south with a two-digit reference number that was apparently based on the original German numbering. The yellow sector outlines the inner compound of 'W 2' and the table on page 33 lists the function of most of the buildings. This can be augmented with others such as No. 24, a Type L410 Flak bunker; No. 81, a Type 105A machine gun bunker (refurbished by the ASW 2 association); and No. 99, a Type 108A ammunition bunker. The buildings in the green areas were predominantly new French constructions except for those at Neuville-sur-Margival where there were several original buildings from a German heavy Flak battery that had been located there. No. 229 was a large L408A bunker (a command post for a Flak-Abteilung); Nos. 228, 231 and 232 were Type 502 personnel shelters; but Nos. 225, 226 and 227 were new French constructions built on the site where there had formerly been three Type L2 positions for 37mm Flak guns. None of the wooden huts that were distributed throughout the area to serve as barracks for the Flak gun crews appear on this plan. These buildings were in poor shape by the early 1950s and by 1952 most of them had been demolished. However, two large timber buildings were still indexed on the plan in the centre of the complex: the L-shaped building No. 10ter that was to be destroyed later in the 1950s, and the large hut No. 10bis which was to survive right up to the mid-1970s. The words 'Entrée de la Carrière' at Neuville-sur-Margival and at Laffaux indicate the entrances to underground quarries (see the photographs at the bottom of the facing page).



ASWZ

With no photos of 'W 2' under German management having survived to our knowledge, those taken during the French tenure in the 1970s provide a good illustration of what the place must have looked like as a military headquarters. In March 1971 Général Georges Richter, commanding the 8ème Division d'Infanterie, and Général Maurice Henry, commanding the 4ème Brigade, reviewed troops in front of Bau 14.



ASWZ

From 1968 to 1985 the Margival facilities hosted the Centre d'Entraînement Commando (CEC), a training centre for French commandos. This photo from 1975 shows the CEC emblem on the façade of Bau 18, the facility's command post during this period. Both Bau 14 and 18 were light bunkers, the former measuring 45 by 14 metres, the latter 35 by 14 metres. The armoured doors and shutters were original German fittings.

1977, ten years after having evacuated Margival, that NATO Central Europe command possessed an adequate headquarters for war operations, this being the underground facility code-named 'Erwin' at Boerfink, near Kaiserslautern, in Germany.)

From 1968 the Margival facilities were used as a training centre for French commandos, an obvious reminder of this period being the 'village' of Saint-Raoul built in the 1980s at the junction at the bottom of Bau (Building) 1 for practising street-fighting.

The commandos left in 1985 and from then on the camp served occasionally for manoeuvres by the 67ème Régiment d'Infanterie which was based at Soissons. In 1987 there were talks of constructing a hospital there for the German army and, although money was spent in the early 1990s to sanitise and update the facilities, the former Hitler headquarters finally closed down in July 1993. From then on, although the area remained off-limits for individual access, much looting, theft and mindless vandalism took place.

In 2005 the whole site was offered back to the communities of Laffaux, Margival and Neuville whose land had been taken in 1939, each village taking back its former territory. However it was specified that the French Army retained the right to requisition the camp. However it would appear that Neuville's plot, which includes three of the largest bunkers, was sold in 2008 to a Dutch developer.



MICHEL TRUTTMAN

Another shot taken at the time of the CEC in 1982, this one showing a well-maintained Bau 4, which was a heavy bunker of the 'Baustärke A' type, that during the war had housed the FHQu teleprinter exchange. Note that its 'Vorbau' (annex) was built on one side only. In the background, across the railway line, stands Bau 1. The original German concrete road was still in perfect condition.



THIERRY GILBERT

Left: Climbing training in 1984 on the exercise tower built by the French on the roof of Bau 21. This was a 'Baustärke A' heavy bunker, 44.5 by 18.5 metres, with a garage extension on the side. Its four doors are visible. Right: Colonel Henri Tirat during a parade



ASWZ

in July 1977 marking the completion of the commando course. Bau 9 seen in the background was another 'Baustärke A' bunker, this particular one measuring 79.5 by 26 metres with annexes built along the front and sides.

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Unfortunately the 1944 report by Siegfried Schmelcher does not include a plan, and no original plan of Führerhauptquartier 'W 2' appears to have survived. Also no photos of the headquarters during the war have been discovered. Although one can understand that the Germans would have banned all photography for security reasons, one might have hoped that the Americans or British would have photographed the base, assuming of course that they were aware of its importance as Hitler's headquarters in the West. However, but for the survey conducted by the 602nd Engineer Camouflage Battalion in September 1944, no further investigation appears to have been carried out.

No. 542 Squadron of the RAF photographed Margival on July 6, 1944, and in April 1949 the French Institut Géographique

National (IGN) surveyed the area, taking sharp aerial photos. These are of particular interest as they show 'W 2' more or less as it was at the war's end. Photos taken by IGN in 1957 and 1975 also enable us to follow the later French and NATO alterations and new constructions.

Another major source of information are the early post-war French studies. In order to assess the value of the various works built in France by the Germans during the war, in the interests of national defence the French set up a commission to carry out a complete survey covering the whole country. Army engineers were responsible for surveying and preparing reports, the commission then deciding whether to take into official ownership those facilities that were of interest or to hand them over to the owner of the land on which they were built.

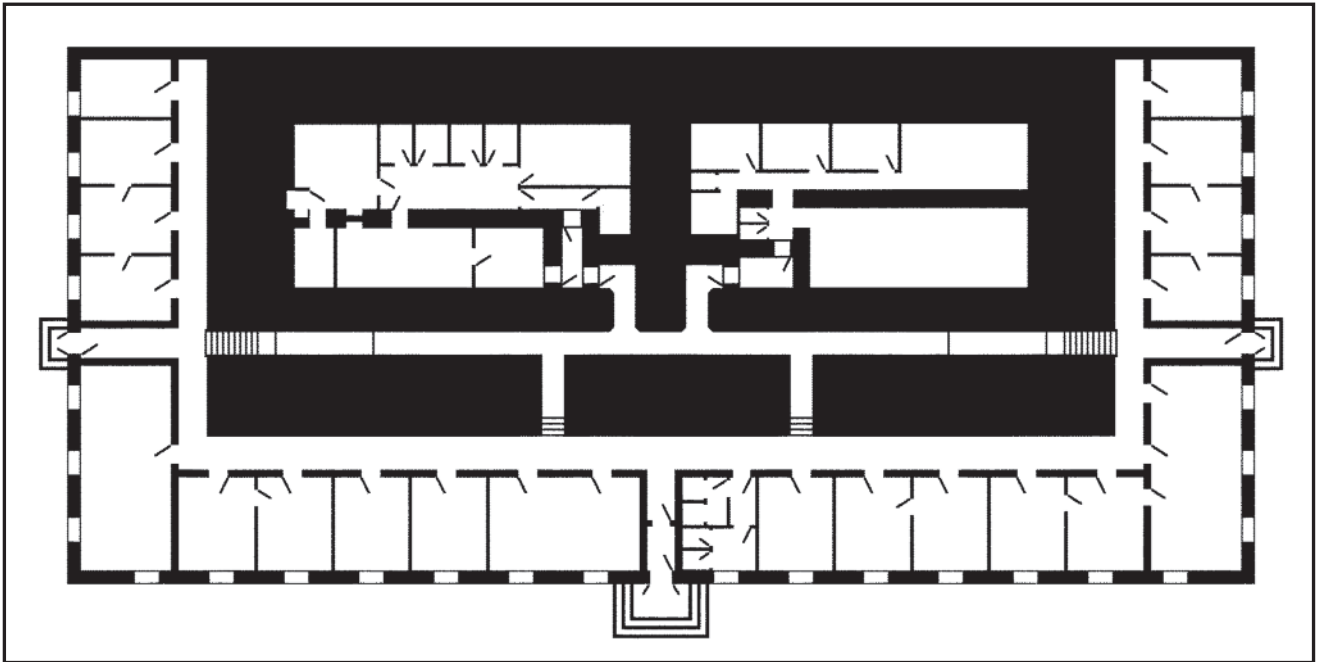
The earliest set of plans that we have traced was drawn up in June 1952 by the Engineers Direction of Soissons and are part of a file dealing with the French National Air Defence Command Centre, code-named 'Olive', planned to be installed at Margival. The study lists the constructions — some 135 'blocks' in all — and includes a sketch plan of every one with the function of each building. These early French plans index each construction from north to south with a two-digit reference number that may be based on the original German numbering, hence the description 'Bau 1' and 'Bau 2' that remained in use for the larger bunkers. More plans were drawn up in the 1970s and 1980s when the camp was occupied by the French Army but these changed the indexing to three figures. We have used the numbering system of 1952 throughout this article.

FÜHRERHAUPTQUARTIER 'WOLFSSCHLUCHT 2' INNER COMPOUND

<i>Indexing 1950s</i>	<i>Indexing 1980s</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Overall measurements</i>		<i>FHQ function when known</i>	<i>Comments and later French names</i>
1	027	heavy bunker Vorbau	23	17	Führerbunker	Haut-le-Wastia
2	002	heavy bunker Vorbau	60	18.5	OKW	Zucarello
		annex	72.5	25.5		
4	028	heavy bunker Vorbau	44	12	teleprinter exchange	
			31	18.5		
5	024	heavy bunker Vorbau	93	18.5	telephone exchange	Constance
			108.5	25.5		
9	036	heavy bunker Vorbau	69	18.5	guests' bunker	Taschet des Combes
			79.5	26		
21	056	heavy bunker annex	44.5	18.5	shelter garage	Loano
			16	12		
23	Vx 971	heavy bunker Vorbau	45	18.5		
			60	26		
3	029	light bunker	27.4	13	cinema	Krasnoe
6	023	light bunker	29.4	11.4		Derly
7	022	light bunker	34	12		A/C Bahl
8	019	light bunker	29.4	11.4		Berezina
10	037	light bunker	32	14		Sergent Coty
13	046	light bunker	23	14		Verdun
14	047	light bunker	45	14		Fockedey
15	048	light bunker	32	14		Colonel Marescot du Tilleul
16	049	light bunker	44	14		La Marne
18	051	light bunker	35	14		Général Weiller
19	052	light bunker	40	12.4		Caen
20	054	light bunker	32	14		Sous-Lieutenant Busin
22	057	light bunker	40	12.4		Le Matz
26	030	power station	28.8	11	four 150 KVA generators	
27	060	power station	13.6	10.4	two 150 KVA generators	
25	Vx 970	power station	13.6	10.4	two 150 KVA generators	
17	050	shelter	16.7	15.5	Type 608	
11	039	shelter	14.8	9.5	Type 502	
12	044	shelter	12.5	11.6	Type 622	
19b	053	shelter	12.5	11.6	Type 622	
72	004	shelter	9.8	9.6	Type 621	
50	016	shelter	9.8	9.6	Type 621	
23b	Vx 467b	shelter	9.8	9.6	Type 621	
10b	040	wooden building	30.5	12.5		demolished 1970s
11b	043	wooden chalet	13	11		demolished 1980s
32	026	wooden chalet	26.5	6.4	officers club ('Teehaus')	demolished 1986
22t	058	brick building			entrance post	pre WWII construction
37	032	brick building			railway station	pre WWII construction

This table only lists the larger bunkers and specific constructions in the inner compound of 'Wolfsschlucht 2'. It does not include Flak or ground-defence bunkers. The first column for the heavy bunkers refers to the 'Baustärke A' part and the second to the annex or 'Vorbau'. These extensions were generally built along the front and sides of the central bunker and the measurements given include the annex, hence the latter line

should be read as 'overall measurements' (except for Bau 4 and 21 where the annex was simply built alongside). The functions of each construction in the FHQu organisation remain largely unknown though in a very few cases some indications can be found in early reports. In the case of Bau 3 for example, the American engineers visiting the camp in September 1944 noted that it was a 'motion picture auditorium'.



ATB

There were seven heavy bunkers of 'Baustärke A' in the inner compound. Depending on their size, they comprised either one or several separate shelters, with a gas-lock at each entrance. Bau 1 and 4 comprised only one shelter, Bau 2, 21 and 23 (above) two, Bau 9 three and Bau 5 four. Bau 23, shown here, had the 'Vorbau' annexes added along the front and sides. Bau 5 and 9 had the same configuration. Bau 4 and 21 had the annex built as a separate building alongside, while Bau 1 and 2 featured a combination of the two. Bau 1 had the extension added along the front by a building at an angle (see page 25), and Bau 2 had an annex along its front and sides plus an independent building located at the front right-hand corner. These three views show Bau 5, the former telephone exchange. The long central corridor (below left) has doors on the left to the rooms in the annex (right) while those on the right lead to the corridor inside the main 'Baustärke A' shelter (below right).



ATB



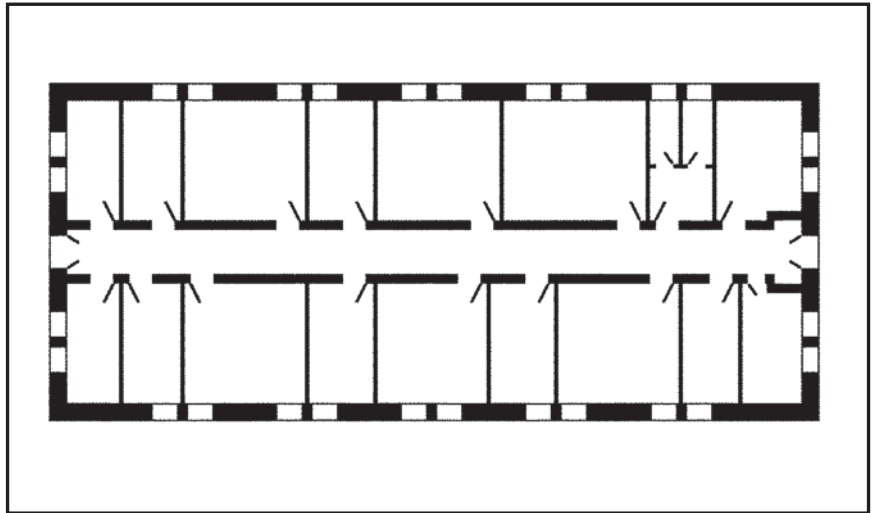
ATB



ATB

From the report of Siegfried Schmelcher issued in November 1944 we know that the construction of 'W 2' involved 2.7 million working days and needed about 250,000 cubic metres of concrete. This was more than any of the other Hitler headquarters, including 'Wolfsschanze' at Rastenburg, as that took 1.75 million days to construct and used 173,000 cubic metres of concrete. Only the huge, uncompleted 'Riese' complex south-east of Bad Charlottenbrunn (now Jedlina-Zdró in Poland) in Lower Silesia involved more working days: 3.5 million and 360,000 cubic metres of cement by the end of 1944.

Führerhauptquartier 'W 2' covered an area two kilometres long by one wide and was split into two parts. The headquarters, with the Hitler and OKW bunkers and the communication centres, lay to the north while the support, supply and services were in the south. Surprisingly, there was no road inside the compound linking the two parts until one was built in the 1950s along the eastern side of the railway line. According to Schmelcher's report, the constructions at Führerhauptquartier 'W 2' provided 43,050 square metres of useful space. Over ten per cent — 5,045 square metres — were built to what was called 'Baustärke A' standard,



There were 13 light bunkers in the inner compound. Bau 15, shown here, illustrates the general plan of these bunkers, which had a central corridor with entrances at each end and offices on either side. Depending on its size, each bunker featured between ten and 20 rooms plus a toilet.



During the mid-1970s, the French Army gave the large bunkers girl's names which were painted on the concrete. Bau 1 became 'Marie-Aude', Bau 2 'Marie-Jeanne', Bau 5 'Patricia', and so on. In the early 1980s, they were renamed along more-martial lines, Bau 1 becoming 'Haut-le-Wastia' after the battle with the Germans in Belgium in May 1940. Others commemorated First World War battles — 'La Marne' and 'Verdun' — and even a river crossing during Napoléon's Russian campaign was remembered with the name 'Berezina'. Above: Bau 15 today although some of the armoured doors and shutters that once protected its openings have been removed.

i.e. with walls and ceilings of 3.5 metres of reinforced concrete, capable of withstanding the heaviest artillery of the day and direct hits from bombs of up to one tonne. These bunkers had their own air supply and could be sealed off from the outside, the entrances being protected by a pair of gas-proof armoured doors. These bunkers were not just air raid shelters but served to provide secure accommodation for command and communications (one of them housed the telephone exchange and another the teleprinter unit). The headquarters compound contained seven bunkers of 'Baustärke A', some shaped to make the best use of the hillside on which they were built, hence the angled Bau 1 and the curved Bau 5. Most of these bunkers had an annex, or 'Vorbau', comprising overflow offices with walls and ceilings only 50 to 75cm thick.

Two more of these 'Baustärke A' bunkers lay outside the perimeter, one being located in the grounds of a château at Vregny that was developed to house the services of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, and another near a property at Mailly for Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop.

In addition, there were 13 light bunkers in the inner compound to provide additional office space. The design was a protective shell of concrete walls and roof over a standard brick-built hut that Organisation Todt referred to as 'Ummantelte Baracken' — concrete-encased huts. The entrances and windows



Left: This corner of Bau 10 is a good example as it still shows the successive designations of the bunker. The first series of numbers, here number '10', were painted directly on the concrete in white on a black background. Though they probably followed the original German numbering system, they only appeared on the exterior walls after the war, as is proven by the photo of Bau 5 taken by the US engineers in September 1944 (see page 23 top) which does not show the number. The second name, 'Sergent Coty', was applied in the 1980s and was painted mostly in red on blue metal panels which were secured to the concrete. This panel was placed over the earlier female name, the blue outline of the former identity can just be seen in this picture slightly protruding from the new nameplate. As the same method of adding metal panels was used for the new three-digit numbers, (here '037') these were most likely to have been introduced at the same time.



ATB

Two 'Baustärke A' bunkers were built outside the FHQu compound, one at Vregny, five kilometres to the south, where Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler had planned to set up camp, and one at Mailly (above), 15 kilometres to the north-east, for Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and his staff.



ATB

Three large bunkers had been built to house generators for the 'Wolfsschlucht 2' headquarters. No. 25 was located near the northern end of the railway tunnel, close to Bau 23; No. 26 situated at the tunnel's southern end near Bau 3 and 4; and No. 27, pictured (above), was located near the village of Margival, opposite Bau 19, 20 and 21 on the far side of the railway track (see the map on page 31).



ATB

were fitted with armoured doors and shutters but were not gas-proof, and with walls and roof between 50-75cm thick, these bunkers offered limited protection, the Organisation Todt considering them only 'Splittersicher' — shrapnel proof. The size of these light bunkers varied from 23 to 45 metres, by either 11.4 or 14 metres, and each provided 10 to 20 rooms with a central corridor.

In the inner compound there were also three large bunkers housing generators, eight standard command or shelter bunkers, about ten large wooden huts, and odd buildings like garages and workshops. The bunkers housing generators were built to 'Baustärke B' specification having the roof and walls two metres thick. A French report drawn up in the early 1950s explains that poor-quality timber had been used in the construction of the wooden buildings and that these were already in poor condition. It stated that repair was impossible and that they should be demolished yet the large hut, No. 10b, still survived till the mid-1970s.

One notable timber construction was the 'Teehaus' or 'Kasino' on the hillside about 200 metres from the Führerbunker. It had two dining rooms and a bar and served as the Officers' Mess. Known as the 'Green Chalet' during the post-war era, it ended up in poor shape and was finally demolished in 1986. Another wooden chalet stood near the railway line by the southern entrance. Its purpose is not known although it might have been the office of the security services. In the 1970s it was known as the 'White Chalet' or the 'Finnish Chalet' and was used by the French Army to house high-ranking guests. It, too, was removed in the 1980s.

There were also about 70 wooden huts distributed throughout the area to serve as barracks for the Flak gun crews. Generally they were provided with earth banks for blast protection. Most of these were also demolished in the 1950s, the remainders in the 1970s or 1980s, but in many places the protecting walls still survive today.

The headquarters compound was defended by an outer belt of defences comprising around 60 bunkers with machine guns, most in open 'Tobruk'-type positions, but some with either a steel plate embrasure or armoured cupola. There were also personnel shelters and numerous ammunition stores. 'W 2' was defended against air attack by seven heavy Flak batteries and around five light/medium batteries. The heavies each had six 105mm guns plus two or three 20mm guns and a 60cm searchlight, and the light and medium batteries were mostly armed with 37mm guns, 12 guns each, and some with 20mm guns.

The FHQu compound was defended by an outer belt of defences comprising a total of about 155 bunkers of various type and function in a radius of a few kilometres around the headquarters. Around 80 of these were personnel quarters for the troops and 60 were bunkers armed with machine guns. Most were in open 'Tobruk' positions (a concrete fox-hole occupied by a two-man team) but 14 possessed armoured embrasures; another four armoured cupolas with firing slits, and two armoured embrasures plus a cupola. *Left:* This armoured cupola on top of a Type 99A bunker can still be seen at Margival, off the right-hand side of the road, about 100 metres beyond the turning which climbs past the entrance to the FHQu compound. For the technically minded, the cupola is a Type 407P9 with three firing slits. There were four of them in the FHQu belt of defences. These defence bunkers were mostly left untouched by the later French and NATO troops occupying the compound and original German markings can still be seen in many of them today.

Seven heavy Flak batteries defended FHQu 'W 2' against air attack, each having six 105mm guns plus two or three 20mm guns and one 60cm searchlight. The weapons were installed in concrete emplacements, with associated bunkers being provided for personnel and ammunition as well as shelters for generators. In addition, each position comprised about ten wooden huts that served as barracks for the gun crews. *Right:* The heavy Flak battery just south of the village of Laffaux featured six 105mm gun positions of Type 103A — at [1] and [2] — and three 20mm gun positions of Type L1 (two at [3] and one at [4]). It also had one Type 426 communication post [5] and one Type 407 ammunition depot [6]. A Type 621 personnel shelter lies north of the battery [7] and another at the right end of the zig-zagging trench in the centre of the 105mm gun positions. The wooden huts had already been demolished by the time this aerial photo was taken in 1949 although the excavations in which they were sited to give protection still showed up. Three of them stood side by side below and left of the battery, with a third slightly above; four were in line just under the fork of the inverted Y-shaped tracks; one was at the left end of the zig-zag trench within the circle of gun positions; and one was situated just above the circle, by the side of the incoming track.

MARGIVAL TODAY

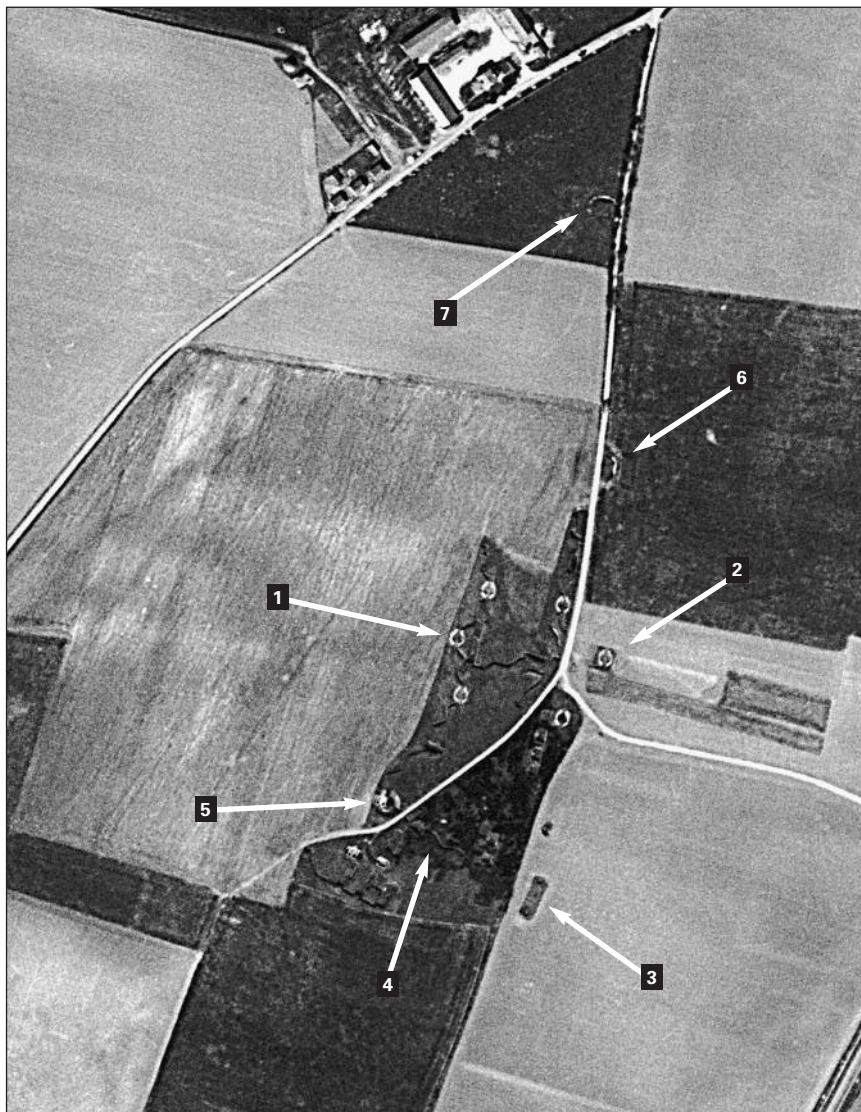
All in all, the Margival site comprised some 800 buildings, including 155 forming the ground defences and 230 the anti-aircraft batteries, plus another 80 miscellaneous structures serving as barracks, fuel stores, garages, etc.

'Wolfsschlucht 2' is the only one of Hitler's headquarters where the concrete bunkers are more or less in the same condition as when abandoned over 60 years ago, even though many are overgrown and with internal fittings missing. Also many of the Flak positions and defence bunkers still remain to be seen.

The condition of the surviving bunkers, including many very rare types, and the beautiful surroundings, makes 'W 2' a very attractive place to visit. There is a mix of Atlantikwall and Westwall designs and some of the late Luftwaffe Regelbau bunkers like L425, L426 and L427. The ASW 2 Association devotes much effort in trying to preserve what is left although the task is a huge one. One recent project was to refurbish a Type 105A defence bunker back to its original condition having first to clear it of electrical equipment installed by the French Army (see their website at www.asw2.new.fr).

However, unlike the sites of FHQu 'Wolfsschanze' in East Prussia and FHQu 'Riese' in Lower Silesia which have now become successful tourist venues, local authorities have as yet failed to seize the opportunities offered by the remarkably preserved FHQu 'Wolfsschlucht 2', and the area is still closed to individual access. However, the ASW 2 Association has obtained permission to organise group visits with a minimum of four persons, and they can also offer guided tours. For further details and appointments, E-mail lede.didier@yahoo.fr.

The railway tunnel, which was once an important part of the headquarters, is now fenced off and strictly out of bounds as the line is in constant use. However this is no great loss for the wartime double-track was reduced to single working when the tunnel was totally rebuilt in 1975. During this conversion work, the mountings for the German armoured doors were covered up behind the new tunnel wall.



IGN



ATB

The five light and medium batteries were mostly armed with three 37mm guns, although some were fitted with 20mm weapons. The gun crews and associated searchlight units of the Flak batteries defending the Führerhauptquartier amounted to about 1,800 men. *Above:* This is one of the Type 103A gun positions of the heavy Flak battery located near the village of Moisy. It is as large as the one at Laffaux, and remarkably well preserved, though now totally enveloped by farmland.

FÜHRERHAUPTQUARTIERE: THE HEADQUARTERS

<i>OT number</i>	<i>OT designations</i>	<i>Other designations</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Services due to be there, as filed by the OT</i>
1	Mühle	Adlerhorst Amt 600	Wiesental, just west of Bad Nauheim, Germany	FHQ, RAM in castle Ziegenberg RFSS in castle Kransberg
2	Felsenest	Anlage 'WO'	Rodert, just east of Bad Münstereifel, Germany	FHQ and OKH, parts of, in Forsthaus Hülloch, 5 km to the east
3	Waldwiese		Glan Münchweiler, 20 km west of Kaiserslautern, Germany	FHQ, small part only
4	Tannenberg		Kniebis, 65 km south-west of Stuttgart, Germany	FHQ, parts only
5	Wolfsschlucht		Brûly-de-Pesche, 6 km south of Couvin, Belgium	FHQ, parts only OKH, parts of, in Chimay
6	Askania Nord	Wolfsschanze	Rastenburg, East Prussia, now Ketrzyn, province Warminsko-Mazurskie, Poland	FHQ in Görlitz wood, Rastenburg OKH in Mauerwald (Mamerki), Angerburg (Wegorzewo) and Lötzen (Gizycko) OKL in Niedersee (Ruciane-Nida) and Goldap RFSS in Grossgarten (Pozezdrze) RAM in Steinart (Sztynort)
7	Askania Mitte	Anlage Mitte	Tomaszow Mazowiecki, 40 km east of Lodz, Poland	FHQ and small parts of OKH
8	Askania Süd	Anlage Süd	Stryzow, 15 km north-east of Krosno, Poland	FHQ only
9	Eichenhain	Wehrwolf	Vinnitsa (German spelling Winniza), 200 km south-west of Kiev, Ukraine	FHQ in Anlage Wald, 8 km north of Winniza OKH in Anlage Winniza, OKL in Anlage Steinbruch, 30 km north of Winniza RFSS and RAM in Anlage Hegewald on outskirts of Shitomir
10	Bärenhöhle		Gniesdoba, 9 km north of Smolensk, Russia	FHQ only
11	Wasserburg		4 km north-west of Pskov (German spelling Pleskau), 250 km south-west of Saint Petersburg, Russia	FHQ, parts only
12	Hagen	Siegfried	Pullach, 13 km south of München, Germany	FHQ, parts only
13	Olga		Orsha (German spelling Orscha), 80 km south of Vitebsk, Belarus	FHQ, parts only
14	W 2		Margival, 10 km north-east of Soissons, France	FHQ and small part of OKH RFSS in Vregny and RAM in Mailly
15	W 3		Saint-Rimay, 12 km south-west of Vendôme, France	FHQ only
16	Zigeuner	Brunhilde	north-west of Thionville, 25 km north of Metz, France	FHQ, parts of OKH, RFSS and RAM
17	Riese	Rudiger	Bad Charlottenbrunn, now Jedlina-Zdro, 65 km south-east of Wroclaw, Poland	FHQ, OKH, OKM, OKL, RFSS and RAM
18	Berchtesgaden	Lothar	Berchtesgaden, Winkl, and Bad Reichenhall, southern Germany	FHQ and OKH, parts only, in Franken-Strubb barracks in Berchtesgaden OKH in barracks at Winkl and Bad Reichenhall
19	Zeppelin	Amt 500 Maybach II	Zossen, 25 km south of Berlin	OKH

At the beginning of the Second World War no permanent headquarters had been constructed for Hitler so instead he visited the front lines in Poland either by air or on his personal train, the Führersonderzug, which can possibly be considered as the first of Hitler's field headquarters. (Stationed at Mönichkirchen, Austria, it served as Führerhauptquartier 'Frühlingssturm' during the Balkans campaign in the spring of 1941 when Hitler stayed there from April 12-25.) The building of the first fixed headquarters, FHQ 'Mühle' and FHQ 'Felsenest', was begun back in September and October 1939 for Hitler's use during the campaign in the West in May 1940. This list of the Führerhauptquartiere is based on data compiled by Siegfried Schmelcher,

the Senior Construction Engineer of the Führerhauptquartier Projects at Organisation Todt, in his report of November 1944. It covers the 16 Führerhauptquartiere which had then been completed and the three under construction with the planned date for completion and the number of working days required. The latter figures appear between brackets in this table. Although it was not mentioned in Schmelcher's report, the Führerbunker at the Reichskanzlei in Berlin should appear as it became a de facto headquarters for the Führer during the Battle of Berlin. The designation given in the second column has been taken from Schmelcher's report, but the names in the third column are from various secondary sources and should be viewed with

BUILT FOR HITLER'S USE

<i>Construction periods</i>	<i>Days worked</i>	<i>Concrete used (cubic metres)</i>	<i>Surfaces provided (square metres)</i>	<i>Periods when used as FHQu</i>
September 1939 - August 1940	584,000	48,100	900 - 3,969 - 7,740 - 0	December 10, 1944 to January 15, 1945
October 1939 - May 1940	85,500	8,500	0 - 130 - 1,050 - 8,300	May 10 to June 5, 1940
October 1939 - May 1940	38,750	4,250	0 - 0 - 285 - 96	Not used as FHQu
October 1939 - June 1940	43,750	2,340	0 - 0 - 275 - 85	June 26 to July 6, 1940
May 25 - June 6, 1940	7,200	630	0 - 2,800 - 25 - 1,500	June 6 to 25, 1940
September 1940 - August 1941 and July 1942 - beginning 1945	1,748,500	173,260	0 - 9,830 - 5,394 - 141,987	June 24 to August 27, 1941 August 28, 1941 to June 11, 1942 June 20 to July 15, 1942 November 1 to 5, 1942 November 23, 1942 to February 18, 1943 March 13 to 21, 1943 June 29 to August 26, 1943 August 27 to November 7, 1943 November 16, 1943 to February 23, 1944 July 9 July 16 to November 20, 1944
October 1940 - September 1941	812,500	75,100	0 - 130 - 6,849 - 4,900	Not used as FHQu
October 1940 - October 1941	1,200,000	61,500	4,520 - 0 - 3,900 - 8,010	Hitler's and Mussolini's respective trains stopped for the night on August 27/28, 1941
November 1941 - September 1942 and January - July 1943	332,100	11,400	0 - 21,500 - 184 - 140,595	July 16 to October 31, 1942 February 18 to March 13, 1943 August 27, 1943
October 1941 - September 1942	475,000	900	0 - 0 - 43 - 9,416	Not used as FHQu
November 1942 - June 1943	475,000	900	0 - 4,300 - 43 - 2,540	Not used as FHQu
March 1943 - November 1944	173,750	25,000	0 - 0 - 1,642 - 5,626	Not used as FHQu
July - September 1943	35,750	400	0 - 200 - 0 - 3,599	Not used as FHQu
September 1942 - September 1944	2,700,000	249,350	0 - 15,330 - 5,045 - 22,675	June 17, 1944
June 1942 - August 1943	400,000	9,000	0 - 0 - 190 - 7,000	Not used as FHQu
March - September 1944	322,500	2,300	15,300 - 1,080 - 0 - 1,350	Not used as FHQu
November 1943 - August 1945	3,457,950 (6,307,950)	359,100	40,160 - 44,802 - 10,240 - 99,030	Not used as FHQu
October 1944 - March 1945	56,000 (528,000)	43,000	2,800 - 0 - 2,090 - 18,000	Not used as FHQu
September 1944 - May 1945	68,750 (108,000)	18,000	0 - 0 - 1,180 - 0	Not used as FHQu

caution as some of the headquarters are well documented like 'Adlerhorst' or 'Wolfsschanze' but others less so. Also for sake of clarity sub-designations of parts of the complex have been omitted. As for the square metreage of the buildings, the figures include both newly-built and existing buildings and tunnels fitted out by the OT. The two figures on the first line are for the areas in tunnels and heavy bunkers. The two on the second line are for light bunkers (first figure) and for wooden huts, blockhouses, and other concrete constructions (second figure). The most extensive one completed was that of FHQu 'Wolfschlucht 2' at Margival where 2.7 million working days and about 250,000 cubic metres of concrete were involved, more

than in any other headquarters, including FHQu 'Wolfsschanze' at Rastenburg. Only the massive 'Riese' complex involved more working days and employed more concrete but this was still uncompleted in 1945. Regarding the periods of occupation by Hitler, please note that some dates are still unclear and are even disputed by historians. For example, Hitler's first arrival at 'Wolfsschanze' is stated in the FHQu war diary as June 24, but other sources give either the 22nd or the 23rd. One thing that is clearly apparent is that Hitler spent very little time in Berlin during the war, and was most frequently at the Berghof on the Obersalzberg at Berchtesgaden and the 'Wolfsschanze' headquarters in East Prussia.