



original Sturmabteilung (SA) literature and memorabilia

Offered in this category is original Third Reich literature and memorabilia from and about the SA, the Nazi Stormtroopers or Brownshirts.

The Sturmabteilung or SA (which means translated "Storm Division" but is usually translated as "Stormtroopers"), was a paramilitary organization of the NSDAP.

SA men were often called "Brownshirts" because of the color of their uniforms and to distinguish them from the SS, who wore black uniforms. The brown-colored shirts were probably chosen as the SA uniform because a large quantity of them was cheaply available after World War One. They were originally ordered for German troops serving in Africa and never issued before the war had ended. The name Sturmabteilung was adopted from the specialized assault troops used by the German army in 1918 towards the end of World War One. Instead of a large mass assault, the Sturmabteilungen were organized into small squads of a few soldiers each and were very effective in pushing back the British and French lines.

In the fall of 1920, Hitler himself created the Ordnertruppen in Munich to protect his speeches and NSDAP (Nazi) gatherings from disruptions from Social Democrats and Communists. Originally the Ordnertruppen functioned as a group of bodyguards to ensure order at Nazi gatherings. On November 4, 1921 the NSDAP held a large public meeting in the Hofbräuhaus in München (Munich). After Hitler had spoken for some time the meeting was disrupted by the opposition and a small company of Ordnertruppen thrashed them. After this the organization was officially named SA. Under their leader Ernst Röhm the SA quickly grew in importance within the Nazi structure and had thousands of members. In 1922, the NSDAP created a youth section, the Jugendbund, for young men between the ages of 14 and 18 years. Its successor, the Hitler Youth, remained under SA command until May 1932. From April of 1924 until late February of 1925 when the NSDAP was declared illegal after the failed Beer Hall Putsch on November 9, 1923 the SA became the Frontbann to avoid being banned also. The SA was involved in many street-fights against Communists and Socialists in the 1920's. The SS eventually took over the original role of the SA.

The SA was also the first Nazi paramilitary group which developed military-like titles and ranks and several other Nazi organizations later adopted them. After Adolf Hitler became elected Reich Chancellor in 1933, the SA became more and more anxious for power and saw themselves as a replacement for the German army. This created a conflict with the regular army, the Reichswehr which regarded the SA as "brown scum". Many other Nazi party leaders saw Röhm's increasingly powerful SA as a threat to their own personal ambitions. Many considered the SA to be a dangerous organization, especially since it was a common SA practice to swear loyalty to local SA commanders rather than Adolf Hitler or the NSDAP. One of the original purposes for the creation of the SS was to restrict the power of the brownshirts and its leaders. It is said that several top Nazis including Himmler faked a dossier which suggested that Röhm had received payment from the French to carry out a coup against Hitler. At first Hitler refused to believe it, but he was aware that the SA had grown into a powerful organization with the capability to remove him. Ernst Röhm was unpopular in the NSDAP because others saw his ambition as threatening their own, and because he was rumored to be a homosexual. Eventually Hitler ordered the execution of the leadership of the SA, which took place on June 30 to July 1, 1934, known as the "Nacht der langen Messer" (Night of the Long Knives). Victor Lutze, in the rank of a Obergruppen-führer, became the new Stabs-chef of the SA until his death, caused by a car accident in May 2, 1943. The organization soon lost importance in the Nazi power structure in favor of the SS. The SA remained active until the end of the

war, but its only significant action after 1934 was the so called "Kristallnacht", when all SS and SA units were activated to riot against Jews, destroying Jewish businesses and synagogues.