



Operation Valkyrie

Rastenburg, 20th July 1944

Claus Philipp Maria Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg (Jettingen-Scheppach, 15th November 1907 – Berlin, 21st July 1944) was a German army officer known as one of the leading officers who planned the **20th July 1944** bombing of Hitler's military headquarters and the resultant attempted coup.

As Bryan Singer's film "**Valkyrie**", starring **Tom Cruise** as the German officer von Stauffenberg, will be released by the end of December, SCALA is glad to present you the story of the 20 July plot through the historical photographs of its German collections.



I Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg 1934. Cod. B007668



Left: Carl and Nina Stauffenbergs's wedding, 26th September 1933. Cod.B007660. Right: Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg. 1934. Cod. B007663



Although he never joined the Nazi party, Claus von Stauffenberg fought in Africa during the Second World War as First Officer.

After the explosion of a mine on 7th March 1943, von Stauffenberg lost his right hand, the left eye and two fingers of the left hand.

Notwithstanding his disablement, he kept working for the army even if his anti-Nazi beliefs were getting firmer day by day.

In fact he had realized that the 3rd Reich was leading Germany into an abyss from which it would have hardly risen. There was no time to lose, they needed to do something immediately or their country would have been devastated.

Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg (left) with Albrecht Ritter Mertz von Quirnheim in the courtyard of the OKH-Gebäudes in Bendlerstrasse. Cod. B007664

The conspiracy of the German officers against the *Führer* led to the **20th July attack** to the core of Hitler's military headquarters in **Rastenburg**. Known as the Wolfsschanze (Wolf's Lair), this is the place from which Adolf Hitler followed the Second World War since 24th June 1941 to 20th November 1944. Appointed chief-of-staff in July 1944, von Stauffenberg used to take part to the meetings held in Rastenburg, therefore he did not arouse suspicion when he went in the **Lagebaracke** (a meeting-room) the day of the attack.

Hiding in his briefcase a powerful

explosive device at delayed action, von Stauffenberg sat close to Hitler and initiated the detonator. Then he put the briefcase under the table and went out of the room. It was **12:42** when the bomb burst demolishing the room and causing terror and death all around the headquarters.

Assuming that Hitler was dead, Stauffenberg flew to Berlin to complete the operation with the coup.



Adolf Hitler with the members of Todt in the "Wolfsschanze". 1941.
Cod. B007673



Adolf Hitler shows Benito Mussolini (on the left) the "Lagebaracke" destroyed after the 20 July 1944 attack . Cod. B007662

Same day in the afternoon, Hitler welcomed Benito **Mussolini** who could see with his own eyes the extent of the attack visiting the place of the explosion. In the meanwhile the communication between Rastenburg and Berlin was cut off: **Operation Valkyrie** had definitely **failed**.



Hitler visiting wounded officers (von Puttkamer), end of July-September 1944. Cod. B007624



October 1944, Rudolf Schmundt dead after the 20 July attack. Cod. B007669



Rastenburg, Ketrzyn, FHQ Wolfsschanze. Briefing ,20th July August 1944. Cod. B007621

Immediately after the attack, **traitors** were identified and arrested by SS and Gestapo. They were tortured and executed at night.

Hitler was furious and longing for revenge. Not only the people involved with the operation, but all their relatives were to be eliminated. They were arrested, put on trial and executed.

The court of law which dealt with those cases where the **Volksgerechtshof**, the military court: judge Ronald Freisler, a fervent nazi, sentenced each suspect in a few minutes, pleasing the *Führer* and pacifying his rage.



Berthold Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg, Bruder von Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg, als Angeklagter vor dem Volksgeschichtshof. 1944
Berthold Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg, Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg's brother, at the trial. Cod. B007659



“What really matters is showing the world and history that German resistance existed and dared to take action paying with his own members’ lives”.
Claus von Stauffenberg

Tombstone in Stauffenbergstraße with the names of all the people killed by the government following 20 July attack.
Cod. B007670

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