# *Operation Valkyrie*

# The Failed Plot to Assassinate Hitler

AZIZUL JALIL

The British, American and Free French Forces had landed on the beaches of Normandy in France on June 6, 1944. It was only a matter of time before the Soviets from the east and the allied armies from the west would overrun Berlin, the German capital. Hitler, the Chancellor, was holed up at his East Prussian headquarters, Wolfssschanze (Wolf's Lair), a heavily guarded remote forest area. Outside the lunatic circle surrounding Hitler, most Germans if asked privately, would admit that the war was lost. But the Fuehrer was delusional, personally devising the war strategy and issuing frantic orders, deploying the already depleted or non-existing troops.

At this juncture, a few patriotic army officers thought it necessary to shift their loyalty from the person of Hitler to the German State. They did not suddenly become pacifists but had become convinced that the regime was dooming Germany to mass destruction. There was no way to change the government and its insane policies of conquest of Europe and elimination of the Jews except by assassinating Hitler. The conspirators also hoped to make a deal with the Americans and possibly save Germany from the coming vengeance of the Soviet Union, which had lost millions of its people in the war.

The main figure in the plot to kill Hitler was Claus von Stauffenberg, who belonged to the Prussian aristocracy. He was commissioned in 1930 after a brilliant record at the infantry school and the cavalry academy at Hanover. He rose rapidly and had become a lieutenant colonel by 1943. While serving in North Africa, the staff car he was riding was strafed by an allied plane. He received serious injuries, losing his right hand, forearm and left eye. During his medical treatment, he had refused painkillers and this bravery came to the attention of the army high command.



Adolf Hitler

A few patriotic army officers thought it necessary to shift their loyalty from the person of Hitler to the German State. They did not suddenly become pacifists but had become convinced that the regime was dooming Germany to mass destruction. There was no way to change the government and its insane policies of conquest of Europe and elimination of the Jews except by assassinating Hitler.

As a brilliant officer no longer able to fight, he was posted to the army general staff. He was to serve under General Olbricht, who was dissatisfied by the war situation and planning to do something about it. There were about 15 other generals, including Field Marshal Rommel and high-ranking officials who had the knowledge and tacitly supported the idea of overthrowing the Hitler regime. At the outset, Olbricht asked him whether he was prepared to participate in an attack on Hitler's life. Stauffenberg's answer was in the affirmative.

There was the fear that even if the attempt to kill Hitler succeeded, the Special Forces belonging to the Nazi Party-the fiercely loyal SS, would oppose the take over of the government by the plotters. They had to be neutralized