



## Chapter 10: The Rising Sun

---

On 27<sup>th</sup> September 1940 Hitler and Mussolini duly signed the tri-partite pact with Japan, the purpose of which the parties agreed, was to keep the U.S. out of the war. Heydrich, though, was convinced that the information coming to him from his sources in the States, Singapore, Hong Kong and above all Japan itself, made it inevitable that America would be dragged screaming into a war with Japan that would do the Fatherland no favours. He remained convinced that his briefing to Hitler regarding revealing Japanese intentions was sound. Yet he had to acknowledge that the Führer could not set a date for the Hess venture because the Americans would need to see unambiguous proof that a Japanese attack on their fleet was more than the wild thoughts of a drunken Japanese zealot that had been blown up out of all proportion by German Intelligence. Sorge had provided conclusive proof in November that the Japanese were building a further six aircraft carriers, giving them eleven carriers which they certainly would not need against Siberia, Hong Kong or even French Indo-China.

By January 1941 the Japanese were, he was reliably informed, establishing a navy base in northern Japan that replicated the peculiar shape of the America's substantial navy base in Hawaii and that it had an adjacent airfield, which in juxtaposition of proximity and bearing was similar to that of Hickam Field at Pearl Harbour. He would dearly have liked a photographic record of this feature to support his agents' reports but any such damning evidence was annoyingly beyond his reach. There was nowhere any aircraft at his disposal could fly from to provide the proof he needed, but Arado bombers had been float equipped and he had even looked at the possibility of refuelling one at sea from suitably positioned tanker U-boats, but the risks were so high that the costs could not be possibly justified. Heydrich suspected that Sorge might be playing a double game and in January 1941 considered replacing the German Air Attaché at the Tokyo embassy with a man who would be prepared to undertake a most hazardous mission. Then he mused, why a *man* – a woman might be more successful.

The purpose of the Japanese aircraft carriers became even clearer to Heydrich when on 26<sup>th</sup> March he hosted the Japanese Foreign Minister Yōsuke Matsuoka who had been told at the last minute that von Ribbentrop would not be able to meet with him, as planned, due to pressing business with the Führer. Heydrich had instead hurriedly assembled a good cross section of senior people to entertain the Japanese delegation; among them was Hanna Reitsch who had once amazed the watching Japanese and other guests when she had repeatedly flown an early development helicopter inside the Deutschlandshalle at the Berlin International

Motor show in 1938.

During a long evening of drinking and cordial reflection Matsuoka talked freely about Admiral Nomura's discussions with the U.S. Secretary of State, Cordell Hull which had started earlier in the month. The Japanese Foreign Minister hinted that the discussions were to delude the Americans that Japan sought a peaceful resolution of the problems that stemmed from the U.S. trade embargos. The hawkish military within the Japanese government encouraged the delusion to buy time to complete the aircraft carriers and be ready for a successful attack on America if they were forced to take such a course of action.

Heydrich pursued his Führer's line with Matsuoka, "It is my understanding, Sir, that it is the purpose of the tri-partite agreement to use every means possible to keep the Americans out of the war. Our U-boats have been depth-charged by their ships on more than one occasion and still the Führer has expressly forbidden any counter actions against them ... so please accept that we are adhering to the spirit of the agreement."

Matsuoka considered this as carefully as his intoxication would allow, "In the unlikely event of Admiral Nomura succeeding in the negotiations with America, keeping them out of the war will be achieved, after all they are fully aware of the tri-partite pact and any war declared against Germany would mean a war with Japan."

Heydrich pressed the near-comatose Foreign Minister, "How long is your government going to allow Nomura to negotiate before it decides to take action against America?"

"If a resolution is not achieved by May, we will be forced to invade French indo-China and after that we will attempt to continue talks with the U.S. purely as a holding operation."

Heydrich was feigning a greater level of intoxication than Matsuoka was suffering and gave Hanna a pre-arranged signal to join them, "Admiral Raeder has pressed the Führer to complete our carrier, the Graf Zeppelin but he is not at all convinced that the navy has a use for an aircraft carrier. After the British carrier-based attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto, even with their pathetic Swordfish bi-planes, it became clear that we were overlooking an essential strategic weapon. After all, if Churchill did drag the U.S. into the war, we would be unable to deliver any attack on America itself. Even if we took some of the Atlantic Islands, we do not have aircraft capable of reaching the United States proper. While we trust that they will see reason and stay out of this war, there may come a time when we will have to take the war to them."

Nomura blinked, "We considered this two years ago and decided that as the Americans could attack us using aircraft carriers, so we should have the same capability, if only to deter them."

Seeing Hanna Reitsch join Heydrich and his Foreign Minister, Commander Osikawa, the naval attaché to Berlin joined the group. Heydrich smiled to himself, twenty-nine year old Hanna had a certain enigmatic magnetism and she quite ably protected herself from unwelcomed advances by never talking about anything except flying such that in many quarters she was seen as sexually disinterested. Heydrich, of course, new better and he had briefed her well on his intentions and she now played her part to perfection. "What do you think about flying from an aircraft carrier, Hanna," asked Heydrich.

"You know me Obergruppenführer, I'll take off and land from anything, anywhere – but the Graf Zeppelin is sitting unfinished and unloved, acting as a storage depot outside Gotenhafen so I don't think I'll ever have the opportunity for a carrier flight."

Osikawa took the bait, "Perhaps I could persuade you to come to Japan, Fraulein Reitsch,

where our navy would be honoured to help you add another accomplishment to your already impressive list.”

“Please call me Hanna,” she purred with an inviting smile.

Commander Osikawa could feel himself blushing and bowed deferentially to give time for it to disappear, “Hanna, yes, and please to call me Mitsuoto,” he offered in his now partially recovered state.

Hanna having hooked him, now played him with all the skill of the renowned pilot assisted in no small part by her natural femininity, “If you are able to promise me that, Mitsuoto, and the Führer will allow me to go, I shall take you up in one of our helicopters.” Osikawa caught the bleary eye of General Matsuoka and bent to whisper to him in Japanese. The General, quite overcome by the excess of alcohol in his bloodstream, made an obscene gesture and replied effusively, nodding knowingly at Hanna.

Osikawa felt embarrassed by his General’s universally understood gestures and took Hanna to one side, “I apologise for my Minister’s lack of respect, but he finds it difficult to accept that a woman can be as accomplished as you undoubtedly are without the grateful assistance of an influential man. He has, however, given permission for me to arrange your visit to Japan.”

Hanna turned on the charm, “Mitsuoto, please do not feel embarrassed – I’m sure it was the alcohol talking, I shall, with your agreement, seek permission for my visit and then contact you at the embassy but one way or another I will give you the helicopter flight.”

“I would be honoured, Fraulein Reitsch, and if you would care to accompany me in my personal aircraft which I have been given permission to keep at Templehof. We could even take a flight to Switzerland and escape the privations of war for a few hours.”

“That certainly sounds tempting. Would there be no problems flying over the border?”

“None whatsoever, I bought the aircraft – a little Morraine Saunier – new from the factory after the fall of France and I had the foresight to have it registered in Switzerland and as I have a diplomatic passport, your presence would not be questioned.”

Hanna flashed a seductive smile, “That, I look forward to almost as much as going to Japan, I shall telephone soon.” To reinforce his belief in a near conquest, she gave the unctuous little man a lingering kiss on the cheek and returned to Heydrich who by now had left the Foreign Minister snoring on a sofa, while other guests left for activities new and not so new.

That evening Hanna joined Heydrich at his Wansee villa, north of Berlin and her invitation to Japan was the centre of their discussions. Hanna was prepared to do anything for her Führer but she told Heydrich, “I’m sorry but honorary Aryan or not, I really don’t find Osikawa at all appealing and I know already that he expects to get me into his bed.”

Heydrich looked at her petite form lying beside him, “I can’t say I blame him, but nobody’s insisting you go that far, just hold out the promise. Anyway, you had no time for me when we met back in 1937, perhaps Osikawa will sweep you off your feet.”

Hanna giggled, “I always wanted you, Reinhard, but I held you in awe – that was the reason I resisted you, but I’m glad I gave in without more than the requisite fight.”

Heydrich kissed her gently, almost afraid to put his full weight on her, she was so small – but her size disguised her courage and determination and already Hanna wore her well-deserved Iron Cross proudly on her civilian tunic.

After another passionate exchange he rolled over and, lighting a cigarette, said, “I leave the detail to your discretion, but I do need to know the Japanese intentions regarding south-

east Asia and, for reasons that it would be better for you not to know, particularly how they intend to deal with the Americans. Somehow you must be able to do some flying on your own there and I want you to fly over a secret installation and photograph it for me.”

“I don’t think I’ll have any problem convincing Osikawa to let me fly alone, but how do I smuggle a decent camera aboard – I don’t have a cleavage that would hide the film let alone the camera.”

“I think you should be open about your camera from the very start – take pictures of anything and everything. Ask Osikawa to take pictures of you on their carrier – in their aircraft – everywhere, nobody will take any notice of your camera after a while.”

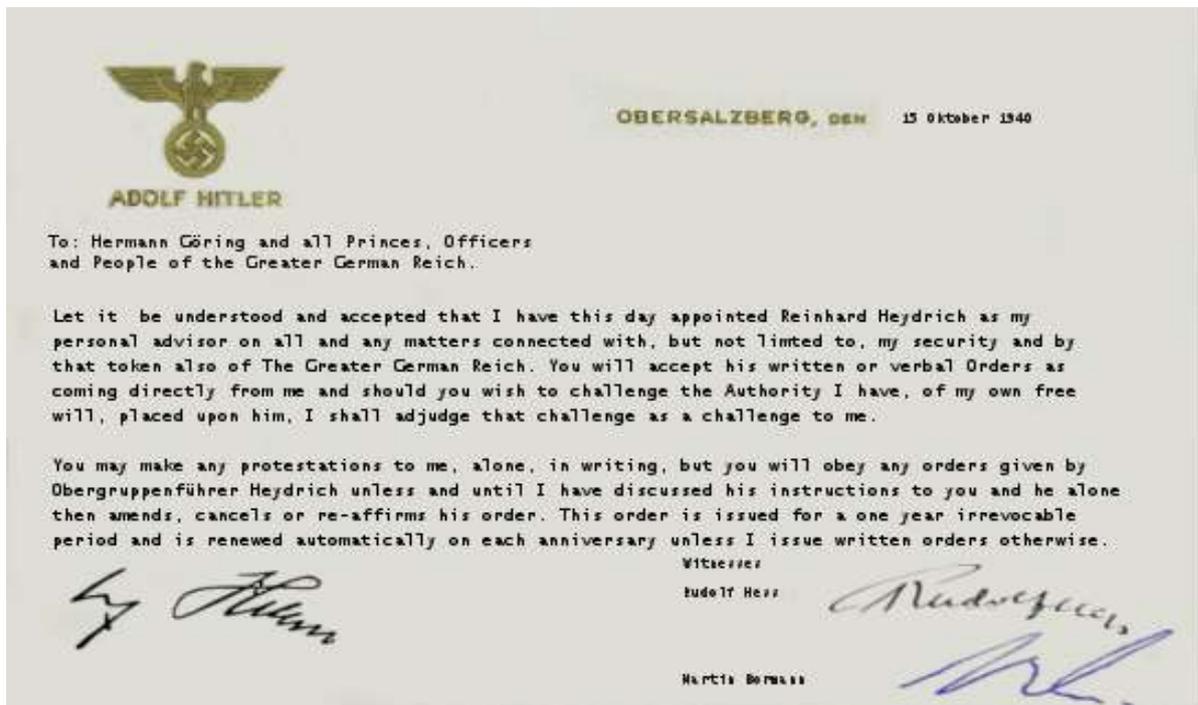
“Don’t you think you ought to tell me exactly what’s going on – if there’s any risk I ought to know about it first – have you cleared this with the Führer?”

Heydrich considered for a moment, “If the Führer told you he wanted you to go to Japan, would you ask him about the risks?”

“Of course I wouldn’t, but he’s not the one who’s asking me and I shall have to seek permission from somebody to leave my duties – you know I’m testing the jet aircraft at the moment.”

Heydrich climbed out of bed and went to his briefcase, returning with a sheet of paper, “Perhaps you should read this before you ask for permission to go.”

Hanna took the paper and read, each line making her sit up until, almost involuntarily, she was standing next to him, the paper amplifying the shaking in her hands:



Hanna read the letter again and reached for the bedspread. She wrapped herself in it as if being naked in front of Heydrich was like walking naked into a room to find the Führer there, “But ... but this makes you his successor in all but name – you will have more power than Göring, Hess or even Himmler – I don’t understand – what is going on?”

Heydrich sat on the bed in front of her, “I am not able to tell you what is going on save that I asked the Führer for written authority to pursue certain activities in furtherance of the war and for the good of the Reich; the Führer asked me to draft a letter of authority, which I

did. A little later, we had another meeting and he passed me this letter that is far in excess of what I had drafted or, indeed, needed. When I queried the virtual power of attorney it bestowed upon me, he said that his mind was made up on the matter and he would remain unassailable to me or anybody else, including Göring, Hess and Himmler and that as of that day I was responsible to him and him alone.”

“But what if something should happen to the Führer?” she asked timidly.

“That was also my most immediate thought, but he was so adamant – I could not even broach the subject.”

“But if, for instance, his plane crashed or the British assassinated him,” she queried shaking her head in disbelief.

Heydrich frowned, “If that were to happen, on the face of it, the order could not be rescinded. However, the Führer is nobody’s fool – doubtlessly he will have prepared a written testament as to who would succeed him in that eventuality. That could still be Göring, but legally his successor would still be bound to this order until each October.”

Heydrich reflected briefly on their first meeting after he had read the contents of the letter. He had listened, horror struck, as Hitler confided in him that he had a worsening medical problem that was debilitating and could strike him down without warning. He had gone on to explain that while Göring remained his natural successor, his Power of Attorney would permit Heydrich to keep Göring on the right path and if at some stage he decided that a better successor had proved himself, Göring would be passed over as Hess had been.

“Therefore as far as going to Japan is concerned,” put Hanna, “your word is sufficient.”

Heydrich studied her for a moment, “In much the same way as was my order to von Ribbentrop regarding tonight’s meeting.”

Hanna’s amazement was growing, “So the official line that von Ribbentrop had been called urgently to the Führer’s side was untrue – you called off his reception party and organised one instead and I suppose you did that solely with the intention of getting me to Japan.”

He contrived to look hurt that he was forced to send her, “There’s no point in pretending otherwise, it is essential that you should go. In fact tonight was the first time I have invoked the letter – Ribbentrop contacted the Führer in my presence and I saw him go a bright scarlet when I clearly heard the Führer shout at him, *Can’t you read – do as you are told and stay out of sight for the night ...*”

Hanna’s attitude to him suddenly and irredeemably changed; she started to dress, knowing she could wake any morning to find that Heydrich was the new Führer and whilst sleeping with the Führer was the stuff of many girls’ dreams, Hanna felt a strange feeling run through her as if she had just slept with her stepfather.

She was as determined as ever to do all in her power to assist the Fatherland and her developing relationship with Osikawa would now be her way to draw a line under the relationship with the Heydrich she was once passionate about in deference to the new all-powerful Heydrich whose replacement of the Führer she somehow feared. For some while, she avoided any contact with him that might result in her having to refuse him and she suspected that he had put her evasiveness down to her contempt for his using her by thrusting her into the eager arms of Osikawa.

Gradually her transformation had continued as she changed from aloof aviatrix into spy

and adventurous woman and Osikawa felt a deep sense of belonging when he was with this extra-special woman. He showered her with heartfelt gifts and entertained her publically within the confines of her evident belief that she had an essential image to maintain for the Reich that might somehow be tainted if her being with him became unrestricted public knowledge. Yet gradually they were drawn into the inevitability of the situation, spending a passionate night in his Berlin apartment. Heydrich had been her first real lover and though he always pleased her, there was predictability to their lovemaking. With Osikawa she found herself indulged and indulging in oriental practices, the pleasure from which she still could not have believed; although she found the little officer somewhat forbidding at each meeting, she relished their exciting time together and awoke each morning looking forward to seeing him again. On this particular morning she had awoken and found herself determined to indulge herself by playing out some wild fantasies that she had pondered during her many isolated moments in the cockpit.

After a hot night of unbridled and adventurous passion, they found the early morning February cold stiffly penetrating as they madly headed for Templehof airfield. Hanna had thrown herself headlong into intoxicating physical pleasure and endless satisfaction, but this day they would push the boundaries of love-making to the limit and Osikawa had no idea what awaited him as she drove frantically along.

At Templehof they checked the weather over the Alps, loaded their scant luggage and soon were climbing into the willing little aeroplane and heading for a few days in Switzerland. Osikawa let Hanna do the take off and she climbed gradually to a comfortable height and headed for Munich. Hanna smiled to herself as she looked at the airspeed-indicator; they were cruising at barely 150 km/h, only a little above the landing speed of some of the aircraft she regularly flew. It would be three hours before they reached Munich for a break and fuel before the final leg of the journey into Switzerland. She pulled gently back on the stick and almost imperceptibly the little machine rose higher and after an hour they flew over the eastern suburbs of Leipzig nearly two thousand metres above German soil.

Although progress was slow, the pleasure of being able to survey calmly the countryside more than compensated for the birdlike pace. She asked Osikawa if he could get any more heat into the cockpit because 'while it is cold on the ground it is like the Arctic up here'. As the warm air off the engine flowed mercifully around them, Hanna passed control back to Osikawa and she knelt on the bench seat of the fairly roomy cabin with its back seats that might take two five-year-olds if not occupied by their baggage. "Let's go into Augsburg, if he's there I'll introduce you to Willy Messerschmitt," suggested Hanna, "he's a sweetie and we might even be able to have a look at his new jet aircraft – we can fuel-up there more easily."

Osikawa really didn't mind how they reached Switzerland, he didn't particularly mind if they didn't go there, he had Hanna to himself for a few days and he was going to make the most of it as he extended her knowledge of eastern pleasures, "Whatever you like, princess, I'm just enjoying myself being with you."

Hanna reached across and kissed him on his cheek, he turned, and they kissed deeply but awkwardly as he almost needlessly kept one eye fixed on his instruments. "Mmmmm, I think I'll change into a nice dress before we land at Willy's – I want to look like a woman for a change; perhaps he won't even recognise me!"

She tugged at her jacket and then her serge trousers and knelt again apparently looking for

some suitable attire, but managed to punctuate her searching with some exploratory kisses that lasted longer each time but the stable little aircraft barely deviated from its plodding course whenever she diverted Osikawa's attention.

"Super little 'plane this, flies itself really," shared Osikawa, "you could almost do it with your eyes closed."

Hanna giggled, "I bet you can't!"

"What?"

"Fly it with your eyes closed, say for five minutes holding your heading and altitude – no more than 5% either way – I regularly do it for ten minutes or more."

"Never tried it, but I'll give it a go."

"I know you, Mitsuoto, you're cheating, you are looking through your lashes." She reached into her bag and found her yellow scarf that she wrapped around the protesting man's eyes, "Now try it!"

He flew steadily on, maintaining his height by pulling back on his stick as the engine note increased and pushing as it laboured. He felt as if he were flying on a switchback, which was not helped by Hanna's infectious giggling, "They all find it easy to start off with, but it gets to you, within a minute you'll be breaking out in perspiration."

"We will see ... now what is the wager?"

"If you don't do it, you must buy me lunch."

"And if I do?"

"That's a surprise, but it'll be something you'll remember forever."

"You're on then, it's the heading that's hardest, but I'm confident about holding the height."

"You're ten degrees off heading already, in five minutes you'll be flying in a circle. Let me put her on course for you and I'll hold your heading for a few minutes until you get the feel of it – we have to do this in case we have an instrument failure in cloud, you have to be able to handle the stress to reach your objective in one piece."

After a while, he was holding a steady course for Augsburg, approaching the lone peak that shielded the festival town of Bayreuth from the cutting north wind. Hanna kissed him on the cheek, "Right, your five minutes starts now!"

Osikawa flew steadily on as Hanna prepared herself for his reward.

"You're finding this too easy; I shall have to throw the occasional handicap at you."

"That's not fair – it wasn't part of the bet."

"I know, mein Schatz, but it was part of my plan and you never know what might confront you when you're flying."

Osikawa flew on oblivious of the handicaps she was planning, "You're beginning to perspire, Mitsu, let me help you out of your jacket." As her insistent hands fumbled with his buttons, Osikawa was struggling to concentrate on the task in hand, but soon his jacket was on the backseat and he was forging on barely deviating from his course and altitude,

"How long do I have left?"

"About three minutes, then I'll show you how to do it properly."

"What do you mean, properly, I reckon I'm not doing too badly."

"You're doing very well but you're still perspiring." Hanna tugged at his clothing and threw more into the backseat.

"How long now?"

"Before the five minutes is up, or you're naked?" she giggled.

"I think the two are somehow going to coincide," replied the concentrating pilot as Hanna

raised each of his legs in turn and divested him of shoes and socks.

He winced as he put his bare feet back onto the icy rudder bars and he too was almost overcome with chuckling as he seemed to wander at random around a thankfully empty sky. Hanna slipped off her underclothes and began to stroke his chest and nuzzle into his neck.

“Hanna, stop it – you’re trying to make me lose the wager, you’ll stop at nothing, play fair!”

As Osikawa reached the end of his tether she announced, “Five minutes are up, you’ve won, you lucky man.”

“Might I claim my prize now?” he asked as he slipped his blindfold off to be faced with a very naked and nubile Hanna who was settling back to show him how a German woman could perform in the air.

“I have control, Mitsu, now you have me at a disadvantage.”

Osikawa tore off the rest of his clothes before they continued their flight, united as never before. When they passed uninterrupted over Nürnberg, Hanna raised her head slightly from her supine position and looked down into the huge stadium where Hitler electrified his audience and had stirred Hanna’s senses on more than one occasion. However, even the Führer had not stirred her as she was being stirred just then. As they approached Augsburg, they scrambled into their clothing and by the time they landed at the airfield of the mighty Messerschmitt factory, they were somewhat calmer. They were given a conducted tour by a surprised Willy Messerschmitt and entertained for lunch.

Three hours later, they were on their way to Switzerland, flying high across the Alps. She knew that in the years to come, whenever anybody mentioned Nürnberg, Switzerland or even Willy, she would definitely remember that memorable flight and her aerial activities with an adventurous man from the Orient.

\*\*\*

However, her adventures had only just begun. In early April, Hanna and Osikawa set out on the gruelling trip to Japan. They flew via Moscow and Siberia and arrived in Japan on the 5<sup>th</sup> April. Hanna was amazed at her welcome, everybody treated her as a hero and she had a vague inkling how Emilia Erhardt had felt when she made her epic journey. Nothing was too much trouble for them and soon her wish came true when she flew several times from the deck of a brand new aircraft carrier, initially in a two-seat trainer and then solo in a Mitsubishi Zero.

She made a big fuss of the aircraft and compared it favourably with the Me109 and even the newish Fw190 and she was allowed to roam the skies unrestricted. Each day she flew, she headed a little further north until she identified a newly constructed airfield adjacent to a natural harbour. She rightly thought that this would be her one and only opportunity to overfly the site and she reeled off a complete film as she riskily circled overhead. Her radio suddenly came alive and she was ordered back to the carrier immediately. Holding the stick between her legs, she wound on, removed the film from her camera, and inserted a new one, taking a few innocent shots into the middle distance. As she approached the ship, she wriggled her hand down into her underclothes and secreted the film from all but the most penetrating of Japanese inspections. She knew she was in trouble as soon as she landed, for there on the flight deck was Captain Tamushi and she was soon escorted to his side. He spoke quietly but pointedly, “Fraulein Reitsch, I do not know what you were doing circling one of

our sensitive installations before you were recalled, but just in case you might have exposed some of your film in that particular area, I think you had better hand it to me for vetting.”

He took the offered camera and handed it to a Lieutenant who removed the film and disappeared below and an hour later, she was in front of the Captain in his day cabin. “Fraulein Reitsch, I do not wish to be discourteous – but I think that you are now perfectly able to fly from an aircraft carrier.”

“Thank you Captain, it has been a most worthwhile experience.”

“We printed your film for you and are delighted that you have such memories to take back to Germany. I have asked Commander Osikawa to make sure you see Tokyo and perhaps some of the surrounding countryside, before you return home next week.”

Osikawa met her as the launch pulled in to the jetty, “What are you up to Hanna, you came close to being shot down.” Hanna had been oblivious to the flight of Zeros that had been placed on alert when her re-call message had been sent, “Shot down? By whom? Whatever for?”

“Whatever happened, it has caused repercussions. I may entertain you in Japan for only three days then I am ordered to escort you home.”

“It’s been a lovely time, Mitsu, perhaps we could see Mount Fuji before we leave, oh and I must send a telegram to my mother.”

Heydrich read the telegram that had been intercepted as agreed:

|   |
|---|
| <p>MUTTI – HOME BY 18TH <b>STOP</b> HAVE SEEN ALL RECOMMENDED SIGHTS<br/><b>STOP</b> AMAZING PICTURES TO ADD TO MY COLLECTION <b>STOP</b> JAPANESE<br/>EXACTLY AS EXPECTED <b>STOP</b><br/>LOVE HANNA <b>STOP</b> SENT 13-04-41</p> |
|---|

Heydrich looked at the date on Hanna’s cable, 13<sup>th</sup> April 1941. It gave him much satisfaction that Japan had signed a neutrality pact with Russia on the same day – if they could be that duplicitous – they deserved everything they got. Heydrich knew the Japanese would not break the pact because it protected their back door. He reckoned they were determined to go south and then attack America; regrettably an extra fifty-eight divisions could be added to the vast manpower Stalin would be able to muster to resist Hitler’s huge gamble.

When Hanna returned triumphantly with the crucial reel of film, Heydrich swung into action. He had copies made and the final piece of evidence was in place to finish the complex documents he was preparing for delivery to the British.

Hitler looked at everything Heydrich laid before him and confirmed the Hess flight must now go ahead as soon as everything could be arranged. Heydrich completed all his paperwork and returned to Gütersloh leaving Hitler to have two final and critical conversations.

\*\*\*

In May 1941, the Führer had made a unique journey to the home of Crown Prince Wilhelm shortly after the death of the Prince’s father – the erstwhile and exiled Kaiser,

accompanied only by his driver and with Prince August as his bodyguard. He had been received with courteous respect by the prince and as they talked they both warmed to each other, whereupon Hitler asked if they could talk privately.

“I have never been an ardent monarchist, as you are aware, your Highness, but you are de facto heir to your Royal House and I have come to see that a constitutional monarchy, along British lines, is a great force for stability and the tempering of the wildest excesses of politicians.”

“You are of course correct Herr Reichskanzler and you also know that I fervently campaigned for the restoration of our monarchy along those lines until 1934 when my good friend, your predecessor Kurt von Schleicher was ... ah ... ah... mortally wounded during the taming of the SA. Since then I have considered it best to enjoy life to the full and not to engage in politics at all.”

“I would be lying to you if I said that I had no part in that particularly painful episode, but the SA and especially Ernst Röhm were plotting a revolution which had to be ... ah ... quelled. Whilst I admit to issuing the order to arrest the perpetrators, the SS became overzealous and I deeply regret many of the events of that time, including von Schleicher’s death.”

“Thank you Herr Hitler, that admission and apology is all that I ever wanted to hear from you and it restores my faith in your Chancellorship – perhaps now we could move on to the business that has brought you here.”

“As you know, Sir, I decided against assuming the mantle of Reichpräsident upon the death of von Hindenburg. Whilst I carry out many of the duties of State that he once fulfilled I now find there are times when a steadying hand on the rudder would be most beneficial – indeed Mr Churchill has to be particularly attentive to the British constitution in order to maintain the relationship between government and crown. This tempers his activities somewhat and inserts time for reflection.”

“Yes, I understand exactly – my father used to say that his grandmother Queen Victoria had her Prime Ministers quaking in their shoes.”

They both chuckled at the thought, brought alive by contemporary films of her reign. “Sir, we have reached a stage in this regrettable war with England where I believe a settlement could and should be negotiated but it is not a role I am best suited for.”

“Why might that be Herr Hitler?”

“Because, plainly speaking, I am just that ... Herr Hitler and merely a Great War corporal to boot. Most of the British leaders are rooted in the aristocracy with links to royalty and it is understandable that they feel uncomfortable and loath to enter into any discussions with me. Furthermore I confess that I was disingenuous in my talks with Mr Chamberlain and Lord Halifax at the time of the Sudetenland issue and I fear they have not forgiven me.”

“What is it Reichskanzler that brings you wringing your hands to me? I am not a priest and this is no confessional.”

Hitler shifted uncomfortably in his chair. Whilst the Prince had accepted his apology, it was obvious that because Hitler wanted something he was taking advantage of the situation to have some revenge, “In 1932, Sir, you considered running against von Hindenberg for the presidency but I believe your late father believed the democratic process was unbecoming to a Prince of the Blood, is that not so?”

“It is indeed true and I admit that he, in good faith, believed so strongly in royal duty that even after the Allies forced him to abdicate, he threatened he would cut me off and disinherit me should I continue with my ... democratic intentions. As you know I still harboured a wish

to restore the monarchy to Germany and Prussia which would have been beyond my grasp as a disinherited commoner with no claim to the throne.”

“Might it surprise you, Sir, if I were to say that I believe the House of Hohenzollern should be reinstated after this war?”

“You would indeed surprise me Herr Reichskanzler. Why might that be in our mutual interest?”

“Germany might well be presiding over a unified Europe, perhaps the most powerful force in the world and certainly on a par with the United States of America. It is my belief that not only Germany, but also this new United States of Europe, would be better served by a constitutional monarchy. If we do not have a suitable candidate, the British Monarchy will see it as its obligation and duty to take on the role whereas I believe that we, as victors, should be blessed with a German King of Europe.”

Prince Wilhelm was visibly shaken by Hitler’s suggestion. However, Hitler was not finished, “In order that our people may once again accept the notion of royalty after twenty years of republicanism I would be most honoured, Sir, if you would be gracious enough to allow yourself to be nominated once more to become our Reichpräsident, not by appointment but by due democratic process. If you would accept this nomination your name would be put forward to the people of the Reich in a plebiscite, in which I am confident you would be strongly endorsed; additionally the people, having warmed to you as their Reichpräsident, would be relaxed and enthusiastic about your becoming Europe’s Premier Monarch.”

The Prince was obviously honoured but for some while argued that he was too old and perhaps the honour should pass to his grandson. Hitler continued, “Prince Wilhelm, I know you share my view that your great father, the Kaiser, was cheated out of victory by conniving and disruptive internal enemies toward the end of the Great War. You may also believe that he and Germany were further humiliated by that accursed throttling treaty forged at Versailles. I am aware that your British cousins and in particular Edward VII and his son George V were never minded to strangle Germany’s royal house; we know now that it was a conspiracy put together by the French and the U.S., both of which are fervently anti-monarchy. The Americans, having come late to the war and throwing their weight around amongst the war-weary Europeans and, no doubt influenced by Jewish financial objectives, tailored the treaty in line with what they saw as their commercial advantage. The French, out of vengeance and bitterness, went along with them. The British had wanted our monarchy to remain intact but were over-ruled. You may not be aware that when The Duke of Windsor came to see me, he told me of the great respect his family and his brother King George VI still hold for the house of Hohenzollern.”

Hitler’s power of oratory was not confined to ranting speeches before enthusiastic crowds. The Prince was moved and there was the trace of a tear down his cheek, “I will naturally do my duty for Germany and if required for the other European people who might be content under a constitutional monarchy. I believe, though, that you should reach a settlement with England because the future would be better served by the experience and continuity of the British Monarchy.”

“That will be for you to discuss and agree after the war is ended, but in the meantime, because time is pressing for a peace settlement, I would be grateful if you would consider going to Britain to meet with their King’s brother the Duke of Kent with a view to finding a pathway to peace?”

“I would be greatly honoured, Herr Reichskanzler.”

As a very self-satisfied Hitler climbed into his car to return to Berlin after this momentous meeting, he mused if the Prince would have so readily agreed had he known how it was intended he should set foot on British soil.

# Chapter 11: One Single and Two Returns

---

The new Bf110, which Hess collected from the Messerschmitt factory at Augsburg, had been especially adapted and designated 'k' in accordance with the written specification sent by Hess but prepared by Heydrich. It was equipped with additional on-board fuel capacity and drop tanks increasing endurance by over two hours, it also had controllable pitch propellers with negative pitch capability, high lift flaps, air brakes, stiffened undercarriage, improved braking system, *knickbein* navigation system panel in the pilot's cockpit along with RAF radio and 'Friend or Foe' device. Everything that could be added had been and only four things were missing as per the Hess specification. The Bf110k unusually carried no swastikas on the tail fins and in place of the black crosses on its fuselage red, white and *black* roundels in RAF style similar to the markings the British had applied to captured Bf110's were painted. Heydrich had recognised the risk of a connection here so had had Hess himself telephone Willy Messerschmitt to avoid putting this change in writing.

Hess took possession of the aircraft personally from Willy Messerschmitt and, after a detailed briefing, he took off with full main and half-full drop tanks at 17.45 and flew directly to Gütersloh at top speed where he landed ahead of schedule at 18.35 having had a strong tail wind at 4000 metres altitude all the way. His instructions were to maintain radio silence and, because there was no airfield control, to land at his own discretion according to the wind direction. Then he had to taxi to the north-east of the airfield and remain in the aircraft until approached by Heydrich and nobody else.

Heydrich, who had been there for three days desperately practicing short take off and landing methods with the less than suitable Bf110d, came to meet him and directed him to a section of the airfield that had been tailored to replicate faithfully the Duke of Sutherland's 600m strip. Because of the different prevailing winds in northern Germany except it was not, however, on the same compass heading. Heydrich had carried out his reconnaissance work to coincide with raids from Norway against Scotland and had satisfied himself that with the modified aircraft, the mission should be practicable, but with the standard aircraft, although he could land and stop within 600 metres in windless conditions – sometimes it was a close run thing. Taking-off with full standard tanks and two up was possible, but only if there was a good wind down the strip and that then made the landing impossible because the Duke's airstrip was one way with trees at one end. Even if he could get off the runway in time, he needed to fly level for a further 300 metres to gain sufficient airspeed for the maximum rate of climb that would be essential to clear the surrounding hills. Heydrich ushered his trusted SS ground crew into the windowless crew-room and locked the door as arranged. When Hess climbed out of the cockpit at 18.45, the additional tanks under the wings were all but empty as expected.

Heydrich had decided the safest place for Hess not to be seen by any of his men was in the back of the Bf110k with him and he was soon landing it in four hundred metres in the fortunately still air at ground level. Further attempts over the next half hour saw consistent landings within three hundred metres. On his final landing he even managed to land and stop in 150 metres by the use of almost full throttles pulling against the additional drag of the airbrakes and exaggerated side-slipping before cutting the engines just before the threshold, dropping the aircraft down on the stall before braking very hard and applying negative pitch.

Although his ground speed was less than 100km an hour on impact, he felt the tail beginning to lift as he decelerated and he told himself that he should not try that again, but he was confident that the aircraft with its full complement of technical advances was fit for the job.

After he landed each time, he turned and carried out a short take off – but even with the finest pitch, there would be no margin for error. He predicted that as he would not be taking off with the drop tanks, the lower drag and weight would give him a safety margin without the absence of their drag significantly affecting his landing length. He hoped that there would be no wind in Scotland but this was unlikely and he was relying on a promised large bonfire to provide final information, but zero wind was the ideal. Any headwind could suddenly disappear on landing, due to the trees at the end of the runway and this risk made the powered approach safest – while the trees would minimise the effects of tail wind on take-off, he would then have to be very careful as he raised the flaps.

When he landed for the final time, he turned to see Hess in a state of panic, screaming into the intercom but wildly forgetting to press the button. Heydrich climbed out, followed by a shaken Hess muttering almost incoherently, “You don’t expect me to be able to do that and in the dark, do you?”

“Perhaps if you try it a few times you’ll get the hang of it,” offered Heydrich with as much cynicism as encouragement in his voice.

“You must be bloody joking, how long have you been practicing this and you expect me to be able to do it after a couple of tries?”

Heydrich seized the opportunity, “If you don’t think you are able to do it, you are left with three options.”

“Any bloody option is better than that and why do I need to be able to do a short take-off – they’re not going to let me go that quickly.”

“I thought I ought to show you what can be done with Willy’s wonder ‘plane, just in case you have to put down somewhere to get your bearings – you aren’t going to be able to fly *and* use a sextant.”

“Damn the sextant – what are those three options?”

“You land as best you can and run into the trees – I reckon that you’d survive; you bail out over the strip or ...”

“Or what? Come on Heydrich don’t mess me about!”

Heydrich grimaced at him, “You telephone the Führer and tell him you’re not going.”

Hess nearly exploded, “You bastard, you know I’d rather jump than tell him that.”

Heydrich felt relieved, it was simple now, “Jumping out is easy – it’s the building up to it that’s the hard bit but it’s straightforward. Just undo your safety belt – not, I said *not* your parachute harness, open the canopy – it will probably be ripped off in the slipstream – throttle back, pull the nose up a little, to slow her to 140km/hour and roll her on to her back and you’ll just drop out, as if by magic. Don’t do it below seven hundred metres or you might not get your ‘chute open in time – we don’t want the Duke suing the Reich for the damage you do to his runway.”

Hess stood open-mouthed, “The last time I tried it from a training tower, I was told to roll when I landed but I couldn’t get the hang of it.”

“Doesn’t really matter in the dark, you won’t be able to see the ground clearly enough, even in the light Scottish nights, no – just remember to keep your knees bent a little and you’ll be all right – come on – let’s have a coffee and relax for a moment, while the aircraft are refuelled and prepared.”

Heydrich showed Hess through another door in the near end of the purpose-built crew room, "Have some coffee, I won't be a moment – just need to put the ground crew to work ..." He left Hess inside and closed and locked the door then went and unlocked the other door for the ground crew to go to prepare the aircraft. He returned quickly to his crew room and found Hess in an agitated state, "Just a precaution, Sir, I'm sorry but as far as the plan is concerned you're still airborne and already well on your way to Scotland. You sent the note to the Führer by courier before you left Augsburg, didn't you?"

Hess felt as if he were on a merry-go-round, unable to get off, "Of course I did, that was at 17.30, he should receive it at Obersalzberg at about 18.45, what's the time now?"

Heydrich looked at the clock on the wall that Hess had somehow refused to notice, "Exactly 19.30, *we* must be leaving soon."

Hess was mortified at the thought that Hitler was already issuing the planned interception orders. He could not now change his mind if he had wanted to, but was inordinately encouraged at Heydrich's use of a simple word. "*We?*" he queried.

Heydrich looked at him as if he had just thought of it, "I know you're supposed to be doing this on your own, but I don't see the point in your getting lost – so I'll come as far as Holy Island with you, then you're on your own. I'll have to take the modified aircraft or I'll never make it to Norway, but now you've decided to jump it doesn't matter if you fly the standard 110. You just fly 50 metres below and behind me, all you have to do is fly from Holy Island to Dungavel, and that's about 120km. Here's your flight plan with all the timings – remember the Duke's lights come on first at 22.45, then again at 23.15 and finally at 23.45 and that's on our aircraft clocks, I've already allowed for British time which is out of sync with ours, so if you'd care to set your wristwatch to GMT..."

Hess' confusion and anxiety was affecting his reason, "What the hell's that?"

Heydrich looked at Hess with pity – here was a man who had wanted to make the journey on his own, "Greenwich Mean Time – all pilots should know that."

"Oh yes, of course I know what GMT is, I didn't hear you properly."

"Now study your flight plan, please, Sir, I have things to attend to – I shall lock the door again to make sure nobody stumbles in on you – we'll only have a brief moment to talk when I return, but we'll be able to use the radios on low power during the flight – it'll all be pre-set for you."

Heydrich went out and locked the door behind him, unlocked the crew room and watched briefly as the ground crew readied the aircraft. 'Now for the tricky bit', he said to himself. The ground crew had finished their work and all that remained was for them to connect up the ground trolleys for the start up. As per orders, they cleared the fuel bowsers and returned to the crew room and Heydrich locked the door behind them once more. He flashed his torch and within moments a big Mercedes arrived, driven by Prince August of Prussia proudly wearing his SS uniform; seated in the back looking anxious was Crown Prince Wilhelm, somewhat strangely but perhaps expectedly, attired in morning suit complete with bow tie and royal insignia under his still open flying suit, with a top hat beside him. Heydrich opened the door and helped the Prince out to the waiting aircraft, where after securing his suit and fitting his Mae West and parachute harness, he was bundled in by the younger pair – a task not helped by the Prince's previous need for alcohol-induced courage in order to undertake the flight.

Once they had bundled him inside Heydrich fitted his flying helmet and intercom and showed him the press-to-talk button and August strapped him in and put his top hat on his lap. Prince August smiled as he secured the canopy and joined Heydrich on the ground, "I'm

glad I'm not going wherever it is..." Heydrich said nothing, August would never know just how near he came to being in that back seat, "Right, you'd better be off – I don't want the ground crew to see you, but it was Hess that Heydrich didn't want him to see.

As Prince August disappeared toward the airfield gate, to be waved through as rapidly as he had entered – Heydrich unlocked the door that protected Hess and went in and locking the door behind him, took out a syringe from his briefcase and Hess submissively rolled up his sleeve, "No point arguing about this now, I suppose?"

"Sorry, Sir, but it's all agreed with the Führer, I'm just carrying out his orders," replied Heydrich and with that, he injected the 'time bomb' nerve agent into Hess' trembling arm.

Heydrich led the deputy Führer out to the Bf110d and told him to don his helmet and goggles before he shut the canopy and went to unlock the crew room door, beckoning them out to start the aircraft, reminding them of their strict orders.

Heydrich climbed into the cockpit, closed the canopy and connecting his headset, speaking briefly to the Prince. "Are you all right, Sir, we'll be airborne soon."

The Prince though terrified and in mid-prayer, put a brave face on it and replied jauntily, "I think so – but you'd better be off before I change my mind."

Heydrich signalled to the ground crew, started his port engine and then his starboard, and went through his pre-flight checks and he looked back at Hess doing the same. There was no need to taxi, the nearby windsock still hung limply from its pole; Heydrich turned on his radio, "Delta leader to Delta 2, ready to roll."

"Delta 2 ready to roll," came the reply.

Heydrich signalled to the ground crew to remove the chocks, checked for fine pitch and pushed his throttles forward a little and as he started to roll he selected ten degrees of flap, then eased his throttles to full power and headed down the runway, it was 19.50 – what had he told the Führer about departure time? Looking in his mirror, he could just make out the following aircraft as he eased the stick forward to raise the tail plane. Airspeed was soon up to 150km/h and he pulled the stick back gently to leave German soil. As he climbed, he retracted the undercarriage and lifted the flaps before selecting coarse pitch and setting his course north-west to intercept the Kleve beam over Holland. He pressed his transmit button, "Delta leader to Delta 2, I shall climb to 1000 metres until I have found the beam. Then as I turn north, gradually to 4000 metres until we approach the coast south of your target landfall – that will be about twenty minutes after we turn west south-west – hold your position carefully or you'll lose me and there will be two aircraft seen on British radar."

The flight was uneventful apart from a heart-stopping failure by the Prince to reply when Heydrich asked over the intercom if he was all right, but he was relieved when he glanced quickly around to see that the old man was fast asleep – his chin resting on a slowly protesting top hat – 'best place for him', he thought. In slightly under an hour and a half he was approaching the Stavanger beam and briefly warned Hess by radio before he turned in a long sweep to port and he looked back at Hess as he followed in a perfect formation manoeuvre. After a few minutes he intercepted the Stavanger beam and in the distance Heydrich could see the coast of northern England and he reached down and turned on the IFF device- he had no idea if it was working, it sat there passively waiting to do its job when activated by a radar beam. He decided to make a low power contact with Hess, "Throttle back now to an airspeed of 200km an hour and follow behind and slightly above me at a safe

distance while I drop the tanks – they will add to the confusion on their radar screens. At 21.35 as you see me cross the coast, do a rate one turn onto a heading of 300 degrees then, throttling right back, glide descend at 650 metres a minute keeping your airspeed to no more than 140km an hour so you won't be heard. You should pass through that bit of stratus lying off the coast and be down to 700 metres above Holy Island at 21.52; you'll have to circle a few times before you start your run toward Arran at 22.22. The timing is critical to be in place to see the first lights at Dungavel at 22.45 as you run past westbound. I'll increase my speed now and stay at this altitude and fly over Acklington a few times and then I shall have to head east for Stavanger to draw attention away from you before you start your run – it's up to you then, Sir, best of luck."

The throttle adjustments both of them had made soon saw Heydrich more than 5km in front and Hess' voice seemed fainter now as he came over the radio, "I think I understood all that – it's almost like daylight this far north – it's eerie – I'll be all right – quite looking forward to it – and thank you for your help – out."

Heydrich felt a sudden pang of sympathy for Hitler's deputy – he was only a diversion – once he left Holy Island he could do nothing but bail out into a situation so confusing that he would never begin to piece it together before the nerve agent kicked in. However, his arrival was essential to give cover to the real mission should Churchill get wind of it.

Heydrich kept his throttles hard forward leaving Hess behind and as he approached the coast near RAF Aklington he jettisoned his drop tanks, then he swung north-west and looking across his starboard wing he could just make out Hess starting to bank to the north toward the thin cloud cover over the Farne Islands. As Heydrich flew into England at Alnmouth and passed over Alnwick toward the Cheviot it was now 21.40. He was on schedule but he had only five minutes before the first lights at Dungavel. He pushed the stick forward to begin his gradual decent, throttling back a little to minimise the unmistakable throb of the Bf110 but increasing his airspeed to 450km an hour. At 21.43, he had Kelso under his starboard wing and was able to see the Tweed and the adjacent railway line in the valley with Melrose and Galashiels ahead of him and as he passed over Melrose at 3000 metres, he thought he saw lights come on in the far distance. He maintained his speed and gradual decent, following the Tweed and the criss-crossing railway line. He overflew Peebles at 21.48 convinced he could see the lights some 40km ahead. Just as he passed the fork in the river, he definitely saw the lights go out – it was 21.50 and he had ten minutes to do 32km. He checked his speed. This left time in hand to make the distance to Dungavel before the lights came on again at 22.00 and he throttled right back putting on induction heating for the descent.

Following the railway line he soon had Carstairs in sight and was now 350 metres above the ground – it was 21.56. He picked up the Clyde coming in from the south and turned his normal radio to high power, pressed the button and sent a final message to Hess, "Delta leaving – good luck." He saw the Clyde abruptly turning west at Carstairs and in two minutes he identified the river turning north again to Lanark, it was 21.58. He left the river and continued his westward track briefly before turning to line up on the airfield. He dropped his undercarriage and ran through the pre-landing checks. He glanced round at the Prince who was half-dozing and decided not to alert him that landing was imminent – before he could worry, they would be on the ground – one way or another.

Then he saw the lights no more than two km ahead and slightly to the north and as he selected half flap and fine pitch he pushed hard on the stick and trimmed the elevator to ease

the effort, then he lined up and side-slipped for all he was worth and pressed the button for the RAF radio, “Delta finals.” He was at 200 metres and saw the smoke from the nearby bonfire seemingly climbing straight into the clear sky and the lights coming up fast. He selected full flap and held the nose down, easy, easy – the first lights were within 100 metres now and he selected the airbrake and applied a little more power, airspeed 120km/h – sixty metres, bring back the power, now! He kicked the rudder straight and backed-off the throttles just before the threshold and the aircraft dropped suddenly, but he must have judged it to perfection, there was hardly a bump.

Pulling back hard on the stick he applied the brakes, gently at first then harder, he felt the aircraft shudder as the wheels slid on the damp grass and he released the brakes momentarily then reapplied them. He grabbed the pitch lever, pulled the safety detent for negative thrust and put engine power back on; he could see the shapes of the trees clearly as he desperately tried to stop the heavy aircraft – 150 metres, he almost stood on the brakes now, pressing hard into his seat-back. Then, just as he thought the trees were going to win, the aircraft finally came to a stop with no more than 50 metres to run.

He sat sweating for a moment before pulling the fuel cut-off knob and killing the magnetos – the engines coughed, briefly reversed then came to a stop. ‘Bloody hell’, thought Heydrich, ‘why did she take so long to stop?’

The intercom crackled in his ears, “Did I feel a bump – have we been hit?” the Prince asked desperately.

Heydrich pressed his button while blue-uniformed figures ran toward the aircraft as the runway lights went out, “No, Sir, we have arrived, I think you should straighten up your hat before you meet the Duke.”

Heydrich switched off all the equipment, killed the master switch and took off his flying helmet. He released the canopy and stood up as men swarmed around them. Then he felt the breeze on the back of his neck and looked across at the raging bonfire to see the column of smoke heading at 45 degrees past the trees. It could not have been worse – he had landed with a twenty-odd km tailwind; but he was down now and if the wind held force and direction, he would have no problem getting airborne again.

As Heydrich jumped down on to British soil, an RAF squadron leader, complete with pilot’s wings, was hurrying towards him and aware of RAF traditions, he reached in his pocket and pulled out a Luftwaffe forage cap which he quickly set in position. The officer came to a stop just before Heydrich and saluted smartly and Heydrich returned the Luftwaffe salute. “That was a brilliant landing, Sir.”

Heydrich smiled warmly at him, “It would have been better if the wind hadn’t been behind me – I should have over flown the field first, then I would have seen the smoke down the strip, but I only just made the lights.” He offered his hand and as the Squadron Leader took it he was suddenly struck by that age-old camaraderie between pilots and their other differences seemed irrelevant, “I am Major Heydrich and you are ...?”

“I am Squadron Leader Metcalf, Sir,” he said, “shall we help the Prince out and go and meet the Duke? He’s been kicking his heels for an hour.”

“Kicking his heels – I didn’t know you did that too? The Squadron Leader laughed, “I’m sorry, no, we don’t – it’s one of those funny English expressions meaning waiting impatiently.” He called one of the men to bring a ladder while Heydrich climbed back up on the aircraft and released the rear canopy,

“Are you all right, Sir? They’re finding a ladder for you, let me pass your hat down,” Heydrich said, helping the Prince out of his harnesses and on to the waiting ladder.

The Squadron Leader, the Prince’s hat in one hand offered the other and bowed, “I’m honoured to meet you, Sir, I am the Duke’s aide-de-camp, he’s waiting for you in those buildings.”

Heydrich looked at the Prince whose agitation clearly betrayed the need to answer a call of nature – who could blame him? Heydrich shared a similar need – he had forgotten to suggest the Prince should empty his bladder before they took off, “Perhaps the Prince could take his flying suit off and freshen up a bit before he meets the Duke?”

“Certainly, Sir, if you’ll be good enough to follow me?” he said as he turned and led the way, not to the castle but to what appeared to be a stable block. Heydrich looked at his watch, it was 22.15 – they had no more than an hour before Rudolf Hess would join them, one way or another, on British soil.

Once inside the block the Squadron Leader showed the Prince to the toilet and left him there to prepare for the momentous, but brief, encounter. Heydrich peeled off his flying suit to reveal his own uniform of a Luftwaffe major, worn in deference to what he thought might be disquiet over his normal SD apparel and as the Prince appeared from the toilet, looking the part, he dashed in to prepare himself for the imminent appointment. He rejoined the two men and they were shown through into a small warm room with a large antique table that left little room to move past the equally ancient chairs. Standing with his elbow on the mantelpiece above a roaring fire, trying to look nonchalant was the Duke of Kent, dressed in his uniform as a Group Captain. He tossed his half-smoked cigarette onto the fire and stood solemnly to be introduced.

Metcalf did the honours, as if such meetings were run-of-the mill, “Sir, may I introduce you to Crown Prince Wilhelm of Prussia.” The Duke bowed deeply in deference to the Prince’s status at the meeting and his age rather than his equal status as a royal cousin and he shook his hand firmly, “Come and warm yourself by the fire, Sir, you must be frozen.” Metcalf looked again at the Duke and continued, “And this is Major Heydrich, a most able pilot.”

The Duke had not known who would be bringing the Prince but even in Luftwaffe uniform he knew exactly who Heydrich was; however, putting aside all possible differences for the moment he offered his hand, “I felt sure you out-ranked me Major.”

“No, Sir, not in this uniform, Major is my official Luftwaffe rank.”

“I understand, Major. May I say how much I admire your determination to bring the Prince and me together – let us hope that some good will come from this overdue meeting. I suppose, like ours, you have little heating in your aircraft?”

Metcalf was a study of efficiency and Heydrich felt himself warming to the man as much as he felt the warmth from the blazing log fire, “Shall we sit down, Gentlemen? I have had some refreshments prepared, please ...” He ushered them to their seats – the Duke facing the Prince who sat beside Heydrich. Metcalf went to a side table and brought a cold buffet and coffee to them, “I do hope this will be sufficient, but in view of the time at our disposal and the ground we may need to cover.”

The Duke looked at his elderly cousin whom he had only met as a youngster before the first war with Germany, “Perhaps, Sir, I could tempt you to try some of our excellent Scottish

single malt.”

The Prince, as instructed, allowed Heydrich to translate for him before emerging from his reticence at the mention of Scotch and nodding effusively replied, “I have been thinking about the delightful flavour of malt from the moment this meeting was set – thank you – a large one would not be amiss, would it?”

The Duke did not need to wait for Heydrich’s translation and poured the Prince a generous glass whilst glancing quizzically at Heydrich, “Major?”

Heydrich pondered for a moment, “Perhaps a small one just to, how do you say it? Yes, to whet my whistle – I really will need my wits about me to get out of here later.”

Heydrich looked at his watch again – it was now nearly 22.30, he walked around the table and spoke quietly to Metcalf, “Reichsleiter Hess will be expecting to see the lights at 22.45 – that’s fifteen minutes from now – would you please make sure somebody puts them on for a few minutes? We must be gone within three-quarters of an hour – just in case Hess manages to parachute right on to the runway, you do realise that he mustn’t know about our visit or any documentation I may show you?” Metcalf nodded his assent and left the room as Heydrich helped himself to some food and coffee before continuing, “With respect Duke we have little time.”

The Duke who had acknowledged the plea to Metcalf nodded, “I am anxious that we keep it quiet at this end too, let’s hope that you are going to be able to give me something that will make the inevitable questions worthwhile.” There was the sound of a key turning outside and Metcalf came back to join them. The Prince glanced up at him as he sat next to the Duke opposite, but remained preoccupied by his single malt.

Heydrich looked at him before continuing, “We have two letters to lay before you, both from the Reichskanzler.”

Heydrich slid the letters, along with English translations to Metcalf who read both versions before passing them to the Duke. The Duke read the first, which was Hitler’s power of attorney for Heydrich and the second containing details of the proposed ratification by the German people of Prince Wilhelm’s installation as Reichpräsident and his consequential authority to speak for the Reich.

The Duke read both and placed them in Heydrich’s outstretched hand before replying, “This is most satisfactory, but please understand, Major, that I am not empowered to provide similar documentation – we are a parliamentary democracy and any agreements can only come through the Prime Minister. I assure you, however, that the King is prepared to listen to any proposal of substance that he may put before the government – but I have to say that time is running out.”

Heydrich looked at Prince Wilhelm, who nodded his understanding as the Duke filled his glass again, “It goes without saying, Sir, that it is a tragedy that our countries of connected blood should find themselves at war with each other again and I am authorised to make certain proposals on behalf of the Reichpräsident and his Reichskanzler.” Heydrich studiously avoided the use of Hitler’s name, which appeared to pass unnoticed by the British. “We have many times suggested that we wish to see the British Empire survive intact, but we reserve our position in Europe and the east.”

The Duke considered carefully, “And you are aware that we would wish to return to the pre-1939 position as a pre-condition before any formal negotiations could proceed.”

“We are, indeed, but it would be very difficult for us to vacate Poland and other parts of eastern-Europe without an agreement with Russia that they would not occupy those territories were we to leave.”

The Duke nodded, “I understand that, but assuming for the moment that a firm agreement could be extracted from them, would your country’s withdrawal form part of any future discussions?”

Heydrich translated and prompted the Prince who spoke solemnly on behalf of the Reich for the first time in his life, “We are prepared to consider any proposals that would lead to an honourable peace between our nations.”

Heydrich, ever conscious of the passage of time, seized the opportunity and continued in English, “There are two matters that should be presented to establish clearly our country’s *bona fides* regarding peace. Firstly we adhered faithfully to The Washington Treaty which was underpinned by von Ribbentrop’s stated undertaking on behalf of the Reichskanzler not to commence any terror bombing campaign against you and we expected the same adherence and consideration.” The Duke unwittingly was walking into an embarrassing situation, “We had no intention of breaking the treaty or that tacit understanding, but your aircraft broke the status quo last August when London was bombed; we merely retaliated when we bombed Berlin.”

Heydrich pulled a substantial file from his briefcase, “I do not expect you to read this now, but contained within this file, which I shall leave for you, is incontrovertible evidence from German, American, Japanese, Swedish, Polish and even British sources. They confirm in a variety of ways that our aircraft were beguiled into bombing London by following orders from a lone Heinkel 111 on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1940. The Heinkel, it turns out, was one that we thought had crashed, possibly in the sea as we had received no information from you about our crews. We have located one member of the crew held in isolation in a POW camp near Girvan and our information is that he successfully force-landed the aircraft in a field in Kent some three weeks before it was seen to lead our aircraft against London. Metcalf reached for the dossier but Heydrich kept hold of it, “I’m afraid I shall have to ask that you sign this receipt for the file, before you read it.”

The Duke and Metcalf went pale at the implication of Heydrich’s words, but he had said sufficient to whet their appetites, although the two men looked at each other with concern at the prospect of signing the receipt contained in an envelope that Heydrich now passed them. The Duke opened the unsealed envelope and the two read the receipt carefully:

|   |
|---|
| Received this 11th day of May 1941, from German sources seeking to bring an honourable end to the war with Great Britain, one file of documents reference number – RSHA 41/678607 – pertaining to the bombing of London on 23rd August 1940 by Heinkel He111 aircraft 1G-ZZ and others.<br><br>Signed ..... |
|---|

The receipt appeared innocuous enough and they were encouraged to accept Heydrich’s need for a signature as normal German attention to detail. The document could have been sent by anybody through a variety of networks, after all. The Duke whispered carefully to Metcalf but although he knew that Heydrich’s English was near perfect, how could he have

known that during the past fifteen years he had studiously developed his ability to lip-read in German and after three months intensive study Heydrich was now passable in reading English in the same way.

“I’m not keen on putting my signature to this, Metcalf,” mouthed the Duke, “if there were any repercussions, the King would be put in a frightful position.”

Metcalf understood his superior’s train of thought, “I don’t suppose it would cause any such embarrassment if I were to sign it, though – we really must have a look at these documents – do you see any reason to refuse?”

“I see no reason why you shouldn’t sign his bloody receipt, Metcalf, if we don’t give him a signature, I suppose we could have him arrested, but then we’d have to explain why he and Prince Wilhelm are here; no ... sign and be damned, but don’t do your usual signature.”

The signature ruse was exactly as Heydrich had expected and he had had the receipt paper impregnated so that their fingerprints and his could be used as reasonably convincing evidence.

Metcalf took his favourite fountain pen from his pocket and signed with a flourish, handing back the receipt to Heydrich who sealed it in its envelope and made a point of putting it into his inside pocket before sliding the file over to the eager pair.

Perhaps just a little too eager: For the one thing they had overlooked was the very real date on the receipt, which, with the fingerprints, was part of the proof Heydrich might need to supply directly to the Americans.

The Duke and Metcalf read several of the abridged depositions that were in their original English or translations of original documents. Metcalf spoke for the Duke, “If, with respect, we are able to establish these as genuine – serious repercussions could result in our Parliament.”

Heydrich looked benevolently at him, “I have spent more than six months checking and cross-checking the facts. There would be no point in laying such a file before you if it could be discredited – somebody in this country with sufficient influence, and I need not say who, seems to have laid a complicated deception to raise the stakes in this war, possibly with a view to encouraging the U.S. to become more directly involved.”

The Duke looked up from the documents, with a grim expression, “This is so serious, I don’t know yet how I shall deal with it. I shall obviously have to check the veracity of these papers to satisfy myself before I would be able to speak with the King.”

As he finished the sentence, light poured in through the windows as the runway was illuminated again. Heydrich looked at his watch, precisely 22.45 – ‘good’, he thought, ‘Hess should be audible in the next five minutes’. The Duke was looking at the file, shaking his head and Heydrich spoke to Prince Wilhelm, fully aware that Metcalf and probably the Duke would understand the conversation, “It is your duty, Sir, as our Reichpräsident to impress upon the Duke that our mission has been undertaken for mutual benefit and for humanitarian reasons. Until we have some indications of a willingness by the British to resolve our differences peacefully, huge bombing raids, as will have been suffered by London tonight, could become the norm.” Although he did not move his eyes from the Prince, Heydrich sensed a gesture between the Duke and Metcalf after which the latter excused himself and left the building.

Heydrich had played his king and had shown his queen and he waited for Metcalf to return before playing his ace. As he waited, he heard the distinctive sound of a Bf110 flying low almost directly overhead and he checked his watch – 22.48 – amazing, Hess was to be applauded – the jack would play itself after all. Metcalf unlocked the door and returned, ashen faced and whispered in the Duke's ear. Heydrich knew by the expression on their faces that Metcalf had confirmed the heaviest raid on London since Germany had changed its bombing strategy last September.

As Heydrich exaggeratedly lit a cigarette, the Prince spoke clearly and unequivocally as practiced over the past weeks, "If I felt sufficiently encouraged, I would telephone Berlin now and insist on a truce. We have done almost all we can as a gesture of good faith – the rest is up to you, but you will find that we have prepared a way for you to communicate with us that will enable you to respond to my offer of a truce in advance of further negotiations taking place. However, I must emphasise that the unique channel will remain open for only two weeks from tonight, after which we shall be forced to believe that peace is not desired by your country."

The Duke was still shaken by the news of the night's massive air raid on London, which had damaged Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament but asked astutely, in German, "Are you able to confirm the details of this means of communication, Sir?"

The Prince baulked, "Ah, that's ..."

As Metcalf half-expected, Heydrich answered in English for the tongue-tied Prince, "The Reichpräsident has no need to know, or be troubled by such details, which I believe you already are aware of. However, we have engineered a slight deception for Mr Churchill's benefit and much will become clearer to you before the night is out and indeed over the next few weeks. I must emphasise again the time limit stated by the Prince. Pigeons do eat strange food in Germany these days, you know. Sometimes it causes them digestive problems and strange behaviour."

The Prince looked inquisitively at Heydrich who had fixed his eyes pointedly at the Duke, who in turn looked at Metcalf knowingly. Metcalf spoke in a similar guarded way on behalf of the Duke, "I understand we shall make contact through a third party who, as we speak, is on his way."

Heydrich nodded and played his ace, "Our sources in America tell us that your government will be handing over control of Iceland to them on 9<sup>th</sup> July. In a further demonstration of our *bone fides*, here is another and potentially more significant file detailing a planned attack on the U.S. Pacific fleet by our ally Japan – we have done everything possible to dissuade them from their folly, but to no avail. There is no advantage to us in their plan but should they succeed your colonies in China and south-east Asia, not to mention Australia and New Zealand would be at risk."

He continued, "I believe you might wish to deliver these documents personally to the Americans once they are in control of Iceland, to encourage them to withdraw their fleet to home waters before the end of the year. Unless, of course, you accept your government's apparent view that the irreversible damage to your empire from such an attack would be a reasonable price to pay for catapulting America into this needless war, in which case you will entrust the file to the – ah – authorities."

Metcalf reached for the file, but Heydrich shook his head, "I'm sorry, it's not a reflection on you, but I must have a signed receipt first." Metcalf looked at the Duke anxiously and whispered to him, "I don't even remember how I signed my name last bloody time – what do

we do now?”

The Duke of Kent threw caution to the wind and taking his pen, he similarly signed his name, safe he thought, in the knowledge that his signature, too, would be unrecognizable. He then handed it to a smug-looking Heydrich who repeated the process as before and passed the file to the Duke.

Heydrich continued, “Please excuse my caution regarding these files, gentlemen, but as you will see, they are entirely in English and have been written on paper liberated from your old embassy in Berlin, using one of your English typewriters and they have nothing within them that would enable our ... ah ... ally to see our hand in this matter. Nonetheless, I entrust them to you in the sincere belief that you will personally deliver them to Iceland, after which time we will be forced to deliver a copy of the documents directly. They might then, of course, believe that the British establishment has been polluted by Mr Churchill’s apparent ambition to bring them into the war at any cost.”

Both men had dread written large on their faces and Metcalf spoke for the Duke, “I imagine that you have determined how and when your alternative delivery will take place. Will you assure us that it will not be before the fourteen days has elapsed?”

“I will do better than that – Mr Churchill must be made aware that you really have no sensible option other than to inform the Americans and then to deliver the documents to Iceland. I have to tell you that the Reichskanzler personally delivered the remaining two English copies into the hands of Admiral Lütjens six days ago. He was given orders to sail to the north Atlantic and take up station just outside the United States extended exclusion zone near Iceland on 25<sup>th</sup> May. If the Admiral does not receive a coded radio message known only to the two of us by midnight on the 25<sup>th</sup>, his ship *or* the escort will proceed under a flag of truce to a pre-arranged rendezvous with a U.S. vessel, where a copy of the document will be handed over. They will be left to draw their own conclusions as to the origin of the files.”

Neither Briton needed to ask who Lütjens was or the name of his flagship – the RAF had been shadowing the mighty Bismark since it left the slipway for sea trials last year and was aware that it was almost ready to sail now that the builders had left, having rectified some faults and reinforced the armour. A German navy Enigma signal to ‘Admiral Lütjens – Flagship Bismark’ had been intercepted and decoded earlier in the month concerning Hitler’s inspection of her on 5<sup>th</sup> May and stating that her escort would now be the Prinz Eugen which would join her for the inspection after which the pair would put to sea. Heydrich was sure he was giving nothing valuable away compared with the priceless intelligence he hoped he would draw from their response to his statement and, as he sat back and lit another cigarette, he was not disappointed.

Metcalf and the Duke began whispering to each other so quietly that Heydrich could barely hear their breath, but his eyes helped confirm his belief. Not only did they tell him that the two Britons believed that there was a copy on both the Bismark and the Prinz Eugen. They also told him that the critical Kriegsmarine signal had been decoded and this meant that the British, who were regularly subjected to false radio traffic to test their code breaking capabilities, but had been unable to read naval signals for months, were again cracking the improved Enigma codes.

After much frantic whispering the Duke spoke gravely, “Are you saying that if I do not

deliver these documents to the U.S. – you will, in due course, let them know that I was given them?”

Heydrich considered his reply carefully, “I honestly believe that the documents will be better received by the Americans if they are given to them by you. Although handing them over ourselves would raise our stock with them, it would be bound to get back to the Japanese and finish our ability to monitor their activities, which will help nobody. I would like to think that the documents could reach President Roosevelt through normal diplomatic channels in London, but I fear that Mr Churchill would do all in his power to prevent them from reaching the President should he feel that Japan’s attack would guarantee bringing the U.S. into this European war. Once that happens there will be no prospect of peace. Even if we were to declare our preparedness to withdraw from Poland as part of a basis for negotiations which, with good will, could be finalised quite rapidly – if Mr Churchill is not prepared to deal with us under any circumstances, bringing the Americans in would make it a fight to the death. While some elements of our government think Japan and we could defeat the U.S., I am pragmatic enough to recognise the might of their almost limitless resources. Inevitably, much of those resources might be supplied to equip the almost inexhaustible supply of Russian manpower but once the Bolsheviks start rolling across their own borders, they might develop a *permanent* taste for Western Europe – a taste they could even want more of and that would do none of us any good. Anyway, I recognise that you will not be able to take the documents to an Iceland still in British hands, but I believe that provided the Americans know of their existence within the next two weeks we would be prepared to postpone Lütjens’ mission. Although he will be in a position to deliver if there is no early move by you, he is equipped to remain on station for several months and could be instructed to act once you have had a reasonable amount of time to go to Iceland – say by the end of July. As far as anything I have said which you may have taken as a threat, I don’t really believe that the United States would take my word and a signature that could have been ... ah... produced by anybody as sufficient to implicate you. However, if you assure me that you will first notify the States within days and then personally ensure the documents are placed in American hands outside Britain, I will take your word as an honourable man, so any alternative plans I might have are doubtless irrelevant.”

While Heydrich had been clarifying his position, Kent had come to realise that he had been out-manoeuvred. If Churchill’s views had been sought beforehand for such a meeting with the Germans, the Duke’s naivety alone would have warranted dissuading him from the encounter, “It appears, Major, that you have me at a disadvantage. If I do deliver them, I’ll be damned by Churchill if he finds out and if I don’t I’m damned by you and Lütjens when the Americans hear about it.”

Heydrich saw no need to antagonise the situation, “I would rather put it this way, Your Grace, we are determined that the United States should know – so would it not be a good idea to release the information to them and steal our thunder? You could always claim that the ... ah ... ‘homing pigeon’ somehow acquired them and brought them here as a gesture of good faith.”

It was now fast approaching 23.00 and Heydrich, aware that Hess could be making his final run, looked pointedly at Metcalf, “Squadron Leader, I am most grateful to you for your courtesy to the Prince and me, but time is pressing. I wonder if you would be kind enough to arrange to have our aircraft spun around with the tail pushed as near to the trees as possible. Oh and before you do that, perhaps another brief flash of your runway lights to be on the safe

side, before we start up to leave.”

Metcalf forgot himself for a moment and sprang to attention at the measured order from his enemy, but quickly recovered and looked to the Duke who was keenly reading the second file but found time to nod his agreement to Heydrich’s strong request. Metcalf left the room followed by Heydrich who collected the flying suits from the anteroom where he waited for a moment after Metcalf locked the door behind him. While he pulled on his suit, the lights flashed on and by the time he was buttoned up, they had gone out again; Heydrich looked at his watch, 23.03. As he turned to rejoin the Prince, he clearly heard overhead a lone Bf110 climbing with engines spluttering and he thought of Hess preparing to bail out.

He returned to the room to find the Prince devouring some of the prepared food while the Duke was still engrossed in the file of reports and photographs, but he looked up at Heydrich, “Please be assured, Major, that with the King’s permission I shall personally deliver this to a senior American officer immediately after 9<sup>th</sup> July. It will be for them to decide their fate, but I shall let the risk to our interests in the region be known in the House of Lords and of course to the King.”

Heydrich simply nodded and helped the Prince put his flying suit on then passed him his top hat, which he had carried all this way and the only part of his head that it had touched had been his chin. The Prince seemed loathe to leave and Heydrich pressed him, “Herr Reichpräsident, I am sorry to have to drag you away from your Scotch whisky, but we must be going.” Heydrich continued in a whisper, “Perhaps some might be given to you during further discussions.” The Duke heard the whispered German phrase and smiled – he stood up and went to an adjacent dresser from which he took four bottles of single malt and held them out, “Perhaps, cousin, you would care to stand these in your new office as a souvenir of this momentous meeting.” Heydrich translated the Duke’s sentiments for the Prince but added with a wink, “*Der Name des Herzogs auf das Etikett.*” He looked at the Duke whose German was adequate but he added to the likelihood of confusion by translating, “I told the Prince that you must have a name for etiquette.”

The Duke appeared suitably honoured, but the Prince understood the real meaning of Heydrich’s words and in a rare burst of humour he replied, “I would be delighted to display them, Cousin, but I do not feel that they will prove so outstandingly attractive once empty. I wonder if you’d sign the bottles for me – just in case in the years ahead I forget why I’m holding on to some empty whisky bottles?”

“Why not indeed,” replied the Duke, signing each label with a flourish.

Metcalf had now returned and he and the Duke accompanied them to the aircraft carrying the Prince’s spoils of war while Heydrich carried a much emptier briefcase and lighter spirits. As they walked to the waiting aircraft a shadow cast by the bright moon drifted across the field and Heydrich looked up to see an ominously silent Bf110 heading north little more than 500 metres high. Heydrich noticed Metcalf looking up at the beleaguered aircraft and he remarked casually, “Our ‘homing pigeon’ has arrived I believe.”

Metcalf helped the Prince into the back of the aircraft and strapped him in while Heydrich set about checking the aircraft. While Metcalf was precariously perched on the inadequate footstep, Heydrich borrowed the ladder and was topping up the oil in the port engine from a sealed container he had brought with him and was just fixing the panel back into place when there was a loud explosion in the distance. Metcalf almost fell from the aircraft in surprise and he cast a knowing look at Heydrich who spoke first, “Let’s hope our pigeon bailed out

first.”

The Duke, who was nursing the Prince’s bottles in his top hat murmured, “Pray God he did, I’m sure we are going to need him now.”

Heydrich smiled solemnly and climbed up to check the starboard engine, then returned the ladder for Metcalf who with the Prince settled, helmet and headset in place, went to close the canopy but the Prince grabbed the framework and whispered to the surprised officer in English, “Haven’t you forgotten something?”

Metcalf was momentarily wrong-footed, “Ah, yes, your hat.”

The Prince chuckled, “I’d quite forgotten that, don’t know why I brought it now – no I would like you to keep my topper as a memento, I’m referring to the precious cargo I’m taking back home with me!”

Metcalf was bemused by the Prince’s excellent English but reached out to the Duke who passed the bottles to him and he placed them on the Prince’s lap. “I wish I’d thought about exporting one of your fine glasses now,” chuckled the Prince, “oh well, if I become desperate the cap will do. I must say that even if this is the only good thing that comes out of tonight’s meeting, it will all have been worthwhile for me.” Metcalf laughed nervously, locked the canopy and climbed down.

Heydrich had finished his checks and was climbing into the cockpit almost ready to go, “She should fire up on her batteries, but if not – we have a cranking device which I might have to ask you to organise someone to do for me, he said waving a handle in the air. He looked at the plume from the dwindling fire, which still indicated a light breeze down the runway. He settled himself and strapped up, and went into his starting sequence, both engines being still warm fired up effortlessly and Metcalf waved and indicated he would put the lights on. Heydrich closed the canopy and with a final look at his instruments and controls, he dropped the flaps and ran the engines up fully, holding the vibrating beast on the toe-brakes. Heydrich checked the Prince was ready and saluted to the Duke who stood at attention saluting, his outstretched fingers pulsing at the peak of his cap. The lights came on, Heydrich released the brakes, and the aircraft soon had sprung into the sky as if it, too, was keen to get home.

Heydrich climbed straight out and as he circled he thought he could see a small fire on a hillside to the north, but there was no time or point in lingering. He was more concerned that RAF fighters might be hunting for the unknown fighter-bomber after its flight from coast to coast and he turned onto 100 degrees and opened the aircraft right up, staying low enough to clear all the hills but make him difficult to see from above. ‘Anyway’, he mused, ‘I could outrun the pedestrian hurricanes that are adequate in this less threatened area of the country’. He turned on the IFF, thundered down the Tweed valley, and was soon over the Cheviot and the sea at very nearly the spot where he and Hess had parted company only ninety minutes ago. He picked up the Stavanger beam and after twenty minutes, he throttled back to a comfortable cruising speed and turned off the IFF. The Prince was quiet and Heydrich suspected he had fallen back to sleep so he decided not to disturb him with the intercom. In a little over an hour, he was in contact by radio with the Luftwaffe base at Stavanger and twenty minutes later he was taxiing toward and into a large hanger that had been opened-up as instructed. Heydrich brought her to a stop and switched everything off. From the moment the aircraft landed until they were given the all clear, all personnel were under orders to remain behind closed doors. Heydrich prepared to lead the Prince who was beyond risk of recognition anyway in his flying suit and helmet. Still Heydrich thought, ‘why chance it

now?’ He provided a ladder and the Prince passed down three bottles to Heydrich before climbing down shakily into the dimly lit hanger. Heydrich looked at him askance and posed a rhetorical question, “I thought the Duke gave you four bottles, Sir?”

“Ah... hurrmm, he did but I think I must have ... ah ... spilt one during the flight.”

Heydrich smiled and led the tottering Prince out of a rear door and along the short pathway to the officers’ mess then up the deserted stairs to the sumptuous room recently vacated by the station commander. Here he went into the bedroom and deposited the three bottles on a table; these he guessed might miraculously be reduced to two by the morning, “Is there anything you need, Sir, I really do need to turn in – I shall fly you back to Gütersloh tomorrow – breakfast will be sent up at 11.00 – I’ll join you then.”

The Prince was looking around his quarters in a dream. “Perhaps you’d better use the bathroom and retire now, Sir, I’ve put your cargo and a glass by your bedside – everything is ready for you.”

Heydrich walked into his adjacent room and saw that it was 01.20 – he thought briefly about Hess, who might be, at that very moment, presenting his credentials to the Duke of Hamilton – but he found it hard to think rationally, he was so tired. He sat on the bed and started to remove his clothes, but he collapsed back exhausted, slipped into blissful unconsciousness and barely moved for the rest of the night.

Back in Scotland, the Duke of Kent and Metcalf had watched Heydrich’s outstanding take-off from a field that had rarely seen anything bigger than a little Auster aircraft. Metcalf killed the lights as they watched him fly off rapidly to the east. “Why do you suppose we thought your cousin’s English wasn’t up to this meeting? He spoke perfect English once he was in the aircraft?”

“Perhaps Heydrich wanted to be sure that the Prince wouldn’t say anything we’d latch on to – I don’t know.”

Once the German aircraft was out of hearing range the Duke of Kent and his aide returned to the locked building and the documents left for them to reconcile. It was after midnight before Hamilton arrived and Metcalf left the two dukes to discuss the way forward.

\*\*\*

Earlier, while on duty at RAF Turnhouse, Edinburgh, Hamilton had watched the relayed images of what had been one, then two aircraft on his radar screen, one aircraft flying north to Holy Island and the other, giving a British IFF signal, obviously making for Dungavel. He had managed to keep anybody of importance from noticing the incoming aircraft, but once they flew nearer to Glasgow, they would be visible on a different Sector’s radar so he had been pleased to see the re-emerging identification of the Prince’s aircraft as it tracked direct to Norway an hour later. There had been several calls from Royal Observer Corps posts relating to a suspected intruder and he had sent a RAF Defiant to stooge around the sky in the wrong area.