Chapter 1

Germany’s Rearmament

My name is Wolfgang Kaiser. I have blond hair and blue eyes. I was fifteen in 1933.

 America, France, England, and all their allies decided our fate. The Great War left both sides devastated and there was no clear winner. We had kicked the Russians out of the war by outsmarting their Czar, but we angered the Americans, causing them to enter. This was our only mistake! They caused the line to be drawn and a ceasefire was ordered, sealing our fate. The French and English practically demanded our blood by dividing up the Fatherland, dividing up her allies, and making us pay fines too large to imagine!

 Our economy plummeted with many of the jobs no longer available. My father finally lost his in 1920. I was only two at the time, but I had two older brothers and an older sister that all seem to remember the trying times of those first two years much more than I can. We struggled to get by with one politician after another promising reform. All the candidates promised reformation of the economy, the government, and anything else that wasn’t working right. For years this happened, and in 1925, a small political party grew for a book called Mein Kampf. No one had taken them seriously because the United States had decided to become involved with European affairs and lend my Germany money to repay the war reparations. We had started to recover when a great depression struck America, sending us back to square one.

 With no money and no positive outlook in sight, Adolf Hitler came in with his National Socialist German Workers’ Party which soon was just referred to as the Nazi Party. Hitler came in and embraced the ideals of the true German people and Aryan race. I was the perfect specimen with my blond hair, blue eyes, tall frame, and Christian beliefs. Hitler had helped from at the start of America’s depression in 1929 to make the Fatherland the place it always was. He gained momentum with his party until finally becoming Chancellor in 1933. I knew from the start that he would lead us out of these miserable conditions, so I started to call Adolf Hitler my fuehrer, or my leader.

My fuehrer did not like how restricting the Treaty of Versailles had left Germany no way to rebuild. Instead of doing nothing like the government was doing, he ordered the army to increase to 300,000 men, 1,000 planes to be built, and several compounds with barracks to be built! My father’s friend that still had a job in the government told my father of this order, which I had overheard from another room in the house. I know it's a secret right not because we don’t want France and England to know we are building up an army, or else they might put a stop to it before all the jobs can be filled for the benefit of the Fatherland. Being only fifteen, I was too young to join the army, but my two brothers had volunteered! One went into the Luftwaffe which is just our air force, and the other one went into the Heer which is the regular army. Both are branches of the Wehrmacht which is just the unified forces of Germany with the Luftwaffe, Heer, and Kriegsmarine, or navy. Frustrated with having to wait, I joined Hitler’s club for children not old enough to join the army called the Hitler Youth.

By joining the Hitler Youth, I met some of my best friends, and I learned so many different parts of the Fatherland I had not previously know. My friend Albert told me of this family that lived next to him and had strange rituals they performed daily. When I asked my father about it, he said they were Jews. Intrigued by this, I told Albert what my father said, and we asked our Hitler Youth instructor what it meant to be Jewish. Right away, he told us Jews were horrible people not to be associated with and that Hitler had deemed them the cause for us losing the Great War. Our instructor asked us where we had heard of these people, and Albert said his neighbors were Jewish. The instructor thanked him and told Albert to not go over to their house ever and that soon, they would be gone. The next week when I saw Albert again, he said,” My neighbors are gone now. Do you remember the Jewish one? My dad told me to go to my room, but I saw through my window some men in black coats come and take them away in cars. Later, some more men in black coats came and collected all their stuff and put it all into a truck. I think they were moving, but I’m glad they’re gone.” I agreed, and later that day, the instructor went over the sections in Mein Kampf where the fuehrer told us the disgrace of the Jews.

Most days, I saw my friends from the Hitler Youth in school or after if they didn’t go to my school. My family lived in the small town of Mannheim in Southwest Germany, so we didn’t have much to do besides our club. My parents were so proud of me and this was second year in it when my fuehrer really started to make life interesting.

I was in school when an announcement came on over the radio our teacher had in the corner. The teacher told us it was mandatory for all radios to be on during the day and in the evening in case the fuehrer had something to say to us or other important information. Today I considered this very important because, when the fuehrer came on, even the teacher went dead quiet. He told us that the Fatherland was finally going public with his recent military expansions, and he ordered another 2,500 planes to be built and a conscription to increase the Wehrmacht to 550,000 men. Even though this broke the Treaty of Versailles, all the other countries in Europe were too busy to deal with their problems to try and stop Germany.

“Next year, when I’m eighteen, I’m going to join the Wehrmacht just like my brothers and help the Fatherland!” I told my friends.

“I’m going to join up, too!” Albert exclaimed to my outburst.

The rest of the class went on with the teacher trying to calm us all down and continue back on track.

Three months later in class, the teacher asked us,” Have any of your parents informed you of the news?”

Several students raised their hands but Ava, a small blond hair, hazel eyed girls, was called on by the teacher. “Our fuehrer made an agreement with England,” she answered softly.

“That’s right!” the teacher replied. “Germany and England have signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement. This will allow Germany to have one-third of the tonnage of Great Britain’s navy’s surface fleet, and we can have equal tonnage of their submarine fleet.”

The next year came and passed with graduation and goodbyes said to all my friends and eventually family. It was 1936, and I had joined the Wehrmacht to be a part of the Infantry. Boot camp was long and hard. I had to learn to follow orders which came easier than expected from the Hitler Youth. The Hitler Youth had also taught basic use of guns and some heavier equipment, so I felt I had an edge compared to some of the other recruits. I was in basic training for a year when news came in of the annexation of Austria. All the soldiers talked excitedly how Austria was taken without a shot fired and England and France were doing nothing to prevent this shift. I had wondered if my Fuhrer was planning something larger since the drill sergeants were ramping up the workloads and drills. A year later, I found out.

The date was August 12, 2938 when orders came in to mobilize the different branches of the Wehrmacht. Hitler was not satisfied with only Austria, and he wanted more of the lost pieces of Germany after the Great War divided her up. We were to march close to the Czechoslovakia border and almost reach the Sudetenland. The marching was long and tiring with fewer breaks than could be considered favorable. I marched on for my love of the Fatherland and to regain the glory of the Third Reich. However, we were halted before entering because in September, the leaders of England and France met with the Fuhrer in Munich.

The leader of England, Neville Chamberlain, and the leader of France, Daladier, negotiated what to do with the Sudetenland, should we have to invade. For a month, the leaders and the Fuhrer worked through translators in what became named the Munich Conference. In the end, those weak-willed English and French caved in to the Fuhrer’s demands for the Sudetenland but on the condition he asked for no more. The agreement was signed on September 30 and started England’s plan of appeasement. On October 15, we marched into the Sudetenland and occupied it. I was 21 years old. Appeasement only works for so long and a storm was brewing.