OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS BRANCH
BIOGRAPHICAL REPORT

Name: SKORENY, Otto
Nationality: Austrian
Region: Vienna and Berlin
Birth date and place: 12 June 1903, Vienna

Major positions:
- S.-Obersturmbannführer and Lt. Col. (Oberstleutnant) of the Waffen-SS
- Former Head (Chef) of Section S (sabotage) of Amt VI in the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA)
- Former Head (Chef) of Section D (sabotage) of the Militärisches Amt of the RSHA

Family History: Skorseny comes from a middle class family; his father, Anton, was a construction engineer in Vienna. He is married. 1/

Education and Work History: Skorseny attended Realschule and Technische Hochschule in Vienna and graduated as a construction engineer in the early 1930s. 1/ During his university years he was a member of the German nationalist fraternity "Marcomania". The members of this fraternity were known as radical German nationalists and as being in close contact with German rightist circles and with Nazi organizations. 11/2 At the same time he also became a member of the Steirischer Heimatschutz (Styrian Home Guard), the wing of the Heimwehr which split off from the official Heimwehr organization because its members did not agree with Stachsebarg's anti-Nazi politics; practically all members of the Steirischer Heimatschutz became members of the illegal Nazi party after 1933. 1/12

After termination of his studies, Skorseny held various positions as an engineer in building trades. 2/ However, his main interest was concentrated on politics; in 1932 he joined the Nazi Party in Vienna; he became a member of the Allgemeine SS on 1 February, 1934. 1/ At that time the Nazi Party in Austria, and consequently the SS, was already outlawed and the Nazis tried to force the Austrian Government to submit to their will by a reign of terrorist actions in which members of the SS were instrumental. 12/ Skorseny was the leader of a motor squad of illegal SS men when the Germans invaded Austria in March 1938 and subsequently served as motor vehicle inspector of an SS-Abschnitt (SS group) in Austria, apparently entirely abandoning his civilian occupation as a construction engineer. 2/ At the outbreak of the war, Skorseny joined the Nazi Army and first served as an officer candidate with the Air Force. In January 1940 he volunteered for the Waffen-SS (Military SS) and served as Obersturmführer in the SS-Division "Das Reich". 12/ He was transferred as Hauptsturmführer to the Sicherheitsdienst (SD) (Counter-Intelligence and Security Service of the SS) 1/.
Otto (cont'd) - 2 -

In serving in the SD he is reported to have planned and executed the kidnapping of two British agents from Holland in 1940 (the so-called Vienlo incident). 2/ Otto became known when he parachuted with a small party of SS men near the place in Holland where Mussolini was held as a prisoner of the Italian Government and brought him to Hitler's Headquarters in the middle of September 1943. For this achievement he was made an SS-Sturmbannführer and awarded the Knight's Cross of the War Cross. 3/ At about the same time he was put in charge of sabotage operations in various Sections of the Abwehr organisation (German Counter Intelligence Service), originally headed by Admiral Canaris, were subordinated to the Reichssicherheitsabteilung (Reich Main Security Office of the SS) headed by Ernst Kaltenbrunner. 4/ The Reichssicherheitsabteilung was Head of Section E (Sabotage) of the Militärwirtschaft (military office). 5/

According to him, after his capture by American troops, that in his capacity as head of the German sabotage activities he was the master mind which planned the kidnapping of Admiral Nicholas Horthy, former Regent of Hungary. 6/ He is said to have been entrusted with the task of spreading terror behind the Allied lines with the help of specially trained saboteurs and murderers using stolen American uniforms and vehicles. 7/ It is reported that in September 1943 he organized the SS Streifkorps (raiding or patrolling unit), a major sabotage agency operating in the last months of the war, and the so-called SS-Panzerbrigade, another subversive organization, which was, however, later dissolved. 8/ Another report credits Skorzeny with the planned assassination of the Allied Commander-in-Chief, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. 9/ He also organized the SS Sturmbannführer in the T/affen 38. 10/

In the course of his activities in the last weeks of the war he was mentioned on several occasions as one of the more leaders of the Werewolves and as the likely chief of German post-war sabotage activities. 11/ However, all these plans were frustrated by his capture by the American troops on 26 May 1945. 12/

Sources:
1/ Neues Wiener Tageblatt, 16/17 September 1945
2/ FGC Daily Report, 16 September 1945 (Berlin radio)
3/ FGC Daily Report, 17 September 1945 (Berlin radio)
4/ OSS Sources, 1 January 1945
5/ OSS Source 3, 17 February 1945
6/ OSS Source 3, 19 February 1945
7/ OSS Source 3, 12 April 1945
8/ OSS Source 3, 23 April 1945
9/ US European News Digest, 10 May 1945 (London radio)
10/ New York Times, 16 May 1945
11/ New York Times, 22 May 1945
12/ OSS Source 3, 24 August 1945
This record is a summary of such intelligence (from one or more sources as indicated) as was available at the time of preparation. It may consequently be subject to amendment by additional or more recent intelligence. Index numbers and letters are solely for indexing statements in the report.