

Nazi-Run Europe Is Notified By B.B.C. of Deaths in Chair of Six Saboteurs in America

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Other Two Trained Saboteurs, Dasch and Burger, Are Given 30 Years and Life for Help They Gave Authorities

Washington, Aug. 10.—The same strict secrecy which surrounded eight Nazi saboteur specialists during their trial for life before a military tribunal continued to-day to shroud six of them in death and the two who didn't die. Office of war information officials said that details of the disposition of the bodies of the six who were executed in the district jail's electric chair Saturday must come from the White house. Sources there said Presidential Secretary Stephen Early, from whom such an announcement would normally be expected, probably would not be available to-day.

Berlin Notified

Thus, an official curtain was drawn over the likely resting place of the half dozen who landed from U-boats on a mission of sabotage but met instead swift and deadly justice.

But Berlin knew that Heinrich Harm Heinck, Richard Quirin, Edward John Kerling, Herbert Haupt, Werner Thiel and Hermann Otto Neubauer were dead. The B.B.C. took care of that last night, broadcasting the news in several languages to the Nazi-dominated European Continent.

Snug in iron-barred safety, George John Dasch and Ernest Peter Burger continued to live to-day. The help they gave the government in sealing the fate of the other six brought commutation of their death sentence—Dasch's to 30 years and Burger's to life, both at hard labour.

Attorney-General Francis Biddle, chief prosecutor, said the leniency

and Dasch were placed in the president's hands for review.

Activity at Jail

It became apparent early Saturday that he had affirmed the commission's verdict and sentences, and that at the jail preparations were in progress for the executions. Reporters waiting outside the soldier-guarded building saw army chaplains and the District of Columbia coroner enter. After 11 o'clock all possible lights in the jail were kept extinguished.

Outside the jail a small crowd saw army ambulances enter the jail yard, presumably to remove the bodies. A group of young women, huddled under umbrellas on a nearby roof, could see over the wall.

On the sidewalk an elderly gray-haired woman waited for four hours. She told reporters she had one son in the army and one in the navy. When she learned that the men had been executed, she said:

"I'm glad. I don't see why they waited, though. Of course, this is the United States, but they would not have waited all that time over there."

Later the coroner, Dr. A. Magruder MacDonald, left the jail with a military escort, refusing to say what disposition would be made of the bodies. Brigadier-General Robert L. Cox, provost marshal for the District of Columbia, left soon afterward. Reporters attempted to question him, but he placed a finger on his lips, and would say only:

"All mum."

The ambulances bearing the bodies left the jail at mid-afternoon bound apparently for a morgue and burial preparations. A score of soldiers, armed with sub-machine guns, guarded the prison entrance, holding back a lingering crowd of 100 or more. Inside the walled yard the bodies had been carried to the ambulances on stretchers borne by soldiers.

Meanwhile, Stephen Early, the president's secretary, called White House reporters to his office and gave them copies of the announcement.

Text of Announcement

"The president completed his review of the findings and sentences of the military commission appointed by him on July 2, 1942, which tried the eight Nazi saboteurs," it said.

"The president approved the judgment of the military commission that all of the prisoners were guilty, and that they be given the death sentence by electrocution.

"However, there was a unanimous recommendation by the commission, concurred in by the attorney-general and the judge advocate-general of the army, that the sentence of two of the prisoners be commuted to life imprisonment because of their assistance to the government of the United States in the apprehension and conviction of the others.

"The commutation directed by the president in the case of Burger was to confinement at hard labour for life. In the case of Dasch, the sentence was commuted by the president to confinement at hard labour for thirty years.

"The electrocutions began at noon to-day.

"Six of the prisoners were electrocuted. The other two were confined to prison.

"The record in all eight cases will be sealed until the end of the war."

The electric chair is located in a chamber on the top floor of the jail. The chair itself, newly cleaned, stood in the middle of the room. Two dozen shiny aluminum chairs had been placed in the adjoining witness room, separated from the death chamber itself by a partition of glass and screening.

In advance it was said that a crew of four from the regular staff of the jail would manage the executions.

The four, their names not announced, were an executioner and an assistant executioner, who receive \$50 for each person put to death, and two assistants, each getting \$25.

All eight of the would-be saboteurs, although German-born, had spent considerable periods in this country, and one, Haupt, was a naturalized American citizen.

Four of them, Dasch, Burger,

Heinck and Quirin, came ashore on June 13 at Amagansett beach, Long Island. They wore, it was revealed later, uniforms of the German marine infantry, donned, the government contended, so that if captured as they landed, they could claim the rights of military prisoners. They quickly changed to civilian garb.

Guardman's Tip-off

In landing they encountered an unarmed coast guardsman, John C. Cullen, on beach patrol. They attempted to buy his silence with a bribe of \$300, for his death or disappearance would have unleashed a determined hunt. Taking the money, he went to his station and reported the event. Then he discovered that he had been short-changed by \$40.

The four others landed three days later on a beach near Jacksonville, Fla. By what method they were apprehended has never been revealed, but on June 27, a week or ten days later, federal bureau of investigation agents had arrested all eight in New York and Chicago.

Announcing their seizure, the F.B.I. said the men brought with them enough explosives for a two-year campaign of destruction. These they had buried on the beach. The caches included quantities of T.N.T., incendiaries, time fuses, acids, and bombs disguised as lumps of coal.

They had a list, too, of the plants, railroads, waterways and bridges which they had been instructed to destroy.

Confer on Other Charges

Washington, Aug. 10.—(BUP)—Justice department officials confer to-day to consider bringing treason charges against the 14 confederates of the eight Nazi saboteurs whose abortive plans of destruction ended with death in the electric chair for six of them.

The two who talked and lived, George John Dasch and Ernest Peter Burger, remained under heavy guard in the District of Columbia jail where their six colleagues walked in a semi-trance to the electric chair on Saturday.

The bodies of the six who died were still in the morgue at Walter Reed hospital, but some time to-day military authorities may decide how to dispose of them.

It is possible that Dasch and Burger will be held available to testify against their confederates who were rounded up in New York and Chicago soon after the Gestapo-trained saboteurs were captured.

At present ten of the accomplices are charged with being accessories and four are held as enemy aliens. Under existing law, conviction on the accessory charge brings a penalty that is comparatively light—a maximum of ten years' imprisonment.

But for treason, the maximum penalty is death. For this reason, justice department authorities are reviewing the records of the saboteurs' "contacts" to decide whether to bring the more serious charge against them.



shown the two was "perfectly justified" because "they helped considerably" in preparing the case against the other six. It also was evidence that the mercy granted the two would be of value in sowing seeds of distrust in any espionage, sabotage or fifth-column group that still might be in existence. The publicity given the Dasch-Burger commutations was a bid for any member of enemy bands who might choose to turn tale-bearers.

Ten Held as Accomplices

With ten others jailed in Chicago and New York, charged with being the saboteurs' American accomplices, this point took on a new import.

The first of the saboteurs to pay with his life was led from a cell at the District of Columbia jail to its execution chamber at noon Saturday. In grim succession, the five others followed.

Just before 1.30 the White house, several miles away, announced that President Roosevelt had approved the findings and recommendations of the military commission, and that the six had been executed. The record of the case, containing much information of an important military nature, it was said, would be sealed until after the war.

So, nearly two months after the arrival of the eight men on American shores, their cases were ended. They were closed, however, only after exhaustive legal proceedings, undreamed of in the dictator-ridden land from which they came. At one point an appeal for writ of habeas corpus was taken to the civil courts, and the supreme court, meeting in special session, upheld the legality and constitutionality of the method of trial which President Roosevelt had established.

The military commission finished its work last Sunday. On Monday the record of the case, the sentences imposed and the recommendations for leniency to Burger