

# SWORN TO SECRECY FOR LIFE

A Young American Spy's Odyssey through War-torn Germany and Russia.



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**Charles Joseph Fickey**

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**Charles Joseph Fickey**



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Sworn to Secrecy - For Life

A Young American Spy's Odyssey through War-torn Germany and Russia

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I dedicate this autobiographical work to my wife, Helga (often known as Bunny), my daughters Vera and Carolyn, and my son Fredric.



## *Author's Note*

This is a work of fiction based on the author's personal knowledge, research and experience. Except for well known historical figures such as President Roosevelt, Hitler, Keitel, Jodl and Stalin, any resemblance to anyone living or dead is purely coincidental. Literary license, such as the description of events or conversations of the characters, has been taken to make an interesting story. The thoughts or statements of historical characters are the product of the author's imagination. Some of the places named are fictional, but most are factual.

In order to lend an air of authenticity to the story, many German expressions are used. However, because the book is likely to be read by persons who usually speak English, the characters use many American colloquial terms, and American units of measurement are used to ensure easy readability. To help readers understand the foreign expressions used, especially the many German, American and Russian military terms of World War II, a Glossary of these terms is appended at the end of the book.



## *Chapter 1*

# *Jump at Orel*

*February, 1943*

A German twin engine Heinkel 111 medium bomber was flying east on a route over France, Germany and Poland at night toward the German-Russian front lines. The plane had been stripped of all armor, weapons, bomb-racks and anything of weight; it had supercharged engines to make it faster, with added gas tanks to extend the flight range. It could fly at about 500 miles per hour, but was cruising at about 350 miles per hour to conserve fuel.

It was piloted by a German Captain named Gerd Reuss who was a prisoner of war in England. He had been a Captain in the German Luftwaffe. Gerd Reuss was born and raised in Nurnberg, and had the typical non-chalance of the Germans who came from Bavaria. He was 29 years old, of average height - best for the tight confines of war planes - had reddish-blond hair and a full, round face, and was usually smiling. He had formerly been a fighter pilot and taken part in the campaign against France, but had asked for a change to bombers because he did not like the solitude of the fighter pilot. He was a very likable and personable person and very loquacious. Since he was maintaining radio silence for security reasons, he was flying by visual and dead-reckoning, making use of certain preselected cities as check points. This was quite difficult at night, but Reuss was a highly experienced flyer. He was flying at a low altitude, and the snow on the ground made it somewhat easier to see. The cockpit was in total darkness, except for very low backlight on the instruments.

The only other person on the plane was sitting in the copilot's seat. He was a man in a German panzer uniform, carrying the Soldbuch (service papers) of a German Hauptman (Captain) with the identity of Karl Johann Fenske. He was considerably younger than Reuss, 17 years old, with dark

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hair and a very nice-looking but quite ordinary face, about 5' 11" tall, and slender. He was wearing a parachute, which caused him to be rather cramped sitting in the space of the copilot's seat. They were conversing in German, or rather the pilot was doing all of the talking, because, with the continual drone of the engines and the constant chatter of Reuss, the younger Fenske had been semi-doing since the beginning of the flight. Suddenly, the cockpit was brightly lit up.

The brilliance shocked Hauptman Fenske out of his somnolent state and he bolted upright, and exclaimed, "Ach du lieber Gott! What's that?"

Hauptman Reuss replied, not quite as casually as usual, "It's searchlights. We are just passing over Berlin. I thought at this speed we might get by before anyone could pick us up. Don't worry. When they see that this is a German plane, I'm sure they will not fire."

He said this as much to reassure himself as he did for Hauptman Fenske. He waggled the wings as if this might reassure the people on the ground. They sat on the edges of their seats for what seemed forever but was just a few seconds. They were beginning to pull away from the area, when, sure enough, after a few anxious moments, the lights went out. Reuss continued talking, and Fenske dozed off again. Reuss was saying that their next check point was Warsaw, after which he would follow the rail-line toward Moscow, and circle the station at Orel which was where he was to discharge Fenske.

When they reached a certain point, the pilot told his passenger, who he knew very well, that they would soon be at what he believed was the destination. He said that he would fly north of the station at Orel, circle and come back on the south side, and throttle down to about 100 miles/hour to let him jump out of the open bomb bay.

Reuss remarked, "Flying this trip in the dark is no picnic, but I would rather be flying this plane than going where you are going. Remember we are flying low, so get that chute open fast." The pilot then said, "Hals und beinbruch!" (Good Luck!)

The passenger got up and went back and stood by the opened bomb bay doors, and when he heard the pilot hit the buzzer, he jumped into the black abyss. The blast of arctic cold air against his face as he fell through the air made him fully awake, and he wondered how he got into all of this.

