

GURPS®

WWII™ IRON CROSS

Nazi Germany And Its Forces

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WHAT THEY CARRIED



Heer troops carried an efficient minimum of equipment for daily usage. See pp. W87-99 for basic gear and weapons.

Papers and ID

Every German soldier carried a standard set of personal identification. This began with his *Soldbuch*, or paybook, a strongly bound booklet somewhat larger than a modern passport and serving much the same purpose. It included a photograph and physical description of the soldier, his service and medical records, a copy of his identity-disc's lettering, and his history of drawing pay outside his own unit. Troopers routinely carried other documents, such as civil driving licenses, folded within their paybook. Generally, when about to take part in an assault, German soldiers left their paybooks with someone in the rear; they carried them at all times, otherwise.

Troops not on active service carried a *Wehrpass*, much like the paybook. Unit administrators kept these for those on duty.

The Wehrmacht issued an identity disc much like dog tags. It was a zinc oval about 3" across, perforated along the long axis and with holes drilled in it for a leather cord. The trooper wore it around his neck. If he was killed, the lower half of the disc could be snapped off and taken, leaving the upper half with the body. Both halves initially gave service number, unit, and blood type. Later discs carried only the service number and a code for rear-area administrators to look up the rest.

German soldiers generally carried a minimal set of personal effects: snapshots of mom (*mutti*), wife, and/or girlfriend(s); pornographic post or playing cards; and (for reasons not entirely clear) photos of atrocities or executions they had witnessed.

Medals

See p. W49. About 16% of German soldiers had an Iron Cross, Second Class, while about 3% wore the First Class version. The Wehrmacht and Nazi party issued hundreds of other medals and awards. Few not discussed on p. W49 would merit a reaction bonus, though the GMIs free to judge differently depending on circumstances. For instance, most soldiers simply wouldn't recognize something like the old-pattern Romanian Order of the Crown, but the medal might bestow a +1 reaction from old-guard officers (a small group) if the soldier wore nothing more prominent. If worn with an Iron Cross, the Romanian medal probably would not add to the reaction bonus.

Civilian awards were not common, though the Cross of Honor of the German Mother (in bronze for 5-6 children, silver for 7-8, or gold for more) gave a +1 to reactions among most Germans, even those not particularly devoted to Nazism.

Infantry Kit

An off-duty rifleman wore underclothes, uniform with first-aid kit, service cap, and boots, weighing 11.5 lbs. with jackboots.

Entering combat, he placed two full rifle ammo pouches on his belt, one to each side of the buckle. He added his exterior suspenders (which normally attached to the ammo pouches) to form his load-carrying gear. He attached a bread bag to his belt at the right hip, within which he carried a half-day's

rations, toiletries, personal effects, and usually his service cap. He attached his entrenching tool (see p. W88) to his belt at the left hip with his bayonet (see p. W193) just before it. He attached a canteen to the bread bag such that it rode near his right buttock. He slung a gas-mask container over his right shoulder and fixed it to his belt so that it rode securely over his left kidney or buttock. He then put on his helmet and picked up his Karabiner 98k rifle (see p. W92), often slinging it to the front when marching in the field rather than on parade.

This basic combat load weighed 43 lbs. When possible, riflemen carried into action only this gear and a grenade or two.

Early rifleman also carried a gas cape (see p. W87) on the front side of their gas-mask strap, bringing combat encumbrance to 45 lbs. total. They began to discard these as fighting progressed without threat of chemical warfare. Panzer-grenadiers also often carried goggles for use while in their carriers. They wore these slung around their necks in combat.

On the march or when transport was not available to carry field gear, the rifleman could attach an assault pack or the *tor-nister* full pack (treat as a backpack or mountain backpack respectively; see p. W87) to a yoke hung from his braces high on his shoulders. With this, the trooper's greatcoat (treat as a trenchcoat, p. W87), blanket, and shelter half were rolled together and strapped horseshoe-style over the top of the pack. This assembly added 17.5 (for the assault pack) or 22.5 lbs. to encumbrance before anything was added to the backpack other than stakes and rope for using the shelter half as a tent.

See pp. 57-59 for more details on much of this equipment.

WHAT CARRIED THEM

Whenever possible, troops moved by train. Standard troop trains carried a tank platoon, a motorized company and support elements, or 350 infantrymen with baggage and horses. An infantry division required 35-40 of these trains, a panzer division twice that. Trains averaged 150-200 miles daily in Germany, 60 near the front. They carried 1-3 AAGuns.

Once on the road, German infantry divisions averaged 3 mph at all hours, motorized divisions 16 mph in daytime or 10 mph at night, and armored divisions 12 mph during daylight or 7 mph after dark. Infantry could cover short distances at 4 mph but rarely averaged more than 20 miles per day, half that in rough terrain or bad weather. Motorized divisions averaged 90-150 miles, armored divisions 60-90 on good roads. As with all armies, a German division formed an incredibly long column on the march. An infantry division stretched 25 miles with no space between subunits, a panzer division 59.

Less commonly, troops moved by ship. In game terms, the general staff set aside 40 VSPs (see p. W118) of cargo space per soldier, 160 per horse, 200 per light vehicle, 400 per truck or heavy artillery piece, or 500 for a medium tank. (The *GURPS WWII* design system requires *much* less space. These are historical figures, whereas the game rules assume very high efficiency.) This averaged to 110 VSPs per man with gear in an infantry division, with careful loading. Simply rushing everyone on and off ferries multiplied space needs by as much as 7!

GURPS Nazi Germany Ranks

MR	Army (Air Force)	Waffen-SS, Gestapo	Navy	Police	Nazi Party
8	Generalfeldmarschall†	Reichsführer-SS	Grossadmiral	–	Reichsleiter
8	Generaloberst	SS-Oberstgruppenführer	Generaladmiral	Generaloberst	–
8	General	SS-Obergruppenführer	Admiral	General	Gauleiter
7	Generalleutnant	SS-Gruppenführer	Vizeadmiral	Generalleutnant	–
7	Generalmajor	SS-Brigadeführer	Konteradmiral	Generalmajor	Deputy Gauleiter
6	Oberst	SS-Oberf., -Standartenführer	Kapitän*, Kommodore	Oberst	–
5	Oberstleutnant	SS-Obersturmbannführer	Fregattenkapitän	Oberstleutnant	Kreisleiter
4	Major	SS-Sturmbannführer	Korvettenkapitän	Major	–
4	Hauptmann	SS-Hauptsturmführer	Kapitänleutnant	Hauptmann	Ortsgruppenleiter
3	Oberleutnant	SS-Obersturmführer	Oberleutnant*	Oberleutnant	Zellenleiter
3	Leutnant	SS-Untersturmführer	Leutnant*	Leutnant	Blockleiter
2	Stabsfeldwebel	SS-Sturmscharführer	Stabsoberbootsmann	Meister	Hauptbereitschaftsl.
2	Hauptfeldwebel	SS-Stabsscharführer	Oberbootsmann	Hauptwachtmeister	–
2	Oberfeldwebel	SS-Hauptscharführer	Stabsbootsmann	Kompaniehauptwachtm.	Oberbereitschaftsleiter
1	Feldwebel	SS-Oberscharführer	Bootsmann	Revieroberwachtmeister	Bereitschaftsleiter
1	Unterfeldwebel	SS-Scharführer	Stabssteurmann	Oberwachtmeister	–
1	Obergefreiter	SS-Unterscharführer	Matrosen-Obergefr.	Wachtmeister	Hauptarbeitsleiter
0	Gefreiter	SS-Rottenführer	Matrosen-Gefreiter	Rottwachtmeister	Oberarbeitsleiter
0	Oberschütze	SS-Sturmmann	–	Unterbwachtmeister	Arbeitsleiter
0	Schütze (Flieger)	SS-Mann	Matrosen	Anwärter	Helfer

A “–” means no equivalent rank.

Most Heer (army) officer ranks are followed by the branch of service; e.g., Hauptmann der Infanterie.

† Luftwaffe (air force) officer ranks are followed by “der Flieger.” Göring alone held the top Rank 8 title, Reichsmarschall.

* Kriegsmarine (navy) officer ranks marked with an asterisk are followed by “zur See.”

Police officer ranks are followed by “der Gendarmerie” or “der Polizei.”

Patron see pp. W63, W181

Nazi Germany essentially worked on the patronage system. Hitler served as a patron to many generals and party officials, these generals and officials themselves served as patrons for field officers and mid-level functionaries, and so on.

Many of these relationships would not qualify as Patrons in game terms, however. For a superior to qualify as a **GURPS** patron, he would have to be willing to stick by the character in thin times as well as thick. This wasn't typical Nazi behavior. Hitler would gladly reward an officer who had pleased him, but for the most part he would just as quickly get rid of the fellow once he fouled up. He had his exceptions – Albert Speer (p. 54) certainly qualified as one – but not many.

Those who do have Hitler as a Patron must treat him as a 30-point national government, no matter his personal point cost. In this case, his assertion that he *was* the state holds true.

Rank see pp. 96, W62, W179

All members of the German armed forces, including the police, have Military Rank as described in the corebook.

Nazi officials (p. 96) have Administrative Rank rather than Military Rank. It works exactly the same way, except it applies to the party apparatus rather than armed forces. The two functions often overlapped in one man, and in turn overlapped with civil posts that had their own Administrative Rank. Only the *highest* of these Ranks should be paid for in these cases. A Nazi gauleiter would gain little reach, just breadth, of power by becoming an SS-Obersturmbannführer or civil mayor.

Administrative Rank within Nazi Germany improves Status just like Military Rank (p. W66) does, but characters with a mix of both sorts of Rank only get the Status bonus for the *highest* one.

Note that the Germans had *many* more enlisted grades than was common for the period. In fact, the table still truncates them. For instance, technically a gefreiter was a corporal – but a German gefreiter only held duties comparable to an acting corporal in most armies, not taking a true leader role until becoming an obergefreiter, a sort of senior corporal. The transition from corporal to sergeant was one rank in the U.S. Army. In the Wehrmacht, the obergefreiter advanced to stabsgefreiter, then unteroffizier, then unterfeldwebel, taking on sergeant-comparable duties somewhere within the last two ranks.

Special branches usually had special grades. For instance, a radioman was a funkler rather than schütze, and an ordnance staff sergeant was a feuerwerker rather than feldwebel.

Furthermore, some enlisted grades changed names when the holder reached a certain service-time threshold.

After November 1942, Hitler changed the private grade from schütze to grenadier for most riflemen. Mountain and Jäger units retained the old grade. Riflemen also were called fusilier in regiments with the same name, or muskietier within some infantry units of the panzer corps Gross Deutschland.

This state of affairs should illustrate that the GM should feel free to create fictional special grades in his campaign.

Army officer ranks in combat arms had only one alternate name. A hauptmann in the cavalry was called a rittmeister. Non-combat arms had many special officer-equivalent ranks.

KMS BISMARCK



The KMS *Bismarck* met a spectacular end at British hands in May 1941 (p. W20). Her sister ship, *Tirpitz*, worried the British until they finally destroyed her in November 1944. Neither had any significant impact on the war, but the *Bismarck* has come to represent what the Kriegsmarine could have done . . . and what the Royal Navy prevented it from accomplishing.

The *Bismarck* normally carries a crew of 2,192 officers and men. Overall, 286 crew stations are scattered around the ship to represent bridge spaces and gunner's stations, but the vast majority of the crew does not need crew stations. They load the weapons, tend the engines, or repair battle damage, instead.

Seaman of all nations coveted posting to a battleship, not only for the prestige, but because the ships were far and away the most spacious and comfortable warships in any navy. The *Bismarck* is no different. A full 55 VSPs per crewmen of access space has been added to this design, which transforms the environment from the elbow-in-stomach coziness of a submarine to something equivalent to a modern office building – not truly private, but far from oppressive. This access space is assumed to include full access (p. 69) for any ship's components that might need it, which amounts to a small percentage of the extra crew-space investment.

This still leaves 5,000 VSPs in the body and superstructure to carry cargo – and all battleships carried a lot of cargo – but it was exclusively working materials. Lockers containing fire hoses, life jackets, plumbing supplies, first-aid kits, etc. will be scattered throughout the ship.

Bismarck carried six Ar 196s (p. 84) – three in hangars, two as cargo, and one ready to launch – and four ship's launches.

The main turrets hydraulically traverse at 1° per second, or 12 crew members manually rotate one at 0.2° per second. The 150mm-gun turrets traverse at 3° per second, or 12 crew members manually rotate one at 1.5° per second. The 105mm-gun turrets traverse at 5° per second, or eight crew members manually rotate one at 1.7° per second. Two crew members manually rotate each 37mm open mount at 13° per second. The gunner manually rotates each 20mm open mount at 18° per second.

The *Bismarck* burns 6,200 gallons of diesel (fuel oil) per hour at routine usage. Fuel, ammo, and food cost \$2.7 million.

KMS Bismarck

Subassemblies: Medium Battleship chassis +11; waterproofed Small Capital superstructure [Body:T] +8; four waterproofed limited-rotation Small Naval turrets with mild slope [Body:T] +5; six waterproofed limited-rotation Large Secondary turrets with mild slope [Body:T] +4; eight waterproofed limited-rotation Medium Secondary turrets [Sup:T] +4; eight limited-rotation Medium Weapon open mounts [Sup:T] +1; six limited-rotation Small Weapon open mounts [Sup:T] +0.

Powertrain: Three 34,300-kW steam turbines with three 34,300-kW screws and 2.73 million-gallon standard fuel tanks. Eight 500-kW and 10 690-kW diesel engines used as electrical plants to power turret traversing gear, lights, etc. Also carries 9,000 gallons of gas for seaplanes.

Occ: See above.

Cargo: See above.

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
<i>Body:</i>	4/1,030	4/1,030	4/1,030	4/275	4/500
<i>Super:</i>	4/485	4/485	4/485	4/165	–
<i>Bridge*:</i>	0/+645	0/+645	0/+645	0/+545	0/+200
<i>SN Turs:</i>	5/1,730	4/600	4/1,030	4/500	–
<i>LS Turs:</i>	5/280	4/200	4/200	4/150	–
<i>MS Turs:</i>	4/200	4/150	4/150	4/120	–
<i>MW, SW OMs:</i>	4/40	0/0	0/0	0/0	–

* Armored station for 15 crew members.

Weaponry

8×15" Naval Guns/SK-C/34 [SN Turs:F] (100).*

12×150mm Med. DP Guns/SK-C/28 [LS Turs:F] (200).*

16×105mm Med. DP Guns/SK-C/33 [MS Turs:F] (500).*

16×37mm Med. Gr. ACs/SK-C/33 [MW OMs:F] (1,875).*

12×20mm Long Gr. ACs/SK-C/30 [SW OMs:F] (4,875).*

* Linked in pairs at one pair per turret or open mount; in all cases ammo allotment in parentheses is *per gun*.

Equipment

Body: 89,000 bilge; 200 bilge pumps; brigs and restraints for 10 crew bunks; 2,000 bunks; 200 cabins; two 10-ton cranes; 88 environmental control; four 15-ton external cradles for ship's launches; 30 fire extinguishers; 20 halls; 132,000 man-days of provisions; three surgeries; two 60-ton winches; 10 workshops; four 225-kW traversing gears for Small Naval turrets; four 95-kW traversing gears for Large Secondary turrets. **Super:** Autopilot; 25 cabins; five luxury cabins; 15 fire extinguishers; three fire direction centers; three 100-VSPhangar bays; two launch catapults; three sets of navigation instruments; 17-mile targeting radar; large radio direction finder; very large radio receiver; large radio transmitter; very large radio transmitter; six searchlights; sound detector; mainframe targeting computer dedicated to main guns; eight 95-kW traversing gears for Medium Secondary turrets.

Statistics

Size: 824' ×118' ×180' **Payload:** 10K tons **Lwt:** 49K tons

Volume: 574K **MH:** 62 **Cost:** \$16.7M

HT: 7. **HPs:** 720K **Body,** 12,000 **Superstructure,** 1,900 each **SN Turret,** 900 each **LS Turret,** 750 each **MS Turret,** 75 each **MW OM,** 45 each **SW OM.**

wSpeed: 33 **wAccel:** 0.3 **wDecel:** 0.1 (0.25) **wMR:** 0.02 **wSR:** 6 **Draft** 31'. **Flotation Rating** 51,600 tons.

Design Notes

The design's wSpeed was 29 mph; this has been increased to the historical figure. The design's draft was 40' – this has been reduced substantially to the historical figure.

Bismarck carries a huge amount of fuel – even by battleship standards – as a sleight of hand to circumvent treaty limitations. Much of the tankage was counted as bilges (p. 69) in the original plans, reducing loaded weight considerably on paper.

FACELESS FOES

Putting aside the Golden Rule, mocking Nazis is a lot of fun. (In this case, the term “Nazi” is willfully applied to *anyone* in Hitler’s military employ.) Many GMs will gleefully ignore much of this book in painting their Germans as by-the-numbers bad guys. That works perfectly well in many popular genres. In particular, the *Hellboy* roleplaying game, which uses the same rules as the *GURPS WWII* series, takes this art form to untold heights.

For the uninitiated, a few pointers include:

Ve Have Vays of Making You Talk

And we, in turn, have ways of making Nazis talk. They pronounce “w” as “v.” (“Vaitress, ve vill vant vaffles viff our breakfast.”) They phrase most everything as a threat. (“Ve vill have vaffles, vaitress!”) They are always bombastic and often impatient. (“More coffee, schnell!”) Except when they’re gloating. (“Is gooooooot. Now you vill get me non-dairy creamer.”)

Certain catchphrases dominate amidst the fiery stuff: “Sieg Heil!,” “Heil Hitler!,” “Amerikaner Schweine!,” and “Glory of the Reich.” *Everything* – even breakfast waffles – is for the glory of the Reich. In the gloating stages, Nazis might purringly concede that they and their adversaries – the PCs – might have been good comrades, if of course the Nazi wasn’t an Aryan superman and the PCs subhuman worms.

We also have ways of making them walk, the goose step, from which Nazis always come to a heel-clicking stop. (In real life, the Heer specifically forbade most instructors from teaching the goose step during the war. The Wehrmacht only used it on parade, though earlier German armies goose-stepped on the march.)

Ve Have Vays of Making You Die

Making a stereotypical Nazi act like a nincompoop is a lot easier than getting him to die like one. The GM must finely balance that these are supposed to be most worthy adversaries, even though he intends for the PCs to fill the *Queen Mary* with their corpses.

The most simple device bridging this gap is the Aim maneuver (p. W198). In this sort of campaign, Nazis always step out into the open, level their submachine gun, and take a second to Aim. This will give their opponents a leisurely second to obliterate the Nazi with an unaimed shot, all the while holding out the threat that if they miss, they’ll be in a world of hurt. Some subtle phrasing can keep this from becoming too obvious of a ploy: “Out of the corner of your eye you see a Nazi leveling his MP40 at you,” suggests that the Nazi thinks he has time to aim. “Given the range, the Nazi puts his eye to his gun sights,” suggests that he thinks his best bet is to aim for a difficult shot. Conversely, when Nazis really are too far away to hit anything, have them spray unaimed bullets around like madmen.

To further increase the body count, Nazis should always enter combat in single file. (To keep these stormtroopers from appearing to be complete idiots, it’s wise to stage combat in old castles or other environments with lots of long, narrow corridors . . .) This prevents more than one of them from

shooting back at a time. It allows powerful weapons to blow through the first target and injure one or more behind him. (If using the *WWII Lite* rules, simply assume that any damage beyond each target’s HT passes through him. It attacks the next Nazi on a 9 or less, or whatever it would have taken to hit him on purpose, whichever is worse. He probably won’t be able to dodge, because the previous victim will block his line of sight to the attacker.) In this sort of cinematic campaign, the GM might as well allow automatic-weapon users to attack the entire line, en masse, by applying the rules for indirect *Machine-Gun Fire* (see p. W202) to direct-fire bursts.



Nothing Vill Stop Us Now!

Of course, real Nazis don’t actually fight the war; they spend their time looking for shortcuts to bring Germany a guaranteed victory. The shortcut usually represents the adventure’s goal, with the PCs pursuing it for their own use, or simply trying to keep it out of dirty Nazi hands.

These McGuffins may take the form of wonder weapons (pp. 121-122), ancient mystical artifacts of great power, even attempts to assassinate prominent Allied leaders. No matter how badly the PCs may fail in their race against the Nazis, the GM should really, really avoid allowing the stormtroopers to secure their prize and use it without actually obtaining world domination. As silly as it sometimes is, the conventions of this genre assume that when a Nazi proclaims, “With Wendell Willkie dead, the Third Reich will rule the world!” then the threat will carry out as he promises. (For the record, Willkie died in 1944, but the Nazis probably would have wanted to stop him before his 1940 “Miracle at Philadelphia” fatally divided Republican opposition to Roosevelt, or even before his 1942 goodwill tour of the Allied fronts.)

The GM can booby-trap the McGuffin, so that it doesn’t perform as the Nazis expected (see *Raiders of the Lost Ark* for a prime example of the PCs failing miserably but coming out on top), but this effect should be immediate and heavy-handed.

Historically, German propagandists constantly dreamed up these sorts of lurid threats, in the process displaying almost no clue as to their enemy’s priorities. The loudspeaker proclamation that “The Statue of Liberty is kaput!” as an attempt to gut American morale in *Saving Private Ryan* is an excellent example. The above convention, in which fictional heroes have to take almost comical Nazi boasts seriously, may have evolved as a satirical response to this real behavior.

THE OTHER 988 YEARS

Many alternate-history settings hinge upon Germany winning WWII. Just about everyone has a pet pivotal moment in which the Third Reich could have turned the tide. (For both readers who don't have one, common examples include: conquering the United Kingdom in Operation Sea Lion, maintaining the uneasy alliance with the U.S.S.R. instead of attacking it, capturing Malta and thereby securing the Mediterranean, making allies of all the disgruntled ex-Soviets in conquered lands instead of persecuting them, or getting the best German technology into battle more quickly and in greater numbers.) This section won't dwell on the *how* of Germany winning the war, but rather deal with the question, "What now?"

The Reich-5 setting in *GURPS Alternate Earths* provides one detailed example of what might have been, but its future history doesn't stress what the Nazis themselves planned. This section describes their very real agenda for the Aryan peace after WWII.

The New Order

The Nazis planned a massive integration of a Greater Reich stretching from the French border to the Urals. New autobahns (highways) would have knitted together this far-ranging empire. Berlin (renamed Germania), Hamburg, Nuremberg, Munich, and Vienna would have become *Führerstädte*, or administrative centers, with Trondheim in Norway transformed into the world's premier naval base. Germany proper would have retained all heavy industry with the rest of the Reich supplying raw materials and labor.



The former Soviet lands would have been developed in a spoke-and-hub system. Each town, laid out on a square grid, would have had eight equally spaced roads leading straight toward farming villages. The Russians themselves, those that remained after the SS exterminated everyone on its list, would have been shipped to Siberia, with a garrison line keeping them there. The Nazis often promised their soldiers plots of land in this "Russian colony" once the war ended.

Leveling the Playing Field

The Nazis greatly distrusted the German aristocracy, but in practice noble followers provided them a much needed veneer of legitimacy. Many party leaders, including Hitler himself, struggled to completely rid themselves of the genuflecting reflex.

