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T H E S T O R Y
of the
S A U E R K R A U T S

MO - MEDTO

2677th HDQ. DET. OSS (PROV.)

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THE STORY

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THE STORY OF THE SAUERKRAUTS

On July 21, 1944, the world heard the dramatic news of the abortive attempt on the life of Adolph Hitler, staged by trusted members of the German High Command. A few hours later, on the same hot afternoon in Rome, the story of the Sauerkrauts began.

It was very apparent that MO's most important task at the moment was to create some device whereby it could quickly capitalize upon the attempted coup. A conference of the MO staff, together with Lt. Burkhardt and Mr. Rockhill, of R&A, was held that morning. For some time, Mr. Warner had been debating the advisability of using German prisoners of war as agents to distribute MO material. Italian agents had proved virtually useless in providing distribution among front-line troops. Here was news which certainly should be interpreted for the front-line soldier.

Messrs. Burkhardt and Rockhill, speaking from months of interviews with German prisoners, said that they believed the plan to be feasible. Furthermore, they suggested the names of specific prisoner-candidates with whom they had previously talked.

Obviously, the situation inside Germany called for speedy action. This was the first sign of internal strife in the Reich and the ordinary landser was ripe for rumor, half-truths and pure invention. Major Dewart and Corporal Lauwers departed for the prison camp at Aversa, near Naples, that evening. Meanwhile, work began on a series of documents and leaflets which were especially designed for this type of front-line infiltration. A special order of the day, purporting to come from Field Marshall Walther Von Brauchitsch, was prepared and printed. It proclaimed that the Field Marshal had taken over control of Germany

and implied that the revolt against the Nazis was continuing inside the Reich.

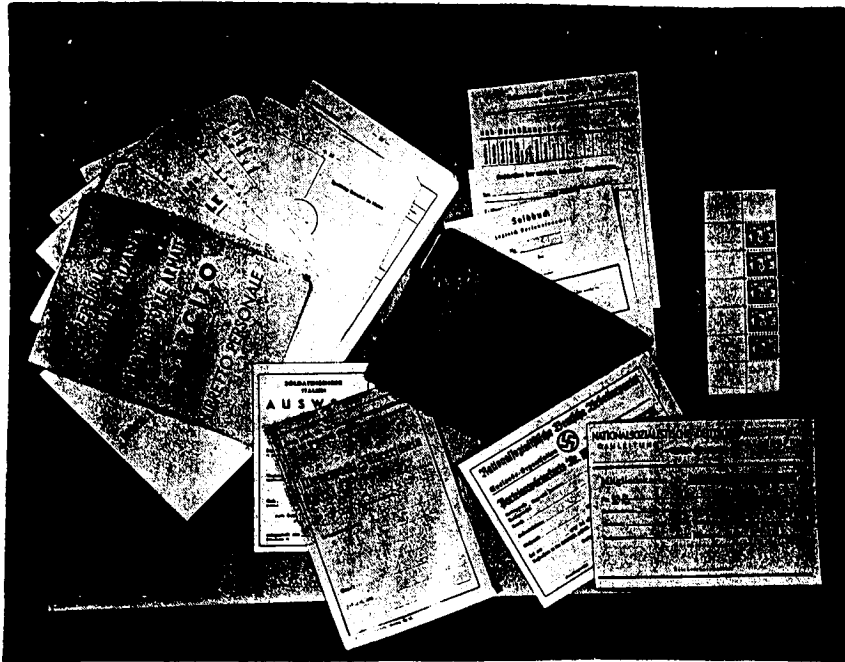
Sixteen agents were recruited by Corporal Lauwers and Major Dewart within a period of twenty-four hours. Clearance for the project was obtained and the agents were immediately transported to Company D, Siena. In the meantime, Mr. Zinder, who was in charge of the project, was ransacking the countryside for uniforms and fashioning vital credentials with primitive improvised equipment, for the mission, which was given the code name « Sauerkraut ».

Less than four days after the entire plan had been conceived, the first three teams were successfully sent through the German lines. Two days later, all returned unharmed. They reported that they had been able to move about freely and therefore had been able to disseminate all of their propaganda material. All along the Italian front, German soldiers were reading documents intended to create the impression that at home the revolt against the Nazis had begun. Although it was not their mission, these agents brought back much valuable intelligence. G-2, Fifth Army, was impressed and asked for more Sauerkrauts.

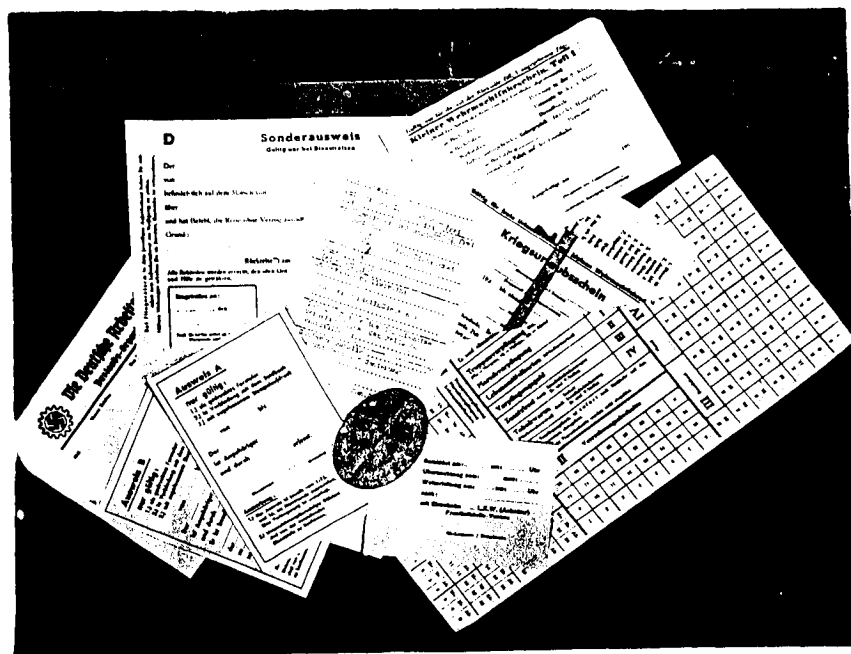
More than anything else, the success of the first mission showed that Sauerkrauts could be carried out consistently and could be expanded. This expansion involved the establishment of several holding areas, which were constantly changed for security considerations, and made it necessary to establish separate departments for training, documentation and uniforms. Although MO's available personnel was very limited, all of these were shortly in operation.

Here is the story, from beginning to end, in pictures:

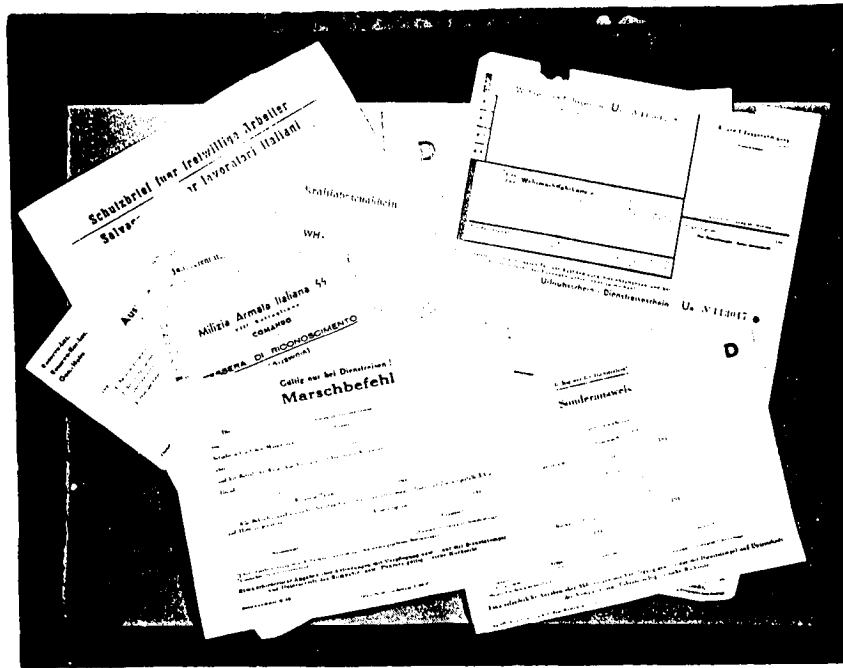
Unimpeachable credentials were vitally important



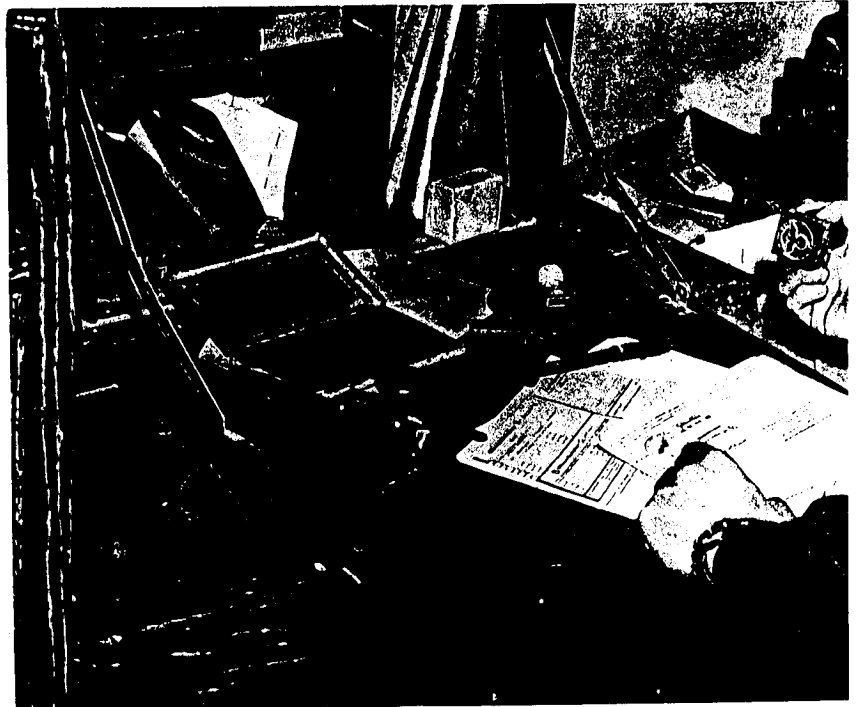
Special documents had to be prepared to substantiate the agents' cover stories.



After the operation started, the Germans made frequent changes in their documents and it was necessary to check and duplicate these.

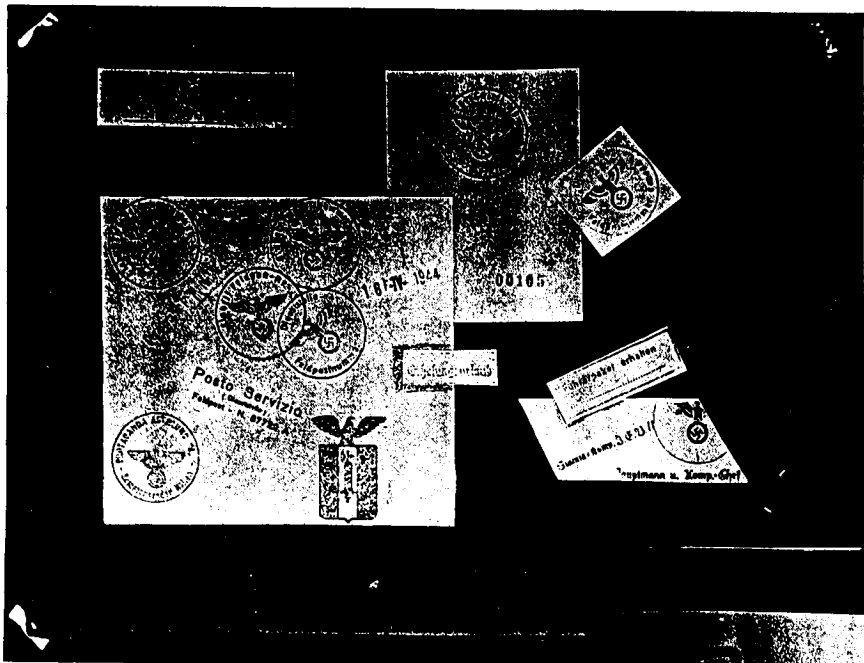


Although the agents were accosted by German Military Police on many occasions, there was only one instance in which their credentials were questioned.

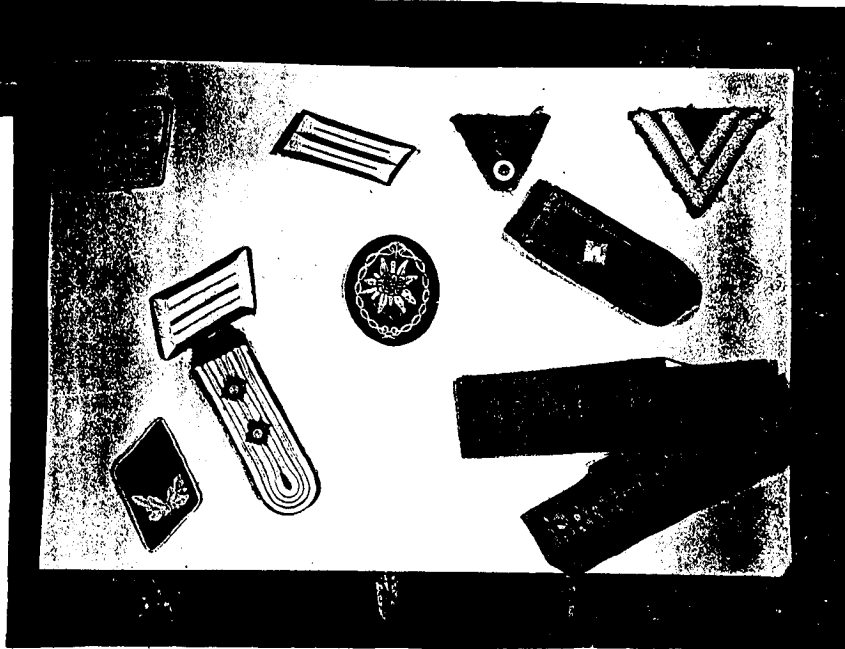


A special department was set up so that the documentation could be completed in the field.

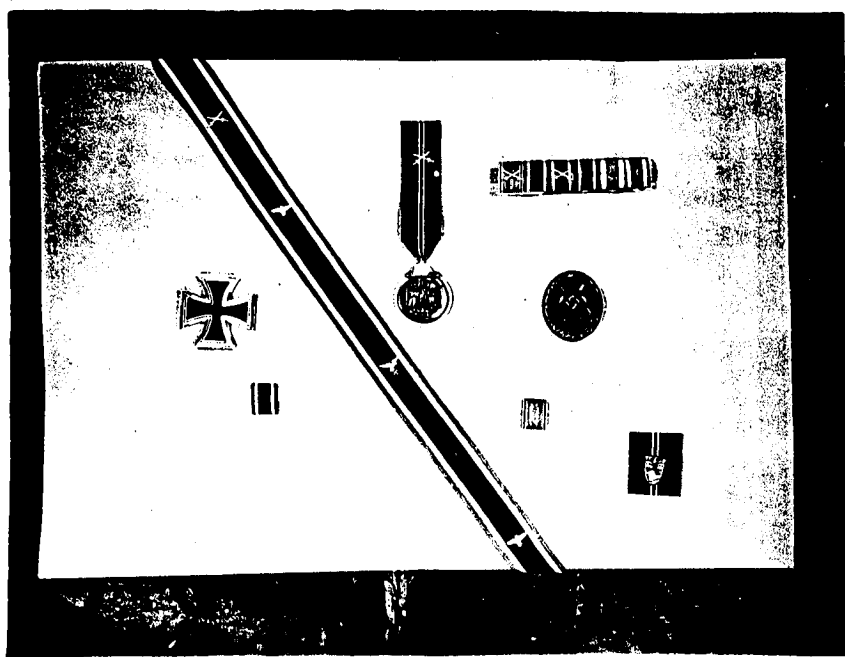
A wide variety of official rubber stamps were manufactured by R&D in Rome.



All credentials were carefully checked before the men left for the field.



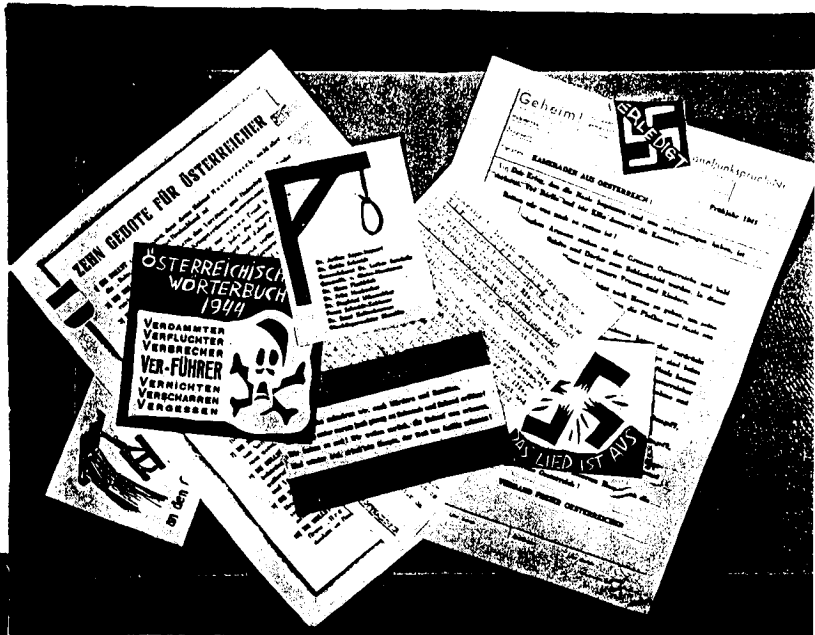
Every conceivable kind of insignia had to be located.



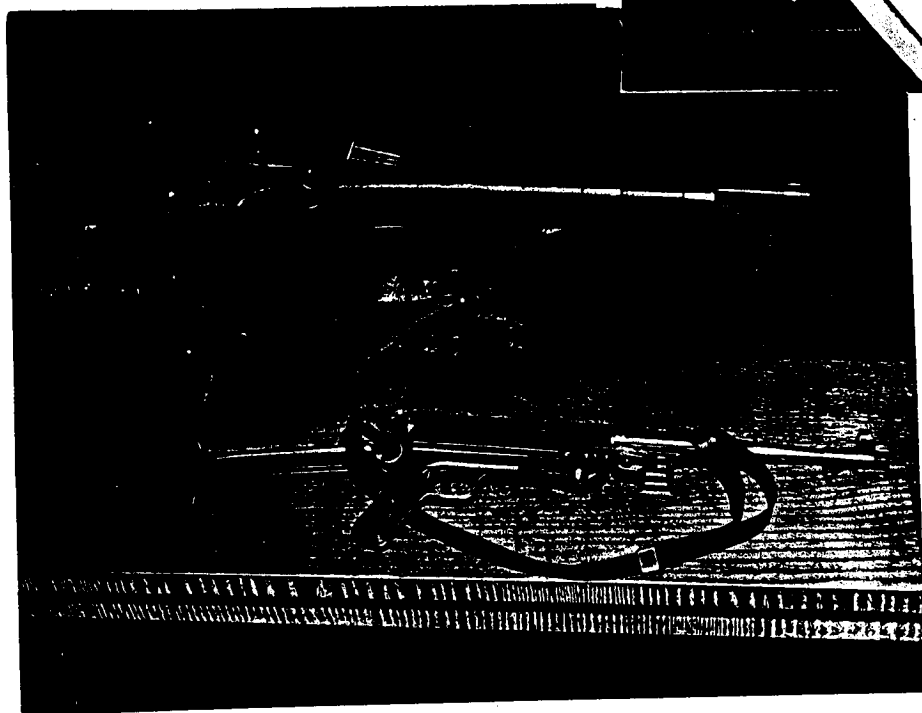
Because of souvenir-hunting GI's at the front, medals and decorations were extremely difficult to obtain.



Uniforms were completed down to the last detail. Hose of a wrong color might give a man away and destroy the entire operation.



No mission was complete, of course, without propaganda material.



Weapons had to be supplied, even though American soldiers were offering 150 dollars for a Luger without luck.



German Army vehicles, moving towards the north, were loaded with substantial supplies of such materials as this.



Others found newspaper emanating from home-land underground movements in their latrines.



German soldiers, sleeping along a roadside, awakened to find leaflets covering their faces which told them to go home.

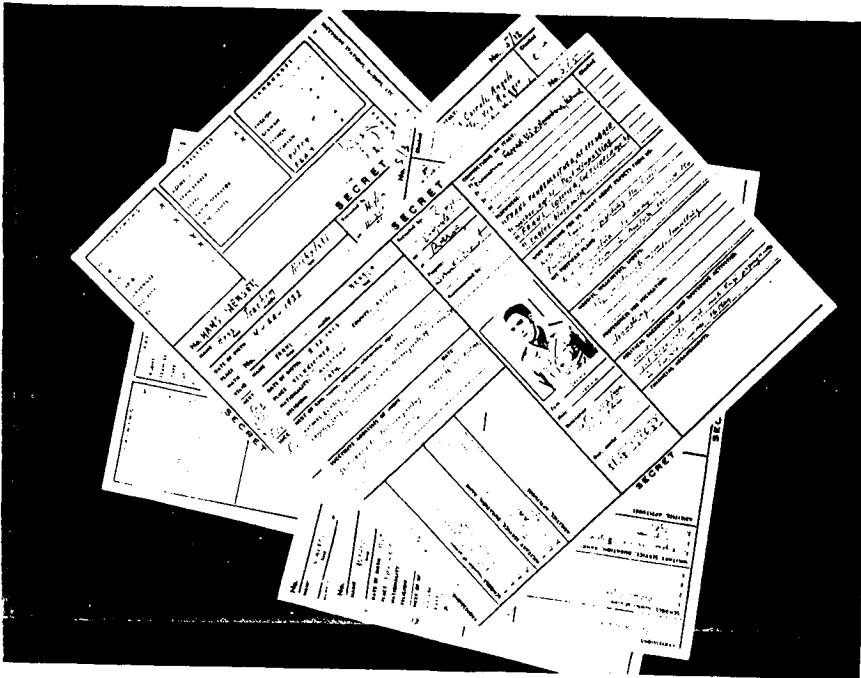
Recruiting and training



The first group of agents was recruited in this prison camp at Aversa, Italy.



Each man was interviewed thoroughly, tests of his character were made.



As each was accepted, a complete record of his past performances and his qualifications was entered in the files.

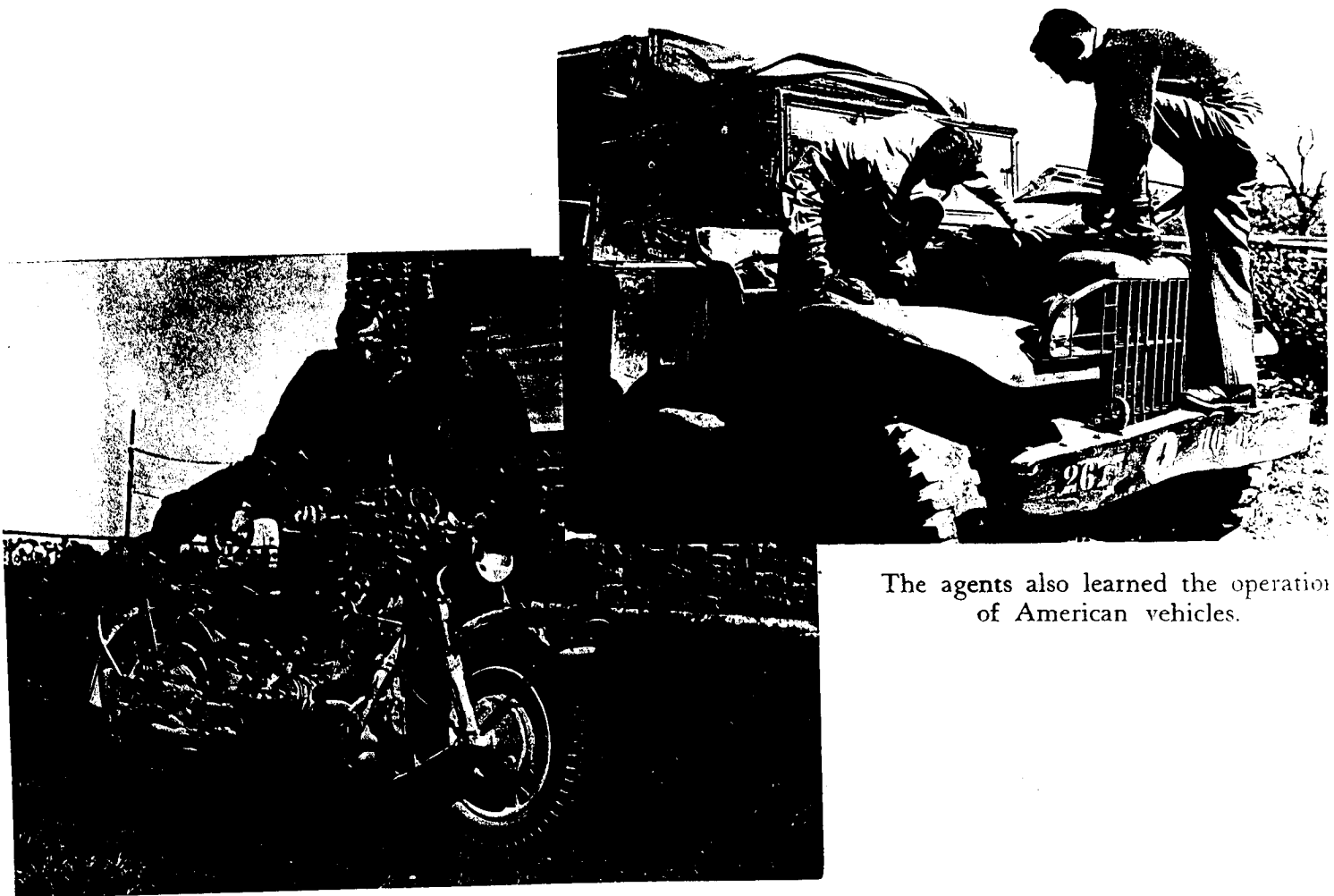


The recruited agents were moved to isolated holding areas.



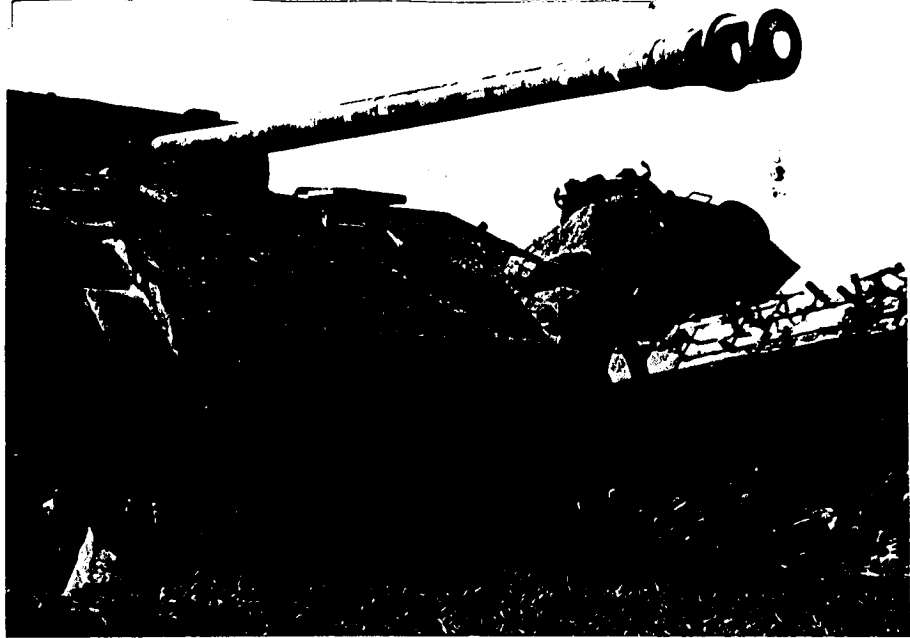
Elaborate security precautions were necessary.

Map-reading was important since the men had to travel miles behind German lines and too many questions were dangerous. Also, exact reporting of a mission was essential.



The agents also learned the operation of American vehicles.

Not to mention German ones.



They refreshed their recollection of German ordnance.



Practice in the dissemination
of MO material.

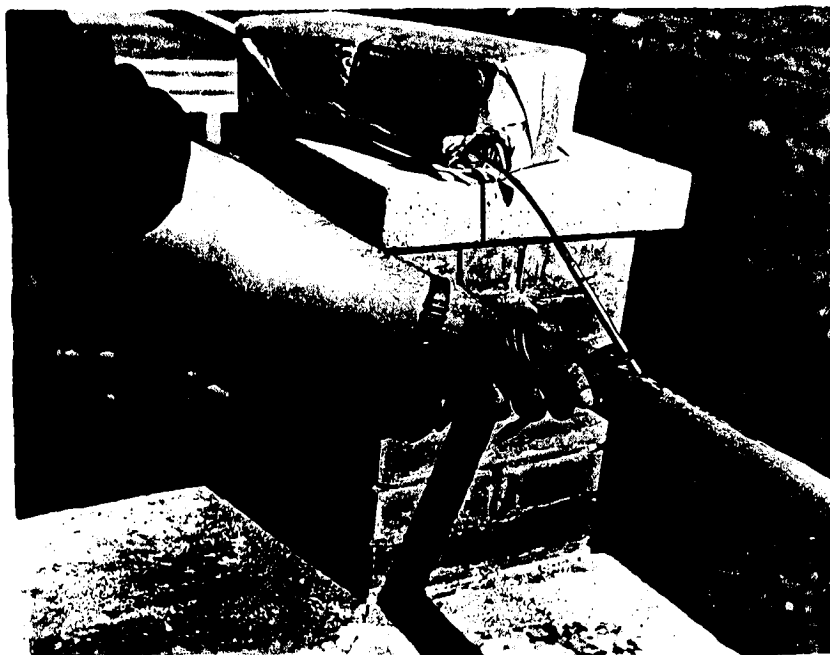
Here, the agents rehearse their
cover stories. Agent in the
rear has just called the other
by his cover name. It was im-
portant that they remember and
respond to their take names.



Instruction in the use of explosives.



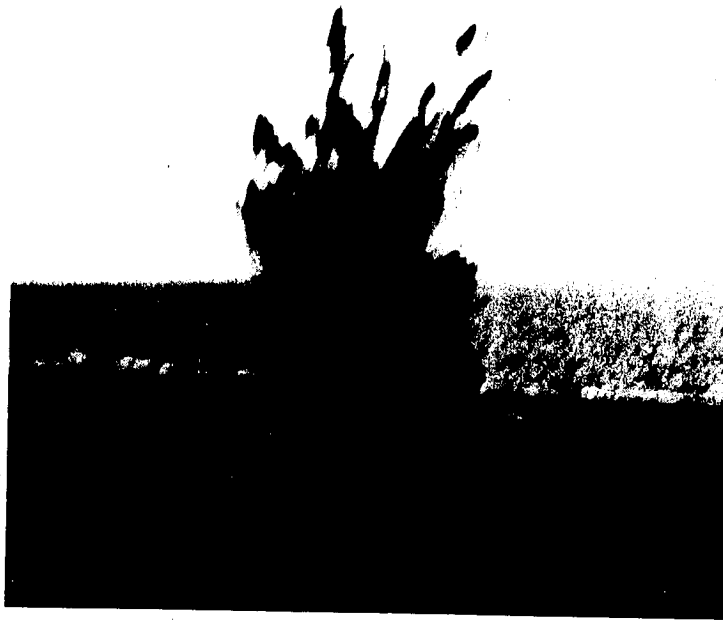
Fastening a detonator to the fuze.



A bundle of MO material is about to be detonated.



The air is filled with propaganda, about to settle in the streets of an enemy-held town.

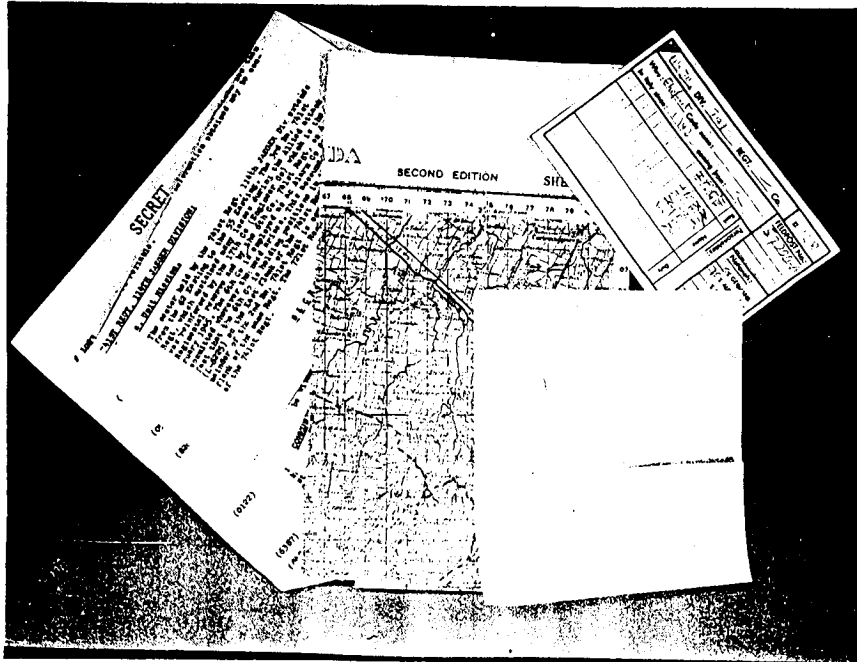


Other demolition practice.



In order to encourage them as members of « Das Neue Deutschland », the agents were allowed to administer their own discipline.

Operations in the Field



Each operation was carefully rehearsed and documented.



The routes by which each man was to proceed to his destination were planned to the last detail.



Final additions were made in the documents, based on lastminute intelligence.



Details of uniform were scrupulously checked, a mistake might wreck the operation.



Constant liaison with the Army was necessary.



The men gather for the take-off.



They ride to the infiltration point.

Last minute briefing.



Each man's mission is checked with him.



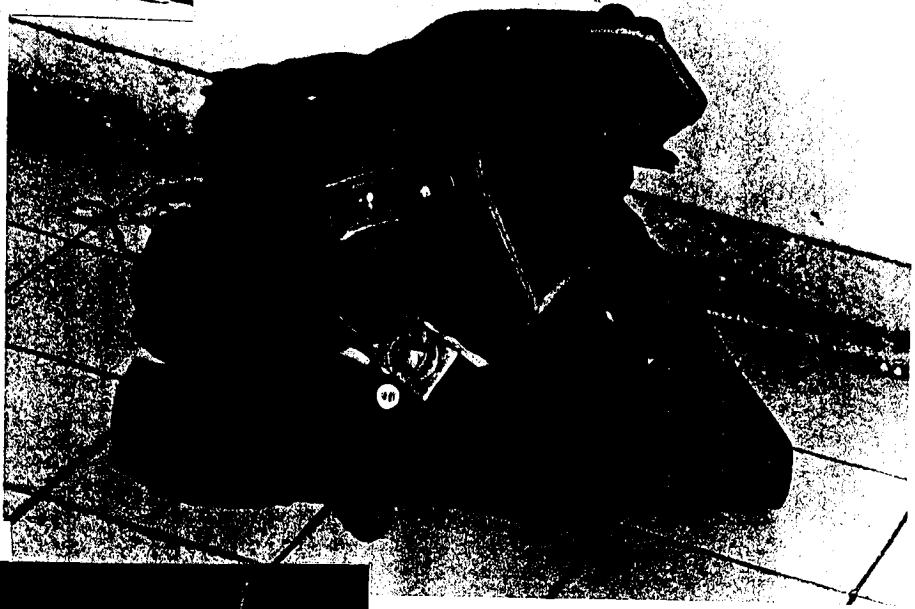
They load up with material.



Into enemy territory.



Mission completed, the agents are thoroughly debriefed.



Their clothing is deloused.



Bathed and shaved, they enjoy a good meal.

The Sauerkraut operations were rich in detail and anecdote. Some of the anecdotes, taken from actual reports, follow:

1. On October 6, 1944, a group of MO agents visited a bar at Castel D'Aiano, some fifteen miles behind the German lines. They encountered a real German Feldwebel in the bar and asked him what the news was. In response, he showed them a copy of the PWB newspaper « Frontpost ». One MO agent accepted it and handed the German a copy of « Das Neue Deutschland », saying that he had received it from another soldier at Modena. The German read the paper in their presence and expressed satisfaction that there was at last a real underground movement in Germany. « Gott sei Dank », said he.

2. In behavior, manner and dress the MO agents were so completely German that, on one occasion, they were attacked by Italian partisans and taken prisoners.

3. German trucks moving to and from the front were loaded with MO propaganda. Posters and stickers were attached to houses, poles and trees along the main highways. « Das Neue Deutschland » was distributed in many instances through personal contact with German soldiers. Valuable close-up, detailed intelligence was brought back and even some sabotage was accomplished, such as cutting telephone wires, etc.

4. Captured German soldiers frequently had our material on their persons. Largely, they believed that the material was produced by the German underground. Soldiers on leave carried our material into Germany and several leaflets made their way back to the front from German cities.

5. Faked German orders, disseminated by these MO agents, frequently provoked disorder in the German Army administration. Field Marshal Kesselring was forced to deny one of his « orders » in an official broadcast.

6. The agents said that their toughest task was to avoid the partisans—who shoot first and ask questions later.

7. One team of three agents was returning to our lines in a sector held by Negro troops. The first soldier they encountered was a lone, colored infantryman. They expressed their desire to

surrender to him. Noting how heavily they were armed, the American soldier instead dropped his gun and surrendered himself. It was some time before they convinced him that they were the ones who wished to surrender.

8. Three of the Sauerkrauts were hiding in the woods, overlooking a road held by the Allies. They were waiting for an American patrol which would take them back to our lines. Finally, they saw an American jeep coming down the road. Carrying their Schmeisser sub-machine guns, they crashed down the embankment to stop the jeep. The American lieutenant who was driving the jeep felt much better when he finally discovered that they were *his* prisoners.

On the following pages appear brief biographical sketches of a few agents which reveal the reasons why they joined the Allies to fight Naziism. Accompanying are cartoon sketches made by Haseneier. These men with the exception of Michalski were the pioneers for these extremely hazardous missions and are fairly typical of all the MO agents.

Hans Tappert



HANS TAPPERT, 33, born in Dortmund, Germany; Protestant; married; 4 years of navigation school. Speaks German, French, Dutch, Flemish and Italian. Had a great variety of occupations, the latest: fashion designer.

His family, he says, was persecuted: father was shot by Nazis; mother placed in Bochum penitentiary for anti-nazi activities and later transferred to concentration camp at Finsterwalde where she died and was cremated in 1937; one sister is still in prison, the other one died in an air attack.

Tappert was three times tried for anti-nazi activities: in 1934 he was sentenced for high treason to 18 months in Bayreuth penitentiary. In 1936 he emigrated to Belgium, married, but after the occupation of Bel-

gium he was drafted for the Wehrmacht. In 1940 tried in Brussels for espionage and sentenced to six months prison in Bonn a/R. When released was sent to Greece where he worked at Division HQ.

In 1943 he was courtmartialled for activities detrimental to national defence and sentenced to 18 months. After 6 months in prison in Glatz he was sent to the Italian front. There, 30 km. before the front, he deserted to the Partisans and later surrendered to the Americans.

His ambition is to contribute to the rehabilitation of his country and help so that the German is once again recognized as a decent man.

Went on Sauerkrauts 2 and 3 (volunteered for others); excellent results.



Willi Borgwardt



WILLI BORGWARDT, 26, an atheist from Duisburg, Germany. Married, his only child was baptized during the wedding ceremony.



Borgwardt's family were active communists. In 1932, at the age of 13, he witnessed an SA and SS raid on a communist picnic-party, was beaten unconscious and saw his father taken to prison. Was



dismissed by his employer for having refused to join the Hitlerjugend. In 1934-35 attended secret school in Pomerania organized by Communists. While taking a group of Jews across the border to Holland, he

was caught and convicted but released because of his youth; from then on he was under police observation.

In 1938 he tried to join the paratroopers but was rejected as « politically unreliable ». In 1939 he was accepted, took part in the invasion of Holland, later was sent to Russia where he deserted to the partisans. He returned claiming to be an escaped prisoner. Next he was sent to Italy. In fall 1943 as a Sgt. was ordered to execute 15 partisans, but released them; this



was reported and Borgwardt was sentenced to 4 months prison.

Was released when Americans landed at Nettuno. Borgwardt, then in charge of an emplacement, persuaded part of his group to cross the lines. He deserted in the opposite direction. Came to Rome in civilian clothes and after a week of hiding, reported to the Americans.

He wants to continue to fight the Nazis even after the war. Is willing to join the Nazi underground in order to expose them after cessation of hostilities.

Went on Sauerkrauts 1, 2 and 3 (volunteered for others); excellent results.

Hans
Michalski



HANS MICHALSKI, 23, born in Katowice, Poland, but of German parents. He lived in Poland, Germany and Czechoslovakia where his father still lives as director of a bank. Has 4 years of elementary school and 8 years of «gymnasium» (Secondary school training). Has good knowledge of German and English, speaks fairly French and Italian and poorly Czech and Polish.

Michalski was drafted first for Arbeitsdienst (Labor service) and in January 1942, inducted into the Wehrmacht. He was sent with a tank unit to the Russian front and later to Italy. In September, 1944, he deserted from his unit (1st Co., 504th Regt.) to join the partisans. September 27, 1944, he surrendered to the Americans.

His anti-nazi feelings have roots in his education in Polish and Czechoslovak schools. Labor service and Wehrmacht supplied final impetus. Unlike others in the group, he does not blame the German people for following the Nazis. Nazi leaders, however, should be tried and, if guilty, severely punished. Michalski is against any form of dictatorship, black or red, and believes the German people could save themselves by approaching in their way of living and thinking the Western democracies.

For himself, he hopes to go to America and study journalism.

Went on Sauerkrauts 4 and 5 (volunteered for others); excellent results.

Alfred Weinand



ALFRED WEINAND, 26, born in Bitburg, Germany; married; Roman Catholic. He had 8 years of elementary school and two years of military service prior to the outbreak of the war. He is a veteran of the French campaign and Afrika Korps, where he served as Sgt. in the 2nd Engineer Co., 33rd Bn., 15th Armored Division. From Africa he went home on furlough only to find out that his father, an active communist and separatist, (Rhineland) had been taken back to the concentration camp where he had served a two year sentence from 1933-1935; his two brothers were listed as missing on the Eastern front.

Weinand made up his mind to desert; he requested to be sent back to his old unit then in Italy. He joined his outfit at Casino. Since it was rather unsafe to cross the lines there, he proceeded to Rome where he lived 7 months hiding as a civilian with a

girl he later married. He surrendered to the Americans upon their arrival in Rome.

Weinand, although brought up in a communistic environment, distrusts any kind of dictator-Nazi. He refused to join ship—communist, fascist or the Hitlerjugend as well as any other Nazi organization. Now he is willing to work for the Allies in Germany if desired, but does not intend to return to stay. He believes that his generation in Germany will have to devote all its energy and labor to paying taxes and reparations. He feels that his family has done enough for Germany: two brothers killed, father probably dead.

He is an auto mechanic and expects to return to his trade anywhere but in Germany.

Went on Sauerkrauts 1, 2 and 3; excellent results.



Franz Berger



FRANZ BERGER, 21, born in Neukirchen, Austria, on a small farm. Entered Wehrmacht (4th Btry, 304th AA Bn.) in 1942, was stationed in Norway and Finland and later transferred to the Italian

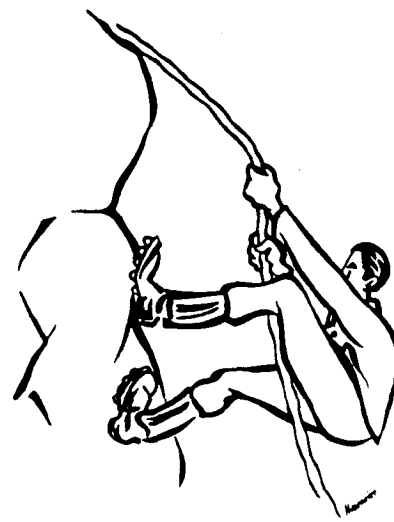
concentration camps, he became anti-nazi. He took active part in painting communist signs and slogans and walls and pavements of his native town, committed acts of sabotage in the foundry where he worked; listened to foreign broadcasts, and spread the news and attended illegal meetings.

He would like to return to Austria and work for the Americans; he feels that he could be of help in



front. There in June, 1944, he crossed the lines and surrendered to the Americans at Lago Bolcano.

He is Roman Catholic. Had 8 years of primary school and 3 years of vocational training. His hobbies are traveling, skiing, mountain-climbing and hunting. Prior to his enlistment he was a steel-worker. According to his statement, he was too young to formulate any definite political opinion while still in civilian life, but surrounded by Social Democrats, and having seen most of his friends placed in con-



furnishing names of others who would be willing to collaborate.

Went on Sauerkrauts 2 and 3 (volunteered to be dropped in Austria); very good results.

Walter Tepe



WALTER TEPE, 20, plumber from Osnabrück, Germany, of Roman Catholic parents. His



Nazis. He refused to join the Hitlerjugend which caused him trouble in his profession and later in the Wehrmacht. He served as a Private 14 months (9th Co., 3rd Bn., 131st Regt., 44th Div.) until the day he received a message that his father, mother and brother died «for Führer and Fatherland» during a bombing attack. Now, there was no need to be afraid of retaliation upon members of his family—

education comprises 4 years of elementary school, 4 years of high school and 3 years of vocational training.



According to his statement, the democratic leanings of his family influenced him more than the



so he deserted and surrendered to a French unit of the 5th Army at St. Andrea.

In the PW camp at Aversa he served as orderly to German officers and reported to the camp authorities about doings in the Officers' enclosure. His ambition is to speed up the end of war, help to locate and punish Nazis and become independent.

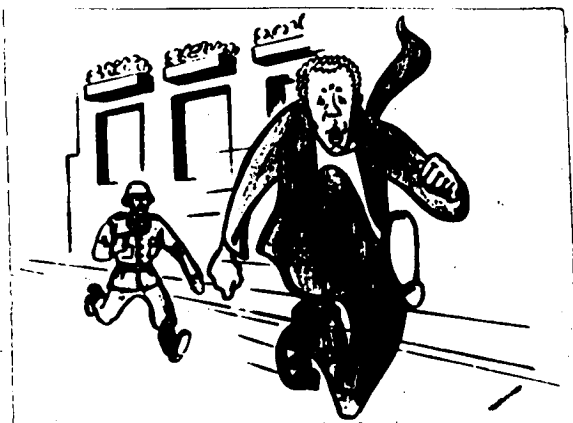
Tepe does not expect any reward for his work. Went on Sauerkrauts 1, 2 and 3; good results.

Rolf Mahatsek

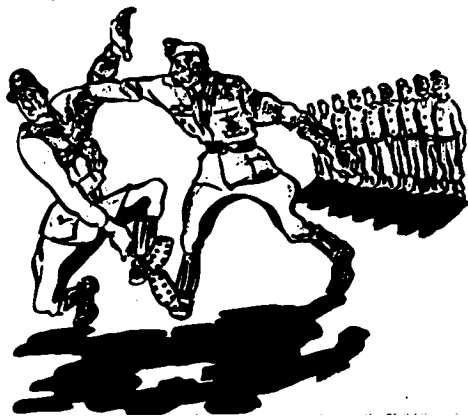


ROLF MAHATSEK, 31, born in Cologne, Germany; Roman Catholic; single; electrical engineer. Was in the Wehrmacht over 4 years. According to his statement, he was a Company Commander (1st Lt.) of an outfit of Engineers; during an argu-

years of University studies (Institute of Technology). Speaks, reads and writes German well; French fairly



ment with his superior (a Major) in front of his men, Lt. Mahatsek slapped the Major and became Pvt. Mahatsek. He also relates he was given the castor oil treatment for political statements made while a landser.



Returned from his last mission with a report that the rest of the men in the group have described as fantastic. At the beginning of this year, he and Willi Haseneier violated the regulations of security and were sent back to PW camp at Aversa, after a trial by their fellow agents.

Mahatsek's education comprises 4 years of elementary school, 8 years of Gymnasium and 4



well; understands Italian. His hobbies are: riding, swimming, athletics and stamp-collecting. Post-war plans: to return to Germany and work in his profession. His return to Germany—in his words—is subject to one condition; i.e. that Germany will not be governed by a dictatorial regime.

He volunteered for the three missions because he wanted to fight against the Nazis. Does not expect any reward from the Americans. Would like to work for the Americans in Germany after the war.



Went on Sauerkrauts 1, 2 and 3 (declined to go again); good results on 1 and 2, lost nerve on 3.

Willy Haseneier



WILLY HASENEIER, 25, born in Bochum, Germany; Protestant; single. In civilian life worked around the Tobis Klagfilm Studios as designer, assistant to cameramen, etc. Was in the Wehrmacht for 22 months (first in Denmark, then on the Italian front, where he was a map maker at HQ. of a Field Artillery outfit.) Fed up with the war, he surrendered to the Americans, near Rome.

Education : Elementary school, 4 years high school, 4 years Academy of Arts (Dusseldorf). Can draw well; is extremely interested in film-production. Knows German well, English fairly well. Is interested and had some experience in acting. Attempted script-writing. Post-war plans: Work in Germany in film-production, if possible in connection with the

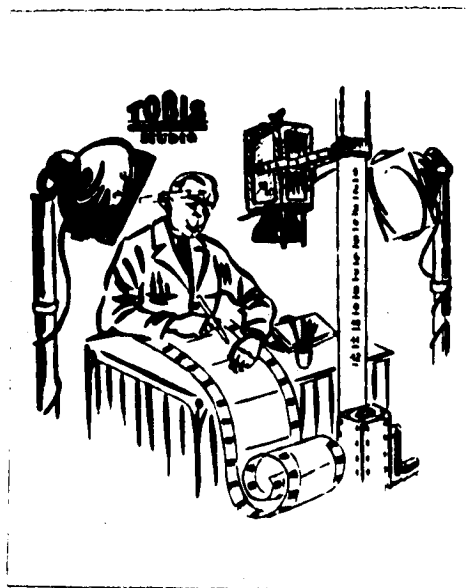
Americans. His motto is: « I like my personal freedom ». His ambition: To go to the United States and become a citizen and a « Hollywood-man ». His

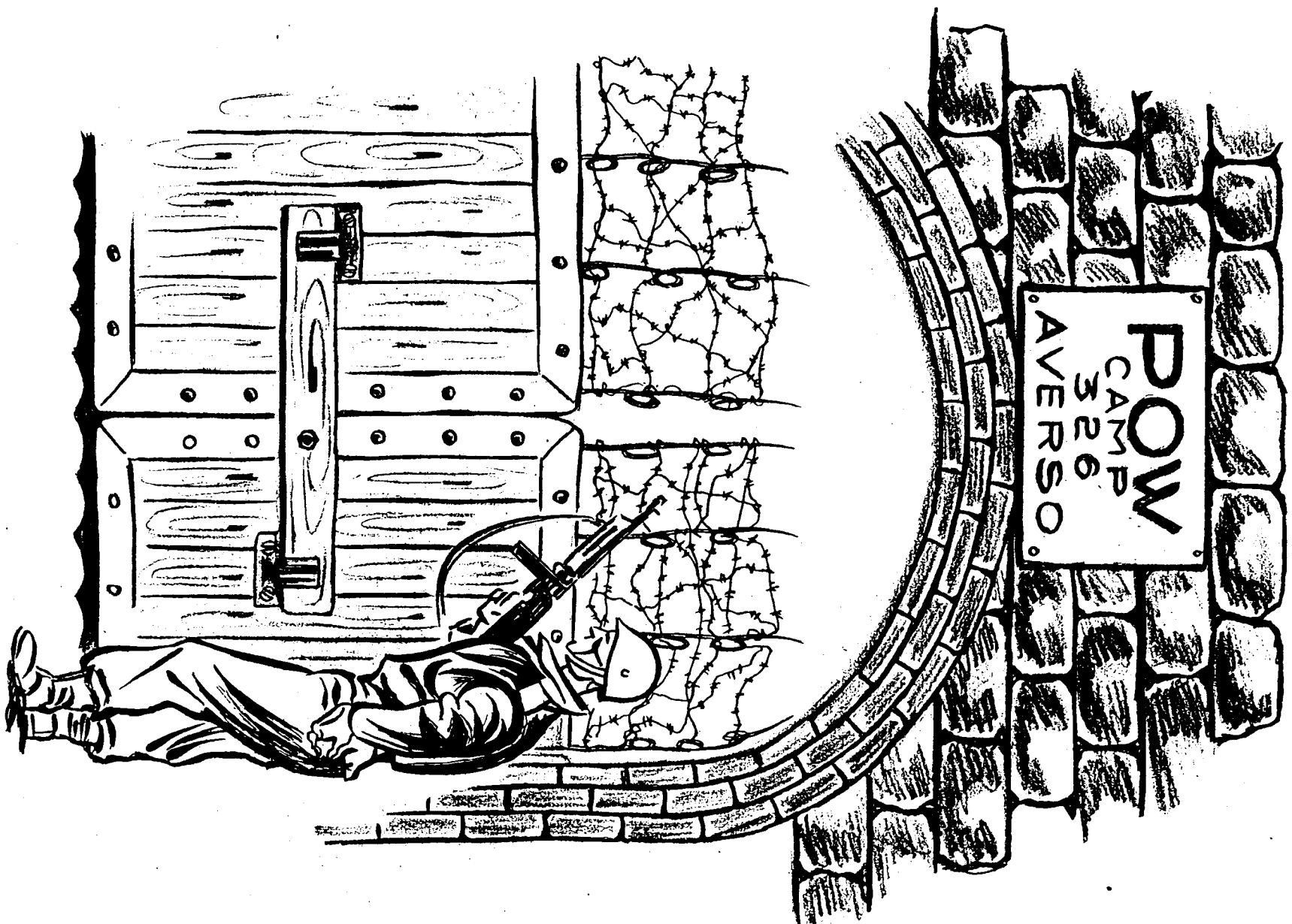
hobbies: Tennis, Boxing, swimming, riding, women, music, theater, opera, art-history. He is strongly anti-militarist and anti-fascist. Is greatly afraid of the Russians.

As an artist, he says, he never belonged to any Nazi organization. While in Denmark, he was in contact with the underground and did some work for its members (propaganda posters and stickers).

Would like to see Germany come closer to the ways of living of the United States.

Went on no missions (volunteered to go on « Romeo »).





POW Camp 326, near Naples. Soon the door will open and 16 anti-Nazi saboteurs will work for MO.

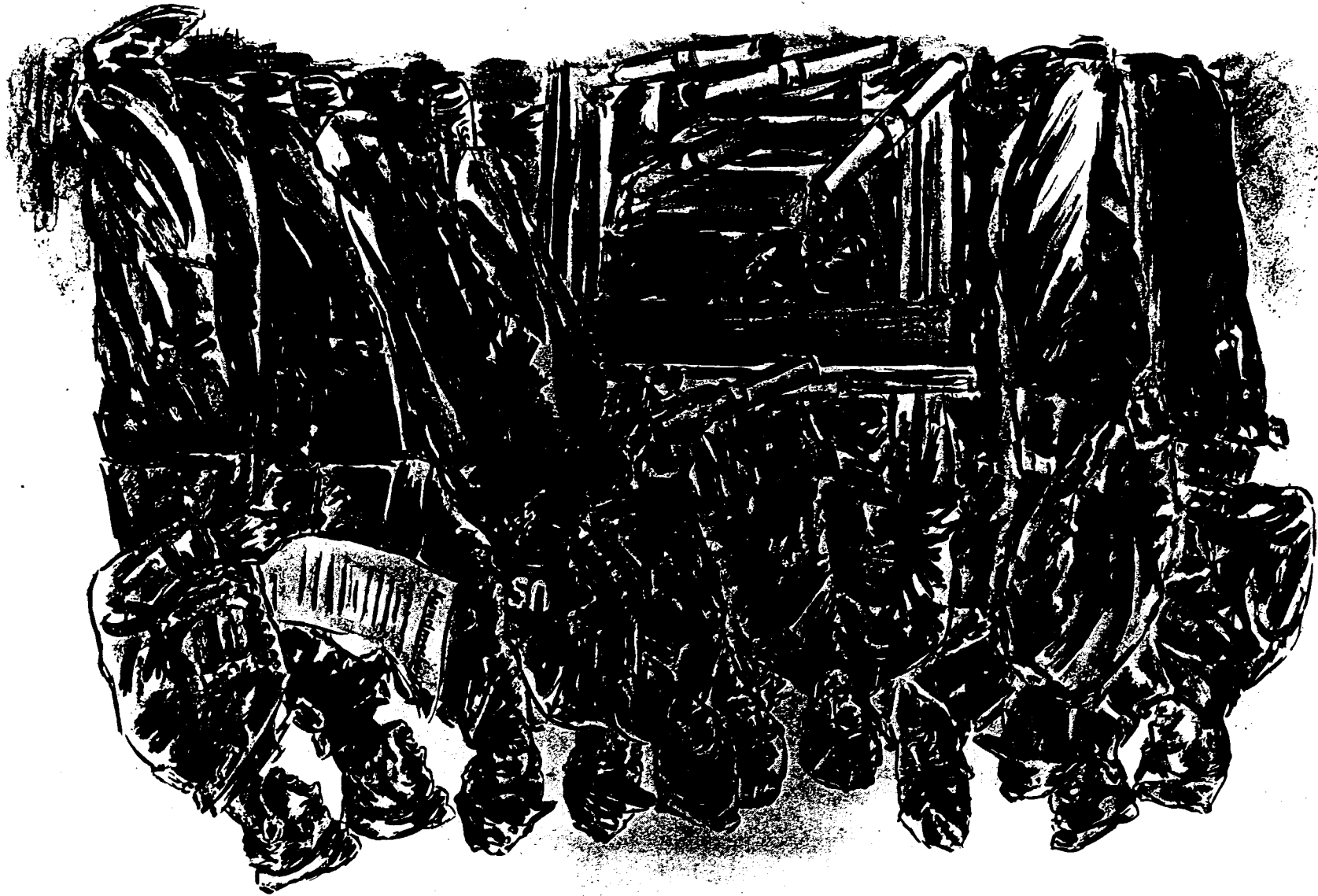


At the front. Eddie Zinder with improvised implements
manufactures the necessary credentials



More improvisation. Prisoners with borrowed anvil hammer
out fake Wehrmacht dog-tags.

The MO material is handed around. These sketches were made on the spot. Men are now all ready to go.





The first wave of agents wades into the swollen Arno River under fire. Sauerkraut I begins.

After wading and swimming the river, the men silently
crawl through wire and mines into enemy territory.





They reach a village behind the lines and spread MO material,
carried in gasmask containers.



L. ...

Proclamations are fastened on trees, onto walls of buildings, tossed into passing trucks, etc.

On a later breakthrough, agents are attacked and kill some of the enemy in a fire fight.

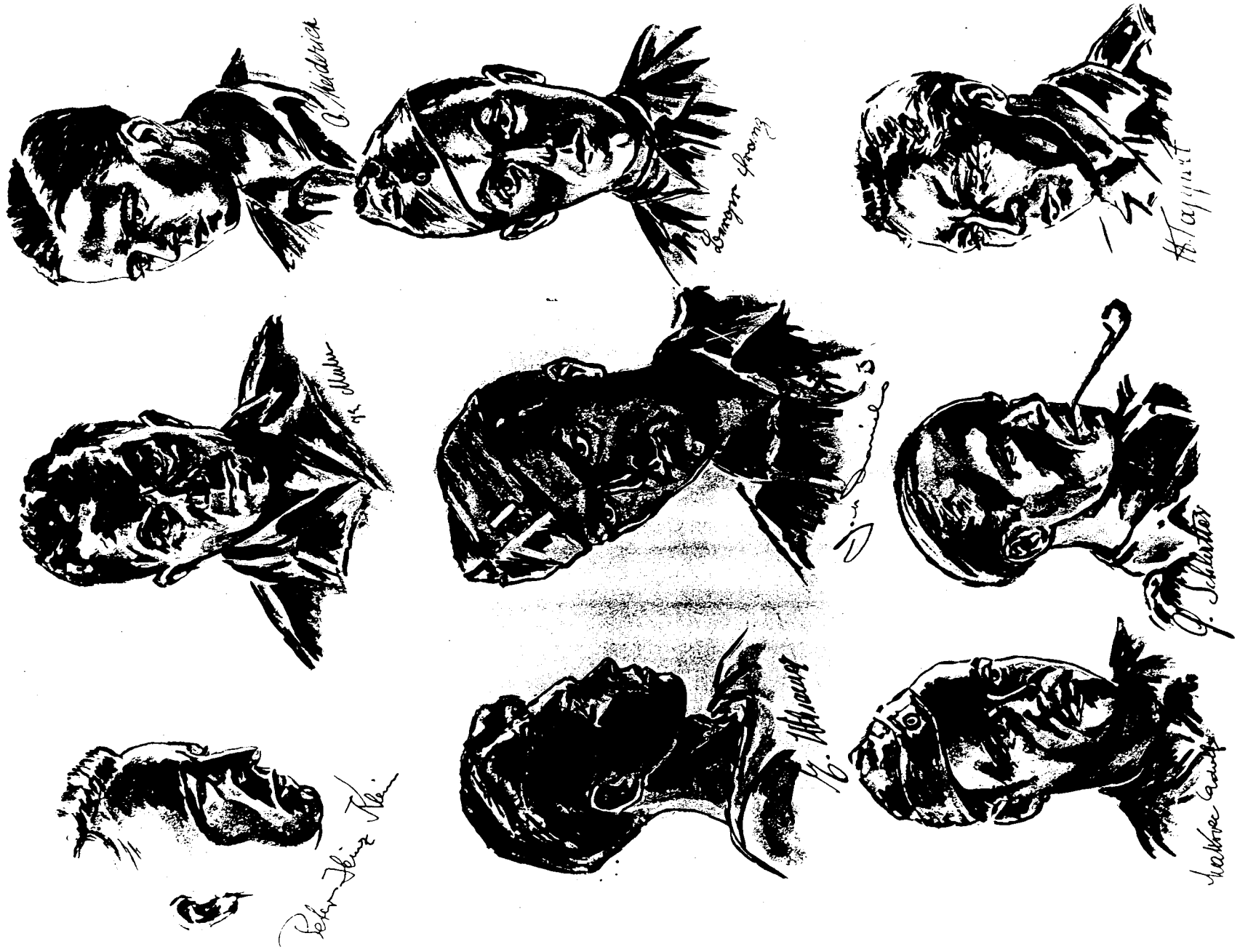




From concealment, agents watch Germans reading proclamation
which says Kesselring no longer obeys Hitler.



Artist indulges in a little cartooning as he depicts his conception of German officer's reaction.



Of this entire group of first recruits only Berger and Tappert were good enough to keep on job.



Portrait of Lt. Jack Daniels who led the first Sauerkrauts.
He loved the work, was under fire at times.



Portrait of Eddie Zinder, to whom goes most of the credit
for organizing, briefing and preparing.