

THE THREE VONS

Germany's Leading Soldiers



VON LEEB

VON RUNDSTEDT

VON BOCK

A recent issue of "Time" gives this vivid picture of Germany's three leading soldiers

ONE of the most extraordinary obscurities of World War II is Germany's team of top-field generals. They have conquered most of Europe, but very few people could have been blamed for not recognising their names when Adolf Hitler praised them recently for their work in Russia: Field Marshals Karl Rudolf Gerd von Rundstedt, Fedor von Bock, Wilhelm Joseph Franz Ritter von Leeb.

These three have been a team ever since 1935, when the Nazi Party reorganised the Reichswehr and divided the country into three Group Commands. Rundstedt held

Group I. (based on Berlin), Leeb held II. (Cassel), and Bock held III. (Dresden). Only two Army groups attacked Poland, but two of these three commanded them: Bock in the north, Rundstedt in the south. Against France the team was together again: Leeb on the left, Rundstedt in the centre, Bock on the right. In Russia, Leeb is attacking Leningrad in the north, Bock has been assigned Moscow in the centre, and Rundstedt is working on the Ukraine to the south.

If there is a type of top-ranking German general, these three are it. They look almost exactly alike—heavily lined face, aquiline nose, snapping, snake-eyes, lips tight and bitter. They are old: Rundstedt is 65, Leeb will be next month,

Bock is 60. They are stiffly aristocratic: all three sport vons. None of them thinks much of the Nazis. Leeb and Rundstedt both retired temporarily in 1938, reportedly for political reasons, and ascetic. Bock hates sensuous Goring. But all of them love soldiering, and have a consuming sense of patriotic duty.

Oldest Is Best

Rundstedt, the oldest, is also the best. Before the Nazis came to power, he was a staunch royalist, a faithful Hindenburg man. Now he is the Nazis' high priest of strategy. Belittlers of Chief of the High Command, Wilhelm Keitel, used to say that Keitel was such a coxcomb that he wouldn't even listen to

devised the break-through at Sedan early last summer, and it was his tank generals, Guderian and Kleist, who executed it.

Leeb is the most consciously aristocratic, the most austere. Because he wrote a *Chronicle of the Leeb Family*, he has been called the Family-Tree General. His friend, Marshal Siegmund Wilhelm List, who commanded the Balkan campaign, once said: "If Leeb ever tried to smile, it would crack his face." His coldness has deprived him of friends, but he is respected as an up-right professional soldier. He lost a son in Poland.

The Most Fanatical

Bock is the most fanatical. His fanaticism is military, not political. Leading an army into the Sudetenland, he took his twelve-year-old son, dressed in a sailor suit, along in his car "to impress on his son the beauty and exhilaration that lie in soldiering." German officers

★ THEIR OPPOSITE NUMBERS ★



Marshal Timoshenko
versus Bock

Marshal Voroshilov
versus Leeb

Marshal Budenny
versus Rundstedt

Rundstedt. Rundstedt is easily the most experienced German commander. He alone, of the present crop of generals, was an Army Corps Chief of Staff in World War I. He will go down in German history as a hero because it was he who

call him *der Sterber*, the dier, because of his great fondness for holding forth on the glories of dying for the Fatherland. It used to be generally said in Berlin that he had Russian blood in his veins. But it was blue blood, not Red.

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NEW SONATA MOVEMENT

Auckland Composer's Broadcast

LISTENERS who are interested in the work of John Tait, the Auckland composer, will be interested to learn that when, with Winifred Hayes, he presents his *Sonata in A Major* for Violin and Piano from 1YA on Wednesday evening, October 1, it will include a new movement. The work is in three movements: (a) Grave—Allegro Moderato; (b) Larghetto; (c) Allegro Pomposo. This last movement replaces the original movement. It has been written for this broadcast and will be heard then for the first time.

John Tait was born 76 years ago in the then important market town of Dalkeith, Mid-Lothian. He began his musical career when he was 11½ by

playing the organ in the little Wesleyan chapel in his native town, but though he was entirely self-taught at this period he later had pianoforte lessons from a pupil of Sterndale Bennett, followed by three years of serious study as a church organist, under the organist of the Duke of Buccleuch's private chapel of St. Mary's, Dalkeith.

This was, in those days, the only religious establishment in Scotland where daily choral services of a cathedral type were maintained. The choir consisted of six professional men singers and twelve boys. The late Sir George Martin, before his appointment to St. Paul's Cathedral, London, was for some years organist at St. Mary's.

After many years of service in various churches in Peebles, Edinburgh, London and elsewhere, Mr. Tait came out to New Zealand in 1913 with his wife and family and settled in Nelson, where he held the position of organist of All Saints Church and for some time taught organ, singing and harmony at the Nelson School of Music. In 1924 he was appointed to St. Paul's Church, Auckland. A few years ago, he retired from church work having completed 60 years of practically continuous work as an organist. He still continues, in a limited way, his work as a private teacher, but his chief interest is now in composition. Frequent broadcasts of his part-songs and instrumental music have been given from 1YA and 2YA. A number of his compositions have been published in London and Melbourne and he has contributed to the well-known "Scottish Students' Song Book."