

Mueller, Heinrich

(1900--?), Chief of the Gestapo.

In 1919 Mueller began working at the Munich police headquarters. When Reinhard Heydrich was appointed Bavarian police chief in 1933, Mueller became one of his closest aides. His job performance even caught the eye of SS leader and Chief of German police, Heinrich Himmler. Mueller became controller of the criminal police in 1935. Although not a member of the SS until 1939, Mueller was made a member of the SS's Security Service (SD).

Heydrich was named *Gestapo* chief in 1936; he brought Mueller along with him, and appointed him co-director of a subsection responsible for investigating possible enemies of the Reich, including Jews. By January 1937 Mueller had been promoted to *SS-Standartenfuehrer*, and in June he was awarded the rank of senior administrative councilor and criminal police councilor.

From September 1939 to the end of the war in 1945, Mueller was the head of the *Gestapo*. At the same time, he also served as deputy commander of the Security Police and the SD. He answered directly to Heydrich, and after Heydrich's assassination, to his successor, Ernst Kaltenbrunner. Under Mueller's leadership, the *Gestapo* evolved into the most fear-inducing secret police in Europe.

Mueller played a major role in organizing the atrocities of the Holocaust, but he tended to work behind the scenes. He was boss to Adolf Eichmann, who organized the deportations of Jews to their deaths in extermination camps in Poland. He represented the *Gestapo* at the January 1942 Wannsee Conference in Berlin. He himself approved executions. In June 1942 Mueller ordered that all evidence of mass murder in Eastern Europe at the hands of the *Einsatzgruppen* mobile killing units be destroyed.

Mueller was loyal to Hitler to the end. He destroyed the participants in the plot on Hitler's life, including personal friends of his. He was last seen on April 29, 1945 in Hitler's command bunker. Then he disappeared, leaving no trace.

