

Knight's Cross Recipients

Knight's Cross recipients and recipients of higher levels of the award did not appear in the paper until about three weeks after the approval of the award. The last edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter* appeared in Munich on 28 April 1945.⁵⁴ After 30 April 1945, no more recipients of these high-level awards were published in the *Flensburger Nachrichten*, because the officer responsible for releasing this information to the press, *General der Infanterie* Burgdorf, had committed suicide during the night of 1/2 May 1945.⁵⁵

2. The Decision Cycles

The Army Personnel Office was the staff directorate that prepared and filtered the award recommendations that arrived from the field. It was part of the German Army High Command, which reported directly to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, *Generalfeldmarschall* von Brauchitsch. The latter also signed the *vorläufige Besitzezeugnisse* (preliminary award documents) of recommendations that had been approved by Hitler. These were signed: *Der Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres* and *v. Brauchitsch*. When the *Generalfeldmarschall* relinquished his duties on 20 December 1941 and Hitler assumed overall command of the Army, the Army Personnel Office then theoretically also reported directly to Hitler. Hitler only practiced the authority granted him as Commander-in-Chief of the Army in the area of operational command, however. All of the remaining authorities of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army — to include providing input concerning submitted Knight's Cross

edition, which appeared until 20 April 1945, and the Viennese edition, which appeared until 7 April 1945.

⁵⁴ Telephonic information provided on 18 June 2004 by Ms. Hörning at the library of the University of the Armed Forces in Hamburg.

⁵⁵ The award recommendations General der Infanterie Burgdorf presented to and approved by Hitler were then reported by the former to P 5a and, at the same time, the press section of the German Armed Forces High Command (PKW/WPr/Gr. P), which released them to the Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro (German Press Agency).

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Havik, Hans	<i>SS-Untersturmführer / Platoon Leader / 1./SS-Polizei-Panzer- Abteilung 4</i>	9 May 1945
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5 May 1923 Groningen / Holland
21 September 1997 Stein bei Nuremberg
East

According to the log of "Awarded Knight's Crosses" and the index-card files, the award recommendation from the field was received by the Army Personnel Office on 6 April 1945. Apparently, an Army Personnel Office Award Recommendation was produced and was forwarded with No. 5023 on 8 April (according to the index-card file). No other information concerning processing or approval of the award. According to Krätschmer, the award date was: "6 May 1945". The point of contact for tracing individuals for the "*Götz von Berlichingen*" divisional association, Mr. Ott, named the source for the information concerning Havik to Fellgiebel: Federal Archives, gleaned by Award Association of the Knight's Cross member Mr. X (name is known to the author). (Letter from W. Ott to Fellgiebel, dated 7 January 1986.) The Federal Archives declared that it could not provide evidence for Havik, however. (Information provided on 20 July 2004 by Mr. Meentz.) The award date of "9 May 1945" was determined by Fellgiebel.

B.Arch RW 57/96, log of "Awarded Knight's Crosses", Knight's Cross files of the Army and *Waffen-SS*; Krätschmer, *Ritterkreuzträger*, 3rd edition.

Heiland, Hans	<i>Leutnant / Acting Commander / 5./Panzergranadier- Regiment 126</i>	9 May 1945
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22 June 1917 Stuttgart
East / *Wehrmacht (Oberleutnant)* (information provided by Heiland)

Award recommendation from the field arrived at the Army Personnel Office via teletype on 12 April 1945. No index-card file. In the log of "Awarded Knight's Crosses", the receipt of award recommendation is given as 12 April 1945. The following is noted under remarks: "W.V. 10 May". Apparently, the input from the chain-of-command was missing — as was the case in a number of other cases — and had to be requested before the award could be processed. The award recommendation was supposedly presented to *Major* Domaschk again on 10 May. From the point of view of the Award Association of the Knight's Cross, the award was approved as a result of the "Dönitz Directive". According to a statement by the *Wehrmachtsauskunftsstelle* (= *WASst* = Armed Forces Information Center) (see appendix), this "directive" is not legally valid. The date of the award was determined by Fellgiebel. Heiland is a member of the Award Association of the Knight's Cross.

B.Arch RH 7/v.290, log of "Awarded Knight's Crosses".

Heisterman von Ziehlberg, Gustav	<i>Generalleutnant / Commander / 28. Jäger-Division</i>	27 July 1944
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10 December 1898 Hohenzalza
2 February 1945 Berlin-Spandau (executed by firing squad in conjunction with the 20 July plot)
Soviet Union

Heisterman von Ziehlberg was sentenced to death and loss of all military honors by the *Reich* Court Martial on 21 November 1944 in conjunction with the 20 July plot. The loss of military honors mandatorily led to the permanent loss of awards and decorations.

Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand (Berlin).