

ADOLF HITLER & EVA BRAUN

THE ESCAPE FROM BERLIN

2023 Luc Vanhixe

ISBN 978 94 648 5657 6

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Luc Vanhixe

Adolf Hitler & Eva Braun

The Escape from Berlin

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April 1945. 'Berlin bleibt deutsch!' (Berlin remains German!) The Soviets clearly had a different opinion.

Preface

On April 30, 1945, Germany's military situation was critical. The Allies had already conquered most of the Third Reich, and the rest was on the verge of collapse. Berlin was completely encircled by the Soviets.

The last German blood was shed in fierce house-to-house fighting in the government district. Some 2,500 Hitler Youth ¹ children and teenagers tried to hold off the Red Army a little longer. They were aided in this hopeless endeavor by the *Volkssturm*, a militia formed in October 1944 from all male citizens who had previously been declared unfit or too old for military service. It was only a matter of hours before Berlin would fall.

Completely demoralized and disoriented, Adolf Hitler and his new bride, Eva Braun, took their own lives. This happened between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. in the Berlin *Führerbunker* ², 25 feet below the surface. And that's what any serious historian will be happy to confirm.

But is this what really took place? Or should we put our faith in the many conspiracy theories that claim Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun escaped from Berlin at the last moment and lived quietly in South America or some tropical destination for many years after World War II?

To answer this question without a shadow of a doubt, we'll have to track down all available original sources of information. All the facts, statements and data will have to be examined in depth, according to the rules of a modern police investigation.

And this approach will lead to surprising results. To quote from the TV series 'The X-Files': *'The truth is out there!'* And it's more than time for it to see the light of day.

Conspiracy theories

Since the end of World War II, a number of books have been written about Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun's escape from the *Führerbunker* as the Red Army closed in on the besieged German capital. But to determine whether these theories have any merit, we must first consider whether the *Führer*³ and his new bride had both the time to prepare for their escape and the opportunity to get out of Berlin at the last moment.

The collapse of the Third Reich

The first 'Instrument of Surrender' was signed by the Germans in Reims in the early hours of May 7, 1945. But Stalin demanded a ceremony in Berlin. So the final text was signed in the German capital on the night of May 8, 1945. However, Nazi Germany didn't suddenly lose the war in the spring of '45. Defeat announced itself much earlier.

After considerable hesitation, Adolf Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, on June 22, 1941. Opening a second front was a considerable risk. But the *Führer* was confident of a quick victory within a few months. And at first, the German war machine did indeed score a series of resounding victories on Soviet soil.

The German armed forces consisted of the *Wehrmacht* (army, navy, and air force) and the *Schutzstaffel* (SS).⁴ The SS was the paramilitary organization of the Nazi Party and was not part of the *Wehrmacht*.

But with the onset of a very cold Russian winter '41 - '42, the German offensive came to a halt. As a result, the *Führer* made a fatal mistake. There had been trouble between the U.S. and Japan for some time. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, starting a war between the two countries. Just a few days

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

later, on December 11, the *Führer* declared war on the U.S. Adolf Hitler hoped that the Japanese, grateful for his support, would declare war on the Soviet Union to help him. But that didn't happen. Instead of drawing Stalin into a two-front war, Nazi Germany was faced with a new and very powerful opponent.

On the battlefield, it didn't make much of a difference right away because the United States wasn't ready for war. As a result, the German armies were able to resume their offensive in Russia in the spring of 1942. But the end was near. In mid-November '42, Soviet forces launched a counteroffensive, turning the tide on the Eastern Front for several reasons:

- Although the Soviet Union had already lost some five million soldiers by the end of 1942, Stalin managed to mobilize more and more troops.
- Adolf Hitler was convinced that the Soviet soldier was an inferior human being and that the leadership of the Red Army was nothing more than a bunch of amateurs. On the battlefield, however, the experience of the *Wehrmacht* and the SS was very different.
- The German troops could not withstand Russia's harsh winter climate.

On January 31, 1943, the Battle of Stalingrad ended and the German 6th Army was forced to surrender. *Generalfeldmarschall*⁵ Friedrich Paulus lost 400,000 soldiers in the bloodiest battle in the history of warfare. From then on, Nazi Germany was fighting a losing battle. The *Führer* couldn't stop the Soviet counterattack, and it was only a matter of time before the Western Allies landed in Normandy. All the *Führer* could do was try to delay his defeat as long as possible. But this meant that preparations for the end of World War II began on both sides as early as 1943. And it also means that the *Führer* and his staff had ample time to prepare elaborate plans for every possible contingency.

Escape routes

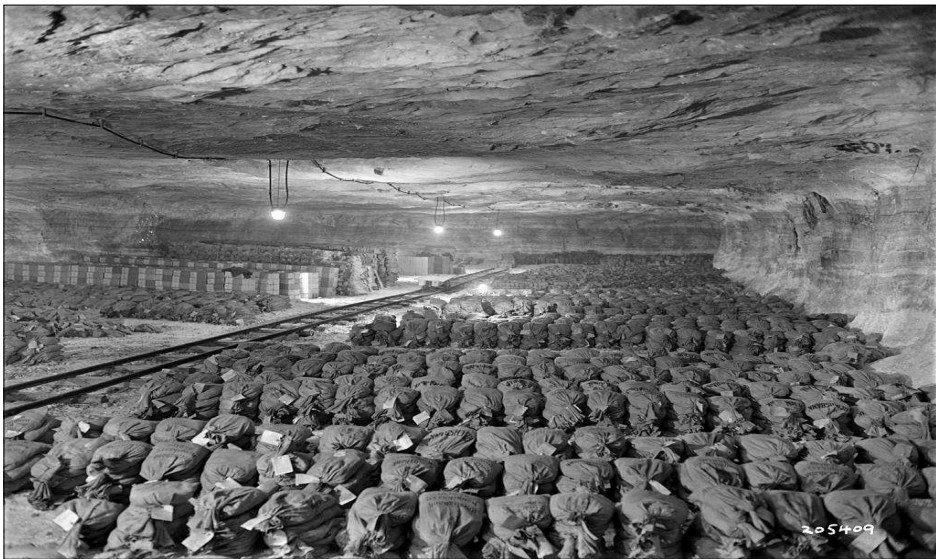
It is a fact that many Germans fled to South America after the fall of Nazi Germany. Some high-ranking officials, such as Adolf Eichmann and Doctor Josef Mengele, the 'Angel of Death' of Auschwitz, escaped on a passenger ship. And at least two German submarines surfaced in Argentina several months after the end of World War II in Europe.

Adolf Eichmann organized and coordinated the details of the *Endlösung*⁶, the mass execution of the Jews.

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In addition, tens of thousands of Nazis made their way to South America on the so-called ‘ratlines’. The first escape route was prepared as early as 1942. And the Vatican played an important role. That’s why they were known as the ‘Monastery Routes’. Most escaped war criminals ended up in Argentina, but many also found safe haven in Paraguay, Colombia, Guatemala, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Even in some Arab countries, Nazis disappeared into anonymity.

Much of the Nazi gold, most of it stolen, was hidden in secret deposits and the vaults of European banking institutions. The Swiss National Bank and the Vatican Bank probably played a major role in this operation. Both institutions, of course, have denied any involvement in the scheme. In addition, credible sources claim that some of the Nazi gold was also transferred to banks in South America. In this way, the Nazi leadership would have the necessary funds available upon arrival. Martin Bormann, the *Führer*’s private secretary, was most likely the driving force behind the preparations for the escape from Nazi Germany.



On April 7, 1945, the American 90th Infantry Division discovered some of the Nazi gold (8,198 bars and 55 boxes of gold bullion, hundreds of bags of gold objects, over 1,300 bags of gold Reichsmarks, British pounds, and French francs, 711 bags of American twenty-dollar gold, 40 bags of silver bullion, 118 boxes and bags of silver plate, six bars of platinum, etc.), SS loot, and valuable artwork in the Kaiseroda salt mine vault in Merkers, Germany. But much of the Nazi gold was still missing.⁷

Let's make a deal

Immediately after the end of World War II, the U.S. government launched Operations Overcast and Paperclip. These secret programs brought more than 1,600 German scientists and technicians to the U.S. Most famously, former *SS-Sturmbannführer* Wernher von Braun and his V2 rocket team. Von Braun went on to develop the Saturn V rocket for the Apollo program and became one of NASA's heroes. He was even awarded the National Medal of Science by President Gerald Ford in 1977. Another German rocket scientist, Kurt Heinrich Debus, was a member of the Nazi Party and the SS. But in 1962 he became the first director of the Kennedy Space Center.

And during the Cold War, the U.S. was open to other deals. *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Klaus Barbie, the 'Butcher of Lyon,' was responsible for the deaths of at least 4,000 people, mostly Jews, as head of the local *Gestapo*. Sentenced to death by a French court in 1947, he remained free and worked for the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) ⁸ in Germany from 1947 to 1951. From 1951 to 1983, he continued his work for the CIC in Bolivia. And during all this time, not even the Mossad could touch him.

In June 1946, the Americans established the Gehlen Organization in the United States Zone of Germany. This intelligence service was headed by former German Major General Reinhard Gehlen, head of German military intelligence on the Eastern Front during World War II. Gehlen's German spies were the CIA's eyes and ears in the Soviet bloc countries during the Cold War. Gehlen employed many former Nazis and known war criminals. In 1956, Gehlen became director of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND), West Germany's federal intelligence agency.

On May 22, 1945, Gehlen surrendered to the CIC in Bavaria.

The Americans immediately recognized his potential value.⁹



Based on all of this information, we can safely conclude that

1. Since the war was already lost for Nazi Germany in early 1943, Adolf Hitler had plenty of time to prepare one or more escape plans.
2. Many Nazis escaped to South America or some other destination after the end of World War II.
3. The U.S. employed a significant number of former Nazis. Even major war criminals were not prosecuted as long as they were useful to the United States.

Therefore, the *Führer* had both the time and the opportunity to flee Nazi Germany in the spring of 1945. Moreover, the U.S. was open to all kinds of deals in its fight against the USSR.¹⁰ But did Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun take advantage of these opportunities?

Conspiracy theories

Many conspiracy theorists are convinced that they did. Simon Dunstan and Gerrard Williams in their book *'Grey Wolf: The Escape of Adolf Hitler,'* describe how the *Führer* and his wife escaped from Berlin on April 28, 1945, in a Junkers Ju 52.¹¹ From Berlin they flew to Denmark, Reus in Spain and finally to Fuerteventura, one of the Canary Islands.

A few days later, Operation Seawolf was launched. Hitler and Braun boarded a submarine that took them to South America in 59 days. After arriving in Argentina, they continued their journey by plane to Patagonia in the south. First, Hitler and Braun spent nine months at the Estancia San Ramón, an estate owned by a German prince. Then the construction of his final refuge was completed: Residencia Inalco, near the Chilean border. According to Dunstan and Williams, Hitler and Braun



lived a quiet life in Patagonia until 1962, the year of his death.

The Residencia Inalco still exists. But there is no evidence that Hitler and Braun ever lived there.

Adolf Hitler died in Paraguay

Argentine journalist and author Abel Basti also wrote an international bestseller about Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun's escape: *'Hitler in Exile'*. Basti claims that the U.S. allowed the *Führer* to spend the rest of his life in South America out of gratitude for the scientists they were able to send to the U.S. in Operation Paperclip. According to the Argentine writer, Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun sailed from the Canary Islands to Argentina in a submarine, which is consistent with Dunstan and Williams' story. The *Führer* lived in Argentina for 10 years and then moved to Paraguay, where he died on February 3, 1971. Adolf Hitler was buried in an underground bunker in Asunción. The entrance to the bunker was sealed in 1973. Again, there are no photos or other evidence to support this story.

The hospitality of the Eichhorns

Another very popular topic among conspiracy writers is the story of the Eichhorns. The wealthy German couple Walter and Ida Eichhorn owned the Eden Hotel in La Falda, Argentina. As great admirers of Adolf Hitler, they sponsored him beginning in the 1920s and offered him refuge should he ever need it.



Ida Eichhorn

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These photos would prove that Adolf Hitler visited the Eichhorns in Argentina after the war. But they were taken during the Eichhorn's annual visit to Germany in the 1930s.

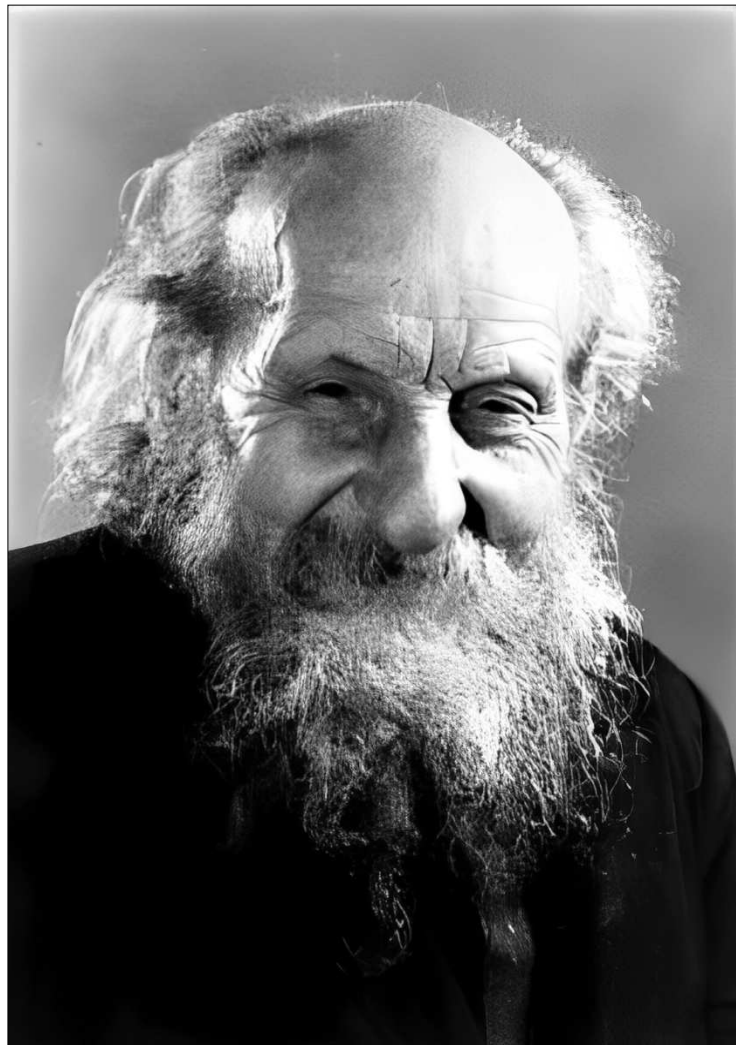
Plastic surgery and Father Crespi

In another conspiracy theory, we can read how Adolf Hitler spent the rest of his life in Cuenca, Ecuador. After a visit to the plastic surgeon at the end of the war, he sought refuge in the Vatican under the name of Carlos Crespi and was later ordained a priest... A specialist in stolen art, he was given a position as 'curator of art for the Vatican archives'. In 1956, he was sent as a priest to Cuenca, Ecuador. He died there in 1993 at the age of 104.

*Adolf Hitler
after highly
successful
plastic
surgery?*

*Father Carlos
Crespi Croci
did exist. He
was a Salesian
priest, born in
Italy in 1891,
who lived in
Cuenca from
1923 to 1982.*

*But he didn't
start World
War II...*



No proof

All these conspiracy theories have one thing in common: they offer no proof. And when they do, it's fake. Why do people write such nonsense? An international bestseller can make a small fortune. Or maybe some authors don't take their medicine as prescribed. But there is, or was, another kind of motivation, especially shortly after the end of the war. Many Nazis and Nazi sympathizers wanted to keep the myth alive. As long as the *Führer* wasn't dead, or believed to be dead, Nazism could still make a comeback.

At this point, however, one thing is clear: no conspiracy theory will bring us any closer to the true fate of Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun after World War II. It will take a thorough investigation to unravel this mystery.

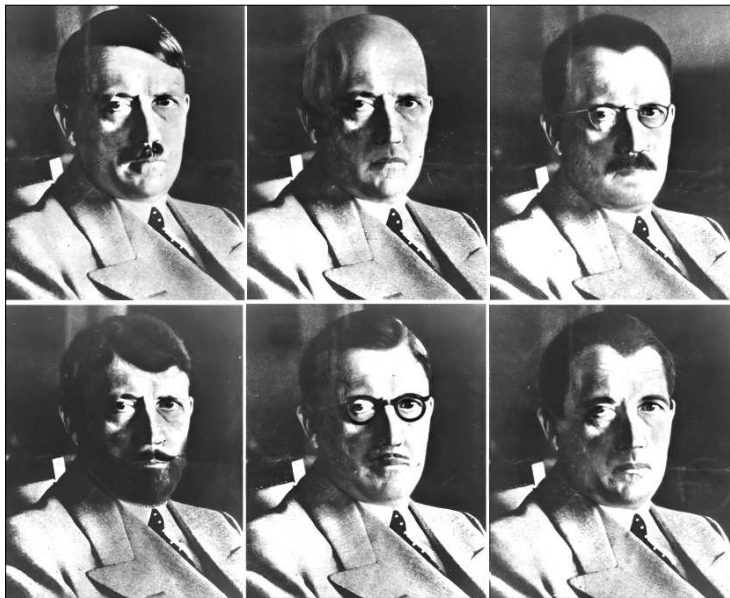


Adolf Hitler lost his hair and mustache in a Photoshop attempt to prove he survived the war. The original photo was taken in 1943 on the terrace of the Berghof, his villa on the Obersalzberg in Bavaria.

Americans on the hunt

In 1944, World War II was almost coming to an end. On June 6th, the Allies landed in Normandy. That day, more than 5,000 ships and 160,000 troops crossed the English Channel. By the end of August, Allied forces in Europe numbered more than two million.

With defeat on the horizon, officials and the public in the West began to speculate about Adolf Hitler's last scheme. Was he planning to disguise himself and flee abroad? Eddie Senz, a Hollywood makeup artist, even created a series of manipulated photographs of the *Führer* in disguise.



Adolf Hitler in disguise, doctored photos by Eddie Senz. Most sources claim that he made these images for the U.S. Office of

Strategic Services (OSS). But they were first published in the New York Times in 1944, where the OSS supposedly happened to see them, ready for use...

On September 4, 1944, FBI Special Agent D.J. Ladd sent a memo directly to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover informing him that there were indications that a hideout for Adolf Hitler was being prepared in Argentina.

In the spring of 1945, Hitler disappeared from the face of the earth. The Americans thought that the *Führer* might have fled to his Alpine Fortress (or Redoubt) in Bavaria. But other sources claimed that Hitler would never leave Berlin in the final stages of the war.

Carl Wiberg, a Swedish businessman who spied for the Allies in Berlin, sent a report on April 18, 1945, assuring that the *Führer* was still in Berlin. And five days later, on April 23, *Generalleutnant* ¹² Kurt Dittmar surrendered to the U.S. 30th Infantry Division. He claimed that there was no such thing as an Alpine Redoubt. But the Americans were not convinced. So when Berlin fell on May 2nd, no one knew where Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun were.

FBI and CIA pull out all the stops

The fact that Adolf Hitler had disappeared greatly disturbed the Western authorities. The Americans, in particular, did their utmost to solve the mystery. Both the FBI and the CIA actively participated in the hunt for Adolf Hitler. For more than a decade, U.S. presidents Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered that every tip be thoroughly investigated. And the list was endless:

- Many people were convinced that Hitler and Braun had escaped in a German submarine. In fact, after Nazi Germany surrendered, the submarine U-530 sailed for Argentina, as did U-977. Both ships surrendered to the Argentine Navy at Mar del Plata. However, the Argentine Navy Ministry issued an official communiqué stating that there were no Nazi leaders on board.
- In the first half of July 1945, a search in the Bavarian Alps came up empty. A German POW had claimed that Hitler's body was buried near the *Berghof*.
- Nor had the *Führer* opened a medical practice in Bern under the name of Doctor Brandl.
- In August 1945, Adolf Hitler had a factory in Argentina for the production of 'long-range robot bombs'.
- In September 1946, the former *Führer* was seen in Spain commanding a number of submarines. But at the same time, Mrs. Jones of Culpeper spotted Adolf Hitler at a hotel in Charlottesville, Virginia. Another American lady shared a table with the fugitive at a diner in Washington D.C.

AMERICANS ON THE HUNT



Adolf Schüttelmayer
Columbia. Tunga.
America del Sur. 1954 iv.

'Adolf Schüttelmayer Colombia Tunga. America del Sur 1954 iv.' (South America 1954, 'iv' could be short for invierno – winter.) In the hunt for Adolf Hitler, the FBI received thousands of tips, but only one (doctored?) photograph. But this investigation also came to nothing.

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- A longshoreman sent a letter to the U.S. president informing him that Adolf Hitler was working as a butler on a ship. And in his spare time, the *Führer* even tried to sell an Encyclopedia Britannica to a young man in Elizabethton, Tennessee. In the run-up to Christmas 1946, Adolf Hitler apparently bivouacked in a cave somewhere in Scandinavia.
- A thorough investigation revealed that the most wanted war criminal didn't remain in Egypt after converting to Islam. Nor was he taking his daily walks around Lake Hohenlychen, north of Berlin.
- In 1947, Adolf Hitler, disguised as an American officer, was preparing his comeback near the city of Heidelberg, Germany.
- On July 16, 1948, the CIA in Washington received an anonymous letter. The informant was convinced that the *Führer* and some of his followers were living in Bobovo, a hamlet somewhere in Yugoslavia.
- The landlady of a small boarding house in Washington D.C. contacted the FBI on October 9, 1948. Adolf Hitler had rented one of her rooms and she was very concerned that she would be arrested and sent to prison for aiding and abetting the Nazi fugitive.
- In 1950, several people were convinced that Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun had taken refuge in a monastery in Tibet. At the same time, however, the former *Führer* went into hiding in Innsbruck, Austria, under the name Gerhard Weithaupt. He was seen in a cafe in Amsterdam, and an American GI even spotted him picking up his laundry at a laundromat.

And this went on for years... Someone was convinced that the FBI should look for Adolf Hitler in New York because *'that's the best place to disappear'*. And a medium heard from a source 'on the other side' that the *Führer* had made the trip to the U.S. in a Japanese submarine and landed on a beach in California.

Year after year, hundreds of FBI and CIA investigations led to one dead end after another. In 1955, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower finally decided that enough was enough. With no tangible evidence, the case was closed and Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun were presumed dead... But now the time has come to reopen the investigation.

The crime scene

After his appointment as German Chancellor on January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler commissioned his architect, Albert Speer, to build him a new and much larger Reich Chancellery. But first, Hitler wanted a new banquet hall as an extension of the old Reich Chancellery, as well as an underground command center in the garden of the old Reich Chancellery: the *Führerbunker*.

To make room for the new Reich Chancellery, Speer began expropriating and demolishing buildings on the north side of *Voßstraße*. Meanwhile, the banquet hall and the *Führerbunker* were being built. Both were completed in January 1936.



*The old
Reich
Chancellery
on Berlin's
Wilhelm-
straße.*¹³



In 1937 and 1938, more than 4,000 (forced) laborers worked around the clock to build the new chancellery. The resources were unlimited.¹⁴ ~ In January 1939, the imposing building on Berlin's Voßstraße was completed. It was no less than 421 meters long.¹⁵ The new chancellery had a volume of 400,000 cubic meters and was beautifully decorated.

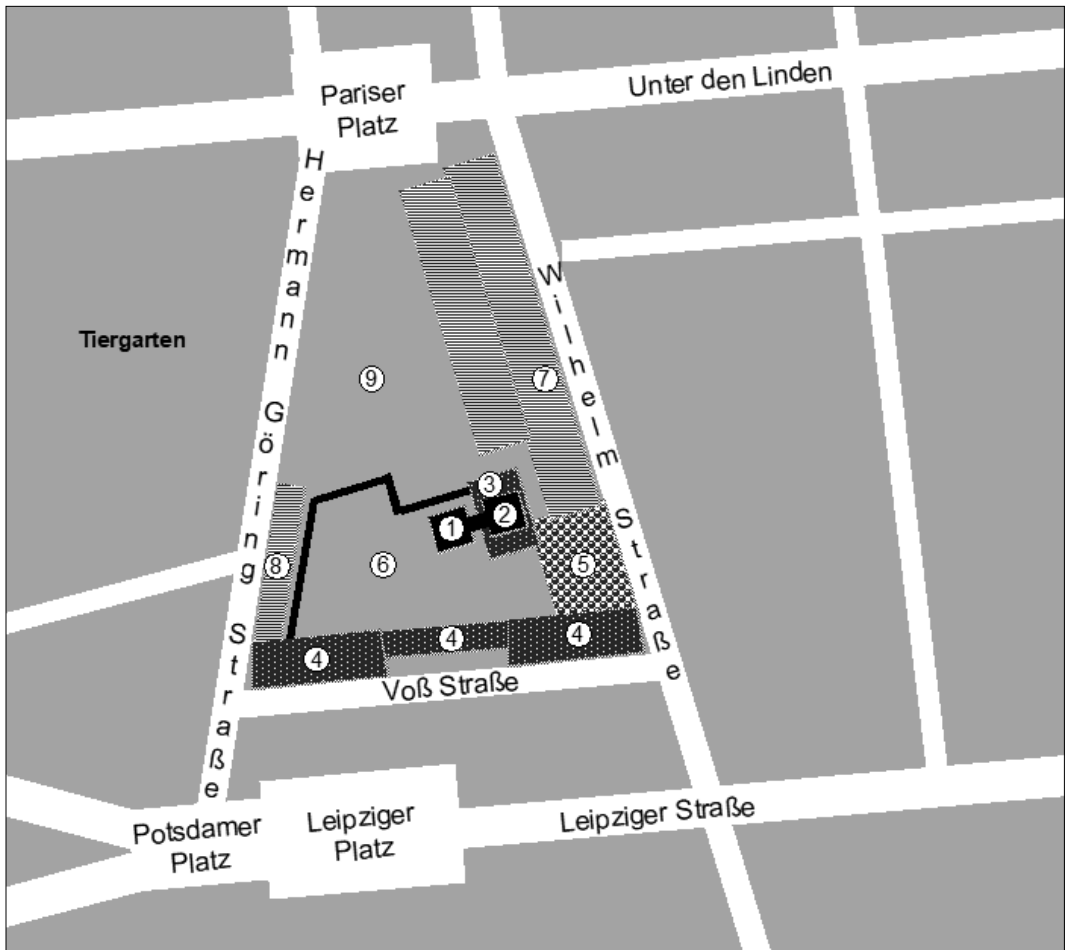




In the middle section of the chancellery was a 146-meter-long colonnade, twice as long as the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, where the Treaty of Versailles was signed after World War One.¹⁶ ~ Hitler's office was 400 square meters in size and 10 meters in height.



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- 1: The (new) *Führerbunker*.
- 2: The front bunker (the first *Führerbunker*) under the new banquet hall.
- 3: The new banquet hall.
- 4: The new chancellery.
- 5: The old chancellery.
- 6: The garden of the chancellery.
- 7: Ministries.
- 8: Barracks.
- 9: The garden of the ministries.

THE CRIME SCENE

But in addition to this splendor, the necessary infrastructure for the coming war was already in place. A series of large air raid shelters had been constructed under the new building for the hundreds of officials who worked there. In the vicinity of the old and new chancellery were the other government buildings, whose cellars were also reinforced and expanded into bunkers during the same period. In total, an underground labyrinth of more than 20 bunkers connected by tunnels was created. These spacious air raid shelters would prove their worth at the end of WW II.

A deeper bunker

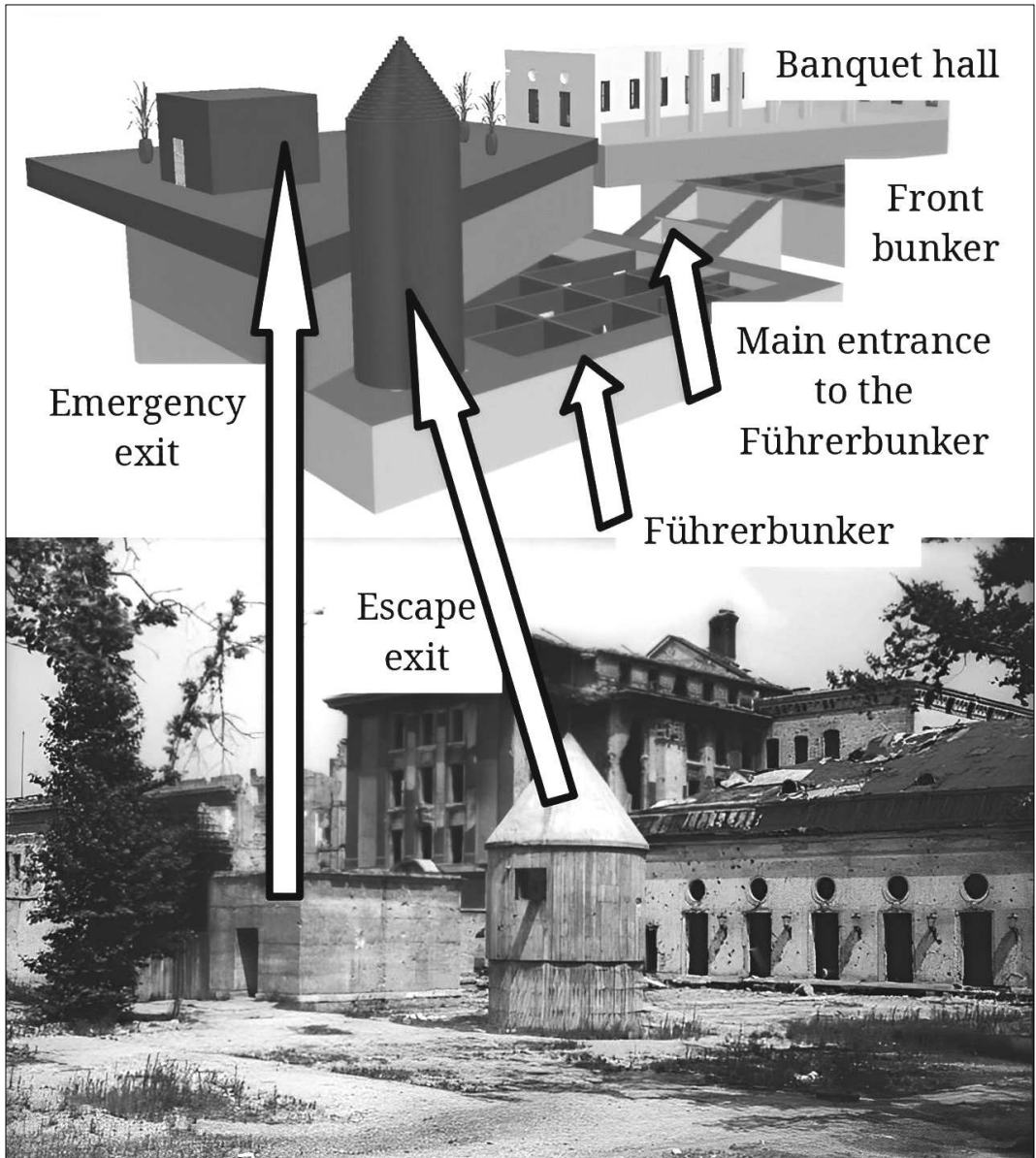
On June 22, 1941, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. At first, everything went smoothly for the German army, but by the end of 1941, the attack began to falter. And in 1942, the odds on the Eastern Front changed for good. It became clear that it was not going to be a walk in the park for the *Wehrmacht* in Russia.

In July 1943, the Allies landed in Sicily and turned up the heat from the south as well. Hitler knew he was now on the defensive. He decided to build an additional command bunker, even stronger and deeper underground than the previous one.

From then on, the first bunker, located under the banquet hall behind the old chancellery, was called the 'front bunker'. The new *Führerbunker* was built behind the front bunker, under the garden of the old chancellery. This immense work began in 1943, and by the end of October 1944 the bunker was ready for use. But it was never fully completed.

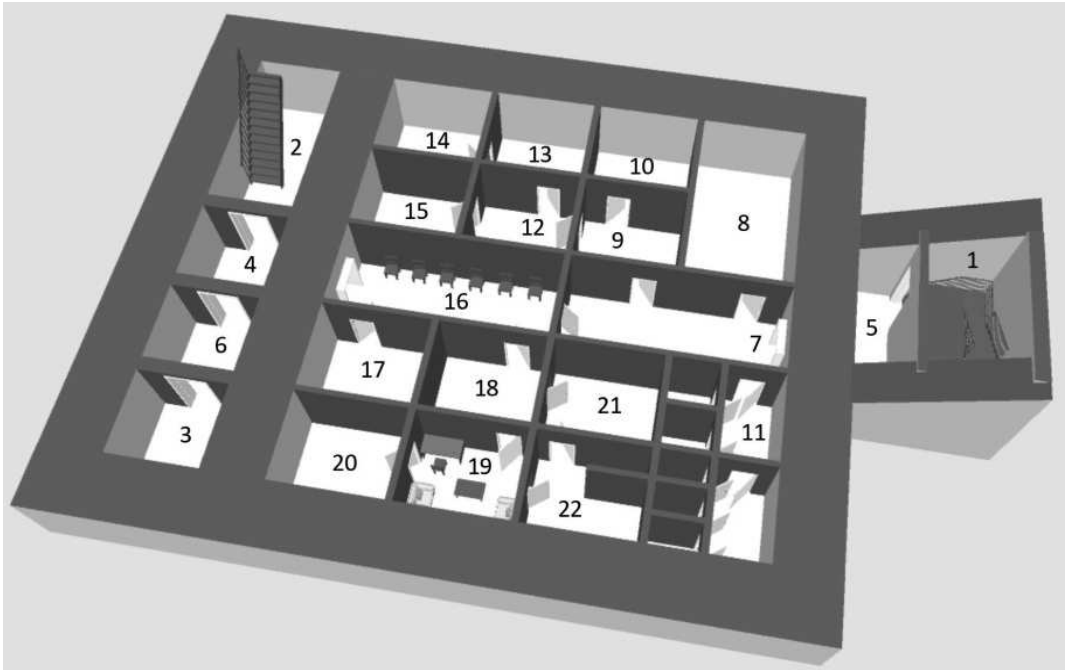
The new *Führerbunker* was built even more solidly than the front bunker. This first command bunker already had thick walls and initially a concrete roof 2.6 meters thick. Around the turn of '44-'45, the roof of the front bunker was reinforced with an additional meter of concrete.

But Speer went even further with the new *Führerbunker*. Hitler's emergency residence was 2.5 meters deeper into the ground: 8.5 meters below the garden of the old chancellery. The floor slab was 2.5 meters thick, the outer walls were made of 2.2 meters of reinforced concrete, and the roof was made of 4 meters of reinforced concrete. The *Führerbunker* was sealed with double gas-tight steel doors, permanently guarded by SS men. At the time, the Allies did not have a bomb that could damage this structure.



The front bunker (the first Führerbunker) was used as a kitchen, guard quarters, storage room, shelter, secretariat, dining room, etc. The round watchtower also served as an escape exit. The photo was taken in July 1947 from the garden of the old chancellery. The emergency exit and the escape exit from the Führerbunker will play an important role in the investigation.¹⁷

THE CRIME SCENE



1. The *Führerbunker* had a **main entrance**, via a staircase from the front bunker.
2. One could also enter and leave the bunker through the **emergency exit**. A staircase led to a concrete cube in the garden of the old chancellery. This emergency exit was used frequently in the last days before the collapse.
3. Less known is the **escape exit**. It consisted of steel climbing brackets in the wall of the bunker, which gave access to the circular observation tower. Inside was a hatch that could only be opened from the inside. In case of emergency, it was also possible to leave the bunker this way.
4. Heavily armed members of the *Reichssicherheitsdienst* (RSD ¹⁸) guarded the **entrance to the bunker**. Adolf Hitler had several services protecting him. First, there was the *Führerbegleitkommando* (FBK ¹⁹). This unit was selected from the SS in 1932 and originally consisted of eight members. By the end of the war, the FBK consisted of 31 officers and 112 NCOs. The primary function of the FBK was to protect the *Führer* during movements outside of his official residences or headquarters. In theory, the FBK was under the command of the *Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler* (LAH), but in practice this unit

took its orders directly from the *Führer*. The LAH was originally a private army of 120 SS men established in 1933. Over the years, the LAH evolved into an SS division that was used for combat missions and no longer performed tasks for the *Führer* personally. Finally, there was the RSD. The RSD provided bodyguards for the *Führer*. Its members were recruited from the *Kriminalpolizei* (Kripo – the ‘criminal police’) and had both *Wehrmacht*, SS, and police degrees. Each top Nazi had a section of the RSD, a *Dienststelle*, which provided personal security. *Dienststelle 1* was the personal bodyguard of the *Führer*.

5. **Ditto**. Everyone, even the generals, had to leave their personal weapons here.
6. **Room for RSD officers** not on duty at one of the entrances. If necessary, they could help immediately.
7. Upon entering the bunker, one first entered a **corridor** that was again guarded by a heavily armed guard.
8. The first door on the right led to the **engine room**, which housed the diesel generators that provided power for lighting and ventilation.
9. The second door on the right led to the room where the **ventilation system** was located.
10. Behind it was the **telephone and telegraph exchange**, the domain of *SS-Oberscharführer* Rochus Misch, the telephone operator.
11. The **toilets** behind the door on the left were used by everyone in the bunker except Hitler and Braun. There was also a place for Blondi, the *Führer's* dog, at the back of the room.
12. Accomodation area for the *Führer's* **personal valets**.
13. Sleeping quarters for the *Führer's* **personal valets**.
14. **Infirmary**.
15. **Joseph Goebbels' bedroom**.
16. People who came for an audience with the *Führer* or for a staff meeting had to wait in the **anteroom of the meeting room**.
17. Daily meetings were held in the small **meeting room**. Here Hitler sat behind a table, usually with the necessary maps in front of him. About twenty participants stood shoulder to shoulder. Often a number of participants lower in the pecking order had to watch the meeting from the anteroom of the meeting room. It was in this small meeting room that the wedding of Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun took place.
18. From the anteroom of the meeting room, a double armored door gave access to the ***Führer's* apartment**, which consisted of five small rooms. The first was **Hitler's anteroom**, again a waiting room for visitors the *Führer* wished to receive personally.