

# Execution for Duty: The Life, Trial and Murder of a U boat Captain

Peter C. Hansen



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Oskar Heinz Kusch, joined the German Navy in 1937. He worked his way successfully through naval college and eventually volunteered for duty in U boats. During this period the underwater service was causing havoc to Allied shipping in the Atlantic and was highly regarded as an elite force. He had an exemplary service record, and eventually he gained his own command in the 2nd U boat Flotilla. Before his second operational voyage as Captain three new junior officers joined the submarine, they were confirmed Nazi patriots and not popular aboard, constantly praising all the heroes of Reich and never conceding that the demise of the U boat was approaching due to the increased use of more sophisticated radar techniques used by the Allies. The voyage was to prove unsuccessful in terms of Allied ships sunk and unbeknown to Kusch the three hatched a plan to dishonour their Captain and accuse him of treason.

The trial was corrupt and rigged. No latitude was given from higher authorities and no account of his previous unblemished career was taken into consideration. To the amazement of the court, orders were given that Kusch was to be shot.

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