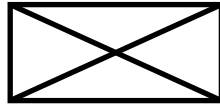




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MESSAGE CENTER



MILLENNIUM EDITION

DECEMBER 1999

Status of AT's Message Center Newsletter:

A lot has transpired since the delayed mailing of the M/C last Fall. The one perhaps misleadingly identified as the "JULY" 1999 issue. We are continuing to struggle to achieve a paid subscription basis and have elected to release this issue ahead of our normal biannual date of March 2000 in order to apprise you of how we're doing. The answer is, lousy. The response to Rudy's September 27th letter to you, suggesting \$5 advance subscriptions, has been disappointing at best. Particularly so, to those of us who volunteered to carry on the good work Rudy started so many years ago. The effect of your "votes" in this respect will certainly be a substantial reduction in the circulation of future issues. Look at the listing of your names and addresses on page 6. Those of you who by your failure to subscribe, essentially voted *against* continued support of the M/C, are listed indented and in *italics*. Only a third of you chose to support future M/C newsletters with a subscription. Your names are listed in **bold** face type.

That said, as your editor I (RC) can assure you that this will be your last chance to subscribe. We won't ask you again because to harangue you would cost our modest treasury more than it can afford. But we *do* want to gratefully acknowledge the response we had from those who chose to subscribe and who will remain on our mailing list for the foreseeable future. Thanks, you guys, for making it possible to continue. And so long to those of you who didn't.

More About Bormann:

As some of you may already know, the national news media recently, and rather conclusively, established that the quest for Martin Bormann carried out by Dalton Raze and Bill Rogers in the Summer of 1945, and featured in our last issue, was not just fruitless. It was futile. But of course, no one could have known that at the time. We *now* know that Bormann certainly met death by his own hand on May 2, 1945. How do we know? Read on.

A documentary on Bormann hosted by Roger Mudd was aired on television's History Channel on August 12, 1999. It was entitled "Hitler's Henchmen: Martin Bormann, the Shadow Man". I guess we could all agree with that title! A conclusion of the report said "In 1972, during excavations at the Weidendammer Bridge, construction workers came across two skeletons...." Upon examining them, Dr. Helmut Hühn, a Forensic Scientist, concluded "I am quite convinced that Martin Bormann died in 1945. All

results of the comparative tests and parameters confirmed one hundred percent that Martin Bormann died in Berlin in 1945."

Apparently, around midnight of May 1, 1945, four men clambered out of a cellar window of Berlin's Reichschancellery, Bormann among them. He struggled his way [about 2 miles] to reach the south end of the Weidendammer Bridge. There, he gave up. [However, this location, identified by TV's History Channel documentary as the point where his escape ended, has been disputed by more detailed and authoritative reports to be described below.] In his teeth the forensic doctors later found glass splinters from a cyanide capsule. Bormann had killed himself.

Concluding comment by host Roger Mudd: "At war's end, Bormann's body had not been recovered. For more than 25 years his fate was a mystery. There were rumors of sightings in Italy, South America, North Africa, and Australia. But then, in Berlin in 1972, two skeletons were found near where Bormann was reportedly last seen alive. There were glass splinters of cyanide vials in the jaw bones. Dental records indicated one of the dead men was Bormann. This was confirmed in 1998 by DNA tests. Martin Bormann had taken the coward's way out and had never escaped from Berlin after all." This documentary stirred my (RC's) imagination and prompted me to delve deeper. RM (Rob) Smith helped me do so.

A Reprise:

Directed by information acquired and passed along to me by RM (Rob Smith), I "visited" the Internet site <http://www.anesi.com/east/bormann.htm>. It produced a detailed account of Bormann's last hours, authoritatively based on the book "The Last Days of Hitler" by Hugh Trevor-Roper¹. Shortly after the European war ended, Roper was appointed by British Intelligence to investigate the evidence surrounding the fates of Hitler, Goebbels, Bormann, and others. His definitive book, was cited as a reference by the web site's author, Chuck Anesi. If you have access to the Internet and are at all interested, you too should visit that web address.

A revision updating Roper's first edition, related that in December of 1972, during construction activities at the Lehrter Station (a stop on Berlin's Intra-urban railway about a mile and a half WNW of the Weidendammer Bridge and in the path of the escapees' flight), two skeletons had been unearthed near where Artur Axmann claimed in 1945 to have seen the bodies of both Bormann and Stumpfegger, lifeless and lying face up, illuminated by the early morning moonlight of May 2nd. Axmann, was the 32 year old head of the Hitler Youth and along with Dr. Ludwig Stumpfegger, Hitler's surgeon, was a member of the group of three or four who had begun their escape together on foot. The distance traveled to that point would have been about 4 miles along the planned escape route from the Führer Bunker. Axmann's

deposition of 1945 stating that Bormann had met his death there had been ignored because at the time, he (Axmann) was suspected of giving false evidence to help Bormann avoid capture.

However, extensive forensic examinations, including use of the dental records kept by Bormann's dentist, Prof. Hugo Blaschke (who was also Hitler's dentist), verified Axmann's story and conclusively identified the shorter of the two skeletons as Bormann's. He was thereupon officially declared dead by West German authorities. The forensics employed were validated by Dr. Reidar F. Sognaes, a U.S. expert in such matters. The other skeleton was identified as Ludwig Stumpfegger's. Both were declared to have met death between the hours of 1:30 and 2:30 A.M., May 2, 1945. As noted earlier, DNA tests run in 1998 further confirmed one of the skeletons as Bormann's.

¹ (University of Chicago Press, ISBN 0-226-81224-3, 1946...1978)

Chuck Anesi, the author of the web's "Escape Route of Martin Bormann", gives a description I've quoted below, of the route taken by the bunker's inhabitants, small groups of whom began leaving 3 or 4 at a time, at 11 P.M. on May 1st. Axmann likely revealed these details in testimony following his capture. Chuck also provides visitors to his web page (address given above) with an interesting route map and color photos of points along the route, as they now (in 1995) exist. The description follows:

"Moving in small groups, they proceeded underground, as planned, [by tunnel and subway] to the Friedrichstrasse station. Here they emerged to find the ruins of Berlin in flames and Russian shells bursting everywhere around them. The first group managed to cross the river Spree by an iron footbridge that ran parallel to the Weidendammer Bridge. The remaining groups likewise emerged at the Friedrichstrasse Station, but there became confused and disoriented. They made their way north along the Friedrichstrasse to the Weidendammer Bridge, where they found their way blocked at the bridge's north end by an anti-tank barrier and heavy Russian fire. Next, they withdrew to the south end of the bridge, where they were soon joined by a few German tanks. Gathering about the tanks, they again pressed forward. Bormann, Artur Axmann, Ludwig Stumpfegger, and others followed the lead tanks as far as the Ziegelstrasse. There, a *panzerfaust* struck the lead tank. The violent explosion stunned Bormann and Stumpfegger, and wounded Axmann. All retreated to the Weidendammer Bridge...Bormann, Stumpfegger, and others followed the tracks of the surface railway to the Lehrter station. There, Bormann and Stumpfegger decided to follow the Invalidienstrasse east. Axmann elected to go west but encountered a Russian patrol and returned on the the path Bormann and Stumpfegger had taken. He soon found them behind the bridge, where the Invalidienstrasse crosses the railroad tracks...Both were dead. He continued on his way, escaping from Berlin and spending the next six months

hiding out with the Hitler Youth in the Bavarian Alps where he was eventually captured."

Coatless in the Cold - A Recollection by Bill Sheridan (1st Squad, 1st Platoon)

No doubt about it. Of my thirty three months of service, the month spent in Porthcawl , Wales was the best of all. The girls from the aircraft plant, the pubs, the dance pavilion, and tea and pastries each night at the Nesta Café. It was but a short cab ride to the Miners' Rest, a grim pile of masonry occupying a rocky point on Bristol Bay, where the AntiTank Company was billeted.

All of this was topped off by a three day pass to London in early December. Slim in my Class A overcoat, brass buttons reflecting the weak sun, I cheered the Royal Family in Hyde Park where they presided over the disbanding of the Home Guard. Then, there was Westminster Abbey, a cruise on the Thames, a show, and a few V2 rockets to liven things up.

On the return train ride to Porthcawl some apprehension began to creep into my mind. Brass buttons? Perhaps it was our imminent move to Europe which gave rise to some concerns about facing the Wehrmacht behind those bright buttons. Then, too, there was that tomb in Westminster Abbey with a single inscription. It read: SHERIDAN. Prophetic perhaps?

Nevertheless, that night, as I snuggled into my hard little sack in our dormitory at the Rest, some of the fonder remembrances filled my head. Since the room was unheated, the overcoat felt comfy over the meager, single blanket provided by Uncle Sam.

Still drowsy with sleep, I became aware that the coat was slowly slipping off the bed. As I grasped at it, I became aware that another pair of hands were also attached to the coat. With a snap the coat thief tucked the coat under his arm, burst out the door and sprinted down the corridor to disappear into the maze of corridors and dormitories.

Certainly, with the prospects of a winter campaign at hand, the U.S. Army could not allow one of its brave infantrymen to face such weather without an overcoat. Wrong! The hearty crew manning the supply room informed me that there was a better chance of requisitioning an M4 tank than an overcoat. The army had made sure that every GI boarding a troop transport in the USA had his overcoat and therefor, for every soldier in Europe, there was an overcoat and no need for a supply of spares in the ETO. And besides, the supply room had already packed up their requisition forms for the trip to Europe. With a sly wink, one of them suggested that there was an obvious solution to my problem on the coat rack of every pub in Porthcawl. My parochial school indoctrination clearly eliminated this as an option.

So I was off to Europe swaddled in my green M1 raincoat. Strangely, except for my first squad friends, no one else ever inquired why I was wearing that raincoat and was so obviously out of uniform. Actually, it was not all that uncomfortable. The back pack and duffle bag were that much lighter, and with a neck muffler, I was no more miserable than my buddies. The raincoat proved to be a good wind breaker during those unforgettable, top-down night road marches through Belgium's rain and sleet. A brief respite was enjoyed when the first squad was billeted with the Peterson family of Hasselt. Around the kitchen stove we

learned from the BBC of the new German offensive while the buzz bombs aimed at Antwerp passed overhead every ten minutes or so. The Peterson's young daughter, Wilhelmina, sat nearby, sewing our seventy-fifth patches back on our coats. They had been removed to conceal the division's presence on the continent.

From Hasselt our direction was east toward the tip of the Bulge. As we approached the front, somewhere west of Hotton, we paused on a road over which another outfit had recently carried out a swift advance. In which direction they had advanced was not clear, but plainly, they were in a big hurry and had decided to lighten their loads. Blankets, gas masks, rations, tools, bed rolls, and yes, overcoats - plenty of overcoats -- were strewn along the road. It took but a moment to inspect perhaps a half dozen coats and select one almost new, of ample size and sporting sensible, dull plastic buttons. In a sense, the Germans had solved my problem.

And finally, how about the guy who stole *my* coat? How did he make out in the Bulge? And now, perhaps he is reading this memoir....WJS - June 1999.

WANTED: Though we have no deaths to report, we would like to enlist your aid in recalling more about another "lost" member of the company: We don't recall his given name, but we think his surname was "Holtzhauser". If the collective memories of Robert Smith, Bill Sheridan, and my own serve us accurately, he was the driver of a gun squad truck, possibly in the 3rd Platoon. Bill recalls him to have come from north New Jersey, near the Bayway Refinery and possibly an employee of ESSO. We believe him to have been wounded in the thigh or arm by shrapnel, an injury possibly never reported as such. Do any of our readers remember more about him, such as the severity of his wound; whether he was evacuated; whether he ever rejoined the company; whether he was present at Camp St. Louis; was he transferred to the 2nd ID?...Anything that might help solidify the vague image we have of him would be gratefully appreciated. Just write or otherwise communicate what you know to Robert Smith, Bill Sheridan, or me.....RCS

From the M/C staff: RC (Ray Smith), Editor
RM (Rob Smith),
Publisher/Treasurer
Rudy Gillen, Editor and Publisher
Emeritus