

The Final Hours - Johannes Steinhoff

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Fighter ace Col. Johannes Steinhoff commanded an elite group of pilots trained to fly the first jet aircraft employed in combat, the famous Messerschmitt Me-262, at a time when Reich Marshal Hermann Goring, by then out of favor with Hitler for his failure to stop the Allied bombing raids, denounced his own pilots as cowards. After Goring refused to deploy the Me-262 as a fighter, the role for which it was designed, and instead ordered its use as a bomber, Steinhoff and other senior air leaders devised a plot to depose Goring from his command of the Luftwaffe in the futile hope of staving off final defeat in the air. The pilots' long-standing disgust with their Reich Marshal's military incompetence and technical dilettantism led to their dangerous intrigue in the fall of 1944. There was an added element of risk as their desperate gamble came in the wake of the July 20 plot against Hitler, the onrushing Allied onslaught, and the general disintegration of the German military and its war effort. Steinhoff crashed while trying to take off in a heavily laden Me-262. The explosion left him badly burned and still in the hospital when the war ended. From his hospital bed in the summer of 1945, he dictated to a fellow wounded German soldier the account that became The Final Hours. His memories are vivid, painful, and gripping. Free from the years of recrimination and reflection so common in similar works, his tale recounts the pressure of fighting for a lost cause and the intrigue fostered by an unstable command. His account reveals every facet of a remarkable fighter pilot's struggle for survival and provides an excellent case study of the plodding bureaucracy and scheming obscurantism so characteristic of the Third Reich. Author: Steinhoff, Johannes Publisher: Potomac Books Inc. Illustration: N Language: ENG Title: The Final Hours Pages: 00204 (Unencrypted EPUB) On Sale: 2005-08-31 SKU-13/ISBN: 9781574888638 Category: Biography & Autobiography : Military

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