



Federal Ministry
of Defence

The Bendlerblock



Bundeswehr
Wir. Dienen. Deutschland.

The Bendlerblock



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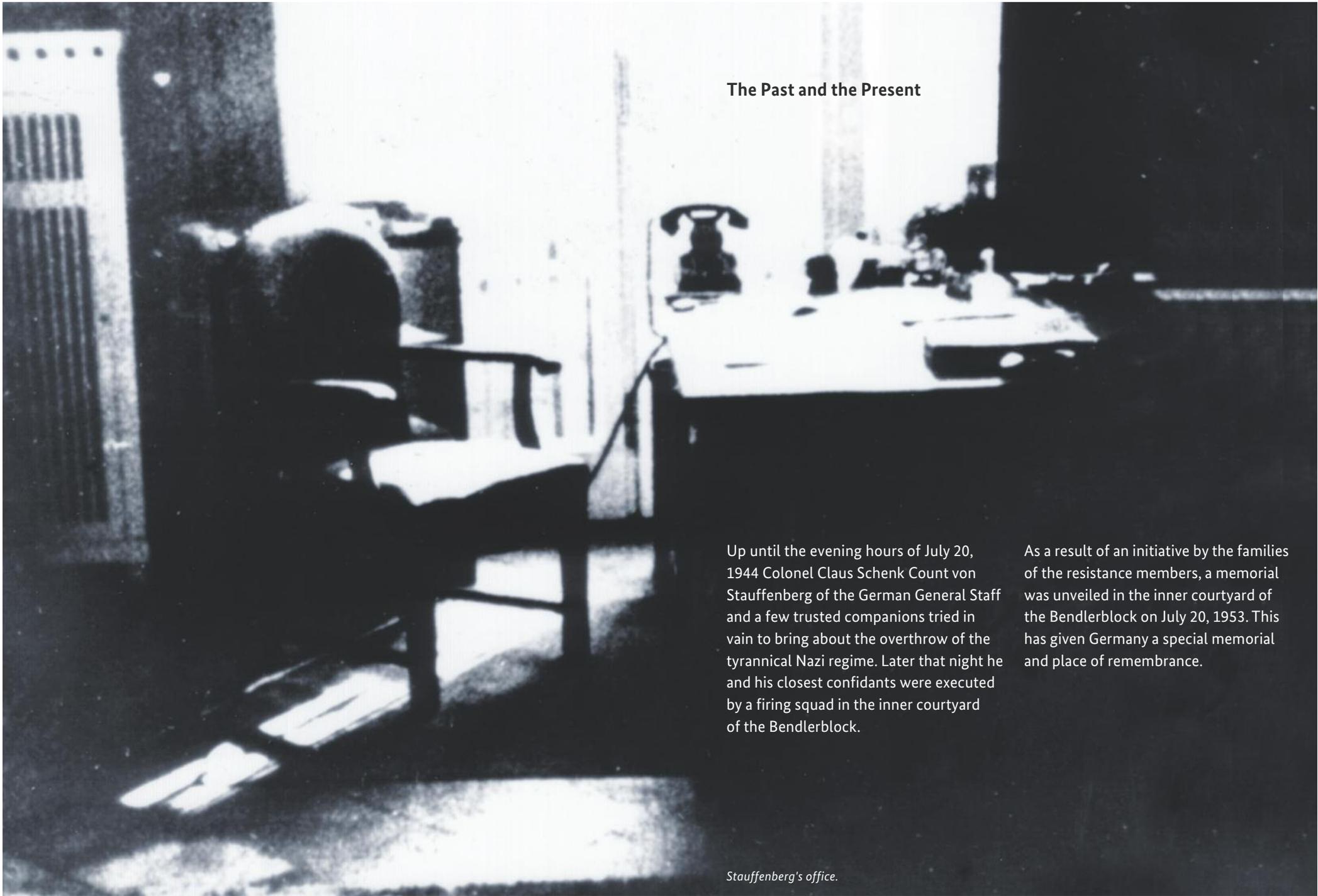
*Vestibule interior
with security gate.*



*Above: The Bendlerblock's historic facade –
as seen from Reichpietschufer.
Below: Staircase in the columned hall.*



The Bendlerblock is one of the most significant sites of Germany's recent history in Berlin.



The Past and the Present

Up until the evening hours of July 20, 1944 Colonel Claus Schenk Count von Stauffenberg of the German General Staff and a few trusted companions tried in vain to bring about the overthrow of the tyrannical Nazi regime. Later that night he and his closest confidants were executed by a firing squad in the inner courtyard of the Bendlerblock.

As a result of an initiative by the families of the resistance members, a memorial was unveiled in the inner courtyard of the Bendlerblock on July 20, 1953. This has given Germany a special memorial and place of remembrance.

Stauffenberg's office.

After the decision to move the seat of German government to Berlin, it was decided to base the Federal Minister of Defence's Berlin office in the Bendlerblock. This once again underscored the Bundeswehr's commitment to the tradition of military resistance to the Nazi regime. The supreme task of the Bundeswehr is to guarantee the rule of law and to protect human dignity. In this respect, it has much in common with the men and women of July 20, 1944.

The Berlin seat of the Federal Ministry of Defence with its staff of some 900¹ ensures the necessary proximity of the Federal Minister, State Secretaries, the Chief of Defence and the Ministry's directorate-generals to the capital's political decision-making bodies.

¹As of March 2017

View into the Stauffenbergsaal conference room with bronze bust and Renate Anger's butterfly frieze "Rotes Ordensband" (red underwing) consisting of eight individual panels.



The Bendlerblock

The historical complex of buildings known as the “Bendlerblock” is situated between Tiergarten and Landwehrkanal. Although this name was never officially given to the complex, this is what it is referred to and known as far beyond the city of Berlin.

The history of the Bendlerblock goes back to before World War I. The master builder Johann Christoph Bendler (1789–1873) developed this area of land and bequeathed a large part of the site to the city administration. The street which connects the Landwehrkanal and the Tiergarten was originally named in his honour, although it is now called Stauffenbergstrasse.

The Imperial German Navy acquired plots of land at this location and a building complex was constructed on it between 1911 and 1914, large enough to house several of the Reich Navy Office’s command authorities which had previously been scattered throughout central Berlin. With its five floors and numerous inner courtyards, this building provided room for 900 people.

Building seen from the parade ground.

The main building on Landwehrkanal was exclusively used as the office of the Secretary of State of the Reich Navy Office (until 1916 Grand Admiral von Tirpitz). The wing of the main building on the right housed the Admiralty Staff of the Imperial German Navy. It was from here that Imperial Germany conducted its naval war during World War I. The east wing was used by the Navy Cabinet, the Kaiser’s personal staff for naval affairs. The Secretary of State of the Reich Navy Office and the head of the Navy Cabinet lived in apartments on the second floor.

In the wake of World War I, it was here that the leadership of the Reichswehr sought to define its role in the first parliamentary democracy on German soil.



The Treaty of Versailles (1919) led to radical reductions in German force levels. Germany was forced to abandon its air force. Hence the Bendlerblock was able to provide enough room for the High Commands of both the Navy and the Army, which had also been scaled down. The Reichswehr Ministry under Gustav Noske (1868–1946), the first Reichswehr Minister of the new German Republic, and the Army High Command under the command of General Walter Reinhardt, moved into what once were apartments used by the former Imperial German Navy authorities.

In March 1920 the reactionary Free Corps staged a putsch in the streets of Berlin. The head of the Truppenamt (the name under which the General Staff operated after being banned under the provisions of the Versailles Treaty), Major General von Seeckt, was asked if the military could quell the coup. In the Minister's office in the Bendlerblock, he is said to have replied, "Troops do not fire upon troops". In other words: the democratic Republican Government could not count on being protected by the Reichswehr. It had to flee from the rebels and moved temporarily to Stuttgart. The Army Headquarters was located in the east wing of the Bendlerblock under the command of General von Seeckt until 1926.

Left: The Bendlerblock's columned hall. Following pages: The "Roter Teppich" (red carpet) in the columned hall shows an aerial photograph of post-war Berlin. In particular, it shows the Tiergarten district with the partially destroyed Bendlerblock. (Artist: Via Lewandowsky)





In January 1933, the Reichswehr commanders met in the Bendlerblock to discuss their position in the event of Hitler's Chancellorship. A few days later, Reich President Hindenburg appointed Hitler head of government – with the consent of the top military echelon.

On February 3, 1933 the "Führer" explained his intentions to all the Reichswehr generals present. He was remarkably frank in describing the objectives of his policy. He talked about "eradicating Marxism root and branch", "the tightest possible authoritarian government leadership and stamping out the cancer of democracy" and "the fight against Versailles".

When asked how "political power" was to be used in the future, Hitler mentioned the "conquest of new lebensraum in the east and its ruthless Germanisation".¹

On June 30, 1934 – less than one-and-a-half years later – Hitler had numerous political opponents murdered under the pretence of an alleged putsch by the SA (Sturmabteilung or "Storm Division"). These also included two former Reichswehr generals (Kurt von Schleicher and Ferdinand von Bredow). The Reichswehr tolerated their liquidation.

The state of affairs at the time was also reflected in measures taken by another representative of the top military echelon: The Chief of Army Command and subsequent Supreme Army Commander, General von Fritsch, ensconced himself in his Bendlerblock apartment, protected by soldiers.

View of the FMoD visitors' mess.

¹ "Hitler's first talks ...on February 3, 1933 (at Hammerstein's)" in: H.-A. Jacobsen, 1939 – 1945. *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik und Dokumenten.* Darmstadt 1959, pp. 81ff.



Above: Historical stairway.
Below: Corridor leading to offices.



Modern staircase.



Meanwhile, adjoining plots of land had been bought on which additional new buildings were erected up to 1938. Finally, after its extension was completed, the Bendlerblock housed, apart from the Supreme Army Commander, elements of the Navy Operations staff of the Navy High Command and most of the agencies of the Office for Foreign Affairs/Intelligence in the Armed Forces High Command under Admiral Wilhelm Canaris.

The Abwehr, the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Third Reich, was a first centre of military resistance. Major General Oster and a group of conspirators planned to overthrow the Nazi regime by military means as early as in 1938. Their intention was to hinder Hitler's military action against Czechoslovakia because they feared it would trigger a war in Europe which they were firmly convinced Germany could never win.

When the European powers approved of the occupation of large parts of Czechoslovakia by German forces, Hitler's

Wreaths placed in the commemorative courtyard of the "German Resistance Memorial Centre" during the annual celebrations commemorating the events of July 20, 1944.

foreign policy registered a success and the attempt to overthrow the regime was quashed.

Until the Gestapo stripped it of its powers in 1943, the Abwehr remained a pocket of resistance.

Shortly after the beginning of the war, the Commander of the Reserve Army and the Army Office (headed by Infantry General Friedrich Olbricht) moved into the main part of the east wing. From October 1943 Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) of the General Staff Claus Schenk Count von Stauffenberg worked here, too. The nationwide military coup against Hitler was plotted under the code name "Valkyrie" in an office on the second floor of the Bendlerblock.

The coup d'état failed on July 20, 1944. The very spot where Stauffenberg and his fellow conspirators General Friedrich Olbricht, Colonel Albrecht Ritter Mertz von Quirnheim and Reserve Lieutenant Werner von Haefen were executed that same night is located in what is today the commemorative courtyard. The four brave men are commemorated with a memorial plaque.



During the final days of the war the Bendlerblock served as a command post for General Helmuth Weidling, the Berlin combat commander. Finally, on May 2, 1945, Russian troops occupied the complex.

During the post-war period the Bendlerblock was used by a great number of civilian agencies and federal authorities. At an early stage it also became a memorial of recent German history. On July 20, 1952 the widow of Friedrich Olbricht, representing the members of the resistance and their families, laid the foundation stone for a memorial in the courtyard. It was unveiled by Ernst Reuter, the Governing Mayor of Berlin, in a ceremony one year later. On July 20, 1955 Bendlerstrasse was consequently renamed Stauffenbergstrasse. In 1980 the commemorative courtyard was remodelled. Since then one of the walls at the entrance bears this inscription:

Here in the former Army High Command, Germans organised the attempt to overthrow the lawless National Socialist regime on July 20, 1944. For this they sacrificed their lives.

A memorial and educational centre was first opened in the Bendlerblock on July 20, 1968, the 20th anniversary of the failed assassination attempt. The results of research on contemporary history prompted an extension to the exhibition to document the entire spectrum and diversity of resistance against Hitler and the Nazi regime in Germany.

By 1989, the “German Resistance Memorial Centre” with its permanent exhibition “Resistance to National Socialism” was established in the historic rooms where the coup had been planned and staged.

Soldiers of the FMoD Guard Battalion stand honour guard in front of the memorial plaque for the victims of July 20, 1944.

Portraits of Resistance



Ludwig Beck
June 29, 1880 – July 20, 1944

Ludwig Beck

came from an established family of academics, civil servants and officers in Hesse-Darmstadt. After beginning his army service in an artillery regiment in 1898, he qualified for the General Staff (1908–1911); after World War I he became a member of the Reichswehr and held various troop and staff assignments.

As a commander he already had his first close encounter with National Socialism before 1933 when officers of his regiment, who sympathised with the Nazi ideology, were charged with treason (1930). While condemning their actions, Beck could well understand the officers' views; after all, he saw National Socialism as an instrument to overcome the provisions of the Versailles Peace Treaty.

Hitler's acts of murder against the SA in the summer of 1934 triggered a substantial change of mind in Beck. During the years that followed, he finally saw through the Führer's foreign policy.

As Army Chief of Staff from 1935, he saw his role in a conventional and professional way, namely as a totally independent adviser to the political leaders.

With this view, however, he stood in sharp contrast to Hitler and those officers who, from an early stage, permitted themselves to be used as Hitler's willing henchmen.

In memoranda, lectures and studies he consistently pointed out the risk of war and its dramatic consequences for Germany. His attempts to rally support among army commanders failed. Beck was steadfast in his decision to submit his resignation in 1938 to avoid any involvement in Hitler's policy which was driving the nation into war against Czechoslovakia.

Beck remained unimpressed by Hitler's success in foreign policy and his early military "feats". He was completely aware that the war triggered by the attack on



Werner von Haeften
October 9, 1908 – July 21, 1944

Werner von Haeften

had a military family background. After studying law he worked as a lawyer in Berlin. Later, while serving as a platoon commander in an infantry unit, he was seriously wounded during the Russian campaign in the winter of 1942.

Following his recovery, Haeften became aide-de-camp to Stauffenberg. He was a friend of Stauffenberg and one of the conspirators; he took part in the assassination attempt on Hitler at midday, July 20, 1944.

On the night of July 20/21, 1944 Reserve Lieutenant von Haeften was shot in the courtyard of Bendlerblock.

Poland in September 1939 would inevitably result in Germany's total destruction. Apart from the external threat, he was preoccupied with the inner decay of Germany, brought about by National-Socialist rule and the crimes it was committing.

From the winter of 1939 on, Beck effectively functioned as the centre of the resistance. With his vision and superior intellect, he managed to unify and control its various currents and movements. Had the coup succeeded, Beck had been earmarked to become head of state.

After an unsuccessful suicide attempt to avoid interrogation and torture, Colonel General Beck was shot late in the evening of July 20, 1944.



Albrecht Ritter Mertz von Quirnheim
March 26, 1905 – July 21, 1944

Albrecht Ritter Mertz von Quirnheim

came from a family of Bavarian-Palatinate gentry. On completion of his secondary education he joined the Reichswehr (1923), and temporarily considered transferring to the SA. Mertz and Stauffenberg had been close friends ever since they trained together at the War Academy in Berlin.

After various unit command and staff assignments he was posted to the Führer’s headquarters near Vinnitsa (Ukraine) in the winter of 1941. This was where he worked closely together with Stauffenberg and was confronted with severe ethical quandaries as a result of Nazi occupation policy.

In June 1944 Mertz von Quirnheim succeeded Stauffenberg as Chief of Staff under Olbricht’s command. He was one of those who prepared the orders to be issued after Hitler’s assassination (“Operation Valkyrie”).

On the night of July 20, 1944 – knowing full well that Hitler had survived the assassination attempt – von Quirnheim unwaveringly issued orders for the realisation of the coup.

Shortly afterwards, Colonel of the General Staff Albrecht Ritter Mertz von Quirnheim was shot in the courtyard of Bendlerblock.



Friedrich Olbricht
October 4, 1888 – July 21, 1944

Friedrich Olbricht

a teacher’s son, became a soldier in 1907. Following various staff assignments after World War I, Olbricht held several high command positions until 1938. After initially commanding a division, he became chief of the General Army Office in the Army High Command, Berlin, in 1940.

Olbricht established contacts with several members of the resistance at an early stage. From the beginning of the War he had been among the protagonists of military opposition in Germany.

The use of the alert plan “Valkyrie” as an instrument for the coup – disseminating it through official channels – had been his brainchild. Army units were due to be alerted promptly anyway in case of civil unrest in the Homeland.

All further steps by the conspirators – ousting Hitler, assuming military command authority and government responsibility – were forthwith camouflaged this way.

The units to be alerted were to be made to believe that high-ranking disloyal Nazi officials would with Hitler’s death try to consolidate their power in a quasi-coup, which was to be prevented at all costs by the Wehrmacht.

On July 20, 1944, however, the measures that Olbricht had meticulously planned got off to a slow start because the message that Hitler had survived the assassination attempt had got through to the Bendlerblock quite early on.

During that same night Infantry General Friedrich Olbricht was shot in the courtyard of the Bendlerblock as ordered by Colonel General Fromm, Commander of the Replacement Training Army.



*Claus Schenk Count von Stauffenberg
November 15, 1907 – July 21, 1944*

Claus Schenk Count von Stauffenberg

was born into old Swabian nobility. His maternal ancestors were related to Gneisenau. In 1926 he joined the elitist Bamberg Seventeenth Cavalry Regiment (“Bamberger Reiter”) as an officer cadet.

In 1936 he was selected for general staff officer training and posted to the War Academy in Berlin. The handsome cavalry officer was considered a brilliant thinker who was equally charismatic. His way of thinking was deeply influenced by the poet and influential intellectual Stefan George (1868–1933) who was also his personal friend.

In spring 1943 Stauffenberg was severely wounded in an air raid in Northern Africa, losing his left eye, right hand and two fingers of his left hand. Nonetheless, he continued his service in outstanding positions. In the summer of 1944 – at the age of 36 years – he was promoted to Colonel of the General Staff and Chief of Staff of the Replacement Training Army Command in the Bendlerblock.

Initially, Stauffenberg condoned the Nazi government’s foreign policy goals. Soon, however, the sensitive officer felt growing abhorrence at the brutish methods of those now wielding power.

By 1942 Stauffenberg had become aware that the war would unavoidably lead to Germany’s destruction and that his actions were covering the most heinous of crimes that the lawless Nazi regime was committing in the name of Germany. Stauffenberg, in his own words: “They’re shooting Jews in their thousands. These crimes must stop!”

From October 1943 he was responsible for personnel replacement and was thus confronted with the rising number of casualties every day. By then Stauffenberg was firmly convinced that continuing the war would be a crime against the German people. This war had to be stopped at all costs but this seemed impossible as long as Hitler was still alive and in power.

Along with General Olbricht, Colonel von Tresckow and a small number of hand-picked conspirators Stauffenberg started to transform the planning measures, which were his responsibility and which were to be taken in case of civil unrest (“Operation Valkyrie”) into a plan for a coup d’état, which was prepared with military precision. At that time, Stauffenberg was the only conspirator to still have personal access to Hitler.

Hence it was crucial on July 20, 1944 – the day of the attempted coup – that Stauffenberg not only arm the bomb at the Führer’s headquarters in East Prussia but return to Berlin alive to direct the overthrow from the Bendlerblock from about 1600 hours.

In a frenzy of activity he tried to convince the Wehrmacht agencies in the Reich that this was the time to act. As the evening progressed, however, it became increasingly obvious that the coup had failed.

Stauffenberg and his three closest conspirators were summarily executed by a firing squad in the inner courtyard of the Bendlerblock.

The Attempted Assassination of Hitler – Thursday, July 20, 1944

The following events in Berlin and Rastenburg (East Prussia), the location of Hitler's Headquarters ("Wolf's Lair"), are featured in the overview of individual actions and military measures of July 20 and 21, 1944 contained in the catalogue of the travelling exhibition of the Military History Research Institute (also see Reference Literature on page 52).

- Berlin**
0600 hrs Stauffenberg leaves his brother Berthold's apartment (Tristanstrasse 8, Berlin-Wannsee), for Rangsdorf airfield.
- Rangsdorf**
0700 hrs At about 0700 hrs Stauffenberg meets his adjutant Haeften and flies to Rastenburg with him.
- Rastenburg**
1015 hrs Arrival and onward journey to the Führer's headquarters, access via the western checkpoint; breakfast.
- 1130 hrs Stauffenberg reports to Field Marshal General Keitel (Head of the Wehrmacht High Command); 1130 - 1200 hrs relief of the guards in the Restricted Areas.
- Berlin**
1200 hrs Lieutenant General von Hase (Berlin City Commandant) is informed about the planned assassination.
- Rastenburg**
1230 hrs Haeften helps Stauffenberg to prepare the assassination. They are disturbed but still succeed in completing their work. Stauffenberg leaves to attend the situation briefing, carrying the armed 1-kg explosives charge in his briefcase.

- 1237 hrs Situation briefing by Lieutenant General Heusinger (Head of the Operations Division of the Army High Command). Due to give a talk on the "employment of blocking divisions", Stauffenberg's presence is announced to Hitler. Stauffenberg places the briefcase under the chart table close to Hitler; there are another 24 persons present. - On the pretence of having to make a phone call, Stauffenberg leaves the room.
- 1242 hrs The charge explodes, killing four persons. Hitler survives with only minor injuries. Stauffenberg watches the explosion from 200 metres away.
- 1243 hrs Restricted Area I is closed.
- 1244 hrs Stauffenberg and Haeften are allowed to leave Restricted Area I, the officer in charge of the guards suspects nothing.
- 1245 hrs Both Restricted Areas are put on alert. Stauffenberg is stopped, after confirmation by telephone he is allowed to pass the second checkpoint.
- 1300 hrs At about 1300 hrs a news blackout is imposed on the headquarters, which does not include the SS lines of communication; shortly after, Goebbels is informed about the events without any details.
- 1315 hrs Stauffenberg and Haeften fly to Berlin. The head of the Wehrmacht communication links agency (in Berlin) is informed that the assassination attempt has failed and that Hitler escaped with minor injuries.
- Rastenburg**
1345 hrs Himmler (Reichsführer SS) arrives at the scene; initially, labourers working at the headquarters are suspected. Himmler sends for investigators from Berlin, the suspect is now Stauffenberg. Himmler orders him to be arrested on his arrival at Rangsdorf.

Rangsdorf Stauffenberg and Haeften land at Rangsdorf air base.
between Haeften telephones the conspirators in the Bendlerblock,
1445 and saying that Hitler is dead.
1515 hrs

Berlin Lieutenant General Thiele (Head of the Wehrmacht signal
1515 hrs communications agency) passes on the telephone message
(of 1315 hrs) stating that several people had been killed
in the explosion at the "Führer's headquarters". Colonel
General Hoepner and General Olbricht delay the initia-
tion of alert state "Valkyrie" until there is certainty.

1550 to Olbricht states password "Deutschland" and thus initiates
1600 hrs "Valkyrie"; in a message to Colonel General Fromm
(Commander of the Replacement Training Army) he states
that the Führer is dead and that "Valkyrie" is to be
initiated. Fromm telephones Keitel who acknowledges the
incident but informs him that Hitler sustained only minor
injuries.

Rastenburg All military district commands are informed about the
1600 hrs failed assassination attempt and counter-orders are
issued.

Berlin The guard battalion "Großdeutschland" is put on alert
1610 hrs ("Valkyrie"), its commander, Major Remer, then goes to
see the Berlin City Commandant to be briefed; meanwhile
further alert measures get under way until 1730 hrs.

1620 hrs Fromm issues the order not to initiate "Valkyrie";
Count von Helldorf (Chief Constable) is ordered to
the Bendlerblock. In the meantime another two members
of the resistance arrive, one of them being Colonel
General Beck, the former Chief of the General Staff.

1630 hrs The head of the intelligence service of the Wehrmacht
High Command, Lieutenant Röhrig, receives a teletype
message, "the Führer is dead..."; an amended version
here of is forwarded to twenty addresses (1735 to
2103 hrs).

1630 and Stauffenberg and Haeften arrive at the Bendlerblock.
1700 hrs Stauffenberg reports to Fromm, claims responsibility
for the assassination and states that Hitler is dead.
Olbricht informs Fromm that he has launched "Valkyrie".
Fromm refuses to co-operate and is arrested. Beck
issues orders to act as though Hitler were dead.

1645 hrs Remer returns to his troops with the task of cordoning
off the government district.

Rastenburg Himmler orders the Reich Security Main Office in Berlin
1700 hrs to arrest Stauffenberg inconspicuously. Commanders at
the headquarters persistently inquire whether Hitler is
really dead. Keitel tries to contact Fromm or Olbricht
by telephone. From 1700 hrs radio stations report on the
assassination attempt, stating that Hitler had sustained
only minor injuries (these messages are disseminated
until 2200 hrs).

Berlin Remer passes on the orders to the officers in his
1700 to battalion. One officer who had become suspicious asks
1730 hrs for permission to verify the news with Goebbels himself.
This way, Goebbels first learns about "Valkyrie" and
on his part alerts an SS training unit (based in
Berlin-Lichterfelde). Remer is then briefed on the real
situation.

1750 hrs Röhrig has first doubts as he is supposed to relay a
teletype message to the effect that "executive powers in
the military districts are delegated to the commanding
generals and military district commanders".

1800 hrs Röhrig is given another text containing instructions
regarding the second stage of alert plan "Valkyrie";
this text is disseminated until 2300 hrs.

1830 hrs The government district is cordoned off under "Valkyrie".

Berlin
1845 hrs Röhrig receives the teletype message pertaining to Hoepner's appointment as Commander of the Replacement Training Army and Supreme Commander of the Home Combat Area; parts of the text are disseminated between 2020 and 2115 hrs. - Meanwhile Colonel Jäger reports to the Berlin City Commandant with the order to arrest Goebbels. - By 1900 hrs soldiers of the School of Artificers have moved into alert positions (castle, arsenal).

1900 hrs Remer reports to Goebbels and receives Hitler's order by telephone to quash the uprising immediately. - In the meantime Beck tries to win the commanders of the Western and the Eastern fronts over to the uprising efforts, most of all to bring about the withdrawal of the Northern Army Group. Another telephone message is received from Army High Command (Organisational Division), acknowledging that the assassination attempt has failed. In endless telephone calls, Stauffenberg persists in stating that Hitler is dead and that the Army has assumed executive powers!

1915 hrs Röhrig receives a teletype message, "Radio communiqué is not true. The Führer is dead." This message is disseminated between 1945 and 2012 hrs.

1930 hrs Field Marshal General von Witzleben, slated to be supreme commander of the Wehrmacht, arrives at the Bendlerblock. He has a one-on-one talk with Beck.

1945 hrs Röhrig voices his doubts to his superior, Colonel Köllner, and tells him of the delay action already initiated at the teletypewriter station.

2000 hrs An armoured unit arrives at Fehrbelliner Platz (Berlin-Wilmersdorf) to be employed in quelling the uprising.

2015 hrs Witzleben concludes that the uprising has failed. He leaves the Bendlerblock.

2020 to 2102 hrs No further teletype messages about "Valkyrie", Summary Regulations 1 to 5, are dispatched.

Rastenburg
2020 hrs All military district commanders are instructed only to follow the orders of Himmler, the new Replacement Training Army commander.

Berlin
2035 hrs The intelligence centre in Bendlerstrasse picks up Keitel's teletype message pertaining to Himmler's appointment as commander of the Replacement Training Army. General Olbricht forbids its onward transmission.

Rastenburg
2115 hrs Following orders by General Reinecke, Lieutenant General von Hase meets Goebbels in the latter's residence where he is at first detained and then arrested the following morning.

2230 to 2250 hrs In the Bendlerblock officers who were not initiated into the plot carry out an armed counter-attack. As a result Fromm is set free. He has Olbricht, Stauffenberg, Mertz von Quirnheim and Haeften arrested before pronouncing a court martial verdict.

2315 hrs A company of the "Großdeutschland" guard battalion marches into and occupies the Bendlerblock.

Between 2315 and 2345 hrs Beck tries in vain to kill himself and is then shot by a sergeant who had been ordered to the scene.

0010 to 0021 hrs Fromm dispatches teletype messages to all military district commands to announce that the "attempted coup has been quelled with considerable bloodshed".

Berlin
0015 to 0030 hrs A firing squad consisting of ten non-commissioned officers, commanded by Lieutenant Schady, executes Haeften, Olbricht, Merz von Quirnheim and Stauffenberg who dies calling out "Long live our sacred Germany!"

Just before 0100 hrs Hitler addresses the nation in a radio message.

The Bundeswehr Memorial

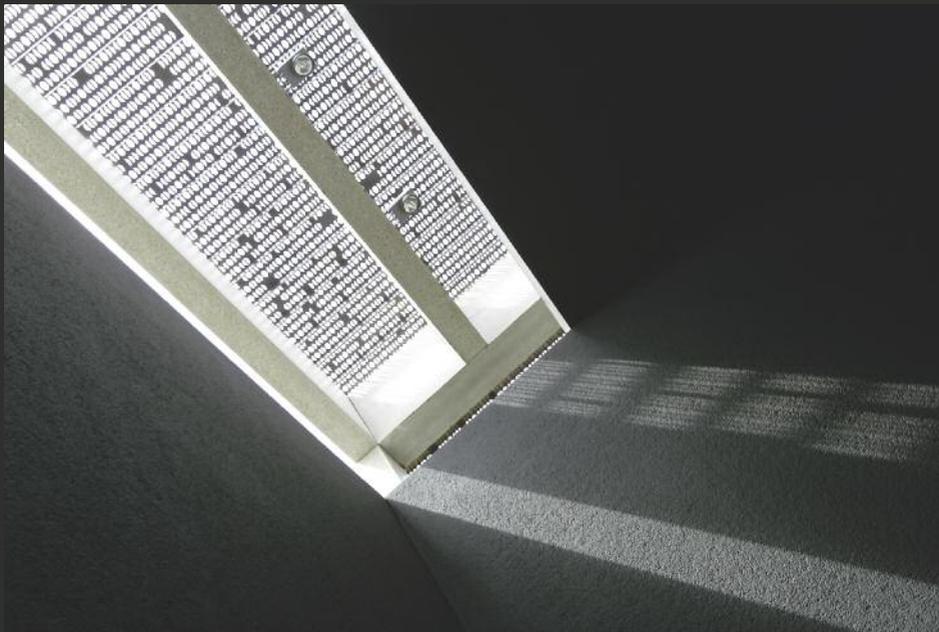
This Memorial marks an important milestone in Bundeswehr history. For the first time, there is a central site to commemorate military and civilian Bundeswehr members who lost their lives in the course of their service to the Federal Republic of Germany.



Identity disk: upon entry into military service, every soldier is issued with an identity disc which permits him to be identified quickly and reliably.



*Above: The Memorial; view from the parade ground.
Below: The wide opening of the building in both directions, i.e. to Hildebrandstrasse and to the parade ground, and its frequently perforated bronze shell symbolise transparency.*



Since the Bundeswehr was established in 1955, more than 3,250 of its members have been killed: our soldiers who were killed in conflict prevention and crisis management operations in the cause of peace as well as all the Bundeswehr members who lost their lives in or as a result of tragic accidents, whether during training, exercises, in traffic accidents or air crashes.

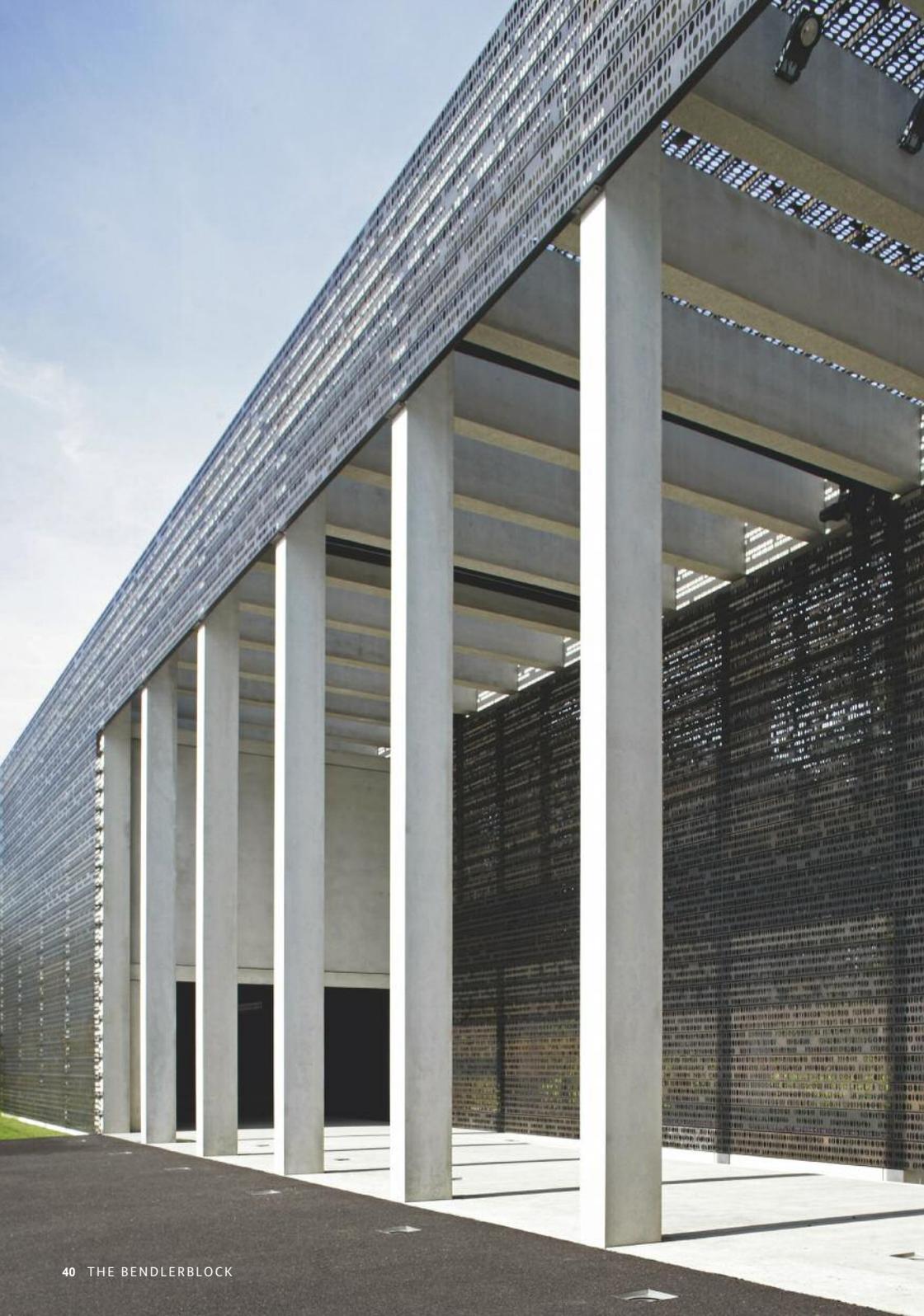
The Bundeswehr Memorial makes it clear that the defence of peace, justice and freedom cannot be compared with any other profession. In no other career is the question of life and death of such existential importance as in military service.

The servicemen and women of the Bundeswehr are bound by their solemn pledge and their official oath to bravely defend the rights and freedom of the German people. Military service involves, if necessary, risking life and limb and, ultimately, the obligation to kill in battle. This all-embracing duty of loyalty constitutes the core of military service.

Military and civilian personnel who have lost their lives for the protection of peace and freedom also deserve public respect and commemoration. That is why a Federal Institutions Flag covers the mortal remains of servicemen and women who were killed while exercising their official duties. This symbol is a visible token of the special ties of loyalty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the deceased soldier. In addition, the Bundeswehr holds a funeral service to pay its last respects to those who were killed in missions abroad or during their duty at home.

This is an important token of solidarity, which can provide helpful support for the bereaved in a situation that shakes their very existence.

But in order to commemorate the dead it is necessary not only to adhere consistently to rituals but also to designate certain places for this and make them known.



*Left: The Memorial; view from the parade ground.
Above: The Memorial with a view of the parade
ground and the Benderblock.*

The Location

The site of the Memorial in Berlin, at the official seat of the Federal Ministry of Defence, is the expression of a considered political decision.

All fundamental decisions by the government and parliament regarding the Bundeswehr are made in Berlin. At the Bendlerblock, the Berlin seat of the Federal Ministry of Defence, these decisions are then implemented for the Bundeswehr.

The site of the Memorial in the immediate proximity of the legislative and executive powers indirectly highlights the fact that the Bundeswehr is bound by the Constitution and that the democratic political will takes precedence.

The urban area in which the Memorial is situated is characterised by its structural diversity. Embassies, representations of the Länder, museums as well as office and service buildings make this a privileged location that is also easily accessible by public transport. As part of this ensemble, the Memorial is neither exposed on a prominent urban stage nor hidden in a backyard. It stands its ground with a certain matter-of-factness without being obtrusive. This also reflects the self-image

of the Bundeswehr, which holds its position in state and society with confidence yet does not claim a special role for its members.

At the same time, the Memorial fits well into the architectural context of the capital's other memorials: several memorials from the time of the German Empire, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the New Guardhouse (Neue Wache) as the Central Memorial to Victims of War and Tyranny are in the vicinity of the Bundeswehr Memorial.

The German Resistance Memorial Centre housed in a side wing of the Bendlerblock close to the Bundeswehr Memorial is of special significance.

This is one of the most important sites of remembrance of the revolt of conscience against the criminal national-socialist regime. Particularly the military resistance against Adolf Hitler is a cornerstone of the Bundeswehr's understanding of tradition.

The Bundeswehr Memorial is quite separate from the German Resistance Memorial Centre and, although nearby, there is still an appropriate distance between the two memorials. This distance from the

courtyard of the Bendlerblock underlines the fact that the Bundeswehr Memorial neither affects nor qualifies the importance of July 20 for the Bundeswehr's understanding of tradition. On the contrary, the choice of its location again clearly demonstrates that the Memorial consciously reflects the Bundeswehr's lines of tradition.

The location of the Memorial fits in well with the existing architecture. The centre one of the five flagpoles on the slightly raised forecourt marks the centre line of the parade ground. During military ceremonies that take place here, movements can be oriented towards the centre line and the flags. It is here that the Memorial creates a new visual boundary to the parade ground. At the same time, the Memorial is integrated into the spatial and ideal context of the Federal Ministry of Defence.

A key aspect of the Memorial's architecture is its location at the interface of the public-civilian and the official-military area. It is situated right on the boundary between the site of the Bendlerblock and the publicly accessible Hildebrandstrasse.

Therefore, the Memorial can be entered either from the premises of the Federal Ministry of Defence or from the public street. Thus representing the interface between the Armed Forces and society, it constitutes another vital element of the Bundeswehr's self-image.

The open access to both sides provides a great deal of flexibility in use allowing for both public and private commemoration and mourning. Individual, private commemoration and public remembrance during military ceremonies are thus equally possible.

The Cella

Inside the Memorial is a room of silence:
the cella.



Above: The intentionally reduced use of forms leaves room for concentration and interpretation.
Below: The Book of Remembrance with a total of 20 bronze sheets.



This room at the southern end of the Memorial has neither doors nor windows and can be entered either from the parade ground or from the street (Hildebrandstrasse). By lowering the ceiling an entrance has been created that leads the visitor into the cella. The cella is a monochrome, dark room in which the contours are blurred, so that it seems dematerialised. The total absence of pictures, ornaments, design elements and colour inside the cella helps the visitor to concentrate on the most important aspects.

At the end of the cella, the clean lines and symmetry are interrupted, giving the room an unexpected appearance. The farthest floor panel is raised at an angle so that its edge is fully visible, breaking the Memorial's strictly rectangular order. This tilted panel symbolises the force and sheer magnitude of the violence and disaster which ended a life.

The fault is moreover a reminder that losing somebody has virtually thrown the lives of the bereaved, relatives, friends and comrades out of joint. The raised floor panel provides a suitable surface on which visitors can place wreaths, flowers, candles or other mementos.

Daylight shines into the room through a skylight in the ceiling of the cella. This opens up the austere room to the heavens – a timeless symbol for the crossing of real borders and the world perceived by the senses.

The daylight that enters the room from above shines through the semi-oval holes in the bronze shell. In favourable light conditions, the special play of light and shadows on the polished surface of the floor panel again provides the link with the pledge, the oath of office and the official oath.

PETER SARTORIUS



FUR FRIEDEN REC

Dedication and Naming of the Dead

On leaving the cella, the visitor faces a shimmering golden wall. Its radiance contrasts sharply with the sombre tones of the cella.

The inscription in raised letters on the golden wall reads:

**TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE
OF OUR BUNDESWEHR
WHO DIED FOR PEACE,
JUSTICE AND FREEDOM**

Using capital letters only and dispensing with punctuation lend the inscription powerful expression and unity. The dedication recaptures the key idea of the Memorial: to honour the memory of all members of the Bundeswehr who died as a direct or indirect consequence of performing their duties to our country.

Whilst the cella relies on abstract elements to achieve its effect, a materialised form of remembrance confronts the visitor as he leaves the room: above the entrance a luminous band displays the names of the dead to be commemorated on a horizontally mounted concrete slab in an ever-changing sequence. The letters shine through translucent concrete. This gives the impression that the names are floating in space.

Naming the dead is a decisive element of remembrance. This is a fitting way to pay respect to members of the Bundeswehr who lost their lives.

At the same time, it is a reminder that behind the abstract design of the Memorial are the real tragedies of people who were killed in the course of their service to our society. The technical installation permits changes to be made. Thus it is possible for names not to appear should the relatives so wish.

Golden wall with inscription.



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