



## Diary of an S.A. Leader

By Hans Snyckers

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## Introduction

Outsiders have had views — and quite differing ones — about the nature and duties of the S.A. But they have one thing in common: they do not agree with reality. One sees the core of the S.A.'s work in the political and worldview training of S.A. men. The second sees the main task of the S.A. in the athletic training of its members, while a third sees only its propaganda activity. There may today even be a fourth view, which thinks that the S.A. fulfilled its task as the shock troop of the National Socialist movement during the struggle for power, and now has no real reason for existence. It looks around for some sort of more or less useful service to perform for the people or the state. These and similar opinions miss the point. The duties and nature of the S.A. are determined primarily by two things: the drive to increase the military readiness of German manhood both within and outside of the S.A., and the need to maintain and extend the will, the spirit of genuine National Socialist readiness for action and military camaraderie that have become known to our people as the "S.A. spirit." That is the goal of the work of the S.A., and that is what determines its nature. The path the S.A. takes to its goal cannot be described in a few words. To understand it, to see that it is heading straight toward its goal with the full personal involvement of its members, one must march for a while with the S.A. One must experience its everyday routine and its unusual activities for a while if one wants to form an accurate impression of its accomplishments and its attitudes. There is no other way to understand the work of the S.A., which is as varied in its details as it is united in its overall structure. This book follows the march of an S.A. Sturm [the Nazi term for an S.A. unit of around 100 members] for fifteen months. The experiences of an S.A. leader reflect accurately the life of an S.A. Sturm, one of thousands in the Greater German Reich, thousands whose work takes a similar course and whose spirit is the same.

If this diary contributes to an understanding of the nature and accomplishments of the S.A., it will achieve its goal. May it help some to understand why we S.A. men see it as a blessing and an honor to serve the Führer in the S.A. This little book may be a memento for the S.A. man himself of his service, and it may give lower-level S.A. leaders an occasional idea for their labors.

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24 February 1938. I assume leadership of a Sturm! The order came yesterday. After long service on the staff, I am delighted once again to lead a unit. Not only is it necessary for the paid S.A. leadership to keep in the closest possible touch with the volunteers, it is also good for his conscience as an S.A. man to take on voluntary duties alongside his paid ones, making the sacrifice of time that was natural before he became a paid staff member, and that is still natural for the leaders and men of the front line S.A. For us mid-level S.A. staff members that is certainly true. For those “further up,” it is practically impossible. I am determined to use my full energies in front line S.A. service to see if I am able to realize the demands of the staff for “proper S.A. leadership” under the existing conditions. And I have sworn to use every possible way to complain if I find that bureaucratic make-work is being required!

The only thing that I knew about my Sturm yesterday was that it is located in my neighborhood to the north of the regional capital. Immediately after work for the day, I headed out to meet my new Sturmbannführer [his S.A. superior] and learn from him what was going on. My first question had to do with the Sturm’s territory. It covered two suburbs of the capital and five rural villages. There were three troops — one in each of the suburbs, the third consisting of the rural villages — and nine groups. Total membership on paper was 150 men. The initial condition of Troop I (the headquarters area with 75 men on paper) was very poor. Troop II (the rural areas with about 40 men), so-so. Troop III (in the second suburb with about 35 men) was in good shape. After some more information about subleaders and men, the meeting with the Sturmbannführer was over. But since it was Wednesday, the day of the weekly evening meeting, the Sturmbannführer organized an introductory tour. Each troop held a meeting. The five rural villages were close enough together to make that possible for them as well. One can reach them all in an evening. Good thing that I have my two-seater DKW — suitable for off-road travel! That is a big advantage over most S. A. leaders, I realize, but I appreciate it since I want to attempt to show up at every meeting of each troop. Without a motor vehicle, it would be impossible, but I think it essential for a Sturmführer who wants to personally “lead” his unit, which means overseeing its training and building and maintaining its camaraderie.

At 8 p.m. I fetch the Stubaf [Nazi jargon for Sturmbannführer] and head for Troop I. It meets at a school — as do the others. I do not think much

of schools as S.A. meeting places, though at least they are better than pub back rooms. In schools the men have to sit in desk that are too small for them. Grown up men feel like schoolboys again when they have to sit at desks. And even if it happens unintentionally, the unit leader, when he stands in front of the room, takes on the role of “teacher,” and schoolroom manners like raising one’s hand to ask a question resurface. Still, such thoughts will not do much good until it is generally realized that grown men are at least as influenced by their surroundings as the youth, and until then there will be no large-scale efforts to establish S.A. headquarters. It is not yet generally accepted that the spiritual and physical success of a meeting depends on the readiness of the men, and that that readiness is significantly influenced by the surroundings. That is particularly true in the evening, when men are tired from their day’s labors and weighed down with everyday concerns, and yet must still learn a mass of stuff!

The arrival of the Sturmbannführer and the Sturmführer with his red shoulder tabs astonishes the men! At least in so far as they are there. All of 12 men have “come together.” I am somewhat surprised, and look carefully at the troop leader. No cause for enthusiasm there. However, several of the unit leaders and a few other men look capable of more. There are no old S.A. men present — there are only a few of them in the whole Sturm.

The Sturmbannführer introduces me with a few words. The men observe me rather critically — a young Sturmführer with red tabs. I speak briefly about my view of the nature of the S.A. I do not feel that it brings me any closer to the men. Have I spoken too quickly and forcefully, so that they doubt I am serious about it all, or do they fear being overworked? More likely the South Germans mistrust the differences between them and me.

After about 20 minutes we head for the second troop. 27 of the 35 registered members are present. That looks better. The troop leader makes an excellent impression, and the men seem to get along with each other well. But I sense the same strong reserve against the red-tabbed “outsider” from Central Germany. Well, we will see, and get to know each other.

25 of the 40 men of Troop II are present. Not much can be said about that, since it is a rural region with five villages. The troop leader, a North German, is an old chief AW man [I am not sure what this means], and rather snappy. He makes a slightly bitter impression. He seems to have the men well in hand. I feel even less contact here than with the other troops.

Since the Sturmbannführer want to return to headquarters with me to discuss several urgent matters, I have to skip talking with the men after

the meeting.

The Sturm headquarters are in the top floor of an old building. There is a rather nice office for the Sturmführer, a very tiny business office, and a well appointed Sturm room. All in all, a decent place to work. There is even a telephone. I think that is absolutely necessary — at least for a Sturm that is not compact.

We meet the bookkeeper and the janitor. I like both of them. The “spotlight” is a small, wiry man with a big bald head and enormous eyes, which look very suspiciously at “the new guy.” He seems conscientiousness personified. The janitor looks like he will be easier to win over — he has amused eyes. He is surely at least 40 years old — I must look very young to him. He stands straight as a soldier, and his place seems in order.

There is apparently enough paperwork to handle — miserable stuff. But it has to be. The best leadership is in vain when it is not based on organized work at lower levels. But it has to be done at a desk. I look forward to it with bitterness.

I am annoyed, and not for the first time, at the pile of unanswered mail, that huge stream of mail that flows from the offices and departments of the OSAF [the central S.A. headquarters], the groups, the brigades, the Standarten and also the Sturmbannen. Individually it is certainly not a lot, or at least no more than necessary, that each office puts out — but together? Above all, each piece of paper seems to have a very short deadline (“Yesterday”).

The Sturmbannführer leaves at 11 p.m. There is no point to trying to find the men in a pub any more. So after he leaves, I head home.

I have told my wife that my spare time will be very limited in the future. That is unpleasant only four weeks after returning from one’s honeymoon — but thank God she is an old BDM [League of German Girls] leader, and she understands.

4 March. My first ten days as leader of my Sturm are behind me. My initial impressions have been confirmed. Troop I is the problem child, with no cohesion at all. After the meeting, three separate groups form. That is telling. One group goes home immediately. Nothing to be said against that if one works hard and has to get up early. The second group heads for a cafe, and the third to a pub 100 meters further on. There are really four groups — the members of the fourth and largest group do not show up at the meetings at all. I do not want to begin like a beserker, with new appointments and innovations for the Sturm, as long as the men still do not know me, so I shake my head and do nothing for the moment. Besides, I have to know whom I can trust with

which tasks. But things cannot continue as they are with Truppführer I, unless he pulls himself together. I learn nothing from him — he is completely taciturn — though he looks as if he should be good for something. My assistant, who has been a member of the Sturm for a long time, tells me at least that Troop I was in good shape not all that long ago. Curious!

“My assistant” — he is the Obertruppführer, who holds one of the most important offices in the Sturm, but for which there is no official S.A. title. Some call him the “Sturm corporal,” others the “duty Obertruppführer” the “office Obertruppführer,” etc. The chap was called the “Sturm corporal” previously, but I think that a misnomer, half S.A., half army — neither fish nor fowl. Be that as it may, this indispensable man should have some sort of official title.

My first mistake is behind me. I think that in the lower-level units which should display strong camaraderie — up to the Sturm level — one should address one’s comrades outside duty hours with Du [the German pronoun used with close friends] and rank, superiors included. The “number of stars” and the office should play no role, for he who cannot get along with his men without the wall of Sie [the formal second person pronoun] is not an S.A. leader. I start out this way, greeting the office staff and the men with Du. Sie and Sturmführer is what I hear back. Damn! At first I thought that “Sie” was the general custom within the Sturm and want to abolish it with an order, but then note that I am the only exception. I do not know if it is uncertainty, or my red shoulder tabs, or a certain reserve with regard to the “new guy.” Perhaps something of each. Still, I had the feeling that it did not work, and decide to avoid Du until we know each other better. Such misunderstandings must be avoided at all costs. The camaraderie between my men and me should not be based in the pub or some similar atmosphere, but rather on shared duty in which the leader and his men must together give their full efforts. Under those conditions formality gradually vanishes by itself. After these thoughts, I lay aside the Du, and address my men more formally.

Things are downright hectic. I am determined to set a sharp pace that will drive away those who are unwilling to go along. A unit of 80 or 100 men who participate actively is worth twenty times as much as a group twice the size, only 40% or 50% of whom show up!

7 March. For the past 14 days I’ve observed — there were no Sunday meetings — and attacked the paperwork. It is enormous. Those of us on the staff really have no idea of what goes on at the Sturm level! Report after report to the most varied superior offices, regulations, bureaucratic nonsense, correspondence with local party offices on social questions or whatever, correspondence with the mayor or other offices, directives to the troops and units and — heavily emphasized — the S.A. sports

activities. I can see that if this is only “spring storm.” If this tempo continues, the average Sturmführer will have no time both to lead and deal with the desk work without paid assistance. Either the Sturmführer drowns in paperwork and lets his Sturm rot, or he keeps his Sturm together and ignores the paperwork. It is a terrible choice: either lead or administer his Sturm, but to do both is impossible! It is easy to order that S.A. sports activities be carried out with all possible energy, and that every German of military age should earn the S.A. sports badge, that the exercises are to be carefully organized, etc. However, the paperwork alone could keep a man busy almost full-time, and that man is not there.

I am supposed to take the training course in Dresden from 13-29 March. Fortunately, I have already had the Sturmbannführer training course and am safe. I will speak on the S.A. sports badge. We will see what S.A. leaders have to say about the OSAF Leadership School.

11 March. Until the Dresden course is finished, I leave the Sturm run in its accustomed way. After that, full steam ahead.

My men and I have a kind of service action behind us. Last weekend was the collection for the WHW [the Nazi Party charity]. It is great to see the pleasure the men take in any such activity, as long as they can see its usefulness. Even Troop I was better than usual.

I believe that the often poor attendance is partly due to the fact that many men are not convinced of the real necessity of normal S.A. training. Let's be honest — even we S.A. leaders often wonder if it is useful. We certainly recognize the enormous importance of a firm block of soldierly National Socialists. Real political soldiers will develop only from a community of men who work together to master a task whose fulfillment each of them can see is of vital significance for the nation's existence. From common effort toward a great goal, that camaraderie of the front develops that is a requirement for the life of our state. Does the S.A. currently have such a task? The closest thing is S.A. sport activity. The S.A. sports badge will probably be the starting point for later S.A. activities. The current situation is not completely satisfactory. Voluntary participation is fine and good — but it reaches those racial comrades who are least in need of military training and political education. Those idealists who volunteer are probably already members of some National Socialist organization and will be politically trained and will also receive some sort of physical training. But we do not reach the large mass who lack the idealistic desire to volunteer, even though they are the ones who most need community training. True, even for those who do come to us, there is something to be done in the area of military education and training. But the current training period for the S.A. sports badge is not sufficient to fully and permanently eliminate the deficiencies, nor does the refresher course in its current form. There is much to be done

in the S.A. itself in the area of military education, and there is enough time for it, if it is systematically used. But one thing is very clear: the military training methods of the S.A. are in no way adequate. Sports, marching, field exercises, training in map reading, using the compass and route finding, theoretical and practical marksmanship with an air rifle, and who knows what all else, remain absolutely necessary. But in their fifth year of training, the men will not have much interest unless the training material is improved. But we don't have anything. Marksmanship is a particularly burning issue. Of course one can learn to aim and other things, too, just as with a larger weapon. But a grownup man of military age prefers to have a serious weapon in his hands. For a German above all, it is a matter of honor to carry a weapon, and he is embarrassed to appear with a weak one. It can easily give him an inferiority complex.

12 March. Today I met my new Standartenführer, whom I already knew to be a solid front-line S.A. leader. He seemed pleased to have a "gentleman of the group staff" as leader of one of his units, and heartily welcomed me.

I seem to be fortunate with the Sturm staff. They all make an orderly, reliable, and diligent impression. The Oberscharführer in particular, who handles the personnel details, seems to be a fanatic S.A. man. To my great pleasure, he exudes energy, and has made exemplary order of the personnel paperwork. But I will have to see if it might be better to entrust him over the long term with a leadership position.

2 April. The Dresden course is finished. It was excellent. One was really well-equipped in Dresden. The needs of the front are known. I don't believe that anyone is going home without feeling that the training methods are correct and that the front line service of leader and men is worth the effort. It is good, too, that one got to work with the leaders of other organizations — the Labor Service, the NSKK [the Nazi Party motorized unit], the NSFK [the party's aviation group], and also political leaders.

But we were all unhappy that we had no way to express our enthusiasm as Austria returned to the Reich [the Anschluß]. Austria back in the Reich! One can't imagine that there is anyone in Germany — in the Greater German Reich — who is not now ready to serve the Führer and his work with complete devotion!

The Führer spoke yesterday in our Gau capital. I yelled myself half hoarse, and was filled with the enthusiasm that captured hundreds of thousands. What must the Führer feel now that he has brought his homeland into the Reich!

10 April. Busy days are behind me. And a lot of marching! On 3 and 6

April, as well as yesterday and today, we marched back and forth through our seven communities to remind every last citizen to be thankful to the Führer. The first election results are coming over the radio, and they are as one would expect [Hitler called a referendum to approve the annexation of Austria].

And the coming days will be no relief. 24 April is the first refresher course. There is a lot of paperwork to dispatch. We all love the list each S.A. sports badge holder has to keep. There are 16 various tasks. The second level has “only” 5 more, and the participant’s card has 8 more items. There are 400 applicants within and outside the S.A. in the district (that at least is how many have applied after numerous newspaper announcements). 16 + 5 + 8 entries per person: that is almost 12,000 written notes for S.A. sports badge holders. And that is without any full-time help, and on top of the usual duties! It will hopefully work out in my Sturm, although my wife was not all that happy that I had to use the holidays from Good Friday to Easter Monday, except for meals, to handle the paperwork by myself. It had to be done.

When the refresher course is finished, I have to get the SAG [the group for those earning the S.A. sports badge] going, and then I have to develop a long-term training program for my Sturm. In the long run, working things out two days before the meeting won’t do. That results in no organized plan. Besides, the men lose their enthusiasm when they do not know what to prepare for.

24 April. It’s a good thing I put my diary entries on the to-do list, or they’d never get done! OK, here goes. On 17 April we dedicated a display case for the “S.A.-Mann” [the S.A. newspaper] with Troop III. It is a large oak case, naturally stained, with the words “The S.A. Man” neatly carved. The men of Troop III not only paid for it themselves, but did all the work themselves. The display case is a good thing. The S.A. newspaper, pictures of the work of the Sturm, etc., will keep us S.A. men in constant touch with the population of the area.

The dedication was brief but dignified. Troop III, party political leaders, and the HJ [Hitler Youth] were present, along with the party’s local group leader, the mayor, HJ leaders, and myself. The troop leader reported to me. I spoke for five minutes about the tasks of the S.A. to educate politically, make propaganda for National Socialism, and made a few remarks about the purpose of the display case. Sieg Heil! And it was over. Then a brief propaganda march through the small town. The previous Sunday was election duty, and the refresher course is approaching. Time was short. But the lunch with the men of Troop III was a pleasure. They are slowly beginning to warm up! We began by singing some songs. They can sing the old fighting songs very well — but the new ones... They carelessly answer my question of what new fighting

songs they know by saying all of them. The troop leader attempts to change the subject, and I can see by his concerned expression that he isn't too confident. I ignore his efforts and suggest several songs: "A Young People," "Marching with the S.A.," "Our Lives Serve only Freedom," "The Rotten Bones are Shaking," "Soldiers are Always Soldiers," "The Columns are Marching" and "Listen to the Thunder." Concerned faces. Who knows what the men thought were new fighting songs! A brave soul suggests something. "A Young People" goes tolerably well. The "rotten bones," too. The rest is silence. I make a few nasty remarks. The men laugh a bit, and are a bit annoyed at the embarrassment. The troop leader is a bit grim. But that does no harm. In four weeks they will sing like larks to get their revenge!

In that expectation, I have worked on every possible song myself over the past week, since to my embarrassment I had to admit that I didn't know them all very well either.

The last evening meeting was primarily concerned with sports. I am not satisfied with the present opportunities for sport in the Sturm. One can do sports without equipment, but it goes better with equipment. Yesterday I met with the party's local group leader and the mayors of the two suburbs, with happy results. I can't ask for a gift — that is forbidden — and the towns themselves can't give things away. But the towns can purchase equipment for general use to advance sports and military training within the community. And we are not prohibited from borrowing community property and from taking care of it. On this "legal basis," and with the support of the local group leader, my mayors gave their approval, and yesterday the two communities approved a total of 1100 Reichsmarks for equipment. The mayors authorized me to select and purchase the equipment, which comes to our office and is at the disposal of my Sturm. Other groups can also use it, but they have to apply to the Sturm, and I make the decision. I think this is an acceptable solution, and recommend it to other Sturmführer.

24 April, evening. This afternoon I, my secretary and two men from Troops I and III filled out the participant's cards for the refresher course. 400 cards are filled out, and I am ready for bed. But the refresher course exercises of this morning deserve to be recorded. The refresher course exercises are also a promotion for the S.A.sports badge. The 15 kilometer march includes all significant places in the district. I don't think the propaganda effect is at all bad, for the "march of the 400" — actually, there were 437 — was impressive. And the two bands — from the HJ and the fire department — made a lot of noise. And the banners that the artists in my Sturm prepared made a good impression, too.

To prevent the 15 kilometer march from being only propaganda and to give the participants a sense of accomplishment, I was hard at work. Slower — faster — still faster — slow again. Then a pause to estimate

the distance. Then uphill, downhill. A lot of fine citizens huffed and puffed and cursed all that fat they'd eaten over the past few years!

We finished up the paperwork, and got through distance estimation for the whole group in 45 minutes. It was a good thing that we had figured out in advance how to break them into groups of 20 that could be handled by a subleader. Thanks to the quick count and efficiently done paperwork, and the smooth handling of distance estimation, the mood of the column was excellent.

I sent the participants off with a brief talk on the duties of the S.A. sports badge wearer, which still annoys me! I neglected to have them form a square, and therefore had to make myself audible to four hundred people in three lines. That takes a lot of lung power outdoors with no loudspeaker. I'll be smarter next time!

I'll admit I used my position as leader of the refresher course exercises. The editor of our local National Socialist newspaper was one of the S.A. sports badge participants. The chance to talk with him was there, since he was in my group. And it worked out nicely. There was a page on the S.A. sports badge on Wednesday. A message from the Sturmbannführer, a general story on the S.A. sports badge, a few pictures, and an interview with me about the developing S.A. sports badge community in my Sturm. That should be a blow to the indolence of those capable men who have still not earned the S.A. sports badge.

3 May. It is midnight, and I am back from the Sturm office. Tuesday, the day I keep office hours, is behind me. After several citizens came by who had to have a thousand questions answered before they could decide to join the S.A. sports badge community, three newly arrived S.A. members from Austria reported. Two of them were legionnaires, one from Steiermark, the other from Vienna. The former made a good impression. Both seemed somewhat bitter. After them came the third, from Tyrolia. The first thing that struck me were his thick glasses, which gave him a somewhat unmilitary appearance. The left eye was strangely fixed. He reported in exemplary fashion where he was coming from and what unit he had belonged to there. Since that was a part of the Old Reich, I asked him when and why he had left Austria. "After the events of July 1934," he replied. Had he been persecuted? "Yes, I spent six months in jail in 1933, and they really were after me." He had been unable to resume his job as a miner in the Old Reich, so he worked as a laborer in various positions. He never lasted too long, since he was no longer able to perform hard labor for very long. — Why not? — Jail had been hard on him. And shortly after his release, he had lost the sight of his left eye through a knife wound during a meeting hall battle, and took a bullet just above his heart that left him in poor condition for quite a while. — I'm startled, and look at the man carefully — he says it all in a matter-of-fact way, as if it were entirely normal. It is so unusual that I am a bit

suspicious. But the man looks honest, not at all like a swindler. — I ask if he has any evidence of his past. He pulls out a tattered piece of paper. I note that he has a crooked finger, also a result of the meeting hall battle. “You know, Sturmführer, “things were rough down there in Hötting. The Innsbruck S.A. and the Heimwehr, the guys from Penzplätten, they didn’t do too badly.” I read the statement from the German-Austrian Assistance Society. It confirms everything he said with signatures and stamps. “So what happened after you got to the Reich?” “What should have happened, Sturmführer — nothing!” “Didn’t you ask for help?” “No, I didn’t. I’ve never asked for help, Sturmführer. I did nothing more than my duty.” “But look, surely you earned more as a miner than as a common laborer! You broke your bones for the party, and it would surely help you if only it knew! What do you earn?” “I work as a janitor for an armored regiment. I earn 68 pfennig an hour. I earned more before, but the work was a lot harder.” “Are you married?” “Yes.” “Children?” “A girl.” — I still don’t know whether I should believe him. — “Sturmführer, I give you my word of honor that everything I have told you is true. And I’ve not asked for help, because I did no more than others did. I just had a little more bad luck, and that is surely no cause. I’ve gotten by.” — That’s the way it is. An S.A. man stands in front of me, a corporal like hundreds of thousands of others, who almost became a cripple fighting for National Socialism, who has sacrificed a thousand times more than most of us — and he doesn’t think anything of it. He has lived in the National Socialist Reich for nearly four years, and hasn’t said anything about it. Hasn’t even tried to get compensation for the injuries that hamper him every day. And why? — “I did no more than my duty, and that is nothing special.”

The Reich is built on this foundation, and it will last as long as German men think like this unknown S.A. man. Only rarely am I as proud to be an S.A. man and an S.A. leader as I am this evening.

I hope that it will soon be possible to find this man a decent job, and that the party will be able to provide at least material compensation for the sacrifices he has made. I have taken the first steps, and will do the rest tomorrow.

8 May. Another refresher course with several late-comers went smoothly this afternoon. Now that is finished with in my district. The negligent will get a “love letter” in the next few days — withdrawal of their S.A. sports badge for failure to attend the refresher course. Be firm — don’t turn weak. If one isn’t strict now, the reputation of the refresher course, and that of the whole S.A. sports badge itself, will suffer!

I finally had a Sunday afternoon and evening free today. I took a walk this afternoon — with my wife and in civilian dress — just like any normal citizen. The recollection that it was the second such Sunday afternoon since February consoled me somewhat. My wife keeps in

touch with my parents, bothers and sisters and friends, who are beginning to wonder if I have forgotten how to write. If only they knew! Everyone in the Sturm office has learned to write over the past few weeks, if they didn't already know how. 143 men responded to our propaganda for the S.A. sports badge by applying to the SAG [the group for non-S.A. members who were working toward the sports badge]. I really had wanted to limit it to 60, since I didn't think we could handle more. I wouldn't have had any concern in stopping the flood, since it certainly wouldn't hurt the image of the S.A. sports badge to reply: "We're sorry, but there are too many applicants, and in the interest of doing things properly, we've put you down for a later course." But I missed the deadline. I had sign up offices in three communities — which prevented a clear view of the total. And groups of more than 30 political leaders [Nazi Party officials], 25 firemen, about as many workers and 12 HJ and DJ [the group for young boys] leaders, and suddenly there were 90. It was 8 days before I saw the first list, and there were already 140. We have to deal with them, although I shut off the flood after that. But the thoroughness of the training cannot be allowed to suffer.

Assuming that more than 40 men cannot be handled in an SAG, I have attached an SAG to each of the three troops that will do the exercises each Wednesday with the S.A. I therefore do not need special trainers for the SAGs, and they will develop better relations with the S.A., which I think a good thing. I then established a fourth SAG for those men in the whole district who were not free on Wednesday evenings. They meet on Fridays. The necessary training personnel are available — a subleader takes on the administrative matters and a variety of trainers take the various subjects. The trainers thus will not be overworked, and since I keep an eye on things, it will work out. There is one catch. On Sundays, there can be different activities for the S.A. and the SAGs, allowing for major S.A. tasks, and there can be additional Sunday meetings for the SAGs. But on Wednesday evenings, I have to say the same things to both, "bottle-feeding" the SAGs. I decided to accept that for three reasons. It can't hurt my unit, which is not yet entirely in order, if it hears again in brief the same material it has heard for years, but in a systematic form. Second, there are many S.A. men in the Sturm who do not yet have the S.A. sports badge. I don't want them to take the test without being sure that they will pass it. An S.A. man certainly cannot fail, and after the test each member of the Sturm has to have the S.A. sports badge. Third, I still do not have an accurate overview of the condition of training throughout the district. It seems to me to be somewhat uneven. Systematic SAG training will finally create a firm foundation, and I will be able to see how far the men have come, and where the problems are.

The Sturm bitches a bit about putting the S.A. and the SAG together. Troop I in particular, the worst troop and the one with the least energy, is noticeably dissatisfied. Its honor is wounded. From the troop leader

on down. Fine. I have good nerves, and within a few months I will know where the bitching comes from. The troublemaker will go — he can rely on it!

The whole SAG process would be fine were it not for the terrible paperwork, for which even the most primitive resources are lacking. Besides the SAG, developing a plan for the S.A. and the SAG has occupied me. I finished it after the rainy May Day parade and mass meeting. I typed the stencils into the early hours of 2 May. On 2 May it is in the mail slots of the Scharführer. Each now has a detailed plan that tells him when (day, hour, and minute), which unit (troop, SAG, subleaders), where, what (exact content) and whom (office or name). The plans are essentially the same for each unit. Only the order differs, to allow me to reach at least two troops each evening with the material I will present, without throwing off the schedule.

I think it a good idea for the Sturmführer to conduct at least one session on each topic for the troops. That is better for the troop and group leaders than lots of suggestions during inspections — though that has to be there too. It also allows one to establish the routine he wants and is the best way to implement his own “style.” Above all, the Sturmführer should keep worldview training in his own hands as much as possible. I have split the work with a very capable Scharführer, because I want the SAG men in particular to go home with no less worldview training than technical training. And it demands skills that not all troop leaders and Scharführer possess. “Introduction to the S.A. sports badge.” “The S.A.’s mission and significance from its origins until today.” “The realization of the party program since 1933” (two lectures). “The growth of the German Reich” (four lectures: 1. “Borders, tribes and leaders of the first German Reich up to the Interregnum,” 2. “The concept of the Reich from Rudolf von Hapsburg to the end of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation,” 3. “The concept of the Reich from the Wars of Liberation to Bismark,” 4. “The development of the concept of the Reich from Bismark to its fulfillment by the Führer”). “Germandom outside the Reich and its conditions.” “Germany’s geopolitical situation” (two lectures: 1. A general introduction. 2. Military considerations). That is the prescribed material. I will have to work hard myself to have something sensible to say — If one only had the time!

17 May. This entry concerns training for the national S.A. competition.

22 May. The entry begins with a discussion of field exercises (marching, map reading, concealment methods, etc.).

Over the last week, military personnel have moved into the new barracks. Formerly, only a part of the staff was there. A tank regiment in the office area, an air force intelligence unit near Troop III. The tank regiment invited me to its arrival ceremony, and the contact with the

officers was particularly pleasant. At the last S.A. meeting before the troops arrived, I sent the following written order to every member of the S.A.:

“Strong Wehrmacht units will be arriving in our Sturm’s territory in the next few days. We S.A. men are delighted and extend our warm camaraderie as the Führer’s political soldiers to the weapon-bearers of the nation, Germany’s soldiers.

Our salutes must demonstrate our attitude. We S.A. men do not ask who has the most seniority or who is the oldest before saluting. don’t wait to be saluted. The only principle for us is: The better mannered person salutes first.

I am convinced that the men of the Wehrmacht are of the same opinion, and that for them as for us, there will be no problems in saluting. I require of the men of my Sturm that they salute Wehrmacht members in an exemplary fashion. I will take immediate action against anyone who violates this order.”

I sent a copy to the commander. The commander of the tank regiment told me that he passed it along to his men, with the corresponding instructions.

26 May. The Sturmführer develops a newsletter to improve communication within the Sturm.

30 May. More on training for the S.A. athletic competition.

Some good news. “My” Austrian has a new job in the Finance Department. There will be no heavy labor, and he will earn half again more than before. And he has gotten his first payment from the party, after queries to his old Innsbruck S.A. leaders confirmed once again all that he had said.

6 June. Pentecost Monday — the whole day is entirely free! One learns to appreciate that! Sleep in, out in nature for the afternoon, and an evening at the theatre. It’s wonderful, but if it were the rule, it would become boring.

Yesterday afternoon, I wandered around the field, accompanied by the leader of Troop III and my “educational aide,” the future leader of Troop IV. (Troop I has a paper membership of 80, of whom 15 show up. I plan to split it into Troop I and a new Troop IV.) We quickly finished our preparations for the next Sunday’s exercises — Pentecost could begin.

The last week went well enough, though not particularly quietly: Sunday night there was a competition between the units; Tuesday evening I held

office hours; Wednesday the troops met; Friday evening, a meeting of SAG IV; Saturday afternoon preparations for leader training on the coming Saturday and a lecture on “borders, tribes and chiefs of the First Reich up to the Interregnum”; Saturday evening to bed — sleep is wonderful!

12 June: Target practice and military exercises with his men.

22 June. The separation of Troop I into a new Troop I and a new Troop IV, which primarily has the younger men, is finished. About the same time, the matter of the troop leader is resolved. He simply forgot to show up to lead an SAG meeting. The new leader of Troop I is, with the approval of the Standarte, also my personal assistant. He is delighted, and I am sure he can handle the troop. He will first attend the group training school and earn the first certificate. The leader of Troop IV is my “educational aide — only a Scharführer in rank, but a great chap everyone in the Sturm likes.

I am delighted that I finally work well with all my subordinates — particularly with the office staff (even the distrustful “spotlight” is on board!) and the four troop leaders. Being constantly suspicious is a handicap. I believe that there is now peace in Troop I as well, and that all will follow the settled routine that had not entirely died out in those S. A. men. I will give the troop leaders until the Nuremberg Party Rally to get their sheep in order — after which I’ll clean house. Throw the trash overboard!

Yesterday evening was the summer solstice. More than 2,000 of the 17,000 citizens of the area went up to the ceremony site, high above town. Members of party formations and the usual groups were the majority, but many civilians were present as well. We S.A. men conducted the ceremony and made sure that it was conducted in a simple and military manner, free of bombast and deep mysticism. I gave the speech, a copy of which follows. People said to me afterwards that some were pleased that I did not talk over their heads, but spoke in a straightforward manner appropriate to the feelings of people today.

### Summer Solstice Speech

We have gathered around the bonfire for the summer solstice, and each of us looks intensely into the flames. On the way up, some of us probably thought about the meaning of the summer solstice. Some of us probably had the feeling that people today lack a living connection to this festival of light. Now we are all gathered around the fire, and it is time to think about the meaning and significance of the festival of the summer solstice.

We think back to the distant past when our forefathers of the German

community of blood came to the heights on this the shortest night of the year and, like us today, gathered around the bonfire. In that distant time, just as today, fires greeted each other from hilltop to hilltop, building a bridge from one small community of German blood to the next.

The very thought that the festival we celebrate today has come down to us from the earliest days of our history, that it has been maintained over the millennia, awakens in us a feeling of awe, and we sense something of the eternal stream of blood that unites us to the people of our race from the distant past to the far future. But we still do not fully realize what led our ancestors to light the fires on the heights on the night of the summer solstice.

The day of the summer solstice is the day on which the life-giving sun shines the longest on the northerly realms of our race, and the dark of night has the least power over our homeland. It is the day on which life, embodied in the sun, celebrates its greatest victory over darkness. It is the day on which nature most favors growth on earth, and most blesses the labor of those people who work the soil to earn their daily bread. But it is also the day of the year on which growing darkness begins — the season when people must more and more win through work and struggle what nature will not provide. Thus it is clear why our ancestors, closely tied to the cycle of nature, gathered on the heights of their homeland to light a fire.

They gathered around the fire that reflects the strength of the sun to thank the godly power that blessed their labors. But there was no weak submission in their hearts, Within their hearts burned the will never to be lazy and content, never to waste the gifts of nature, but rather to earn them and use them through untiring effort. In the coming days as the gift of providence ripened the harvest while the life-renewing force of light diminished, no one could rest from his labors. They came to the summer solstice ceremony to pledge renewed energy for their labors. And they came to receive strength from the community in which the will of providence had placed them, from the community of their tribe. And around them they saw the fires of their neighbors. They experienced the larger community of those of their blood.

For us National Socialist Germans, the significance of the summer solstice has become even greater: We stand here not as members of a small tribe that senses only dimly its relationship to the larger community of like people — no, we stand here as men and women, as boys and girls, of a united and powerful people — we stand here as Germans, as men and women, boys and girls, of the Greater German Reich.

For us the summer solstice is first of all an hour to contemplate the god-

ordained unity of all people of German blood — without regard to class, occupation or origin. We here pledge to set aside our own good for the great military camaraderie that must bind our people if we are to survive. And we want to affirm proudly the idea from which alone this camaraderie can grow — the National Socialist worldview. We gather courage, strength and determination from everything that National Socialist Germany has gained in its five and a half years of existence. This year we above all wish to express our joy and pleasure in the fulfillment of our great German longing — our union with our German brothers in Austria. And we pledge not to forget the suffering of those racial comrades who live at the borders of the Reich in foreign states, who are persecuted and suppressed.

All our thoughts turn to the man who changed the fate of our people and who alone will lead our people to a blessed future, the Führer. In this solemn hour, we pledge to him unbreakable loyalty, for we know and have experienced that only he can unite all our individual efforts into a great work of liberation for our German people. And we know that from our individual deeds, the Führer forges the weapons of his battle. He himself said two years ago to his old S.A. comrades: “Everything you are is because of me, and everything I am is because of you alone.” We feel the deep and obligating truth, expressed today for the whole German people in the words of a poet to the Führer:

You are many thousands who stand behind me, And you are me and I am you. I have no thoughts That do not dwell in you. And none of my words Are not in accord with your will. For I am you and you are me, And we all believe in you, Germany!

We salute the Führer and pledge him our loyalty. To Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist Greater German Reich — Sieg Heil!”

26 June. It's his birthday, but the day is filled with various field exercises.

5 July. The planned celebration of his birthday is interrupted by his superiors.

7 July. Back from the Sturm. 12:30 a.m. That upset some fine soul in the neighborhood. Yesterday our landlord passed on an anonymous complaint that I drove up late every night at midnight. The noise of the motor disturbs the neighbors, and I should please go on on foot when returning so late. That would be something! As an S.A. leader, one is busy nearly every night — there is time for a glass of beer only after the Wednesday meeting — and this satisfied chap who goes to bed after dinner and never does anything beyond what he is paid to do complains that an S.A. leader doesn't take on an evening march, but instead

disturbs the well-deserved rest of his neighbors with the noise of his car! I'd love to reward the cowardly chap in the "old fashioned way" — but unfortunately I do not know who he is. These fine neighbors should work more and go to bed later, and then they would not be bothered by motor noise. A whole armored column couldn't wake me up!

10 July. Preparations for major field exercises two weeks hence.

14 July. The new leader of Troop I is doing fine. The Sturmführer laments that it is so hard for leaders to get time off from work to attend S.A. leadership training courses.

17 July. More field exercises, including climbing hills while wearing gas masks.

21 July. He finds gas masks for the rest of the Sturm.

25 July. More on field exercises.

28 July. A great deal more on field exercises, along with the text of a morning ceremony on the theme: "Faith in the Führer leads to a readiness to work and sacrifice." That runs as follows:

The S.A. affirms: We believe in the Führer and on his idea. This is so obvious to us S.A. men that we hardly know what to say when someone asks us why we believe.

We affirm our belief in the Führer in everything that we think and do. But if, as wearers of the brown shirt, we must give an answer to the question "Why," we proudly realize that this is less a matter of the cold reasoning of superior intellect, but rather the voice of our blood and heart. These never ask, but rather always call us to action and to sacrifice.

We S.A. men do not believe because the Führer succeeded in realizing our National Socialist program, which is the heart of our idea. Nor do we believe because the Führer gave us jobs and food, because he freed us from the chains of shame, because he once again gave our German people a German face. No, we believe in the Führer because he is the Führer. We believe blindly and without reservation. We would believe in him even if he had done none of these things.

We believe in the Führer, and we would believe in him even if fate turned against him. We would fight even harder for him then, for he is a part of us, he is our very identity (unser ich).

We can only say to those who ask, to the doubters and those who do not believe, that we were not converted to faith in the Führer because he

solved the social question, or any other question, but rather because those things only proved, after the fact, that we rightly had believed. But we had, and have, no doubts at all, it is damned hard for us to find a way to express this in cold argument.

Our S.A. style of thinking comes from the heart. It is military.

We cannot prove our faith in the Führer through some kind of intellectual twaddle, but rather only through our deeds, through our actions, through our duty.

However much the world may ask, the S.A. affirms: We believe in the Führer — and we prove our faith through our deeds. The Führer may demand of us what he will: all we possess, our bodies and lives, our spirit and our heart. For the Führer comes from us, and we are made one through the Führer. He is the sum of our strength, and we live through him. (taken from "Our Faith," Der S.A. Führer, April 1936).

This is followed by more material from the ceremony.

31 July. Things are hectic, but he manages to have a day in the country with his wife.

4 August. It can no longer be denied: Troop I, and Troop IV, which has been separated from it, are going somewhere! Yesterday evening, 33 of its on paper membership of 52 were present, 25 of 35 for Troop IV. Given the season, that is as good as can be expected. That is certainly a lot better than the 12 of 80 who showed up for the former leader of Troop I! I expelled him yesterday, by the way. He lied to me, and hardly did anything. Away with him. There are just five weeks left until the Reich party rally, at which point the grace period for the remaining sluggards is over. There are about 30 who will change from the shirt of an S.A. man into more modest civilian garb in September. But I'll really be able to do something with the 120 who will be left!

Troops I and IV have also gotten over the habit of running off to different pubs after the meeting. Since we usually finish before midnight, even the early risers get to bed on time. I am happy to see that the men do not all run off in different directions after the meeting. Even Troops I and IV, which have the greatest range of members, like to stay together in a comradely fashion after the meeting.

7 August. Target practice. He acquits himself well, to the disappointment of his men

11 August. A discussion of summer S.A. clothing, and an argument that richer S.A. men should not dress down to conceal their prosperity. If they do their duty, all will be well, and National Socialism is not after

the lowest common denominator.

12 August. On 24 August we are to gather the largest possible audience for the national S.A. film “National Socialist War Games 1937.” It has to be an event! I meet with the local group leader, a great chap to work with, and he will make the evening an obligatory event for party members. I’ve reserved the largest meeting place in the area, the new community meeting hall — now we just have to get “at least” 700 people to more or less fill the hall up! It won’t be easy to get that many of the 17,000 people in the area to show up for a film at this time of year. If only the tank regiment were still here! But they are out on maneuvers. The local press will have to help out. Fortunately, the Sturm works well with the editorial staff. They promise to run not only the material from the OSAF, but also a daily story on page 3. And I can provide several short articles on the S.A. That will give me something to do on Sunday afternoon!

I use the opportunity to remind the public of what we are up to. The S. A. should not keep too much to the background! Modesty is great, and is a virtue for a soldier. But one can’t let one’s accomplishments go unnoticed.

We have to make a bit of noise. We are after all propagandists for the movement — we have to constantly promote and persuade — and we can do that only when a wider circle knows what we are doing. Therefore, the party press! It happily prints our contributions!

14 August. Along with 70 men from my storm and some SAG members, I did volunteer work this morning at the S.A. settlement just outside town. A group gathered at 6 a.m. by the post office on Bahnhofstraße. Dubious characters were standing around until 6:30, when a command brought order to the gathering. I remember the surprised faces of some citizens who were either late-to-bed or early-to-rise when they realized it was the S.A., or something similar. We planned to work until noon, but heavy and long-lasting rain forced us to stop work at 10. Well, at least we dug some holes.

Several of the settlers are members of the storm. They were delighted to see their storm members helping them out. The digging made clear to me that there is a certain difference between those who work with the pen and those who use a shovel. I have more blisters on my hands than I have fingers. But the work was both useful and pleasant.

18 August. First aid training.

20 August. Sports training.

21 August. Air guns and hand grenades.

25 August. The film showing yesterday was a “hit”! 685 paid admissions, about 500 of whom were not S.A. members. That is a record! Including the guests of honor, total attendance was over 700, the third best in the area, even though it was shown in some big cities. My men are justifiably proud, and I am, too. A lot of it is thanks to the local group leader and the press, but it also shows that party members and the public take a lively interest in our work. The 160 Hitler Youth were a particular pleasure. I am curious how many of the 18-year-olds will join us on 9 November! [New S.A. members were often accepted on 9 November, the anniversary of Hitler’s 1923 Beer Hall Putsch]. The program went smoothly and impressively. After my introduction, the S. A. sang — even Sturm II A was there — “A Young People Rises up.” They all knew it, and the HJ joined in promptly and on cue. After that, I spoke briefly about the nature and significance of the work, particularly the S.A.’s training exercises, directing my remarks to the outsiders. The film, which is good and gripping, followed. It held the audience’s attention at least as well as a good newreel. It occurred to me how good it would be for the S.A. and its work — and therefore also for the National Socialist military training of our people — if someone would make a cultural or fictional film about the everyday activities of the S.A. (it would have to be accurate!), and it played in public movie theaters. That would surely be no less educational and effective than this film about life in the Wehrmacht.

After the film, the local group leader made some warm and friendly remarks. He ended with an appeal on all those sympathetic to National Socialism, those for whom, in the spirit of the S.A., have embodied the S. A. spirit in their lives, to support the S.A., and particularly its efforts to increase the military preparedness of our people.

Afterwards, we S.A. men stayed along with some of our guests in the hall of the local party gathering spot. Two young men who had just finished their Wehrmacht service came to me and said they had not known what to do next. They asked to join the S.A. That is the best proof for the effectiveness, even the necessity of such public S.A. meetings!

28 August. The activities of the week.

2 September. The sports training is in high gear.

5 September. More sports training.

7 September. Two bits of good news.

As of 1 September, all the men of the Sturm belong to the NSV [the Nazi Party’s charitable organization]. Even the poorest of them, who would

themselves receive aid were they not too proud to ask for it, pay their 50 pfennig a month to the NSDAP's great social welfare organization. I am as proud of this new proof of the National Socialist sentiments of my comrades as if it were my own doing! Many a more prosperous racial comrade could use a bit of their willingness to sacrifice!

After last Sunday's test, more than 95% of the Sturm have earned the S. A. sports badge. None of the S.A. men failed. I feared somewhat for one with more good will than intelligence, but he made it too. The fact that we did not make 100% has to do with the rapid membership changes in the Sturm, since there are always new men who have not earned the S. A. sports badge, and there are two S.A. applicants who joined at the film evening who have not yet been able to take the test. Only one of my old members lacks the badge and has no likelihood of earning it, but he has been suffering from a serious tendon injury in his leg for the past two months.

8 September. I use the calm of the Nuremberg Party Rally week to prepare to expel those who are unsuited. The men in question have not all committed offenses. Some have always had excuses for their failures. I first left it to their discretion to resign. Some were smart enough to do that, but the others will be "released as unsuited for the S.A.," which will teach them that an S.A. man does not meet his obligations by the more or less timely payment of various fees. There are 32 on the "death list." 13 have asked to resign. 19 will be expelled without asking, and immediately, as my aide assures me. The Sturm will be reduced to 119 men. It has never been as small. But those who remain are first rate!

10 September. My thoughts are with those who are in Nuremberg. Tomorrow is the "Day of the S.A.," with a march past the Führer. I wish I could be there! My seven attendees are writing satisfied postcards. It is interesting that each remarks that it would be good next year to have the tea and rum mixed together rather than served separately as this year!!

I was in the office last night to deal with paperwork, and found applications from four SAG men to join the S.A. They had enjoyed the SAG, and the tasks of the S.A. seemed so important and the camaraderie within the S.A. so good that they wanted to join in. I was delighted. Particularly because they are good chaps. I really had not expected any of the SAG men to join us, since all but 9 were already political leaders in the party, the HJ, the union, the fire department, or the Red Cross, and all of them, including the 9 "full civilians," had given 1001 reasons just a few weeks ago as to why they could not join the S.A.

There are other applicants. Back at the end of July when we made cutbacks in the workload, I encouraged those who benefited to do some thinking about good new members for their Sturm. I told them firmly,

though, that it was not just a matter of finding any old person who was half-alive. Nothing happened up to the end of August. But early in September, several brought me a total of six new applicants who, they claimed, were good chaps. Formerly, they had lacked the necessary connections to find their way to one of the party's fighting formations. If they turn out well, then my men really did do the kind of promotion that I want. I certainly am not interested in getting as many involved as possible — otherwise, I would not have thrown 32 people out — but it does seem to me that there are a lot of useful young chaps running around in Germany who have not found their way into a fighting formation. They need a kick in the ribs to wake them up. I think we can make S.A. men out of them.

12 September. Many have failed the refresher course for the S.A. sports badge, even though several years before they had met the requirements. This proves the necessity for constant military training.

15 September. Paperwork woes. The Sturmführer wants to get 100% participation in target practice, but nearly a third of his members are in the military or working outside the area. Getting the results from them all is a challenge. He argues that S.A. duties should have the same legal standing as military service.

18 September. More on target practice. I believe that only a crisis will show what the S.A. has accomplished. Under the most unfavorable conditions!

20 September. The Standarte approved the expulsions, which take effect immediately. I can strike them all from the membership list today, which is updated on the 20th of each month. I am pleased, particularly with regards to the shooting competition, for I could not and would not want to get those on the "death list," who know their fate, up to the mark.

22 September. Staffing changes.

27 September. I have been up here in the Black Forest with my wife on vacation since yesterday, waiting to be called. I will go to the hospital only when the danger of war is past [he has earlier mentioned a leg injury]. It doesn't look likely at the moment, but who can tell what the Führer will do.

Before I close this diary, perhaps not opening it again for a long while, I want to report on the summer's activities.

100% of the Sturm participated in the shooting competition! 116 of the 123 members "on paper" actually showed up. Nearly 30 of those away from home or serving in the Wehrmacht took a Sunday leave and

showed up. I was absolutely delighted. 7 were missing. I have now gotten target sheets and certifications from them. That makes 100%

The average score of the 123 with 5 shots was 6.84 rings. It could have been better, but that's not bad.

And their scores for hand grenade aiming and distance throws were also not bad. Only a few failed to meet the requirements — a happy and striking contrast with the results of the civilian S.A. sports badge holders!

I was so pleased with my men and so moved by the events of recent days that I gave a short speech that was probably one of the best I have ever given. My heart was overflowing, and I was deeply moved by the thought that this could be the last time I saw my men in their current form.

I dismissed the Sturm at 2 p.m. A half hour later, the Standarte ordered me to send them all our equipment by evening. A few minutes earlier, it would have been easy, but now one had to chase them down to get their coats, knapsacks, etc. Fortunately, there were enough volunteers still around on a Sunday afternoon to gather everything and put it in order, so by 7 p.m. everything was loaded onto two trucks and shipped off — to the field. The afternoon showed us how serious things were!

We still had a pleasant evening with the SAGs and wives to mark the end of the summer's activities. I bade farewell to my aides and thanked my subleaders, then gave a brief outline of what was coming. Then the men spouted off. They ribbed me unmercifully, but never got nasty.

The evening went smoothly, a happy end to six months of hard work.

Our desire for action will only be greater in the coming days — whether we wear a military or an S.A. uniform. Whatever may come, the work of the S.A. for Führer and people will not have been in vain. As our old teacher always said: "Quod di bene vertant!"

5 October. The political situation cleared up at the last minute. It almost looks like a higher European reason took charge. Still, one can't be sure there will be peace. It is clear that Hitler and Mussolini want peace. But perhaps the western democracies pulled back not only because of the determination of the authoritarian states, but also in order to be better prepared to stubbornly defend the status quo the next time. Whatever the cause, our work continues as before. I can't say that in my own case, however. Since yesterday, I am here in the hospital in this old university town in the Black Forest. The professor tells me that I should plan on 8 weeks in bed. He thought it might be even more as he looked at my leg. But things will work out — God doesn't forget S.A. men!

I've been away from my Sturm for 8 days, and I am already beginning to miss the familiar routine. I think of a thousand things that have to be done, and worry that they won't be done right. I have to get rid of these thoughts. The Sturm is in the best of hands, and I overestimate myself in thinking it can't get along without me. It's certainly going well.

As the political situation cleared up on 29 September, my last official duty was to work out training goals for the winter months. I have left it to the troop leaders to work out the details and fit it in with everything else. We'll see what they can do on their own, what they learned from the planning of the exercises over the summer.

The rest of the entry lays out the exercises that will be part of the coming season.

10 October. He sends in his promotion list.

13 October. His men send him enough presents so that the professor asks if he plans to open a liquor shop.

15 October. He receives information that his men are planning well in advance.

19 October. News that his Sturm has climbed higher on the list for the shooting competition.

27 October. He receives a long report that all is going well back at the Sturm.

8 November. A report on charitable collections.

11 November. My recommendations for promotion have been approved! I spent half of yesterday writing letters of congratulation. And I have been promoted to Obersturmführer. They men seem even happier than I am. In any event, I got congratulations as if I'd been married.

16 November. Various HJ members, having turned 18, join the S.A.

19 November. 4 of his subleaders make the long drive to visit him in the hospital.

2 December. He's home from the hospital, and his wife is about to give birth.

4 December. Hans-Hugo has arrived! 6 3/4 pounds, gifted with a loud voice. And my wife is recovering well.

10 December. Yesterday I took the first steps back to “official life.” I have a talk and spent the evening with the officer corps of our tank regiment. It was not only pleasant, but good for my S.A. heart. I was well received, and there was a lively interest in the work of the S.A. “What do you really do in the S.A.?” This question was asked repeatedly. It proves to me that we are too modest, and have to present our training and educational activities to the broader public.

After I gave a brief outline of our activities, the unit commander said: “If that is what the S.A. does, it is exactly what we need to support our work. In the two years of active service we have, and occasional reserve exercises, the best we can do is provide the technical training our soldiers need. As necessary as general military training may be, we have only a little time for it. And we have no time at all for military-political and military-spiritual education, other than what comes from living in the barracks and serving as a soldier. I must also admit that I — and most officers — lack the training for that. I never learned it in my 23 years as a soldier, and it is too late now. But you are right. Your work is useful, even perhaps necessary, and we can only be pleased that the S. A. is at our side.”

They shake their heads as I tell them how much time and money the men sacrifice, above all the leaders, and what minimal resources are available to us.

I leave the temporary officer’s quarters — the permanent is not yet ready, and the temporary quarters will become the home of NCOs — with some envy. If we had a tenth of what this building cost, we could build our own S.A. headquarters! We would have a few offices, a meeting room and above all several classrooms. What a boost it would be to our work if we had our own space!

Lacking such a space, he invites 30 of his subordinates to his small apartment for a social evening.

16 December. The gathering goes well, but even though all is quiet, a neighbor comes to complain at 12:45 a.m. The diary writer is incensed.

18 December. He attends the Sturm Christmas party, and is surprised by the gift of a splendid oak cradle made by the men for his new baby boy.

23 December. He distributes Christmas packages from the party charity.

30 December. He is trying to get 30 air rifles for his group, but can’t take up a collection or ask for money in his official capacity. He thus in his “private” capacity speaks with acquaintances, hoping they will

purchase the weapons and donate them.

1 January 1939. We celebrated the new year with a few good friends. The new year starts out well. As of midnight, I again am the leader of my Sturm!

3 January. Heil three times over! 37 more air guns!

5 January. He works out the plan for the next three months, and issues a newsletter to all members, part of which is included in the diary.

From Sturm Order #1/1939

To the Sturm:

...1939 will demand even more of us than 1938. Only if from the start we give up some private pleasures and comforts will we be up to its challenges. I will use every available means, regardless of the cost, to help us meet those challenges.... He who is not ready to give his best to serve his S.A. Sturm, and thereby National Socialism and its Führer, will be a dangerous weakling unless he is immediately expelled. He who is not yet a soldier or for some reason is not a member of the S.A., or who resigns from it, can certainly still be a decent and honorable man. He who stays in the S.A. without giving it his full devotion betrays its work and camaraderie, and will be a scoundrel in the eyes of real S.A. men and National Socialists, someone who must be thrown out...

Introduction of new S.A. men:

I have often been displeased that new S.A. men joining the Sturm are not introduced at the first meeting by the leaders. That increases the feeling of strangeness that one always has in new surroundings in an unnecessary and unfriendly way, and gives the impression of being unwanted. And the "old" members have less connection to the new than is desirable. It is obvious that, with the constant coming and going in our Sturm, leaders must do everything they can to make newcomers feel at home. That means that leaders must be informed of the personal and S.A. background of new members before their first meeting at the latest, and that during the meeting they should say a few words to introduce the newcomer and welcome him to the group.

Rules for vacations, resignations and transfers:

It seems to be a hard to abolish weakness in military behavior that some S.A. men still seem to believe that turning in a request for vacation, resignation or transfer is all that they need to do, and are thus immediately relieved of their S.A. obligations. For anyone who thinks

like a soldier, it is obvious that one is relieved of S.A. obligations only when he has received written notification. A leave before receiving written permission is possible only in exceptional circumstances and with my oral approval.

He who misses a meeting without such approval is guilty of an unexcused absence and is punishable for dereliction of duty. In a ruling dated 3 December 1938, the Standarte ruled that in such cases, the absence will be denied and disciplinary measures culminating in the expulsion of the S.A. man concerned will be instituted!

Institution of a "Report System":

Details on an attendance policy for S.A. activities. Those who miss meetings without excellent reason will be called to account.

Shooting courses:

Several levels of classes will be established.

Weapon training:

Details on same.

8 January. Complaints about orders from above. I strongly object to the principle: "Demand the impossible to achieve the possible." I think there is nothing worse than leadership that is satisfied with 40% of what it asks for. I prefer to ask for what is possible, and then go at it with every available resource to achieve 100%.

10 January. A surprise inspection by his superior, the Obergruppenführer. Although the writer is nervous, everything runs smoothly.

12 January. Yesterday numerous party members received this letter signed by the local group leader and myself:

"Party comrade!

We have noted that although you are an adult party member, you are not serving the party or its divisions in any way. Since we have no reason to doubt your National Socialist willingness to serve, we assume that you have not yet found the appropriate form of service.

For you as a man and party comrade of military age, the best way you can and should demonstrate your willingness to serve the movement is to join the S.A. It is by the Führer's will the movement's school, which

demonstrates the strength of National Socialists to serve the political ideas of National Socialism and tests and hardens our people's military preparedness. The corps of political leaders should be renewed from those men who have proved themselves in the S.A.

We expect therefore, party comrade, that you will join the community of the movement's political soldiers. We think that there will have to be compelling reasons for you to remain an inactive member of the party.

Whatever you decide, we expect that you will notify us of your decision by Monday, 23 January 1939 at the latest."

One should involve broader circles. We can't take everyone into the S.A., but it would be good if our educational work could be extended to all men of military age!

15 January. Marksmanship training matters.

19 January. Our town council responded quickly to a little suggestion and today approved renaming "Town Hall Square" the "S.A. Square." That will remain confidential until it is announced at a ceremony of the S.A., party and public. The planned date is 30 January [the holiday commemorating the Nazi assumption of power in 1933], since it seems there will not be a speech by the Führer this year. At the same time, sports badges will be awarded to SAG participants of last year.

The square is being rebuilt at the moment and will later get a fountain with an S.A. relief or the figure of an S.A. man or something similar that reflects the new name. Since our town is generous once it has decided to do something, something decent will surely result.

20 January. A morning appeal from the Sturmführer in the city. He wants to encourage us poor front-line guys, and urge us on. Unfortunately, the line once more is: "Keep working, don't give up, do your best; the great task we've been longing for for five years will surely come!" But so what. S.A. work is worth our full efforts even today, and there are difficulties to be overcome.

22 January 1939. I still can hardly believe it: The major task for the S.A. that we have longed for is here! The Führer has given the S.A. responsibility for all pre- and post-military training! The S.A. has been given a task within the framework of the state that it deserves. What we are to do, by god, is no less significant than that which the Wehrmacht, the Labor Service, and the Hitler Youth have to do! We S.A. men are responsible for maintaining the military attitudes and abilities of those released from active military service. We S.A. men must ensure that the foundation of any people and Reich is never lost in National Socialist Germany: that military attitudes, hardness, and capabilities remain

vibrant life forces. The Führer has given us the talk of maintaining the military preparedness of all those released from military service. In doing so, he has made the S.A. the final guarantee for the survival of the Greater German Reich. Only when we succeed in keeping each man ready for action and useful militarily up to the limits of age will the German people be ready to survive its battle for existence for all time. Only then will the Führer's Reich become the thousand-year Reich of the Germans, which is the meaning and goal of his work and ours. Alongside the major (and very difficult!) work of post-military training, we have to establish a firm foundation for the Wehrmacht through pre-military training. Even before the Labor Service and military service, the military instincts of the young German man must be awakened. Even boys must cease to be "civilians." The Wehrmacht must take in recruits that it can quickly turn into soldiers. Soldiers even more superior to those of other nations than they already are. — All that has been put in our hands. How proud we S.A. men can be! But the confidence the Führer has placed in us, and the greatness of our task, are an obligation.

I will never forget the leadership meeting yesterday at the state theater. After some introductory words that left us expectant, the Obergruppenführer read a telegram from the Chief of Staff: "The Führer has just signed a decree giving all pre- and post-military training to the S.A." Then he read the decree, which was the best possible justification for our previous work and the fulfillment of our hopes. We 800 S.A. leaders broke out in jubilation. The new task was liberating. Nothing had moved me so deeply for a long time as this modest but significant decree by the Führer. Now the slogan is "Get your butts in gear!" We have to have something to offer men returning from two years of military service. The state may force all of them into our hands, but our goal is to turn them into "volunteers" through our education and training.

This morning, advanced marksmanship Nr. 1 with about 45 men. It was a pleasure to see the men's shining eyes. Every S.A. man knows the scale of the Führer's order!

27 January. The Führer will speak on 30 January after all. There is enormous curiosity about what he will say to the First Reichstag of the Greater German Reich and his people. Our ceremony at "S.A. Square" is of course canceled.

On Monday subleaders begin a seven lecture series on racial science. By order, the racial question is the center of this year's worldview education. One has to provide subleaders with more information on this central aspect of National Socialist teaching than is possible in normal training.

The leader of Troop IV takes on the lecture. He does the first lecture

well. It helps a lot that he can show slides.

2 February. "I consider the most important task of National Socialist state leadership to do everything possible to strengthen our military capacity." These words from the Führer's major serious speech on 30 January are directed to us as well. It gives us direction for the future, and confirms what we have done in the past.

3 February. The S.A. will be collecting for the party charity.

6 February. We had 5690 badges to distribute, and 5690 were distributed. [Contributors to the party charity got a small badge they could wear to prove they had given.] We were supposed to raise 1138 RM, and we actually collected 1440.29 RM. My Sturm gave out 3170 badges. We collected 914.76 RM. We get to keep 280.96 RM of the 302.29 RM above the goal. Sturm A II is in second place, with 1422 badges given out and 297.45 RM collected. Third was the S.A. equestrian unit, with 300 badges and 64.05 RM, followed by the NSKK with 292 badges and 58.85 RM, the SS with 250 badges and 51.10 RM, No reason to be dissatisfied with my men!

I got angry several times while collecting. It is always the same thing: the women in fur coats and the men in their furs and top hats "have already given." They are not ashamed of themselves when they see the collectors walking up and down the street, half frozen, but still smiling as they clink their tins. But there are also happy experiences. I met an old woman who looked so poor that I tried to sneak past her like a guilty boy. But she was waiting for me: "You have to sell me a badge, S.A. man. I am on a pension and don't have much, but I give gladly to the Führer!"

12 February. More sports equipment is secured.

16 February. On boxing.

18 February. A gathering with the officers, and he again regrets the lack of an S.A. headquarters.

19 February. Badges for military training are distributed.

26 February. More field exercises.

4 March. Today we had a subscription campaign for the "S.A. Mann." The press helped out. We got 148 new subscribers, which should get us a bonus. In 1937, we were already third best at getting subscriptions.

5 March. He works on the emergency plan for the Sturm.

6 March. Damn! The “S.A. Mann” campaign was canceled, and that after we got our 150 new subscriptions!

12 March. On the celebration of Heroes’ Memorial Day.

16 March. “The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia!” The Führer finally broke the fist that plunged into the middle of the Reich! Ancient German cultural territory returns to the Reich! What a wonderful time! But foreign countries are outraged, and it is not in vain that the Führer has proclaimed increasing our military preparedness to be the prime goal. Once again we S.A. men see the larger context of our efforts.

The Führer is in Prague at the head of his troops. Splendid and wonderful, but one worries too. A year ago he entered a jubilant Austria — but this time he is traveling through enemy territory. Still, nothing will happen to the Führer before he fulfills his mission.

18 March. A wave of meetings in the county from yesterday until tomorrow, Tomorrow is out turn. Nothing much will be left of Sunday, since during the day I will be out scouting the terrain with the leader of Troop III for the maneuvers that will take place on 2 April. Happily, the leader of Troop III will do most of the technical work — drawing tables, lists, etc., which is a big relief.

22 March. Preparations for the field exercises on 2 April.

23 March 1939. Hitler secures the return of the Memel District.

25 March. Extensive details on the upcoming field exercises.

29 March. Swimming matters.

3 April. The field exercises are a great success.

4 April. Plans for a weekend trip with his men.

6 April. More on the results of the 2 April field exercises.

14 April. As a result of Hitler’s decree, the S.A. is being somewhat reorganized, and he is likely to command a new Sturmabteilung. And he has a nasty cold.

20 April. The Führer’s 50th birthday. My men participate in a torchlight procession — I have to stay home. But the day after tomorrow, I can travel. The doctor approves.

The railway coach is reserved, as is the boat trip on the Bodensee. And there is enough money. And none of my men was stingy — everyone

gave according to his income. Even those who could not go along! S.A. camaraderie!

24 April. A report on the weekend excursion.

29 April. The radio will carry a report on our competition! An astonished world will hear it on 5 May on the program "Aus Zeit und Leben"!

30 April 1939. I got the news today. I will take over Sturmabteilung II on 2 May, and will give up my old Sturm. I hate to leave, but look forward of course to the Sturmabteilung.

This ends the diary of a Sturm. I can conclude it in no better way than by thanking my S.A. men. They march year in, year out, physical laborers and white collar workers, joined in camaraderie, all filled only with the will to serve the Führer and Germany. Ten thousand S.A. Stürme with the same attitudes march today in the Greater German Reich, and do the same things. These hundreds of thousands of unknown S.A. men are the mortar that holds the Führer's work together, and there is no greater joy than serving as a leader in this community of Adolf Hitler's most loyal soldiers.