



0. ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF HITLER - Story  
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After the attempted assassination of Adolf Hitler, during the summer of 1944, some of the Nazi leader's high-ranking officers inspected the bomb damage at Wolf's Lair. In the picture - by an unnamed photographer - we see Martin Bormann, Hermann Göring, and Bruno Loerzer viewing the damaged conference room. Credit: Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1972-025-10 / [CC-BY-SA 3.0](#)

Taken to Tegel Prison, [Bonhoeffer](#) began what would ultimately be the most prolific part of his life. Already a respected author, [Cost of Discipleship](#) became an apt title for his new life as a prisoner of the Third Reich. The central theme of that 1939 book - true Christians must do all they can to follow Christ - must have resonated through Bonhoeffer as he lived his life in Cell 92.

By July 1944, many high-ranking government officials had long been convinced Hitler and his cohorts were leading Germany down a path of ultimate destruction. Even though economic conditions in Germany had drastically improved under Hitler's regime, [his opponents](#) could see the future with Hitler. It was a terrible vision.

Germans were upset with the way the victors of World War I had dealt with their country at the end of that war. The Nazis had capitalized on this smoldering resentment. The Treaty of Versailles (ending WWI) had required Germany to give up some of [its territories](#). Germans wanted [that land](#) back.

Hitler saw an opportunity. By playing into the fears of the German people, Hitler had used his considerable oratory [skills](#) to convince many people that he and his party were the [best thing](#) for the country. But some of the military commanders who originally thought Hitler could help Germany realized he had to go. The only way to get rid of him - in the minds of many high-ranking people - was to assassinate him.

Members of Bonhoeffer's resistance group and German officers with access to [Hitler](#) - like Colonel Claus [von Stauffenberg](#) - took part in the [plot](#) (code-named "[Operation Valkyrie](#)") to assassinate the Fuhrer. The plan had been years in the making.

The plot came to fruition while Bonhoeffer was already in prison for [smuggling Jews](#) out of the country.

On [July 20, 1944](#), Colonel [von Stauffenberg](#) left a briefcase bomb in Hitler's heavily fortified planning room at the now-ruined [Wolf's Lair](#) (then in East Prussia, [now Poland](#)). The bomb [exploded](#) but Hitler, [shaken](#), survived the [attempt](#).

Had Hitler, and his staff, been in their normal meeting place (a bunker) instead of a room with windows (where pressure from the explosion was not confined), the blast would have killed everyone.

The [bunkers](#) at Wolf's Lair [today](#) are not as they were when the attempted assassination took place. When he left the Eastern Front, Hitler believed his former headquarters could be used by the approaching Soviet Army, so he ordered them [destroyed](#).

The Nazis [shot](#) Von Stauffenberg the same evening in Berlin. Two days after the [assassination attempt](#), the Nazi Party's newspaper demanded that German people make greater sacrifices and give absolute obedience to the party and to government leaders.

Officials in charge of [trials](#), orchestrated to condemn the plot's leaders, had one object in mind: demonstrate their own loyalty to Hitler. Rules required for a just trial were completely ignored.

The Nazis implicated thousands of people in the assassination plot, including Bonhoeffer and three members of his immediate family (his brother Klaus and two brothers-in-law). Incriminating documents, hidden by his sister's husband Hans von Dohnanyi, had been found by the Gestapo. Although he did not yet realize the secret papers were in the hands of his enemies, Bonhoeffer was a condemned man.

Transferred to the Berlin Gestapo Prison in February 1945, Bonhoeffer knew he would be executed. His correspondence from prison - smuggled out and published as *Letters and Papers From Prison* - reflect the knowledge of his impending death. Few martyrs have so vividly painted a picture of events leading to their final act of courage.

But prison was not the end for Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The Gestapo had other, more brutal plans in store for him. He was transferred to Buchenwald, the infamous concentration camp.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ATTEMPTED-ASSASSINATION-OF-HITLER-Bonhoeffer-Martyr-of-Faith>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/ATTEMPTED-ASSASSINATION-OF-HITLER-Bonhoeffer-Martyr-of-Faith>

## Media Stream



### Adolph Hitler

Image online, courtesy the German Federal Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Adolph-Hitler>



### Bunkers at Wolf's Lair

Image provided here by Przemyslaw 'Blueshade' Idzkiewicz. Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

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### Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg

Image online, courtesy the Chemistry Daily website.

View this asset at:

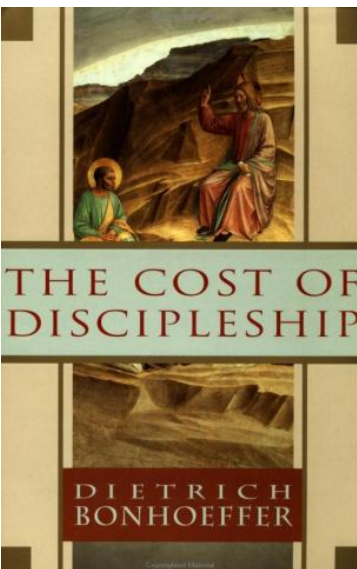
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Colonel-Claus-von-Stauffenberg0>



### Colonel von Stauffenberg

Image online, courtesy the German Resistance Memorial Center.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Colonel-von-Stauffenberg0>



### Cost of Discipleship

Image online, courtesy the amazon.com website.

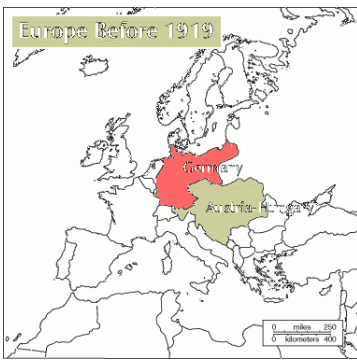
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Cost-of-Discipleship>



### Europe After 1919

Image online, courtesy the University of South Florida website.

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### Europe Before 1919

Image online, courtesy the [interwarperiods.blogspot](http://www.interwarperiods.blogspot.com) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Europe-Before-1919>



### Hans von Dohnanyi

Image online, courtesy the [American Hungarian Federation](http://www.americanhungarianfederation.com) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hans-von-Dohnanyi0>



### Hitler Assassination Attempt

Image online, courtesy the [German Federal Archives](http://www.germanfederalarchives.com).

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## Hitler Ordered the Bunkers Destroyed

Wolf's Lair, one of Hitler's bunker-headquarters which he used during World War II, is also known by its German name: *Wolfsschanze*.

Located in Poland, the bunker featured a concrete ceiling which was two-meters thick. CJ Moss, a Canadian educator, created this map image depicting Wolf Lair's location. (License: CC BY-SA 3.0)



Worried that advancing Soviet troops would use his former headquarters for their own purpose, when they reached Wolf's Lair, Hitler ordered the bunker to be destroyed. His order was carried-out during the night of January 24/25 in 1945.

This image depicts what is left of Wolf's Lair following the 1945 explosion (and how it appeared during May of 2003 when Przemyslaw Idzkiewicz ["Blueshade"] took this picture). Click on the image for a better view.

Image, described above, online via Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hitler-Ordered-the-Bunkers-Destroyed>



## Hitler Surveying the Damage

Image provided here by the German Federal Archives. Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0 DE.

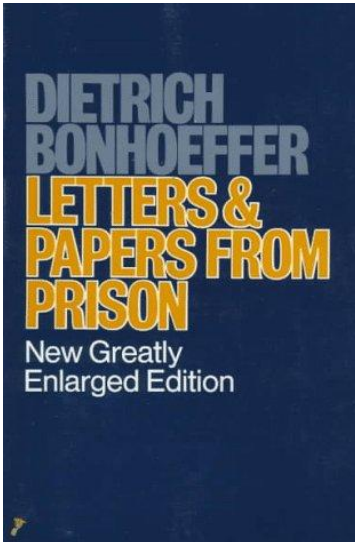
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hitler-Surveying-the-Damage>



### Klaus Bonhoeffer

Image online, courtesy the [Jewish Virtual Library](#) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Klaus-Bonhoeffer1>



### Letters and Papers from Prison

Image online, courtesy [amazon.com](#) website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Letters-and-Papers-from-Prison>



### Map Depicting Location of Wolf's Lair

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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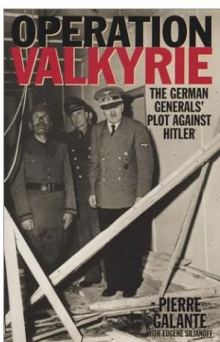
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Depicting-Location-of-Wolf-s-Lair>



### The Wolf's Lair Bunkers Today

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 3.0.

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### Valkyrie: The German Generals' Plot Against Hitler

Image online, courtesy the [amazon.com](#) website.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Valkyrie-The-German-Generals-Plot-Against-Hitler>



### Wolf's Lair

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Wolf's Lair After the Bomb Exploded

Image online, courtesy the German Federal Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Wolf-s-Lair-After-the-Bomb-Exploded>