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Hitler at War : *What Really Happened ?*

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Part 9

Chapter 8: Victory in the West

“A philosophy will lead its idea to victory only if it unites the most courageous and energetic elements of its epoch and people in its ranks, and puts them into the solid forms of a fighting organization.”

Adolf Hitler,
Mein Kampf, volume 2, chapter V

Wehrmacht forces were mopping up operations in Norway when the Hitler-von Manstein Western Offensive began on 10 May. A German advance through the Ardennes particularly appealed to Hitler, because it did not pass into the Low Countries. Contrary to conventional historians, he was not interested in accumulating foreign real estate, but wanted to confine and terminate the conflict as soon as possible to prevent it from spreading. In his war directives issued to every Wehrmacht

commander on the Western Front for months before the 1940 campaign began, the Fuehrer stressed over and over again that no violations of the neutral countries were to be allowed. In his very first directive for the conduct of the war, he stated that “the assurances of neutrality given us by Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland are to be meticulously observed.” In his Second Directive, he ordered that “the entrances to the Baltic will be mined without infringing neutral territorial waters” (38, 41). He later stressed to the Kriegsmarine, “The neutrality of all neutral states is to be fully respected” (“Top Secret, Officer Only, C.-in-C., Navy, Berlin, 4 August 1939”). These directives were top secret military orders made public for the first time long after war’s end (in 1964).

Sharply contrasting Hitler’s scrupulous respect for the sovereignty of neutral nations on the periphery of the fighting, Allied commanders planned to occupy Belgium with the British Expeditionary Forces led by General Lord Gort and the French XVI Corps headed by General Fagalde at least as early as 24 October 1939. The so-called Dyle Plan derived its name from a river where Gort’s army planned to link up with Belgian forces in front of Antwerp. This “personal and secret instruction” (Innes, 117) was conveyed to the Belgian supreme headquarters, where its commanders wholeheartedly endorsed the violation of their own country’s neutrality. With a nod from Belgium’s King Leopold III, General Georges, representing the French High Command, “converted the provisional Dyle Plan into a definite order” on 14 November (ibid). When Hitler learned of Belgian treachery, he immediately ordered his Wehrmacht to prepare for the seizure of the Netherlands before they could join up with the Anglo-French armies. The democratic authorities in these little nations hoped to profit from an Allied victory; specifically, the easy theft of new territories at Northern Germany’s expense to accommodate their burgeoning populations.

With England’s attempted seizure of Norway foiled, the Allies’ other threat through the Netherlands had to be no less thoroughly scotched. Accordingly, at 0545 hours, 10 May---just two hours ahead of the British and French forces moving into the Low Countries---Luftwaffe warplanes struck at airfields in Belgium.

By far the greatest obstacle to Hitler’s offensive was Belgium’s Eben Emael, the most powerful, technologically advanced fortification on Earth. Universally regarded in military circles as “impregnable,” it was not only the key to the Liege defenses, but of the entire Western Campaign. Its very existence had convinced virtually every general---German and Allied---that it would either break or bog down the toughest offensive thrown against it. Eben Emael’s commanding, underground position was unassailable by ground forces unable to circumvent the fort, and its bunkers were absolutely impervious to the largest aerial bombs, even heavy artillery shells. It completely dominated the strategic hinge-pin of Hitler’s Offen-

sive where the Meuse River and Albert Canal intersected. This canal's locks were controlled by observers in the stronghold. The very existence of the Belgian fortification had been cited by German General Staff strategists against the von Manstein plan. To be sure, conventional forces could never get passed Eben Emael.

Once again, the Fuehrer sought out a man who had been pushed into the background by Army High Command superiors for his innovative ideas. General Kurt Student believed extraordinary defenses could be taken by surprise with minimum loss of life by soldiers landing unseen in gliders. Hitler conferred with Student, and they worked out details for a dawn glider attack on Eben Emael. So important was this projected assault, that the Fuehrer postponed the entire Western Offensive until the fort's capture, upon which, indeed, the whole Campaign depended.

At 7,500 feet, the inimitable Ju 52s, towing 39 DFS 230s, cut loose their wood-winged charges, and turned back at the German border, enabling the gliders---each carrying eight heavily armed paratroopers and explosive experts---to land at bridges along the Meuse River and Albert Canal, including Eben Emael, in total silence. The landing was flawless and utterly unnoticed by the defenders. Although taken by complete surprise, they fought back with great ferocity and skill. But by the time they recovered from the shock of confronting German soldiers on the very roof of their invincible fort, the paratroopers had knocked out two 120-mm cannon and nine 75-mm guns; in other words, all of the fort's topside artillery. Within 24 hours, the supposedly "impregnable" bastion of 700 elite soldiers had fallen to 70 glider troops, who lost six killed and twenty wounded. Through an immense gap in the Allied defenses left by the fall of this mightiest stronghold in the world, the Wehrmacht offensive deluged Belgium.

Meanwhile, other glider troops swiftly captured bridges at Veldwezelt and Vroenhaven, over which the German forces stormed. Hitler, General Student and his paratroopers achieved a military miracle without precedent; the single most important action of the entire Campaign, and one of the greatest, most unique victories in the annals of warfare. In the words of *The Marshall Cavendish Illustrated Encyclopedia of World War Two* (p. 141, Vol. I), "No account had been taken of the imaginative flair of Adolf Hitler, who had taken a personal interest in the planning for surprise capture of the Albert Canal bridges, despite the skepticism of the O.K.W."

In just a week, the British and French armies were driven out of Belgium. Totally caught off guard by the unexpected capitulation of Eben Emael, the Allied armies stumbled backward to cower behind another fortification they deemed invulnerable---the Maginot Line. The same World War One mentality that dominated the German General Staff fossilized French strategy. But the Fuehrer looked beyond their out-dated conventions. According to the plan he worked out with von

Manstein, his Luftwaffe swept the skies of enemy aircraft while pounding Allied ground forces, which were simultaneously savaged by the Panzers, then blasted by mobile artillery and polished off by infantry. The spirit of National Socialist cooperation had beautifully coordinated all these various elements of battle into a swiftly, always forward-moving, continuous Blitzkrieg that kept the outnumbering enemy off balance.

Everywhere the French or British tried to make a stand, they were dealt knock-out blows, after which the Germans sped on to the next target, never allowing the enemy time to breathe, let alone respond. The speed and savagery of these tactics soon unnerved the Allied forces. By 20 May, just ten days after the offensive began, French and British ground forces were split in two. The tide had turned. To their credit, as the war began to go against them, they valiantly tried to regain their lost initiative by improvising a powerful counter-offensive against the 7th Panzer Division, which had just about reached the end of its supplies by advancing as far as Cambrai. Allied commanders understood the Panzers' precarious position, and, thinking quickly, launched two fresh British and French tank battalions each, seriously outnumbering the Germans who were low on ammunition, and threatening them with annihilation. Near Arras, French Char B tanks surprised German armor at close range, destroying Panzer Mark IVs, three of the Wehrmacht's only heavy tank, at close range.

The Allied stroke might have succeeded had the 7th Panzers not been led by a man who was to later make his reputation in North Africa---General Erwin Rommel. He staged a mock retreat. When the French gleefully followed, he suddenly swung his armor around on them, bloodied and stopped their forward advance, then scattered the startled British, who presumed he was evacuating Cambrai. When one of his columns was held up in a village by twenty French heavy tanks, he ordered a single Panzer IV to surprise the enemy rear. Its crew rushed at the foe furiously firing their 75-mm cannon at point-blank range, knocking out 14 of the big Char Bs in about twenty minutes, and forcing the rest to surrender. Not once during the entire Campaign had the Allies achieved anything approximating so spectacular an action. Although each one of his Panzers faced five of the enemy, Rommel engaged the Allies long enough for the arrival of Stuka dive-bombers, which flattened every French and English tank in the field.

The next day, 21 May, the German offensive swung north towards the Channel ports of Boulogne and Calais to cut off all further aid from Britain. Grasping its importance, soldiers of the B.E.F. put up a desperate defense that lasted five days of intense shelling and air attacks. With the fall of these vital harbor cities, the Allies mounted another numerically overwhelming counter-offensive involving British forces and the French First Army driving from the north, while the French Sev-

enth and Tenth Armies attacked from the south; in between was the bulk of German armor. Additional R.A.F. *Spitfires* and *Hurricanes* flew in from their English bases to provide cover with French Dewoitines, Blochs and Morane-Saulniers. While Messerschmitts tangled with them in the skies high overhead, Stuka dive-bombers broke up the Franco-British counter-stroke, which was further pulverized by heavy artillery, then given the *coup-de-grace* by the infantry. The Franco-British retreat resumed; this time, a head-long rout toward Paris.

But the Allied cause was not yet lost. Numerous French armies were still intact with all their munitions and supplies, while Panzer strength, after two weeks of unremitting hard driving and fighting, was down to 30%. General Maxime Weygand, in command of all Allied forces, was about to launch an all-out assault for the recapture of Cambrai, where weak German defenses could not have been expected to withstand the eight Allied divisions brought against them. For the operation to succeed, however, assistance from British ground forces, especially tanks, and, most importantly, support by the RAF, was essential. Weygand's attack portended success and was, in fact, already under way, when, to his astonishment, the British turned tail and ran for Dunkirk. General Lord Gort, in charge of the B.E.F., had received personal orders from the new Prime Minister, Winston S. Churchill, to abandon their French and Belgian allies in the field without notifying them. The Weygand Offensive collapsed, and France's fate was sealed. Churchill loudly condemned King Leopold as "a traitor", even though the monarch notified him five days before Belgium surrendered; that was five days more notice than the British gave their continental allies.

On 5 June, Wehrmacht operations began against the remaining Allied forces in the south. The very next day, German forces broke through the lower Somme, reaching the River Aisne, and soon after routed the determined soldiers of the French Tenth Army (to whom the Germans paid special tribute for their hopeless courage after the armistice). They were joined by infantrymen of the British 51st Highland Division, who, cut off from their Dunkirk-bound comrades, fled to St. Valery, in hopes of being similarly evacuated. They were not so lucky, and surrendered on 12 June. Days previous to these calamitous events, Lord Gort's hapless soldiers crowded on the beaches at Dunkirk---220,000 of them, together with 120,000 French and Belgians. The Panzers ran up to the cliffs over-looking the demoralized Allies crouching in the sand.

The German commanders were about to issue them an ultimatum they could not refuse---surrender or face annihilation---when a directive from the Fuehrer ordered his forces to withhold their fire so the Allies could evacuate. Every man in the Wehrmacht was stunned with disbelief. As he explained to the Belgian SS leader, Leon DeGrelle, four years later, Hitler let the British go at Dunkirk, because at that

time he still nurtured hopes for their friendship and cooperation: “By forcing either their surrender or annihilation, they would have never been able to negotiate.” By letting them go home, the British authorities and people themselves would properly understand his gesture for what it was: a sincere move toward an end of the fighting and the beginning of reconciliation.

Instead, Churchill and his propagandists turned Hitler’s incredible offer, historically unique for its generosity, inside out. His attempt at peace was portrayed as a defeat brought about by his inability to crush the English soldiers, even in the midst of their retreat. As such, British morale at home stiffened, because the Germans were depicted as frustrated and beaten. The deceived British people were never allowed to learn that their sons, husbands, fathers and brothers had been saved, not through a makeshift flotilla of yachts crossing the Channel, but by the Fuehrer’s refusal to shed more Aryan blood in a Jew-provoked war.

The so-called “Miracle of Dunkirk” was entirely the work of Adolf Hitler. High-minded as his gesture might have been, it was entirely wasted on the authorities in London. The more than half-a-million enemy soldiers he spared in 1940 would not appreciate what he had done for them, thanks to their skillful propagandizing at the hands of Churchill, et al. They returned in the next few years, not as the friends he hoped to make of them, but as revenge-crazed killers. Better had he slaughtered every one of them down to the last man, than tried to send them home as emissaries of his good will, something they were incapable of comprehending.

In any case, such annihilation would not have been necessary. Given the opportunity to honorably surrender in an utterly hopeless situation they faced on the beaches of Dunkirk, Lord Gort and his B.E.F. would have been forced to lay down their arms, just as their comrades of the 51st Highland Division were to do in a similar situation at St. Valery. England’s leading military historian, Sir Basil Liddell Hart, said of Dunkirk, “never was a great disaster more preventable” (Walsh, 42). While Churchill went into public denial, twisting the ignominious withdrawal from Dunkirk into a British triumph, he privately described it as “a colossal military disaster” (ibid, 43). General Ironside, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, confided to Anthony Eden, “This is the end of the British Empire” (ibid).

Less than two weeks after the last Tommy sailed home, German forces entered Paris. As happened before in Warsaw, the politicians responsible for declaring war on the Reich ran away, leaving their own people adrift in defeat. Philippe Petain, the venerable World War One hero and general, formed a new government, which accepted an armistice on 25 June. Petain was a wise choice, because the Fuehrer respected him; hence, surrender terms were lenient, as demonstrated by Hitler’s generous dealings with the French Fleet. As even the hostile authors of a Time-Life book (*The Luftwaffe*, p.44) had to admit, “The two campaigns---in Scandina-

via and a month later across the plains of western Europe---were among the most brilliant military operations of modern times.” If so, their success was owed overwhelmingly to the imaginative genius of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist state he created. No other nation in history, out-numbered and even often out-classed technologically, could have thoroughly beaten such powerful opponents in such a short space of time. Nothing comparable had ever happened before.

The Campaign in the West was won by the Fuehrer’s daring and flair, as chiefly expressed through his SS men, whose decisive achievements in combat were shunned by aristocratic snobs of the German General Staff. Yet, troops of the *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* (Adolf Hitler Bodyguard) seized the strategic Dutch canals before they could be blown, thereby making the *Blitzkrieg* possible. They took Rotterdam in three days, and spearheaded the whole offensive by advancing 120 miles through French territory in 24 hours. After capturing the Somme in a lightning advance, the SS *Totenkopf* (“Deaths head”) Regiment blasted the way open to Paris. Thanks in large measure to their incomparable soldiery, the young spirit of Aryan manhood smashed the old world of Jewish democracy on the battlefields of France. The Allies---all their fighting men and factory workers---had been the pathetic dupes of Jew agendas which had nothing to do with “saving Poland”, “defending the neutral states”, or “stopping Nazi world conquest in France”. These were the transparently obvious shibboleths emotionally engineered for Gentile consumption.

Still portrayed as a “tragedy” by court historians and media propagandists, Hitler’s success was in fact the triumph of National Socialist organization and superior fighting abilities over the deceived minions and ideological dwarfs of Jew-ridden states intent on racial suicide. The Western Campaign demonstrated that a race-conscious, all-Aryan band of fighters can defeat a numerically superior, racially mixed enemy, such as the British, French and Dutch, with their colored colonial troops from India, Senegal and Indonesia.



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