

World War II Surrender Documents

GERMANY SURRENDERS 1945

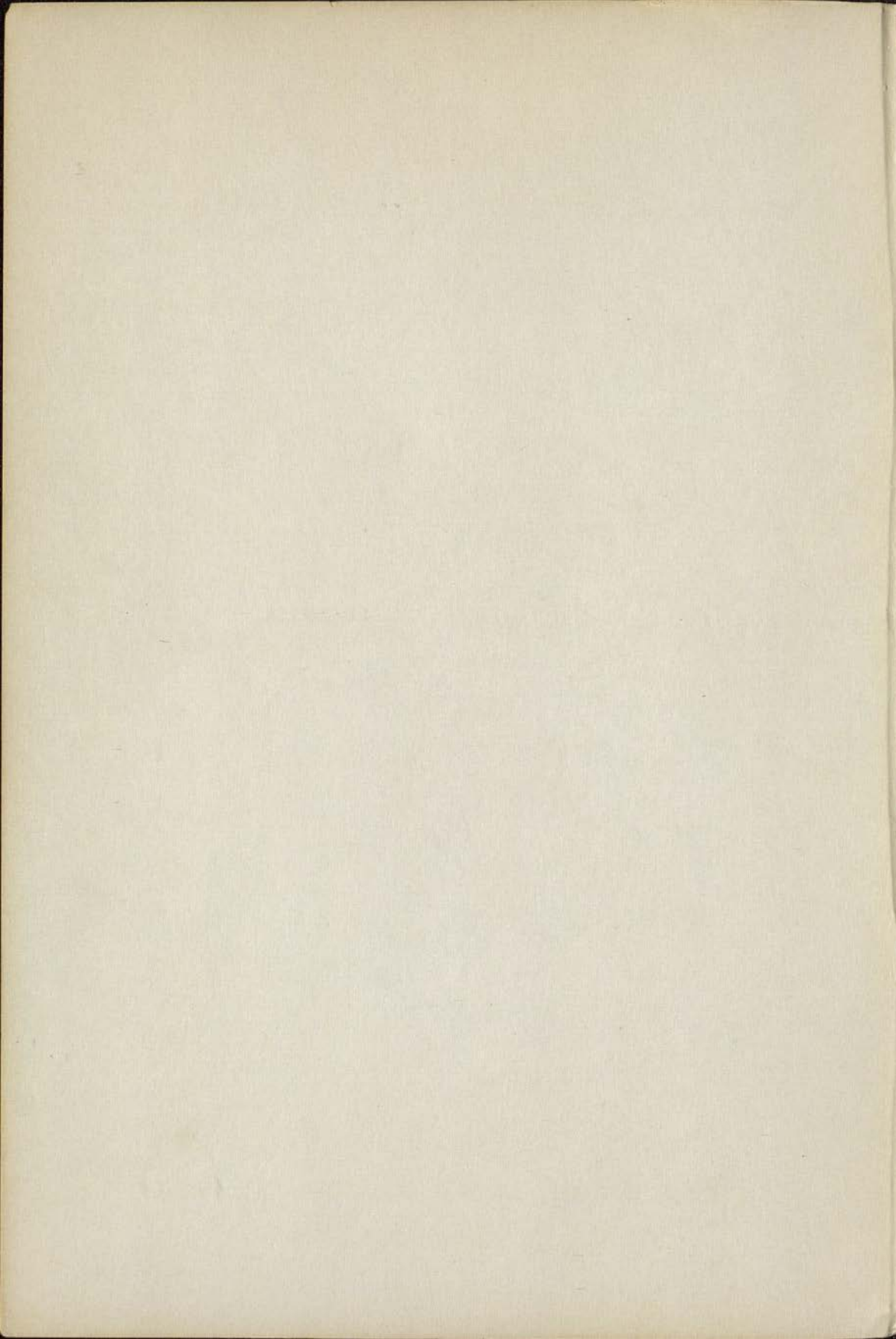
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**World War II
Surrender Documents**

**GERMANY
SURRENDERS
1945**

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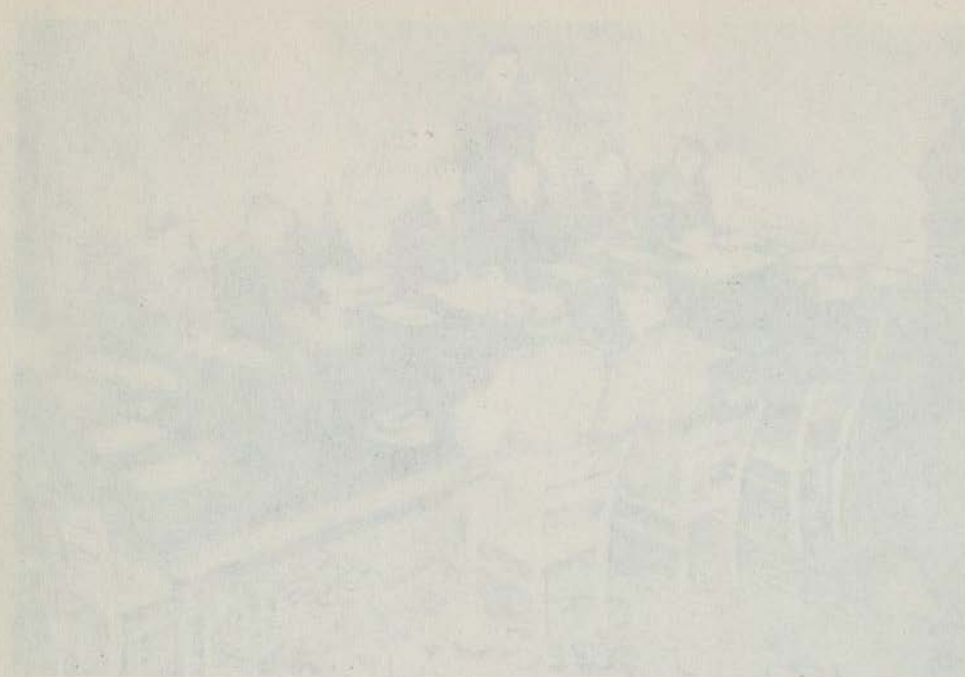
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Surrender at Reims, May 7, 1945. Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) officers on one side of the table sign the surrender papers already signed by the three German officers across the table. From left the Allied representatives are Lt. Gen. Sir Fred Morgan, Maj. Gen. François Sevez, Adm. Sir Harold Burrough, Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, Lt. Ivan Chermiaev, Maj. Gen. Ivan Sousloparov, Gen.

Carl Spaatz, Air Marshal J. M. Robb, and Senior Lt. Col. Ivan Zenkovitch. Maj. Gen. Harold R. Bull sits almost out of the picture, between Robb and Zenkovitch. The Germans are, left to right, Gen. Adm. Hans Georg von Friedeburg, Col. Gen. Alfred Jodl, and Maj. Friedrich Wilhelm Oxenius. A U.S. naval officer stands in front of situation maps of northern Europe. (U.S. Information Agency.)



The building is a large, multi-story structure, possibly a school or institutional building. It features a prominent central tower or entrance. The image is very faded and low-contrast, making details difficult to discern.

The building is a large, multi-story structure, possibly a school or institutional building. It features a prominent central tower or entrance. The image is very faded and low-contrast, making details difficult to discern.

Preface

The documents reproduced in this booklet are part of the Federal Government's permanently valuable records administered by the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration. These archival holdings date from the days of the First Continental Congress and consist of the basic records of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of our Government. From time to time, we reproduce various documents in a publication aimed at reaching a much wider audience than would normally consult the records for research or use in the ordinary processes of government.

This publication is the successor to the 1945 booklet *Germany Surrenders Unconditionally: Facsimiles of the*

Documents. It attempts to present its material in a more objective manner than the earlier work, which was written when the revelations of the German death camps were still fresh in mind and the Nazi war leaders were still unpunished. The passage of more than 30 years, however, only heightens the importance of the surrender documents, which remain among the most significant records of the 20th century.

The text was written by James J. Hastings and Goddard Winterbottom. Richard Hall was the editor. Robert Wolfe served as consultant.

James B. Rhoads
Archivist of the
United States

Introduction

Surrender in Installments

World War II, the deadliest war in history, began in Europe with the German invasion of Poland, September 1, 1939. For almost 6 years it raged across the Western World, taking the lives of 11 million soldiers and an equal number of civilians. Finally, by the spring of 1945, the major Allies—the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France—had brought to exhaustion the will and fighting capacity of the German war machine. Slowly but completely, the Nazi-led Third Reich collapsed, not in a single surrender at one time and one place but in a series of piecemeal surrenders culminating on VE (Victory in Europe) Day, May 8, 1945.

The unplanned surrender had posed a touchy problem for the Big Three chiefs of state: British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, U. S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and So-

viet Union Premier Josef Stalin. They agreed unanimously not only that surrender should be unconditional, but also that it should take place simultaneously on all fronts as well. Behind this second resolve was the Russian suspicion that Germany would succeed in concluding a separate peace with Great Britain and the United States and the Western Allies' memory of Nazi-Soviet collaboration from August 1939 to June 1941. However, even with seeming agreement among the Allies, the road to unconditional surrender proved to be as bumpy as it was long. The major sign posts along the road were the following:

July 25, 1943

The first break in the Axis alliance comes when Benito Mussolini resigns as Italian premier and is replaced by Marshall Pietro Badoglio;

September 8, 1943

Badoglio surrenders Italy on the eve of the Allied landing at Salerno, but Nazi troops install Mussolini as puppet head of German-occupied Italy, September 12;

February 1945

At Yalta, U.S.S.R., the Big Three chiefs of government issue a joint statement: "It is our inflexible purpose to destroy German militarism and nazism and to insure that Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world. . . . It is not our purpose to destroy the people of Germany, but only when nazism and militarism have been extirpated will there be hope for a decent life for the Germans and a place for them in the comity of nations";

April 23, 1945

U.S. troops cross the Po River

and resistance on the Italian front collapses;

April 25, 1945

U. S. and Soviet troops meet at Torgau in the heart of Germany;

April 29, 1945

All German forces on the Italian front surrender, to be effective May 2;

April 30, 1945

The suicide of Adolf Hitler gives German leadership to Grand Adm. Karl Doenitz;

May 4, 1945

On Lueneberg Heath, German troops in Belgium, the Netherlands, and northern Germany surrender;

May 7, 1945

In Reims, the unconditional surrender of all German military forces is signed, to become effective at 11:01 P.M. the following day;

May 8, 1945

VE Day. At Soviet insistence, formal instruments of unconditional surrender are signed in Berlin;

May 23, 1945

The principal members of the German government are arrested for alleged war crimes;

June 5, 1945

The Declaration on Germany is issued. By this instrument, the four Allied Nations (now including France) assume complete political control of Germany.

Surrender in the Southwest Caserta, Italy, April 29, 1945

The Allied drive across the Po River in northern Italy led to the first installment of Germany's piecemeal surrender. There were many delays and false starts. The German negotiators had to hide their efforts from Hitler—and often from each other. Finally, representatives for both sides reached an agreement on terms and convened at Caserta to sign the surrender document.

At the simple ceremony on April 29, a member of Col. Gen. Heinrich von Vietinghoff-Scheel's staff yielded up all the armed services in the German Southwest Command. A second German signature was for SS Gen. Karl Wolff, whose organization had assumed a major role in the Nazi occupation of northern Italy after the

Badoglio surrender in 1943. The acceptance was signed on behalf of Field Marshal Sir Harold Alexander, Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean Theater.

Even though this was to be only a local surrender, the Allied commanders were enjoined to secure Soviet assent lest Stalin feel justified in his earlier accusation that Truman and Churchill were scheming at a separate peace. Although Stalin finally gave his approval and Soviet Maj. Gen. Alexei Kislenko attended the signing, the circumstances of the surrender in Italy magnified the always-present Russian suspicions. This was a factor in the later Soviet insistence on a second surrender at Berlin, superseding the Reims surrender.

SECRET

INSTRUMENT OF LOCAL SURRENDER OF GERMAN AND OTHER FORCES UNDER THE COMMAND OR CONTROL OF THE GERMAN COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SOUTHWEST

1. The German Commander-in-Chief Southwest hereby surrenders unconditionally all the forces under his command or control on land, at sea and in the air and places himself and these forces unconditionally at the disposal of the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre of Operations.
2. All armed forces under the command or control of the German Commander-in-Chief Southwest will cease all hostilities on land, at sea and in the air at 1200 hours (Greenwich mean time) on 2 May 1945. The German Commander-in-Chief Southwest undertakes to arrange accordingly.
3. The German Commander-in-Chief Southwest undertakes to carry out the orders set out in Appendices A, B and C and any further orders of the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre of Operations. Disobedience of such orders or failure to comply with them will be dealt with in accordance with the accepted laws and usages of war.
4. This instrument will enter into force immediately on signature, and the orders in Appendices A, B and C will become effective on the date and at the time specified in paragraph 2 above.
5. This instrument and accompanying orders are drawn up in the English and German languages. The English version is the authentic text. If any doubt as to meaning or interpretation arises, the decision of the Supreme Allied Commander is final.

SECRET

This instrument is independent of, without prejudice to, and shall be superseded by any general instrument of surrender imposed by or on behalf of the United Nations and applicable to GERMANY and the German armed forces as a whole.

[Signature]
.....

167 10 00 9 47
.....

VICTOR VON SCHWENITZ,
Lieutenant Colonel in
the General Staff of
Army Group C,
for Colonel General VON
VITTINGHOFF-SCHEEL,
Commander-in-Chief South-
west and Commander-in-
Chief of Army Group C.

W. D. MORGAN,
Lieutenant General,
Chief of Staff,
for Field Marshal The
Honourable Sir Harold
R.L.G. ALEXANDER,
Supreme Allied Commander
of the Mediterranean
Theatre of Operations

[Signature]
.....

EUGEN YENNER,
SS-Sturmabführer and
Major in the Waffen-SS,
for SS-Obergruppenführer
and General of the Waffen-
SS WOLFF,
Supreme Commander of SS and
Police and plenipotentiary
General of the German Wehr-
macht in Italy.

Signed at CASERTA, Italy.

19th April 1945

+ 00
..... hours

Surrender in the Northwest Lueneberg Heath, Germany May 4, 1945

Like so many other events in military history, the signing of the *Instrument of Surrender of All German Armed Forces in Holland, in Northwest Germany Including All Islands, and in Denmark* took place in a tent, on this occasion at the headquarters of British Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery on Lueneberg Heath in the German state of Lower Saxony. Regarded as a tactical surrender of forces in the field only, the Lueneberg Heath document, in article 5, anticipates the unconditional surrender of the German nation at a later date.

The signers for Germany were, in order of seniority, Gen. Adm. Hans Georg von Friedeburg, chief German

negotiator and commander in chief of the German navy; Lt. Gen. Eberhard Kinzel, chief of staff to Field Marshal Ernst Busch, commander in chief of the German armies in the Northwest; Rear Adm. Gerhard Wagner, director of the German Military Cabinet; and staff officers Col. Fritz Poleck and Maj. Hans Jochen Friedel. Field Marshal Montgomery, commander of the British-Canadian 21st Army Group, signed the document with the authorization and as the representative of the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower. The handwritten addition to the first article was made by Montgomery himself.

Instrument of Surrender

of .

All German armed forces in HOLLAND, in
northwest Germany including all islands,
and in DENMARK.

1. The German Command agrees to the surrender of all German armed forces in HOLLAND, in northwest GERMANY including the FRISIAN ISLANDS and HELIGOLAND and all other islands, in SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN, and in DENMARK, to the C.-in-C. 21 Army Group. *This to include all naval ships in these areas.* These forces to lay down their arms and to surrender unconditionally.
2. All hostilities on land, on sea, or in the air by German forces in the above areas to cease at 0800 hrs. British Double Summer Time on Saturday 5 May 1945.
3. The German command to carry out at once, and without argument or comment, all further orders that will be issued by the Allied Powers on any subject.
4. Disobedience of orders, or failure to comply with them, will be regarded as a breach of these surrender terms and will be dealt with by the Allied Powers in accordance with the accepted laws and usages of war.
5. This instrument of surrender is independent of, without prejudice to, and will be superseded by any general instrument of surrender imposed by or on behalf of the Allied Powers and applicable to Germany and the German armed forces as a whole.
6. This instrument of surrender is written in English and in German. The English version is the authentic text.
7. The decision of the Allied Powers will be final if any doubt or dispute arises as to the meaning or interpretation of the surrender terms.

B. L. Montgomery
Field-Marshal

4 May 1945
1830 hrs.

W. J. J. de B.

Linzel
L. Ammer

De B.
Linzel

Preparing for a General Surrender

On May 6, Grand Adm. Karl Doenitz, who had become head of the Third Reich on Hitler's death, authorized Col. Gen. Alfred Jodl to conclude a general German surrender with General Eisenhower. The text of his order reads "I authorize Colonel General Jodl, Chief of the Operations' Staff in the High Command of the Armed Forces, to conclude an armistice agreement with the headquarters of General Eisenhower."

The new German approach met the demands of Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), for a total, unconditional surrender of all German forces on both the western and eastern fronts. Doenitz and other

German leaders had hoped until the last minute to make a separate peace with the British and American armies while continuing to resist the Soviet advance in the East or at least making some arrangement whereby German troops could avoid surrendering to Soviet armies. These alternatives, clearly contrary to the spirit and letter of accords reached at summit conferences between the Big Three heads of government, were rejected out of hand by General Eisenhower, at whose insistence the first instruments of unconditional surrender were signed the following morning in Reims.

Hauptquartier, den 6. Mai 1945.

Ich bevollmächtige Generaloberst J o d l ,
Chef des Wehrmachtführungsstabes im Oberkommando
der Wehrmacht, zum Abschluss eines Waffenstill-
standsabkommens mit dem Hauptquartier des Generals
E i s e n h o w e r .



Großadmiral.

Surrender of All German Forces Reims, France, May 7, 1945

The unconditional surrender of the German Third Reich was signed in the early morning hours of Monday, May 7, 1945; the time on the documents is noted as 0241 hours, or 2:41 A.M. The scene was the war room at SHAEF, located in the Professional and Technical School at Reims, a historic city in northeastern France that had been almost completely leveled by the Germans during the war.

Across the conference table, representatives of the four Allied Powers—France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States—faced the three German officers delegated by President Doenitz: Col. Gen. Alfred Jodl, who alone had been authorized to sign the surrender document; Gen. Adm. Hans Georg von Friedeburg, a chief negotiator here as on Lueneberg Heath; and Maj. Friedrich Wilhelm Oxenius, an aide to Jodl.

Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, SHAEF chief of staff, led the Allied delegation as the representative of General Eisenhower, who had refused to meet with the Germans until the surrender had been accomplished. Other American officers present were Maj. Gen. Harold R. Bull and Gen. Carl Spaatz.

British observers were Adm. Sir Harold Burrough, Lt. Gen. Sir Fred Morgan (SHAEF deputy chief of staff), and Air Marshal J. M. Robb. Maj. Gen. Ivan Sousloparov, head of the Soviet mission to France, represented the Soviet High Command; he was accompanied by Lt. Ivan Chermiaev and Senior Lt. Col. Ivan Zenkovitch as interpreters. Representing the French chief of staff (Gen. Alphonse Pierre Juin) was Maj. Gen. François Sevez.

The surrender document signed at Reims at 0241 hours on May 7, 1945, was not the official document that had

been authorized in July 1944 by Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin. The July 1944 instrument had been produced through the arduous labors of the European Advisory Commission (EAC), which was set up in 1943 to work out the details of the unconditional German surrender and to propose specific solutions to the political and economic problems that were anticipated in postwar Germany.

Although the EAC surrender document had been sent to General Eisenhower, two intervening developments deterred SHAEF officials from using it at Reims. First, France had been added as a signatory, causing the 1944 draft to be regarded by SHAEF as preliminary only. Second, the Big Three, meeting at Yalta in February 1945, had decided to add the word "dismemberment" to the calls for disarmament and demobilization already

included in their guidelines for Germany's future, expressing thereby a determination to prevent further German militarism by partitioning the country into separate political units. The EAC drew up a new surrender document incorporating these changes.

SHAEF officials concluded, however, that political and other considerations should be settled at a high civilian level after the cessation of hostilities. Accordingly, they drew up their own military document, one directed only at ending the fighting and halting further bloodshed. Article 4 of the *Act of Military Surrender*, however, like article 5 of the *Lueneberg Heath Instrument of Surrender*, looks ahead to additional accords. Inserted at the urgent behest of John Winant, U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain and representative to EAC, it ensured that

Only this text in English is authoritative

ACT OF MILITARY SURRENDER

1. We the undersigned, acting by authority of the German High Command, hereby surrender unconditionally to the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and simultaneously to the Soviet High Command all forces on land, sea, and in the air who are at this date under German control.

2. The German High Command will at once issue orders to all German military, naval and air authorities and to all forces under German control to cease active operations at 2301 hours Central European time on 8 May and to remain in the positions occupied at that time. No ship, vessel, or aircraft is to be scuttled, or any damage done to their hull, machinery or equipment.

3. The German High Command will at once issue to the appropriate commanders, and ensure the carrying out of any further orders issued by the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and by the Soviet High Command.

4. This act of military surrender is without prejudice to, and will be superseded by any general instrument of surrender imposed by, or on behalf of the United Nations and applicable to GERMANY and the German armed forces as a whole.

5. In the event of the German High Command or any of the forces under their control failing to act in accordance with this Act of Surrender, the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and the Soviet High Command will take such punitive or other action as they deem appropriate.

Signed at *Rhine at 0241* on the *7th* day of May, 1945.
France

On behalf of the German High Command.

J.W.

IN THE PRESENCE OF

On behalf of the Supreme Commander,
Allied Expeditionary Force.

On behalf of the Soviet
High Command.

A. B. Smith

Souyegwa

Heure

-2-

Major General, French Army
(Witness)

the purely military surrenders of May 7 and 8 would be supplemented later by a general political surrender that contained the EAC provisions.

The more than 44 hours between the signing of the *Act of Military Surrender* and the cease-fire to take place at 2301 hours, or 11:01 P.M., on May 8 represented a concession to the Germans by SHAEF, one that unintentionally allowed more German troops to be moved westward for surrender to American or British and

Commonwealth forces rather than to those of the Soviet Union.

Signers of the surrender document were Col. Gen. Alfred Jodl, on behalf of the German High Command; Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, representing General Eisenhower; Maj. Gen. Ivan Sousloparov, fulfilling the Big Three agreement that a Soviet representative would take part in any ceremony of total surrender; and Maj. Gen. François Sevez, signing as a witness for France.

Relaying the Surrender Orders

A second document signed at Reims contains orders from General Smith about procedures for disseminating detailed surrender instructions to German army and air force units on

the western front. The specific orders were to come from the Allied unit commanders to their German counterparts.

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

SERIAL 1

ORDERS BY THE SUPREME COMMANDER

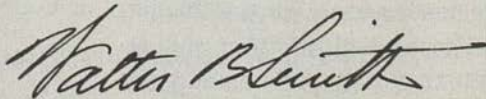
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE RELATING TO

ARMY AND AIR FORCES UNDER GERMAN CONTROL

1. Local commanders of Army and Air Forces under German control on the Western Front, in NORWAY and in the CHANNEL ISLANDS will hold themselves in readiness to receive detailed orders for the surrender of their forces from the Supreme Commander's subordinate commanders opposite their front.

2. In the case of NORWAY the Supreme Commander's representatives will be the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Scottish Command and Air Officer Commanding 13 Group RAF.

3. In the case of the CHANNEL ISLANDS the Supreme Commander's representatives will be the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Command and Air Officer Commanding 10 Group RAF.



Signed.....
For the Supreme Commander, AEF.

Dated 0241 7th May, 1945.

Chelms France

Surrender of German Naval Forces

The longest by far of the Reims documents is the one containing a series of instructions for the surrender of all German naval forces, both surface and undersea. It was signed by Adm. Sir Harold Burrough on behalf of General Eisenhower. Of particular interest are the very specific instructions that it gives about the movement and location of vessels. Both this document and the preceding one (relating to army and air forces) emphasize the concern of SHAEF officials at Reims with bringing military activities to a halt and leaving the broader and more general provisions of surrender to a later time.

Only the first three and the last articles are shown here. Following them is annexure "A," which is of special interest because it gives orders to the once-dreaded German submarine fleet.

SPECIAL ORDERS BY THE SUPREME COMMANDER, ALLIED
EXPEDITIONARY FORCE TO THE GERMAN HIGH COMMAND
RELATING TO NAVAL FORCES

PART I GENERAL

Definition of Naval Forces

1. For the purpose of these orders all formations, units and personnel of the German Navy together with the Marine Kusten Polizei shall be referred to as the German Naval Forces.

2. Members of the Marine Kusten Polizei will immediately be placed under the command of the appropriate German Naval Commanders who will be responsible for their disarmament and discipline, as well as for their maintenance and supply where applicable, to the same extent and degree as for units of the German Navy.
German Naval Representatives and information required immediately

3. The German High Command will despatch within 48 hours after the surrender becomes effective, a responsible Flag Officer to the Allied Naval Commander, Expeditionary Force at his Headquarters. This Flag Officer will furnish the Allied Naval Commander, Expeditionary Force, with:-

* * * * *

17. The German High Command will be responsible for the immediate and total disarmament of all naval personnel on shore. The orders issued to the German High Command in respect of the disarmament and war material of land forces will apply also to naval personnel on shore.

Signed.....*John Burroughs*
For the Supreme Commander, AEF.

Dated 0241 1st May 1945
(Rheims, France)

SURRENDER OF GERMAN 'U' BOAT FLEET

To all 'U' Boats at sea:

Carry out the following instructions forthwith which have been given by the Allied Representatives

(A) Surface immediately and remain surfaced.
(B) Report immediately in P/L your position in latitude and longitude and number of your 'U' Boat to nearest British, US, Canadian or Soviet coast W/T station on 500 kc/s (600 metres) and to call sign GZZ 10 on one of the following high frequencies: 16845 - 12685 or 5970 kc/s.

(C) Fly a large black or blue flag by day.

(D) Burn navigation lights by night.

(E) Jettison all ammunition, remove breachblocks from guns and render torpedoes safe by removing pistols.

All mines are to be rendered safe.

(F) Make all signals in P/L.

(G) Follow strictly the instructions for proceeding to Allied ports from your present area given in immediately following message.

(H) Observe strictly the orders of Allied Representatives to refrain from scuttling or in any way damaging your 'U' Boat.

2. These instructions will be repeated at two-hour intervals until further notice.

Agreement for Formal Ratification

An agreement to meet for a formal ratification of the unconditional surrender at a later date—to be specified by General Eisenhower in his capacity as Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force—was also signed by Colonel General Jodl at the Reims ceremony.

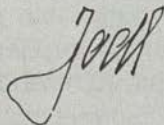
Major General Sousloparov had been sent to Reims by the Soviet High Command to take part in the negotiations, but he was not empowered to sign any agreement. As a consequence, a critical phrase in the document is “with plenary powers,” powers not delegated to Sousloparov. Thus a meeting was scheduled the following day in Berlin in response to Soviet concern that the Reims ceremony had given the impression of being the separate German surrender to the American and British forces that Doenitz had sought.

UNDERTAKING
GIVEN BY CERTAIN GERMAN EMISSARIES
TO THE ALLIED HIGH COMMANDS

It is agreed by the German emissaries undersigned that the following German officers will arrive at a place and time designated by the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, and the Soviet High Command prepared, with plenary powers, to execute a formal ratification on behalf of the German High Command of this act of Unconditional Surrender of the German armed forces.

Chief of the High Command
Commander-in-Chief of the Army
Commander-in-Chief of the Navy
Commander-in-Chief of the Air Forces.

SIGNED



Representing the German High Command.

DATED 0241 7th May 1945
Rheims, France

Authorization to Execute Ratification

With this letter Grand Adm. Karl Doenitz, now also the German president, authorized the signing of the formal unconditional surrender of Germany. Following the specifications of the final Reims document signed by General Jodl, Doenitz appointed three men to represent the German nation in the ceremony at Berlin on May 8: Gen. Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel; Gen. Adm. Hans Georg von Friedeburg, a participant at both the Lueneberg Heath and Reims ceremonies; and Col. Gen. Hans Juergen Stumpf.

The letter reads: "I authorize General Field Marshal Keitel as chief of the High Command of the Armed Forces and simultaneously as Commander in Chief of the Army, General Admiral von Friedeburg as Commander in Chief of the Navy, Colonel General Stumpf as representative of the Commander in Chief of the Air Force to ratify the unconditional capitulation of the German fighting forces to the Commander in Chief of the Allied Expeditionary Forces and the Soviet High Command."

A b s c h r i f t.

Der Oberste Befehlshaber
der Wehrmacht

Hauptquartier, den 7.5.45.

/Bitte in der Antwort vorstehendes
Geschäftszeichen, das Datum und
kurzen Inhalt anzugeben./

ICH BEVOLLMÄCHTIGTE

GENERALFELDMARSCHALL K E I T E L

ALS CHEF DES OBERKOMMANDOS DER
WEHRMACHT UND ZUGLEICH ALS OBER-
BEFEHLSHABER DES HEERES,

GENERALADMIRAL VON FRIEDEBURG

ALS OBERBEFEHLSHABER DER KRIEGSMARINE,

GENERALOBERST S T R U M P F

ALS VERTRETER DES OBERBEFEHLSHABERS
DER LUFTWAFFE

ZUR RATIFIZIERUNG DER BEDINGUNGSLOSEN
KAPITULATION DER DEUTSCHEN STREITKRÄFTE GEGEN-
ÜBER DEM OBERBEFEHLSHABER DER ALLIIERTEN
EXPEDITIONSSTREITKRÄFTE UND DEM SOVIET-ÜBER-
KOMMANDO.

DONITE

GEBOADMIRAL.

Siegel.

Signo: czechy (czechoslovak)

Instrument of Surrender Berlin, Germany, May 8, 1945

To reassure the Soviet Union that the western Allies had no intention of concluding a separate peace with Germany, General Eisenhower requested that the Soviet representative in his theater, Major General Sousloparov, be authorized to participate in the Reims negotiations. But after the signing of the Reims accord, Soviet chief of staff Gen. Alexei Antonov notified SHAEF that German troops continued to fight against Soviet forces while scarcely resisting in the West. Thus the Reims surrender continued to resemble a separate truce on the Western front, thereby belying Allied unity. The Soviet command wanted the Act of Military Surrender, with certain additions and alterations, to be signed at Berlin.

To the Soviets, the documents signed at Berlin on May 8, 1945, represented the official, legal sur-

render of the Third Reich. The U. S., British, and French Governments regarded it as a symbol of Allied unity, east and west, and as merely the more formal of the two ceremonies ending the war.

Unlike the Reims documents, which were authoritative only in their English text, the surrender documents signed at Berlin on May 8, 1945, were written and signed separately in the English, Russian, and German languages.

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower had originally planned to attend the ceremony at Berlin in his capacity as Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force. However, because the Soviet plenary representative was to be Marshal Georgi Zhukov, a group commander well below him in rank, Eisenhower selected SHAEF deputy supreme commander, British Air

Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder. Protocol specified that Tedder sign as Eisenhower's representative and Zhukov on behalf of the Red Army. Gen. Jean de Lattre de Tassigny and Gen. Carl Spaatz signed as witnesses. Signing for Germany were Keitel, Von Friedeburg, and Stumpf, as designated by Doenitz.

The Berlin document had few significant changes from the one signed a day earlier at Reims. The phrase "Supreme High Command of the Red Army" was substituted for "Soviet High Command"; article 2 was altered to require that Germany "disarm completely"; and the demand that ships and military equipment not be damaged was made more detailed. The English and Russian language versions follow.

ACT OF MILITARY SURRENDER

1. We the undersigned, acting by authority of the German High Command, hereby surrender unconditionally to the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and simultaneously to the Supreme High Command of the Red Army all forces on land, at sea, and in the air who are at this date under German control.

2. The German High Command will at once issue orders to all German military, naval and air authorities and to all forces under German control to cease active operations at 2301 hours Central European time on 8th May 1945, to remain in the positions occupied at that time and to disarm completely, handing over their weapons and equipment to the local allied commanders or officers designated by Representatives of the Allied Supreme Commands. No ship, vessel, or aircraft is to be scuttled, or any damage done to their hull, machinery or equipment, and also to machines of all kinds, armament, apparatus, and all the technical means of prosecution of war in general.

3. The German High Command will at once issue to the appropriate commanders, and ensure the carrying out of any further orders issued by the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and by the Supreme High Command of the Red Army.

4. This act of military surrender is without prejudice to, and will be superseded by any general instrument of surrender imposed by, or on behalf of the United Nations and applicable to GERMANY and the German armed forces as a whole.

5. In the event of the German High Command or any of the forces under their control failing to act in accordance with this Act of Surrender, the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and the Supreme High Command of the Red Army will take such punitive or other action as they deem appropriate.

6. This Act is drawn up in the English,
Russian and German languages. The English and
Russian are the only authentic texts.

Signed at *Potsdam* on the *8.* day of May, 1945

Heidebrink *Meier* *Guernsey*
On behalf of the German High Command

IN THE PRESENCE OF:

Andersson

On behalf of the
Supreme Commander
Allied Expeditionary Force

On behalf of the
Supreme High Command of the
Red Army *V. K. K.*

At the signing also were present as witnesses:

J. d. Pallen-Samiray

General Commanding in Chief
First French Army

Carl Spaatz

General, Commanding
United States Strategic Air Forces

АКТ О ВОЕННОЙ КАПИТУЛЯЦИИ.

1. Мы, ниже подписавшиеся, действуя от имени Германского Верховного Командования, соглашаемся на безоговорочную капитуляцию всех наших вооруженных сил на суше, на море и в воздухе, а также всех сил, находящихся в настоящее время под немецким командованием, - Верховному Главнокомандованию Красной Армии и одновременно Верховному Командованию Союзных Экспедиционных сил.

2. Германское Верховное командование немедленно издает приказы всем немецким командующим сухопутными, морскими и воздушными силами и всем силам, находящимся под германским командованием, прекратить военные действия в 23-01 час по Центрально-Европейскому времени 8 мая 1945 года, остаться на своих местах, где они находятся в это время, и полностью разоружиться, передав все их оружие и военное имущество местным союзным командующим или офицерам, выделенным представителями Союзных Верховных Командований, не разрушать и не причинять никаких повреждений пароходам, судам и самолетам, их двигателям, корпусам и оборудованию, а также машинам, вооружению, аппаратам и всем вообще военно-техническим средствам ведения войны.

3. Германское Верховное Командование немедленно выделит соответствующих командиров и обеспечит выполнение всех дальнейших приказов, изданных Верховным Главнокомандованием Красной Армии и Верховным Командованием Союзных Экспедиционных сил.

4. Этот акт не будет являться препятствием к замене его другим генеральным документом о капитуляции, заключенным Об'единенными Нациями или от их имени, применимым к Германии и германским вооруженным силам в целом.

5. В случае, если немецкое Верховное Командование или какие-либо вооруженные силы, находящиеся под его командованием, не будут действовать в соответствии с этим актом о капитуляции, Верховное Командование Красной Армии, а также Верховное Командование Союзных Экспедиционных сил, предпримут такие карательные меры, или другие действия, которые они сочтут необходимыми.

6. Этот акт составлен на английском, русском и немецком языках. Только английский и русский тексты являются аутентичными.

Подписано 8 мая 1945 года в гор. БЕРЛИНЕ.

От имени Германского Верховного Командования:

Widell
Widell В присутствии:

По уполномочию Верховного
Командующего Экспедиционными
силами Советников

ГЛАВНОГО МАРШАЛА АВИАЦИИ

ТЕДДЕРА

По уполномочию Верховного
Главного командования Красной
Армии

МАРШАЛА СОВЕТСКОГО СОЮЗА

Г. ЕЖУКОВА

При подписании также присутствовали в качестве
свидетелей:

Командующий Стратегическими
Воздушными силами США

ГЕНЕРАЛ

СПААТС

Главкомандующий Французской
Армией

ГЕНЕРАЛ ДЕЛАТР

де ТАССИНЫ

J. de Laet-Tassin

Germany Surrenders—And Is Disarmed

The following two pages present the German language version of the instrument of surrender signed at Berlin, May 8, 1945. The document on the third page (p. 36), repeating the first two articles of surrender, is from another copy that is of interest because of special notations made on it. At the top, the document is identified by Gen. Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel as having been "received from the British at Tempelhof Airport" when he arrived at Berlin for the signing. In the left margin is Keitel's word "new,"

describing the underlined material as an addition to the document signed the previous day at Reims. The new clause reads "and to disarm completely handing over their weapons and equipment to the local Allied commanders or officers designated by representatives of the Allied Supreme Commands."

KAPITULATIONSERKLÄRUNG.

1. Wir, die hier Unterzeichneten, handelnd in Vollmacht fuer und im Namen des Oberkommandos der Deutschen Wehrmacht, erklæren hiermit die bedingungslose Kapitulation aller an gegenwaertigen Zeitpunkt unter deutschem Befehl stehenden oder von Deutschland beherrschten Streitkraefte auf dem Lande, auf der See und in der Luft gleichzeitig gegenueber dem Obersten Befehlshaber der Alliierten Expeditions Streitkraefte und dem Oberkommando der Roten Armee.

2. Das Oberkommando der Deutschen Wehrmacht wird unverzueglich allen Behoerden der deutschen Land-, See- und Luftstreitkraefte und allen von Deutschland beherrschten Streitkraeften den Befehl geben, die Kampfhandlungen um 2301 Uhr Mitteleuropaeischer Zeit am 8 Mai einzustellen und in den Stellungen zu verbleiben, die sie an diesem Zeitpunkt innehaben und sich vollstaendig zu entwaeffnen, indem sie Waffen und Geraete an die oertlichen Alliierten Befehlshaber beziehungsweise an die von den Alliierten Vertretern zu bestimmenden Offiziere abliefern. Kein Schiff, Boot oder Flugzeug irgendeiner Art darf versenkt werden, noch duerfen Schiffsruempfe, maschinelle Einrichtungen, Ausruestungsgegenstaende, Maschinen irgendwelcher Art, Waffen, Apparaturen, technische Gegenstaende, die Kriegszwecken im Allgemeinen dienlich sein koennen, beschædigt werden.

3. Das Oberkommando der Deutschen Wehrmacht wird unverzueglich den zustaendigen Befehlshabern alle von dem Obersten Befehlshaber der Alliierten Expeditions Streitkraefte und dem Oberkommando der Roten Armee erlassenen zusaetzlichen Befehle weitergeben und deren Durchfuehrung sicherstellen.

4. Diese Kapitulationserklaerung ist ohne Praejudiz fuer irgendwelche an ihre Stelle tretenden allgemeinen Kapitulationsbestimmungen, die durch die Vereinten Nationen und in deren Namen Deutschland und der Deutschen Wehrmacht auferlegt werden moegen.

5. Falls das Oberkommando der Deutschen Wehrmacht oder irgendwelche ihm unterstehende oder von ihm beherrschte Streitkraefte es versaeumen sollten, sich gemæss den Bestimmungen dieser Kapitulations-Erklaerung zu verhalten,

werden der Oberste Befehlshaber der Alliierten Expeditions
Streitkrafte und das Oberkommando der Roten Armee alle
diejenigen Straf- und anderen Massnahmen ergreifen, die sie
als zweckmaessig erachten.

6. Diese Erklaerung ist in englischer, russischer und
deutscher Sprache abgefasst. Allein massgebend sind die
englische und die russische Fassung.

Unterzeichnet zu *Wien* am *8.* Mai 1945

Kurt
Wiedling *Stumpff*

Fuer das Oberkommando der Deutschen Wehrmacht.

In Gegenwart von:

Anders

Fuer den Obersten Befehlshaber
der Alliierten Expeditions-
Streitkrafte.

Fuer das Oberkommando
der Roten Armee

K. K. K.

Bei der Unterzeichnung waren als Zeugen
auch zugegen:

J. de Lattre - Tassigny
General, Oberstkommandierender
der Ersten Franzoesischen Armee

Carl Spaatz
Kommandierender General
der Strategischen
Luftstreitkrafte der
Vereinigten Staaten

KAPITULATIONSERKLÄRUNG

1. Wir, die hier Unterzeichneten, handelnd in Vollmacht fuer und im Namen des Oberkommandos der deutschen Wehrmacht, uebergeben hiermit bedingungslos und zur gleichen Zeit dem Obersten Befehlshaber der Alliierten Expeditions Streitkraefte und dem Oberkommando der roten Armee (alle an) gegenwaertigen Zeitpunkt unter deutschem Befehl stehenden oder von Deutschland beherrschten Streitkraefte auf dem Lande, auf der See und in der Luft.

2. Das Oberkommando der deutschen Wehrmacht wird unverzuglich allen Behoerden der deutschen Land-, See- und Luftstreitkraefte und allen von Deutschland beherrschten Streitkraeften den Befehl geben, die Kampfhandlungen um 2301 Uhr Mitteleuropaeischer Zeit am 8 Mai einzustellen und in den Stellungen zu verbleiben, die sie an diesem Zeitpunkt innehaben und sich vollstaendig zu entwaeffnen in dem Sie Waffen und Geraet an die oertlichen Alliierten Befehlshaber beziehungsweise an die von den Alliierten Vertretern namhaftzumachenden Offisiere abliefern. / Kein Schiff, Boot oder Flugzeug von irgendeiner Art darf versenkt und keinerlei Beschaedigung dem Schifferumpf, Maschinen, oder Geraet zugefuegt werden.

M. J. - A. J. -

President Truman's VE-Day Proclamation

As part of the VE-Day celebration, President Harry Truman issued a proclamation designating the following Sunday, May 13, as a day of prayer and thanksgiving. In this document the President notes the "final and unconditional surrender" of Germany but warns that victory must still be won "in the East" (Japan). Only then will the world be "cleansed of the evil." This victory would come in a little over 3 months with the surrender of the Japanese Government, August 14 (U. S. time).

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

The Allied armies, through sacrifice and devotion and with God's help, have wrung from Germany a final and unconditional surrender. The western world has been freed of the evil forces which for five years and longer have imprisoned the bodies and broken the lives of millions upon millions of free-born men. They have violated their churches, destroyed their homes, corrupted their children, and murdered their loved ones. Our Armies of Liberation have restored freedom to these suffering peoples, whose spirit and will the oppressors could never enslave.

Much remains to be done. The victory won in the West must now be won in the East. The whole world must be cleansed of the evil from which half the world has been freed. United, the peace-loving nations have demonstrated in the West that their arms are stronger by far than the might of dictators or the tyranny of military cliques that once called us soft and weak. The power of our peoples to defend themselves against all enemies will be proved in the Pacific war as it has been proved in Europe.

For the triumph of spirit and of arms which we have won, and for its promise to peoples everywhere who join us in the love of freedom, it is fitting that we, as a nation, give thanks to Almighty God, who has strengthened us and given us the victory.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, HARRY S. TRUMAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby appoint Sunday, May 13, 1945, to be a day of prayer.

I call upon the people of the United States, whatever their faith, to unite in offering joyful thanks to God for the victory we

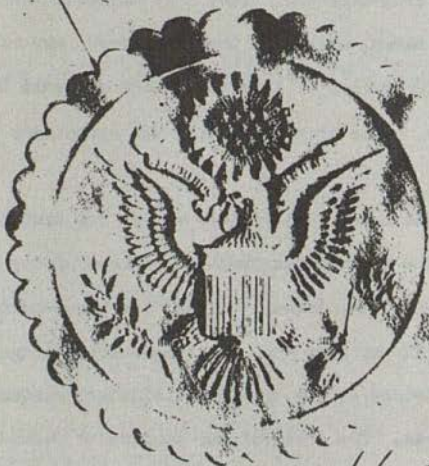
have won and to pray that He will support us to the end of our present struggle and guide us into the way of peace.

I also call upon my countrymen to dedicate this day of prayer to the memory of those who have given their lives to make possible our victory.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington this eighth day of May in

the year of our Lord
nineteen hundred
and forty-five
and of the
Independence
of the United
States of America
the one hundred
and sixty-ninth.



By the President:

Joseph E. Ruman
Acting Secretary of State.

Harry Truman

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Epilogue

As a means of bringing about an orderly transition of power in Germany, the Allies allowed the government of Grand Adm. Karl Doenitz to remain in power for 16 days. On May 23, 1945, however, the principal members of the government were taken into custody for trial as war criminals.

On June 5, the Allied commander in chief issued the Declaration on Germany, which represented the official assumption of political control of the nation by the four occupy-

ing powers—the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France. This instrument was to replace for years the broader political surrender that had been anticipated in the Reims and Berlin surrender documents.

Of the Germans who were involved in the surrender ceremonies in Reims and Berlin, Doenitz received a 10-year prison sentence and Keitel and Jodl were hanged after trial at Nuernberg; Von Friedeburg committed suicide before his trial.

For Further Reading

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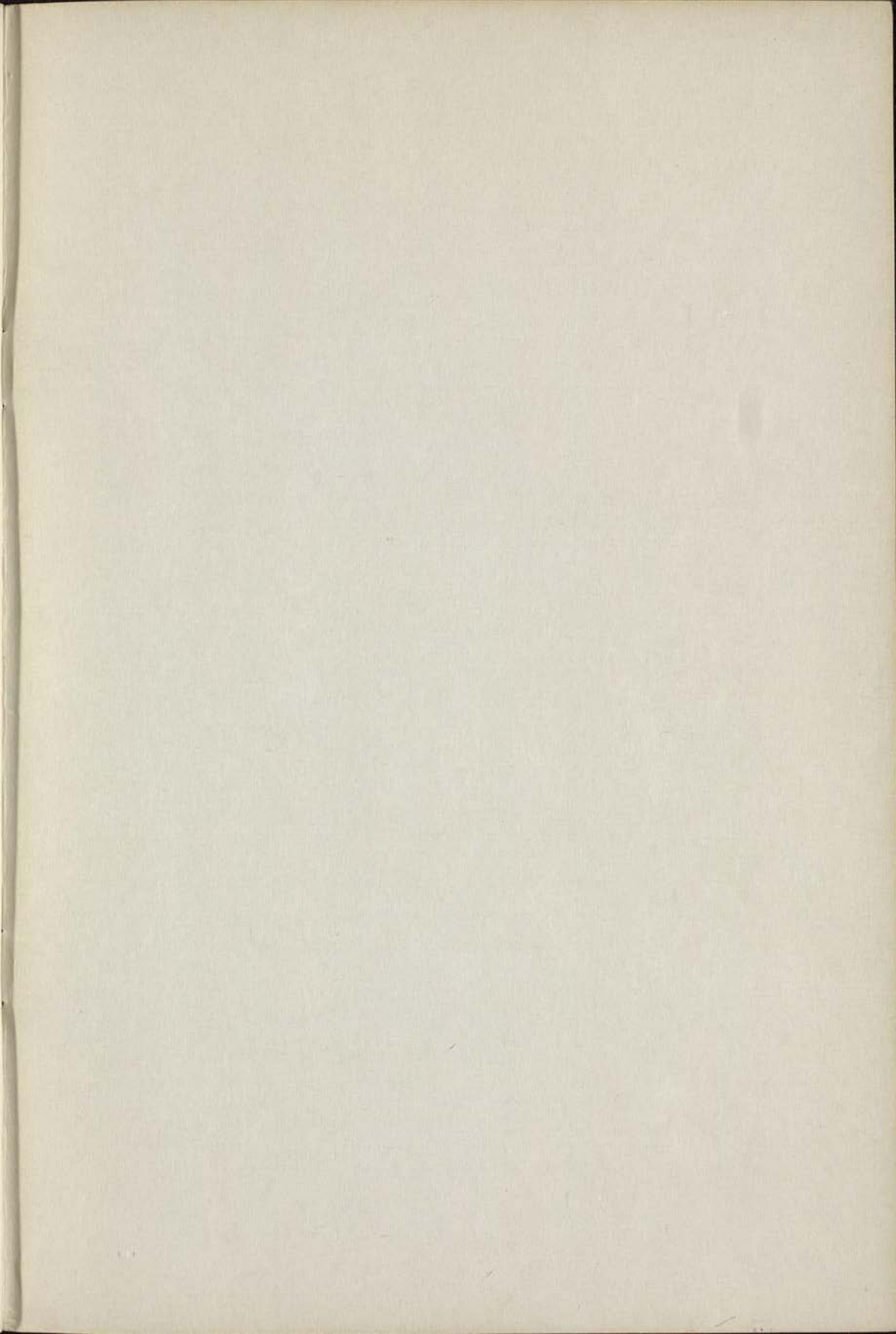
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[Faint, illegible markings and smudges at the bottom of the page]