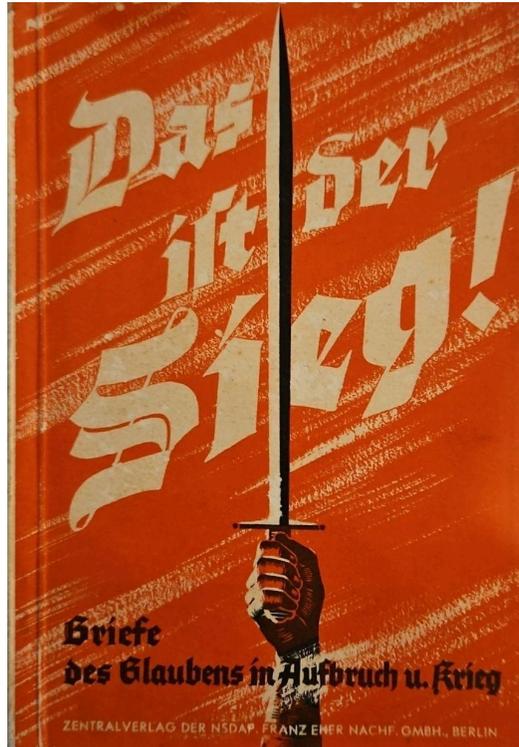


That Is Victory!
Letters of Faith in Times of Upheaval and War



With a Given Quote by Reichführer Heinrich Himmler
Edited by Gunter d'Alquen

Berlin 1941
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"These letters are proof of the mental fortitude and strength of the German people - all the little difficulties of everyday life disappear in the face of such testimonies of human grit."

- **Heinrich Himmler,**
Reichsführer SS and Chief of the German Police



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Forward

Never has our people understood the meaning and profound necessity of war more clearly than in this grave and proud moment.

We are in the midst of a tremendous revolution, which, through Germany's struggle, means the rebirth of Europe. Our decisive steps, on land, at sea, in the air, on all fronts, and at home, are being fought with the best weapons that our skill and strength have created in years of rapid and hard construction.

And yet, what use are weapons and willpower without faith, which gives meaning and direction to all fighting, storming, and bleeding, and thus determines the ultimate victory? This elemental force could not have grown and become conscious if it had not been deeply rooted in the blood, in the very core of our people, often almost forgotten and buried, yet still alive as the best of its essence. The great miracle of our present is the awakening and breakthrough of this force - fate has given us a Führer to turn its spark into a blazing fire.

What could be expected of our people that was not already contained in our very essence, and what does leadership and command ultimately mean other than the shaping and gathering of all the forces that, out of our deepest faith, strive toward the greatest of deeds?

This collection is intended to bear unadulterated witness to this faith, which alone guarantees victory - these are letters, letters from the span of a great year, which, more than a gifted composition, conveys a picture that usually remains hidden in such vivid colors.

Now that we are gathering all of our strength and fighting for the future, both on the front and at home, such proof of the victory of faith is a pledge of the coming decision between victory or extinction.

It is not wishes, hopes, or commands that this book contains, nor slogans shouted from the towers - from our midst, down to the last village, every letter speaks, far from empty phrases, that this great miracle of our time is now bearing its first fruits, and that faith is now moving all those mountains that towered high, hard and heavy in the dark nights of countless years.

This book is therefore not intended to be a textbook - for who could it teach who did not already know?

This book seeks to be a friend to all the men and women on all fronts of this struggle, in those hours when it is good for the heart to know that it is united with the best forces of its people.

Berlin, April 20th, 1940.

For the Fourth Edition

Half a year has now passed since we completed this collection for the front and the homeland - half a year of victory has been achieved through the concentrated strength and fervent belief of our strong people.

Many thousands of copies of this reflection of German sentiment have become a bridge between all fronts of the struggle for freedom, and now a few letters from the great period between the publication of this collection and today will serve as a supplement.

Further echoes from the field may precede future editions, as proof of how clearly the intention of this task was understood, and as a thank you to all the unnamed comrades who, without knowing it, contributed in life, in struggle, and in death to shaping this pure image of the victory of faith.

Berlin, November 9th, 1940.

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In the Field, August 24th, 1940

My dear Gretl!

“I am finally able to send you the book I wanted to give you on the occasion of my first leave, but was unable to get earlier; I became aware of this little book through the story “Die Bekehrung des Herzens” (The Test of the Heart), which I read in a newspaper, and decided then to send it to you.

When I got my hands on it, I was quite shocked - it was an unassuming book, with a plain gray cover, black lettering, and paper that wasn't exactly of the best quality. ‘Don't judge a book by its cover,’ I told myself, but I had seen a letter from the contents, and was now curious to see what else the book had to say.

When I read through it, I became glad again, for I had not been mistaken - many noble thoughts and a thousand golden words were shown to me, thoughts in quiet rooms and written during long nights, spoken through mouth and pen by good mothers, brave women, and loyal comrades. A parable then presented itself to me: as unassuming as this little book appeared, it is noble and good in its innermost essence, just as people, with a beautiful, characterful nature, are simple and unassuming on the outside.

This little book is like the gray clad simple soldier who does not talk about himself, but who, during long nights spent awake alone, has found answers to many thoughts and questions that burned in his soul. Take this book with you, therefore, as a thousand memories of me, as an echo of what I could not all tell you in the short time we spent together during my first vacation. In the many hours you spend alone, may it be a comfort to you and let it bring greetings from me in your loneliness...”

Adolf Hitler

Who among us living today could paint a picture of the Führer?

Just as he was born among the people, rose from the people, and was chosen by them, so he stands, lives, and works through each of us. In each of us, he has awakened the strength that signifies Germany's new beginning - in a brilliant synthesis, this strength is the power that this man before us represents in the name of the Reich; if these people had one heart, and this heart one mouth, this mouth alone would be called upon to speak about Adolf Hitler.

Who knows, perhaps even he would lack the words, for who among us would not lack them when speaking about his father and mother to a stranger who had neither desired and never learned to love them?

We have therefore resigned ourselves to the fact that beyond our blood, no one could ever replace, suspect, or even comprehend the sacred mystery of the myth of "the Führer and people" - today we know how much this fact has contributed to the most dangerous of errors that drove the enemy to wage war against the Reich.

And yet, we have tried to give a picture of the Führer that is as true and faithful as the image that stands before the soul of the people.

To do this, we decided to reach out and document the German people's innermost feelings in order to achieve, in many individual strokes, a sketch that comes as close as possible to that incomprehensible image before us all.

The birthday of the Führer seemed to us the best time to do this. We wrote to people, men and women, who had given us proof of their friendship and trust on various occasions.

"Tell us," we asked, "what the Führer means to you, tell us what place the Führer occupies in your life, in your personal world of ideas; you don't need to tell us what you think the Führer means to the people and to history - you can't judge that any more completely than anyone else alive. We want to see the Führer through your own eyes, as if you were describing your father or your brother, because doesn't the Führer belong to each of us in the same way?

You don't need to be a literary genius, because we don't need your contribution for public consumption and entertainment, but for ourselves. We want to broaden our view by seeing through your eyes, and we want to broaden our feelings by making use of your feelings..."

Contrary to our promise, a number of these many responses from regular Germans have been selected for publication after all, for all the German people to see - we could not do otherwise, because we recognized too clearly that there was no way we could substitute a professional writer to speak about the Führer before the only authority that mattered - the German people.

Today, millions are fighting on the front lines and at home in a decisive battle - the will of the Führer is, as never before, the clear and unambiguous will of the people. Adolf Hitler, like his soldiers, wears the field gray uniform and is, precisely as Führer of the Reich, the symbol of the unknown grenadier.

We know from letters from officers and soldiers that the last words of our heroes in Poland, in the west, and in the north were addressed to the Führer. We know how they are talking to him today everywhere, on

lonely watch, in the hurricane of roaring propellers, in the deathly silence of the submarine under the water.

We know, we feel, and believe his hand is firmly in ours - we hear his words, his commands, as the echo of our own will.

This Führer is the German heart - no, more than that, he is like the eternal German soul, risen up in all of us, alive at all times, and yet as never as present as today.

What all weak words cannot express, may the following sentences, these little melodies, encompass in a resounding chorus the rhythm of our existence: that call to renew and to create life, and therefore also, because fate must demand it, the call to war for Germany's victory through Adolf Hitler!

Berlin, April 20th, 1939

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“Mein Führer!”

“So I stand before your image on this day - this image is larger than life and boundless; it is powerful, harsh, beautiful, and sublime; it is so simple, kind, modest, and warm - yes, it is my father, mother, and brother, all in one, and even more than that.

It carries the greatest years of my life, it encompasses those quiet hours of reflection, those days full of doubts and fears, the beam of sunlight to shine on my most faithful fulfillment, the victory that was always the beginning of new duties and new fields - the more I try to grasp it, the wider, brighter, and endless it becomes to me, but never has it been foreign and distant.

You are the Führer without the demand of obedience, for you live and are the law. You are love and strength, and my heart is full of thoughts of you on this day; it is too full to express my many wishes and thanks to you.

You are freedom, for you have given duty its meaning, which gives all creation joy, strength, and substance. You took away the curse of sweat and toil from our Volk, who, like me on this day, march in shy silence in your presence.

You stand in a cathedral full of millions, its dome arching high toward the light; millions of hearts beat faster and hotter on this day of your birth, and because your life belongs to us, it is a festive day—a holiday for the German people.

We who hope to give you strength and blood out of our love on this day renew our vows; even on your holiday, your gifts and your giving knows no bounds; you make us rich and strong, and bring happiness deep in our hearts.

How weak are the pen and tongue today to express what fills our souls; how we painfully struggle for words and deeds, to say just once, if only once, the thanks that truly comes from our hearts!

We old grenadiers who have often seen you on your way, we are with you on this day, together with our faithful dead, and millions of children wait for the life that you are filling with sunshine and true meaning for them and their children, and children's children.

We don't have much to say, and we know how much you dislike empty words - but if we do say something, you know that it is the truth:

We want, Führer—all the soldiers whom you have dedicated to this fight—in good times and bad, to remain what we have always been - loyal to victory!"

One of the Old Guard.

*

“I Cannot Write...”

"I have long searched for words to express what the Führer means to me - words can sound so bland and empty when they are meant to express our innermost feelings. The Führer stands so tall that words cannot reach him. He has become destiny for me, as he has for all honest Germans. Can a person describe his destiny in words? I consider it presumptuous.

That is why I cannot write what the Führer means to me - I only want to love him because he, to me, is Germany."

Erich F., Münster

*

“My Father...”

"Until I was 30 years old, my father was the center of my life. To me, he was the highest and purest embodiment of everything noble, kind, and great that a person can be, with a pure heart, pure intentions, and pure abilities; anyone who got to know him well couldn't help but admire everything about him.

When he died in 1930, he left a bitter void in me - suddenly, everything that my thoughts and aspirations revolved around was gone—suddenly, this center was no longer there.

There is not enough space here to describe how the Führer filled this place in me; at first, of course, I saw him only as a political leader to whom I was drawn to for reasons I could not explain. The transformation from follower to someone with a very personal and internalized relationship with the Führer, who now seems like a father to me, only really took place after 1933. Every day, I saw how he struggled for his people, how he worried, how he fought for our existence, how he improved our living conditions - in short, I experienced once again everything I had felt for my father.

My final transformation took place two years later, when I was staying in the Bavarian mountains for a short time. I stopped to rest at the home of an old woodcutter in a lonely valley; the two of us sat in front of his small, dilapidated house and talked about many things, including the Führer.

At one point, the old man said, looking calmly at his son, who was raking together the sparse refuse outside: 'When I close my eyes, I know for sure that the boy has a father again, in the form of our Führer. He cares more about us than our own father does.'

This utterance of ‘I know’ from the mouth of that old man, who had never seen the Führer, who had never even been to a movie theater where he had been told that the Führer could be seen in the newsreels, moved me deeply. Even though I believed I was already very close to the Führer, clearly this old woodsman was closer than I was.

At first I felt something like envy and jealousy - I had no siblings, my father belonged only to me - sharing in this relationship felt foreign.

Gradually, I came to terms with the fact that other people also saw more in the Führer than just the chancellor or the friend of the people, and today I have actually reached the point where I cannot deny feeling happy at this thought.

There are only two pictures on my desk, because I am not into personality cults - one picture is of my late father, and the other is of the Führer.

When I often sit alone, working until midnight, or when I am troubled, I talk both to my father and to the Führer. One looks at me with a kind smile, the other shows me his determination. In this way, I believe, fate has almost imperceptibly filled the void once held within me."

Heil Hitler!

Gerhard, D., Berlin.

*

“Just One Wish...”

"Can a National Socialist even say what the Führer means to him and what role he plays in his personal imagination? How is it that a Hermann Göring, a Dr. Goebbels, otherwise masters of language, struggle to find the words with what they can say when it comes to thanking the Führer on behalf of the entire German people for his actions? Because what they feel compelled to say in such moments no longer comes from the realm of the word-forming intellect - it can only shoot out from the soul, and from an overflowing heart.

Gifted poets may be able to let their hearts, and truly only their hearts, speak; where they may find words whose nobility matches the greatness of their feelings, we, who have become rough men in hard years, know only that we are dominated by a feeling, a feeling whose nature and depth we can hardly fathom, and which therefore renders us speechless.

Admiration, love, loyalty, gratitude, devotion, self-sacrifice—each of these is complete, and yet none of them is enough; perhaps that is how that feeling can be described; it is also these terms that have been stripped of their ultimate, deepest, and most beautiful meaning - stripped by the mundaneness of daily life!

But, no matter how one might try to exhaust them, there would still be one being left who represents their innate value (and this is precisely what reveals the elementary, unique, characteristic nature of our feeling for the person of the Führer): to ‘personalize’ all these concepts beyond their noblest content.

Towards the most venerable father, the most loving mother, the most faithful companion, the most reliable friend, they sound as though they compose a completely different melody than when our soul cheers the Führer, and wants to offer him the most precious gift.

Certainly, we who are alive today cannot measure the unique historical greatness of Adolf Hitler in all its magnitude and significance; but one need not even be a comparative historian to sense, under the impression of the gigantic events and experiences of the last six years, that the earth has never before borne such a man.

You have experienced this man and his work, you have seen him face to face, you are yourself a German like him, and you too are concerned for this truest father of the fatherland!

How could such pride not influence the essence of your loyalty, your love, and your gratitude? Even if you might otherwise feel it as a moral obligation, in your personal relationship with the Führer, it transforms from an obligation into the highest and ultimate goal of your thoughts and aspirations, your will and desires; it fills your life by giving it a meaning that your grandchildren will envy you for, and it leaves only one wish unfulfilled:

To be placed in a position where you can give your best and your last - to serve the Führer and his work!"

Dr. jur. H.D.K., Dortmund.

*

“He Saved Us From Suicide!”

"I know you don't expect emotional revelations from me, because feelings cannot be put into words. But please, imagine: without a position, without support. Two years! Four years! Six years! A desperate woman, broken in body and soul! Three children, barely more than babies.

How often did their hungry eyes look at me in vain, full of expectation! I can't imagine anything more agonizing than that look in the eyes of my children.

It was my belief in him, in the fanatical fighter, that saved me and my family from what irresistibly lured us—and everyone else in our situation—toward suicide.

Today?

See the mother who is always singing and jumping around exuberantly with her children; no one recognizes in her the haggard and desperate woman she once was. Instead of those three depressed, hollow-cheeked creatures, there are four boisterous little devils, the noisiest little things far and wide. Look at them! There may be families with better-behaved children, but certainly none happier or more cheerful! You see: that is what the Führer means to me and my family.

I turned my back on a foreign worldview very early on because I found its interpretation to be meaningless to me; the Führer gave me a firm foundation with his worldview, for it is nothing other than the recognition of those eternal laws that govern the universe.

His deeds are the joyful fulfillment of these laws. The successes of his struggle do not appear to me, as is often heard, as tremendous luck, but as the natural consequence of his existence and actions. Out of this belief, no, out of this certainty, I will understand the Führer even where his actions would otherwise require blind trust and faith alone.

This self-evident understanding is the most wonderful feeling I can imagine. Admiration? Recognition? Gratitude? They are nothing compared to the full understanding of an 80-million-strong people dedicated to the mission of their Führer - this alone would be the crowning glory of his sacrificial struggle.

My prayers for the Führer are for the fulfillment of his worldview, and thus the fulfillment of myself."

Fred. Ch., Poppelau (O-S).

“We, With Seven Children...”

"Everything that the Führer is to us, he is our faith, our support, and our hope; as a recipient of the Blood Order¹, I have always believed in this man who has led us, who has cheered us on, and who is marching us into battle for Germany's greatness. We, my family, my seven children, my wife, and I, will believe in him, and only in him, Adolf Hitler. Is there a belief more tangible, more real, and more natural than this?

Hasn't the Führer given us everything, done everything he could for the good of my family? Didn't he give me work so that I could feed and clothe my family again; didn't he build a future for my children that no country can so easily offer its youth?

The Führer supports us in every situation! There are many things in life between a family and the world that clash hard and fast; you often have a difficult time that is not easy to overcome. It is precisely at such times that I go into my living room, where the picture of my Führer hangs.

When I briefly look into the eyes of Adolf Hitler, I see his great struggle, his great will and achievements; my poor, weak hour is gone, and the thought of the Führer gives me renewed strength. How can I fail when I see the greatness in and around Adolf Hitler?

My children know the Führer as the man who commands everything, who regulates everything, who has built the world around them. The Führer is the visible embodiment of leadership to my children, a concept they tried so hard to portray to us when we ourselves were children; the difference is that the Führer moves among the people, you can cheer for him, and our love is rewarded again and again by new great proofs of his gifts.

Hope is what leads us in every situation - look, dear comrade, if you have to raise seven children, then according to the Führer's own words, this is the greatest duty to the state and a sacred task. To shape these children's souls, to raise them to be good people, is an achievement that is only so beautiful and possible because the Führer has given us the secure foundations for such a task. The Führer is our hope because it is only through his generous measures that we large families have 'a life' worthy of human beings. He

¹ A decoration given to those who participated in the Munich coup on November 23rd, 1923.

secured our ability to work through the assistance of the NSV² and their childcare benefits; he elevated mothers to a high position in the state, and he gave children the value of a precious state asset.

My wife and I have been elevated to the status of public servants through our work. In the past, people laughed at large families - today they are honored, and that is why we have such great hope for a good future for our children, because the Führer laid all the foundations for them to one day help build the nation, start families of their own, and contribute to the security and preservation of the great Fatherland.

Isn't it wonderful to know what a bright future our children have ahead of them? It makes one think back to the past, to our youth, the post-war period and inflation, the days of hunger and so many other things that had such a terrible impact on our youth and development at that time. Our children will not have to go through any of this; they have the security that our Führer built, through his oversight and administration.

Isn't it obvious, then, that the Führer is everything to us?"

Toni Dominik Sch., Unterammergau.

“This Man, or No One!”

"I can still see the image clearly in front of me when I saw the Führer for the first time in 1920 at the Krone Circus in Munich, and heard him speak for the very first time.

When the announcement came, ‘Adolf Hitler will now speak!’, a somewhat slight young man appeared before me, wearing a short coat, a soft collar, and a crumpled tie. He was poorly dressed, and I was curious to hear what this man had to say.

When I heard his voice, the passion in his words, something unheard of at that time, the crescendo of his speech to the highest tension, it was clear to me: this man, or no one! That inner conviction has never left me since then.

The greatness of this man, his deeds and historical achievements seem infinitely significant to me, and yet I always see the man as one among the people, one of us, before my mind's eye; and it fills me with pride that Providence chose, as it were, a brother of ours to fulfill German history.

If I have a feeling of reverence for the great figures of German history, it is a completely different feeling toward our Führer - I think the best way to describe it is love.

He is one of us, from the midst of the people, who has achieved something infinitely great and yet has remained the same from the first day I saw him.

I am so devoted to this man that I would defend him even if he were wrong - an impossibility because he can never be wrong - because he is truth and justice itself."

Gr. F., München

“I Think About the People”

² The National Socialist People's Welfare, a social welfare organization that assisted in childcare and in large German families.

"I often think about this man whom 80 million people call their Führer, but when I do, I don't think so much about the chancellor, but rather about Adolf Hitler as a person.

As a lover of the mountains, I often compare him to a weathered peak on a lonely height - like the peak, he stands alone at the deepest level; no matter how many people revere, love, and esteem him, as a human being he will always fall short, and we will always remain his debtors.

Where is the woman he calls his wife? Where are the children who call him 'father', that sweet word? Where is the lap in which he can rest his head? Can the jubilation of the people, can power and glory replace this one happiness? I think this again and again when I think of the Führer.

Yet the Führer has never complained about this, he never mentions this sacrifice. But anyone who has a heart, anyone who looks at the Führer when he looks at a child, knows this: 'Adolf Hitler sacrifices, and must continue to sacrifice, for the sake of a greater cause.'

One more thing - must this unique worker not always live in worry out of his conscientiousness? Can he review all the countless regulations, or even overlook them, which are intended to ensure the implementation of his clear laws; does the letter of some regulations also correspond to the spirit that speaks from these clear and good laws? Is it not often the case that stupid or thoughtless people hold the Führer responsible for when an overzealous official wants to be more papal than the Pope in his decrees? Will Adolf Hitler not sometimes be weighed down by these worries during sleepless nights?

All this I think of when the name 'Adolf Hitler' stands before my soul."

Otto R., Wien.

"My Boldest Dream"

"What does the Führer mean to me in my life? That's hard to say, because the feelings I have for this man are manifold.

He is simply the Führer.

A leader whom I never dared to imagine in my wildest dreams - and I have cherished these dreams so often. I say dreams; but could one dream in 1918, in the days of collapse, as a soldier on the front line facing the enemy? Then they were just wishful dreams, or, better still, obsessions that came over me when I could not or would not comprehend the bitterness of retreat and defeat in the war.

A visionary figure appeared before my eyes, who would succeed in inspiring all the good and brave to a final battle that would defeat all internal and external enemies. At the time no one embodied this dream - there was no one there, and the call that hundreds of thousands would have followed remained unheard. Fate then took its course, because we lacked a leader. I knew that even then.

I saw this in a thousand incidents, at the front, in the rear, during rest periods, and on leave at home. I don't want to talk about later, nor about the thousand deeds and miracles that the Führer accomplished. The word 'Führer' has a special meaning for me.

And what abuse is often perpetrated by people with the word Führer! This title should really only be given to Adolf Hitler, and people should be taught from childhood to revere this word, as the Christian churches do with their saints.

If the Führer has given me, as a German, a proud sense of self-confidence once again, then I also have him to thank for an enormous improvement in my economic situation - thanks to the motorization he promoted, an automotive invention is earning me higher and higher licenses, so that, first of all, I have been freed from the crushing debt burden of the crisis period and, secondly, I can enjoy now enjoy life again.”

“Language Is Far Too Poor”

"...our beautiful German language seems too poor to express my feelings; every sentence I write about this seems banal, even clichéd. Please don't misunderstand me - bear in mind that it is almost impossible for us, as simple members of the national community, to express our feelings properly.

I know fellow citizens who had the opportunity and great fortune to see our Führer up close, some even close enough to shake his hand. And when I asked these fellow citizens what they had said to the Führer, they replied, ‘Nothing, we simply weren't capable of it.’

You see, that's how I would feel if I had the good fortune to shake the Führer's hand.

Finally, rest assured that everything I have to do for my wife, my children, and my parents is simply my duty as a man - how much more must I do for the man who made it possible for me to start a family, who gave me work after six years of wandering, and who today works day and night for the security of the country and thus also for me and my family - our dear Führer Adolf Hitler.

One should not talk about this simple, self-evident duty of a man, but prove it through deeds. Quietly and modestly, without big words.

May the Almighty give me the strength to raise healthy, strong offspring for the Führer. I feel happy to have contributed my part to the principles of the new Greater Germany in three years of marriage with three healthy children."

Alfred G., Laage, Mecklenburg.

“The Day Will Come!”

"I feel utterly awkward about this question, like a child asked by their mother how much she loves them - this child may find their form of expression, but it is no comparison for the magnitude of their feelings. What my Führer gave me is not just a political worldview, it is much more! He gave me a faith that I never really possessed, not even as a child.

It is faith in ourselves, in our strength, in our greatness. Faith in the mysterious power of blood, of the soil of our homeland, of the German nation.

Perhaps, as a former citizen of the Old Reich, you will not be able to share the feeling that I, as a former Austrian, now have. There used to be a certain feeling of inferiority due to the small size of the state, and when someone said, 'yes, that's a German', it always meant looking up to something great. And now our Führer has led us home to greatness, and has given us greatness.

It is such a beautiful and proud feeling to be a German too. Such a feeling is a commitment - and I feel committed with all my heart and soul.

My Führer gave my life value and content, purpose and meaning. I feel too weak to find words of thanks and love for all this; I believe that I would be better able to express myself if I were given a task to prove my great love for this man, my devotion to this man, through my actions.

Perhaps the day will come when I can prove my reverence, loyalty, and love through action.

And I am aware that I will succeed in this better than in my writing today, because such deep feelings and decisions of the heart cannot be expressed in words without sounding trite."

Friedrich G., Wien.

"From the Agony of Being a Mother..."

"There was a time when life seemed hardly worth living. I had lost my faith, my belief in a meaningful order to all things, my belief in divine justice. And yet, I also felt infinitely repelled by a place where God was denied and, at the same time, the most sacred thing a person possesses in this world: their homeland. My blood rebelled against this. People told me of the happiness that this time would bring. Happiness, out of such German misery? I couldn't believe it. Like a pendulum I swung from here and there, never finding a foothold, never finding the solid ground of a homeland.

Day after day, my profession presented me with questioning children's eyes that demanded a clear decision. I grew accustomed to loneliness, and took my inner voice as my guide. But in front of the children, the question tormented me again and again:

'Can you really guide these children? What will become of them in times like these? Won't they end up just as helpless and abandoned as you are?'

And today? Do I need to torment myself today about how to raise my children? They are and should be German! The Führer has outlined all of these concepts so wonderfully and clearly! Being clean separates right from wrong, white from black, up from down. He has uncovered all sources rooted in the German spirit, so that I only need to guide my children to them. His faith has moved mountains, and is an eternal reproach and a constant reminder to me, a person of little faith.

Are we Germans to become a godless people? Never have I felt divine power so close as in the greatness of this time, in the greatness of the Führer. This must have an effect on all my actions, for the time is as great as we humans deserve according to our deeds. Adolf Hitler taught me this, and I want to teach it to my children.

When children's hands fold together evening after evening, professing their one prayer: 'Dear God, protect our Führer!', then I am filled with boundless gratitude to fate for giving us this man. It still strikes me as an incomprehensible miracle that it was possible for one man, in such a short time, to create order

out of chaos, to make the land of my fathers, often foreign and incomprehensible to me, a home where I not only feel safe, but of which I can be proud.

Adolf Hitler turned the agony of being a mother, of having to bring children into a life that seemed meaningless, into a joyful and sacred task. The Führer has given my life direction and purpose!

And there is only one way I could ever repay him: even if I should ever fail to understand or even misjudge the reasons behind the Führer's decisions, I must trust him blindly.

Only when I am ready to do so will I have the right to say: 'Mein Führer'."

Erna W., Berlin

"My Happiness"

"The Führer is the embodiment of all the virtues possessed by the German people. He is my role model; he is my father, who has freed me from the pressure and dross that weighed on my soul, who has taught me to think about the purpose of my life, and who has given my life a new, more valuable meaning.

I am not a devout person in the Christian sense; I consider the blood community of races to be a community much more desired by God than the institutions constructed by humans on this earth.

Nevertheless, my thoughts wander back almost daily - I ponder whether I could stand before my Führer and father Adolf Hitler if he knew my thoughts, words, and deeds.

For me, the question is always: what would my Führer Adolf Hitler say if he knew this or that about me? And then an inner glow flows through me, an indescribable feeling of satisfaction, when, after careful consideration, I come to the conclusion that Adolf Hitler would approve of this or that.

However, I do not always come to this conclusion - often I am ashamed when I review my thoughts, words, or deeds of the day. I then have to console myself with the thought that one never achieves absolute perfection.

When I owe so much to this man for my life, I would have to be a bastard to not acknowledge this with gratitude; from there I then must consider how I can repay part of this debt of gratitude.

I can only do this if I resolve unreservedly to follow my Führer Adolf Hitler unconditionally at all times, even if it means dying, whatever may happen. It is a heartfelt need for me to fulfill my duty everywhere and at all times, not only in my profession, but even more so in voluntary party service to my people, and finally to be a role model in my private life as a husband, neighbor, spouse, father, and ancestor of future generations. That I can do this, that I find the spiritual strength to do so, I owe once again to Adolf Hitler.

This interdependency is the basis of my happiness, and the fulfillment of my life."

Fritz K., Berlin-Charlottenburg.

"A Miracle"

"We were once raised religiously, in the sense of a belief that seemed to come from the clouds, impersonal and abstract. This belief did not improve people, it hardly humanized them, but rather taught them to be

discouraged and passive. In my opinion, nothing that the Church has created on the basis of this worldview can change this fundamental flaw.

Since joining the party, the words and deeds of the Führer have accompanied me again and again, and they are increasingly becoming the embodiment of my own will and actions, insofar as it is possible for a human being to emulate his example always and everywhere; much of the Führer's personality is so great and overwhelming that one can only describe it again and again—and it may sound trite—as a miracle.

With every step I wanted or had to take, I thought of the Führer, and many things became easier for me; after my return from abroad, I had to struggle with many difficulties, but not one of them ever caused me to despair, because I knew that the Führer cares for each and every one of us, and that is the only reason why it is possible to bring happiness to the German people!

Through his actions, the Führer has opened up many areas to me personally that I would not have dared to approach before or that would not have interested me. My faith in the Führer and his work has given me the strength to force my life onto a path that leads upward.

In this godless world, fallen prey to Mammon, torn apart by hatred and fratricide, this world of madness, in the midst of this chaos, a center is emerging from which a light is shining that points to a future that will be more beautiful than our past.

Our present? I am proud to live in it, to live as a German, and that the Führer has set tasks for our time and our generation, the solution of which will one day bring peace and happiness to my children. I thank him for this with all my heart, and I will thank him with loyalty and love!"

Werther W.D., Berlin.

“It Was As If I Had Known Him!”

"The first images I saw of the Führer of the German people, Adolf Hitler, were malicious caricatures, and the first words I heard about him were ugly insults and slander. I was still a child at the time, and democracy reigned supreme in my homeland.

The first feeling I had for this man, who was so badly mocked, was pity - without really understanding it, I felt that this man could not be bad if this foreign, hostile element that ruled everything hated him. I began to take an interest in him, and as I grew older, I heard and understood more and more about his struggle and his fight for Germany.

What I feel for the Führer, what role he plays in my life—how can I put it into words? I look up to the Führer with the same faith and trust that I had when I prayed as a child, completely imbued with goodness and strength. And the wonderful thing is that it is so familiar to me, as if I had always known him, as if he were always around me and could see my thoughts and deeds. His words and teachings determine all my actions - I simply cannot imagine my life without the Führer anymore.

I still remember the time when I first heard his speeches on the radio. His voice was powerful and stirring, and I felt as if something was breaking open inside me, something indescribably beautiful, that I had always felt but could not express.

What I find most wonderful about the Führer is that he is a human being like all of us, that there is nothing separating him from his people, and that he will always remain as he is—simple, full of kindness and understanding, and loyal."

Anni W., Neunkirchen.

“In Our Most Difficult Hours...”

"In the most difficult hours of my life, when everything about me and my family threatened to collapse, my faith in the Führer saved me from the worst and gave me courage and strength in the struggle for even a simple existence; his fanatical idealism and his unshakeable belief in the eternal values of the people has also lifted me up again and again, and stripped me of all cowardice and despondency.

I took his admonition to expect nothing from blind chance and everything from my own accumulated strength as a guiding principle and worked my way and my family out of the deepest misery.

Today, at the age of 65, I look back with pride and deep satisfaction on the achievements of this struggle and freely and openly confess: The Führer was our savior from hardship and misery; we owe our rebirth to him, his unyielding faith, his struggle against despair and despondency, against weakness and cowardice, against fatalism and indifference."

Wilhelm F., Landau/Pf.

“Returning As a Blind Man From the War”

"First of all, I must confess that I was not immediately an enthusiastic supporter of our Führer, which has to do with many events that cannot be discussed here. A serious external factor was probably the main reason:

I returned from the World War and rarely came into contact with other people because I came home blind, i.e., I have been living as a war blind person ever since, and so it is easy to understand that I had to live a very secluded life and had almost no contact with anyone from whom I could have learned anything about world events.

It is not surprising, then, that I did not read the newspapers or watch the newsreels - how could I have known anything about Adolf Hitler? Today, I cannot lament enough that I had to live outside society at that time, and that I was not among those who first had the courage to swear allegiance to Adolf Hitler and who is now regarded with joy by everyone.

You cannot imagine how often I tell myself that if I had had just one opportunity back then, when I sat at home bitter and helpless, to hear our Führer speak, his voice and his speech would have penetrated to the depths of my heart, as happened later when good fortune brought me to a large gathering where I sat a few meters from the place where the Führer gave one of his inspiring and moving speeches.

The result was that I immediately went and registered as a party member. Oh, why didn't this experience come to me a few years earlier? Unfortunately, there is nothing to be done about the past; after all, what can a blind man do?

All that remains is to pray to heaven for the Führer, that he may remain with us as long as man can live. May he be protected from all evil throughout his life and may his divine power remain with him until his last breath.

If I want to do justice to his God-blessed work in the best possible way, then the best way is to compare earlier times, which were so ruinous for the German people, with today.

What was Germany and what did it mean to the world before the war? It was respected to a certain extent, but I, at least, am convinced, and have also experienced this myself abroad, that it was not comparable to the respect, I would even say reverence, that we enjoy in the world today.

What was our position during that unfortunate period of oppression?

As a respectable man, one had good reason to be ashamed of belonging to the German people, not because one was born and raised as a German, but because the men who were called upon to defend and uphold our national honor before and against the world were cowardly and dishonorable wretches, who fell on their bellies at every frown from a Frenchman, an Englishman, or an American; who let themselves be treated with kicks; who never dared to open their mouths and demand the respect that a great people who had gone through four years of war deserves.

Has it not happened to all of us a hundred times that, when faced with some new insolence from a hostile and ignorant statesman, we clenched our fists in anger, only to tell ourselves that once again that our national self-esteem is at stake, that to react in anger would damage it - in the end we would do nothing, and we would be expected to give the highest deference.

Who does not remember the indignation with which it was proclaimed: 'Never will a German be found who will sign this shameful treaty!' Less than 24 hours later, it was obediently signed and even more obediently fulfilled, even though even a child could see that it was physically impossible to fulfill these conditions - our country was teeming with accursed, dishonorable rabble who were deliberately working to destroy Germany to its very foundations.

Every good German at that time walked around with nothing but anger and bitterness, unable to vent his feelings; all the enemy statesmen knew very well that they could demand anything they want from the Germans, even if it is the most absurd thing, and we would accept it, and they would laugh at our cowardice.

Then Adolf Hitler appeared, as if sent by God, and even if he was not immediately recognized by the entire population, the power of his words and his character soon forced all those who cried out for salvation to follow him.

And how quickly he brought salvation! Compare today's conditions with those of that time.

Today the situation may still look bleak, but I, for example, always console myself with the thought: Why worry? Why should we, when we have a Führer named Adolf Hitler who cares for us, who watches over us, and who will bring everything to a good end. Doesn't he always do that?

Of course, it is difficult to measure his greatness mathematically, if at all; you have to feel it with a devoted heart, and only if you can and do so are you able to pay the Führer a tiny bit of the gratitude we all owe him."

Dr. J., München

“It’s All or Nothing!”

In the West, February 1940

"Before the campaign in Poland began, I was working for a large insurance company and traveled extensively throughout much of our homeland - this brought me into contact with large sections of the population.

Since the spring of 1939, the question had been heard everywhere: How long will the Führer put up with the slander from England and its satellites, and how long will Polish megalomania be allowed to run rampant? Everyone waited eagerly and, above all, calmly for the Führer's decisions.

No matter who you asked, you could hear everyone say with conviction and boundless confidence: Come what may, our Führer will take care of it, and will definitely choose and find the right path. The tension rose higher and higher, and, as could be seen everywhere - and so did trust in the Führer.

After hearing the evening news and learning of new attacks by Polish hordes, we went to bed on August 25th, 1939 - only to be awoken suddenly.

My brother-in-law, who was a member of the border guard, had been alerted to swap his penknife for his rifle, and came to say goodbye. As a former professional soldier myself, I also had to report for duty immediately, so I woke my wife and we decided to return to Sorau that night. As there were no trains before morning, we set off on borrowed bicycles to cover the 40 kilometers in the night so that we would arrive on time. Everything was still quiet when we arrived, with only the registration office being brightly lit.

At around 3:30 a.m., August 26th, 1939, the long-awaited draft papers arrived, and with them my departure. In a hurry, all of my wife's private and business papers were explained to her once again, and then, at around 5 a.m., we headed to the train station.

On the way to the station, the enormous change that the people had undergone since 1933, thanks to their education under National Socialism, was clearly evident - there was no so-called ‘hurrah patriotism’ of the last war, no whining or complaining. No, you could only see iron calm on every face, and the common sentiment of, ‘Enough is enough. As Germans, we cannot tolerate any more insults. We will defend our honor with weapons in our hands.’

Even at the train station, where women were saying goodbye to their husbands, you could see how every woman controlled herself and held back her tears, precisely because each of them knew what was at stake. The day of the mobs of drafted soldiers then came, and we learned and saw what the Führer and his staff had quietly accomplished.

Everything went like clockwork, and every one of the reservists, who had been called up in large numbers, was a soldier within two days, without a button missing. It was the same in Forst as in Sorau - the same calm, the same self-control, the same determination.

The entire population seemed to be of one mind. When it was time to load up, again everything went like clockwork - no noise was to be heard, and everyone knew what was at stake. When we reached the border, we saw for the first time what the guard created by the Führer in the east looked like. Then came the great marches, and soon after crossing the border, the first battles. The civilians had become German fighters - soldiers who no longer saw right or left, but knew how to fight and die for the just German cause.

We soon saw the suffering of our German brothers with our own eyes, and many who had doubted the newspapers and radio realized that the reality was even more horrific.

We saw what the Führer wanted to protect the German people from, and we saw how necessary the Wehrmacht created by the Führer was.

I do not want to write here about the further battles and individual successes; however, as a former opponent of National Socialism, I saw how necessary the anti-Semitism preached by the Führer and often ridiculed by me was. Jews, crimes everywhere you looked - after Lodz, I myself became one of those who would never again compromise with a Jew.

When we then learned that our Führer himself was at the front and always stayed where the most difficult decisions had to be made, there was certainly no one who was not proud and happy to be a soldier.

When you hear things like these from comrades who, just like me in 1933, were not exactly treated with kid gloves because of their different political views: 'Gosh, Adolf is a completely different guy than the people of 1914, and it's worth following him because he always leads by example'; that's definitely worth more than big words.

Our Führer has perhaps never made greater friends and comrades-in-arms than by constantly staying at the front; anyone who has heard the cheers when it was announced that the Führer was coming to see us cannot imagine the successes and the hardships endured with the greatest willingness. When we then went to the West, there was and is only one thing for us to do: to punish the English rabble as quickly and thoroughly as possible so that they will never again be able to hinder the development of our people again. Although I am currently without a position in my homeland, I know that my family is provided for, and I can do my duty without worry. I know that everything is at stake, that there can only be one final and decisive victory for Germany if we and our children, and thus the entire German people, want to live. It is easy to follow, because we have such a shining example amidst us: our Führer!"

Heil Hitler!

Erich B., Sergeant

“Believe Unconditionally!”

Somewhere in the West...

My dear Lieselotte!

“...I am very happy that you visited my mother. She already wrote to me about it, and of those fond memories of times gone by, when I was still at home every day and filled every room with my powerful voice.

I know how hard it is for my mother and how worried she is about me. I always feel so sorry about that, but I can't change it; the worst thing is when I have to leave her and go back to the troops after my leave. I always tell her to keep her chin up and be brave, and I know how brave she is. When we're out there and we're about to go back into the fire, we don't worry or think about anything. If we fall, it's over quickly. But oh, the pain for our mothers at home!

All German mothers want fate to spare their sons, yet many must fall - great things must be paid for with sacrifice.

No amount of begging or pleading will help - it is a harsh, unalterable necessity. And that makes it so difficult for me, because I am an only child, her only son. Nevertheless, my life and my future belong to my people. I have now put all my plans for the future aside and just want to be a soldier. If I do make it through it all, there are so many possibilities once I return.

I have only one wish from fate: either to be healthy or to die - no compromises. If this wish comes true, I will gladly serve my country in any capacity. I am happy and grateful that I am able to serve my country as a soldier at such a young age, and to play an active role in the great struggle for survival.

I believe that hardly any other generation has experienced as much and been thrown into the seriousness of life as early as we, the youth between two wars. Those of us who reach old age will have tasted life and had our fill of it.

When this war is won, a great era will begin for Germany - but before then we must ensure that the spirit of the war years is preserved, and that our people do not fall back into complacent comfort, political indifference, and carelessness as they did in the years before 1914. We want to ask fate to continue to give us statesmen who will secure what has been won with the same rigor, greatness, and foresight.

Our Führer is the most unique man in history. I believe in him and his movement unreservedly. He is my religion.”

With warm regards,
Your Helmut

“I Want to See Him Now!”

Montchemin, June 26th, 1940

Dear Lotte!

“After several attempts, I finally have the time today to thank you warmly for your parcel, the contents of which gave me great pleasure on the march. Thank you also for the letters that reached me the day before.

Our marches over the last few weeks have borne fruit - the French are running out of steam. When we heard about the imminent armistice a week ago, we didn't want to believe it at first. Restrained but genuine jubilation then broke out, and all our hardships were forgotten.

We consider it the least we can do, but we know that there is someone above us who, with the strength of a superhuman, created the conditions and plans to lead the campaign to victory. Truly, today's generation of Germans can be proud and grateful to have among them the greatest and most powerful man in their history. May he also always be a reminder to us, the future generation, not to rest or relax, for the sake of the German people and their Reich. Everyday life now always seems too restrictive to me.

These days, I would like to see the Führer once, to listen to him - but that will happen after the final victory. May we then be granted a joyful reunion in our homeland.

With best wishes for you, Pina, and your parents, I greet you.”

Germany—Sieg Heil!

G.

“For the Führer!”

Belgium, 3rd Day of Pentecost, 1940

My dear parents!

"I am currently staying in a small chateau on the Meuse in the front line. Yesterday we forced the river crossing and crossed in barges under heavy artillery fire, then we dragged our guns forward in a manned train, an enormous effort; when we reached our destination, we collapsed exhausted next to our cannons, still holding the tow ropes.

Now we are feeling better again. We were under artillery fire day and night, but when things got dangerous, we were able to take refuge in a hole dug by the French in the park wall. This morning we had two heavy impacts three meters away from us, but we managed to disappear into our hole in time. We can only sleep rarely, and then at least 1-2 meters underground.

We look as dirty as pigs, our skin is cracked, especially on our lips, and we have grown considerable beards. We have plenty to eat and there are enough cigarettes.

The camaraderie is wonderful. The mood is good, impeccable. We will win this battle, that is certain. The enemy is no longer a match for us.

We can be proud and grateful that we were found worthy to defend Greater Germany on the front lines. The existence of the Reich depends on us soldiers.

Unfortunately, two comrades had to seal their oath to the flag with their lives. A whole number are wounded. My dear friend H.R. is also seriously wounded. I fear that he will not survive. He was such a dear, wonderful boy. We had always been together recently.

This could happen to any one of us.

If this is what fate has in store for me, please bear it with pride and composure; that is my only wish. Work even harder and more determinedly for Germany, both of you, in your own capacities - I want to be brave and unshaken, and not have my sacrifice be in vain.

Deep down, as I have felt again in recent days, it is all just fate. Rebelling against it does not help, nor do imploring prayers or promises to a higher power. Fate cannot be negotiated. The main thing is that Germany wins, and that will certainly be the case.

The Führer, the knight of the World War, is personally leading the German army to victory. To fall in the fight for this victory is an honor. And that is the great force that drives us forward, this belief in providence, which may call some of us away, but will lead our people to a better world.

We have become calm, quiet, cheerful, and modest, no longer children, but soldiers. We now know exactly how artillery shells flash, whistle, and strike. As I lie here in the garden of this chateau, there is a constant whistling sound."

*

May 15th, 1940

"We took up position at the same altitude. French and German planes are chasing each other in the air. Our tanks have broken through. The Stukas have demolished the enemy artillery. The enemy is retreating - in the afternoon, we begin the pursuit. It's like a scene from Poland. The defeated army has left everything behind. The prisoners are exhausted, weary of war, and happy; "La guerre est finie."³ When we meet locals, I interpret. My dictionary is excellent.

I am also amazed at the expressions that rise from my subconscious; when you are in the country where the language is spoken, everything is much easier. Otherwise, I am fine. If you want to send me something, please send me some German cigarettes."

End of entry on May 16th, 9 a.m.

Sincerely,
Your boy.

(Killed in action on May 20th, as a lance corporal and gunner in a tank attack near Cambrai.)

³ Meaning "The war is over."

The War and The Family

The Führer once said that he does not measure the success of our work by the growth of roads, the construction of new factories, or the establishment of divisions, but rather by the German child and German youth, who stand at the pinnacle of success:

“If they grow, then I know that my people will not perish, and that our work will not have been in vain.”

This commitment to the eternal existence of the German people is also the task that the Führer has set for us - it points beyond the present and the immediate future, to the distant future of coming generations.

It is difficult to solve all the problems that every generation is often inevitably faced with - but we must try. Our children and our children's children should be able to continue building towards the future and not have to struggle with the same worries as we do; this is not the least of the reasons why we were forced to wage this war.

We know, every single one of us is aware, that this time it is indeed a matter of life or death for the German people. That is why we must and will prevail. However, victory will not fall into our laps. Like every war, it will claim its victims and thus weaken the biological strength of the people. The extent of this weakening will depend not only on the severity of the fighting, but also on the insight and will of the people who have been given this task.

Since ancient times, war has generally been regarded as the high time of men. This is unjust, for mothers, both old and young, are no less put to the test.

Who would be presumptuous enough to claim that he has more to give than they? They are not allowed to face the enemy and bring about the conclusion of victory as the soldiers do.

Mothers must wait, fearing for their sons, for their loved ones at the front, and listen for the faint stirrings of new life beneath their hearts.

May all mothers, young and old, recognize the duty of the hour. They can help determine the fate of Germany - their faith will promise us immortality.

“The Big Question...”

In the West, November 1939

"...I have a big favor to ask you today: I have a question that I cannot answer myself.

To explain, I need to explain a bit. I was born on May 23rd, 1914, and have been active in the party and the SA since May 1st, 1932. I wanted to become a civil engineer before the war; I completed the required practical training and enrolled at the State Technical University in Köthen, Anhalt, for the 1939/40 winter semester.

Then the war broke out.

Since August 27th, I have been doing my duty in the armed forces, as is the duty of every decent German. Now I come to my question:

I am very much in love with a girl who will turn 22 on January 12th, 1940. She volunteered for the air raid protection service and is therefore also part of the German armed forces. Originally, my fiancée wanted to wait until I had finished my studies (7 semesters). Then we were going to get married. But now there is a war, and I don't know when I will be able to resume my studies; if we wait until I finish my studies, my fiancée will only get older and older.

I would therefore like to get married now - I would do so without hesitation if I had finished my vocational training. However, because I haven't, I have been tormenting myself for weeks with the question of whether I can take responsibility for this. It would be my duty to my country to start a family and have children, for Germany's future lies with our children. But what will happen when the war is over and I am left with wife and child, but no profession?

Can you give me an answer to this question? I don't know what to do. Please write back soon. I'm eagerly awaiting your reply. Until then, I renew my oath:"

Heil Hitler!"

Fritz K., soldier.

...And the Answer

Heidelberg, November 1939

Dear Dieter!

"This time you will receive a long, serious letter from me, for I must address your last remark when we parted. We had come to discuss the possibility of your wedding during the war, and you said with emphatic severity: 'I consider marriage during wartime a crime.'

At that time, there was only a short time left before departure, so I was unable to object; now I could no longer justify it since I have since heard similar views from other young men participating in the war, men

who are not the worst in terms of character and attitude; with this I feel compelled to address your thoughts in greater detail and with greater seriousness - not only for your sake and that of your bride.

At 26, you are a company commander in the field; your fiancée is 21 and works as a nurse. There are no materialistic reasons why such thoughts would arise in you, which would also be completely foreign to your character.

Since I know you and your fiancée well, I know that you were motivated solely by consideration for others, believing that it would be wrong for a man to burden his wife with all the vicissitudes and tribulations of war to which he himself is exposed, especially since she may become the mother of a child whom he may not be able to provide for under certain circumstances.

What are the facts that might justify such thinking? Since I myself spent much time with young married or engaged officers in an active frontline regiment during the World War and got to know their wives and fiancées when they were on home leave, I am well placed to judge the attitudes and views of the time. Even now, my military position has brought me into contact with many young officers and their wives, which allows me to expand on the knowledge I gained earlier.

Let us now turn to the first point mentioned: Should women be spared the worry about their beloved husbands? I ask a question in response: is a woman's concern for her fiancé or lover less than for her husband? Isn't the presence of a child a goal and a source of support in turbulent times, a distraction from the unrest outside, a focus on constant duty and quiet work?

If there is real love, and I assume that there is in your case, it will not be calculated, but only felt; the question of provision and well-being in the future, of wealth and elegant furnishings will not play a role, but only the question that is already there even without marriage: Will he come home?

You object: Even if I did, it would be even worse if I came back mutilated! Here, too, you underestimate the willingness of women to make sacrifices, who are happily prepared to provide every kind of care and service if only they can be close to their beloved husband and help him.

True love given by a woman does not solely want a life of pleasure; it wants to be able to sacrifice if it means to bring about happiness. This is how German women have been since time immemorial, this is how they were in the last war, and this is how they remain today, and I do not think any differently of your bride, whom I know almost as well as I know you.

So much for the side of insight into feelings and character - now to the observation of life's fortunes. We often talked about these sorts of things in the rest quarters during the last war and weighed the pros and cons from your point of view as well; among many others, I remember two company commanders. Both were mature, upstanding characters, successful in the military, personally amiable - one was young and, as far as I remember, accustomed to war; the other was already engaged for a long time.

When one of them went on leave, you could see how happy he was to be going home to his family, where he was greeted with beaming faces. He came back stronger, having experienced and learned what Germans can joyfully die for. Today, as the father of a large family, he stands for his country in a successful outpost.

The other, with a more heroic nature that was almost more pronounced in battle, was tormented by a conflict every time he went on leave: Should I get married this time? And when he didn't, he always returned with the inner reproach: Why didn't I get married this time?

His bride? She still mourns him today, for he was killed by a lucky shot in the spring of 1918. His wife would have been happy today to have raised a son of his.

The example of these two could be extended to many others. But now to the fate of women who have lost their husbands - the vast majority of them successfully took up the fight for their position and asserted their future and their life goals for themselves and their children.

I know almost only joyful fighters who have remained unbroken and steadfast throughout their lives; a number have remarried, often to friends and comrades-in-arms of their fallen husbands, who have become good husbands and exemplary fathers to those war orphans. Exceptions seemed rare to me. I also know women who married seriously wounded friends after the war, despite the prospect of having to remain nurses for the rest of their lives - but they became the mothers of their beloved husbands' children nonetheless!

These were not marriages of convenience, but marriages with serious women who were aware of their lives and their responsibilities, and who would have been able to make a living even without these marriages. I even know a woman like this who, after her husband's condition worsened, became the breadwinner of the family through her academic profession.

The other side of the coin is quite different. There are large numbers of weary older girls whom the war has robbed of their loved ones. They are characterized by a joyless attitude of dissatisfaction; their dull faces bear the vertical lines of renunciation at the corners of their mouths. After the death of their fiancés, they were unable to find another man, and the shortage of men made it impossible for them to marry later in life.

Many of these women live in a state of renunciation in female occupations, in shops, offices, department stores, factories; many of them are involved in serious work, but many also find themselves dissatisfied with themselves and the world, with fate and the state, which they hold responsible for their lot.

Many, especially those from the formerly wealthy and educated classes, have remained eternal daughters, who have learned a few things but can't really do anything overall; even today, they are still the children of their aging parents, and will have nothing when they close their eyes for the final time. Only the National Socialist Women's Organizations were able to have a positive effect here, insofar as they were still active.

I will say nothing of the impulsive and unstable characters who threw themselves at one man after another in quick succession until they were completely unstable and uprooted.

All in all, from a human and national point of view, it is a gruesome picture.

And the cause: even in times of war, man must not disregard the eternal laws of nature, which call out to him with an irrevocable duty, 'Die and be reborn!' Thus, the most intimate vocation and life's work of women, and their most sacred duty, is motherhood.

This natural instinct can be very strong; I know women who, during the enforced shortage of men, sought a father for an illegitimate child whose name remained their secret. They were then the most devoted and honorable mothers to their children.

Now to the ethnic and racial policy side of this question. I do not know whether you heard enough about this during your training in the then voluntary labor service and the then apolitical Reichswehr. In any case, your views are not in line with the racial policy principles of National Socialism.

As a bearer of the racial heritage, you have obligations not only to yourself, to the state, and to the people, but also to the genetic material you carry within you; you cannot be certain that the valuable genetic traits you possess will be passed on by your brothers or sisters; you yourself are obliged to ensure that these traits are preserved in the next generation.

An officer in particular must not do the enemy powers the favor of allowing the greater loss of leaders caused by the war to result in a negative selection for our people, as has almost always been the case in the course of German and Germanic history.

Germany must be crippled; that was the English objective in the last war, and it is the same objective now. However, this will to destroy must be countered by a determined will to defend and win, both in the military and in the ethnic sphere. The eagle's claw that others have intended for us must never be allowed to strike us in such a way that it calls into question our ability to regenerate, and everyone, especially those who carry a proven and tested heritage, must help. The wise saying from the Edda in the old poem of customs still applies.

If the field marshal of the great Frederick, Count Schwerin, had fallen without issue before Prague, a line of leaders would have died out; the deaths of Weddigen⁴, Richthofen, Horst Wessel, and many thousands of others have left irreplaceable gaps. That is why every fighter should already have a successor in the cradle; that would be the only right thing to do.

As in all ages, the victories that decide world history are won on the battlefields; but they are ultimately achieved as victories of birth by young, strong peoples and the fertility of the mothers of the nation.

Through conscious birth control, it can be prevented that war becomes a matter of survival for the sick, weak, and inadequate; that is why the leader, by virtue of their higher intelligence, must ensure from the very first opportunity that the stock of such families is preserved, or better still, increased in the next generation. This appeal applies in general to all carriers of valuable genetic material, and in view of our racial and geographical situation, this includes almost all families of Germans worthy of defense.

What is right is what benefits my people.

If the position you represent had been considered right in the past and had been put into practice, then Germany, as a Germanic country, would not have survived the Migration Period; there would have been no Hermann the Cheruscan, no Widukind, no Dietrich of Bern, no Henry the Follower, no Henry the Lion, no Duke Billung. The Alemanni would not have survived the Frankish wars, nor would the Saxons; the Ostmark would have succumbed to the Huns, the Avars, or the Turks, and the German Empire would have come to an end with the Thirty Years' War or the French Wars; even from the most treacherous of dangers, German women, with their unbroken reproductive capacity, have raised the German people up again; from that I refer to the epidemics of plague, smallpox, cholera, and dysentery. For this, we owe women our gratitude. However, we would be sinning against their blood and ours if we were to relieve

⁴ Otto Weddigen, U-Boot commander, awarded the Pour le Mérite in the First World War for sinking four British warships before being killed in action in 1915.

them of this struggle in the future. In doing so, we would render the sacrifices made by German women thus far futile and rob ourselves, our wives, and our children of the future.

With this attitude, I am not, of course, advocating early marriage and war weddings. Appropriate maturity and a sufficiently long acquaintance remain prerequisites for the harmonious life together that is necessary for marriage. But that is out of the question for you. As neighbors, Hans and Grete know each other through and through, and I know for a fact that your bride only needs to understand the circumstances I have just outlined, and she will set out on the path she has chosen with true feminine sentiment.

Best regards from your mother and siblings. All the best to you and Ilse.

Heil Hitler!"
Your Father

“That’s Not Your Fate”

January 1st, 1940

“...my husband had three years of active military service behind him in 1914, and was immediately sent to the front. In 1916, I was 22 years old, and we got married because of the war.

We both came from large families. My greatest wish was to have many children; however, out of a misguided sense of responsibility towards me and our future children, my husband rejected this. ‘Not now, later, when the war is over!’, he would tell me. I was sad. ‘Why not now?’ My husband replied: ‘If something happens to us, you’ll be left alone. You shouldn’t go around moping like a weeping willow, you should remarry, and then the children will be in the way!’

A later request to become a midwife was also met with resistance: ‘I can support my wife on my own!’ I begged him: ‘At least let me take the exam. You’ll be away in the field for so long, and then I’ll have something to do at home!’

The last vacation was in May 1918. At the Charlottenburg train station, I said quietly as I said goodbye, “Don’t let them capture you alive, you’d be better dead!” And the answer came from him, “I would shoot myself!!” In July 1918, he was killed in an assault.

I didn’t run around mourning, as he said, but I never remarried either, partly because the men were too young, or because our characters didn’t match. To this day, I regret not having children then.

My profession brought me into contact with many families; I often witnessed an overwhelming flow of familial happiness when I was able to place a healthy child in the arms of their mother. I rejoiced with the parents, and yet the longing for a child of my own burned in my heart.

Other children were also born. Unwanted, undesired! The mothers couldn’t bear the pain, they didn’t want to see the children! How I envied these mothers for their children, and also for the pain I would have gladly endured if I could have held my own child to my breast!

I looked for a substitute and took in a child from my large family for a few years. When the children grew older, my siblings took them back. There was always an unfulfilled longing and an emptiness in my life. Now the tasks set by various organizations fill the void.

How much happier my life would have been if someone had given my husband the only correct answer to that serious question back then, as people do today: a German woman must be a mother, regardless of whether her future is financially secure or not. A mother's love overcomes all obstacles and finds a way with the heart where the man cannot see it with his mind.”

Heil Hitler!
Elfriede S.

“Rest Without Warmth”

In the West, December 1939

"I have known my fiancée for years, and it was clear to us from the beginning that we would marry one day, namely when I had completed my studies and was financially able to start a family. We expected to have saved enough money in two to three years. Then the war broke out, and I had to join the army. I gladly answered the call.

My fiancée and I sat together for a long time on the evening before I left. We talked about this and that, about many things that should have been irrelevant at that moment. We were both thinking about something we didn't dare say out loud.

My fiancée said quietly, ‘Many will bleed to death again.’ I looked at her and knew that she was thinking the same thing I was. And even more quietly, she said, ‘I don't want to be left alone.’

I come from an old farming family in Dithmarschen and am proud of my farming heritage. The questions loomed large before me: "Can you give your blood to your country without having blood relatives? Are not strong children proof of immortality here on earth?" I also thought of the words of a Persian sage, that a man could say he had lived his life, truly lived, if he had fathered a son, written two books, and planted three trees...

I will never forget that evening when a woman trustingly placed her fate in my hands, even though she knew that a thorny path lay ahead of her, one that only truly loving and beloved women can walk with pride.

I had to go to war. Now I know what I have to protect, for a child is growing in my bride's womb, and I believe that I am all the more a man and fulfilling my duty as a man since I know this.

Not a single letter has reached me at the front containing a word of regret or ‘remorse’; every letter is full of courage and confidence. We will marry as soon as I can go on leave.

One often hears people say that it is reckless to marry in such uncertain times; one does not know whether one will return home, or whether one will perhaps end one's life as a cripple. Oh, these faint-hearted and despondent people! My bride will be proud to have given the best to her country. A truly loving woman gladly gives her care to a man who went out to protect his country.

People will reproach me for being too young. Too young? They demand that I stand my ground at the front, and I gladly follow this call, but then they must not deny me the wish to have a child of my own too.

People may accuse me of not yet being in a position to support a family. No, not now that I am here, but should I return home safely from the war, then I am sure and certain that we both—my bride and I—will manage together, for we are young and strong and have great confidence in the future.

We will marry, even without having built a warm nest for ourselves first. We will save and work together, and I believe that one day the time when we feared for the three of us to make our way through the world will be the best time of our lives, just as today—I passed my emergency exam a month ago—the time when I starved myself to finish my studies is a fond memory that can lift me up in difficult times.

To my delight, the ‘Lebensborn’⁵ organization has come to our aid with its facilities, so I am certain that my bride will receive the proper care.

Some people will not understand me; they do not know why anyone would take such a step without any material foundation. May these lines, and that is the purpose of my letter, inspire them to at least think about it once. I too know that not every child born out of wedlock in the coming times will be conceived consciously and out of pure love, but one should first look at the parents of the child and only then judge.

Who dares to cast the first stone at us? I would ask that man: 'Do you have the same will to live? Do you have the same desire for children and thus for the future of our people? Do you have the same confidence in the future of our people? Does your wife have the same complete devotion to our blood? Are you yourself standing at the front?'

If all these questions were answered with ‘yes,’ then he would understand our actions and our intentions. We have not acted out of recklessness, but in full responsibility to our inner convictions, to our people and their future, and to that which is above ourselves.

We stand by our child and can look everyone in the eye, because every cry of a healthy child born to healthy and strong parents is a hymn to God in these times."

Heil Hitler!
Werner N., Soldier

“Nothing Will Go Wrong!”

Hilden, January 13th, 1940

"...please write this to the young fighter: Nothing will go wrong! Don't think too little of German women. They are not decorative dolls; they want to master life together with their husbands and ensure the happiness of their families. If they have lost their life partner, they will not allow themselves to be

⁵ The “Lebensborn” organization was a SS project founded in 1935 by Heinrich Himmler to encourage and increase the birth of ‘racially valuable’ children. The project also provided childcare and assistance to new families.

weighed down by grief and hardship forever, because they have been entrusted with his most precious legacy: his children.

My father died in the World War, and my mother took up the struggle for life alone. She worked and toiled from morning till night, to the point where my brother and I wondered where she found the strength and determination to do so.

Yet from this experience she has never been embittered, even though life has been hard on her. Her eyes shine as brightly as my brother's, and her soul has remained young and resilient.

How much easier this fate would be for a young woman facing the same tribulations in the Greater German Reich under the leadership of Adolf Hitler!

We German girls believe in victory and hope that God will grant it to us without the ultimate sacrifice. But if it is demanded of us, if the man for Germany's future falls, we do not want to stand there alone, joyless until old age.

We want to carry an equally sunny, strong, and good boy in our arms and lead him into life, just as he was who was called to the front, so that his blood may live for all eternity."

Heil Hitler!

A.J.

“My Brave Wife”

In the West, January 1940

"...I myself have four children, and am happy to be called upon to return to the front for my family.

Twenty years ago, I was in the Baltic States, single, without children, with a people in need and disgrace behind me - today I am once again on the front line, with a German mother and my children behind me, and a people who have risen up for the final great struggle for the freedom of the Reich.

I was on vacation in November, and my brave wife said to me, ‘How wonderful it would be if I could feel your heart beat with mine again at this very moment. But I know you are out there on the border, and I am at home, with the certainty that I am giving the Fatherland another child in this time of blood sacrifice.’ When a woman, a mother of small children, looks so confidently to the future of the Reich, all doubts recede.

When our brave women at home look so firmly to life and the future, there is no room for calculating considerations. Germany will live, even if we must die! We soldiers carry this certainty indelibly in our hearts."

Heil Hitler!

Hans Sch., Soldier

“Now Is the Time to Get Married”

In the Field, January 1940

“Unfortunately, I don't have the time or opportunity to give you a detailed account; you'll have to make do with a few lines, in which I want to tell you that you are still my loyal friend out here - how often you have given me courage and confidence.

With your choice of words, you have found the right way to the hearts of the soldiers! We do not want to read hurrah-filled sentences, we do not want to be bothered with trivialities from home, but only true reports that we can take as an example for ourselves to emulate - continue to speak of the good qualities that the war brings out in the German people; continue to tell us about the camaraderie, loyalty, and care that the front and home show for one another.

Like many others, I have been torn from my career, which was almost completely planned out. I am also engaged. I too am struggling with the question of whether or not to get married during the war; although economic considerations are not the only factor in my decision to wait, they do play a major role.

My fiancée, to whom I have been publicly engaged for almost a year, was previously married and has a child from her first marriage. Can I take responsibility for giving her my name when I may not return home from the war?

Like all decent Germans, we want to give life to children, but will my future wife be able to look forward to our child with all her heart in these serious times, especially since she also works?

I do not want to withhold our decision on the question of a wartime wedding from you: we will marry if there is a clear prospect of the war ending by spring 1940. This will allow us to keep the date we set for our marriage in peacetime - the fact that the material basis of our marriage will be different from what we could originally hope for does not cause us the slightest concern.

After the war is victorious and over, there will be opportunities to realize the plans we made during peacetime. My bride and I love each other with all our hearts and will know how to overcome any obstacles.

So, my faithful comrade, I must now end my letter. I have been able to tell you only a little about my feelings, worries, and hardships, but I believe you understand me.”

With warmest regards,
Heil Hitler!
Klaus Sch., Soldier

“These Little Things”

Offenbach, March 1940

"I have both feet firmly planted in life, so that even though my husband has been a soldier since August, I am able to cope with the decisions and difficulties of everyday life; above all else, I see the purpose and meaning of my existence in the life of our child, whom I gave birth to last October and who will not remain our only child for long.

Look at the two pictures enclosed:

‘Christmas in Wartime 1939’

The child on my lap is looking over at his father in his gray uniform. He builds a golden bridge between his parents and a diamond bridge between home and the front in his letters.

In the second photo:

‘Happy Soldier, Happy Father’

The little one is two and a half months old and gets along wonderfully with his dad. She talks to him in the sweetest little sounds, and her father's happiness and joy are boundless. He loves his wife even more now that she has given him such great happiness.

This is also intended to be an illustrated contribution to the often-discussed and inexhaustible topic: What are all these ridiculous squabbles over little things like soup dumplings and other scarce foodstuffs? I have secured what I absolutely need to live on, and what I can't have, I didn't want. I pity the housewives who are always on the hunt for this and that. Their horizons are so narrow - they live to eat. Besides, in my opinion, they are bad housewives who cannot always make do with what they have, but want to cook exactly what they cannot have.

They already existed when we weren't thinking about war. There's no way to educate them anymore; you can only keep them in check. Their eternal dissatisfaction is the best punishment they could give themselves.

What worries do I, a small individual, have compared to the enormous events of the migration of our ethnic Germans back to the Reich? I would have liked to help!

Show these photos to would-be fathers as a visual lesson as to what they should aspire to.”

Heil Hitler!

Luise N.

Always Cheerful

In the West, January 1940

"I am the father of a large family and have been at the front since the first day of the war. According to traditional bourgeois values, I should have nothing to laugh about, given that my business has come to a standstill, my wife has no one to help her with our four small children, and is even ill at times - yet I am

always in a good mood! And I want to say why: because I have realized with great joy that now, when the going gets tough, when things get really serious, I think exactly the same as all my many, many comrades!

Before the war, I always had something to complain about, that this and that could be different, etc., etc. And now I have had the opportunity to talk to so many soldiers, workers, merchants, etc. about the current situation, and I have always found one thing to be true: I think just like you, namely that this war is being fought by all Germans in familial solidarity with the Führer.

And just as a family always willingly allows itself to be led and commanded by a good father, so every good German, whether soldier or not, follows the Führer! And the fact that, after careful consideration, I have come to the same conclusion makes me so happy that even the so-called 'critical days' in a soldier's life can never change my mind.

In view of this happy realization, of belonging to the many who are marching with the Führer to a good end, the personal measures are of very little importance. What is there actually left to do?

In view of this happy realization that we are among the many who are marching with the Führer to a successful conclusion, personal measures are of secondary importance.

What serious decisions are there left to make? I am a small businessman and even before the war I could not buy more than what my family gets on ration cards today. Yes, they don't even buy all of the ration cards. The bar of chocolate I used to bring my children when I came home is now replaced by a hearty piece of commissary bread, which the little ones enjoy just as much because it is from their 'grey-clad father'. And, as a merchant, I think that the customers who are now going to the 'non-conscripted competition' will surely come back to me later, or I will surely find many more new customers than before in the new areas that have joined or will join our great fatherland, because if someone can say that he was a soldier, he will also be able to earn his living as a businessman again.

That we will be victorious, that our small (mostly personal) everyday worries will be overcome, needs no special emphasis, because that is so clear and so self-evident for a soldier of our Führer that even in military circles, these questions are no longer debated.

And dying!

We soldiers don't take it as badly as so many people back home think. Almost all soldiers say the same thing I do: 'If you're unlucky, you can fall so unhappily in times of peace or get hit by a car or die in some other way that you don't need to think about it. It happens to one person, but not to another! Let's forget about it!'

In any case, I now know that my children will be able to go about their work in peace in the coming decades, and whether I die in the process is irrelevant.

If even one child fell into a river, I would try to save them without thinking twice about drowning myself.

We all know what the enemy has in store for our children - good! We're here! Let them try out their 'pious' intentions."

Heil Hitler!

Karl Fr. L., Soldier

A Practical Man

Berlin, February 1940

"I have written to you many times for no other reason than to confide in someone whom I expected to understand me completely; however, never before have I wanted to talk to you about such personal matters as I do today.

Ever since the issue of early marriage—as a problem in itself and now even more so in wartime—has been brought to the fore in all its possible ramifications, I have intended to express my opinion on the matter. I believe I have a certain right to do so, for I could contribute a small but not insignificant chapter to all the theoretical discussions - namely, that of practical experience!

Time and again, young people shy away from marriage out of concern for the material basis of their union. How can this material basis, which must exist in some form, be created? I will tell you briefly and simply how I did it:

Inspired not least by your thoughts, after much deliberation I took a stand on early marriage and saw no reason not to marry young, even though I did not have a 'sufficient material basis.' I had a girl I loved, whom I knew was the right one, who wanted to go through thick and thin with me; we may have been not the most financially secure couple, but we're not lacking in ways to make up for it with your hands or your head.

From this, I got married in my third semester as a student. The family had no choice but to agree - they just felt sorry for me 'because I hadn't enjoyed life yet', and most of my comrades shared the same view. Everyone was now curious to see how I would get by without neglecting my studies.

I went to university at 8 a.m. and studied; in the afternoon I took off my student cap and worked first as a telegram delivery boy at the post office, and later as a ticket inspector and elevator operator in a movie theater. My wife continued to work in the office at first, and with a few extra hours on both sides, we managed without difficulty not only to earn a living, but also to save a few marks for a rainy day. My father continued to pay my tuition fees, because whether I was single or married while studying was irrelevant in this context, so I didn't need to claim any state support, because there are people who need this money more than I do.

The only thing that didn't work out was the apartment. No matter where I went, there was nothing to be done, no apartment was available, and if one was available, the landlord was happy to turn me down because I had no 'secure financial basis.' Even despite this, I still live in furnished accommodation today; although it is by no means ideal, I take comfort in the thought that many young people are no better off, and that after the war the housing shortage will be eliminated, just like many other abuses.

I have been married for almost two years now, and we have a little boy who is my pride and joy; I have overcome all my material worries, even if the day is sometimes long with 16 hours of work and we have to forgo many pleasures. But what have I gained in return? How much happiness does it bring to see a little person of your own blood grow up, and to know that you have fought for this happiness, which you might otherwise have had to wait eight or ten years for if you had followed the 'bourgeois view'!

What does all this mean even more in our days, in this war, perhaps the most decisive war our people have ever had to fight? All the war aims have taken on life and shape - you know what you are living for and, when sooner or later the call to arms comes, what you are fighting for.

If one does not return, then 23 years have not been lived in vain; no, the child, the son, can continue forward, and one will tell him about his father, who fell while fighting for our Führer in the great struggle.

I can only advise anyone who is still considering marriage and having children because they believe they don't have the financial means to do so: take the plunge, you won't regret it, because even if you have to go without a lot, having a child gives you more than any pleasure and, above all, more than any financial security could ever offer you if you have to wait several years to get married because of that security. My marriage and child have not interfered with my studies in any way; on the contrary, the desire to build something for my family and to become something drives me forward.

I don't need to work as a student trainee during the last two semesters of my studies: through a loan arranged by the Reich Student Service, you can get the money you need to live on and pay it back later when you have achieved your career goal. If anyone thinks that a sponsorship from the Reich would be beneath them and that they don't need one, it is entirely possible to do it on your own with a little help from the state in the form of a repayable loan. Just as this is possible in academic vocational training, it will also be possible in other professions, perhaps also in the form of repayable loans. Ultimately, it is possible if you want it to be.

Our people will not suffer from a lack of children; the war has meaning, and our lives have a purpose that we must fulfill!"

Heil Hitler!
S.W.

The Greater Right

Westwall, January 15th, 1940

"I am also the father of six children, aged 1 to 13. I was a volunteer in the last war at the age of 17, and since August 28th, 1939, I have become a soldier again, working as a motorcycle courier. The harder the service, the more joy I felt, because combat strengthens the body and tests one's courage; likewise, I tested the unconditional obedience of conformity as a school of life for my fellow citizens entrusted to me in civilian life.

I was to be discharged at Christmas. Here was the reason: a request had been made to the Führer to transfer soldiers with large families from the front to the armaments industry at home.

I found this 'Christmas present' almost insulting.

As a father of many children, I cannot imagine a greater and more honorable happiness than being able to set an example for my children as a soldier of the new Reich until my last breath. It would be antisocial to deny children from large families the opportunity to participate in the nation's victory march because their

fathers were unable to fulfill their duties to the state; if you demand greater economic sacrifices from a father with many children than from others, then you must also grant him greater rights to pave the way to freedom for his people.

Believe me, I love my wife and children more than anything, and I share every hour of joy with them; however, both my wife and I were overjoyed when my voluntary stay in the army was approved. What does the material reduction in family income mean compared to the ideological wealth for the future of our children? The sacrifice that the Führer makes as the first soldier of the state must not be denied to anyone who wishes to imitate it in their own small way."

Heil Hitler!

Georg A., Lance-Corporal

The Test of the Heart

In the West, March 15th, 1940

"It happened in the last days of January 1940 - I cannot remain silent about the events of that day, which testify to the steadfastness of the heart, and the quiet faith and humility of a great woman.

We were sent by our unit to a special training course in a city in western Germany - perhaps we would get to sleep in a bed again, perhaps we would have evening leave. How many months have we been away now? Unlikely possibilities opened up - one wanted to go to the theater again, another to the movies; a third wanted to dance, to hold a girl in his arms again. My God, how wonderful it would be! Would any of that still be possible?

Of course, we didn't see any beds in our new quarters, because the hall, whose ceiling was covered with astonishingly huge cobwebs, contained only straw mattresses, which were assigned to us as beds. Outside, the thermometer had dropped below freezing, and just looking at it sent a chill through our souls.

One of those days, I met my comrade Feuerlein, a quiet man who, although he showed no emotion, seemed to me to be carrying a secret; he was, as it became apparent, more of a dreamer than someone who lived for the moment. He had built his nest next to me in the straw, with his backpack, carbine, steel helmet, and gas mask, the tent canvas at the head and the blankets spread over the warm straw.

Where was he from? From here and there. Had he already had leave? Yes, that too.

'But what do you mean, leave?', continued Comrade Feuerlein. (I should explain that this was not his real name and that this story has been written down with the names changed.)

Yes, he had already had leave, three days, because he had been enlisted for a long time and had also had a wartime wedding.

'I'm thinking,' he told me, 'about whether I should call my wife to come down here. She can be here in two hours on the express train.'

The day after next, on a Sunday, Feuerlein's young wife, whom he had married during the war, had indeed come down to see her husband. Her name was Leni. Comrade Feuerlein let her embrace and kiss him on the sidewalk without saying a word; they hadn't seen each other for almost four months. Although

Feuerlein acted a little shy, you could sense the great happiness that had overcome them both. She had tears in her eyes.

I must call it a coincidence that I ran into the two of them again that same day - I entered a small coffee house and found them sitting unabashedly in a corner, close together. At his behest, I had to sit down with them. Mrs. Leni exuded a strange power, an immaculate and radiant happiness. The woman's presence had also deeply moved Comrade Feuerlein. I was ashamed and perceived myself to be a rabble rouser interrupting this private moment.

'No, you stay,' said my comrade. I thought I could sense a question hovering between the two of them, a question that was slowly becoming more urgent. When Mrs. Leni suddenly asked if I had children, I knew what this was about. Yes, I have children, 'Here', and I pulled the picture of my children out of my bag, 'this is them.'

It would be useful to report what moved this young woman, and what was obviously causing turmoil within her; like a thunderstorm that had awoken us from our slumber, she said nothing more to me, a complete stranger, than this: 'I would also like a child, but my husband does not want one yet.' Such a pure request from a faithful heart left me in silence.

Feuerlein, ashamed and embarrassed, had probably also heard the heart of the beloved but, as it seemed to me, helpless and ashamed before her lament, he also fell completely silent - just as a lark can soar upward in early spring, with joy in its heart and throat, so too can it plunge down from the heavens.

Feuerlein voiced his own concerns that dwelled within his heart: 'Do you know if I'll come back?'

Mrs. Leni then said nothing else but this, and again in my presence, a complete stranger: 'That's exactly why!'

That's exactly why she wanted a child from him, her beloved husband, because she didn't know if he would ever come back. This woman's heart had touched the stars - o wonderful, brave, little woman!

Two days later, when no more words had been spoken about the event, Comrade Feuerlein arrived at the military hospital. He had severe bronchitis, or something like that. The course came to an end and I returned to my unit. I never saw him again.

It may be symbolic that two days later, when Mrs. Leni left, the landscape revealed its full beauty - the sun stood over the white town, powerful and large; where yesterday there had been leaden balls of haze hanging between tangled trees, bushes, gardens, and suburban settlements, where everything was still held fast by heavy, reluctant fog, today the winter landscape opened up, pure and clear.

In a woman like that, walking back toward the train station to home, there had to be a spark of faith, strength, confidence, and no less than grace and humility. I will never forget the woman whose eyes shone so incomparably amber at the thought of having a child precisely because her husband might not come home; anyone who spoke like her, who says, 'Precisely because of that!', who walked in such circles, should be crowned with the wreath of immortality.

I want to quickly write down this experience, which testifies to the strength of the heart. As I said, I have only changed the name of my comrade."

Heil Hitler!
W.H., Soldier

Married For 22 Days Before Being Called Up For Service

In the West, February 1940

"I am 26 years old, a teacher at a regional air raid shelter school run by the RLB⁶ - as they say, I have a secure position. It is irrelevant to mention, but should also be brought up, that I have been a member of the Hitler Youth since 1931 and that my wife, whom I will tell you about later, has also been involved in the movement for many years.

To the heart of the matter: When I intended to marry last year—I would have done so earlier, incidentally, if my profession had not required me to travel constantly—I wanted to be sure that I would be able to have children in my marriage. The reason for this is probably how my parents were raised, (my mother had 11 living siblings, my father 4); on the other hand, through my work, I got to know more or less monotonous childless marriages, which made me keenly aware of this state of affairs.

I could give enough reasons for my actions, but it was your thoughts that helped me to open my eyes completely. I talked to my bride about it, and we were clear on one thing: if possible, we wanted at least four healthy children.

And so, in May last year, I laid the foundation for our first child, so to speak. You may find these lines indiscreet, cold, and calculating, but I see them as the logical consequence of instructive experiences from the perspective of society as a whole. When the first happy signs appeared, we got married and were both happy about the baby on the way.

One can take whatever stance one wants on the question of whether to have children or not, or whether to marry now or later, but I am convinced that once a child is on the way, one's former point of view is forgotten and one thinks only of the future, in which the unborn child plays the essential role.

When I had been married for 22 days, I received the long-awaited call-up to the Wehrmacht, and several days later I was in Poland; it wasn't in the thick of the action as I had hoped and dreamed, but at least I was where I could stand my ground, and it at least smelled a little bit like gunpowder.

Before I stood and learned to expect death at any moment, I had concerns about my wife and our child; when I arrived at the front however, it was the calming influence in my thoughts that said: If I die, there is already a successor on the way, and our name will not die out. I do have a brother, but he is active and has been out of the country from the beginning of the war, and at that time did not have much to put his stock in - the family name depended only on the two of us before I decided to have children. Furthermore, my wife would not be alone (in the event of my death) and I thanked providence for guiding me in this way.

Now I am in the West, again not quite at the forefront; it is not yet the end of the day, and I am expecting news of the arrival of a daughter, or better still a son, or even better twins, from my wife, a brave woman

⁶ Reich Air Protection League

from Graz. When I receive the news, the greatest joy, apart from the reasons already mentioned, would be a short vacation; only then I would want to get 'right to the front'.

This, then, would be the most important thing I have to say so that you can get as comprehensive a picture as possible of the soldiers of 1940.

I would like to comment on other things, but since I am not 'at the front' enough, I do not feel competent to do so."

Heil Hitler!

Hermann G, Lance Corporal

"Once Again, a Miracle"

Ludwigshafen, February 1940

"It was with deep joy that I read the courageous confessions of our youngest German women, mothers—and fathers, of course. As the mother of a large group of healthy children, I would like to extend my hand to all of you and thank you for your simple willingness to give children to our people.

And yet, I believe that this chapter will only be complete when a word is also addressed to all German women and mothers who already have children.

When I do so today, it is above all a concern that drives me - I know very well that it is precisely these letters and essays that deal cleanly and clearly with the question of childbirth during the war, with all its consequences, that have given many mothers of two, three, or four children a very comfortable feeling. The message is straightforward - we have done our duty, and now it is up to those who do not yet have children to do theirs. I feel compelled to say something very serious to all healthy mothers: if you entertain such complacent thoughts for even a moment today, then hopefully it is only thoughtlessness; if only we think about it carefully, then today, more than ever, refraining from having another child is the greatest betrayal of the fatherland that a German mother can commit.

If Germany cannot afford to do without children today, if the state has coined the honorary title of 'war mother' and generously provides for all children whose fathers are still at the front or who have to complete their vocational training after the war, then I believe that the very first appeal must go to mothers who already have children.

We healthy mothers must, above all, feel the warning that the war addresses to us: We must all want to have a war child! And if we were already thinking of not enlarging our families, then the war must overturn all these considerations and educate us to think in new ways; then, and only then, the special obligation we have to our people will live on in us: our great obligation to replace every fallen soldier with a healthy child.

It is up to us to make up for the blood loss of this war in half a generation; even if the man is still to be called up or has been in the field since the beginning of the war, that is no reason to limit the number of children; if bridal couples whose marriage was not yet possible are now committing themselves to this brave deed, how much more is it an obligation for the soldier's wife, who has been able to enjoy years of family happiness! She too lives in silent worry for her husband - but let us think of the soldiers' wives of

the World War! How many carried their youngest child under their hearts while their husbands died heroically at the front! For all these mothers, this child was their deepest consolation, because it was the most vivid reminder of their lost loved ones - this youngest child often gave them the strength to courageously take up life again.

As long as nature allows us to have children, we are not too old; we young mothers can consider it a special privilege of fate to be able to contribute our visible part to the true victory of our people. If, alongside the victory of the army, we German mothers achieve a tremendous victory in childbirth, only then will the coming peace be secured for the future. We all know that only a growing people can retain their right to exist.

I know a large number of women who are over 40. Many of them have resigned themselves to limiting the number of children they had during the bleak years of the regime; however, in the years of liberation after 1933, they had a third and fourth child. I know that many of them would give us a very brave demonstration of their maternal duty today if nature had not already set limits for them, for these women have clearly recognized the deepest meaning of our national existence.

Our grandmothers and great-grandmothers said: Children are gifts from God, and most of them had large families. Let us place this sentence at the root of our day and, especially now, proudly and consciously increase our number of children. The more children we bring into the world with a firm heart, the more powerful and courageous our people will be in their struggle to bring our just cause to a victorious conclusion.

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Reading these lines, I realize that I must surely provide proof of the justification for such bold demands. But I am entitled to have a say - I myself am expecting our ninth child. When the war broke out, our youngest was still in a basket; with the first losses, it became clear to us that it would not be the last. When my husband's only cousin was killed in Poland at the age of twenty, our older children told me, 'Mummy, now we have to have a boy too!' At Easter, they will learn that their wish has been granted, and in late summer, we will all experience this great miracle once again with grateful and joyful hearts!"

Heil Hitler!
Irmgard Kl.

“To The Mother!”

Heidelberg, September 25th, 1940

Dear comrade!

"Enclosed I am sending you two letters from my sons in the field to their mother for Mother's Day, which the family usually celebrated together with all nine children.

When I picked up my boys' letters again, I remembered a letter I had received during the World War - during Operation Michael⁷, the German breakthrough battle of March 21st, 1918, I was greatly astonished and wrote verses in the Charleville military hospital during breaks between feverish hallucinations. By coincidence, they are scribbled on the cover of Carlyle's 'Work and Don't Despair.'

Heil Hitler!

Dr. W.H., Senior Medical Officer, Retired

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Now for the two letters:

In the West, Mother's Day, 1940

Dear Mother!

"Thank you very much for your lovely letter! You cannot imagine how much it pleased me; for us, D. and me, it means gathering all our strength to prove ourselves worthy of such a mother.

Your confidence and pride have always helped us so much, and they continue to do so now. The thought that you, Mother, and everyone else at home are thinking of us always makes us strong and proud. Oh, what can I say? You know what I mean, dear Mother.

And then all the best and hopefully a happy reunion soon after Germany's victory! Warmest regards to everyone, especially to you, Mom and Dad, and thank you for everything. Lots of love, Mom."

Yours and yours, S.

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In the West, Mother's Day, 1940

My dear Mother!

"I almost forgot that Sunday is Mother's Day, and this year you have a particular reason to be proud - your sons are involved in the great struggle for Germany's strength and security, and we want to act in such a way that your pride is justified.

Through your life, you have shown us how to remain true to ourselves despite worries and the struggle for existence, and how not to lose sight of the great and beautiful things in life. You also show us how to care for others and forget ourselves in the process. We want to act in the same way out here, thinking of our people and our family.

All the best to you, and we hope to see you soon after our victory."

Dein D.

⁷ Also known as the "Ludendorff Offensive" or "German Spring Offensive".

German Immortality

On May 24th, 1940, SS-Untersturmführer Fritz Robert H. fell near Béthune. A comrade who had expressed sympathy to his wife and assured her of our help replied with a letter that is one of the most beautiful expressions of our worldview. Rarely has the position of the man, the woman, and the child in the people and in the immortality of the people been seen more clearly or more beautifully than in these lines:

“The one year of our marriage has made me infinitely rich, and for that I am grateful. What a great treasure I have in our child - I am so glad that my husband saw his child and held him in his arms. He was very happy, and when he went into battle, he was calm and confident.”

She lets her husband speak from his last letter. It is wonderful how these two people are one in their thinking, so much so that their words flow as if from a single source. It is as if the same being is expressing itself here:

"The day of decision, for which we have waited so long, has come. The path lies clearly before us - it is a matter of victory or defeat. I believe with all my heart that this day will lay another building block for the new millennium, of which the Führer spoke of from the beginning and continues to speak of today. The old, worn-out, unworthy phenomena must pass away; life has found them too light and is replacing them with the eternally living. All birth is painful, but it ultimately means the preservation of life. This is something to remember in times like these - it is not the individual that matters, but the species, the preservation of the species, that is, the people, the race. That is the law of nature. We believe in this above all else. We do not know what the next few weeks will bring, but one thing is certain: 'Courage and bravery have accomplished more great things than charity.' Great things will be done. I do not know what contribution I myself will make. Come what may, it will always be a contribution; if it was necessary, then it is also good. You too will make your contribution; we both shall sacrifice joyfully, because we see a great goal for which we have been working for a long time. May our work be blessed!"

This letter, a German prayer before battle, is dated May 10th, the day on which the German regiments marched to battle to win that German millennium, which we will fulfill with the power of our faith. This man set out knowingly on a path into a future in which there could be no anxious uncertainty for him, because everything that was necessary also seemed good; this woman would not have been his wife if her thoughts did not now pick up where his left off in the face of victory:

"Having this letter is a great help to me. For my husband, it was a matter of course that he gave his life in the decisive battle of our people. How can I complain? I am his wife, and will now strive to raise our child in his spirit, and that is a great and beautiful task. My husband died the most beautiful heroic death - he was shot to the heart as he charged forward towards the enemy. He died instantly.“

”We give joyfully because we see a great goal.“

”I will strive to raise our child in his spirit.“ To courage, to bravery, which have done greater things than charity...

If anyone asks us about our belief in immortality, let us refer them to this example and to the many others, who reveal our belief not in thick books, but in the life, death and rebirth of the sanctity of the German people.

Deed and Sacrifice

Deeds and sacrifice in war has a special demand - they demand the last thing we are capable of giving. They make words and concepts seem small and poor, but in action they bring about the proud years of German awakening in the past.

Deeds and sacrifices—these words encompass the highest commitment of men and women today, for their entire existence, for the lives of their loved ones, their fathers, their children.

Deeds and sacrifices—today, these words are so far removed from empty phrases and loud words; they represent a quiet, upright attitude, the ultimate proof in this time of great trial.

Therefore, the following lines shall tell in a few words few words about this German test, about the women and mothers who gave their best, about the South Tyroleans, the Baltic Germans, and the Wolhyniendeutschen⁸, who are now experiencing their great homecoming in the new Reich, happy not to arrive in hours of festive joy, but to have their share in Germany's greatest victory in Germany's most serious of times - a testament to their deeds and their sacrifices.

⁸ Volhyrian Germans, ethnic Germans who settled in Volhynia in what is now Western Ukraine in the 19th century up until the end of the Second World War.

“In Proud Mourning”

The following obituary appeared in the Völkischer Beobachter on October 11th, 1939:

"On September 20th, my only son, aged 21, fell for his beloved Führer and for our Germany at the head of his platoon, during a victorious breakthrough attack near Warsaw.

**Lieutenant Ernst Werner Paupié
Pioneer Battalion**

He was a former youth platoon leader in the “Langemarck” division of the DJV⁹ and member of the NPEA¹⁰ in Plön, Holstein. His motto was: ‘Be more than you seem.’ He was awarded the Iron Cross Second Class for his fearless and brave leadership. His father died in World War I in 1918.

***In dignified and proud mourning,
Pgn¹¹. Mrs. Lisi Paupié,
currently a nurse in Darmstadt, Beerfelden in Odense., Stettin, Clinic Putzstr. 7”***

"This is a language that opens our hearts, teaches us to read between the lines, and recognize a heroic life of bravery and national discipline.

This woman lost her beloved in the last year of the most senseless of all wars - perhaps she was still carrying the boy under her heart when the bitter news arrived from the field.

Over the graves of 1914 to 1918, the madness of inflation raged, the mob of pawnbrokers rampaged in the streets—many women in the same situation would have cursed their fate and collapsed in despair. But not this woman - she courageously took her fate in hand and mastered it, thus lending to the death of her beloved husband a deeper meaning of her own commitment. By nurturing the fruit of their all too short life together, she created a man who was to be a valuable member of the community; this woman did everything in her power to ensure that her son would become a real man, capable of being a capable force in the reconstruction of his fatherland.

We do not know Mrs. P.; we cannot know what hardships she endured over the many years—what would a mother not sacrifice if it was for her children? But have all her efforts and worries once again been in vain? Has the young, brave life of her son been extinguished, for a pointless and meaningless cause, before he could achieve a bright future?

No! replies the mother, proud and dignified, no! Never again! The unbridled mob of a rabble revolt will not rage over this grave; over this grave will resound the triumphal march of a brave, united, clean, and incorruptible people, in whose resurgence she, the mother, has played an active part...

⁹ Deutsches Jungvolk, a section of the Hitler Youth for those between the ages of 10 to 13.

¹⁰ National Political Institutes of Education, secondary boarding schools meant to training promising German youths and shape them to become elite members of the NSDAP.

¹¹ Meaning “Party Comrade”, or “Parteigenosse”.

This woman has given three lives to her people without reservation—alas, it is one thing to perish in the midst of victory, in the heat of battle, but it is quite another to continue living, day after day, to continue on as a living testament to sacrifice—a sacrifice that benefits us all.

For us, understand well, these sacrifices have been made on behalf of each and every one of us! Our lives belong to this woman!

That she is now serving as a nurse in a military hospital may seem insignificant in the face of her great destiny. Perhaps it is her profession? Perhaps she must earn her bread by doing so? Ah, let the high-minded people, for whom money is some measure of value, torment themselves over these differences; these people will never understand that it is not what happens to us that matters, but how we bear it. May we all one day pass through the yoke of decision like that woman and mother: with the dignity of one who has nothing left to give, having fulfilled the meaning of every sacrifice."

Ms. Lisi Paupié responded to these lines by a German poet:

Stettin, November 28th, 1939

"I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for the flowers you sent me; I was delighted to receive such a beautiful Sunday greeting. It adorned the picture of my brave boy for days.

I have received many letters in response to the essay about my son's death; it has lifted people's spirits and thus fulfilled its purpose, especially among women of a faint heart.

The author masterfully understood what was written between the lines.

That was my life. Despite everything, I promised my boy that he would become an officer, and I managed to ensure that he had to assert himself in a foreign country for three years as a free-thinking youth leader and young man.

He rewarded my efforts and hard work with his diligence. The Führer's busy life was his role model.

He gave his young life for the greatest idea of all time.

He lives as long as Germany lives. On the day before he fell, there was a word written in a small book in his pocket:

'I will show you the fulfilling death, which will be a thorn and a vow to the living.'

I will end my life for Germany in a manner worthy of him. I close with our proud salute: Heil Hitler!"

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"The Rebirth"

The Völkischer Beobachter newspaper of October 11th, 1940, also contained a birth announcement that was probably more than just a family notice:

"As a legacy from his father, who fell in France on May 20th, 1940, with firm faith in the Führer and in ultimate victory, God's goodness has today given me his son."

Lenelotte Gräfin Einsiedel, née Quarch.

Weimar, October 8th, 1940.

Zunkelstraße 10, Sophienhaus.

"This announcement is the revelation of a worldview. We do not know the young mother who was able to express such great faith in so few words, but we can ponder her thoughts.

The vocabulary of birth announcements is usually very limited, but shown here, the son of that young mother could not simply have 'arrived'; he was not to be welcomed as a mere 'heir to the family line,' nor did he 'see the light of day' by chance. Here, the great and unique miracle in this woman's life took place: the rebirth of her beloved husband, who gave his life for his people and the Führer, in firm belief in ultimate victory. His legacy, his son, was born, and his life now continues in the ranks of his people.

If you read closely to the words of the young mother, you will also find something else in them: the rebirth of her zest for life, and, after months of agonizing, proud grief, the fulfillment of her destiny as a woman. Now the faith that led her husband to sacrifice himself has also revealed its deeper meaning to her.

The man's sacrifice was not a mindless extermination by the power of an inscrutable fate - he gave his life for a future in which his own blood, his own life, will continue to have an effect, and thus in turn give life. Her message tells us, her people: you must not write off the man who proved his worth through his faith and sacrifice, for he has risen again for his people, and he lives on in his son. We know that he also lives on in the woman he chose."

"A Beautiful Death"

Kleve/Rhld., March 31st, 1940

"I would like to hear something about my husband and father of our two children, about his death and the days before it; it would be a comfort to me if any of my husband's comrades could find us and tell us something about him. He was killed on September 15 near Jaworów and was buried there; he once wrote to me that so many comrades from the former ... company of the L SS AH¹² were with him in Poland. His field post address was: Rottenführer Reinhardt Jünger.

I know it is a beautiful death to give one's life for one's fatherland and for the Führer, and it is a comfort to me to know that he gave his life as a loyal, brave soldier of our Führer, just as he was sworn to the Führer as an SS man. It is a great and proud pain, but we are not abandoned, and that is a proud feeling."

Heil Hitler!

Ilse Jünger

¹² 1st SS Panzer Division Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler

The Most Precious Thing We Had

Weidhausen, October 22nd 1939

To my comrades Eyrich, Prediger, Hofmann, and Scherbel!

"I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for the sympathy you have shown me for the heroic death of my husband.

Dear comrades! It is bitterly hard for me to lose my dear Walter, and for my children to lose their beloved father, but he died so that Germany might live!

We are proud to have sacrificed the most precious thing we had for our fatherland."

Heil Hitler!

Lina Angermüller and her children

"Gunner One Is Down!"

"On September 12th, 1939, the 2nd Battalion carried out an attack against strong Polish forces on the San River; after the company had attacked the village located directly on the San under heavy fire and took possession of it, the bridge over the San at this location was blown up by the Poles. After the company had occupied the bank of the San on this side, it came under heavy rifle and machine gun fire from the heights on the other side of the river.

The following then occurred: The first machine gun of a group of the company had taken up position; shortly thereafter, Gunner 1, Lampe, was shot in the head and chest. Lampe laid down on the other side and said what he had learned over and over again in countless exercises:

"Gunner One down."

Then it was over for him.

It is not my place to report anything more about this incident, for the few words of our fallen comrade say it all. They are an expression of the worldview of every soldier, free from any religious or personal ties. They are also an expression of the German youth's sense of duty."

Heil Hitler!

Sch.

In the Field, July 15th, 1940

Dear Emmy!

"Now that you are approaching your difficult hour, I think of you often, and so I want to send you a few lines to let you know that you are not alone with your thoughts in the days ahead.

Margot tells me that Mother is with you, and that is good. Now that your husband is not there, our mother must be there for you, as mothers always are for their children in difficult times. You are now expecting your third child and are a role model and example to us. You are following the path that we fought for with passionate hearts on the battlefields, into a future that is great and glorious for you and all children, thanks to the power of our sharp swords and our great confidence.

You are adding your deeds to the deeds of men. You have faith, and that makes us soldiers happy. You are consecrating my dead comrades with your deeds; you are giving meaning to their death when you raise your child; you will remember that, dear sister, when your child comes into the world in pain.

Proud and strong, we have defeated the enemies of harsh honesty on the battlefields of Europe, and we think of you with humility and gratitude. Dear Emmy, I know you are brave and great in your happiness. We all thank you. You are a comrade to the young soldiers. I think of you and pray to the God of the Germans. Give our mother my regards."

Your brother,
Hermann

"In Memory of the Fallen"

Valkenburg, February 27th, 1940

"I would like to thank you very much for the beautiful pictures you sent to me of my husband's resting place. They gave me great joy.

Germany needs space, and these sacrifices are necessary for that; everyone who has been affected by this would surely have gladly given their life for Germany with a leader like the one we have. We who have been affected by this fate will not forget each other in our personal grief. That would not be in the spirit of those who fell.

Life goes on, and we must continue to live it with dignity, proving that we were worthy of them. I have found a new purpose in life by joining the labor service; I hope to become a leader within it."

Heil Hitler!
Rina Brüchmann

"Two Kilometers in Slippers"

Ludwigsburg, December 18th, 1939

"...I am pleased to inform you of the following: Deeply moved by the destruction of the battleship 'Admiral Graf Spee', which has affected the entire German people, on the morning of December 18th,

barely an hour after the news was announced, gardener August Oßwald from the Ludwigsburg suburb of Oßwohl appeared in the Ludwigsburger Zeitung newspaper.

He counted out ten hundred-mark notes on the table of the house and said, 'The Führer must be helped so that he can build a new battleship.'

The man, who had fought at the front for over four years in the Great War and was severely wounded, acted so immediately under the impression of the news that he set off in his slippers on the two-kilometer journey to deliver his donation. He resisted for a long time before giving us his name, and only agreed when we promised not to publish it in the newspaper."

Heil Hitler!

Dr. G.

"The Woman's Stance"

Nuremberg, January 4th, 1940

"A few days ago, a woman named Eisen, who appeared to be in very poor circumstances, came to the undersigned and said the following:

'I am a cleaning lady at the municipal works in Nuremberg; before the war, I was assigned to the Res. -Lazarett Nuremberg as an auxiliary nurse. The day before yesterday, I was dismissed due to a lack of wounded soldiers and received my wages for three months in the amount of 25 Reichsmarks; on the same day, however, I also received my weekly wage of 24.15 Reichsmarks. I would like to give this weekly wage to you for wounded soldiers, as I do not want to have a double income because of the war.'

Mrs. Eisen refused to take the money back, leaving no other option but to send it to a seriously wounded comrade.

It is telling of this woman's attitude that she lost her father in World War I at Verdun and her husband was so seriously injured as an SS man during an SA march in Weimar in 1931 that he died.

*

Before the Yule festival, the undersigned also received the following anonymous letter:

Nuremberg, December 21st, 1939

'The mother of a fallen SA man asks that this small gift be used for a poor comrade.'

Heil Hitler!

Enclosed was the sum of 30 Reichsmarks.

As there is no other way to express our gratitude, we kindly request that this be published."

Heil Hitler!

E.

"Only One Way - Forward!"

In the West, January 15th, 1940

Dear Mr. and Mrs. W!

"Wishing you all the best for the New Year. I have been serving as a volunteer at the front since the beginning of the war, and I am still doing well. I fondly remember the wonderful times we had at the Waldhaus-Alm.

My two sons were killed near Lemberg, but now is not the time to mourn; for us, there is only one way forward."

With kind regards to you and your wife,

Heil Hitler!

S.P., Police Sergeant

"My Consolation"

Beuthen O.S., July 31st, 1940

Dear Mr. H!

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your condolences on behalf of the Arbeitsgau 4 Pommern-Ost¹³ on the painful loss of my only beloved son.

It is still incomprehensible to me that my boy will not return; he returned from his Easter vacation in the Eifel region happy and full of confidence. He had already been there too long and was waiting impatiently to get started.

I was full of hope that my son would return from this war safe and sound. His father died in 1918 during the previous World War.

My consolation is that my son died for the greatness of Germany, for his Führer and his fatherland."

Heil Hitler!

Helene M.

"My Best Friend"

¹³ Local org for the Reich Labor Service.

In the West, June 10th, 1940

"A few hours ago, Mrs. Sch. informed me of the death of my friend Adolf. His lonely mother has written to me:

‘My Adolf fell on May 15th in a battle near the town of Ottiquier, 25 kilometers southeast of Brussels.’

She asks me, as his most loyal friend, to inform everyone who knew him of his heroic death, which I am doing herewith.

No one except his mother was more affected by this loss than I was. You understand! His sacrifice shall be my command to fight on for two, and no one shall think of him more than I. Germany must live, even if we must fall!”

W.

“Completely Unnecessary”

Neuern (Bohemian Forest), September 27th, 1940

"Since March 1940, I have been donating a tenth of my monthly earnings to our brave soldiers through the Neuern Savings Bank, so I think it is unnecessary for you to thank me every month. I must thank you for taking such good care of our brave soldiers. So please, don't make me feel ashamed for this small sacrifice!

Victory and glory to our beloved Führer!”

Yours,
Ella F.

“Only One Arm”

Berlin, October 1940

"My request is as follows - I am now fully recovered. I have gained some combat experience through my participation in the Battle of Flanders, and would like to fight against England again. However, none of the doctors agreed to this; instead, they all laughed at me.

Dear comrade, I know very well that I only have one arm, but I also know that I can fight again. Why won't they take me? Am I now superfluous? They keep telling me that we also have a duty on the home front, but they refuse to give us the best opportunity, the highest test, to give our lives for the Führer and for Germany.

My greatest wish would be to return to a combat vehicle; as the commander of a machine gun or a heavy tank, I would still be fully useful; if that is impossible, then at least let me replace a comrade in a combat unit who can then join a fighter squadron.

Please, dear comrade, help me to fulfill my greatest wish - I would gladly give my right arm again if I could go back to fight against England.

I have such great trust in you that you will help me. Please don't disappoint me again."

Heil Hitler!

G.R.

"I Beg You!"

Berlin, July 1940

The father of a fallen soldier writes to his son's captain. He confirms the sad news, describes the mother's pain, and points out his own quarrel with fate:

"It seems impossible to me - I myself spent 48 months in the last war as a cavalryman, and later as a storm troop leader. I suffered an insignificant scratch each year, not even considered a wound – and my son was killed on his second day of battle? This big, strong fellow?

Now, one of his luckier comrades should write to me and tell me how my son behaved, how he lived, how he died. That's how we did things back then... I would also ask for a war story after the war is over, especially about the First Company - I still feel like I belong there, as he did, and want to share in the joys and sorrows of this unit. It would mean a great deal to me.

I have one last request from you, captain! I have the overwhelming feeling that my son sacrificed less than he could in such a short time. I would like to make up for that, and I therefore implore you to accept me into your company as a war volunteer - at 48, I am not yet ready for the scrap heap. I am a swimmer, horseman, motorcyclist, car driver, an autogenous and electric welder, a hand grenade specialist, and, as mentioned, a veteran of the last war - all things that will still be needed. Even if I can no longer replace a good soldier, I would still make a very decent warrior.

Please, do me this favor. I know that if you want to, you can make it happen. Here on the home front I can easily be replaced by prisoners - at least there I can fill the gap left by my son.

I eagerly await your response to this request."

Heil Hitler!

A. Sch.

"Once We're in Germany"

Leipzig, October 1939

"Contemporary documents should be collected - they can make us reflect on the present and teach us about the future.

A lady friend has given me a letter which I would like to bring to your attention - the husband of the letter's author previously held a prestigious position in Riga as a senior teacher, or, to put it more accurately, as a teacher at a higher educational institution. He, his wife, and their children have only ever known Latvia as their country of birth and home; the previous generation was also based in Latvia. They always had a good life, they lacked nothing, and yet they left everything behind and would rather be Germans - they are committed to struggle over ease.

A secure existence, a solid standard of living—none of that counts for anything against the call of the Führer. And it's not just one person, no, they're all coming; they're not coming when we're celebrating, but in this serious time for the fatherland, wanting to help and contribute.

Isn't that German? Isn't that loyal? I will carry that melody with me to places where people don't want to catch it, or where they have other sounds in their ears!

I hope you enjoy the letter as much as I did!"

Heil Hitler!

A. Sch.

*

Riga, October 18th, 1939

My dearest Martha!

"Just as I was packing, I found your last letters, and I felt such a strong desire to talk to you about what is on my mind that I put my work aside to pick up my pen.

Marthchen, your beloved Führer is calling, and we are all coming!

Can you imagine what it means to be proud and free as a German? To be able to say out loud that you are German?

Oh, Marthchen, it is impossible to comprehend that all this is coming true; one hardly dares to believe it, yet all the ethnic Germans are packing their bags.

The first steamer left on Saturday, the second will follow tomorrow, and we are now waiting our turn. Even though it may be very difficult to cope with everything and one hardly has time to think, our hearts are full of grateful love.

This is another piece of world history, and we are privileged to witness it. People keep saying: in Germany it will be like this, and in Germany we will do this and that, and once we are in Germany, etc.

As soon as I know where we are going and we have arrived, I will write to you again. Until then, I remain with the warmest regards and in old faithful friendship."

Deine C.

"The Final Decision"

Bozen, November 29th, 1939

"I was very pleased to receive your field postcard; in response, I am taking this opportunity to tell you what is on our minds.

Above all, we are following the heroic struggle of our fatherland with the deepest sympathy – I can say that now that we have ‘applied for German citizenship’, as the official term for the referendum in South Tyrol is called.

Our struggle for German identity is similar to yours at the front—here, too, everything is at stake. England and France with their satellites—a world of enemies stands against you—but a single will and a united people will secure our victory.

We are facing the greatest spiritual battle in world history; we do not have to vote for Germany or France or Italy, as the Saar Germans do, but we have to choose whether we want to keep our beloved homeland or whether we want to declare ourselves Germans and emigrate.

Do you know what it means for a Tyrolean to leave his glorious thousand-year-old homeland, where the oldest and most beautiful ancestral farms in the world stand, where centuries of history of suffering and joy have forged us to the soil, where palm trees and glaciers, German forests and sunny vineyards stand side by side in perfect beauty?

When choosing between the homeland and the right to be a German, the voice of blood prevails everywhere, and so everyone chooses Germany; over 95% of all South Tyroleans will leave the country to found a new homeland in the German Reich.

This struggle for our fathers' heritage or for Germany has led to a glorious victory for German unity, loyalty, and sacrifice—everything for Germany and for a united people—our destiny will be eternally linked with that of Germany in joy and sorrow, in struggle and hardship—we want to be worthy to stand by your side at the front, and form a united column of blood."

Heil Hitler!

Yours,

Rudolf V.

"We Clueless Inland Germans"

German-Przemyśl, February 3rd, 1940

Dear comrade!

"It's been a while since we've heard from each other, but that's probably not a one-off; we generally have more important things to do than 'keep in touch'. I wouldn't burden you with a peace-loving letter if I didn't really feel the need to pour my heart out to someone who is somewhat familiar with its former contents.

I know: urge and pour out my heart—these are hackneyed phrases, but this one time they really seem appropriate.

So, I must begin by saying that the war after the Polish campaign brought me here to Przemyśl. Two months ago, I would have said that it had forgotten me, for God knows, it is a godforsaken place, and it owes its geographical fame solely to the Austrian fortress builders and the garrison that defended it so long and so gloriously during the World War. However, even these historically remarkable sites lie on the other bank of the San, in the Russian sphere of interest, and what we now call German Przemyśl is nothing more than a 'suburb' of Polish desolation, capable of teaching anyone who ends up there the meaning of howling misery.

I railed against God and the world when I was forced to view the further course of world history, which we were to shape, from this perspective.

When the Führer's spoke of the promise that the ethnic Germans would be repatriated from the Russian sphere of interest, your SS men from the resettlement commissions arrived, and then we too plunged into the turmoil of preparatory work; it was then the first farmers arrived from Eastern Galicia.

Now I must describe to you my experiences since then. It is possible that you know more about these things and have a broader overview; that you say to yourself: 'Why is he bringing me owls to Athens?' But I do not want to describe the major events, which you are more familiar with; nor do I want to say a word about the historical significance of this migration of peoples, or about the ethnic, racial, and political gains it brings us. I only wish to speak of myself. Yes, I am so selfish that I only want to talk about my own experience—in the quiet hope that it might also be of value to others.

Is it just my imagination, or do you think that everyone in my position would have felt the same way? In any case, I have the feeling that I have only now understood the concept of 'volk' in all its greatness and sanctity. We have used this word countless times. It was the fixed point around which we built our worldview, the core of our faith.

But did we ever really think deeply about what a volk is? Perhaps we regarded it too much as a fixed entity and relied too heavily on our school knowledge.

In the sense of our petty German fathers, 'volk' was everything that lived within the borders of the empire; not much, and some things that did not belong to it in God's eyes. We then learned that volk was everything that was German. And that is German? We again contented ourselves with school wisdom that defined peoples solely by their languages: German was whatever used the German language.

Well, the Jews spoke German. So do some people whom we are reluctant to call Germans.

We made our restrictions, but we got no further. We found a nice phrase: German is what is of the German faith - it is this assertion that allowed National Socialism to leap like a spark across the borders of the German Empire, and ignite the German faith everywhere in bright flames.

The commitment to the Führer now characterized Germans much more clearly than their language, but the new interpretation of the concept of the people that was emerging still lacked tangible evidence. We did experience the return of the Ostmark and the Sudetenland, but these were not only victories of faith, but ultimately also political, even power-political events, and those who wished us ill could say that this was no proof of our thesis that being German and having a German faith were one and the same. Now, however, almost every day long trains of ethnic German farmers cross the San Bridge. They bring with them whatever they can fit on their carts, plus two horses, and perhaps a cow. That is all. That is their possessions, that is all that remains of everything they and the generations before them held dear, everything they worked for and fought for. They carry no more with them than a refugee - yet they are anything but refugees.

They pass us by like smiling victors, like an army of farmers who have won their freedom and a homeland.

I spoke to countless people. They told me about their houses, their fields, the forests and moors and marshes and pastures, about horses and cattle. They did not say, 'We were poor, we had a hard life'; they did not try to convince themselves that they were leaving something worth leaving behind. They spoke proudly of their achievements and those of their fathers—and I often couldn't understand how they could leave all that behind without a tear of sorrowful farewell. They showed me pictures of pretty, proud villages and magnificent farms, true castles of a defiant peasantry. They spoke of the often incomprehensible suffering that filled many individual lives with only a dismissive wave of the hand, as if it were no longer any of their concern now that they were home.

To be in Germany, in the Reich of the Führer, and above all to be allowed to stay here, to no longer have to turn back, to be able to live as Germans among Germans, and to hear only German, nothing but German, their sacred mother tongue—that was the great experience of their lives, even more than that: the beginning of a new life - a rebirth.

We old bones stood there and were not only ashamed of our tears, but we stifled an even greater shame in our busyness, because we had to secretly admit that we didn't really know what it meant to be German.

I am only a very small cog in the big machine here, but I have shaken a thousand hard hands that were stretched out to me wherever I went - each one was offered to me as if I were Germany itself. It was no use pointing out the insignificance of my work or my personal irrelevance when people expressed their overwhelming gratitude for my small and subordinate position. I wore a uniform, a German uniform, and the Führer's insignia on my cap - that was enough.

These people judged others by their own standards; they believed that every German from the Reich must be like the image of Germany that had always been in their hearts.

The older ones among them had experienced the unimaginable. The World War had destroyed their Galician villages; for years they had been homeless refugees among strangers who spoke a foreign

language. Their brothers from Volhynia had been deported to Siberia by the Tsarist authorities, where countless numbers had perished, starved, frozen to death, or fallen victim to the civil war. After strange and tortuous journeys, they found their way home to a homeland that had often been reduced to a desert, to a new state, Poland, which treated them with hostility.

But they had not yet settled down when the Polish campaign of extermination against the Ukrainian inhabitants began with all its horrors, and their homeland once again became a battlefield in the Russian-Polish war, and after that, once again the scene of Polish-Ukrainian slaughter. How great was the temptation to take sides, to say: I am a Russian, or a Ukrainian, or finally, a Pole, instead of clinging to a German identity that in this case was so far removed from Europe, so shadowy and unreal. Germans in Galicia, Volhynia? Who knew anything about them!

Those among them who were educated and had studied, who had already been to Germany or had come into contact with German administrative authorities during the World War, still remember well how incomprehensibly they were treated: as Galicians, as Poles, as anything but Germans. But from the way they talk about it, you can tell what kind of German they are: an inner need that cannot be touched by external things.

The Reich did not need to know anything about them, just as a king does not need to know anything about each of his subjects. But they knew about the Reich – more than most of us.

Unlike us, they experienced Germany's rebirth; a god who had long hidden his face revealed himself again to the eyes of believers and warmed their existence with a new, radiant splendor. Germany, holy Germany! I have never heard anyone speak of it with the same religious exaltation except for the Führer.

The Führer speaks the words of simple farmers who never saw him and very rarely heard him, whose feet had never set foot on German soil. The Führer said this, he said that... they knew exactly, then and there, this and that. They spoke it as one speaks a self-evident eternal truth, a guiding principle of life, a meaning of existence.

The Führer! They called him their father, as a matter of course; he is the standard-bearer of providence, as a matter of course; his deeds are revelations of divine will, as a matter of course; he is the bearer and an integral part of their faith—perhaps as much as our children and grandchildren are. Now I understand this recurring statement in all its magnitude and significance: the Führer has called us!

This wiped away everything that could have kept them in their old homeland, all the doubts that might have arisen under different circumstances, the fear of the arduous journey, of the unknown... This word does not even exist in their vocabulary. Uncertainty? The Führer needs us - here we are. What he commands will be good - because we are Germans, and he is Germany.

I can also now modestly add: we too are Germans, but often clueless inland Germans. I now know what that means; I now know that this confession must give voice to a faith whose power shatters everything earthly, possessions and habits, traditions, acquired rights, things we have grown fond of, the things we love most – even life itself.

We may have thought or spoken these words before in the most beautiful terms, but we did so with the reservation that we were 'only' human beings with earthly needs. But now I know that this inner

weakness is not a natural part of our nature and that this excuse no longer applies - for I have experienced and learned the opposite from simple farmers here in Przemyśl.

I wanted to write this from the bottom of my heart."

Heil Hitler!

Dein E.B.

The Seeds Are Sprouting

The National Socialist worldview presupposes that its conscious adherents are people of faith, and its claim to totality is based on its fundamental belief that faith is a prerequisite for the fulfillment of any higher goal.

Because we did not espouse any religious denomination or dogma, we were often denounced as atheists or godless heathens, in an abusive use of the word. Do we need to protest against this? Should we try to prove that God exists? Let the atheists prove that he does not exist - for we believe! We believe in God the Almighty; we see him in the process of becoming and the process of growing, and we, through his divine revelation, see his most inspired creation - our people.

We believe in God the Almighty, who does not bargain or haggle with himself, and who cannot be forced into petty constraints and forms, for he himself gave us the measure to comprehend him - the depth and breadth of human thought.

We believe in eternity, in the eternity of all the great deeds and works of men who have helped shape the face of our people; we believe in eternal life as members of a mighty chain that reaches from the primordial depths, through the present day, and into the future of the life of the people.

We walk this path, burdened with many mistakes and weaknesses of the past, from which we free ourselves through conscious work and duty to those who come after us, as a link in the chain that carries within itself, out of its firm belief, the will to never be weaker than any other in the course of events before us.

This path passes through the womb of woman, and we reverently rescue her from those dark times that tried to rob her of her sanctity, to the detriment of the people.

We believe in God and serve him through our faith, which is acted out by our people; truly, this faith is strong and powerful, for it has made possible and brought about more miracles and more mighty deeds in our time than legend and history have ever been able to pass on to us.

This faith in Germany and its eternal life is a faith in the eternity of us all; part of this life is service to the people, free service of our own free will, born of a faithful heart.

Let us always and at all times think of the Führer; his immeasurable faith in Germany has saved an entire people from destruction. May this deed of the most faithful of all Germans be the guiding light for all who seek the truth, even to their final goal.

From our faithful commitment to God's most sublime creation, to our Germany, from the deeds of a mighty heart, we will create the example and showcase its strength for those who come after us to follow.

Germany now stands in the midst of war, which is really only a special chain of the great, long struggle for German freedom; it is a struggle that demands even less lip service and even more the ultimate, best confession of our faith in the National Socialist worldview.

This war is the great moment of trial; fate demands that we prove that our idea has become a clear reality. The time of the first harvest is near.

The seeds have sprouted. Hearts belong only to the final goal, and this is what the men and women speak of in their many letters, proving to us how natural and joyful their commitment, sacrifice, and deeds are - truly they are inspired by the faith that means victory for Germany.

“Plausible - and Difficult”

Stuttgart, February 1940

"To be honest, I must confess, to my shame, that I have had very little to endure in terms of 'everyday difficulties' since the beginning of the war; I deliberately write 'had to endure' because what we can be sure that what comes after the war is so unimaginably great and powerful that every one of us who is not allowed to be at the front will have to toil and toil at home for years, until the blood comes out from under our fingernails, just to be able to say, with a semblance of justice, that we are even halfway worthy of what we have achieved.

It was difficult enough to come to terms with the fact that my application to volunteer for the Wehrmacht was rejected in September because I was indispensable in my civilian profession.

It is so obvious and plausible to understand that a duty must also be fulfilled at home—and so difficult to accept that one is not allowed to fight."

Heil Hitler!
Franz M.

“We, The War Generation”

Neudeck, Sudetenland, January 25th, 1940

"...we, who already experienced the World War, the 'second war generation', so to speak, are perhaps being tested more severely by this war than the young people who experienced nothing of political events other than the wonderful triumph of National Socialism, after a period of deepest depression. They do not know how this depression came about; that is, they know from the stories of their parents and from books, but they did not experience it themselves. We older people, on the other hand, felt bitterly in our own flesh how our people were brought down step by step from their former heights, how piece by piece the sacred possessions of our people were taken from us.

We experienced all this as the consequence of that lost war, which our generation entered with the most sincere will to victory.

I don't know if I can express myself clearly, but we, the 'second string', also did our duty in 1914 until the last bitter hour, and yet had to yield to the superior power of the enemy spirit.

If, therefore, today, in this continuation of the struggle of that time—for I do not see this war as a 'new' war, but as the resolution of a decision that was interrupted—we believe in our victory with even greater confidence and even deeper devotion, then that is certainly an inner feat of strength for us, far removed from any cheap enthusiasm.

We believe in victory! That is not a phrase - it is as true as the heartbeat that pulses within me! I see it every day, every hour, in my fellow citizens; it comes to the fore in every word and in every action.

I can distinguish a little between appearance and truth; I can sense where the heart speaks and where only the mouth speaks - and I hear the heart speak a thousand times more than the mouth. On occasions when

no one is thinking about posing or showing off, people's true opinions are always expressed in the most genuine way. For example, we glimpse it when a female comrade talks freely about her plans 'after the war' - plans that only a victorious war can realize. We also see it when old front-line soldiers from the World War complain, with bitter resignation, that they will forever be burdened with the odium of the "lost" war, while the young people of today will one day be able to celebrate themselves as victors. These are small episodes, but they vividly reveal the spirit that speaks through them.

As a housewife, as the wife of a craftsman—we have a gardening business—I naturally experience the war not only from its heroic side. It often enough confronts me in its most sober prose. There is, for one thing, the tiresome shortage of labor! We have to do twice as much work as before! Then there are the tasks required by service to the community; they must be done, even if we often don't know when or how.

Thankfully, the problems that may be very important to some people are of no significance to my household: namely, the rationing system. Throughout the so-called 'years of peace', we were accustomed to a life that makes our present life seem like luxury. It is no exaggeration when I say that we considered country butter as a spread on bread to be a waste; for 15 years we only spread margarine on our bread, and my husband recently expressed this very clearly when he said that it was actually a sin to eat butter on bread every day now during the war, when we should be saving.

We have no worries about the other rations either, because everything is delivered in such abundance that it exceeds our standard of living; this is probably the case for most of my fellow Sudeten Germans. In the Altreich¹⁴, it may be more difficult to make do with the prescribed rations, because out there, during the years of reconstruction, people had achieved a standard of living that was far ahead of that in the Sudetenland. This was confirmed to us when we marched in by our quartermasters, who all marveled at our modest standard of living. That is why it is no great achievement on our part to get by with everything without complaining."

Heil Hitler!

Maria K.

“Proud East Germans”

Mödling, March 1940

"I spent four and a half years fighting in various theaters of war during the World War, including the early stages in Galicia; with this experience in mind, I was eager to see how our new Wehrmacht would fare in Poland.

I felt just like everyone else - I couldn't believe my eyes. One thing followed another at an unprecedented pace - within three weeks our brave Wehrmacht had wiped a large empire off the map. It is difficult to describe my personal feelings during those days. I was filled with an indescribable pride that we Easterners now also belonged to this new Germany, and with a deep gratitude to the creator of this Reich.

¹⁴ Meaning "Old Reich", applied when talking about areas that were part of Germany before annexation.

How pitiful are these small, ridiculous sacrifices, if one dares to call them that, which we have to make as a result of the war that was forced upon us, our comfort, or even our palates, compared to the glorious feats of arms that our Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe, and Kriegesmarine are accomplishing every hour, fighting with their lives! I have organized my life in wartime so that it continues exactly as it did in peacetime, and I would be lying if I said that I have to impose real “deprivation” on myself. It only takes a little self-discipline to overcome the little weaknesses that we humans have. I only have to think of the food during the war of 1914-18 when my inner ‘demons’ make themselves felt and want to rear their ugly heads, and immediately they crawl back into their holes.

I can tell you a thing or two about the effects of food rationing back then - when I returned home after the war and had no connections to obtain food ‘on the side’, I had to live on food stamps and the ‘promises’ printed on them! As a result, I repeatedly fainted on my way to work, weakened by malnutrition and hunger. At night, hunger kept me awake, and during the day it was my constant companion, and so it went on for weeks and months. How well and abundantly we live today thanks to the prudence of our Führer! We have bread and flour in abundance, and that is what matters most. Admittedly the fat ration is small, but thank God that is not decisive. If I had been able to dream of the amount of bread I have at my disposal today, I would never have encountered the terrible specter of hunger that haunted and tormented me in my dreams for many years afterward. Anyone who has ever suffered hunger will understand me and agree with me.

Once again, the Western powers are trying to bring us to our knees with a hunger blockade - what a futile, naive endeavor. They should see the goodness of our daily bread, and then they would have to realize that there can be no question of starvation. But as they attempt it, at least it exposes, to all Germans, that they are being fought to the point of extermination by the enemy powers solely because they are ‘Germans’. Once again, the Western powers are throwing out their bait, trying to separate us from our leadership, promising us the moon—but today there are no longer any simpletons who carry a longing for English bait in their hearts.

We Easterners remember very well how cruelly we were treated and how much our women and children were made to suffer because we wanted to call ourselves ‘German Austria’.

A deep hatred poured out over the beggar state they had created, which could neither live nor die; which was dependent on handouts and was pushed from one debt trap to the next; which had an army of unemployed, a people of unfree individuals who, in their desperation, fought among themselves, starved, and suffered, but in their overwhelming majority still felt themselves to be ‘Germans’.

Even today, with the help of the well-known prince and other emigrants, they still dare to portray themselves as the saviours and liberators of the ‘raped’ Ostmark; in doing so, they forget that our mother tongue is German, and that the ‘Austrian people’ only exist in their degenerate imagination.

They certainly cannot lure us with this bait. I look confidently to the future and am without worry, for in my heart and soul dwells the firm belief in our true liberator, Adolf Hitler, who never abandoned us East Germans during all the years of struggle and oppression and who will also lead us to victory in this difficult struggle.

I am proud to serve him and our German people as one of his fine brown soldiers, and I thank God for placing me in this era and creating me in this generation, which, as unknown companions of the greatest and most brilliant leader of all time, will witness the glorious resurgence of our people.

I pray to Providence that it will grant this man, who lives only for his people, the justice he deserves and enable him to crown his life's work by securing for the great German people, after a victorious struggle, the full freedom of life, and their place among other peoples that is rightfully theirs forever."

Heil Hitler!
Sigmund V.

“One For All”

In the West, December 26th, 1939

"...I have never written to you before; if I am doing so today, it is so that, if you perhaps print these lines, the home front will hear the gratitude felt by the soldiers for all the thousands, indeed millions, of parcels we received for Christmas.

I had sat down to write to my parents to tell them about our Christmas celebrations - I had to include a list of everything Santa Claus had brought me.

I was on duty on Christmas Eve, but as is always the case with soldiers, someone always found someone to relieve me, because a shared duty is a shortened duty; with that I was able to attend our wonderful Christmas party from almost the beginning to the end.

Through donations and deductions from our pay, which were divided equally among us, the party was quite well funded; we helped with most of the preparations, but the main work was done by our good Santa Claus: the ‘Spieß’¹⁵.

Each of our comrades received an equal share of the spoils - we found a fabulous Christmas stollen¹⁶ and a beautiful colorful plate with gingerbread cookies, drops, cigarettes, apples, and cookies, and each of us received a nice gift. A beautiful tree lit with candles burned in our midst, reminding us of our loved ones at home. We ended the night with every soldier getting his due, because our superior gave a short speech that ended with a greeting to our Führer and Supreme Commander.

We knew from the speech of the Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht that the Führer was spending Christmas with us comrades in gray uniforms; we carried our greeting with a renewed joyful, solemn, and sacred commitment to the Führer and his work for Greater Germany.

There was no limit to our joy - for weeks we had been receiving parcels, large and small, in almost unimaginable quantities. I will now begin to tell you about my riches: in addition to the novel ‘Der Traum vom Tode’ (‘The Dream of Death’), which I received from the company, I received the following valuable items in 12 parcels of varying sizes: Five books, two valuable wall calendars, which will now decorate

¹⁵ Meaning a company sergeant major.

¹⁶ Christmas bread, a traditional German dish for the holiday.

our quarters; half a bottle of aquavit, half a bottle of peppermint liqueur, and a quarter bottle of rum blend. I also received, believe it or not, seven bars of chocolate, two packets of dates, and one of figs. And even more than that - two packs of five Nuremberg gingerbread cookies, three pieces of marzipan bread (one large and two small), a box full of speculoos cookies, a double pack of Butterkeks cookies, four small bags of assorted candies, 125 cigarettes, 10 cigarillos, two Brazilian cigars, a pack of cough drops, two boxes of cough drops, 125 cigarettes, 10 cigarillos, two Brazilian cigars, a packet of tobacco, a pack of playing cards, ten razor blades, a pack of tissues, a pair of suspenders, and six Christmas tree lights, plus large quantities of gingerbread cookies and fruit. Let's also not forget all the love and kindness that radiated from every package! Yes, we really must thank you again for that; the packages were little works of art and have been appreciated by us in every way.

I have since learned that a 13th package has been sent to me - I am almost ashamed to have been given so much, and I hope that this package has been lost and has brought joy to a comrade who did not receive as much as I did.

My intention in writing this letter was to ensure that our dear friends at home feel our gratitude; that is why I emphasize that I have received only one package from my parents, who have no wealth other than three healthy children! All the others came from my workmates, sports friends, the SA, and the party, and from my landlady, with whom I lived until the outbreak of the war.

When I add all the letters and cards, I come to the conclusion that never before has Germany celebrated Christmas so closely united with its sons and daughters. We all know that this shared celebration has strengthened us greatly, filled our fists with even more strength, and made our will harder, so that we will not think of peace until we have defeated the 'merchant nation' that presumes to 'protect' the whole world!

As I reported to my parents, the thought occurred to me: You could actually write this down; perhaps, or rather hopefully, Mr. Chamberlain and his comrade Churchill will see how far our 'death by starvation' has already progressed!

In this spirit, let us remain comrades and draw ever closer together. I close with:"

Heil Hitler!
Friedrich Wilhelm B., Corporal

"Longing for the Regiment"

Frankfurt, March 1940

"I am certain that I am fulfilling my duties in my homeland to the best of my ability. I know that the home front is as important as the front lines, and yet I cannot help feeling like a coward; an insatiable longing for my old regiment and my old comrades weighs heavily on my soul, and I always feel that we should be there with them, as we once were. This feeling oppresses me most when I see the many soldiers in field

gray saying goodbye at the train station, or when I hear reports from the front and stories of success on the radio.

Of course, I volunteered when the war broke out, like many of my old comrades, but we were not accepted - understandable, given I am over 50 years old and war-wounded.

Now I am standing my ground at home; the spirit of the front must also prevail here, and I am helping to ensure that it does and does not die out. Thank God there are only a few, mostly thoughtless doubters and even fewer malicious ones, but I see it as one of my most important tasks, to which I devote myself with great passion, to ensure that they do not undermine others and that they themselves are guided onto the right path with a skillful hand.

I cannot speak of personal sacrifices; can one even speak of sacrifice at home, in view of the deeds of our soldiers at the front, in view of those who gave and continue to give their health and their lives?

Unfortunately, I can only send one son to war; he is doing his duty with all his heart, as I did and still do. He is guided by the same principle as I am and as all true soldiers are, which is the meaning of my own life: Germany must live, even if we must fall.

You are a soldier for life, or you are not a soldier at all."

Heil Hitler!
Adolf R.

“We Take It For Granted”

Standort, February 1940

"...for a German man in times of war, there is only one thing that is self-evident: to serve his people with a weapon in his hand. With this in mind, I am only doing what millions of other German men are doing.

As a soldier, all private matters must be subordinated to the interests of the service. Being a soldier is nothing more than practical National Socialism - is there anything more natural than living out one's innermost convictions?

Above all the actions and omissions of a loyal follower of the Führer stands the oath : ‘Loyalty and obedience.’ Under this guiding principle, all difficulties can be endured and overcome.

I do not want a great era to find me small; my children and my children's children should not see me blushing and ashamed when they ask me one day: 'Where did you stand in that great era of change and decision, and what did you do?'

I know that I am only telling you things that are self-evident.

Millions of German men are doing the same, feeling and thinking exactly the same way. There is nothing extraordinary or special about this. But I believe that the Führer will already triumph with millions of these 'self-evident' people. That is the goal for us all."

Heil Hitler!
Gottlieb St., Sergeant

"Between the Lines"

Willich, February 1940

"Should any of the sentences be incorrect or should an error have crept in here and there, please forgive me, for as you know I am not a writer, but a laborer. My letter will also give you an insight into the way of thinking of many of my fellow workers.

Since 1933, I have no longer been a private individual - I only belong to the Führer.

Difficulties in everyday life? Which hardships or difficulties were greater, those from 1918 to 1933 or those from 1933 to today? For 15 years, we did not know what we were doing or what we were working for. The sacrifices imposed on us then were meaningless. In contrast, we gladly bear today's difficulties, because life has meaning and purpose.

I must now cast my gaze back to the World War of 1914 to 1918 - it was during this period that I experienced the best years of my childhood, when I involuntarily sacrificed part of my health due to a lack of food.

Hunger—that is what we knew as children back then. Today, in this war, I do not need to write, 'I cannot feed my four children.' No, we have not lacked anything so far, thanks to the care of our Führer.

In 1918, 19/20, our faith in Germany was stolen from us; poison was instilled in our souls instead of love for our fatherland. I thank Providence that, as a 16-year-old boy, I was able to witness the vote in Upper Silesia, where, despite a German majority, a piece of German territory was incorporated into a vassal state - it was here when the English and French gentlemen unwittingly taught us to love our German fatherland. What deluded Germans took from us, the enemy gave us back!

The nights from March 20th, 1921, to June 7th, 1921, will never be erased from our memory. Those who experienced this humiliation never lost hope that a savior would one day come for Germany. In any case, this faith served as healing for our young souls.

I almost feel as if it were only yesterday.

It is approaching midnight, the windows in my bedroom are smashed. Five Polish insurgents approach my bed, drag me out, half-dressed. I have to stand in the street; bells begin to ring, the bells of Polish 'friends', but they sound like a storm.

A procession approaches, mounted Polish insurgents, completely drunk. Children arrive, dressed in white; a canopy appears, and a Catholic priest in festive vestments, in the so-called Holy of Holies, walks beneath it. Behind the canopy follow priests, blessing the Poles and cursing us Germans. At the rear are

Polish insurgents on foot, holding egg grenades¹⁷, gifts from the English and French gentlemen who, oh irony of fate, were there to protect us! These egg grenades were thrown at us Germans - we had been declared fair game.

Countless are the dead from that time - the blood cried out for vengeance.

We young boys became men overnight. I saw Poland becoming what it was and knew or sensed that it would fall. We had to give way to the superior forces and flee, sacrificing our apprenticeships and further education. We found work somewhere in the German fatherland. Years passed, and the teachings of Marxism echoed unheard in my ears. My mind was set on revenge.

The year 1933 came, and with it the awakener of Germany, our glorious leader Adolf Hitler. How does a poet so wonderfully describe him? 'But to many whom you never met, you have become the savior.' Hearts quickly followed him; what German man did not join some branch of his movement, gladly sacrificing his free time and many a penny to help him make Germany great and strong? 1939 – only six years after the seizure of power, the bells are ringing out again in Upper Silesia, not for a few drunken insurgents or clergymen who have gone mad, no, but to avenge the blood shed between 1921 and 1939.

German territory is returning home. I would have liked to go with them, but I had to remain where the Führer had placed me.

Since 1933, I no longer speak of sacrifice; here it is the duty, and only the duty, of every German to help the Führer. I will only speak of sacrifice or change when the Führer calls me to the front to lay down my life for Germany.

What we are doing here at home is a trifle, for 80 million people are sharing the burden. Can you now understand why I wrote at the beginning of this letter that I cannot write about the war interfering with my personal life, but that this war was a salvation for me?

The oath I took in 1921 to avenge my German brothers has been fulfilled. Poland is finished. Now only England and France need to acknowledge this. Even if the fight gets tougher and maybe brings hardship, the German will prevail. As the Führer says: 'Providence has destined our generation for struggle and sacrifice,' but that is not a bad thing, because under his leadership a fatherland will be built for our children, the future heirs of Germany, that will outshine everything that has gone before. Struggle and sacrifice will be overcome, and our children will be able to sing:

***'Blossom in the glory of your happiness,
Blossom, our fatherland!'***

Perhaps you will be somewhat disappointed, but I really cannot write anything else. I have had to go back a long way and have become long-winded, but not detailed enough. However, you can read between the lines what I would like to say to you."

¹⁷ A nickname for the Model 17 'Eierhandgranate', used by the Germans during both World Wars.

Heil Hitler!
Alfred Sch.

“My Son Will Replace Me”

Magdeburg, February 1940

"Please excuse me for only responding today, for it was not possible earlier: my wife is seriously ill, and that causes concern - I am sure you understand. It is a heavy blow for me, but it is also wartime, and one must be strong.

When you've served as a soldier for ten years and taken part in a world war, I think you see the changes brought about by the current war from a different perspective than someone who has never been a soldier. I think that the soldier's feelings and way of thinking remain with you even long after you've taken off your uniform; once you're back in the thick of it again, you feel like a soldier again and act accordingly, not only in your official capacity, but also in your private life. This attitude makes it much easier to overcome any difficulties that arise. I don't know if others feel the same way, but I believe they do. The extra work that the service now requires is only natural in wartime.

One important thing, the question of food, is so well regulated in this war that no one can complain. Everyone gets enough to eat, and that's the main thing. Of course, you have to be able to ration, that's clear.

Sometimes you hear people say, 'If only we had a little more fat!' Good heavens, as if everything depended on that. The main thing is that the English get their fat, don't you think so? We have more than enough bread, which in my opinion is the most important thing. Anyone who, like me, had to wait many days for bread during the last World War knows how to appreciate it.

We can't even use up the amount we're allocated. The remaining ration cards go to the NSV, where they have a use for them in their kindergartens.

Another challenge during this extremely harsh winter of the war was obtaining coal; I never thought I would be out again with a handcart or sled to fetch the black diamonds from the dealer. But there was no other way. I had to do everything I could to get coal for my sick wife; it worked, and it still does.

I have described this work as my winter sport, which, incidentally, suits me well, even if it is hard work. During these months of war, I have noticed, both at work, at home, and in all sorts of other places, that the community spirit has become even stronger than before. Time and again, I see how someone is helped by a small gesture or a friendly word. It's wonderful to experience so-called neighborly help in my own household; it is sometimes really touching how my neighbors look after my wife and help her.

I regard this willingness to help one another as an expression of the community spirit that exists among our people, something that the Führer had been telling us. In caring for our war-disabled from the World War and the current war, I have a wide field of work before me, to which I devote my free time. I have enough work to help me get through everything. But I do it gladly.

We have a number of comrades who are serving at the front for the second time in this war, and then there are many sons of our fellow members with whom we are in contact. The field post letters we receive from them are the best reward for our work and a sign that we are on the right track.

With soldiers like these, we will win the war. It is my duty to help make this happen.

I regret that I can no longer participate in this war because of my old war injuries, and I have to console myself with the fact that at least I have a representative there, my boy; as I mentioned in a previous letter, he is serving in the SS reserve forces. That is my greatest joy.

He's also been making his way up in the world; last year he was supposed to go to the SS Junkerschule in Braunschweig, but his company commander did not release him because he was a driving instructor.

Maybe it will work out later. Since October, he has been driving a heavy armored reconnaissance vehicle. He is proud of that, and so am I.

He is an ambitious young man for his age, 20 years old. I remember being the same way in the last war."

In loyal comradeship,

Heil Hitler!

Hermann Sch.

"I Believe So!"

In the West, February 1940

"You asked me a number of questions and asked me to answer them.

I know that you are following a path that many of your ancestors have taken, who also held fast to their beliefs. And that is a good thing - a person who can suddenly shake off what they believed yesterday is worthless, especially if they loudly proclaim a different opinion after almost every external influence, instead of first processing everything calmly in their heart.

When I was still at school, I blindly believed everything I was taught every day. Later, I thought about it more deeply, and anyone who takes it seriously cannot find peace in their heart until they have finally decided what is right. I know that I may disappoint you, but I am used to standing up for my opinions and not expressing them until I am asked or until I see that I am successful in convincing others of my point of view.

Recent events in the world have further confirmed to me that I am on the right path. It was not prayers that made Germany great and strong, but the strong will of one man, which has spread to the rest of the people. We live in a time that has its roots in a deep faith. The Führer has shown us the path of this faith:

‘I believe in a united, strong Germany; I will fight for it, I will devote my first thoughts to it every day, and I hope that this time we will defeat our many enemies. If we do not doubt this, then victory is certain. But should it turn out differently, then we will not return home.’

This is the creed of many a German soldier.

I do not want forgiveness for my sins in accordance with certain rituals, but I will always take responsibility for what I do. If I fight for Germany's future, whether at the front or at home, in fulfillment of the tasks assigned to me there; only then will this life can come to an end. I have no need to fear. Life on earth has been given to us as a gift. The first thing that surrounds us is our family circle; if there is discord there, the family falls apart. If we – looking further ahead – are not united in the German fatherland, then Germany will also perish, and we would have lost our place under the sun. After the World War, that was certainly the case.

Imagine if the Führer had not come and given direction to our aspirations! Realize that it had been that way for many people for thousands of years; the people came to the brink of destruction until the leader had them remember their national duties.

I have also been in various areas during this campaign and have observed the lives of the people closely. When I entered an apartment in Poland, the whole family would be sitting in front of their beds, praying and praying. The next moment, they would appear to be rogues. Twice I had to intervene with the help of my limited Polish language skills and use force to restore order. A few days earlier, the same people had attacked the Germans like wild animals.

Our faith is Germany; we live, fight, and die for it.

With this thought in mind, I am ready to work for Germany's future, and with this belief I have followed the call of the flag, and I know that I am not alone. I have already told many people about this belief and know that I have already had more success in this than someone who stands on some high pulpit, only to find that he has fewer and fewer listeners each time."

Heil Hitler!
Heinrich N., Soldier

“Official Letter”

Herrsching on Lake Ammersee, October 21st, 1939

To those called up for military service from Herrsching:

“The men who were called up for military service at the end of August have now been in the army for eight weeks; it is therefore high time that we at home take care of you all. Most of you will have received regular news from your relatives and know what the situation is like in Herrsching. The local council has already sent 44 field post parcels to the front.

The local party group has written to party members, the soldiers' association to old soldiers, and the marching band to its members; all in all many individuals have taken action to keep the men out there in touch with home. However, it is possible that one or two people may be overlooked, that one person may always come away empty-handed, while another, deservedly or undeservedly, receives mountains of field post. We are therefore turning today to everyone, to each and every one of you who belongs to Herrsching, with the request to report on how you are doing out there, whether you are in need of anything, whether we can help you in any way.

All organizations in Herrsching, the party, the NSV, the formations, the BDM¹⁸, the women's association, the clubs, and, last but not least, the municipal administration are prepared to do everything possible to fulfill the wishes of our soldiers in the field: who wants cigarettes, who wants magazines, who wants books to read, who needs paper, ink, blotting paper, toothpicks, hair pomade, toothbrushes, pocket knives, whatever else? Who wants to report something, who needs something done privately or officially? All requests may be expressed!

We will try to fulfill every request.

We will even steal horses for you if we have to!

We are so happy to be able to do something for you!

We are looking after everyone - the men in the east, in the west, on home guard duty, in training, in the labor service - all those who are away from home, away from Herrsching, in the service of our fatherland, can count on our goodwill and our commitment. But you must write to us and tell us what you need!

Most of you have now been away from Herrsching for eight weeks. What has this short time already brought us? The situation in the east has finally been decided in our favor. In the west, we have erected a formidable, insurmountable protective wall of fortifications and men, and we have brought the law of action to bear on ourselves. The whole world marvels at the heroic deeds of our airmen and submariners. Now we are all awaiting the orders of our great Führer, ready to do our duty, each in his place. We know that everything he asks of us is necessary to secure the existence of our people for now and for all time."

Greetings from Herrsching!

Heil Hitler!

The local Group Leader and the Mayor

"I'm An Old Woman"

Hamburg, February 1940

"I have just heard 'The Soldier's Voice' on the radio, which talked about inner readiness for the greatest sacrifice and the spiritual attitude in the struggle against fate.

We know that we will be victorious, because such a great young idea, which draws its strength from blood and soil, will inevitably triumph over the rootless, idea-less democrats who stand against us in battle. We are aware that we are standing at the turn of a millennium, and that the new age dawning upon us must pass through struggle and pain before it can shine forth in all its glory.

Once again, Germany is the bearer of the great news, and from its bosom has sprung the new worldview in the living form of Adolf Hitler! Yes, you are so right! We are truly glad that the Führer is 'only' a son of our people. That is precisely what is so miraculous for us!

¹⁸ League of German Girls.

His idea is our worldview. Why borrow from foreign mysticism when we have our domestic faith? From this realization, I see the events of our time and understand the great struggle for destiny facing our people.

I am an aging, single woman who has not been granted the privilege of having a family of my own, as the world war took my loved one from me. I cannot describe how much I feel that loneliness at this time. Right now I work as a correspondent in wholesale; due to a death in the family, I am forced to give up my apartment and move into a single room.

There are all kinds of difficulties and obstacles to overcome that would not otherwise have been there. But everything seems so unimportant when it comes to one's own private life; it recedes so far into the background because one is constantly aware of the necessary decisions that have to be made, and because one is dominated by only one thought: that we will be victorious and that the Führer will remain healthy!

We at home want to face what is coming with courage and faith!

For me personally, there is another great joy. Nothing stands in the way of my admission to the party, and I am so happy to now be a party member."

Heil Hitler!
Ilse G.

“Out of Place”

Tannenberg, February 1940

"War is something that sweeps over us as individuals, especially when those like me are low on the ‘social ladder’, something we have to go through with natural necessity.

This war is the birth pangs and struggles of a new era that we hoped and longed for and fought for. The storm of a turning point in world history - the kind that only happens once in a millennium, heightened to the point of almost metaphysical significance, perhaps a little fantastical at times. This, the necessity of going through it with nature, also expresses what war means to me personally.

You know, that is why I wrote to you back then, that we—because in a situation like mine, one is only a particle, a member of a social community—had many worries and hardships and complaints, contradictions with regard to what often seemed to us to be a conflict between theory and reality. Now it is a matter of life and death for us.

We must fight this battle, each in his own place, however insignificant, because only in this way will the gates be opened to our goal: that we may all be free, happy people, free to indulge in our culture and traditions.

That is why, although I am not a soldier myself and although many other things speak against it (an old, helpless mother), I regret that I, healthy and strong, am not yet—though it may happen soon—with the soldiers in the field.

At this time, one feels somehow out of place, and one would always be ashamed later for not having been there."

Heil Hitler!

Katl M.

“A Continuation”

Berlin-Pankow, February 1940

"...I must admit, however, that I feel almost secondary and neglected because I am still here in my homeland, and thus the greatest demand on my personal existence, namely taking up arms for our Führer's Reich, has not yet taken place.

Apart from this fact, which must certainly bring about something revolutionary, at least in outward appearance, it is like a miracle when, after long reflection, one realizes that the war has actually brought very little that is actually new to me. Looking back to the beginning of the war, I cannot find any particularly drastic change within myself; rather, I find that the real decisive intervention in my personal existence took place many years ago; namely, it was when the idea of the Führer slowly took hold of me; it was during this period of beginnings, of searching, of striving to understand everything that was happening to our people and the meaning of my own life, that the great internal upheaval took place, and I realized that the path ahead would be one of struggle.

The war certainly brought about a concentration of experiences, but it has only intensified my views, not pacified them. Today, I see no difference in the magnitude of the moment when I recall the day the Führer came to power, the day a speech of his was given, all the great events of the last few years of our people's rise, or the 18-day campaign.

I am filled to the brim with experience, and not just since September 2nd, 1930. Outwardly, something new has happened - inwardly, it has only been a continuation.

Even if the outbreak of war does not bring anything new, it does strengthen my desire to participate even more in the fate of the nation, to move even closer to the core of the power around which our Greater Germany lawfully revolves - it is partly this struggle that has inspired me to apply for membership in the party.

I had voluntarily put this off often enough, realizing that it was not yet my turn and that I had to prove myself more to show that I was worthy. I no longer accept this. It was no longer possible to be faithful in secret and follow the great events from afar with only a passionate heart.

I wanted and got more work: to look after a block. The war gave birth to my decision to join the party, but even that was nothing new - it was just a continuation, an exposure of my work and faith to the spotlight. In this work lies the meaning of my existence and the difficulties of my everyday life - but please do not conclude that this is the case for everyone! No, ration cards and vouchers, coal and crowded subways are perhaps the be-all and end-all of the entire war for some people, unfortunately! These are, of course, easy and convenient topics to work on and improve.

De Lagarde once said that great events take place at the very moment they occur. Not allowing this inevitable 'taking' to become the main burden on the people around us is what I wanted, want, and must work toward.

You see, even such activity we commit to now must have started much earlier than September 1939; I can explain this fact most clearly to you by comparing it to Cornelius Friebott from 'Volk und Raum'. He still seems to me to be a person who is very similar to me in his way of thinking, even though he came from the SPD and I came from the 'reactionaries.'

First clear the table, seek clarity again and again, but then apply it on all the many unknown fronts of everyday life in the small circle in which one finds oneself. The greatest reward is when you feel success! When you are clear about yourself, you are successful.

Working here on the smallest scale must be the greatest task and meaning of life for some, for it is clear that even the smallest activity will serve the greater whole, and thus the will and work of our Führer, who wants only the best, will achieve his desires: to give Germany the strength and space to establish peace and justice for itself and the world.

I also greet you in loyal comradeship."

Heil Hitler!

Erich Q.

"Neither a Gift Nor a Miracle"

In the West, March 1940

"After six months of war, we are on the brink of the final battle. In his speech on January 30th, the Führer said that our enemies will get the fight they wanted. We will fight for victory; there will be no more negotiations.

All over the world, people are asking what the Führer will do; in Germany, too, both at the front and at home, this question is raised every day. People are discussing the means and methods the Führer could use or which he could employ.

Again and again, people ask whether there is not some way to achieve victory and avoid the final battle. Yes, perhaps a miracle will happen overnight, and in the morning we will read in the newspaper that we have won. We have already experienced this with Austria, and with Bohemia and Moravia.

Germany shall and will prevail through the strength of its arms and through the spirit of those who gave their lives for the cause. We National Socialists want this victory to last for a long time, and that is why it must be fought for, because only through struggle can victory and a legacy be achieved.

The seizure of power on January 30th, 1933, was no miracle for the party, nor was it easy, since the NSDAP had millions of supporters - it was the success of a 14-year struggle that demanded sacrifice after sacrifice.

Over 400 Germans sanctified their worldview with their deaths. Countless others were wounded and suffered material losses. The work of awakening the German people and preparing them for the great confrontation with the enemies of Germany, whose final battle we are now fighting, was enormous.

National Socialism, once it came to power, secured the state and progressed from success to success because the party was not a collection of interested parties or an opportunistic enterprise, but a fighting community of the highest order. Everything that happened after 1933 was based on the movement's struggle for power. Providence has given us one thing, however, and that is our Führer - but it is his genius and his iron will that have produced the results we have been able to experience in such abundance since 1933.

Germany's triumphs are the successes of a straightforward policy, not miracles. Munich in 1938 was not a sign of our current enemies' willingness to make peace¹⁹, but rather a recognition of their inability to destroy Germany by force of arms. Why they dared to go to war anyway is not something we will examine here.

The Western powers and those behind them have forced us to defend the Reich with arms and to secure our living space. We do not fear the coming struggle, but we are proud that we may be there when it comes to defending the Reich. Our grandfathers fought for the Second Reich, and we want to do the same, because the great German Reich will belong to us and our children.

If we do not live to see victory, then we will have fought for our children, and we will not have died in vain. We do not want a Reich that is handed to us on a silver platter - if you do not risk your lives, you will never win your freedom.

It will not be possible without sacrifice. These coming sacrifices are just as necessary as those of National Socialism in the period from 1920 to 1933. They should give us the spirit to endure everything and become a legacy for the German people for all time. The dead of the World War, the dead of the movement, and the dead of the present war should be a sign to the generations after us of what Germans were capable of sacrificing for the greatness of their Reich.

This time, there can be no understanding, because the worldviews of National Socialism and liberalism are fighting their great battle, which can only end with the complete downfall of one or the other. We know that there can only be one victor, and that is Germany, which is why we are eager for battle. We know that we may fall, and we are prepared to give our lives so that Germany may live.

Without struggle and without sacrifice there can be no victory; let us all remember that. The German armed forces are ready and awaiting the Führer's orders. They do not want miracles, but victory, through their weapons and through their spirit."

Heil Hitler!
P., Lance Corporal

“Far Too Little”

¹⁹ Referring to the Munich Agreement of 1938.

Ulm, February 1940

"The war forced the hotel in Kleve to close, as Kleve was mainly visited by Dutch people; this meant that I was also forced to look for another job, which I found in Ulm. Two weeks ago, I wrote you a little note at the Karlsruhe train station, because I am very happy to have become a mother. My little Ute is in the Hohenhorst home, but thanks to the kindness of the 'Lebensborn' organization, she will soon be brought to Wiesbaden. Then I will be able to see my daughter more often until I can take her home with me. This makes everything we have to sacrifice on the home front for the war seem very small. Actually, what we have to do is a lot, but it is not enough. We have already gained so much through the Führer, and he has demanded so little of the German people.

How bleak my situation would be if I had not had the great good fortune to be able to give at least one child to the state. I had not had the opportunity to marry until now, because in my prime, (I am now 33), times were so turbulent that I did not find the right man, and now I am happy in the knowledge that I can offer my child a nice home through my profession.

Although I have never been married, this fact would have been quite difficult for me in the past, and now I have the certainty that I will be able to describe this development to my child later in a free Germany.

No, I don't have any everyday difficulties to overcome, because despite the war, we are much better off than we were in the past. Back then, as an employee, you always had the feeling of how long it would be before you could work, and today, provided you perform well, of course, you are an employee who is valued and treated accordingly.

We all feel safe in the new Germany. The Führer acts on our behalf, and we only have to follow his orders and live and act decently. Is there anywhere else in the world where that is the case?

During the war with Poland, we were only afraid that the Führer would be endangered by those damned snipers. May he never put himself in danger like that again.

We heard nothing about the assassination attempt in Munich²⁰, as I was at the Hohenhorst home with my daughter for a few days. The administrator had asked that the young mothers not be told. Hopefully, the instigators will get their just deserts."

Heil Hitler!

Lene B.

"The First Commandment"

Munich, February 1940

"My existence, like that of every German who truly experiences current events with their heart and soul, is today more than ever dominated by the Führer's will to shape the future. My attitude and outlook are

²⁰ Referring to the attempted assassination attempt on Hitler in November 1939, during a speech in a Munich beer hall.

determined by my unconditional trust in him, by my unshakeable belief in his mission in world history, and by the confidence with which I can look to the future for my fatherland, my family, and myself.

Anyone who has eyes to see and ears to hear can and must admit that this time we did not slide into war unexpectedly; they can see for themselves the prudence, energy, and consistency with which the leadership of the people has created the indispensable conditions for the struggle. They can find proof that this time no black or red traitors and scoundrels are shaking the home front because every German can do his duty for the most important cause without worry, the most important needs of a decent man are properly taken care of, i.e., the provision and protection of his wife and children.

Because I am absolutely certain that this struggle will be won, because it must be won, and because I would like to swear that, in the end, the Führer will see to it that the gang of swine who brought it about will pay for the havoc they have wrought, I am experiencing the war, insofar as it affects my family and personal interests, with a feeling of almost stoic calm.

However, experiencing this war firsthand as a German stirs up pretty much the entire range of emotions at my disposal, from rage and anger at the perfidious, mendacious intentions and deeds of our oh-so-democratic enemies, to the desire for revenge; to repay our enemies with interest and compound interest; to shout with joy to be alive in this world-shaking age, and to express unbridled pride in the Führer, in my fatherland, and in my people.

Only this feeling of security and order, the faith in which one lives, allows one to experience this struggle for our national existence or non-existence with one's whole heart and all one's feelings.

It is like an individual's fate: a person who has something great in mind that requires his entire commitment will be poorly focused and skeptical about this undertaking if he starts out burdened with a pack of domestic worries and minor obstacles.

Based on this attitude, I do not wish to comment on the "difficulties of everyday life" or "decisions of a private nature," etc. After all, the former are not such that they cannot be overcome with a reasonable amount of good will and adaptability. The latter, however, ultimately depend on the individual's attitude toward life in general.

This brings me to your very serious question: 'How do people see the great task and meaning of their lives in the context of current events?'

At first glance, my views on the meaning of life are very prosaic. This is not changed by the fact that I have adopted the following saying as my motto:

*'I slept and dreamed
that life was joy.
I awoke and saw
that life was duty.
I acted, and behold
duty was joy.'*

I despise dogmatism with all my heart; the primary reason for this contempt is rooted in the fact that the supposed commandments of God do not contain the commandment that entitles humans to life and existence in the first place.

The fact that this commandment is not mentioned is one more reason for me to believe that religions owe their existence primarily to the need for certain phenomena and trends of the times - otherwise, the first and most important commandment would have to be included in the Ten Commandments, which can be formulated succinctly as follows: **Work!**

Work! Do something worthwhile, try with all your means to achieve the best in the shortest time in the field of activity suited to your aptitude and intelligence! Never believe that you have already achieved your best! Always seek to discover the achievements of others that are better than your own, and then try with all your might to improve on these other achievements!

You must love your work as you love your own child, for it is like a child, a part of you, your image; it is as grateful and ungrateful as your child; it gives you joy and sorrow like your child.

If you work like this and love like this, you will never, ever be able to regard your work as a 'cash cow'; you will never work in order to live, but you will always live in order to be able to work.

Diligent, honest, and loving work is the foundation of your people; it is the foundation of your family and your culture. Through diligent work, regardless of its nature, you will become a useful member of the community, because, first of all, you create value and contribute to its prosperity and culture, and secondly, through your work alone you are able to start a family and raise children; it allows you to educate them to be proper and healthy Germans, and thus contribute to the strength, power, and glory of your fatherland.

Work done in this way always and automatically brings with it material success, which in turn allows you to raise your standard of living and your cultural level, and to enjoy the beauties and pleasures of the world in a meaningful and justified way.

Unfortunately, I must stop, otherwise this will turn into a book.

I ask you, is proper, loving work not perhaps the ups and downs of life? Is it not true that those who love their work love all their duties, that for them there are no longer any duties at all, because every duty becomes the joyful fulfillment of an inner need? Is this perhaps a expression of utopia or abstract idealism? No, it cannot be, because I try to live by it and am happy, if not satisfied.

But what is satisfaction? The moment a person is satisfied with themselves, they are already on the path to decline. They already carry within them the first seeds of decadence, like a people who have lived for many years in luxury, debauchery, and peace. Work and struggle must be preached to the individual and to the people as the most desirable and lovable thing, the primary thing in life.

In my opinion, this is one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest, tasks of National Socialist education of the people.

Unfortunately, as you know as well as I do, we are still far from achieving the principle of joy in duty as an indestructible common good; I see it every day in my professional practice how some people have not understood the meaning of their actions and how much they suffer as a result.

It is always an experience and a great pleasure for me when I meet someone who shares my views, or when I succeed in interesting young people in particular in the right relationship between people and their work and duties.

You may ask what all this has to do with current events - I would have to answer 'everything' and would never write to you again."

I greet you with,
Heil Hitler!
Albert S.

"I Want to Prove"

Ludwigsburg, March 1940

"Since we recaptured eastern Germany, I have made the firm decision to move there as well. My husband has been assigned by the German Reichsbahn to the former Polish territory since September 20th, 1939. He is now a board member at the Koziencice train station (near Radom). I now would like to ask you how long it will take before we are allowed to move to the east. To be honest, I can hardly wait; I would like to leave right away. Is that not possible?

I always think of the many Germans from Galicia and Volhynia, of the many sacrifices these people have made. They left their homes and farms, which would be out of the question for me.

I am so happy that my long-awaited wish may finally come true. (I always wanted to emigrate, to Africa or somewhere else, but never had the opportunity.) But even greater is my joy at being able to contribute a tiny little bit to our beloved Führer's goal of making Germany great and eternal.

I am also convinced that I am capable of doing so: in 1934/35, I did six months of voluntary labor service in East Pomerania, even though I should have been earning money. My father was unemployed for about six years. We are four siblings, so it was a great sacrifice for my parents to give me up for six months as the eldest - but I gained more during my labor service than I would have earned in that time.

My parents were well rewarded for this sacrifice, and my two sisters (twins), who are leaving school next year and going to a rural youth camp, will be able to fulfill their duty more easily than I was able to. (I want to make up for that now).

I am now 25 years old, married since 1936, and have two little girls. I want to create a beautiful and large home for my children in particular, and they should be able to become useful people for Germany in this new home.

I have to wait until this war is over? As a German from the Old Reich, I want to show our ethnic Germans, who have had to endure so much and made so many sacrifices, who are alone in the world, that we too are ready at any time to make sacrifices for a new and great Germany."

Heil Hitler!
S.L.

“Suitable For Work in the Homeland”

Weilburg, January 1940

"In March of last year, I received a letter from you similar to the last one you sent me. At that time, I was seriously ill in bed; every evening, a high fever caused the mercury in the thermometer to rise to 39.5 and 40 degrees Celsius. That is why my sister had to assist in my reply by writing for me. Today, I am well again.

Almost a whole year has passed between then and now; however, this period encompasses history that otherwise could not be found in centuries.

When I was able to get up in April 1939, I had to go to a sanatorium because of lung disease. Do you know what that means? I don't want to talk about it. You have to deal with this cursed stuff on your own. The time in the sanatorium was a period of extreme political tension - I myself was now condemned to live uselessly from day to day, an existence without meaning, and yet it was a time of reflection. In short, I recovered from my illness disproportionately quickly.

On September 1st, the first day of the campaign in Poland, my suitcases were packed an hour after the Führer's speech in the Reichstag had ended. How could I stay any longer in the seclusion of a sanatorium? Does one's own health even matter in times like these? No. I obtained my immediate discharge, allowing me to report for duty at my office – the city administration – on September 2nd.

On September 3rd, I started work at our city's refugee office, where I was assigned to the bed allocation department. My job was to help our fellow citizens who had been forced to leave their homes in the Saar and Eifel regions because a criminal clique in London and Paris had decided so.

This debt owed by Chamberlain, Churchill, Daladier & Co. remains unpaid and awaits settlement. Although we were only a transit district and not a rescue district, the events of those first days of the war are unforgettably etched in our memories. The call of the Reich Leader of the SS, 'Do more than your duty,' became the guiding principle for all our actions, as it did for every other decent German.

Once our refugee office had enough volunteers – lecturers and professors from the HfL²¹ – I was assigned to the economic office of our city. Here, I first had to issue or reject ration cards for textiles and footwear. This was done in a certain way to keep bitterness and emotional outbursts among our fellow citizens to a minimum, because unfortunately, even with all the generosity, things didn't always go so smoothly. I have to give credit where credit is due and criticize where criticism is due.

The vast majority of the population accepted all restrictions willingly and lightheartedly, as a matter of course. The other, thank God, small or very small minority showed a lack of understanding that is saddening.

Now the offices have been separated. For about three months now, I have been responsible to my boss, the mayor of the city, for the proper management of the affairs of our city's food office. The work is done for the people and is therefore somewhat satisfying.

²¹ Hereditary Health Court.

Now back to me.

On September 27th, I went to the military district command in Wetzlar for my physical examination. The result of the examination was more than devastating for me as an old Nazi, because it read: 'Fit for work in the homeland'.

Despite urgent pleas to the district military commander, Colonel B., this result was unfortunately not changed. But I have not given up hope of being allowed to wear the gray uniform.

Now would be the time to defend one's convictions with a weapon in one's hand. Is there really no way to do that? My father died as a 100% war invalid. Am I, his son, to be a bad heir?

Certainly, the concept of the inner front has been created today. It did not exist in 1914-18 - the Führer writes in 'Mein Kampf' that he cannot consider any man who did not put on the gray uniform at that time to be a man.

The district leader has also assigned me a place on this internal front - since December 1st, 1939, I have been head of the youth department within the DAF in his war staff.

As district youth leader, I have taken on a position that requires a cheerful sense of responsibility. In wartime, I find this task of looking after the creative youth of a large district particularly rewarding - here, too, the motto is: 'Do more than your duty'. I am only at the beginning of my work, but there is fertile ground to work on. Success cannot and must not fail to come.

There were no big decisions to be made. Everything I did was so self-evident that there was no need to say a word about it. Of course some days bring minor or major difficulties, but how ridiculously small these are when we compare them to the work of our leadership. Despite all the hardships, let us also think of the sacrifices that every soldier is making out there. Isn't everything else insignificant in comparison? And ultimately, every difficulty is there to be overcome. A courageous heart and a clear mind will master everything. After all, we are National Socialists.

Now, in wartime, every man's life has only one meaning, namely to fight. Those who are fortunate enough to be out there on the front lines are granted the privilege of living in the highest perfection of manhood. We men on the home front, on the other hand, have the task of working with double the effort and dedication, as the Führer expects of us.

Here in this country, we know no other task than to serve the people with all our strength. The external front is holding. The internal front will not disgrace it. This time, the German people are truly united - and this unity will defeat every enemy.

Should the war now last longer and demand the heaviest blood sacrifices, it is clear that nothing can keep me in my homeland. Then life will begin to take on its ultimate meaning for me as well.

In good comradeship and loyal solidarity, I send you my warmest regards,"

Heil Hitler!

Wilhelm P.

"These 'Paladins of God'"

Berlin, February 1940

"When war broke out in 1914, my first painful thought was: 'You're too young to contribute'. I wasn't even 14 at the time and envied every girl and woman who was allowed to go out and help our brave soldiers.

Gradually, I found my calling: I collected donations for the Red Cross, knitted socks, sent books and parcels to the front, and wrote letters—many, many letters.

The longer the war went on, the more my correspondence expanded - in every letter that came to me from the front, whether fluently or awkwardly written, I saw the soul of a German man who was out there fighting for me and giving his blood for our country. I wrote letters into the night to express my gratitude, and soon felt that I was the one who was being given a gift.

My view broadened beyond the borders of my small hometown, and I realized early on that it is always the man who matters, never the coat he wears; it was no coincidence that I tied the knot with a soldier who had fought on the front and in the Baltic states.

And now this war, which I still cannot believe in. Once again, I cannot go out to fight - the children need their mother, so my place is at home this time too. I only write letters to relatives in the field; otherwise, I think I am too old for that now.

Writing letters to the front is the wonderful task of our young girls, and I am very happy that the radio and other organizations are providing addresses. But the girls shouldn't just settle for an address; they should write as much as they can. The front doesn't want frivolous letters, but joy, freshness, and youth.

How has the war changed my private life? Outwardly, very little. My husband is still at home and continues to work. Inconveniences such as blackouts and food rationing are only to be welcomed as protective measures for us. I am amazed that it is possible to give a population of 80 million people exactly what they need at any given time.

I consider this organization a marvel. How fortunate we are!

About 20 years ago, I heard a young girl say during a train journey: 'All we had was dry bread!' A venerable woman replied: 'Thank God you still had that. We didn't even have that!' She was a German woman who had been interned in enemy territory during the war.

I will never forget that woman, nor the appreciation she had even for dry bread. With how good we have it, we can't even begin to discuss sacrifice or deprivation.

Winter is proving harsh this year. We did not expect it to be so, and that is why we have some cause for sorrow. But what do we know? Fate gave us a Führer, the dream of our fathers of a Greater German Reich has been realized, and now we can show whether we deserve such a privilege.

Oh, over there in England, they pray so fervently in their churches that we may suffer, that we may hunger and freeze, we German mothers, and become bitter and weary in the face of our children. Yes, we are becoming bitter, but not in the way those gentlemen over there think.

Every hardship only brings us closer to our Führer, because we know that our worries are his worries. But hatred is growing in us against people who avoid fighting man to man, who kneel before their Lord and pray for hardship and death for women and children.

A memory comes back to me: It was here in Berlin, and by chance I took part in a gathering of young students. The topic was world religion. A young Englishman made the claim: 'We English embody it in its purest form. We have brought the most works of love into being of all peoples.' And he began to list them. But an Indian student interrupted him and began listing them himself. A friend threw him the words he couldn't find.

Accusation after accusation was hurled at us all, leaving us all shaken. 'Your religion is supposed to be a religion of love?' Scorn, contempt, and fanatical hatred glowed in the Indian's eyes.

But we know better. The English destroyed half our lives, drove so many Germans to their deaths, denied countless children the right to live, they, these 'paladins of God'. And now we women and mothers are supposed to fall for their hypocritical posturing again? They can't even believe that themselves.

The whole world worshipped them as the master race; even we Germans were proud when England commanded: 'The Germans to the front!'²² Now they are so sure of themselves over there that you have to tear the mask off their faces by force so that they can see themselves.

I am only glad that the rest of the world is gradually waking up and no longer allowing itself to be so easily misused as a front for England's godly, but in reality cunningly selfish, goals. These are the thoughts that move me inwardly.

Above all, of course, gratitude, great gratitude to our Führer, to his Wehrmacht, to every single soldier, that we German mothers can put our children to bed every evening with such confidence and faith in them.

My task in these times? What can I say from my humble position? I would like to put it this way: I am privileged to be living in one of the greatest eras of German history. As a child of my people, I want to prove myself worthy of this era, come what may... As a mother of German children, I want to burn the concept of 'fatherland' into their souls."

Heil Hitler!
Erna W.

"My Draft Notice"

Essen, February 1940

"Today I received my draft notice.

I volunteered at the beginning of the Polish campaign. However, I was not accepted because there were enough soldiers. Today, my fervent wish has come true: I am being sent away as a tank gunner.

²² In reference to the famous line said by Admiral Seymour during the retreat to Tientsin during the Boxer Rebellion.

My wife is a brave and understanding person who understands me completely. I am married and have a little girl. Precisely because I am 31 years old, I will prove that I can keep up with the active soldiers—it is good that I served in the SA for many years.

SA sports, a healthy lifestyle, and an understanding wife, coupled with an unbridled hatred of England and Judah, will make my time as a soldier happy and easy."

Heil Hitler!
Heinrich K.

“For Our Cradles”

Magdeburg, end of February 1940

"In your letter, you yourself write of the great, epoch-making times in which we live in, and whose final outcome we can only guess at for the time being. In such times, however, I personally find it impossible to relate my own small fate to the greater whole.

For me, this war is merely a continuation of our National Socialist struggle in a different form. During the struggle, however, we all put our personal thoughts aside and did not ask what good or bad might come of it for us personally. We had only one thought and one goal: victory.
Should it be any different today?

Furthermore, I would consider it arrogant to describe my impressions of my homeland while my comrades are fighting, bleeding, and dying outside of it. If, under these circumstances, I am allowed to say anything at all about the effect of the war on me personally, then it is the bitter realization that I am not allowed to take up arms to fight for my people.

For over 17 years I have been a volunteer soldier of the Führer, and now, when it comes to standing up for what has been preached for so many years, I have to stay at home.
Of course, I realize that I may be able to serve my people better in my current position than on the front lines and that my desire to go abroad is somewhat selfish. However, I believe that you will understand my feelings nonetheless.

Unfortunately, there are people who cannot understand this because I have a wife and child. What do these philistines know about National Socialism and the meaning of life? This is what gives the fight on the front its true meaning: to protect the blood in the cradle and thus secure immortality for oneself and one's people.

This reminds me of a few verses that came to mind when I looked at my child, and with which I would like to conclude this ‘war letter’:

***‘There you lie in your cradle,
My own flesh and blood;***

*Every feature speaks
Of the spirit and legacy of your forefathers.
You are a link in an endless chain,
from ancient times long since lost,
You are, when I lay down to rest,
My faith in immortality."*

Heil Hitler!
Hans S.

"My 50th Birthday"

Hannover, February 1940

"First, a brief apology: I have been recovering from complications due to a heart attack since August last year and therefore did not dare to 'stroke' the typewriter.

Today is my 50th birthday, and thoughts are racing through my head: I lived through a war, am now eking out an existence as a severely disabled veteran, have been a party member since February 1931, and now there is war again. It all flashes through my mind like a movie—and I must respond to your letter! Yes, I must, because it is a heartfelt desire.

For years I have lived frugally and modestly, because even the 'time of peace' was a preparation for a 'great becoming' for me. What does it matter that my wife has been working in a ration office since August 25th and I have taken on some more household chores and learned how to peel potatoes, etc.? We've already been prepared for this. It is also necessary, even if it means losing a few hours of free time - soldiers in the trenches have to work overtime too.

I have no difficulties in everyday life, except perhaps explaining to other people why England declared war on us and why every single member of the national community must, for the first time ever, firmly grasp the wheel of the state carriage so that the way may finally be opened for the truly capable in the world.

What does it matter to have to live through war, currency devaluation, the Jewish state, years of struggle if we know that all of it will be worth it in the end? In other words, these turbulent times have led us to a great epoch, and I am now firmly convinced that your children will be the beneficiaries or shapers of a new era and will leave their children a truly great and beautiful fatherland!

The real fighter always views his own success with modesty; he fights for higher goals, and since I was once prepared to give my life for this in 1914, I am willing to devote the rest of my life to helping Germany achieve once and for all what it deserves: recognition, respect, and living space - may the one who sent us our Führer grant us this."

Heil Hitler!

Heinrich F., disabled veteran

“Back in Shape”

Standort, February 1940

"As a World War I veteran and party member, of course I put my field gray uniform back on when the war broke out! Funnily enough I recently spent a few days on vacation dressed in simple civilian clothes, and the schoolboys on Ludendorffstraße stared at me in amazement:

‘Hey, what's happened to our captain? Has he gone to join the duds on the home front?’

Now I'm back in shape. The worst thing that could happen to me now would be physical failure, which is certainly a possibility given my advanced age. I want to be in the thick of things now; they'll find a place for me somewhere, I know this place like the back of my hand.

How has the war affected my personal life? Simple: the tremendous difficulties I have overcome since crossing the German border east of Verviers on November 25th, 1918, have not been in vain. My innermost conviction and my belief in the resurgence of our people have always encouraged me to persevere.

Ever since I believed in the Führer, around 1927, the course of events seemed inevitable and self-evident to me - nothing could surprise me anymore, not the crisis in the summer of 1938, nor August 1939. The 18-day campaign filled me with the utmost admiration; what was achieved there through the cooperation of the leadership and the troops is probably unique in the history of warfare.

All the worries and hardships of everyday life are overcome through meaningful and comradely cooperation; like the proverbial saying of the old sailor, nothing can shake us, because we are completely absorbed by the overwhelming magnitude of events.

Our entire past lies far behind us, like a misty distance. Our whole being is spellbound, focused on the future; the hour is fleeting, the great test for each and every one of us is approaching - the Führer is our role model, and we follow him joyfully and courageously.

The two million dead of the World War have risen from their graves and are marching with us - The comrades to whom we read the last farewells to their wives and children from their dying eyes, the fallen of the Movement, the victims of the ethnic Germans in Poland, the blood shed throughout the world for centuries for the cause of Germanism - German paganism of all ages has risen from the graves and lined up for the last great roll call in the ‘most decisive year of German history’.

To victory! These thoughts leave no room for petty and personal concerns: We are now only parts of a greater whole."

In old loyalty,
Heil Hitler!
Wilhelm F., Captain

“A Little More Work”

Dortmund, February 1940

"...some will have felt a kind of shame that fate has assigned them a thoroughly insignificant role, a role somewhere in the background, where the waves of current events ebb away, where they have no opportunity to give their best. Yes, how fortunate were those whom man's good fortune allowed to protect their homeland and families with weapons in their hands, or those whom, for example in business, it called to a position that demands the complete dedication of their personalities! They could and should—even though the unknown private of the World War would never have done so himself!—rightly claim that the war has invaded their personal existence, that it demands real “decisions” from them, and that they have “difficulties” to overcome.

They see the meaning of their lives in the fulfillment of their duty, in the spirit of Frederick the Great, and perhaps they also measure the proud good fortune of their chosen status by the greatness of the tasks assigned to them—but they do not make a fuss about things that they consider to be natural consequences of war.

How, then, should someone who is not one of these chosen few behave - someone whose working day is hardly any different from what it was before? What sacrifice has he made in comparison to those who are prepared to give up everything, to risk everything, at any moment?

Wouldn't it elicit a pitying smile from them if he, of all people, were to talk about 'decisions' and 'difficulties' or even mention that the war was interfering with his personal life—just because he has to impose a few restrictions on his lifestyle that are, in the end, so infinitely insignificant?!

What does it really mean, what the war has demanded of us, the army of those who stayed at home, so far? A little more work, a certain inner adjustment, a simple understanding of necessary measures, increased discipline—but are these things unknown to us Germans, and even to a National Socialist?

Let's be completely honest: what the war has changed in the regular course of our lives, what decisions it demands of us, what difficulties (which usually come more from people than from events...) it has presented us with—none of that is worth mentioning. We are left with one regret at most: that the hour has not yet come when we can put all our strength, of which we are truly capable, to use! For we will only have fulfilled the meaning of our lives when we can say of ourselves: I was there, I too helped—and if we cannot say it ourselves, then at least our children should be able to say it of us."

Heil Hitler!

Hans Otto K.

“The New Life”

In the Field, February 1940

"Dear comrades, first of all: Before the World War, I was a cadet for four years, then an active officer, took my leave, became a reserve captain in 1912, and went abroad two years before the war. I was like thousands of others: fleeing Canada at the outbreak of the war, I was captured and interned for four years in France and one year in Switzerland.

Since the beginning of the war, I have been serving as a battalion commander at the age of 62; with a few exceptions, all of my men are World War I veterans. It is not easy for me to stand at the front as a leader, the only one without a war decoration. It is a constant inner struggle against feelings of inferiority, a burden on a person with the task at hand.

That this duty is fulfilled nonetheless is a matter of course. I consider myself not only a military leader, but also, as is my duty, a caregiver for my men in the broadest sense. A company consists of men from the Saarland, from the evacuated zone.

After being called up, the men heard nothing from their families for up to six weeks, but silently did their duty. There was a lot of worry; there was much to advise, help, and intervene.

The urgent military task, combined with looking after the men, absorbs people to such an extent that other everyday difficulties are completely forgotten - it is as if the time before the war has been forgotten and a completely new life has begun.

If I occasionally feel a little tired, I look to my own people, these men who are now taking on the burden of war for the second time, as a matter of course, and are doing so willingly and wholeheartedly.

The task is too great and too beautiful not to inspire every German man - from the beginning, I have drummed into my people their anger against the 'Engelmänner'²³ (I know them well enough personally), and now the Führer has expressed in his speech on January 30th what I expected on that day: Economic liberalism in Germany is finished; now the fight against world liberalism begins. Since that day, I have called this war the 'Socialist World War.'

I now see the meaning of my life in helping, with total commitment, to destroy the scourge of the world, England, wherever I am placed. I am clear, and my men are clear, that this goal must be achieved in the interests of preserving our fatherland, and that it will be achieved. This should fulfill the meaning of my life as an older person."

With comradely greetings,
Heil Hitler!
Wilhelm R., Captain

"The Lessons of War"

Currently in Dusseldorf, February 1940

"My husband went to war with so much love for our Führer that it wasn't like saying goodbye; on the contrary, 'The Führer called,' and we were both proud. When the boundless loneliness threatened to overwhelm me in the weeks that followed, I only had to think of my life partner to find peace.

²³ The phrase used here is "Engelmänner", and I assume it's a seldom-used German colloquialism that doesn't have much of a presence in any sources that I've read. Given that 'Engel' means "angel" in German and it kinda sounds similar to English, I hazard the guess that it could be making fun of the English sentiment of them being 'representatives of the Christian faith'. I choose to leave this word untranslated in light of this.

A farmer's wife had been unable to help on the farm for years due to an accident: her daughter had fallen ill, and I offered to help out. I was very proud that the whole village was amazed that I was able to do the work at all and that I did it so well. The prediction that I would only help for one day and stay at home the second day did not come true - I stuck it out through the entire beet harvest.

While pulling beets, I strained a tendon in my left arm, but I didn't let on. On the contrary, I gritted my teeth and massaged it thoroughly after work. It was only at the end of the harvest that I showed my hand, and they told me that they now had a different opinion of a city girl. If you want to, you can do anything!

Since Christmas, I have been with my sick elderly mother in Düsseldorf, doing the shopping and helping with the housework, as I have three siblings who are still working. This task does not fulfill me completely, and I will try to find something else to do.

The deeper meaning of my life lies in putting my own 'I' aside and helping others. That is what the war has taught us!

Our great love for our Führer helps us overcome many things, and we want to make sacrifices wherever and however the Führer wants us to. I am proud to have a husband who is a soldier of the Führer with all his heart and soul."

Heil Hitler!

Adele L.

“That’s Our Luck”

Berlin, February 1940

"...should we, who are not yet on the front lines, talk about sacrifices or encroachments on our personal lives? What do we even mean by encroachments - that we cannot eat roast pork or a fat goose every day, that all important foodstuffs are rationed, or that we have to queue for coal and sometimes have none at all?

We can all go about our work in safety, we do not need to go hungry, and we can go to bed at night knowing that others are standing guard for us on all fronts so that we can live in safety.

The word 'sacrifice' is only a relative term that takes shape and comes to life when it is placed in a certain context - and for us, this context is solely the front and, at its head, the Führer.

If we now compare our 'sacrifices' with those on the front, then no one can speak of interference in their personal lives, except for those compatriots who have had to leave their homes temporarily because the front is in the immediate vicinity.

This is not to say that everything in the homeland is blissful and that there are no difficulties to overcome. But therein lies another blessing - the blessing that we can help to overcome these difficulties and thus contribute in a very small way to achieving the Führer's goal, for which the war must be fought.

I myself am fortunate to be able to play an active part in events: as a block warden for the NSV, I have about 800 food ration cards to distribute, and anyone who knows how complicated such a distribution is will know how much work it involves. I sometimes face difficulties when I come home after eight hours of study and then six to eight hours of work, and then this work still has to be done. Why should I deny it? But then I feel the joy of being able to help overcome the difficulties in my homeland.

The best thing is when you go to the individual members of the community and bring them their cards - in every conversation, you hear how much understanding everyone has for the minor inconveniences caused by the ration card system and the cold winter of the world war, and how everyone is willing to do their part to win this war. All this without a lot of rhetoric or jingoism, with a simple matter-of-factness.

Everyone has recognized the magnitude of the times and sees in their small sacrifices the natural contribution of our generation to achieving the goal of our Führer: a free, strong Germany. My letter may not be the right answer to your letter, but I didn't know what else to write."

Heil Hitler!
Siegfried W.

“Still Not Enough”

Poppelau, February 1940

"As someone who had suffered during the World War and had been employed in a Wehrmacht factory for years, my request to be allowed to go to the front as a soldier was denied. It is a sentiment shared by many of my comrades - I wanted to participate, but I wasn't allowed to. What had previously been taken for granted was suddenly perceived as an oppressive duty: obedience.

We, the people of Germany, followed the events of those 18 days with all the more passionate involvement and grim satisfaction. For years we had carried the torment within us: 'Everything these people build is destroyed!' --- 'A century of German diligence - a single mockery!' No, no, not anymore! Adolf Hitler's Germany will not be mocked - with a single blow, the people who undertook to be the henchmen of the will to destroy Germany were crushed. The East, the German East, is free again!

Excuse me my comrades, I have to shout it out of my soul. It is still hard to believe - what was lost after four and a half years of bloody struggle has been regained in eighteen days. Anyone who is not yet aware of the significance of this time is not living, but spiritually dead.

How often in the centuries has Germany been the bulwark against the flooding of the West by the Asian evil spirit and its barbarism? Now the storm has turned and is blowing from the West. It is the same evil spirit that only wants to reap what others have sown; peoples who once benefited from the fact that Germany's youth bled to death for centuries in defense against such storms now 'thank' us with a cold will to destroy. But—and even the smallest pimp²⁴ knows this—we will deal with them just as well. We'll deal with them quickly and decisively, and one day, the word “peace” will regain its German meaning.

²⁴ Nickname for a German youth.

Who could sit calmly at the breakfast table while robbers surround their house and try to set it on fire, complaining about the crispness of the rolls or the pattern of their tie? How can one seriously debate emergency measures that are, after all, for the good of the general public, when it is a matter of thwarting the enemy's intentions? This question and others like it form the content of the daily minutiae with which I am allowed to participate, in my modest way, in the struggle on the home front.

When I return to the local group in the evening after 13 to 15 hours of work, this duty begins. Meetings and house calls, consultation hours and desk work often take up my free time until after midnight, yet I still believe I am not doing enough, given the sacrifices so many make every day. Compared to this concern, everything else that others might call 'worries' melts away."

Heil Hitler!

F. Ch.

"It Had To Be Done"

Berlin, February 1940

"...After all, some of what I have to say should be of interest to you - I want to apply a little methodology and start from the following points of view: namely, how I view this decisive struggle as a former German expatriate, as a professional, as a 'private' individual, and, last but not least, as a family man.

As a former German living abroad, I welcome this war! It had to come sooner or later, because it is a fact that the British would never have accepted the rise of our homeland. England would have put obstacles in our way again and again, would have tried again and again to set traps for the Reich—one way or another!

As a professional, I also welcome this war against England! Not because I work for a supreme Reich authority, but because I am firmly convinced that England's will to destroy is directed against the very existence of the entire German people!

I am glad that I can make a small contribution to effectively countering this will to destroy, this brazen, villainous mendacity and frenzy of slander. All personal ambition in professional matters must take a back seat - now it is no longer a question of promotion, higher salary grades, etc.

What more can I write to you? It would only be stating the obvious.

Now, as a 'private' person, which one still is and remains (in the best sense of the word) in Adolf Hitler's Reich, which is so strongly suspected by England, I have certainly not lost my good humor due to the state of war. I rejoice at every enemy ship sunk and every plane shot down.

I admit that if you had asked me to do what the government is asking of me today when I was still living abroad, I would certainly have argued a little. But this war is a good teacher and disciplinarian, and as long as you are willing to learn and maintain good discipline, things are going very well.

I may have had occasion to complain during the past few months, but I keep telling myself: it is war, and what do petty quarrels matter in such momentous times! They cost time and—something the Führer can particularly well do without today—nerves.

Great events make you simpler, less selfish; your criticism becomes healthier, and if you claim to serve your homeland as a German, the complaining stops all by itself!

And as a family man?

Dear comrades: it is better that my children experience a little restriction now and then and grow up later in a strong, secure, and healthy fatherland, where they will be educated and live as free people, than the other way around!

My private beliefs? I think of the Führer and believe in victory!

How do I overcome the difficulties of everyday life? I think of Old England and that the lads over there haven't had it as good as me for a long time, which makes me realize how strong we are, and that puts me in a good mood! I certainly have nothing against butter, bacon, eggs, ham, and chocolate, but I have a pile of books and sheet music.

When I lived in South America, I could buy as much butter as I wanted, but the climate had already spoiled it! But it still worked, even very well. It wasn't ideal, but you could still get by and come to terms with it; but now, in view of these great times, this gigantic struggle for life, we're suddenly not supposed to do that anymore?

The meaning of my life - is it to eat and drink well when England is destroyed? Perhaps, but that is only an afterthought! Otherwise: achieve something, one way or another, either with the pen or with the sword, when the time comes for me!

The ultimate and greatest meaning of my life, today as in the past, when I repeatedly shouted to my South American friends: Germany, Germany, above all!"

Heil Hitler!

W.D.

“That Hurts Me Deeply”

Hanau, February 1940

"Since the outbreak of war, I have not been in touch because, unfortunately, I am still not actively involved in the major events of the day, and that hurts me deeply.

In my professional life as an engineer, I should actually feel right at home; our company is recognized as important to the war effort, so I have a warm and secure job. Outside, though, life is pulsating - people are fighting and building solid new homes.

There is much talk of the inner front, but as a wanderer who has flown over land and sea and stood his ground as a German pioneer, I feel like a bird locked in a cage with this passive bravery - I am disgruntled, very disgruntled, because I am inactive and my knowledge is limited to the daily newspaper and the radio.

What should I write now? There is only one thought: 'We must defeat the enemy.' - And if the "Engelmann" were to offer us honey-sweet peace today, we could only respond with the words of the Bible about the tongues of angels, for there can be no true peace until England has war in its own country or German troops are standing on the Channel.²⁵

We Germans living abroad know British hypocrisy all too well - Germans living abroad and in border regions—I count myself among both—are aware of the harshness of the battle ahead, but they do not shy away from sacrifice, because their dreams have revealed a goal that is clearly worth that sacrifice.

The term 'war aims' always evokes unpleasant memories; we need not think only of Churchill, the noble lord, but only need to remember our own windbags in the last World War.

On the other side of the Westwall, they have been searching for it since September, at least in the parliaments, because the real movers and shakers of history have their goal, as we all know: the atomization of Germany. But they cannot reveal their goals to the public because the last war has not yet been forgotten. It would be like trying to make frozen potatoes taste good again - they look wonderful in the cellar, but when they come out into the light, they rot.

A National Socialist will only set a goal that is selflessly devoted to the welfare of his people, and will not presume to demand more than he and his people deserve - and that is enough. We can already presume to be the most industrious and intelligent people on earth (but for God's sake, let's not ask for any money for it).

The first thing we want is respect, and we can only achieve that when the aura surrounding England, whose stubborn citizens, according to foreign opinion, still come right after God, is destroyed, which can only be done with a sledgehammer. Respect is also a question of space - generous thinking combined with a better distribution of the population will also eliminate the petty friction that sometimes still makes cooperation difficult; no one will then begrudge the other the butter on their bread because they have bigger things to think about. There is also another reason of course... we will all then have enough butter to spread it thickly on our bread, just like the English do.

These are not just wishes; it is our duty to work toward achieving such goals, because what our beloved Führer does obliges us to think less of ourselves and more of the future.

Our generation seems, as our Führer said, to have been born to be martyrs. We gladly accept this as faithful believers who see our neighbors as our fellow citizens.

We are aware that we are fighting for a just cause, for a respectable Reich in which all ethnic Germans find their bread, even those who today give their labor to foreign peoples and reap only ingratitude; a Reich in which we can realize our great National Socialist plans; an Reich that is self-confident and internally strong, demanding nothing from the rest of the envious world, because it is self-sufficient; it is

²⁵ This supports my theory about this German colloquialism.

so strong that it can defend its achievements against all those for whom this war has not yet been a sufficient lesson.”

Heil Hitler!

Carl A.

“The Sons in the Field”

Kitzbühel, February 1940

“...I have both of my sons, whom I love dearly, in the field. My older boy is 22 years old and serves in an intelligence unit, and my younger one is 19 years old, serving as a volunteer somewhere in the west.

As a National Socialist, I found it natural that my sons would follow the call of the Führer; understandably, though, my thoughts are now always with my children, and I fear for their lives and health day and night.

I don't just think of my sons of course - no, my heart beats for all the hundreds of thousands of boys who are risking their lives today for the survival of our Reich, and for all the mothers who have sacrificed their children to stand in the ranks of our field gray.

I experienced the last war as a very young woman 25 years ago and had to let my husband, whom I had been married to for less than eight days, go to the front. Fortune smiled on him and he returned safely in 1918. I hope the same for my children today. I have no other worries.

We will win the war, thanks to the bravery and skill of our soldiers, thanks to our brilliant leadership and, above all, thanks to what our Führer has said: 'In this war, there can only be one victor, and that is us!'

What is required of us on the home front is so little; I know that there are many women who, in addition to their household duties, are also employed, who cheerfully and courageously do double the work, so it would be ridiculous for a woman in my social position to utter even a word of discontent about measures that must be taken for the common good.

We in the countryside are in many ways better off than housewives in the big cities; we never have to wait long in the shops, we get everything we need, and even a woman from the East doesn't mind the small changes in cooking.

I often have the opportunity to talk to women from the countryside about economic issues, and I am always delighted to find that they have the greatest understanding of the current situation. I know what every German woman has realized today—we will persevere because we want to and because we are inspired by unlimited trust in our Führer, who will lead us on the right path.

At the Nuremberg Party Congress in 1937, the Führer addressed the senior leaders of the BDM and HJ in the Ostmark with words that should serve as a prophecy and an obligation to us all today:

'Germany will outlive every hardship!'

In loyal comradeship, I greet you with..."

Heil Hitler!

Amalie K.

“I’m No Weakling, But...”

Unzmarkt, February 26th, 1940

“These foreign gentlemen have an idea of what the German people are like!” said our Führer in his speech on the anniversary of the founding of the party on February 24th, 1940.

I will try to give you some visuals of these words of the Führer, which I have experienced and which should not be withheld from the German people and the worldwide public:

As you know, a book of sacrifices is being published in the Ostmark as part of the German people's winter relief program; I do not know whether this is happening throughout Greater Germany. Here in Unzmarkt, the subscription was opened yesterday at 3 p.m; so far, there have been five hours of subscriptions with a total of 7,869.09 Reichsmarks. This figure will only mean anything to you when you consider the size of the population and the living conditions of the people.

This subscription amount, statistically, is divided among 391 households, or 1,600 people (the total population). To give you an idea of the standard of living of these people, I must describe the countryside to you again:

If you drive from the district town of Judenburg towards Carinthia, you will reach Unzmarkt after half an hour by train or car. It is a narrow mountain valley with very little valley floor and steep slopes covered with magnificent dark spruce forests; there are few lucrative livelihoods here. Most of the inhabitants are woodcutters and forest workers, small and very poor mountain farmers or sawmill workers with an average monthly income of 60 to 120 Reichsmarks.

The people here perform their hard work, made even harder by the war, without complaint.

Festivals and other truly exciting days are few and far between in everyday life here. I would like to list some of the most important of these days for you:

1. The day the Nazis came to power in the Old Reich (January 30th, 1933), which was celebrated here with a large torchlight procession.
2. The days of upheaval in March 1938: torchlight processions were held, and the visit of the Führer, Hermann Göring, Baldur von Schirach occurred. Everyone came from the last Alphenhütte to witness it.
3. Day of the presentation of the book of sacrifices on February 25th, 1940.

Dressed in their Sunday best, with determined, hard faces and shining eyes, they came and made their sacrifices.

I met an 8-year-old boy in front of the door to the registration room; when I asked him if he had been beaten by a comrade because he was crying, he replied that he didn't dare go in because he only had 55 pfennigs!

The maid of a mountain farmer came and signed up for 100 Reichsmarks. I couldn't believe my eyes and asked her for whom she was making this sacrifice - proudly and with shining eyes, she explained to me that this was her sacrifice – so that we might win!

A seriously ill pensioner came up, supported by his daughter, and with great effort signed his name in the donation book and gave 4 Reichsmarks; he was ashamed that he could not give more, because he had been ill for a long time and therefore had no more left to spare.

The poor of the community came and brought me 1, 5, 6 Reichsmarks. They were visibly embarrassed because they could not give more - for them, this was their pocket money for a month or more!

It was just as touching with the children - if the Führer could have seen the determination and conscientiousness with which they emptied their piggy banks to contribute to the victory, and how they leaned their blond heads against the book as they scribbled their names—with flushed cheeks and shining eyes! He would have been compensated for all his hardships!

I have picked out just a few examples at random, but they are true to life; how salutary such images would be for those fools who imagine they can defeat a people led by Adolf Hitler!

I can assure you that I am no weakling. It takes a lot to get me choked up. But during some of these scenes, I really had to pull myself together to be able to return these people's 'Heil Hitler' greeting; my assistant fared no better!

One can truly say, along with the Führer: 'In this struggle, only one can win - and that is us!'"

Heil Hitler!

Franz F.

“You Should Get to Know Us”

In the West, February 1940

"Your letter reached me late, as I gave up the security of my family life in Berlin months ago to serve the Reich and its people somewhere west of our borders.

You calmly raised a big question for me, a question that is more uncomfortable for me than a photographer asking me to pose for a photo; I would rather prefer to ask you to visit my wife in Berlin and ask her to show you some of the detailed letters I have written to my family. In these letters, you will also find my detailed thoughts on the topic you have raised.

You must understand that my wife and I have much, much more to say to each other than talk about the little shortcomings and trivialities of everyday life. Our letters reflect everything that flows from hearts filled with fanatical faith, forming words and confessions that mutually enrich and inspire us in the tasks

and duties of the present day; what you would find in these letters would certainly not be a 'posed picture', but all the more informal and lively for that.

This is the second war I have experienced as a soldier - as a young volunteer, I came from abroad in 1914 and joined the ranks of my Austrian homeland. As a Tyrolean Kaiserjäger, I marched with them and persevered until the end. At that time, I was young, unmarried, and enthusiastic; my fiancée at the time was a brave girl.

When war broke out in September 1939, I was no longer young or single, but just as 'fanatically enthusiastic' as I had been in 1914; my bride from the World War is now my wife and mother of eight children. We lead a harmonious and happy family life - nevertheless, on the first day of the war, I volunteered enthusiastically to go to the front.

When the postman brought me my draft notice, I was beside myself with joy. I spun my wife around in circles, threw myself off the sofa and stretched all four limbs in the air - in short, I behaved like a young poodle. Even my six-year-old boy was amazed at his father's lack of self-control!

How could an old front-line soldier, who had long since shed the romantic illusions of his youth, leave his home and family so 'light-heartedly', and still be happy that he was allowed to go to war? Many shook their heads at me. Only one person understood me completely - she who had already strengthened my heart during the World War as my fiancée: my beloved wife, the mother of eight children, decorated with the Golden Cross of Honor. She did not make my departure difficult with tears and reproaches: 'Gustl, I understand you so well, so do what you must!' That is what she said.

Why did my wife understand me 'so well'? Because we are one, and for years we have been filled with faith, love, and a determined willingness. That also makes us optimists.

We like to say, 'Those who have a sense of humor get more out of life, and out of ration cards' because they adapt easily to the times, and ration cards, clothing allowance points, standard soap, and the loss of this or that pre-war convenience are something they take for granted and consider the least of the 'sacrifices' in these times of momentous decisions. That's how we cope with all the difficulties - my wife at home, me out on the front. We don't complain to each other in our letters, but always find something to tell each other that makes the other happy, strengthens them inwardly, and gives them new energy to persevere.

As East Germans, we are happy to be standing today on the front lines with our fellow Germans under our leader Adolf Hitler. How happy we were when the Führer said in his speech on January 30th: 'Perhaps Monsieur Daladier will get to know my East Germans!' Yes, they should get to know us, the gentlemen on the Seine and on the Thames! We can be as stubborn as our mountains.

In times past, we sometimes did not know what was really going on in our country: we didn't care. That's why we sometimes just muddled along. Our leaders were to blame. But today! Today, we are not deceived by political charlatans. We follow only one voice, the voice of our blood, and only one idea, the one that has found its embodiment in our leader Adolf Hitler.

That is why we will prevail!"

Heil Hitler!

G.A.K., First Lieutenant

After receiving this letter, we asked our comrade's wife to allow us to take a look at the many field post letters from her husband mentioned in the letter. Here are a few excerpts:

*

"...I hope that your wish comes true and that we will see each other again at Christmas. I hope so too. But it is impossible to predict what will happen.

The fatherland is moving forward, and if circumstances require it, I will be a soldier and remain at my post without complaining - the main thing is that we all love each other and that everyone fulfills their duty.

Do you remember, woman, two years ago! 'Sacrifice for the nation!' How our hearts ached back then when we gave up our wedding rings and silently shed a tear because, as 'foreigners', we were not allowed to vote for the Führer. But today we stand on the same front with all Germans. Our enthusiasm has its place and its meaning - mine outside, and yours at home, as a woman and mother. It is here and there that we want to do our best and spare no effort.

Between us: you have never been greater in my eyes and in my love than in those moments when, without words between us, you did the same thing I was about to do: give up what is currently most precious to me for a common ideal.

What we do is not so important; it is the spirit in which we do it that gives sacrifice its value."

*

"...I wrote to you in response to your urgent letter: don't be upset! Today I read the same thing in your letter. Looking out of the window early in the morning gave you this insight and inner attitude.

I am happy for you that you do not allow yourself to be carried away and defeated by such events and manifold circumstances and 'coincidences'. That would not be the attitude of a strong heart.

These are the right kind of people who, even in the most adverse winds, are able to set their sails in such a way that not only does nothing falter, but on the contrary, everything gains even more poise and elastic momentum..."

*

"...Last night, I gave another 'sermon'. From A to Z. I could have written it down afterwards; I doubt that I could speak so freely off the cuff when I'm awake. 'Love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself' was my theme; strictly speaking, it is my own life theme, God and man—I spell out my life with

it. What I have gained from this for myself so far is a few seashells from the ocean, but even this is to give me a sure path under my feet and a goal to strive for.

What I will have to show for my life when it is over will not be a great harvest, but that doesn't matter. My life is not important - what matters is the impact it has.

There in Munich, 16 human lives were once lost to bullets. What does the life of these fallen people matter? In their impact, they contributed significantly to breaking down an outdated human order and paving the way for a new era.

Where and how one falls is irrelevant - what impulses this gives to posterity is what matters.

You, my heart, and I can already see a generation growing up behind us, sprung from our shared flame of love and our own blood—I am thinking now only of our eight children—how long will it be before we make way for them completely?

It marches and drives past my window in the darkness, seemingly endless. Westward!
I turned off the light and stuck my head out the window. I sent silent but strong wishes to my comrades down there. I am ready at any moment to make the sacrifice that some of them will have to make, if I am called upon to do so. No one would see me hesitate if hell opened its jaws. My heart is firm and my nerves are strong - I have understood the meaning and necessity of this.

Long live our Germany and its Führer!"

*

"...I'm more than satisfied with my new place here - and yet...! What 'yet'?"

I would like to trade it for a bunker on the front line. Yes, that's how it is! I can't stand myself here in peace and quiet. What was it that made my throat tighten again today—as it does every time—when I watched a battalion marching forward that had been stationed here for several weeks?
I was standing at the window of my room when the troops marched past with their instruments playing. Maybe one of them envied me when he looked up at my window - but he probably wouldn't believe me if I told him that I envied him too.

As much as I love my wife and children—God knows I have nothing dearer in this world!—they couldn't stop me if the final question were put to me: I would go immediately.

There are things here that are difficult to talk or write about. They easily give others the impression or the thought: well, he has cheesy, sentimental tendencies and dresses them up in even more pompous phrases. A man doesn't talk like that; and if he does, he's a 'show-off.'
So be it. I'm not looking for an audience for my thoughts. I occasionally put little snippets of my inner world down on paper for you - I don't know why. I often resolve not to do it. Afterwards, when the letter to you has gone, I sometimes think: you could have kept that to yourself..."

*

"...My dear wife, who has proven herself to be a brave fighter during our 20 years of marriage – don't let yourself be discouraged by stupid gossip or anything else, even if only for a moment. I can say with certainty that I am going through this time with open eyes and an open heart, and occasionally I observe things that are not always encouraging, but that cannot shake me. I do not dwell on them, but keep my eyes on the big picture. That gives me resilience.

We want to support the weak, be patient with them, and set an example for them; now is the time when the wheat is separated from the chaff, regardless of whether one wears a party badge or not.

I am happy to be living in this time, when everyone, including myself, is given the opportunity to prove their loyalty in the most decisive way..."

*

"...you put it well: 'Pessimists must be sick somewhere.' That's probably true. But the reverse would sound strange: 'Optimists are healthy somewhere.' There is also exaggerated optimism of course, the kind that loses touch with reality and then descends into rambling - that's also repugnant, but surely easier to bear than pessimism.

Enclosed I am sending you Mom's letter, to which I have already replied at length. I picked up on her comment, 'I shouldn't have written that to you' (regarding the dissatisfaction of some people), and provided some explanations on the subject of 'difficulties.'

We cannot get through this war with 'lightheartedness' unless we shirk our duties and, like cowardly Jews, prefer to 'buy our way out' of this time with unscrupulous profiteering.

I felt it was my duty to write my dear mother a 'strong little tract' from time to time for the benefit and edification of those compatriots who unburden themselves to her - how little such people know about the meaning of life and sacrifice and about what makes us strong! Praise be to what makes us strong, not to what causes us to freeze in delicate, pleasant forms."

*

"...as long as I know that the household is in your hands, I am reassured, although I am still always a little anxious and open each of your letters with the silent hope that they contain good news. I need to know that everything is safe and secure at home. Only then can I devote myself entirely to my duties.

When I feel your love and your complete support, it lifts me up even more and makes it easier for me to fight the battle I am called to fight. I am so happy about every loving word from you and rejoice in you with all my heart; if we do not give each other strength and warmth in the strongest unity and harmony of

heart and soul, then we will both become weak and wingless. United, we will overcome every predicament and enjoy every joy twice as much.

Everything I do and don't do is related to you. I don't want to do anything to hurt our unity. Instead, I've always tried to do everything I can to strengthen our unity, deepen our happiness, and keep our love fresh and tender; if anything, I want to be known as a faithful steward of the "treasure" entrusted to me in this relationship.

I am responsible to God for you (as I am for the children). Likewise, you are responsible to me. 'None of us lives unto himself' also applies in this sense..."

*

"...I am slowly preparing myself mentally.

I am fully focused on what is to come, on the great task that I now have the privilege of participating in. There are no reservations in my soul when I put on my helmet and fasten the storm strap. I only wish that each of the 80 million Germans felt this 'duty' and did not hesitate. The job must be done properly. This can only be achieved with an uncompromising heart.

May the Almighty strengthen your good heart and make it great in these great times..."

"Here, Where My Father Stood"

In the West, Sunday, 2nd Day of Rosenmond, 1940

Dear Madam!

"Langemarck, the song of youth rings out once more, and heroism is once again the law for those young men whose fathers lie here in this earth; it was an indescribable joy for me, but at the same time a great responsibility, to stand there a few days ago where my father stood 22 years ago. Perhaps it is impossible to put into words what one feels at such a moment, but it is more than a normal experience - it is the sanctity of life! My thoughts therefore turned back to my ancestors and to the place where my eternity may lie hidden.

I would like to thank you very much for your letter about our days together, and please also thank your dear mother for her lines! The days were beautiful, and heaven will make them rich!

It is becoming increasingly difficult for us to write letters and form words. I think I will soon become as silent as the beautiful soil of my homeland, but why not, since I am a son of that land; with that, don't be angry if the words stop and only a greeting follows.

I greet you with the fervent wish that heaven will preserve what is dearest to you, but remember also that Germany must live and seeds must be sown!

Long live the great German fatherland, long live the Führer!"

Dein W.

“Dear Local Group”

France, July 30th, 1940

Dear Wasserturm Local Group!

"A few days ago, I received your splendid newsletter; as I now belong to a Stuka unit that spends every day romping around with our 'dear friends', the Tommies, I was unfortunately unable to thank you immediately, so I am doing so today on my day off.

What particularly pleased me is that I, hitherto one of the laziest National Socialists, received such encouraging words from you as any old SA man would. I don't need to assure you that such things will now be different for me now, as we have learned here and feel it every day in our own flesh why we run over everything that stands in our way.

Some of Münster's soldiers have returned home; some who fulfilled their oath will be missed. For their relatives, I would like to write a little poem that came to me in a quiet hour. This poem should also show you, dear local group, how we living soldiers stand by the graves of our dead comrades.

‘At the edge of the field in French territory

I walked along, lost in thought,

I found a quiet hero's grave,

Hidden beneath green trees.

Sunbeams played brightly

On the dark arm of the cross.

Who weeps for you, brave comrade,

In your homeland full of sorrow?

Then I stepped into a field of rye,

And gathered a bouquet of flowers.

I placed it on your grave

As a greeting from your loved ones at home.’

I wish you, dear local group, continued success in your work on the home front, and thus also in achieving our final victory, and remain with best wishes for a healthy reunion in our homeland with,”

Heil Hitler!
Your Gefr. W.B.

“Only Duty”

Martigny on the Somme, June 4th, 1940

Dear girl!

"Just a quick hello on this quiet evening, my girl! We are now arriving at another location; something big seems to be in the works after the army was defeated at the canal. We have actually had a few days of rest recently and are now ready to take on new tasks - now it's all about the final victory that will bring lasting peace to our people. The Reich that thousands before us dreamed of will stand, its banner will fly proudly in the wind for centuries—it's not just about this war, it's about the great, powerful life of our people, and we stand in the midst of it with our lives, for we are nothing without it—it lives through us! Let us joyfully commit ourselves to it: we are only doing our duty."

I remain sincerely yours,
Your boy.

“With Silent Greetings”

Frankfurt a.M., July 23rd, 1940

Dear Ms. G!

"We have learned from the local branch of the NSDAP that your husband, our colleague, died a heroic death for the Führer and the Fatherland. Shocked by this news, please accept our sincere condolences. As you can see from the copy of the letter to the NSDAP enclosed here, we have permanently waived the balance of ...Reichsmarks arising from our mutual business relationship; in addition, we have arranged for the transfer of 100 Reichsmarks to you as a small contribution to alleviate any financial worries you may have.

The sacrifice made by your husband, and through him by you too, has not been in vain. Take comfort in the thought that it was the will of the Almighty."

With silent regards,
Heil Hitler!
Ph. R.

“At Home Without Worries”

Berlin, August 1940

Dear Ms...!

"Your husband has been fulfilling his duty to the Führer and the Fatherland for quite some time now. It is not easy for us to do without his valued services; however, in the current situation, business success must take a back seat.

As you know, your husband's travel district is being looked after by a colleague who has remained at home; I assume that you have no financial worries thanks to the generous support provided by the state and the additional voluntary support from the German Herald. However, during my last visit to Bad Kreuznach, I noticed that your health is not as good as it could be. For this reason, I have contacted the management of the German Herald in Berlin and requested that they approve a voluntary financial contribution to help you take care of your health.

Today, the management of the German Herald informed me that our welfare organization will grant you 60 Reichsmarks to assist you in restoring your health. I have transferred this amount to you today.

I hope this news will bring you some joy - should you have any other concerns, please let me know so that I can assist you.

Wishing you a full recovery, I send you my best regards."

Heil Hitler!

K.E.

"A Request"

Köln, September 1940

"Despite my best efforts, I have not yet been able to obtain clearance for military service; my voluntary enlistment in the Waffen-SS has also not yet been finalized.

However, in order to participate in the great events of our time outside of my professional duties and in addition to active service in the general SS, I request that the 'Organisation Todt' grant me the opportunity to offer a Westwall worker four weeks of recreational leave by working at his place of employment; I hope that my small offer will enable four workers to enjoy one week of rest each. It goes without saying that I will not accept any remuneration - I myself worked for two years as an intern in mechanical engineering and then fulfilled my labor service obligation in 1936. I am currently working as a test engineer at the German Aviation Research Institute.

In addition to my 14 days of vacation, I would also request a further 14 days (i.e., a total of six weeks) of special leave or similar from the company.

I trust that my request will not be denied!"

Heil Hitler!

B.

“From Langemarck”

Zörbig, October 12th

“...that is why I want to give you a letter from my son, written in the place where I was wounded on October 2nd, 1917, during the Battle of Flanders.”

*

Langemarck, May 29th, 1940

Dear Parents!

"Today I received your lovely letter confirming that my lines from the battle zone had reached you. Today is a 'day of rest', which means that after several difficult days in which we had to fight for every inch of ground, we have been withdrawn from the front line.

Yesterday we were in Poelkapelle and marched from there to Langemarck. I thought of you every moment, Dad, as we passed the old World War I bunkers, which have now found a new purpose as shelters. Old steel helmets, grenades, and furrowed earth still bear witness to the barrage of gunfire from times past; in the cemeteries of Langemarck, the dead of the World War now lie alongside the fallen of the current war.

The windows of our quarters rattle under the drumfire of the artillery, which is giving the Tommies trapped here a hard time. I believe that their end is soon sealed; after that, many forces will be freed up again to continue whittling down France.

Especially in times of calm, when everything that has happened rolls through your mind again, you marvel at how smoothly it all went - where it was impossible to advance, we stormed forward, laid in the barrage of French artillery fire from which escape seemed impossible, and ran with weak forces against an enemy ten times our number - we are proud of that because we infantrymen did it!

Our commander received the E.K.²⁶ for the outstanding achievements of our company, and the major expressed his special appreciation to us - I believe that we have thus proved ourselves worthy of the frontline battles of the World War.

We know that this was not the last assault on the enemy, but we will drive him from his new positions with the same determination; the climax of our lives is fulfilled in battle. In battle, I was king because I knew I was one of the few who stood for the fate of the entire people.

Our lieutenant is just walking through our quarters, talking to everyone in a friendly manner. The difference between rank and enlisted men is hardly noticeable anymore; the entire company has become a community that could not be more ideal.”

²⁶ Meaning the Iron Cross medal.

My warmest regards,
Heil Hitler!
Your Erich

“The Legacy”

Berlin, October 30th, 1940

Dear comrades!

"I am sending you a letter from my son Fritz, who was killed on May 6th of this year during a reconnaissance mission in the Saarlautern area. The letter is intended as his last will and testament.

My son was filled with a great will to live and a zest for work; as an assistant engineer at the Heinkel aircraft factory, five years after leaving the local secondary school, he had, through his own efforts, begun studying at the University of Rostock and then continued his studies at the Technical University in Charlottenburg. He was working on his diploma and doctoral thesis when he was called up for military service; in the field, he took part in all reconnaissance missions in his unit, some of which he led; he had been a non-commissioned officer since January."

In his memory,
Heil Hitler!
H.R.

*

In the West

My life!

"Tomorrow I am going to the front. It is not a feeling of cowardice that compels me to take up my pen—but I cannot think of a better day on which to write what I must write.

Should fate demand my life in the service of the Führer and the people, this shall be my last farewell. I was possessed by an irrepressible will to live; I felt that I was really only at the beginning of my life; I was not willing to recklessly risk my life. We are fighting for Germany's rights, for its greatness, for its future.

Our sacrifice will lead Germany to victory. That is why I ask you not to mourn, but to be proud; for I hope that I have proved myself worthy of you.

Even though I have not been able to continue and complete my life's work, I need not assure you that it was my ambition to stand before you one day and say: I have achieved this, and I have you to thank!

To you, my dear parents, I express once again my deepest gratitude for all the efforts and worries you have had for my well-being and my future. I hope that I have not caused you too much grief.

If I fall in battle, know this: We die so that Germany may live!"

Your Fritz

“Mourn With Pride and Dignity”

My dear little bunny!

"It's an hour and a half until the attack on the Maginot Line towards Sedan. Fighter planes are roaring overhead and dropping bombs on enemy positions; the noise of the engines is deafening. At 4 p.m., all hell will break loose. Then it's my time to go!

Should I fall, I know that it was for a great cause. I am calm and confident, and even cheerful. Laughter has helped me so far, so why not today?

If I don't see you again, don't be sad, my dear - be proud and dignified in the face of the greatness of this struggle for life. I want to thank you for everything good in our life together. Raise the boy to be a good, loyal, strong German; he will take my place! Give him a kiss from me; he is my pride and joy!

Give my regards to your parents and siblings, as well as all our friends and relatives.

Our motto is: ‘For the Führer!’, and we intend to fulfill it.

A thousand greetings and all the best, with a kiss to all of you at home and with the request that you mourn with pride and dignity.”

Your Eugen

*

This letter was sent to us by the head of a military registration office. He wrote:

"Sergeant Eugen A. was a military district sergeant at my office. He was a staunch National Socialist, had recently married, and had a young son. He volunteered for the front and was assigned to an infantry regiment - he was killed in the attack on the Maginot Line at Sedan. Shortly before the assault on the fortress, which was considered impregnable, he wrote the words enclosed in the attachment in his diary. This magnificent soldier fell on the same day."

Afterword

We have been able to look deep into the hearts of our people only for a brief moment, but a moment that allows us to guess at the untold treasures that still lie hidden in the millions of letters that form a strong bond of strength and confidence between the front and home.

The letters in the previous pages come from a circle of unknown people, comrades, and coworkers, letters that were all written without any thought of ever being published; they therefore speak in that unadorned, pure language that we understand best today.

While compiling these pages, the idea arose to ask readers to entrust the publisher with similar documents from this proud time of trial for inspection. Perhaps this will eventually lead to the completion of the above narrative, which may one day claim to have made a contribution to the historiography of the German victory - a victory of our faith through Adolf Hitler.