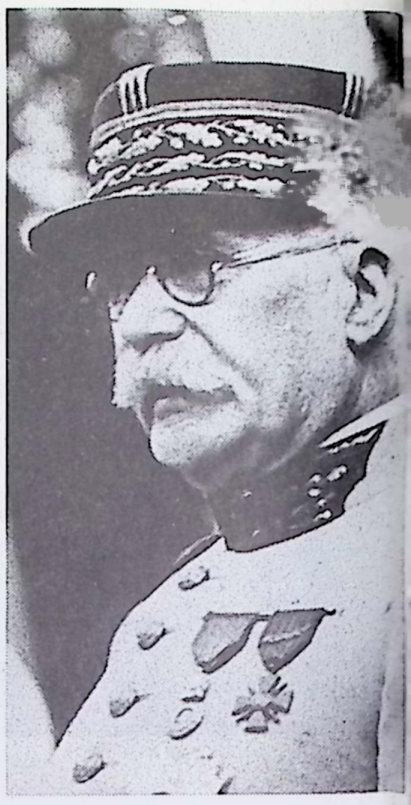




Field Marshal Von Manstein was tried by a British Military Court in Hamburg in 1949 and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment, which was reduced to 12.

criminals, which was legitimised subsequently by an Act of Attainder. War-time passions, however, had cooled, and Cold War considerations perhaps had begun to intrude. There would have been the realisation also that after conflict, reconciliation was the only constructive option. Kesselring's sentence was reduced to life imprisonment. He was in fact released in 1952.

Field Marshal Von Rundstedt was charged as a war criminal by the British, for involvement in mass murders in Soviet territories. He never faced trial, ostensibly because of ill health. He was released in 1948 and died in 1952.[2]

Then there was Field Marshal Von Manstein (top, left). He was tried by a British Military Court in Hamburg in 1949 and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment, which was reduced to 12 years. He served 4 years before he was released for medical reasons. He had followed scorched earth tactics, denying food to the local population in occupied Soviet territories, and had failed to protect civilian lives.

A particularly notorious outfit of war was Unit 731 of Japan. It conducted bacteriological research on humans, mainly Chinese and Russian prisoners, who were subjected to vivisection after being infected with various diseases. There were other grisly experiments. Thousands died. The object was to develop chemical and biological weapons.

General MacArthur ensured immunity to those involved in such research, in exchange for valuable germ warfare data they had gathered. A number of Nazi doctors accused of human experimentation were, however, tried in US Military Courts; some were awarded capital punishment.

Major Colin Powell was serving in Vietnam at the time of the infamous My Lai massacre in March 1968. Decades later, talking to Larry King on CNN, Secretary of State Powell observed that: "In war these horrible things happen every now and again, but they are still to be deplored." War crimes cannot perhaps be altogether separated from war.

The term collaboration may be applied to actions ranging from urging the local population to extend support to an occupying power, to "traitorous cooperation with the enemy, criminal deeds in the service of the occupying power, complicity in murder, persecution, pillage, participating in a puppet government and economic exploitation."

After World War II, collaborators were judged by their own countries and courts, often more harshly and with less ceremony than were Nazi war criminals. Many suspected collaborators received rough and ready summary justice. Thousands were charged with collaboration-related offences in countries like France, Norway, and Denmark.

Marshal Petain (top, middle), a hero of World War I, was the head of state of Vichy France. After the war he was condemned to death for