
The Round Tablette

Founding Editor: James W. Gerber, MD (1951–2009)

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Welcome to the second October meeting of the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table.

Tonight is the annual Dr. Harold C. Deutsch lecture and features Ken Hechler, author of *Goering and His Gang*, who will discuss his personal experiences interviewing Nazi leaders at Mondorf, Luxembourg..

Tonight, we do not have a veteran panel. In the early years, it was Dr. Deutsch's custom to speak on a topic of his choosing at the November meeting. These lectures were always well attended due to his reputation. His knowledge on virtually any World War II topic was second to none. Many of his former students from the University of Minnesota came to this lecture. With his death, it was decided to remember him not only by naming this Round Table in his honor, but also with a lecture series.

Dr. Ken Hechler (Ph.D. Columbia University) taught at Columbia College, Princeton University, and Barnard College before the war. Commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Armor during the war, he served as a military historian in the ETO, rising to Major in the reserves. He was attached to the 9th Armored Division when one of its task forces captured the Ludendorff Bridge, and interviewed the men, and some of the German defenders, writing the book which became a movie. He entered politics, first serving as a speechwriter and staffer for

President Harry S Truman. He was elected to the US House of Representatives from West Virginia, serving from 1959-1977, and then as West Virginia's Secretary of State from 1985 to 2001. He authored *Bridge at Remagen*, and *Working with Truman: A Personal Memoir of the White House Years*.

As a combat historian, he was tasked to interview a number of the leading Nazis quartered at "Ashcan," Central Continental Prisoner of War Enclosure No. 32 at the Palace Hotel in Mondorf, Luxembourg, in the summer of 1945. The inmates were allowed to move freely about the compound, to talk with each other, and with a number of American "welfare" officers and other personnel in hopes that this would "loosen lips

A stellar rogue's gallery of leading Nazis were detained at ASHCAN, including: Goering, Joachim von Ribbentrop (Foreign Minister), Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, General Alfred Jodl, Grand Admiral Karl Doentz, Wilater Funk (Minister of Economics), Hans Frank (Governor General of Poland), Julius Streicher (Gauleiter of Franconia and editor of *Der Stuermer*), and Field Marshals Gerd von Rundstedt and Albert Kesselring.

On 10 August 1945, the prisoners were transferred to Nuremburg, where the War Crimes Commission held them for trial. Camp ASHCAN was closed down and the property reverted to being used as a Hotel. More recently, the building was leveled so that a new Spa could be built.

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Hechler's book, *Goering and His Gang*, contains transcripts of 80 interviews Hechler conducted with many of these notables. In most cases, their frankness helps to fill in the gaps in the record, and allows us to see what was happening on the other side of the hill. Historian Richard Overy complimented Hechler for his ability to get the prisoners to talk saying, "Gradually the exchanges evolved from interrogation to conversation. Hechler became more confident in subsequent interrogations, but he kept the matter-of-fact, open approach and extracted a great deal from his subjects." He was very effective as an interrogator even though some of his US Army colleagues did not appreciate his approach or method.

Further Reading:

Ken Hechler, *Goering and His Gang: My Interrogation of Nazi Germany's Top Officials* (Missoula, Mont.: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 2011).

B.H. Liddell-Hart *The German Generals Talk* (New York: Quill, 1979)

Richard Overy, *Interrogations: The Nazi Elite in Allied Hands, 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001)

Announcements:

Twin Cities Civil War Round Table - Sept. 18, 2012 Lee's Retreaded Tarheels 26th NC www.tccwrt.com - info @ tccwrt.com

St Croix Valley Civil War Round Table - Oct. 22, 2012 South Mountain - Steve Anderson - 715-386-1268 – rossandhaines@comcast.net

Rochester WWII History Round Table –507-280-9970; www.ww2roundtable-rochester.org

Fort Snelling Civil War Symposium April 2013, <http://www.tccwrt.com/symposium.html> or tccwrt@yahoo.com

Minnesota Military Museum, Camp Ripley, 15000 Hwy 115, Little Falls, MN 56345, 320-616-6050, <http://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org/>

Air Show - Eden Prairie - July, 13-14, 2013; <http://www.airexpo-mn.org/> - 952-746-6100

Honor Flight - Jerry Kyser -

crazyjerry45@hotmail.com - 651-338-2717

CAF - Commemorative Air Force - www.cafmn.org or Bill at 952-201-8400

Minnesota Air Guard Museum - www.mnangmuseum.org 612-713-2523

Friends of Ft. Snelling, www.fortsnelling.com
Fagen Museum in Granite Falls,
www.fagenfighterswwiimuseum.org. 320-564-6644

World War II Weekend, Historic Fort Snelling, 8-9 June 2013, ftnselling@mnhs.org

Civil War Weekend, Historic Fort Snelling, 17-18 August 2013, ftnselling@mnhs.org

Round Table Schedule 2012-2013

13 Dec. Relief of Bastogne
2013

10 Jan. Defeat in the East 1943 (Eastern Front)

14 Feb. Emergence of Viet-Nam from WW2

14 Mar. Military Intelligence Language School

28 Mar. WW2 in the Middle East

11 Apr. Hitler's Breakwater Fighting in the Baltic

9 May Kampfgruppe Peiper at Malmedy

If you are a veteran, or know a veteran, of one of these campaigns – contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or coldpatton@yahoo.com



If you liked tonight's program, view our Nov. 2003 program - [Failures of WWI That Led to WWII](#). You may order it tonight for delivery next month by seeing Rob at the desk, or online at: www.barros.us/online-store.cfm or contact Rob at (763) 639-3399