

The Intent

J. D. Beck

THE INTENT

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Beck, Jürgen, 1944-

The intent / Jürgen Beck. ISBN 978-0-9813043-0-4

I. Title.

PS8603.E422I57 2009

C813'.6

C2009-904336-X

ISBN: 978-0-9813043-0-4

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Oak Tree Publishing

Printed in Canada.

Luise, this is for you...1914–1984



Prologue

It would take several lifetimes to read all that has been written about the incredible sacrifices, madness, and the naked truth of World War II.

Looking back though...it was hell on earth for the approximately three to four hundred million people directly affected during the war and the postwar years. The proverb “War for Peace” remains a blistering slur to those who lost someone close to their hearts. Remarkably, many took refuge in believing their sacrifice was necessary to save the world from evil. In a few short years, yesterday’s enemy is today’s ally. Tomorrow this may change again. The shift of power is fickle and always suspect. Financial gain and corrupt power quickly dislodges compassion and common sense. Whatever the reason, the transfer of power has always been at the expense of Joe Average. Ignorance and fanaticism demand a hefty price. The failure to admit that war can never bring lasting peace proves humanity is still in diapers.

Transferring power secretly, perhaps the oldest pervasive tactic known to implement total control, is implemented by megapowers worldwide. Even the “educated” masses are by and large ignorant; successful indoctrination rules their lives. Have we become what George Orwell called “hollow dummies”?



Chapter 1

Thanksgiving. The church bells of Saint Luke's rang throughout the village, across the cemetery and over empty fields before echoing off the hills and gradually drowning in the gurgle of a cold mountain stream.

To give weight to this special day the elders and the parish priest greeted their flock at the decorated entrance of the church. The pews filled quickly, and the vicar was glad people remembered to give thanks. He looked across the churchyard one more time as if to look for someone, then quickly turned and entered the church as the bells stopped ringing.

On the other end of the village, an old white-haired woman made her way slowly up the narrow road toward the cemetery, where the wind whistled sharply among headstones. Slightly bent, she entered, the only person there. She gave the impression of tiredness. It was not the wholesome tiredness from having worked hard all day but the weariness of trailing a casket one too many times. The fallen leaves made a strange woeful sound below her feet as if to give voice to her mood. Her steps, slower now, were more measured as she neared the simple black marble headstone. Her hands folded in prayer, she looked at the stone and read it as if seeing it for the first time.

As the bells stopped, the wind followed suit, and a silence crept across the cemetery. Her thoughts travelled across space and time,

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and for a brief moment she was young, beautiful, and very much in love. The moment slipped away abruptly as ever-present reality crept into her heart. Ignoring the stillness, she stood in front of the grave for the longest time, and then abruptly, as if wanting to flee, she turned and left the cemetery. Her steps full of life and her posture more erect revealed a transformation. While silently standing at the grave, she had realized it would not be long now. The wait was finally over...the secret, kept for many years, could finally be revealed. Confident a new beginning was hers to cherish, she left the cemetery with distinct buoyancy in her step.



Chapter 2

Summer
1944
Germany

Other than having to dodge isolated thunderstorms, it was a routine mission. The last of the lingering B-17 bombers finished dropping their bombs over the industrial sector in Schweinfurt, Germany. Some of the earlier drops were not as accurate, causing death and destruction amongst the civilian population. Family and neighbours, saved by providence, frequently witnessed the horrible suffering as innocent civilians succumbed to the flames ravaging their homes. Far above the gruelling action, several P-51 escort fighter planes circled above the heavy fortresses. Although out of harm's way for the moment, their mission was not over. A rendezvous with the Luftwaffe was still conceivable. Over the past few months, though, it had been quiet in the skies above the Fatherland; most of the German pilots had bought the farm by now. Nevertheless, one had to be vigilant and react swiftly.

Pompous and self-serving Reichsmarshal Göring was desperate. His more zealous pilots were willing to sacrifice their lives to achieve final victory for the Fatherland by crashing into Allied heavy bombers if ammunition was not available. The myth that to die as a warden of the Third Reich would guarantee a place in Walhalla was very much alive. A ME-109 fighter, seemingly coming out of nowhere, would spoil the day, causing chaos amongst the lumbering bombers if not spotted immediately.

One of the American P-51 pilots, a young raring-to-go captain from New York's Catskill Mountains, appreciated that for the time being the war was way below him; up here, everything looked calm, and fortunately nobody was missing. Below, the crew of the B-17s with bomb bays empty were thankful for their "little friends," a nickname for the P-51 Mustangs. Their compasses showing a heading of 280 degrees, direction England, the mood of the boys improved with each mile closer to crossing the English Channel.

The young aviator felt important, knowing his presence in the European war was vital. Prior to the P-51s' engagement, American and British bombers suffered horrendous casualties; unescorted slow bombers were practically sitting ducks for the fast German fighters. The swift long-range single seat P-51, however, changed the odds notably. Now the allies controlled the airspace over Germany. Casualties for the slow-moving heavy bombers were at a minimum.

The American pilot scanned the horizon steadily from left to right to check for German fighter planes, at the same time keeping an eye on his instruments. All of his previous missions were milk runs, no German fighter planes to be seen anywhere. Intense Anglo-American air attacks during the last twelve months practically decimated Göring's Luftwaffe. Few experienced pilots were now available to face the huge offensive from Allied fighter and bomber airplanes.

From the east, Stalin and his army were moving slowly westward; Germany, caught in a deathly grip, signalled the end of the Third Reich and the insanity of World War II in Europe.

In 1919, at the end of World War I, politicians worldwide did what they do best, deceiving people: "World War I was the war to end all wars, once and forever." Twenty-six years later, when the insanity of the Second World War was finally over, the inclusive death toll was a staggering 55 to 65 million. In addition, 200 to

400 million people grieved for lost loved ones. Unmarked graves scarred the earth, and spilled blood screamed to heaven for revenge and forgiveness.

For the moment, though, flying a P-51 Mustang, powered by a two-stage two-speed supercharged 12-cylinder Packard-built version of the legendary Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, was a rush, a dream come true for the young American flyboy. Easy missions like today's were chalked up as bonuses. The American aviator was nevertheless alert; being carefree while on a sortie was a sure way to ask for trouble. Only total concentration on his surroundings would get everybody back home safely. Even now, the hunter could finish the hunted.



Chapter 3

A gentle yet refreshingly cool rain shower slowly brought him around. Instinctively he knew something dreadful had happened. He was not where he should be. Still, he could not tie events together. His thoughts scrambled and his mind seemed to go blank the harder he tried. It was becoming increasingly difficult to focus. Struggling to no avail, he could not remember what happened. The only reality was excruciating pain in his right leg and left arm. From a gash on his forehead, he tasted blood as it trickled down his face and congealed in the corner of his lips. Eventually the relentless pain, in spite of everything, helped him to concentrate, and for a brief moment earlier events crystallized in his mind. However, as quickly as awareness came his thoughts scrambled again; his brain simply refused to acknowledge a coherent sequence.

After resting for a while, his subconscious will to survive took control. Ever so slowly, almost robotically, he took a closer look at his injuries. Although traumatized and in a state of shock, he grasped the seriousness of his condition. Some thirty feet to his right, partially hidden from his view in a shallow ravine, was the wreckage of his aircraft. Considering his injuries, it was a wonder, if not a miracle, how he freed himself from the cockpit and crawl up the embankment. A severe concussion, in addition to the shock of the crash, was the cause of his sporadic memory.

The rain had stopped by now, and the sun's rays pierced the fleeting clouds. Ironically, the ends of a rainbow—God's promise to never again destroy life by way of a flood—hovered above the wreckage of his plane. Tom Williams, the American pilot, was drifting in and out of consciousness. During one of his more lucid moments, he almost formulated spoken words, thinking, his lips moving, *Thank God I found this field...I must get away from here...did the Germans see me crash-land my airplane? Where are the Germans?* Pictures of the crash gelled in his mind. Descending at some 400 feet per minute, the ailerons, the trim, and the hydraulics busted, it took all of his strength to hold the wings of the crippled airplane level. By the time he stabilized the craft, he was dangerously low, and bailing out was never an option. One choice left, a forced wheels-up landing. A reasonably flat field below seemed like a wish come true. *I made it; why am I not in the airplane?* Grasping that a Hun had shot him out of the sky bruised his very being. The dreadful realization brought a tear to his eyes. *Don't give in*, he at once rebuked himself. The colour of his eyes changed from a bluish grey to a steely blue as resistance to his predicament took over. Purposeful self-will slowly got the upper hand, and he started to recall the events leading up to the crash landing. *Why was I such an easy target?* He remembered turning left, flying south, to avoid a thunder cell directly in front of him. After a couple of minutes, he turned back on his northwesterly course. He wondered if focusing on the weather caused him to not watch his altimeter, possibly losing height, sufficient to be in the range of German ground fire. No German fighter planes were seen anywhere. *Antiaircraft ground artillery must have got me. How could I be so careless?*



Chapter 4

His sortie was to escort and protect B-17 bombers from prowling German fighter planes. The Allies' target was the rustic and attractive 700-year-old blue-collar city Schweinfurt, birthplace of Friedrich Rückert one of Germany's greatest poets, surrounded by enchanting countryside, situated on the river Main, in lower Franconia. In the past Schweinfurt was a proud, independent, free imperial city, dating back to the 14th century, now home to one of the largest ball bearing industries in Germany.

On various slopes surrounding the town right up to the Hassberge and southwest to the old university town of Würzburg, the wine capital of Germany, grapes were harvested and made into mouth-watering wines with such unique names as Rödelsee, Iphofen and Eschendorfer Lump and the region's famous Müller-Thurgaus and Silvaners, enjoyed by locals for a very long time. In times to come, most visitors to Germany would look for wine along the Rhein or Mosel rivers, because Rhein and Mosel wines were exported worldwide. The great Franconia wines were seldom exported; locals would stage an uprising in protest. Germans were often branded as beer-doting jolly Bavarians living in the south or, on the other hand, as austere military-like Prussians in the north, while in the centre, right in the heart of Germany's wine capital, reside the relatively unknown Franks.

Franken (Franconia) was named after the Franks, a proud and distinctive German clan. Franken was annexed by Bayern (Bavaria) over 150 years before. In spite of Bavaria's takeover, indigenous folks maintained their distinctive dialect and their unique characteristic sense of humour. Calling someone a "*Schweinfurter Mee Brunser*" ("a Schweinfurter pissing into the river Main") suggests fondness and moreover a concise acknowledgement that "Mee Brunser" is home-grown. The Franks regard themselves as proud and independent amongst the Germanic tribes, appropriately positioned right in the heart of Germany. Their past is bursting with proof that they were the strongest and fiercest of the Germanic clans. Their lineage is full of remarkable people, both common and blue-blooded.

One of the Franks' powerful rulers was Charlemagne, also known as Charles the Great, sovereign of the Franks for forty-seven years (AD 768-814), serving the last fourteen years of his life as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Son of Pepin the Short and grandson of Charles Martel, he was an exceptional warrior and a superior orator, remembered for his intelligence and generosity.

During this ghastly war, ordinary folks with their homes in ruins had to scrounge for food and shelter. This, lamentably, is the norm worldwide when narcissistic power-hungry rulers force ordinary folks into war and eventual poverty. Schweinfurt, a history-rich old countrified city, was by now in ruins due to the determined onslaught by the Allies. This time the fearless Franks could not stop the fire from the sky as they did in 1943. The industrial city was a bull's eye target. The Allies relentlessly continued their bombing raids, tenaciously determined to destroy the factories. If Germany were devoid of ball bearings, its war efforts would soon come to a grinding halt.

At last, the injured American pilot remembered heading west, direction England, before having to make a small detour. The

weather forecast was inaccurate, and isolated thunderstorms in the area forced him to fly around a storm cell. All of a sudden, what felt like a giant hand lifted the rear of his airplane, pitching his nose earthbound. Instantly he knew he was in serious trouble. All hell broke loose, and control of the airplane was lost. The trim and rudder did not respond, and it became increasingly difficult to keep the airplane level.

How long have I been lying here? The thought that he might die in this rain-soaked German field gave him the strength to partially lift himself up and look around. In the chasm to his right was his airplane. The right wing had partially separated from the fuselage, the nose of the plane was completely buried in mud, and the propeller looked more like an anchor from a sand barge from the nearby river Main. A twisted hodgepodge of metal, cables and smoke was all that was left of the tail section.

Hanging on to consciousness, he saw a P-51 make a low pass over the field. Recognizing the markings, he tried to wave to his nineteen-year-old chain-smoking, womanizing, soft-spoken wingman John, a dedicated, naive boy from Minnesota. It was his first combat mission. *What a way to be baptized.* He was trying to signal again, overcome by fatigue and pain, with a tang of blood in his mouth, when everything went thankfully blank.

The P-51 made two more low passes. Seeing people near the crash site, the pilot decided there was nothing he could do. The field was too uneven to land. Gaining height, he continued flying in westerly direction.

The wounded aviator's awareness came partially back when three people stood over him. Someone was speaking to him in a language he had never heard before. It sounded like German, yet he could not be sure. He felt they were arguing amongst themselves.

“Kumm gaeh me g'schwind weg, horch ner do kummt nix draus,”

one of the people said. The three Germans, a young woman and two older men, gathering hay with their horse-drawn wagon, had observed the crash landing from a distance across the fields. Running through a meadow, they reached the crash site. By the time they arrived, the pilot had freed himself from the smouldering airplane and was lying on his back. Evidently he was seriously hurt. There were bloodstains all over his clothing, and his right leg was grotesquely twisted. His uniform was torn in several places, and his handsome face was deathly pale; his pale blue eyes mirrored the shock and trauma of the crash.

Agitated, the Germans constantly looked across the fields to see if someone else was around. Onlookers would offer the two men a way out; rescuing an American was not what they had planned. The young woman, however, was adamant about helping the downed pilot. She pleaded for them to have compassion for the injured American. Reluctantly they agreed, and in typical hands-on German manner, they made a makeshift stretcher out of branches from a nearby weeping willow tree and leather shoelaces from their boots and used a blanket as a cushion on the wood seat of their hay wagon. The woman kneeled beside the injured aviator, holding his hand to provide some small comfort. The recent shower had cooled the air. This, however, did nothing to keep the two men cool, as sweat trickled down their faces and soaked their shirts. They worked fast; rescuing an enemy would be difficult to explain should someone see them.

Bothered by a low flying aircraft, the elderly man who earlier voiced his objection to helping the American tried once more. *“Dos soll mar nur a Warnung sei, kumm g'schwind weg, horch ner do kummt nix draus.”*

Turning away, he implored the others to leave the ill-fated helpless aviator. The young woman, however, was not going to listen. Keenly aware of war's agony, she again insisted on helping the injured pilot.

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For a moment, it looked like the two men were not going to listen to her. Exasperated, disregarding her upbringing to respect her elders, she nearly shouted, "Father, if you must go, then go. I will stay here."

The semiconscious pilot grasped that the young woman was making an effort to help him. Trying to say something depleted his last strength, and he managed only a groan. A single tear left a trail on his bloody face. The severely wounded American, shot down on his seventh mission over Germany, was beginning to become indifferent to his surroundings. *Am I going to die far from home, in this godforsaken German field?* He was fleetingly surprised it did not shock him; death seemed very gentle, caressing him, slowly extracting life.

Then all of a sudden, from the depths of his subconscious mind, a precious parting gift appeared, a vivid memory of a party at his parents' home two years earlier. Life was good then, and celebrating his birthday and his promotion to flight lieutenant was a boisterous and happy affair. All of his family and friends were there. He was twenty-one, and the year was 1942.



Chapter 5

The genesis of this war was no different than all the other wars before. Again, naive young men and woman, spell-bound and brainwashed by rhetoric and indoctrination, ready to spill their blood as dumb animals on a sacrificial materialistic altar, were captivated all over the world by the lies and fabricated slogans of their masters, cleverly disguised as devotion to their country: "We must defend...we must expand...we must protect." These never-ending one-sided self-serving slogans have nothing to do with principles that really matter, such as love, integrity, honour and honesty.

In the thick of war, destiny, so it seems, determines who will live and who will die. Luck and human compassion, handmaidens to karma, can save a man, however. Tom Williams, the American aviator, did not die after all. Innate feminine courage and fierce determination of a young German woman, who had recently lost a twenty-seven-year-old dear-to-her-heart brother on the Russian front, saved the life of the American aviator. Looking after the American was a genuine way to soften the scars of her brother's death.

Her father, at first, was not pleased with her stubborn tenacity to rescue the American. As time went by his spirit, however, softened towards the helpless American. During sleepless nights, when the agony of losing his first-born son in Russia became unbearable,

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