

## War

SFX - noises from the beer hall (similar to the opening scene of episode 2)

Hitler never advertised his personal movements in advance, but there was one place where his presence at a set time could be anticipated with confidence. The site of his failed Beer Hall Putsch of 1923: the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich. Hitler invariably attended on its anniversary each year and spoke for an hour or so from a stage in the large hall.

In November 1939, and with Poland conquered, his presence could be confidently expected once again.

SFX - the sounds of the beer hall fade; cautious steps across creaky floor boards, heavy but contained breathing, and metal tools against wood

The venue was guarded by the SS, but Georg Elser, an expert carpenter and watch maker, managed to slip upstairs from the beer hall night after night. He hid until all was quiet. In the small hours he carefully crafted a spring door in the wood panelling of the column behind Hitler's speaking point. Painstakingly he hollowed out the column, a little each evening.

With the cavity complete, he filled it with an immense pack of explosives.

SFX - metal cogs, winding, ticking clocks

He then designed and built a timing mechanism, using two clocks, calculated to detonate the charge at the scheduled mid-point of Hitler's speech.

SFX - more cautious footsteps across wood; a heavy wood door is opened into the night; footsteps across stone recede into the distance

Two days in advance of Hitler's attendance, Elser slipped away from Munich, leaving his clocks to count down to the appointed hour.

SFX - ticking clock

MX in - tension, something to match the ticking clock

SFX - the beer hall atmos returns; enthusiastic applause

Hitler appeared as planned. Received as a conquering hero, he had to wait ten minutes for the ovation to subside before he could speak. Himmler, Ribbentrop and Goebbels sat in the front row.

Then at 9:07 pm, almost an hour earlier than usual, Hitler brought his speech to an abrupt close and left the hall.

SFX - the ticking continues and begins to dominate the sound design

MX out - abrupt stop

SFX - an explosion of wood

As they travelled to the station Hitler and his entourage heard a thunderous explosion. The bomb caused a section of the beer hall roof to collapse. Eight people died and sixty-three (including Eva Braun's father) were injured.

Hitler had left early to oversee the invasion of France, which he expected to order at any moment. He missed the detonation by a mere 13 minutes. He interpreted his narrow escape as a sign from Providence.

MX in - theme

Elser was arrested trying to cross into Switzerland. He was still carrying incriminating material. He admitted the assassination attempt, but the Nazis never tried him because they publicly blamed the British for the attack. He survived for years in a concentration camp, until towards the end of the war, on Himmler's orders, he was shot.

This is *Treason*, the remarkable true story of Claus von Stauffenberg and the plot to assassinate Hitler.

Episode four, "War".

MX fade

The attack on the west, initially set for 12 November, was postponed because of unfavourable weather. The generals were reluctant to engage in this attack, but Hitler restlessly drove them forward.

At the outset of 1940, the Germans still faced the French across their frontiers. Neither side attacked. An American journalist dubbed this period the 'phoney war' or the 'Sitzkrieg'.

MX in - upbeat drones; driving, pulsing

General Erich von Manstein was engaged in planning the attack in the west. A brilliant strategist, he found a possibility that appeared promising – submitting his 'sickle cut' plan to Hitler.

The French high command believed attack with massed armour was not possible through the mountainous Ardennes sector. For that reason, the Maginot Line was least fortified opposite the Ardennes. But Manstein knew the area well and was confident tanks could be manoeuvred through. If the German divisions could cross the Meuse and break through into France, they would face only open farmland beyond. They could charge all the way to the English Channel, carving like a sickle behind enemy lines. The British, and much of the French, would be trapped in northern France and Belgium – cut off from their supplies and probably from escape.

Claiming that this accorded with his own ideas, Hitler ordered the adoption of Manstein's *sickle-cut*.

Meanwhile, the resistance engaged in promising negotiations with the Allies through the Vatican. The Holy See passed on the message that the resistance was prepared

to remove Hitler and form a new government, and asked whether the British would negotiate. The British agreed to do so.

Talks were undertaken on the condition that they would come to an end if the German offensive in the west was launched.

The uncertainties and suspicions surrounding exploratory discussions were numerous. The opposition was asking Britain for peace, and offered a settlement with Poland and Czechoslovakia. They said they would replace the present government with a democratic administration.

In due course British demands crystallised – including removing Hitler and the Nazis, returning the rule of law, decentralisation in Germany, a plebiscite in Austria, and an international settlement.

However, In April 1940, word was received in Rome that the generals needed would not carry out the coup, and the German offensive in the west was imminent.

That month, Hitler swooped on Norway and Denmark, seizing both nations and forestalling a planned British action.

### SFX - British parliament hubbub

Dissatisfaction with British prime minister Neville Chamberlain boiled over. Conservative MP, Leo Amery quoted Cromwell's 1653 words to the Rump Parliament: "You have sat here too long for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you." And then he pointed directly at Chamberlain and whispered the last words of the quote: "In the name of God, go." Chamberlain was finished as prime minister.

Chamberlain: "I sought an audience of the king this evening, and tended to him my resignation, which His Majesty has been pleased to accept. His Majesty has now entrusted to my friend and colleague Mr. Winston Churchill the task of forming a new administration on a national basis. And in this task I have no doubt he will be

successful. And you and I must rally behind our new leader. And with our united strength and with unshakeable courage, fight and work until this wild beast that has sprung out his lair upon us be finally disarmed and overthrown.”

### MX in - Blitzkrieg

The same day, like a thunderbolt, the German army struck in the west. Simultaneously, German forces attacked the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France. British and French armies reacted as expected, leaping forward to defensive positions east of Brussels.

The Allies did not suspect that the real *schwerpunkt* lay elsewhere – on the Ardennes sector, between Aachen and the Moselle. There Army Group A, comprising 44 divisions, moved forward. Manstein’s sickle cut saw massed columns of tanks stretched back more than 160 kilometres. The Luftwaffe maintained a secure air umbrella over this force, so that the Allies had no idea of its size.

Claus von Stauffenberg was the Quartermaster of the Sixth Panzer Division, one of several panzer divisions comprising the sharp spear point of Army Group A.

### SFX - tanks and troops on the move over dirt roads; breaking tree branches

A panzer division comprised some 14,000 troops, together with thousands of vehicles of various speeds and functions. As quartermaster, Claus had particular responsibility for keeping supplies moving so that they were available at just the right time at the places where they were needed, always allowing the Division both to move forward and avoid becoming strung out or separated.

On 12 May 1940, Claus’ Sixth Panzer Division reached Luxembourg, and rapidly crossed it into Belgium. The following day they arrived at the Meuse River, on the French border. Engineers constructed a temporary bridge, which was destroyed by French artillery. Tanks crossed on rafts while another bridge was built.

### SFX - small plane flies over

### MX in - Claus' theme (trumpet - double time)

The supply train (a column of some hundreds of heavy transport vehicles) and a large unit of infantry had not arrived. Stauffenberg climbed into a small Fieseler Stork aircraft to locate the missing men and supplies. They had become entangled in the road snarls through the Ardennes as other troops pushed down through the hills. He landed, unscrambled the confusion and brought the infantry and supplies up to the Meuse.

Hundreds of kilometres away, the Allies still did not appreciate their real danger, continuing to reinforce the armies facing the German right wing in Belgium.

After breaking through the Meuse, Claus and Army Group A faced the prepared bunkers of France's much vaunted protection – the Maginot Line (albeit not so well-constructed along this stretch of the border). At half past four in the morning of 15 May, supported by artillery and aircraft, Claus's division rushed the French positions. Breaking through within an hour, they didn't linger to mop up or to consolidate. By eleven that morning the Division had penetrated 50 kilometres into France. Army Group A had made a decisive breakthrough. They carved through Allied communications and supply lines, cutting off Allied forces fighting in Belgium. When asked their goal, one colonel replied 'The coast!'

Allied reaction was hesitant and confused. To add to the confusion, on 19 May the French sacked their commander, Maurice Gamelin, and replaced him with General Weygand, who took some time to take control. General Weygand's attempts to coordinate a joint attack on the German 'crocodile snout' fell apart. In the Arras area British forces did mount a strong attack, which Claus's Sixth Panzer Division met and held. The British broke off the engagement.

### MX - Nazi theme (seaside version)

At the Channel, German forces turned up and down the coast to seize ports, cut off escape, and encircle Allied forces. Then came Hitler's now infamous two-day halt order. This stopped the advancing tanks and allowed the Allies to fortify a perimeter

around Dunkirk, giving them a chance to mount a rescue of British and French troops from the beaches.

The next day, its army beaten and its allies fleeing, Belgium capitulated to the Germans.

Meanwhile, Claus received what he regarded as 'sad news' – orders to report to General Staff Headquarters. He would be forced to leave his fighting comrades before the battle was over. However it was a great honour, recognising his outstanding performance during the Battle of France. He had been a diligent and popular officer. The war diary noted his 'tireless work', and he was also decorated with the Iron Cross First Class.

On 16 June, France requested an armistice. An exultant Hitler signed the agreement, dividing the French nation in two. 'Occupied France' (comprised all the Atlantic seaboard of the country, as well as its northern half). 'Unoccupied France' – just two fifths of the country in the south, to be ruled by Marshal Petain's administration in Vichy.

In July, Claus moved with the General Staff to Fontainebleau.

The staff made plans for *Operation Sea Lion*, an invasion of England, but Hitler still hoped that the British would come to terms.

MX in - air raid drone

SFX - air raid siren; planes overhead in a dog fight; distant explosions

Throughout the remainder of that summer and autumn, the Luftwaffe fought 'The Battle of Britain'. When they did not prevail, *Operation Sea Lion* was quietly shelved. Late in October the General Staff moved back to headquarters at Zossen, south of Berlin, and Claus von Stauffenberg went with it.

Claus drew the particular notice of Franz Halder, the Chief of the German General Staff. Although a subordinate, and contrary to orthodox lines of communication Claus

would often deal with Halder directly. Halder found not only an able colleague and confidant in Claus, but also someone who shared his attitudes on Hitler and the Nazi regime.

Claus's star continued to rise. He was about to receive a promotion to major of the General Staff, and there was every prospect that he might settle down to enjoy a more normal family life.

But any hope the Stauffenbergs may have held for a return to family normality were dashed when Hitler secretly issued orders for the invasion of the Soviet Union.

### SFX - sounds of war

Launched on 22 June 1941, the German military onslaught code named Operation Barbarossa achieved complete tactical surprise. The bulk of the Russian air force was destroyed on the ground. Whole Russian armies were encircled and annihilated.

'We have only to kick in the door,' Hitler famously blustered, 'and the whole rotten structure will come crashing down'. His initial success, knocking the entire Russian army off balance, seemed to confirm his prophecy. The Wehrmacht's aggressive thrust into the Soviet Union seemed unstoppable. Optimism flourished.

By October, with German tanks in the suburbs of Moscow, Goebbels announced to an assembly of foreign correspondents in Berlin that the German advance had 'brought the war to a close'.

### SFX - war sounds fade; tank powers down

But not all shared Hitler's confidence. German resistance member General Olbricht saw more clearly than most: 'All our armies are but a breath of wind on the vast steppes of Russia.'

### SFX - desolate; snow blown

MX in - cold drones (LABS Arctic)



The attack on Russia was an immense enterprise. The German Wehrmacht swept into Russia with more than three million troops, and their allies added another million – the largest army the world had ever seen. That is except for the yet larger Soviet army of some 4.7 million troops which received the blow. In the years that followed, millions more from both sides were sucked into the vortex. North Africa, Italy, Normandy, and the Pacific campaign were all tiny sideshows compared with Barbarossa – the cataclysmic clash of the world's two absolute systems of government.

Initially, Hitler divided Operation Barbarossa into three great prongs – Army Group North attacked the Baltic countries and headed for Leningrad (now St Petersburg); Army Group Centre attacked east towards Smolensk and Moscow; and Army Group South, attacked towards Ukraine. Russian geography dictated that each of these spearheads was required to fan out and advance on an ever-widening front.

For the Russian people, after the Red Terror and the Great Terror, and the Great Famine, many longed to be rid of Stalin. German posters and leaflets proclaimed 'Hitler the Liberator', urging Russians to lay down their arms and join the fight against Stalin. Millions did.

To many Russian peasants, the Germans, with bold crosses on their tanks, appeared as Christian crusaders who would liberate them from the atheist Bolsheviks. Indeed, the German 'liberators' gave the locals back their religious rituals, and their arrival became the occasion for church services of thanksgiving.

SFX - church bells; sounds from a mass

But after the church services the Wehrmacht moved on, and Nazi administrators followed. Then came the SS, the special squads, starvation, the conscription of males to work as slave labour in Germany – and worse. Word trickled back of ill-treatment of Russian prisoners of war. The first people killed in the gas chambers at Auschwitz were Russian prisoners.

In July 1941, Claus visited Army Group Centre headquarters in Borisov to make a situation report for the General Staff. While there, Claus met two men who were to have a lasting influence on him - Colonel Henning von Tresckow and Lieutenant Fabian von Schlabrendorff.

Tresckow had served as an officer in the First World War, where he was regarded by his superiors as 'outstandingly capable'.

Tresckow was influential. He had helped Manstein bring the innovative 'sickle cut' plan to the attention of Hitler. Through the tenure of several commanders he rose in responsibility within Army Group Centre.

#### MX in - Resistance theme (short - Tresckow)

But Tresckow was also a leading figure in the struggle against Hitler. He often took on the task of winning superior officers to his cause. Tresckow approached practically every general in the Army. Although only a few joined the conspiracy, none told the Nazis.

In the spring of 1941 – even before Operation Barbarossa commenced – Tresckow formed a group of conspirators within Army Group Centre. To that end he arranged for an *aide-de-camp* he could really trust to be transferred to his service – Fabian von Schlabrendorff.

Schlabrendorff openly stood against Hitler and the Nazis well before their rise to power. When a student, he read the major Nazi texts, including *Mein Kampf*, and opposed everything Hitler stood for. He formed a group of anti-Nazi students, and volunteered to disprove the National Socialists' contention that their foes were too cowardly to oppose them publicly. In one mass-meeting after another, surrounded by Nazi storm troopers, he rose to contradict the Nazis' views, and speak for the opposition. He was lucky to survive.

Schlabrendorff wrote articles attacking the Nazi regime, including one which attacked the unconstitutionality of Hitler's dissolution of the Communist Party after the March

1933 elections. The Nazis immediately closed the conservative paper which published Schlabrendorff's article.

Tresckow and Schlabrendorff had known each other since before the war: Schlabrendorff's wife was Tresckow's cousin. Both agreed that duty and honour required them to do all in their power to overthrow Hitler to save Germany – and Europe – from barbarism.

In Borisov, the two men discovered a kindred spirit in Claus von Stauffenberg.

From an early stage, Claus assessed that the Russians could not be defeated by German military means alone, but only with the support of the Russian population. At first, it appeared the Germans could count on this support.

But the initial good will of the Russian populace towards the German 'liberators' was squandered by Nazi leaders. Hitler led the move to exploit, not liberate, the Russians.

When Russian soldiers sought to join the German forces, they were taken aback at being disarmed. The Germans used Russians as auxiliary forces – to drive vehicles, cook, load, carry out a host of tasks – but not to fight.

But at least for now they were reasonably safe. News of SS atrocities aroused a storm of fury and even guilt amongst German officers. When a special unit of Latvian SS slaughtered five thousand Jews in Borisov, the German commandant of the city found he was not able to stop the murders. Considering this irreconcilable with his honour, he committed suicide.

Meanwhile, Claus was active in working to ensure that the Russian populace was on side, and drew up an order establishing equality for Russian volunteers. He manoeuvred to keep volunteers under army control and out of the clutches of the SS.

Claus had begun to collect any evidence that implicated the SS in war crimes. In May 1942, an officer gave him an eyewitness account of SS men rounding up Jews in a Ukrainian town. They were led to a field, made to dig their own mass grave, and then shot. Claus reacted by saying that Hitler must be removed.

He sought accounts of other atrocities, compiling extensive information about the SS. Operation Barbarossa was rotten to the core.

We cannot pinpoint the moment when Claus turned against Hitler. It was a process. Claus's duties took him frequently to Army Group Centre, and he spent time with Tresckow and Schlabrendorff, and it is possible that their conversations galvanised all three of them.

MX in - doom and horror; Nazi theme

Around this time the Nazi hierarchy foregathered for the 'Wannsee conference' at which they resolved upon a 'final solution of the Jewish question'.

The decision to exterminate the Jews was a closely guarded secret, but information about Auschwitz trickled out. At first, the horrifying truth was not believed, even by resistance members.

Claus fumed at the moral corruption of Hitler and his regime. 'They are shooting Jews in masses' he said to a colleague when they were out horse riding, 'These crimes must not be allowed to continue.'

Later that year, Hitler moved his headquarters to 'Camp Werewolf' near Vinnitsa in Ukraine. The General Staff, including Claus von Stauffenberg, moved there as well. There he was reunited with a friend from his army training days, Major Albrecht Mertz von Quirnheim.

Together, they worked hard to ameliorate the conditions of the Russians, and campaigned for the return of land to the Russian populace.

As relatively junior officers, they did not at this time engage in a plot against Hitler. They sought to 'get round' – not overthrow – the leadership.

From the summer of 1942, Stauffenberg increasingly and repeatedly referred to Hitler as 'foolish' because of his conduct of the war and 'criminal' because he endorsed mistreatment and murder of those in the conquered lands.

### MX in - tense drones

His conversations turned to tyrannicide. He cited St Thomas Aquinas, who had declared the killing of tyrants to be justified in certain circumstances. In Nazi Germany, proclamations like this were dangerous, but Claus made many of them. He spoke out again and again, evidently relying on the solidarity between officers, and the powerful reputation he carried.

Claus was an officer of some standing but he was not a general. He believed the generals would take action against Hitler. Their position both enabled them to carry it through, and conferred on them the duty to undertake it.

At mortal danger to himself, Claus began urging superior officers to deal with Hitler.

At Taganrog on the Sea of Azov, Claus – now promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel of the General Staff – met with Field Marshal von Manstein. Claus urged Manstein to lead the army and the nation in an attempt to end the tyranny and the war.

In the end, Manstein threatened Claus with arrest if he persisted in raising the matter.

Claus was bitterly disappointed: 'Generals!' he said 'They consider honour, duty and service not to be binding ideals but simply grounds for making excuses.'

### MX out

The young officer had made things hot for himself at the General Staff. He had pushed senior officers towards disloyalty. He was at risk of being reported. He had spoken out so often that he also posed a risk to colleagues. Claus's work on the General Staff for the campaign in Russia made him party to a war which the SS used for mass murder. All his attempts to mollify the impact on Russian civilians had come to little.

It seemed there was nothing more he could do. Despondent, Claus sought a posting to the front in Africa where there was no SS. As he put it to Nina 'I am retreating to the front line.'

### MX in - show theme (Africa version)

Towards the close of 1942, fighting intensified in and around Stalingrad as Soviet forces encircled and closed in on Germany's Sixth Army. Denied by Hitler permission to surrender, the Germans were defeated there by the end of January. A quarter of a million soldiers marched into captivity.

Four days later, Claus von Stauffenberg, received his orders for posting to Tunisia. A week later he arrived in Tunis, ready to take on his duties as Senior Staff Officer to the Tenth Panzer Division.

By early 1943, the tide had turned decisively in Africa. British forces were pursuing Rommel west from El Alamein, while US and British forces ground their way east from Morocco and Algeria. The Allies had complete command of the air.

### SFX - dog fight

While German and Italian forces received almost no reinforcements, the Allies grew in strength daily.

As if to underline their dominance, Roosevelt and Churchill met in Casablanca in January and announced their war aim: Germany's 'unconditional surrender'. A new

German government could no longer secure any favourable 'terms' from the Allies. Many felt that the Germans may as well fight on.

SFX - desert ambience; sand storm

Rommel's last campaign in North Africa was directed against Eisenhower's forces to the west – mostly US troops who had not yet seen combat.

There was limited time for this operation. The battle-worn veterans of the British Eighth Army under Montgomery were steadily advancing from the east, and would soon reach the Mareth position to the south. The Axis would then have to muster their available forces to defend it.

The Germans attacked US forces and took the Kasserine Pass, a worrying blow for General Eisenhower. German troops then redeployed to attack the British positions at Medenine, near Mareth to the south.

In April, at the southern end of the German-Italian position in Tunisia, the British Eighth Army broke through at Mareth, sending Axis divisions reeling north. That day the Tenth Armoured Division was under attack from US forces to the west. With forces retreating behind them, they were in dire danger of being cut off, but now the division's withdrawal would be too late to be orderly. Without air support Claus determined that the retreat would have to be carried out, as much as possible, at night. All through the day Claus was under fire in his command post – a captured British bus – but urged his men to hold on until nightfall.

That evening, Claus gave orders, one by one, for units to disengage and make their way back under cover of darkness. The retreat route passed through EI-Halfay Pass. A dangerous jam of vehicles built up in the night.

SFX - distant battle sounds; planes overhead; bombing as it becomes relevant; men screaming

Before dawn that morning, Claus left to direct the retreat from his *Kübelwagen* – the German equivalent of a jeep. He cleared the bottleneck of vehicles around the entrance to El-Halfay Pass, and the column desperately pushed on. By eight o'clock in the morning US artillery was shelling the recently vacated positions of the division. Before long, however, US artillery located the retreat route – a moving column of vehicles. Bomber and fighter bomber attacks inflicted heavy losses.

One witness, Lieutenant Reile, found Claus standing in his *Kübelwagen*, with armoured radio cars nearby, directing the improvised retreat. Claus said to Reile:

'We'll be lucky to get out of this. As usual, we disengaged 24 hours too late.'

MX in - Blitzkrieg (Africa version)

SFX - battle becomes frantic with bombings all over; vehicles on fire; bullets strafing sand, vehicles and men; screams

The column pressed a little further on, when it was hit by an inferno of US fighter-bomber attacks. The planes attacked again and again. They continued to shoot into burning vehicles, which were easy targets, causing ammunition to explode and preventing rescue of the wounded.

A battery of German artillery arrived. The crews had to leap from their tractors and run for cover – or, if they could not find cover, wait until the fighter pilots were committed to an approach and could not change their aim, and then fling themselves aside from the bullets stitching the desert sand. Between sorties survivors seized usable vehicles and desperately tried to make their way out.

SFX - plane passes low overhead; bullets hit the side of a car, glass, and bodies

Amidst this mayhem, Claus drove from unit to unit to direct them. He stood upright in the front passenger seat of his *Kübelwagen*. Suddenly his car came under fire.

Aircraft machine guns riddled the vehicle with bullets. The windscreen had a 20 mm bullet hole on the passenger side. A lieutenant in the back seat was killed.



Claus threw himself over the side of his Kubelwagen and onto the ground. He buried his face on his hands.

Then...

SFX - a whoosh then a bullet finds a target; all sound drops away; slowly, a throbbing tone fades up and the sounds of the battle return

He was hit.

Fortuitously, an ambulance drove up. The men lifted Claus in.

He was not expected to live.

MX in - Claus' theme (minimalist)