

II. THE SURRENDER

Formal surrender of German Army Group G, which included the First and Nineteenth Armies, was agreed to at 1400B hours 5 May 1945, after some 48 hours of negotiating on the part of General der Infanterie Herrmann FOERTSCH, and became effective at noon 6 May 1945. FOERTSCH, who headed the German First Army, represented General der Infanterie SCHULZ, Commander of Army Group G, and his action was with the knowledge and consent of Feldmarschall Albert KESSELRING. The action was but one part of the surrender of all German military units, accomplished over the entire Eastern and Western fronts within a matter of some five days.

Signing of the unconditional battlefield agreement took place in the museum-like building of Prof. THORAK, HITLER's favorite sculptor, at HAAR, in the eastern outskirts of MUNICH, a scant six miles from the birthplace of Nazidom.

General FOERTSCH had first been received the night of 4 May by Brigadier General Robert YOUNG, assistant commander of the U S 3 Division, after having crossed through the American lines.

The next day as General FOERTSCH and his retinue entered the large room at U S XV Corps headquarters where they were to agree to give up, the American officers present did not rise. General FOERTSCH and his staff were told to be seated and then the general was requested to introduce the officers accompanying him. Each German officer arose and bowed. American officers were introduced. They did not rise.

Seated at a ponderous table in a room 40 feet high, in which were recently-completed heroic statues intended for new German buildings, the emissaries from the defeated enemy legions listened in grim silence as the instrument of surrender was explained to them point by point by General Jacob L. DEVERS, U S Sixth Army Group Commander.

During the four hours in which General DEVERS read and explained the document, General FOERTSCH displayed emotion only once. The word "armistice" came up, whereupon General DEVERS emphatically informed the German officers that there was to be no armistice whatsoever.

"You understand, do you not," said General DEVERS, "that this is unconditional surrender of Army Group G and of all the officers, the soldiers, the military personnel and para-military personnel within the prescribed area? Hostilities are to cease at once, although the surrender officially takes effect at noon 6 May, which is tomorrow."

General DEVERS also stated that all German military personnel were to be disarmed. At this point General FOERTSCH was unable, for a moment, to control his voice. He sat silently, with the muscles of his face working intensely. Finally he said:

"I have no power left but to accept." Then he signed.

General DEVERS signed the instrument for General EISENHOWER, Supreme Allied Commander, while FOERTSCH's signature was on behalf of Feldmarschall KESSELRING. Lieutenant General Alexander M. PATCH, Commanding General of the U S Seventh Army, and Lieutenant General Wade H. HAISLIP, Commanding General of the U S XV Corps, also signed.

Thus came about the order for the surrender - without conditions - of nearly 100,000 square miles of territory held by the German Army Group G south of Allied lines to the Swiss and Italian borders, and from the RHINE eastward, roughly, to 20 miles beyond SALZBURG.

Due to a general breakdown of enemy communications, and the rapid development of American arms and German chaos, there was such confusion during the final day that Army Group G's component Nineteenth Army (commanded by General BRANDENBERGER) took surrender upon itself. Apparently unaware of the larger negotiation, the Nineteenth gave itself up at INNSBRUCK to Major General Edward H. BROOKS, commanding the U S VI Corps, effective 1800 hours 5 May.

Immediately after the signing of surrender articles for Army Group G, however, all American and German troops were informed at once and ordered to cease firing and remain in place for further instructions.

While none but the most fanatical German SS men and diehards could have expected other than immediate and complete surrender to the Allies, the task of formally ending hostilities in an orderly manner was a staggering one.

The Germans were not certain how many men they had left in Army Group G - mass surrenders and developing seal-offs had long since made daily recapitulation impossible. Thousands of Germans, beaten and confused, had not waited for formal surrender. As the negotiations proceeded at HAAR they were streaming in from the hills in a never ending procession. Roads were jammed with German military cars, horsedrawn vehicles, bicycles; columns up to five and six abreast slogged toward prison enclosures.

They were still being processed three weeks after the surrender. During the month of May 307,707 prisoners were counted, bringing to 624,204 the total number processed through Seventh Army prisoner of war cages since 15 August 1944. This final figure includes prisoners taken by other forces temporarily operating under command of the Seventh Army - 49,150 by the First French Army, 3,692 by the First Airborne Task Force, 379 by the First Special Service Force, all between 15 August and 15 September 1944; and 3,675 by the French 2 Armored Division between 29 September and 5 December 1944.

It does not include, however, the enemy troops and auxiliaries still under German control in our area at the time of the surrender. That figure, as finally computed by the Germans themselves and submitted on 20 May 1945, stood at 272,006; a further 82,000 subsequently entered the area from ITALY. These troops, awaiting demobilization, were disposed by the Germans as indicated on the map which follows. They were then moved under American control to designated assembly areas, where they were discharged and sent homeward.

- - - -

FULL TEXT OF SURRENDER INSTRUMENT

Specifications of Surrender, presented by General Jacob L. Devers, U. S. Army, Commanding 6th Army Group, on behalf of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, U. S. Army, Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Forces, and accepted by General Schulz, Commander-in-Chief, Army Group "G", Army of the German Reich.

1. It is agreed that the territory covered by this instrument includes the areas bounded on the East generally by the line: KIRCHBERG (inclusive) -

RIED (inclusive) - FRANKENMARKT (inclusive) - FREUDENTHAL (inclusive) - SOUTH CORNER ZELLER SEE* - RADSTADT (inclusive) - OBERDRAUBURG (exclusive) - FLOCKENPASS (exclusive), on the South by the Italian and Swiss frontiers, on the West by the River RHINE, and on the North by the present Allied front line, which are under the jurisdiction of General Schulz. All German military and para-military forces in this area are under command of General Schulz. All these forces, including General Schulz, are bound by this instrument and shall be subject to such other specifications as may be applied hereafter by the authorities of the UNITED NATIONS.

2. All forces, including all para-military forces, under command of General Schulz, shall cease unconditionally all acts of hostilities towards forces of the UNITED NATIONS not later than 1200B hours, 6 May 1945.

3. All such forces under command of General Schulz, except as indicated in Annex A, shall disarm themselves immediately and remain in their present areas retaining all mess and transportation equipment, food and forage necessary for self maintenance and subsistence until directed otherwise by authorities of the Armed Forces of the UNITED NATIONS.

4. Concentration of all equipment and personnel as prescribed in Annex A will be effected not later than 1200B hours, 8 May 1945, after which time offensive ground and air action will be taken by the Allied Forces against all unauthorized movement of forces affected by this instrument. Other instructions indicated in Annex A will be carried out promptly.

5. This instrument is independent of, without prejudice to, and will be superseded by any general instrument of surrender imposed by, or on behalf of the UNITED NATIONS and applicable to Germany and the German Armed Forces as a whole.

6. The official language of this instrument shall be the English text.

Signed and agreed at HAAR, BAVARIA, this 5 day of May 1945.

For General Schulz

Commanding General, First
German Army

General Jacob L. Devers
United States Army.

ANNEX "A"

1. Pending further orders all officers and not to exceed one hundred other ranks per division may retain their rifle, machine pistol, pistol, or other sidearm for internal security purposes. All such armed personnel will wear a 3-inch white arm band above the left elbow for easy identification. All other arms, weapons and ammunition of whatever nature will be placed in dumps of appropriate size in convenient locations in areas occupied by companies, troops, batteries, and other detachments of a comparable or smaller size. Appropriate guards will be posted on all such dumps to insure their security pending further disposition as directed by authorities of the Armed Forces of the UNITED NATIONS. All military equipment such as telephone, telegraph and radio equipment, motor vehicles, horse-drawn vehicles and other means of transport (both ground and air), and other movable military impediments not needed for execution of these specifications will be similarly assembled and guarded in convenient locations pending their further disposition. All such dumps will be kept clear of lines of communication and axes of advance required by the Allied Forces.

R E S T R I C T E D

2. All weapons and equipment will be deposited in dumps with breech blocks, bolts, sights and/or other operating mechanisms intact.

3. Having disposed of all weapons, ammunition and combat equipment of whatever nature, all forces under command of General Schulz will stand fast in their respective areas until given further direction by authorities of the Armed Forces of the UNITED NATIONS, and will keep clear of all highways, railroads, trails and other routes of advance which may be required by Allied Forces.

4. By hour and date indicated in paragraph 2 this instrument, General Schulz shall furnish the Commanding General, Sixth Army Group, an order of battle of all major units, including Allied Prisoner of War Camps, concentration camps and similar installations under his command, and as soon as possible shall furnish the Commanding General, Sixth Army Group, with a complete troop list showing by unit designation, type, strength and location, all elements of his command affected by this instrument.

5. All minefields within areas controlled by General Schulz shall be plainly marked immediately by signs and shall be outlined with white tape or other suitable means which are readily identifiable. All mines, booby traps and other types of demolition charges shall be removed from all highways and railroad bridges, tunnels, overpasses and underpasses on all lines of communication, and from all buildings and means of transport, highway, rail and air, within the areas controlled by General Schulz, and all such mines, booby traps and other means of demolitions so removed shall be rendered harmless; those mines, booby traps and other means of demolitions which cannot be removed or rendered harmless immediately shall be plainly marked and placed under guards.

* * *