

4 Spies, traitors and saboteurs in the UK and its colonies.

Spies

17 men were executed for spying during World War II.

Soon after the beginning of World War II, the government, in an effort to deal with an expected influx of German spies, introduced The Treachery Act of 1940 which stated that : *"If, with intent to help the enemy, any person does, or attempts or conspires with any other person to do any act which is designed or likely to give assistance to the naval, military or air operations of the enemy, to impede such operations of His Majesty's forces, or to endanger life, shall be guilty of felony and shall on conviction suffer death."* This Act came into force on 23 May, 1940 and mandated the death penalty. It was necessary as the Treason Act of 1351 (see later) only applied to British citizens.

German spies were under the control of the Abwehr, the German military intelligence organization. The sending of spies to Britain was code-named "Operation Lena" and was controlled by a group of anti-Nazi Abwehr officers, who did not want them to be successful. They therefore selected unsuitable agents and had them trained by incompetent persons to make sure they did not succeed.

There were two departments at Hamburg charged with sending agents to Britain:

"I L" (section [Roman numeral 1], subsection L for Luft = air) and "I M" (section [Roman numeral 1], subsection Marine = Navy). IL was under the command of Nikolaus Ritter aka Dr. Rantzau, and parachuted agents into Britain.

IM landed their agents on Britain's shores by naval means, some of them in the south (codename "Hummer Süd" which translates as Lobster South), some of them in the north (codename "Hummer Nord" or Lobster North). In her 2014 book on Operation Sealion, Monika Siedentopf considered Operation Lena finished by 1941 (she calls Jakobs, Richter, Glad and Moe "stragglers"), as in the spring of 1941, Ritter was transferred from Abwehr Hamburg to North Africa to be in charge of a special unit whose mission it was to infiltrate spies into Egypt. After 1941 agents were sent to Britain from "neutral" countries such as Spain and Portugal by normal passenger ships. This applied to Timmerman, Dronkers, Winter, Job, Neukermans, Vanhove.

The 17 executed spies.

Name	Age	Date	Place
Joseph Rudolf Waldberg and Carl Meier	25	10th December, 1940	Pentonville
	24		
Charles A van der Kieboom	26	17th December, 1940	Pentonville
George Johnson Armstrong	39	9th July, 1941	Wandsworth
Werner Heinrich Walti & Karl Theo Drueke	34	6th August, 1941	Wandsworth
	25		
Josef Jacobs	43	15th August, 1941	Shot at the Tower of London
Karel Richard Richter	29	10th December, 1940	Wandsworth

Alphonse L. E. Timmerman & José Estelle Key	28	7th July, 1942	Wandsworth
	34		
Duncan Scott-Ford	21	3rd November, 1942	Wandsworth
Johannes Marinus Dronkers	46	31st December, 1942	Wandsworth
Franciscus Johannes Winter	40	26th January, 1943	Wandsworth
Oswald John Job	58	16th March, 1944	Pentonville
Pierre Richard Neukermans	28	23rd June, 1944	Pentonville
Joseph Jan Vanhove	27	12th July, 1944	Pentonville
John Amery	33	19th December, 1945 (Treason)	Pentonville
William Joyce ("Lord Haw Haw")	39	3rd January, 1946 (Treason)	Wandsworth
Theodore John William Schurch	27	4th January, 1946 (Treachery)	Pentonville

Note : There appear to be discrepancies in the spellings of various names and where more than one spelling has been found then the other spellings are also given. The names given here are the names under which these men were tried and hanged in Britain. It may be that part of the problem was that British typewriters did not have German characters such as ü or ä, so that names such as Drücke were mis-spelt as Drucke and Wälti as Walti .

José Waldberg, Carl Heinrich Meier and Charles A. van der Kieboom.

On the morning of Tuesday 3 September, 1940, two single-masted French fishing boats, "La Mascotte" and the "Rose du Carmel", had sailed across the Channel and moored off the Kent coast near Dungeness. Four men disembarked and made their way to the beach in two rowing boats. They were Josef Rudolf Waldberg, known as "José" and whose age is given variously as 22 or 25, from Mainz in Germany. Researchers have recently come to the conclusion that his real name was Henri Lassudry, a Belgian. Carl (also given as Karl) Heinrich Cornelis Ernst Meier, aged 24, a Dutch born Nazi sympathizer from Koblenz, Charles Albert van der Kieboom, aged 25, also Dutch, but who had been born in Japan and who spoke perfect English. The fourth man was another Dutchman, Sjoerd Pons, aged 28. All were agents of the Abwehr - the German military intelligence service - and they had been sent to spy on troop and ship movements. They had money, provisions, a radio transmitter and a revolver. Their arrival on the beach was reported to authorities and all four quickly rounded up. They were taken to MI5's interrogation centre, known as Camp 20, at Latchmere House at Ham in Richmond, London, where they all made statements.

They were tried "in camera" at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Wrottesley on 19 - 22 November, 1940. José Waldberg pleaded guilty. Carl Meier and Charles van der Kieboom were convicted after 90 minutes of deliberation by the jury and sentenced to death. Sjoerd Pons was acquitted.

Waldberg and Meier were hanged at Pentonville prison on Tuesday 10 December, 1940, by Stanley Cross, assisted by Albert Pierrepont and Henry Critchell. Van der Kieboom appealed, although he later withdrew this. His execution was therefore delayed until Tuesday 17 December, 1940 and was carried out by Stanley Cross, assisted by Herbert Morris.

George Armstrong.

38 year old George Johnson Armstrong, a marine engineer from Newcastle upon Tyne, became the fourth man to be executed for espionage during World War II when he was hanged at Wandsworth on Wednesday 9 July, 1941. He was a known Nazi sympathiser before the war.

Armstrong was British and had travelled to the still neutral USA during early 1941. Here he approached the German consul in Boston and offered his services as a spy. He was arrested by the US Immigration Service and held pending deportation. Apparently British authorities were tipped off by their American counterparts, because Armstrong was arrested on his return to Britain on 23 February, 1941.

Armstrong came to trial on 8 May, 1941, before Mr. Justice Lewis, at the Old Bailey. As normal the proceedings were held "in camera". He was charged with the following offence under the Treachery Act 1940: "On or about 19 November, 1940, being a British subject in the U.S.A, with intent to help the enemy, did an act designed or likely to give assistance to the Naval, Military or Air operations of the enemy or to endanger life, to wit did write and endeavour to send a letter to Dr. Herbert Scholz, German Consul at Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A, offering his services, information and assistance to the said Dr. Herbert Scholz."

His appeal was heard at the Court of Criminal Appeal on 23 June, 1941 and was dismissed. He was hanged on Wednesday 9 July, 1941 by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by Steve Wade. Armstrong weighed 154 lbs and was given a drop of 7' 3". Quoting from the LPC4 form, this produced the following injuries : "Separation of the medulla from spinal cord. Fracture of hyoid and thyroid. Extensive injury to the medulla and brain stem. Spine dislocated between 5th and 6th vertebrae."

Karl Theo Drueke, Werner Heinrich Walti and Vera Eriksen.

Karl Drueke (on the LPC4 form; correctly as Drücke in the German press) was a 35 year old German citizen who had been born in Grebenstein, Hessen, on 20 March, 1906. He used the alias François de Deeker.

Werner Heinrich Wälti (given as Walti on the LPC4 form) whose real name may have been Robert Petter held a forged Swiss passport according to which he was a 25 year old Swiss citizen, born in Zurich on 14 December, 1915. With them was Drücke's girlfriend, Vera Eriksen, who was Russian by birth and used a variety of aliases.

They flew by seaplane from Stavanger in Norway on 29 September, 1940. Under cover of darkness in the early hours of the morning of 30 September the trio had been dropped off between Portgordon and Buckie in Banffshire in Scotland to undertake spy missions and rowed ashore in a rubber dinghy. This they then attempted to sink. They then made their way to nearby railway stations. Eriksen and Drücke went to Portgordon station and found that they had two hours to wait before the first train. A railway worker noticed their unusual accents, their wet shoes and legs and reported the pair to the police who arrested them.

Wälti remained at large a little longer, but was betrayed by the rubber dinghy which had survived their efforts to sink it and was spotted from the air. Examination showed that it had most likely had two or three occupants and so a man hunt was launched. Wälti had walked to Buckie and from there took a train to Aberdeen. Here he aroused suspicion but was allowed to board a train to Edinburgh. He was arrested at Edinburgh's Waverley Railway Station a little later trying to reclaim his suitcase from the left luggage office. It contained some clothes and a smaller suitcase containing a radio transmitter. His Identity Card was easily recognizable as a fake, showing a continental numeral "one" with an upstroke. It didn't help either that he tried to reach for the Mauser pistol he carried in his trouser pocket when approached by the police.

Much mystery surrounds Vera Eriksen, "The Beautiful Spy" who was born Vera (von) Schalburg in Russia either on 23 November 1907 or 10 December 1912. She had worked as a Russian and German agent. She was sent to Britain by Abwehr presumably to spy on prominent military personnel at the Dorchester

Hotel in London.

In Holloway prison, Vera Eriksen wrote on 22nd December 1940 this rather touching letter to Karl Theo Drücke:

"My dear Theo, I'd like to ask you again to speak the truth, it will be good for both of us. Hans did not want you to die. And I ask you, if you love me, to try to save both of us. It is so awful to imagine to die like this, and your mother and my parents will not survive it either when they read it in the papers, and we must not do it. Dear, dear Karl-Theo, I am pregnant, and for the sake of our child try to help us. All the best, yours, Vera."

"Hans" may have been Vera's former husband (or at least: lover), Abwehr officer Hilmar Dierks, who had died on 2nd September 1940 in a car crash and who was known to use the aliases "Hans von Wedel" and "Hans zum Stuhreck".

This moving letter however was nothing but a lie. It is true that a few days after her arrival, Vera claimed to be about six weeks to two months pregnant, but already five more days later, she told the Medical Officer at Holloway that she believed she had miscarried. Upon examination, the doctor found signs which he thought were suggestive of an early abortion but not conclusive. So, when she wrote that letter she was certainly no longer pregnant (if she ever had been). She wrote it because she was anxious to save "Deeker's" life, who had so far remained rather obstinately silent. Dr. Harold Dearden, psychiatrist at Camp 020, during a visit suggested to her that such a letter might cause "Deeker" to tell the truth which was, said he, the only thing that might - just might - still weigh in his favour. It worked. The next day, after the doctor had delivered the billet doux (with the interrogators' consent, of course), Drücke handed the orderly officer a slip of paper with his real name and address in Brussels.

In February of 1941, Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police was busy compiling everything that was needed for a trial – prosecution exhibits, statements and the like. Colonel Hinchley-Cooke went to see Vera in order to obtain a statement for trial at the Old Bailey. During this interview, Vera said that Dr. Dearden had come to Holloway and told her "I would be off trial if I told everything and that I would not be shot or hanged." Together with everything else Vera had to say, this was duly taken down, signed, and witnessed.

Colonel Robin 'Tin Eye' Stephens, commander of Camp 020, was annoyed to read this, and took the doctor to task. The latter hastened to assert that he had said nothing of the sort. But the damage was done. Colonel Hinchley-Cooke was convinced that a jury would be affected by the statement of a prisoner that an inducement had been held out to her, notwithstanding the fact that the statement might be false. This part of Vera's statement, he was afraid, might vitiate the trial not only of Vera, but of her two companions as well. As a counter-measure, the prosecution might call Dr. Dearden as a witness for the Crown to give the lie direct to Vera. But this procedure would have a serious drawback: It would reveal more about the character, the workings and the methods of Latchmere House than was desirable.

Around mid-March, 1941, the Police file, still containing Vera's dangerous statement, was typed and ready for the Prosecution.

But when Lawrence A. Byrne, Senior Prosecution Counsel to the Treasury, wrote an Opinion on the admissibility of the charge (that was on 1st April) he had already been told that "Baroness Vera Von Wedel should not be prosecuted". During these two weeks someone – probably the Director of Public Prosecutions - had obviously decided that Vera should be spared. There may have been reasons not to prosecute her that we do not know of to this day. (Vera's MI5 file has been heavily "weeded".) But it seems certain that at least part of the answer lies in the legal and procedural difficulties outlined above.

Drücke and Wälti were tried in camera at the Old Bailey on 12/13 June before Mr. Justice Asquith. Colonel Hinchley-Cooke appeared as an expert witness, explaining to the court the damning significance of the

various items in their luggage. Their appeals were dismissed on 21 July and both hanged at Wandsworth prison on Wednesday 6 August, 1941, by Thomas Pierrepont, assisted by his nephew, Albert, Harry Kirk and Stanley Cross.

Vera was the one person in this trio from whom MI5 and S.I.S. hoped to extract information beyond the bare facts that could be proved against them. However the standard Camp 020 procedure to "break" a prisoner by bullying them into submission did not work with her. If one wanted her to talk, she had to be approached by people who treated her politely. The doctor, for instance, or – "Klop". That was the nickname of agent U35, Jonah Ustinov (Peter Ustinov's father) who was known to be a ladies' man and who had a Russian-born wife. It was decided that Vera should get a "vacation" which was to be spent in Klop's Gloucestershire home.

He debriefed her for about two weeks in February 1942 and afterwards was convinced that she had been honestly trying to help MI5 with everything she knew about the organisation of the Abwehr (which was not much, however).

Vera von Wedel a.k.a. Eriksen a.k.a. Schalburg a.k.a. Staritzky etc. etc. was interned on the Isle of Wight and used by MI5 to report on her fellow internees. In her MI5 archive file there are traces of letters still going to and fro between her and the Ustinovs until early 1945. After the end of the War she was deported to Germany on 29 October, 1945. The British Army of the Rhine who was supposed to keep an eye on her lost her trail (at least that's what they say). There is a death entry for her at the Hamburg Registry Office, saying she died on 8 February, 1946 from pneumonia and heart failure. But with Vera, one never knows. There are people who say she faked her death (perhaps using her old Abwehr contacts), returned to England, married and died in 1993.

No woman would be hanged for espionage in Britain. In 1941, Dorothy Pamela O'Grady was caught walking in areas of the Isle of Wight that were sensitive and from which the public had been banned. She was also accused of cutting an army telephone line and possessing a document with information on defence measures. She was tried at the Old Bailey, the jury taking just over an hour to find her guilty. Her death sentence was commuted, after her appeal, and she served 14 years in Holloway.

Josef Jakobs.

Josef Jakobs was born in Luxembourg on 30 June 1898 of German parents. By 1940 he was a non commissioned officer in the meteorological service of the army, but also worked for the Abwehr.

43 year old Jakobs was an entirely unsuccessful spy. On Saturday 1 February, 1941 he was flown to England from Schiphol in Holland and parachuted into Huntingdonshire, where he landed hard at Dovehouse Farm, Ramsey Hollow, breaking his ankle. He fired three shots to alert people to help him and was rescued by two farm workers who were also members of the Home Guard. When found he had a wireless transmitter, a map with airfield locations marked on it, food, a spade and a large amount of money, some £498. He was turned over to the authorities and charged with espionage under the Treachery Act of 1940.

Jakobs was tried by military court martial at the Duke of York's HQ, Chelsea SW3, on 4 - 5 August, 1941. The charge was "Committing treachery in that you at Ramsay in Huntingdonshire on the night of 31 January, 1941/1 February, 1941 descended by parachute with intent to help the enemy." He pleaded not guilty, however the evidence against him was really overwhelming and he was convicted and sentenced to suffer death by being shot.

Ten days later, Jakobs was transferred to the Tower of London. On the morning of execution he was taken to the East Casements rifle range in the Tower's grounds, where ten World War I spies had been shot, and

tied to a chair. A white target was pinned over his heart. At 7.12 a.m. on 15 August, 1941, Jakobs was shot by an eight man firing squad from The Holding Battalion, Scots Guards. The wheel back chair on which Jakobs died is on display in the Tower collections. The upper edge of the back rest is splintered where the bullets went through. Bernard Spilsbury conducted a post-mortem later in the day and found that five bullets had hit him with one penetrating the heart and four entering the chest close to the target area. Three members of the firing squad had been issued with blank rounds.

Josef Jakobs became the last man to be executed at the Tower of London. It is probable that as he was a serving soldier Jakobs was sentenced to be shot rather than hanged, as the other spies and traitors from World War II were. Jakobs was buried in a civilian grave at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, Northwest London.

His granddaughter Giselle K. Jakobs BSc MDiv PhD wrote 'The Spy in the Tower', a 450 page book on her grandfather's life, trial and death.

Karel Richard Richter.

On 10 December, 1941, 29 year old Karel Richter was hanged at Wandsworth prison by Albert Pierrepoint, assisted by Steve Wade. This was the man whom Albert describes in his biography as giving him serious trouble. Albert refers to Richter as Schmidt in his book (Pages 136-8). With great difficulty Albert got the wrist straps on, but Richter was a powerfully built man, standing 5' 11 1/2" tall and weighing 172 lbs. He fought the warders every inch of the way and managed to get his hands free, splitting the arm strap from one hole to the next. Finally the warders got Richter onto the trap but just as Albert was pushing the lever, Richter jumped and violently shook his head thus loosening the noose which slipped from under his chin to a point under his nose. However it still did the job and to everyone's surprise and relief there was fracture/dislocation between the 3rd and 4th cervical vertebrae and crushing of the spinal cord.

Richter was born on 29 January, 1912 at Kraslice in the Sudetenland and was a Czechoslovakian citizen. In November 1940 he was recruited as a spy by Abwehr and underwent training in Hamburg and The Hague. He was sent to Britain to spy on Wulf Schmidt who was a German spy working in Britain, and whom German authorities suspected of being a double agent, which he was.



Richter was flown to England and parachuted down near the village of London Colney, in Hertfordshire on the night of 12/13 May, 1941. He hid in a wood and emerged when he thought it was safe. A passing lorry driver asked him for directions which he was unable to give. The driver noticed his accent and a few moments later saw a policeman, PC Alec Scott, to whom he reported his suspicions. The officer detained Richter and found he had rather a lot of money, maps and a compass on him. A search of nearby woods located the parachute he had used, together with a loaded pistol and a wireless transmitter. He was tried in camera at the Old Bailey between 21 - 24 October, 1941 before Mr. Justice Tucker. He appealed his conviction but this was dismissed.

Some of his MI5 interviewers thought it was a mistake to publish his execution, thus alerting the Germans to the fact that he had been caught and possibly strengthening their suspicion against Wulf Schmidt.

Alphons Louis Eugene Timmerman.

Alphons Timmerman was born in Ostend in Belgium on 1 August, 1904. Before the War, he had worked as a ship's steward and was familiar with several British ports. When Germany invaded Belgium he attempted to escape to England but was arrested and jailed in Spain. His release was negotiated by the Belgian Consul and he finally arrived in the UK on 1 September, 1941. As a matter of routine he was interrogated by British Security and was found to have materials in his possession for writing invisible messages, plus a

considerable sum of money in pounds Sterling and US dollars.

Timmerman was tried at the Old Bailey on 20 May, 1942 before Mr. Justice Humphreys. and was hanged at Wandsworth on Tuesday 7 July, 1942. With him on the gallows was José Estelle Key. As it was a double execution, the hangman, Albert Pierrepoint, had two assistants, Harry Kirk and Steve Wade. Timmerman weighed just 120 lbs. and was given a drop of 8' 7".

José Estelle Key.

José Estelle Key was a British citizen, having been born on Gibraltar on 1 July, 1908. Here he was able to observe the movements of naval vessels and troops. He was arrested on Gibraltar under the Emergency Powers (Defence of the Realm) Act 1939 as he was in possession of information which he was intending to send to Germany. He was sent to London for trial which took place at the Old Bailey on 15 - 18 May, 1942, also before Mr. Justice Humphreys. His appeal was dismissed on 22 June, 1942 and he was hanged alongside Timmerman on Tuesday 7 July, 1942.

Duncan Scott-Ford.

21 year old Duncan Alexander Croall Scott-Ford became the youngest person to be executed under the Treachery Act 1940, when he was hanged at Wandsworth prison on the morning of Tuesday 3 November, 1942.



At age 16 Scott-Ford joined the Royal Navy and served until 1941 when he was courts-martialled and sentenced to two years in prison for dishonesty, followed by dishonourable discharge. This was later reduced to six months, plus honourable discharge. Upon release from Winchester prison in late 1941 he joined the merchant navy.

In February 1942 he joined the crew of the S.S. Finland which sailed for Lisbon on 11 April.

Here he was approached by German agents offering substantial rewards for information on British ship movements. He was able to give them some information but soon they realised that he did not know much and threatened to pass his information to the British Embassy in Lisbon if he didn't give them what they wanted.

On his return to Salford docks in Manchester on 18 August, 1942, Scott-Ford was questioned by security police and later arrested under the Emergency Powers (Defence of the Realm) Act 1939. Inside his wallet were pieces of paper with ship movements recorded. On 1 September, 1942 he was charged under Section 1 of The Treachery Act 1940: "On the British ship SS Finland, with intent to help the enemy, did an act between 7 - 9 August, 1942, that is, he did record information relating to the movements and composition of a convoy."

Scott-Ford was tried in camera at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Birkett on 16 October, 1942. Sub-Lieutenant Wilfred Wood, RNVR, from the Intelligence Division, Admiralty, testified that the information collected by Scott-Ford would prove extremely useful to the enemy. He was convicted and did not appeal.

He was hanged by Albert Pierrepoint, assisted by Harry Kirk, at Wandsworth at 9 am on Tuesday 3 November, 1942. Scott-Ford stood 5 feet 5 inches tall and weighed 132 lbs. Pierrepoint gave him a drop of 8 feet 5 inches, leading to fracture dislocation of the 4th and 5th cervical vertebrae.

Johannes Marinus Dronkers.

Johannes Marinus Dronkers was born near Utrecht in Holland on 3 April, 1896. Before the War he was working as a post-office clerk in The Hague. He was an admirer of Hitler and a member of the Dutch Nazi party. He received training as a spy in The Hague and was duly sent to Britain. Together with two other Dutchmen, Jan de Langen Bruno and John Alphonsus Mulder, he sailed to Britain in a small yacht, the "Joppa". The trio were picked up off Harwich on the East Coast by a British vessel on 18 May, 1942 and were routinely interviewed as refugees. It was clear that de Langen and Mulder were genuine and no

charges were brought against them, but under questioning, Dronkers admitted his reason for being in the UK was to report on troop movements and send his information to addresses of spy agencies in Stockholm and Lisbon. He was found to possess materials for producing invisible ink.

Dronkers was tried at the Old Bailey on 13 - 17 November before Mr. Justice Wrottesley. His appeal was dismissed and he was hanged at Wandsworth on Thursday 31 December, 1942, by Albert Pierrepoint and Steve Wade.

Franciscus Johannes Winter.

Franciscus Johannes Winter was born in Antwerp in Belgium on 17 January, 1903 and had been a ship's steward before the War. He arrived in Britain aboard ship on 31 July, 1942, claiming refugee status and was thus interviewed by security staff. He initially maintained his story of being a refugee who had managed to escape from Belgium, via Spain. He would later admit that his story was "a pack of lies" and that his real motive was to report on the movements of military convoys, using invisible ink on letters to be sent to German spy agencies. He was convicted of espionage at the Old Bailey on 4 December, 1942. His appeal was heard on 11 January, 1943 and was dismissed.

Winter was hanged at Wandsworth on Tuesday 26 January 1943 by Albert Pierrepoint and Henry Critchell. His was the only spy execution of 1943.

Oswald John Job.

Oswald John Job was born to German parents in Stepney, London on 4 July, 1885 and at 59, was the oldest of the spies. He had moved to France and had lived in Paris since 1911. He was interned in 1940 due to his country of origin. He made friends with his German guards and was recruited by German intelligence who moved him to Spain in 1943 from where he was able to travel to London on 1 November, 1943.

The British Postal Censorship service noticed a frequent exchange of letters between the Job family and Job's former friends in the St. Denis internment camp. However, Job's relatives when interviewed, denied ever sending the letters or knowing the inmates in the internment camp. When security personnel visited Job, they found espionage equipment and he was therefore arrested, coming to trial at Old Bailey on 24 - 26 January, 1944 before Mr. Justice Stable.

Job was hanged at Pentonville on 16 March, 1944 by Albert Pierrepoint, assisted by Harry Kirk.

Pierre Richard Charles Neukermans.

28 year old Pierre Richard Charles Neukermans was born on 1 May, 1916 in Waarbecke, Belgium and had served in the Belgian army before being invalided out in 1938. He tried to escape from occupied Belgium without success and was later recruited by German intelligence. On 16 July, 1943, he obtained legal access to Britain as a refugee and was allowed to work as a clerk in the offices of the Belgian government in England. He was later found to be sending information on ship movements between Britain and the Belgian Congo to the S.S. officer who had helped him "escape" from Nazi occupied Belgium. Neukermans was arrested on 2 February, 1944 and under interrogation admitted that he was a spy.

He was tried at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Macnaghten on 28 April - 1 May, 1944 and had his appeal dismissed on 8 June. He was hanged at Pentonville by Albert Pierrepoint and Alex Riley on Friday 23 June, 1944.

Joseph Jan Vanhove.

27 year old Joseph Jan Vanhove (also given as Van Hove) was another Belgian from Antwerp. He worked there as a waiter and was also involved in the black market. He offered his services to German intelligence and was moved to France to spy on French workers, building airfields in Northern France. He then travelled to Sweden, where he contacted the British Embassy in Stockholm, offering his services, fighting for the Allies. The British suspected that he was a double agent and allowed him to take a ship to the UK. He was arrested on entry into Britain on 11 February, 1943, having travelled from Stockholm by sea. Under interrogation admitted he was intending to work as a German agent.

Vanhove was tried at the Old Bailey on 23 - 24 May, 1944, before Mr. Justice Hallett. His appeal was dismissed on 27 June, 1944. Vanhove was executed at Pentonville by Albert Pierrepoint and Steve Wade on Wednesday 12 July, 1944.

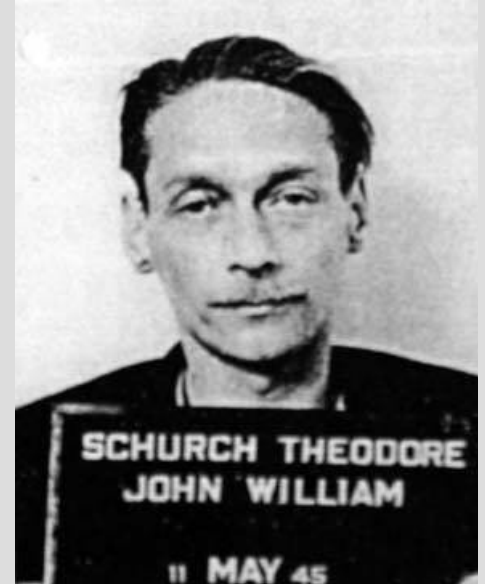
Theodore Schurch.

27 year old Theodore William John Schurch was born in London to Swiss parents on 5 May, 1918. He was a Nazi supporter who had joined the British Union of Fascists in 1934. In 1936 he joined the British Army, serving with the Royal Army Service Corps, as a driver. He was captured by the Italians, while fighting at Tobruk in North Africa. He decided to offer his services to his captors and spied on his fellow prisoners of war passing back useful information to Axis authorities. He was arrested in Rome in March 1945.

Schurch was tried at the Duke of York's HQ, Chelsea by Military Courts Martial on 17 September, 1945. He faced nine counts under the Treachery Act of 1940 plus one count of desertion. Five counts related to his activities in North Africa during 1942 and four to his later time in Rome during 1943.

He did not call any witnesses in his defence but the prosecution were able to call several ex-prisoners of war to identify Schurch as the person who had been asking them questions about what they had been doing and where they were serving prior to capture. Schurch was convicted on all ten charges and received the mandatory death sentence on the treachery convictions.

Theodore Schurch was hanged at Pentonville Prison on 4 January, 1946 by Albert Pierrepoint, assisted by Alexander Riley. He became the last person to die for a crime other than murder in the UK.



Spies who were not executed.

In some cases spies were seen by MI5 as more useful alive than dead, as they could be turned and become double agents. John Masterman, chairman of the XX ("Double Cross") or Twenty Committee gave a logical if somewhat cynical reason why some spies were turned and others were executed: There needed to be a (to the Germans) credible mixture of successful and failing agents: "Some had to perish, both to satisfy the public ... and also to convince the Germans that the others were working properly and were not under control. It would have taxed even German credulity if all their agents had apparently overcome the hazards of landing."

On 23 September, 1940, the cutter "La Part Bien" was captured in the Channel by a British patrol boat and forced to enter the harbor of Plymouth. On board there were the Swedish captain, Hugo L.L. Jonasson, and two Belgians Gerald J.M. Libot and (first name unknown) de Lille. They spent the remainder of the war at Camp 020.

The fishing cutter "Josephine" under Dutch captain Cornelius Evertsen entered port at Fishguard on 12 November 1940: with four crew and three passengers, allegedly from Cuba. Evertsen confessed to being an Abwehr agent. His mission was to land the Cubans on the south English coast together with sabotage material (explosives hidden in cans labelled "Green Peas"). All seven men were kept in prison until the end of the War.

Another "Hummer Nord" enterprise was the landing, on 25 October, 1940, near Nairu in Scotland of Norwegians Gunnar Edvardssen and Leywald Lund and German Otto Joost, in a rubber dinghy. Whatever they intended to tell people, their cover was blown when in Joost's luggage a tin of German "Nivea-Creme" was found, and an aluminum oar with a German manufacturer's inscription. Vera Erikson identified Edvardssen when she was shown his photo, so he must have been an Abwehr agent, too. The three men

were kept in prison until the end of the War.

Parachute agents of "I L":

During the night of 5/6 September, 1940, Gösta Caroli came down near Denton near Northampton. He was turned and used as double agent, codenamed "SUMMER".

It was over his radio that Abwehr announced the arrival of two more parachutists.

Caroli was in detention until the War's end.

On 19 September, 1940 Wulf Schmidt landed near Cambridge. He became double agent "TATE". Wulf Dietrich Christian Schmidt was born 7 December 1911 at Abenraa, in Denmark (his mother was Dane, his father German).

The third parachute agent who landed end of September / beginning of October 1940 is a bit of a mystery. There is no Kew file accessible to the public on him. Various publications call him differently: Kurt Karl Goose or Karl Grosse, he was turned as double agent, and his codename was "GOOSE" or "GANDER". He was another who was kept in detention as long as the War lasted.

Probably in the first days of November a parachute agent landed who for quite some time would remain undetected. His parachute was found on 3 November, 1940 near Haversham in Berkshire. On 1 April 1941 he was found dead in an air raid shelter in Cambridge. He evidently had shot himself after his money and food ration cards had run out. His real name was Engelbertus Fukken but he was known as Jan Willem Ter Braak.

On the night of 6/7 April, 1941 Norwegians Tor Glad and Helge John Moe landed by dinghy after a seaplane had dropped them off in the Moray Firth, Scotland. They became double agents "MUTT" and "JEFF" and returned to Norway when the War was over. Mutt and Jeff is Cockney rhyming slang for deaf, as in mutt 'n jeff. Somebody in MI5 had a sense of humour it seems. MI5 used them to fake acts of sabotage which were radioed to Germany and even covered by the press for further corroboration.

It appears that these two were professional sabotage agents with no connection to Operation Lena.

Rogeiro de Menezes.

The only foreign agent tried and sentenced to death under the Treachery Act who was not executed was a young Portugese working in a minor capacity at the Portugese embassy in London. His name was **Rogério de Magalhães Peixoto de Menezes**, and he was an agent of the Sicherheitsdienst, the intelligence service of the SS. Starting in August 1942, de Menezes was observed to send letters to his sister, via the diplomatic bag, which had enclosures. These were to be handed to an agent named Mendez, and they contained writing in secret ink, among other things describing British anti-aircraft defences.

In February 1943, the Portugese ambassador was approached by a high Foreign Office official, and told about the goings-on in his embassy. Diplomatic status was removed from de Menezes, and he was prosecuted under the Treachery Act.

Even before he came to trial, a great clean-up took place in Lisbon. On 9 April, 1943, MI5's Guy Liddell noted in his diary that "there have been twenty-three arrests in Lisbon including the head of the Sicherheitsdienst." Portugal's Antonio Salazar ordered his police to put an end to German espionage in Lisbon, and they did.

De Menezes was tried at the Old Bailey and sentenced to death on 2 April 1943, but received a commutation to penal servitude for life on 31 May. He was brought to Dartmoor prison and was not allowed to communicate with anybody on the outside. MI5 wanted the Germans to be insecure whether he had been executed or not. In 1949, he was released and deported.

Traitors.

Treason was defined by The Treason Act of 1351, as follows : "When a Man doth compass or imagine the Death of our Lord the King, or of our Lady his Queen or of their eldest Son and Heir; or if a Man do violate the King's Companion, or the King's eldest Daughter unmarried, or the Wife the King's eldest Son and Heir; or if a Man do levy War against our Lord the King in his Realm, or be adherent to the King's Enemies in his Realm, giving to them Aid and Comfort in the Realm." This Act passed during the reign of King Edward III was amended over the centuries but remains in force today. The death penalty was mandatory for treason, until the passing of The Criminal Justice Bill of July 31, 1998, which made it a non-capital crime.

The original Act, in force during the War clearly made giving aid to the King's Enemies treasonable, but it only applied to British citizens and there was doubt in government circles that it could apply to citizens of countries other than Great Britain. Under this Act, one man was hanged in Malta in 1942 and two men were hanged after the War in the UK. They were Carmelo Borg Pisani, John Amery and William Joyce.

John Amery.



John Amery was born on 14 March, 1912 in Chelsea in London to the Right Honourable Leo Amery and his wife, Florence. Leo Amery was a Conservative MP, who later served as a Cabinet Minister. John Amery was sent to Harrow school where he was a difficult pupil. He left after one year. As an adult he was a failure at everything he did. However he was virulently anti-Communist and admired the doctrines of the German National Socialist Party.

In 1936, at the age of 24, he left Britain, having been declared bankrupt and moved to France. He travelled to Austria, Italy, and Germany, but continued to live in France after the German occupation. In September 1942, Amery left France for Germany, having come into conflict with the Vichy government. Here, as a guest of the Reich, he made propaganda broadcasts on behalf of the Nazis. He travelled to prisoner of war camps inviting British prisoners to aid the war on Communism, by joining The British Free Corps. This came to naught and Amery left Berlin in late 1944 and moved to Italy to support Mussolini. He was captured by Italian partisans on Saturday 7 July, 1945 and handed over to

the British. He was flown from Milan to London and charged with treason on arrival.

An initial trial date of 12 September, 1945 had been fixed, but this was postponed to allow Amery's brother, Julian, to fly to Spain to see if he could find evidence that John had become a Spanish citizen and therefore did not owe allegiance to the Crown. As there was no evidence to support this Amery was tried for treason at the Old Bailey on 28 November, 1945 before Mr. Justice Humphreys. The proceedings lasted just 8 minutes, as Amery pleaded guilty. The judge made sure he understood the consequences of his plea and Amery assured him that he did. Only one sentence was permitted under the law and Mr. Justice Humphreys sentenced him to death by hanging.

The execution was carried out at Wandsworth prison by Albert Pierrepoint, assisted by Henry Critchell, at 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday 19 December, 1945. Amery was buried in an unmarked grave within the prison, but in 1996, at the request of the family, his body was exhumed, the remains cremated and the ashes scattered in France.

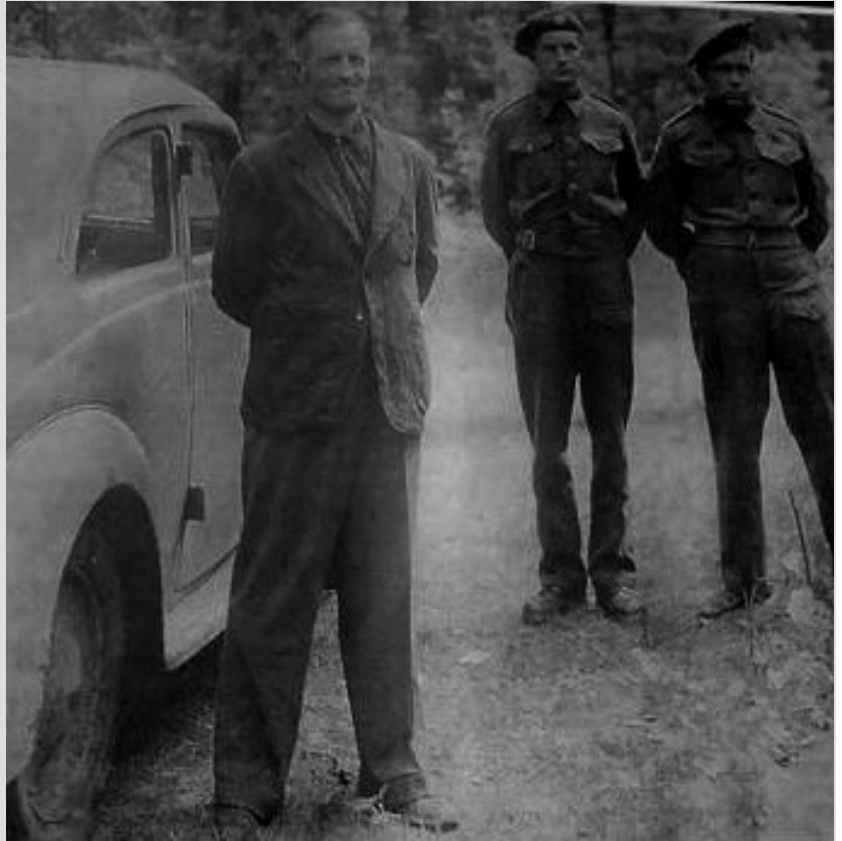
Albert Pierrepoint described him as "the bravest man I ever hanged". A probably apocryphal story is attributed to Amery in his last moments. Greeting Albert as he entered the condemned cell, Amery reportedly said: "Mr. Pierrepoint, I've always wanted to meet you, but not, of course, under these circumstances". A prison official contradicted this and stated that "Amery did extend his hand and said 'Oh! Pierrepoint.' Upon which Pierrepoint took his hand and placed it behind his back for pinioning and that the conversation was entirely limited to that remark". The latter seems more likely.

William Joyce - "Lord Haw Haw".

William Joyce, nicknamed "Lord Haw Haw" because of his posh British accent and trademark "Germany calling" at the start of his radio propaganda broadcasts from Germany, held a British passport and as such he owed allegiance to the Crown. Thus these broadcasts made him guilty of treason.

He had applied for a British passport on 4 July, 1933, giving his birthplace as Galway in Ireland. His passport was renewed in July 1938 and again a year later.

39 year old Joyce was actually an American citizen, even though he claimed to be Irish, who had joined the British Fascist Party in 1933, moving to Germany on 25 August, 1939, before the outbreak of war. With the fall of Hamburg to the Allies, Joyce tried to escape to Denmark, via Hamburg, but was shot in the leg and captured by British forces there on 28 May, 1945.



He was tried at the Old Bailey before Mr. Justice Tucker on 17 - 19 September, 1945. His defence argued that as an American citizen he owed no allegiance to the Crown and thus was not guilty of treason. The prosecution argument was that as a British passport holder he did owe this allegiance. He was convicted and sentenced to death.

This appeal was dismissed on 1 November, 1945, but Joyce was permitted a further appeal to the House of Lords, in view of the point of law raised by the passports. The Law Lords, by a four to one majority, rejected his appeal and he was hanged at Wandsworth by Albert Pierrepoint, assisted by Alexander Riley, at 9.00 a.m. on Thursday, 3 January, 1946.

A Maltese Traitor.

Carmelo Borg Pisani was born on 10 August, 1915 at Cottonera on Malta to a well respected Catholic and Nationalist family. Later he would study in Rome and admired Mussolini. He joined the Fascist party of Italy and the Black Shirt (Camicie Nere) movement. He took part in the Italian occupation of Greece. Pisani believed strongly in Maltese independence from British rule, which he felt was destroying "the Latin soul" of the island.

On May 18, 1942, Pisani was sent to Malta as a spy, arriving by sea at the Dingli cliffs in Ras id-Dawwara. He found a suitable cave but bad weather destroyed his food and equipment, forcing him to seek rescue by a British Naval patrol. He was taken to the Military Hospital at Mtarfa, where he was recognized by a childhood friend, Captain Tom Warrington. This led to his arrest and transfer to Corradino prison, where he was interrogated, and charged with treason. His trial took place in camera on November 12, 1942, before just a panel of judges. Although Pisani could show that he had handed in his British passport and had an Italian one, the judges still considered him to owe allegiance to the Crown. His activities fighting in Greece further weakened his defence. He was convicted and sentenced to death on November 19, 1942. He was hanged nine days later at Corradino prison at 7:34 a.m. on November 28, 1942.

Saboteurs on Gibraltar.

Gibraltar was of great strategic importance to the British during the War as it was the gateway to the

Mediterranean sea from the Atlantic ocean. There was a large naval base there during the War, housing a fleet known as Force H. There was also an underground "city" created by tunneling into the rock. These man-made caverns housed barracks, offices, and a fully equipped hospital.

Given the above it was not surprising that efforts were made to sabotage the facilities, coordinated by Abwehr, the German military intelligence organization from neighbouring Spain, led by Captain Friedrich Hummel. Hummel had contacted Spanish Lt. Colonel Eleuterio Sánchez-Rubio Davila, an intelligence officer, nominally stationed with the Spanish Army's General Staff at Algeciras but really based in La Linea, and a member of the Falange, (a fascist group), with the aim of establishing a network of saboteurs with access to Gibraltar. Sánchez Rubio designated Emilio Plazas Tejera, also a member of Falange, as operations chief of the organisation.

David Scherr, the Security Intelligence Officer at Gibraltar, thought "Plaza's gang", as he called them, was responsible for nine attempted or actual acts of sabotage between early 1941 and mid-summer 1942.

However only two men were caught, tried and executed for sabotage. They were Luis López Cordon-Cuenca (born 21/8/1920) and José Martín Muñoz (born 28/7/1924), both young Spaniards from La Línea de la Concepción. They had been charged with offences against Regulation 23 of the Gibraltar Defence Regulations of 1939. This section states that "if any person, with intent to assist the enemy, attempts to do any act which is designed or likely to impede naval, military or air operations of H.M. Forces or to endanger life, he shall be guilty of a felony and shall on conviction on indictment, suffer death."

Cordon-Cuenca was one of the men approached by Plazas' group. Bombs were smuggled across the frontier to Gibraltar by an agent working for the group. These were passed to Cordon-Cuenca, who hid them in the Empire Fruit Shop at 114 Main Street, where he worked, while he waited for an instruction to hand the bombs to a saboteur.

When he was arrested in June, 1943, he had in his possession a bomb which was intended to blow up the Ragged Staff Magazine armaments tunnel in the Royal Dock-yard at Gibraltar, one of the most important ammunition depots on the Rock. At the time it was full of ammunition in readiness for the Sicily landings.

Cordon-Cuenca was tried before the Supreme Court of Gibraltar between 19 and 25 August, 1943 and he was sentenced to death by His Honour John McDougall on Wednesday 25 August, 1943 (also stated as 31 August). He had pleaded not guilty but was convicted of treachery under the above Regulation.

Cordon-Cuenca appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and this was heard on Monday 13 December 1943.

Muñoz pleaded guilty to his charges at trial before the same judge on Monday 11 October, 1943. He had been employed as a labourer at the dock-yard, and crossed from Spain into Gibraltar each day. He was recruited by a Spaniard in La Linea. Muñoz succeeded in smuggling a bomb into Gibraltar and placing it on an 11,000 gallon petroleum tank in the fuel enclosure of the Coaling Island, causing a serious fire on 30 June, 1943 which spread rapidly to surrounding fuel drums. Defence Security Officer, Lt. Colonel Henry Clement Medlam, noticed the fire at around 1.45 p.m. and in his report wrote: "Drums of petrol were exploding all round me and were being flung into the air by the force of the explosion". The bomb was described as a "clam" type weapon and had a two and a half hour time delay mechanism.

An agent code-named "NAG" was able to provide authorities with the necessary information to enable the identification and arrest of Muñoz. NAG was a Basque lorry driver in the employ of Gibraltar Dockyard who immediately told his employer when he was approached by a German agent.

Muñoz was arrested by Sgt. Ferro of the Gibraltar Security Police at 9.15 a.m. on the morning of 29 July 1943 as he tried to enter Gibraltar. Muñoz also had components for a second bomb hidden under coal in the basement of Café Imperial which he revealed during interrogation.

Muñoz's execution was delayed as a result of Cordon-Cuenca's appeal.

The Home Office sent Albert Pierrepoint a telegram summoning him to London. Harry Kirk who was to be

his assistant joined him there. They departed on 8 January from an aerodrome near Bristol in an RAF plane that took them to Lisbon. They then flew along the Spanish coast to Gibraltar. They were taken to the Moorish Castle where Cordon Cuenca and Muñoz were housed and where Gibraltar's gallows stood. Luis López Cordon-Cuenca and José Martin Muñoz were hanged on Tuesday 11 January, 1944. Albert Pierrepoint reportedly set drops of 6' 10" for each man.

Postscript.

NAG was able to provide a remarkably complete picture of German sabotage operations against Gibraltar. For this NAG was awarded a medal after the war.

On 6 January, 1944 The Governor of Gibraltar sent a report of a meeting he had had with the Spanish Consul General to the Foreign Office, during which it was made clear that allowing Abwehr to operate in Spain and continue further sabotage operations must cease immediately. This, together with similar diplomatic steps through other channels, finally yielded the desired result and the Spanish government published a statement declaring "strict neutrality" on 3 February, 1944. This led to the end of German secret activities in southern Spain.

A German Spy hanged in France by the US Military.

Günther Ohletz was born at Oberhausen in Germany on 26 April, 1924. He was the first spy to be executed by the United States Army in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) and apparently the only one by hanging.

Hitler came to power when Günther Ohletz was nine. He practically did not know any other social system than the one created by Nazism, and when he was 15, war broke out. Like many others of his age group, he wanted his share of soldiering, and at 16 years of age, volunteered for the SS. But they didn't want him yet.

One year later, he was accepted and assigned to a regiment which was part of the 10th SS Panzerdivision "Fruntsberg". He made his first battle experiences in the region of Kovel in Ukraine, but when D-Day came, his division was hurried to Normandy in order to fight back the advancing Allies. Günther was 20 years old by now, and had gained promotion to Rottenführer – something like corporal in other armies.

On 10 August, 1944, Oberscharführer Seel, Günther's platoon leader, said: "I don't like the way these guys go on patrol. They go out, lie down in the grass and they all rest and come back and tell me that they haven't seen anything. I am completely in the dark as to where the enemy is. I would like you to go out on a patrol in civilian clothes. Get yourself some civilian clothes in one of these houses."

When Günther came back dressed for the occasion, Seel handed him a piece of paper on which he had explained, for the benefit of the German outpost line, that this civilian was really an SS Rottenführer on reconnaissance mission.

Günther started out on his mission. Hearing some shooting a few hundred yards to the south, he went to see what was there but found only the tracks of a non-German armoured vehicle and some spent cartridges. When he passed what was supposed to be the German outpost line, he did not see anybody but just found some pieces of equipment. He found more tracks of armoured vehicles, crossed a river, went cross-country, found another road going south, passed a water mill... And then he met Lt. Max M. VanPatton.

Together with another officer and two soldiers, the officer in Company D, 82nd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, had left the village of St. Georges de Rouelley in northerly direction. After about a mile, the car met a civilian smoking a cigarette. The lieutenant stopped to ask whether the civilian knew the location of the enemy. The civilian made a blank face. The lieutenant tried his best French: "Le boche?" and drew a swastika in the dirt. "Nix compre" was the answer. Now this did not sound French, and not English either. But "nix" for "nothing" was an expression a German might use... The "civilian" was searched, and the

Americans found a Luger pistol on him. That was enough to arrest him and return him to St. Georges where he was searched again, and more thoroughly. A "soldbuch" (a military passport and pay book) was found, and a German army identification tag.

One week later Günter was interrogated by a master sergeant of the Military Intelligence. He freely spoke about his mission and admitted everything.

On 7 September, 1944, near Le Perray, a Military Commission sat and tried the case. pursuant to paragraph 1 of Special Orders No. 240. The specification of the charge was : "In that Rottenführer Günther Ohletz, 21st SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment, German Army, did, in the zone of operations of the Armies of the United States near Saint Georges de Reuelle, France, on or about 10 August, 1944, act as a spy by endeavouring, while disguised in civilian clothes, to obtain information with intent to impart same to the enemy." With Günter's confession on record, the defense had a rotten job. The only thing that could be done was to plead his youth in mitigation of punishment. The Commission found the defendant guilty of espionage and sentenced him to hang. The sentence was reviewed on 13th, reviewed again on 19th by the Army Group Judge Advocate, and finally confirmed. Everything had been done by the book, army-style.

On 23 September, the US Army opened the Seine Disciplinary Training Center, complete with gallows. It was situated in the south-east of Paris in the Caserne Mortier, named after a French Marshal of Napoleonic times. On 7 October, 1944 Günter was to be executed there.

However: There was no hangman.

Army regulations so far had ordered that "The trap will be actuated personally by the officer charged with the execution of the sentence." Usually that would be a career officer in the Military Police, for instance Major Mortimer H. Christian, the Commandant of the Seine Section DTC. But so far only one hanging had occurred in France, and for that the US Army had flown in their English contractor, Thomas William Pierrepont. It was clear that this had been an exception, that an army hangman had to be found. Enquiries to that effect had already turned up likely candidates, but in this case, Major Christian still had to do it personally. It is possible that it was even the first hanging in his 48 years of life that he was present at.

In the evening of October 7 at about ten o'clock, Major Christian led the execution party into the death chamber at the Caserne Mortier. Günter was accompanied by two sergeants as guards and an army chaplain. They mounted the steps of the gallows and on the platform met two assistants which the "Report of Proceedings" does not name. An army surgeon took post at about eight feet from the gallows, facing the scaffold, and the Recorder who had the task to write everything down stood near the wall at the foot of the steps. One brigadier general, three colonels, two lieutenant colonels and one captain formed a line in order of rank at a distance of about 24 feet: the witnesses.

Günter did not have much to say when he was asked his last words: "Only that I thank the Chaplain, and I was not a spy."

Leg strap, hood and noose followed, adjusted by one of those unnamed "assistants". Major Christian faced about and cut the rope which released the weight which sprung the trap. It was 10.05 p.m. "The body swayed only lightly and without jerks, tremors or convulsions, hung suspended in the lower screened portion of the scaffold", wrote the Recorder (how could he know if the scaffold was screened?).

At 10.18 p.m., Captain Edward M. Sullivan the surgeon, declared Günter dead. The assistants took Günter's body down and handed it to two soldiers of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service who had come in with a litter. The chaplain "administered the last rites of the faith of the prisoner" which probably means that Günter was a catholic and received the Extreme Unction. Since this involves, among other things, that Günter's hands had to be anointed, it was rather unfortunate that "(t)he assistants were unable to remove the handcuffs due to a faulty lock mechanism".

Then the litter bearers left, after handing the Recorder a receipt for the remains. In quintuplicate.

Günter Ohletz was buried on a cemetery 20 miles southeast of Paris which the US Army had started that year. After the war, the US Army collected their dead from here and reburied them at Epinal. The empty graves were filled by the remains of German soldiers who were brought from the vicinity and from other

war grave sites. Today this is the Cimetière Militaire Allemand at Solers, with 2,228 German graves. Günter Ohletz is buried in Block 1, row 4, grave 131. Who knows – perhaps even with his handcuffs still on.

31 other men were shot for spying by the US Army in the European Theater of Operations, during World War II.