
SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN DISTRICT

West German Mission



At the far north extent of the West German Mission in 1939 was the district of Schleswig-Holstein. With the Danish Mission to the north and the Hamburg District to the south, this district consisted of a very small territory. The four branches were all located north of a line running essentially from the North Sea east to the Baltic Sea, through the city of Neumünster.

This district was administered from the city of Kiel on the Baltic. From there, the distances to the other three branches were not significant: forty-three miles north to Flensburg, twenty miles west to Rendsburg, and twenty miles farther to Friedrichstadt.



Fig. 1. The Schleswig-Holstein District was located among the flat lands of northern Germany.

The population of the district was very small, and most of the members (175 of them, 54 percent) belonged to the Kiel Branch. Indeed, it is difficult to envision missionaries even traveling to such small towns as Friedrichstadt and Rendsburg to seek out people to whom the gospel could be introduced.

Schleswig-Holstein District ¹	1939
Elders	26
Priests	8
Teachers	5
Deacons	26
Other Adult Males	51
Adult Females	193
Male Children	8
Female Children	10
<i>Total</i>	327

The mission directory page listing the leaders of the Schleswig-Holstein District in the summer of 1939 either was never received in the mission office or has not survived. All that is known about those leaders is taken from various reports found in the mission archives. For example, one reads the following entry dated Saturday–Sunday, April 15–16,

1939: “A district conference for Schleswig-Holstein was held in the Kiel Branch hall. Presiding was Robert Salopiata. A wonderful spirit prevailed among saints and friends.”²

It appears that Elder Salopiata of the Flensburg Branch was inducted into the military at the onset of the war, because his availability to serve as the district president ended already in September 1939. The new supervisor of the West German Mission, Friedrich Biehl, wrote to former mission president M. Douglas Wood (then in Stockholm, Sweden) with this message on September 26, 1939: “Brother Kurt Müller of Kiel has agreed to serve as District President of Schleswig-Holstein. Brother Salopiata can now be released.”³

It is believed from eyewitness reports that Elder Müller served in that office for the majority—if not the rest—of the war years. Nothing else is known about the men and women who assisted Elder Müller in directing the affairs of the four branches in that district.

According to the history of the Kiel Branch, the district conference held in Kiel on March 31, 1940, was attended by mission supervisor Christian Heck as well as Hamburg District president Alwin Brey. The attendance consisted of 255 members and 28 friends. In November of that year, another district conference was held, to which two hundred persons came.⁴



Fig. 2. Members of the League of German Girls in Kiel marching to an activity. (R. Radack)

NOTES

1. Presiding Bishopric, “Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955,” 257, CHL CR 4 12.
2. West German Mission quarterly report, 1939, CHL LR 10045 2 16.
3. M. Douglas Wood, papers, CHL MS 10817. The history of the Kiel Branch shows this change of leadership taking place on December 10, 1939.
4. Kiel Branch history; courtesy of Karl-Heinz Goldmund.

FLENSBURG BRANCH

The northern suburbs of the city of Flensburg reached almost to the border of Denmark in 1939. This port city on the Baltic Sea was thus the northernmost city of substantial size (68,042 inhabitants) in Hitler’s Germany when World War II began. With its large port facilities and industry, it was a city crucial to the war efforts of the Third Reich.

The branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints met in rooms rented on the second floor of a building at Grossestrasse 48 in Flensburg. According to the branch history, the main meeting hall was complemented by four small classrooms.¹

A small branch of fifty-four persons called that location home in the summer of 1939. The president of the branch was Max B. Müller, but he was called to be the district president by the end of September. It is not known who succeeded him then. When the war began in September 1939, Otto Schwan was the superintendent of the Sunday School, Friedrich Hansen the leader of the YMMIA, and Constanze Klindt the leader of the YWMIA. The Primary was directed by Elfriede Callesen, and the Relief Society by Margarete Salopiata (who also represented *Der Stern* magazine). Genealogical research was supervised by Max Müller.

The meeting schedule for the Flensburg Branch in 1939 was as follows: Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. and sacrament meeting at 7:00 p.m., entertainment

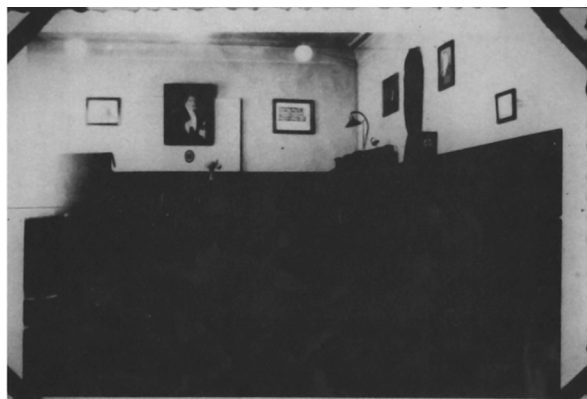


Fig. 1. The main meeting room of the Flensburg Branch in about 1940. (Church History Library)

(of unspecified variety) on Mondays at 7:30 p.m., Primary on Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m., MIA on Thursdays at 7:45 p.m., followed by priesthood and Relief Society meetings at 8:45, and genealogical study on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 6:00 p.m.

Flensburg Branch ²	1939
Elders	6
Priests	1
Teachers	1
Deacons	4
Other Adult Males	11
Adult Females	30
Male Children	0
Female Children	1
<i>Total</i>	54

The surviving manuscript branch history only extends through the end of the year 1940 but includes several comments about life for the Latter-day Saints in the Flensburg Branch during those seventeen months:³

August 22, 1939: A special meeting was held in the Kiel Branch hall with Joseph Fielding Smith as the speaker.

August 27, 1939: Margo Karl Klindt and Albert Dittmer were drafted. Beginning on September 5, sacrament meeting was to begin at 6:00 p.m. due to blackout regulations.

October 15, 1939: Sacrament meeting was to begin at 5:00 p.m. due to blackout regulations.

December 24, 1939: A Christmas program was presented; twenty-five persons attended.

The average sacrament meeting attendance since the war began was eighteen persons.

January 14, 1940: Relief Society meetings started again after a hiatus of four months. The Flensburg Sunday School was discontinued until further notice.

March 30–31, 1940: Twelve members of the branch attended the district conference in Kiel.

April 21, 1940: Max Müller and Elisabeth Bräuer [?] were married; “we gave the young couple a fine reception.”

April 20, 1940: Uwe Wischniewski died at the age of 21–22 months; he was buried on April 24 at the Friedenshügel cemetery; twenty-five persons attended the funeral.

May 26, 1940: [Sunday] meeting times were changed: MIA at 10:30 [a.m.], sacrament meeting at 11:45, Relief Society and priesthood meetings at 12:30.

The average attendance at Sunday meetings in April 1940 was twelve to fourteen persons. It is clear from those entries that wartime conditions had interrupted and even temporarily curtailed branch activities. Nevertheless, it is equally clear that the members of the Flensburg Branch carried on as best they could.

Harry Christensen was born in Denmark in 1922 and baptized in the town of Sonderburg, just north of Flensburg in Denmark, in 1933. His father found work in Flensburg in April 1939 and moved his family south into the city to avoid the long bicycle ride to work. Harry, who was sixteen years old and finished with public schooling, recalled finding work for himself at the time as well:

I started job training in a garden market when I lived in Flensburg but I didn't live at home. My boss had all of his trainees stay in his home. We worked every day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. I had one day off a month and that was usually a Sunday. This was the only time that I could go home and get my laundry done, so I didn't have many opportunities to attend church.⁴

As a citizen of Denmark, Harry could not be drafted into the military nor subjected to other involuntary programs under the National Socialist government. In other respects, Harry and his family found it important to assimilate themselves in Germany. For example, they spoke German at home. In fact, both of Harry's parents were born in Germany, but his father had since become a Danish citizen.

"The first British attack on Flensburg destroyed the branch meeting rooms," recalled Harry. "The young men were drafted, and mothers with their children left town for safer places." Even Danish citizens could not escape the dangers of war, and Harry's life would be interrupted several times by personal loss.

The Flensburg Branch history indicates that changes were made in the Relief Society on September 14, 1940. Margarete Salopiata was called as the new Relief Society leader again, and the following were released: president Paula Thomsen, first counselor Elfriede Callesen, and second counselor Alwine Dittmer. New Sunday School leaders were called: president Franz Luhmann, first counselor Albert Dittmer, and second counselor Thomas Thomsen.⁵

The branch clerk wrote an enlightening paragraph in his record at the conclusion of the year 1940:

So ends the second year of the war. Under the circumstances, the meetings were held for the most part without interruption. All organizations are still functioning well. Sunday School takes place from 11:00 to 12:00, priesthood and Relief Society meetings from 2:00 to 3:00, and sacrament meeting from 3:00 to 4:00. There are 55 members of record: 9 priesthood holders, 11 other males, 29 females, 6 children.⁶

The branch population was constantly in flux, as is clear from an analysis of the above report. Beginning with fifty-four members in 1939, the membership had risen to fifty-five, despite the fact that two members died during 1940. Thus it can be assumed that three persons were baptized that year.

Harry Christensen moved to Kiel and met a nice Catholic girl there. They were married in the civil registry office in 1943 and moved into a modest apartment. In that huge port city, the Christensens were in for very frightening adventures because the city was targeted constantly by Allied bombers. As Harry recalled:

We lost our home three times during the war and lost everything. But because we didn't have anything left, we were given coupons with which to buy the things we were missing. But even though we had the money, those things were not available to buy. I remember one time when my bike was destroyed by a bomb, I received a new one from France that looked really neat. . . . We had four different strollers for our son. We could not take one inside the air-raid shelter, so we left it outside, where it was destroyed.

During the last two years of the war, Harry was assigned duty as an air-raid warden. He recalled many occasions when he watched buildings burn after attacks and wondered about the reactions of residents: "During those times of stress, we often saw people doing things that were not rational. For example, people would throw their belongings out the windows of burning houses but did not think about the fact that the things would break [when they hit the ground]. All they could think about was how to save their property."

After a terrible raid on December 26, 1943, Harry's wife and their little boy were put on a bus and sent to an unspecified location at a safe distance from Kiel. They were eventually assigned a room in the town of Lütjenburg (eighteen miles to the east). The confusion of the times was such that several months passed before Harry found out where his family was and before they found out that he was still alive back in Kiel. Any hope of a normal

life together must have seemed impossible to them under those conditions.

Harry joined his family in Lütjenburg before the British army arrived there on May 5, 1945, and the war ended. The takeover was peaceful, but local residents were subject to a strict curfew. Harry had to sneak around town at night to find a midwife to assist in the birth of his daughter.

Upon finally returning to Kiel in 1946, Harry Christensen established contact with the LDS branch there and met the branch president. “He kept everybody together,” Harry explained.

Back in Flensburg, the branch members likely experienced similar losses as they too tried to survive in a port city. As of this writing, no information is available regarding the location or frequency of church meetings among the Latter-day Saints who remained in Flensburg.

IN MEMORIAM

The following members of the Flensburg Branch did not survive World War II:

Hellmuth Hermann E. Ahrnes b. Toftlund, Schleswig-Holstein, 17 Jul 1912; son of Hermann Ahrnes and Margarethe Sören; bp. 17 Sep 1932; conf. 17 Sep 1932; rifleman; k. in battle Jewanowa, Russia, 2 Aug 1941; bur. Korostyn, Russia (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 413; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Uwe Andersen b. Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 4 Jan 1940; son of Albert Andersen and Elly Schröder; d. stroke 20 Apr 1940 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 505)

Fritz Ludwig Beuermann b. Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 18 May 1924; son of Ludwig Friedrich Diedrich Beuermann and Hedwig Luise Schwichtenberg; bp. 17 Sep 1932; conf. 17 Sep 1932; lance corporal; k. in battle north of Podujevo 2 Nov 1944 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 360; www.volksbund.de)

Alfred August Dittmer b. Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 30 Oct 1927; son of Albert August Dittmer and Wilhelmine Johnsen; bp. 1 Sep 1936; conf. 1 Sep 1936; grenadier; k. in battle 8 Jan 1945; bur. Recogne-Bastogne, Belgium (CHL microfilm 2458, form 42 FP, pt. 37, all mission list 1938–45, 137–38; CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 359; www.volksbund.de)

Julius Heinrich Grell b. Hamburg 5 May 1874; son of Franz Grell and Emilie von Eitzen; d. 28 Jul 1944 (CHL CR 375 8 2458, 840–41)

Fritz Emil Hansen b. Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 6 Aug 1921; son of Friedrich Peter Christian Hansen and Elsabe Wilhelmine Johanna Louise von Ehren; bp. 15 Aug 1929; conf. 15 Aug 1929; non-commissioned officer; k. in battle close to Jankapass Peijapolje-Pass-Pleolja, 25 Nov 1944 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 317; www.volksbund.de; FHL microfilm 162773, 1930 and 1935 censuses; IGI)

Constanz Klindt b. Twedterfeld, Schleswig-Holstein, 22 Jun 1922; son of Hans Christensen Klindt and Constanze Amalie Lorenzen; bp. 16 Aug 1930; d. 10 Feb 1945 or 1 May 1947 (SLCGW; IGI)

Hans Bruno Klindt b. Twedterfeld, Schleswig-Holstein, 28 Jun 1919; son of Hans Christensen Klindt and Constanze Amalie Lorenzen; bp. 27 Aug 1928; MIA Forst 1 Apr 1945 (SLCGW; www.volksbund.de)

Walter Rolf Hans Christian Klindt b. Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 4 Oct 1914; son of Hans Christensen Klindt and Constanze Amalie Lorenzen; MIA Stalingrad, Russia, 1 Jan 1943 (SLCGW; www.volksbund.de)

Otto Fritz Edward Siegmund b. Plön, Schleswig-Holstein, 11 Jan 1877 or 1887; son of Johann Heinrich Julius Siegmund and Sophia Dorothea Henriette Genske; bp. 10 Nov 1923; conf. 11 Nov 1923; ord. deacon 2 Jun 1929; ord. teacher 2 Nov 1930; ord. priest 27 Apr 1932; ord. elder 8 May 1934; d. suicide 18 or 19 Oct 1940 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 227; FHL microfilm 245264; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses; IGI)

Uwe Wischniewski b. Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 9 Feb 1940; son of Ernst-Walter Nikolaus Tollgaard and Gertraud Irmgard Christensen; d. Flensburg 20 Apr 1940; bur. Friedenshügel cemetery 24 Apr 1940 (CHL LR 2884 11, 230)

NOTES

1. Flensburg Branch manuscript history, 230, CHL LR 2884 11.
2. Presiding Bishopric, “Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955,” 257, CHL CR 4 12.
3. Flensburg Branch manuscript history, 232–44.
4. Harry Christian Wilhelm Christensen, interview by the author in German, Murray, UT, March 17, 2006; summarized in English by Judith Sartowski.
5. Flensburg Branch manuscript history, book 2, 10.
6. *Ibid.* 15.

FRIEDRICHSTADT BRANCH

The branch in Friedrichstadt was very isolated. The city was located just a few miles from the mouth of the Eider River at the North Sea, and Latter-day Saints there had to cross almost the entire breadth of Schleswig-Holstein (forty miles) to reach Kiel. The landscape around Friedrichstadt is extremely flat, some of the territory having been reclaimed from the North Sea since 1700 and protected ever since by a network of earthen dikes.

Friedrichstadt, a town of only 2,197 in 1939, had an LDS branch consisting of seventy-one souls, twelve of whom held the priesthood. Over two-thirds of the members were women over twelve years of age.¹ According to the list of branch officers, several members lived in towns and villages a few miles to the north, such as Husum and Mildstedt. Rail connections at the time were such that members who did not live in Friedrichstadt may have walked substantial distances to attend church meetings.

Friedrichstadt Branch ²	1939
Elders	4
Priests	1
Teachers	1
Deacons	6
Other Adult Males	7
Adult Females	46
Male Children	1
Female Children	5
<i>Total</i>	71

Andreas D. Andresen was the president of the Friedrichstadt Branch in the summer of 1939. His counselors were Jakob H. Peters and a Brother

Fuhrmann. The latter was also the superintendant of the Sunday School, while Brother Peters also directed the YMMIA. The leaders of the YWMIA and the Relief Society were respectively Johanne Danklefsen and Emma Micheelsen, while Friederike Peters was the local genealogical class instructor.

The branch meetings were held in the apartment of a Sister Vogt—in a single room, according to Dora Micheelsen (born 1923).³ “The children often had to sit on the floor because the room was not large enough.” The priesthood meeting began at 9:00 a.m. and was followed by Sunday School at 10:00 and sacrament meeting at 2:00 p.m. The Relief Society sisters convened on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and the MIA members at 7:30. A genealogy class was held on the second Sunday of the month at 1:00 p.m.

Baptisms were conducted in the Treene River, which flows through Friedrichstadt into the Eider. There was no need to keep the ceremonies secret because relationships with people of other religions were quite unencumbered in those days, as Dora recalled: “I had a Jewish friend, and I took her to church, and I also went to the synagogue with her.” Even though the branch members were instructed to avoid singing hymns with the words *Israel* and *Zion*, Dora stated that they did not observe the rule.

One of the few quiet corners of the war in Germany was certainly the area of Schleswig-Holstein around Friedrichstadt. The vicinity was not home to significant industrial or transportation installations and thus was not particularly attractive to Allied bombers. Although the residents there heard bombers overhead on their way to other locations in Germany, few bombs fell on Friedrichstadt. According to Dora, “All in all, I have to say that we got through the war pretty well. We didn’t have much to complain about.” While they were not bombed out or driven out of town, the residents of Friedrichstadt were called upon to house some of the millions of refugees from eastern Germany. Dora explained that her family took in nine refugees: “We all felt like we were engaged in a common cause.” That cause, in the last year of the war, was simply survival.

Dora Micheelsen recalled that the Friedrichstadt Branch was never without a place to meet on a Sunday (“but there were difficulties now and then”) and that there was always at least one priesthood holder to provide the required leadership and services. Her own mother died during the war, but Dora had younger siblings to care for and her family employment to keep her sufficiently busy. Regarding her well-being as a member of the Church, she had this to say in retrospect:

During the war, my testimony grew and grew. With all the things we had to go through, our Heavenly Father protected us and helped us find a way. We used to say to each other, “It’s so good that we have the Church in our lives!” Whatever happened, we seemed to think about the Church first and how it could help us. It was the first thing we turned to.

The little Friedrichstadt Branch in its rural setting survived the war in general, but two of the members died in the service of their country, two more disappeared and were not seen again, and two more died of illnesses not common in peacetime. There were enough members left in the summer of 1945 to carry on the activities of faithful Latter-day Saints.

IN MEMORIAM

The following members of the Friedrichstadt Branch did not survive World War II:

Andreas Martin Albertsen b. Mildstedt, Husum, Schleswig-Holstein, 12 May 1909; son of Albert Bahne Albertsen and Anna Maria Petersen; bp. 10 Jul 1920; conf. 10 Jul 1920; lance corporal; k. in battle Ravienna or Russia 3 Mar 1944 (CHL CR 275 8, no. 1; www.volksbund.de; FHL microfilm 25708; 1925 and 1930 censuses; IGI)

Gottfried Ernst Bernhard Christiansen b. Mildstedt, Husum, Schleswig-Holstein, 2 Apr 1915; son of Johannes Wilhelm Friedrich Christiansen and Anna Sass or Christiansen; bp. 16 Jul 1924; conf. 16 Jul 1924; sergeant; k. near Goldberg, Schlesien, 8 Mar 1945 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 78; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Gertrud Rosa Degen b. Elmshorn, Schleswig-Holstein, 23 Oct 1912; dau. of Willy Degen and Maria Kohn; bp. 17 Jul 1921; conf. 17 Jul 1921; missing as of

20 Feb 1942 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 91; FHL microfilm 25753; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses)

Henning Detlef Franzen b. Hude, Husum, Schleswig-Holstein, 21 Mar 1870; son of Henning Detlef Franzen and Anna Dorothea Olm or Ohm; bp. 5 Jun 1921; conf. 5 Jun 1921; ord. deacon 18 Jun 1922; ord. priest 1924; m. 11 Jun 1909; d. lung disease 19 Nov 1940 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 95; FHL microfilm 25769; 1935 census; IGI)

Peter Franzen b. Hude, Husum, Schleswig-Holstein, 14 Apr 1911; son of Henning Detlef Franzen and Helene Margarethe Spiecker; bp. 5 Jun 1921; conf. 5 Jun 1921; ord. deacon 28 Mar 1927; m. 20 Aug 1939, Kaethe Kroger; d. typhus 30 Apr 1944 (CHL CR 275 8, no. 1; CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 97; IGI)

Emma Catharina Peters b. Moordorf, Steinburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 7 Oct 1893; dau. of Claus Peters and Anna Catharine Kunstmann or Kuntzmann; bp. 5 Jun 1921; conf. 5 Jun 1921; m. Breitenberg, Schleswig-Holstein, 28 Jan 1915, Karl August Brassat; 1 child; 2m. Friedrichstadt, Schleswig-Holstein, 11 Mar 1922, Claus Christian Bernhard Micheelsen; 4 children; d. stomach cancer Tönning, Schleswig-Holstein, 2 Aug 1944 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 185; FHL microfilm 245233; 1930, 1935 censuses; IGI; AF; PRF)

Karl Rehder b. Flensburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 14 Sep 1905; son of Karl Rehder and Bertha Mölln; bp. 31 Aug 1929; conf. 31 Aug 1929; missing as of 20 Jan 1940 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 321; FHL microfilm 271400; 1930 and 1935 censuses)

Erna Theede b. Drage, Friedrichstadt, Schleswig-Holstein, 17 Oct 1912; dau. of Jürgen Theede and Katharina Kirchner; bp. 18 Jun 1922; conf. 18 Jun 1922; d. tuberculosis 24 Aug 1944 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 254; FHL microfilm 245283; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses; IGI)

Margarethe Theede b. Hohn, Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 17 Oct 1901; dau. of Jürgen Theede and Katharina Kirchner; bp. 18 Jun 1922; conf. 18 Jun 1922; d. typhus 10 April 1944 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 422; FHL microfilm 245283; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses)

NOTES

1. West German Mission branch directory, 1939, CHL LR 10045 11.
2. Presiding Bishopric, “Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955,” 257, CHL CR 4 12.
3. Dora Micheelsen Zentner, telephone interview with Jennifer Heckmann in German, March 6, 2009; summarized in English by Judith Sartowski.

KIEL BRANCH

The port city of Kiel is located on a fjord of the Baltic Sea near the eastern end of the canal that joins the Baltic to the North Sea. The capital of the province of Schleswig-Holstein for many years, the city had 261,298 inhabitants when World War II began. As a crucial venue for maritime operations, the city's workforce was primarily occupied in the construction and maintenance of ships of war.

Kiel Branch ¹	1939
Elders	13
Priests	6
Teachers	3
Deacons	14
Other Adult Males	28
Adult Females	101
Male Children	6
Female Children	4
<i>Total</i>	175

The branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Kiel was relatively strong, with 175 members, among whom were thirty-six priesthood holders. Since May 4, 1936, the branch meetings had been held in rented rooms in the old Hotel Kronprinz at Hafenstrasse 13–15.² The branch president at the time was Kurt Müller, and it was his honor to greet Elder Joseph Fielding Smith in Kiel for a conference on August 22, 1939. Elder Smith and his wife, Jessie Evans Smith, were traveling with mission president M. Douglas and Evelyn Wood through northern Germany. Saints from other branches in the district were among the 108 persons who attended the event. Little did anyone

know that the visitors and American missionaries in Germany would be instructed to leave the country just three days later.³



Fig. 1. Else Mueller and her infant son Lothar in 1940. (L. Mueller)

The branch directory for the late summer of 1939 shows leaders in all organizations except for the Primary. Wilhelm Metelmann and Heinz Kuhr were the counselors to Kurt Müller; Felix Schmidt, the superintendent of the Sunday School; and Gustav Girnus, the leader of the YMMIA. Eva Behrendt led the YWMIA, and Fanny Metelmann was the president of the Relief Society. Brother Metelmann was also the genealogy expert, and *Der Stern* magazine was promoted by Johann Ceglowski.⁴

Ursula Leschke (born 1930) was baptized by the American missionaries on the beach by the Kiel harbor just before the war began. Her father was not a member of the Church, but her mother was dedicated to the gospel and took Ursula along as she made visits to sisters of the Relief Society. The family lived in the suburbs east of the harbor. Ursula recalled making the long walk to the harbor, then taking a ferry across to the city center, then walking about fifteen minutes to the Hafenstrasse address.⁵

The location of the branch rooms was nice (very close to the city center), but Ursula recalled some negative aspects of the facility: “It was an old beer

hall, and we had to clean it up every week before we could use it. I believe that it was just one large room with a small podium.”

The war that began in September 1939 was not the only challenge Brother Müller had to deal with in those days. According to the branch history, high water from the Kiel Fjord reached the old Hotel Kronprinz on October 29, and church meetings were canceled.⁶ The same problem occurred on January 21, 1940, and on November 2, 1941.

Changes happened quickly in the LDS Church in the first months of the war, principally because many of the brethren were drafted into the army and had to be replaced in their callings. So it was that Kurt Müller was called to be the president of the Schleswig-Holstein District on December 10, 1939. His successor as branch president was Wilhelm Metelmann.



Fig. 2. The Kiel Branch met in rooms in the old Hotel Kronprinz at Hafenstrasse 13–15 (on the right side). This photograph was used for a postcard in the 1920s. (K. Goldmund)

Karla Radack (born 1930) was sent away from her home in Kiel three times as part of the Kinderlandverschickung program, each time for about nine months. “I was first in Göhren on the island of Rügen, where we used to go to the beach and pick sea grass. The second time, I went to [the state of] Thuringia. The third time was in Frankenstein in Saxony. Our teacher and our [League of German Girls] leader always came along. I was able to go home between all those trips, but I had no contact with the Church when I was away from home.”⁷

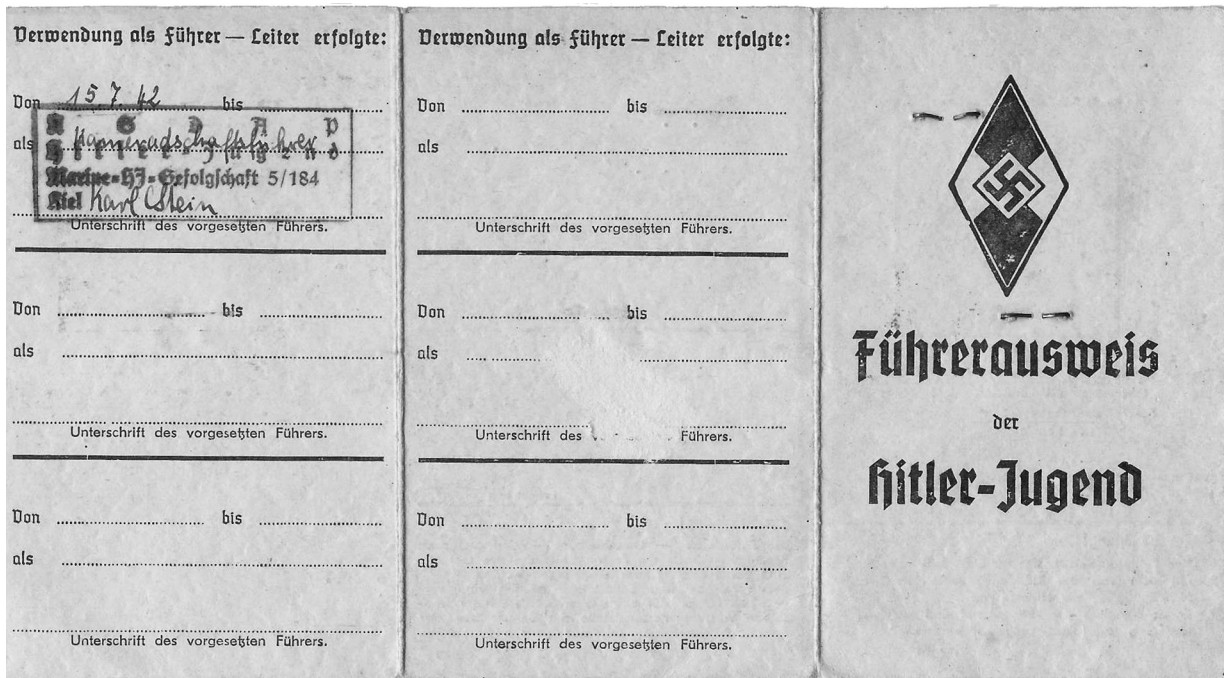


Fig. 3. The Radack home on Langenbergstrasse in Kiel. (K. Radack Siebach)

On one of those trips, Karla saw something she could hardly have comprehended at her age. “In Thuringia we were transported by train. Another train passed us on the other side, and it was full of Jewish people being transported to concentration camps. A lot of German people had water in their hands, and they walked up and gave it to them. That was one of my first recollections of those happenings.” She had no way of knowing the fate of those Jews under a government determined to rid the country of the race.

At the age of sixteen, Ehrenfried Radack (born 1926) was already an active participant in the war. He was drafted along with his schoolmates to operate an anti-aircraft battery at the outskirts of Kiel. He was frightened to shoot at airplanes cruising overhead on their way to attack Kiel. As he recalled, “We had seen them destroy our city piece by piece. . . . We had our classes right there [at] the battery, and we continued our education while we were serving our country.”⁸

One of the favorite activities of German LDS branches was the baptismal ceremony that happened perhaps once or twice a year. The Kiel Branch history lists only three such occasions during the war years. On two of those occasions, a leader of the West German Mission (Christian Heck or Anton Huck) presided and participated. Baptisms in the Kiel Branch took place on a beach or in a bathhouse.



Figs. 4 and 5. Like almost all children in Hitler's Germany, Ehrenfried Radack was inducted into the Jungvolk at age ten. (R. Radack)

Ursula Leschke's father worked as a naval engineer designing submarines. At one point in the war, his office was moved to a place near Hanover, away from the threat of air raids. At home, Ursula's mother, Ellie, failed to fly the swastika flag from her window at the expected times. One day, she found a note pushed through the mail slot by her door—likely by a patriotic neighbor—reminding her of her duty. Her mother also did not greet people with the customary "Heil Hitler!" and one day was challenged by a loyal schoolteacher to explain her actions. According to Ursula, her mother offered a brave reply:

My mother said, "I don't believe in it. I don't think he is a righteous man or that he's doing the right things." Afterwards my mother went home, and she was just scared to death because Fräulein Müller, my teacher, could have easily denounced her to the authorities and my mother would have ended up in a concentration camp. She told me that she went home and she really prayed that Heavenly Father might protect her that she might not be turned in.

All over Germany, LDS men were answering the call to arms, but at least one member of the Church declined to do so. Karla Radack recalled the situation with her uncle:



Fig. 6. Members of the Kiel Branch in 1944 on an outing in a local forest. (M. Radack Kramer)

My uncle Helmut Radack was picked up because he did not want to join the army. One early morning, soon after he had decided against it, he was picked up and put in a concentration camp. He passed away in that camp. They sent the ashes to my grandmother, but my parents later found out that those weren't his ashes after all. They were probably just scooped up and sent to them in an urn. It was very sad for them.⁹

It is interesting to note that while building materials were scarce all over Germany during the war, the branch was able to secure what they needed to renovate the rooms at Hafenstrasse 13–15. Perhaps the challenge of finding the needed materials contributed to the long term of renovation that lasted from October 18, 1942, to March 7, 1943. No details regarding the work done are available.

Sometime during the intermediate war years, Ursula Leschke was sent to Bansin on the Baltic Sea island of Usedom as part of the

Kinderlandverschickung program. Later, her group was transferred to the city of Bromberg in occupied Poland. In the late summer of 1944, that area was in the path of the invading Red Army, so Ursula and her classmates were sent home to Kiel. Back at home, she learned that her school had been destroyed, so she was required to live in Neumünster (twenty miles to the south), where a school was available. However, Allied airplanes soon attacked that city, and the school there was destroyed too. She returned to Kiel to stay and to experience the end of the war. "By then, the harbor ferry was destroyed and we had to walk all the way around [the south end of] the harbor to attend church meetings."

Even in Kiel, one of the prime targets for Allied bombers, it was possible for children to have some fun during the war. Karla Radack had this recollection:

To have fun as kids and teenagers, we went out and looked for shells from bombs. I had a little cigar box that I got from a store. My friends and I liked to collect the outside copper shell cases of antiaircraft ammunition. Those were the best pieces, which we would trade. But we also found toys that blew up when you touched them.¹⁰ We used to go to roller-skate, play ball and games. We also went to the beach quite often.

A traditional thrill for German children (and often their parents as well) was a visit by Adolf Hitler. Karla recalled how they heard that the Führer was supposed to come to the harbor in Kiel one day: “My father and I went down there. He bought a little folding chair because the vendor was yelling, ‘*Wer den Führer heut’ will sehen, muss auf einem Klappstuhl stehen*’ [If you want to see our leader, you’ll need a folding chair.] I sat on his shoulders and was able to see the Führer.”



Fig. 7. Karla Radack in a dress made out of her father's old army coat. (K. Radack Siebach)

After finishing public school, Karla was called upon to serve her *Pflichtjahr* (duty year). She and a friend were assigned to a family with little children in a town not far from Kiel. Unfortunately, the host family did not treat Karla and her friend very well at all. On one occasion, the girls simply went home

to Kiel, but the leaders of the *Pflichtjahr* program forced them to return. Finally, Karla's mother went to pick up the girls and rescue them from the ill treatment.

In January 1944, Ehrenfried Radack was drafted and classified as an officer candidate. Following five months of training in Oldenburg, he was sent to Saarlautern, near the French border. While there, he learned of the assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler on July 20. His company commander assembled the men, informed them of the abortive attempt, and instructed them that from that time forward they were to use the Hitler salute (the straight, raised right arm) rather than the traditional military salute. As Ehrenfried recalled, “Our commander did not seem to be happy about [the new salute].”¹¹

In Saarlautern, Ehrenfried somehow contracted diphtheria and was hospitalized for six weeks. When he asked to return to his unit, the physician ordered him to remain for several more weeks. By the time he returned to the Western Front, the Allies were making steady advances through France and Belgium toward Germany. Soon, Ehrenfried developed an infection in his foot and was again hospitalized, despite the assertion of his sergeant that he was only trying to avoid combat duty. He later realized that his medical problems were blessings in disguise: “How lucky I was; while I was in the hospital, our unit had to fight around Aachen with heavy losses. As I was told later, only one of our group survived.” When he was subsequently transferred from town to town within Germany, he realized that “everything went like it was foreseen [predestined] for me.” He never saw combat on the Western Front but should have on at least two occasions.¹²

The city of Kiel and its harbor were bombed many times during the war, but the air raid of July 24, 1944, was especially tragic for the Latter-day Saints. The old Hotel Kronprinz was destroyed, and somewhere in Kiel, Wilhelm Metelmann was killed. One week later, a sad branch welcomed



Fig. 8. Members of the Kiel Branch in 1944. (M. Radack Kramer)

Edwin KÜchler as their new leader. Gustav Girnus and Walter Köcher continued to serve as the counselors.

“Brother Metelmann had done a lot of genealogy,” recalled Ursula Leschke. She recalled hearing that the branch president was not killed in an air-raid shelter but had died during the firestorm that followed the bombing.

With the destruction of the branch rooms and the apparent lack of suitable rooms elsewhere in the city, the branch began to hold meetings in the homes of members. The history lists the names of six families who hosted Sunday services from October 1944 to March 1945: Girnus, Starkjohann, Leschke, Metelmann, Heimann, and Radack. It is likely that the attendance by that time had been substantially reduced by calls to military service and the departure of mothers with small children

to safer places. The remaining Saints could indeed be accommodated in the largest room of a typical apartment.

Karla Radack was in Kiel for the last year of the war and thus experienced many of the worst air raids against that port city. The shelters constructed for the residents were enormous and solid, but she recalled the lack of sufficient ventilation and the air that was almost too thin to support life. People were sitting almost on top of each other, and anxiety was always high, she explained.

Toward the end of the war, we went to bed with our clothes on and with a suitcase ready. I remember one time when the sirens went off, my father came to help me get dressed. But I didn't want to wake up and was still half asleep. I remember that was the only time that he hit me. The people were running in the streets, and everything was so crowded. Parents had their babies in little

baskets and carried them on each side. A voice from the loudspeaker told us to hurry up because the Allied planes were nearly over Kiel.

Young Marlies Radack (born 1940) could recall little more than air raids during her first five years of life: “That was a nightly thing. We slept in our clothes. There was nothing we could do about it, and it happened every night. You take it day by day. And if you don’t know anything different, it’s pretty normal.”¹³ Marlies explained that she and her mother usually sat in the basement of their apartment building during the attacks unless there was time to run to the closest public bunker. “One night, a bomb hit really close to the house. And then there was one that was by our door and it didn’t explode. They had to call somebody to defuse it. The glass in our windows was all broken. If that bomb had gone off, we wouldn’t have [survived].”

In early December 1944, Corporal Ehrenfried Radack left Germany on a train headed for Wiener Neustadt, a city south of Vienna, Austria. He was



Fig. 9. Ehrenfried Radack in the uniform of an officer candidate. (R. Radack)

to complete officer candidate training there. In March he and his comrades were informed that if they completed the final examination, they would be promoted to second lieutenant on April 20, Hitler’s birthday. Ehrenfried was indeed one of those who passed the test, but before he could enjoy his new status, it was learned that the Soviet

army had broken through the German lines near the border of Austria and Hungary, just a few miles to the east. There followed a most confusing confrontation with the invaders, and Ehrenfried and

his friends were sent with small arms to fight against the feared Soviet T-34 tank.

In the battle that ensued, Ehrenfried watched as his friends were killed, and he was the only survivor. Captured, he was nearly executed several times within one hour. Fortunately, a Soviet officer recognized his rank and singled him out for better treatment. On their way away from the fighting, an odd incident occurred. Ehrenfried wrote this account:

[The Soviet officer and I] approached a trench dug across the road. At this time, when we got ready to jump over, something made me push the Russian officer into the trench with me following him, when [an artillery round] fired by the German artillery hit and exploded at the very spot where we had been standing. He looked at me realizing what had happened, and while we were still in the trench, he shared with me his ration of food. When we finally got up to proceed a few minutes later, he turned me over to a Russian soldier giving him strict orders to take me safely to the battalion commander. He then went away as suddenly as he had appeared to save my life.¹⁴

Lieutenant Radack had survived his first and only combat experience, but he would later describe the adventure that began that day as “the beginning of a long tragedy.” With a thousand other German POWs, he was marched through Austria, Hungary, and other countries on their way to the Black Sea. By the early summer of 1945, he was in the city of Krapotkin, Russia, where his first job was to help rebuild a sunflower factory.¹⁵



Fig. 10. Edeltraud Radack sending Morse code messages in Husum. (K. Radack Siebach)



Fig. 11. Edeltraud Radack at the beach sitting on a defused sea mine. (K. Radack Siebach)

Karla Radack's last wartime assignment required her to work in a submarine construction facility where she was given drafting projects for four months. That work ended when the facility was bombed out of commission in early 1945.

The branch history does not list any meeting dates between March 11, 1945, and August 19, 1945. It is possible that the events of the last months of the war and the first months of the British military occupation did not facilitate gatherings. On September 12, 1945, Gustav Girnus was installed as the branch president. It would be largely his charge to rebuild the Kiel Branch from the ruins of that large but devastated port city.

The span of Ehrenfried Radack's military service during the war (just sixteen months) was very short compared to his time as a POW in the Soviet Union. Year after year dragged by for the young man as he battled to stay healthy, all the while longing for home. Two letters written to his family in Kiel reflect his thinking in the last months of his incarceration:

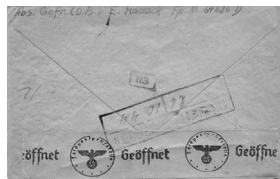


Fig. 12. The envelope carrying Ehrenfried Radack's letter home to his parents was opened by censors. The stamp (geöffnet, "opened") attests to the process. (R. Radack)

February 15, 1949:

My beloved ones, next month it will be four years since my last farewell to you. I remember it so well. Who would have realized then that our reunion would be so far away and still not even know when the time will come. . . . It is difficult to preserve the spiritual and moral strengths, but if I didn't have any faith and all you have taught me, I would have turned out to be like everybody else. . . . Here I have to live the life how it is in reality but still preserve my own dignity.¹⁶

June, 1949:

I look forward to be together with you again. Many things will have changed at home in the four years I was gone. . . . I, too, have changed, more matured by the hard and true face of life. It has pulled me away from the dream world of my youth for life into an unmerciful period

of time. But this has given me strength and knowledge and faith and the desire to always choose the right. . . . I know our Father in Heaven will hold his protecting arm around me until we meet again.¹⁷

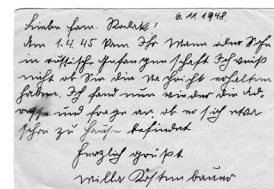


Fig. 13. This card was sent by German POW Milla Köstenbauer to the Radack family in Kiel in 1948: "I don't know if you have been informed that your son was taken prisoner by the Russians. Or is he already home again?" (R. Radack)

In August 1949, still in only his twenty-fourth year, he was released from captivity in the Soviet Union and returned to his family in Kiel. He was one of the last Latter-day Saints of the West German Mission to come home after the war, but he had seen enough death in the camps to know that many other German soldiers would never come home.

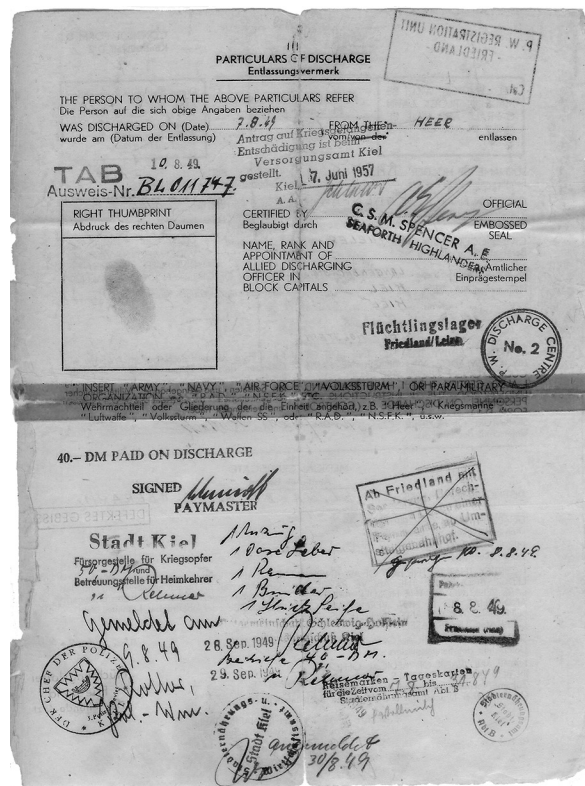


Fig. 14. The release papers for POW Ehrenfried Radack in 1949. (R. Radack)

IN MEMORIAM

The following members of the Kiel Branch did not survive World War II:

Walter Erich Baron b. Breslau, Schlesien, 15 May 1919; son of Alfred Fritz Baron and Meta Klara Cäcilie Kosalek; bp. 17 Dec 1935; conf. 17 Dec 1935; k. in battle (CHL microfilm 2458, Form 42 FP, pt. 37, all-mission list 1945–46, 170–71; CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 489; IGI)

Paula Johanna Christine Anna Dibbert b. Regensburg, Oberpfalz, Bayern, 4 Jul 1888; dau. of Johannes Peter Detlef Dibbert and Johanna Christine M. Dibbert; bp. 24 Jul 1929; conf. 24 Jul 1929; m. — Kol; d. nerve condition 17 May 1941 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 314; IGI)

Max Wilhelm Friedrich Drews b. Trassenheide, Usedom, Pommern, 6 Sep 1884; son of Johann Karl Friedrich Drews and Marie Wilhelmine Friederike Lewerentz; bp. 23 Dec 1922; conf. 23 Dec 1922; m. Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein 17 Nov 1906, Emma Ottilie Emilie Schmalz; 4 children; d. heart condition Pahlhude, Dittmarschen, Schleswig-Holstein, 29 July 1945 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 86; FHL microfilm no. 25757, 1925, 1930, 1935 censuses; IGI; AF)

Rudolph Paul Heinz Otto Haak b. Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, 15 Mar 1924; son of Konrad Friedrich Heinrich Haak and Marie Louise Niehus; bp. 4 Jun 1932; conf. 5 Jun 1932; ord. deacon 9 Apr 1939; navy lieutenant; k. in battle near Essel, Hannover, 12 Apr 1945; bur. Essel, Germany (CHL microfilm 2458, form 42 FP, pt. 37, all-mission list 1938–45, 137–38; CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 118; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Anni Sophie Katharina Hutzfeldt b. Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, 2 Feb 1913; dau. of Waldemar Ludwig Hutzfeldt and Emma Eliese Dorothea Schlueter; bp. 10 Nov 1923; conf. 11 Nov 1923; m. 9 Mar 1935, Waldemar Claussen; k. air raid Kiel (CHL microfilm 2458, form 42 FP, pt. 37, all-mission list, 1945–46, 170–71; CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 132; IGI)

Hermann Gustav Jahn b. Landsberg/Warthe, Brandenburg, 5 Dec 1916; son of Gustav Jahn and Anna Nowakowsky; bp. 13 Dec 1931; conf. 13 Dec 1931; ord. deacon 1 Jul 1934; noncommissioned officer; k. on air force bombing mission 24 Nov 1940; bur. Norderney, Hannover (CHL microfilm 2458, form 42 FP, pt. 37, 1949 list, 1490–91; www.volksbund.de; IGI)

Dorothea Henriette Friedericke Japp b. Altona, Schleswig-Holstein, 29 Jan 1866; dau. of Christian Heinrich Japp and Elisa Anna Marg Grammerstorf; bp. 16 Apr. 1920; conf. 16 Apr 1920; m. 17 Oct 1885, Ludwig Jürgens; d. old age 15 Sep 1943 or 15 Dec 1944

(CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 147; FHL microfilm 271375; 1930 census; IGI; AF; PRF)

Hans Krämer b. 3 March 1909; k. Russia July 1942 (Marlies Radack Krämer)

Wilhelmine Kroll b. Schmoditten, Pr. Eylau, Ostpreußen, 14 May 1864; dau. of Wilhelmine Kroll; bp. 13 Sep 1927; conf. 13 Sep 1927; m. August Simon; d. old age 28 Jul 1941 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 281; FHL microfilm 245265; 1935 census)

Herbert Fritz Karl Kuhr b. Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, 16 Mar 1914; son of Heinrich Wilhelm Kuhr and Betty Emilie Jansen; bp. 5 Jun 1923; conf. 5 Jun 1923; ord. deacon 1 Jun 1930; lance corporal; k. in battle by Wesel, Rheinland, 26 Mar 1945; bur. Mönchengladbach-Haardt, Germany (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 154; FHL microfilm 271381; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses; www.volksbund.de; IGI, AF, PRF)

Heinrich Friedrich Wilhelm Metelmann b. Diepholz, Hannover, 22 Sep 1874; son of Johann Heinrich Hans Asmus Metelmann and Sophie Marie Elisabeth Dohse or Fahse; bp. 7 Jun 1930; conf. 8 Jun 1930; ord. deacon 19 Oct 1931; ord. teacher 2 Oct 1932; ord. priest 2 Dec 1934; ord. elder 17 May 1936; m. 17 Oct 1899, Fanny Wilhelmine Butenschön; k. air raid 24 Jul 1944 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 334; FHL microfilm 245232; 1930 and 1935 censuses; IGI)

Helmut Evan Reinhold Radack b. Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, 28 Apr 1912; son of Friedrich Wilhelm Gustav Ernst Radack and Rosa Christine Larsen Winter; bp. 21 Dec 1924; conf. 21 Dec 1924; d. 15 May 1941 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 216; FHL microfilm 271398; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses; IGI)

Wilhelm Rosenkranz b. Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, 24 Oct 1915; son of Johannes Heinrich Rosenkranz and Ema Sophia Antoinette Schaar; bp. Kiel 8 Oct 1932; conf. 8 Oct 1932; ord. deacon 1 Oct 1933; ord. teacher 10 Nov 1935; corporal; k. in battle near Wichotwice or Leczyca, Poland, 9 Sep 1939; bur. prob. Siemianowice, Poland (*Der Stern*, Oct 1939, 372; www.volksbund.de; CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 418; IGI)

Therese Auguste Mathilde Sakolowski b. Elisabeththal, Bütow, Köslin, Pommern, 14 Feb 1876; dau. of Wilhelm Erdmann Sakolowski and Karoline Wilhelmine Albrecht; bp. 10 Nov 1923; conf. 10 Nov 1923; m. 4 Nov 1899, Julius Kretschmann (div.); 2m. Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, 2 Mar 1918, Wilhelm Heinrich Martin Geist; 3 children; d. lung and heart problems Kiel 12 Jan 1943 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 105; FHL microfilm 25773; 1925, 1930, 1935 censuses; IGI, AF)

Marie Dorothea Sievers b. Jevenstedt, Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein, 2 Jul or Sep 1865; dau. of Claus Sievers and Magdalena Nickels; bp. 25 Jun 1927; conf.

25 Jun 1927; m. — Clausen; d. old age 5 Apr 1942 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 34; IGI)

Johann August Weiss b. Dirschau, Westpreußen, 15 Aug 1894; son of Henrietta Jantczel; bp. 20 Sep 1924; conf. 20 Sep 1924; m. Anna Wischnewski; d. stroke 29 Apr 1941 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 269; FHL microfilm no. 245296; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses)

Rosa Christine Larsen Winter b. Haderslev, Haderslev, Denmark, 9 May 1865; dau. of Jens Larson Winter and Petruline Lund; bp. 8 or 9 May 1898; conf. 9 May 1898; m. Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, 2 or 21 Aug 1893, Friedrich Wilhelm Gustav Ernst Radack; seven children; d. old age Kiel 8 Dec 1939 (CHL microfilm 2448, pt. 27, no. 215; FHL microfilm 271398; 1925, 1930, and 1935 censuses; IGI)

NOTES

1. Presiding Bishopric, "Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955," 257, CHL CR 4 12.
2. Karl-Heinz Goldmund to the author, May 3, 2009. Goldmund located the date in a history of the Kiel Branch as well as on a postcard.
3. For details of the evacuation, see the West German Mission chapter.
4. West German Mission branch directory, 1939, CHL LR 10045 11.
5. Ursula Leschke, telephone interview with Jennifer Heckmann, October 24, 2008.
6. Kiel Branch History; copy courtesy of Karl-Heinz Goldmund.
7. Karla Radack Siebach, interview by Russell H. Michael and Judith Sartowski in German, Alpine, UT, February 20, 2010, summarized in English by Judith Sartowski.
8. Ehrenfried Radack, sacrament meeting talk, 4–5; private collection.
9. Helmut Radack was the only German LDS soldier to refuse to serve in the military.
10. Karla is one of several Church members who remembered enemy bombers dropping toys that were actually booby traps and that severely injured children who picked them up.
11. Ehrenfried Radack, "My Autobiography" (unpublished); private collection.
12. Ibid.
13. Marlies Radack Kramer, interview by Michael Corley, Sandy, UT, March 21, 2008.
14. Radack, "My Autobiography."
15. Radack, sacrament meeting talk, 9.
16. Ehrenfried Radack to Karl and Martha Radack, February 15, 1949; private collection.
17. Ehrenfried Radack to Karl and Martha Radack, June 1949; private collection.

RENDSBURG BRANCH

Situated on the north bank of the Kiel Canal that connects the North and the Baltic Seas, the city of Rendsburg is in the middle of the German Schleswig-Holstein state. One of the smallest branches in Germany at the time, it nevertheless had enough members to fill Church auxiliary leadership positions in the months that preceded World War II. Thilo Hopf was the branch president, and he was assisted by one counselor, Wilhelm Nissen.¹ Those men were two of five priesthood holders among the Saints in Rendsburg.

Rendsburg Branch ²	1939
Elders	3
Priests	0
Teachers	0
Deacons	2
Other Adult Males	5
Adult Females	16
Male Children	1
Female Children	0
<i>Total</i>	27

Other branch leaders were Marie Hopf (YWMIA) and Margarete Tank (Relief Society). These few Saints met in rented rooms at Altstätter Markt in downtown Rendsburg. Four of the weekly meetings were held on Sundays: Sunday School at 10:00, Mutual and the genealogy class at 6:00 p.m., and sacrament meeting at 7:00 p.m. The Relief Society sisters met on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.

The only information available regarding this small branch comes from the manuscript history in the collection of the Church History Library. The following entries are of interest for the war years:³

Tuesday, August 22, 1939: Joseph Fielding Smith spoke in Kiel. Nine members from Rendsburg attended.

Sunday, December 22, 1940: Due to illness, only seven persons attended the Christmas program.

Sunday, November 30, 1941: No meetings were held today; attendance is often only four persons nowadays.

Sunday, March 15, 1942: The centennial of the Relief Society was commemorated [the same program was presented a week later in Flensburg].

Sunday, May 3, 1942: The conference of the Schleswig-Holstein District was held in Flensburg; four persons from the Rendsburg Branch attended.

Sunday, May 2, 1943: The conference of the Schleswig-Holstein District was held in Kiel; several members from Rendsburg attend.

Sunday, September 26, 1943: The conference of the Schleswig-Holstein District was held in Kiel; three members from Rendsburg attended.

The records kept by the Rendsburg Branch clerk during the war years were very sparse. Nevertheless, attendance numbers were usually recorded and show that during the last months of the war (January–May 1945), the attendance at Sunday meetings fluctuated between three and five persons. Annual events in the branch included Mother’s Day.

Due to a lack of other records and eyewitnesses, nothing more is known about the Rendsburg Branch during World War II. No members of the branch are known to have died during the war years or later as a result of the war.

NOTES

1. West German Mission branch directory, 1939, CHL LR 10045 11.
2. Presiding Bishopric, “Financial, Statistical, and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884–1955,” 257, CHL CR 4 12.
3. Rendsburg Branch manuscript history, CHL 7408 2. Page numbers of the entries quoted above are 142, 152, 158, 159, 162, 165, and 167.