

Arthur Britton, the man who arrested Heinrich Himmler



[Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler](#) inspekteert zijn SS-troepen

When the Germans invaded Belgium, *Arthur Schrynemakers* told his wife, who was French, and their three children, a son and two daughters, who were born in England, to flee to England. He dropped the name Schrynemakers and went by his middle name of *Britton*. He was first assigned to guard duty at Windsor Castle. But when it became known that he spoke German, Dutch, and French as well as English, Arthur Britton was assigned to Field Security. His next assignment was to Tunisia, where he is shown in the photo below on his motorcycle in Tunisia.

Next stop was Brussels. There he was given a brief leave so that he could see his father, with whom he had had no contact for four and a half years. It was only then that Schrynemakers learned that his wife had died during the war.



Arthur Britton

After Britton's leave in Brussels came the Belgian Ardenne where he was responsible for checking the identity of American soldiers to make sure they were not Germans attempting to infiltrate the American lines [..].

On May 22, 1945 Britton and his men were manning a checkpoint at the [Bremervorde bridge](#) in west Germany. Three men were brought in for questioning by Britton, who examined their documents. One in particular, going by the name of *Heinrich Hitzinger* (misspelled in the arrest report as *Hizinger*), raised Britton's suspicion. He arrested all three and turned them over to his superiors. (The following arrest report was provided to me by Britton and has been reproduced in several publications. Both reports appeared in *Album Souvenir, 1942-1972*, published by the *Amicale des Milices Patriotiques du Front de*

l'Independance de Schaerbeek.)

Civilian Internment - WESTERTIMKE.

ARREST REPORT.

SURNAME HIZINGER FIRST NAME(S) Heinrich
ALIAS _____
NATIONALITY CLAIMED German
ADDRESS OF LAST RESIDENCE Flensburg
OCCUPATION Feldwebel, Pz Kp z.b.V, detached to GFP (SD)
IDENTITY DOCUMENTS Entlassungsschein dated 3/5/45
DETAILS OF ARREST: (a) PLACE BREMENVORDE Bridge Control (9344)
(b) DATE 22/5/45 (c) TIME 1700 hrs
UNIT MAKING ARREST 1003 PBRD
REASON FOR ARREST See attached report, also occupation as stated above.
(further details to be written on back if necessary)
WITNESSES: NAMES AND ADDRESSES _____
Sgt Britton 45 PSS.

STATEMENT AFTER ARREST
(attach on separate sheet if necessary)

PROPERTY: (Property taken from prisoner to be listed on back, together with description and whereabouts of any other property relevant to the case.)

MILITARY OR CIVIL AUTHORITY TAKING CUSTODY OF THE PRISONER

WESTERTIMKE Cages

Signature of person authorising arrest _____

Date 22/5/45

AG P BR--150M--26821 ABCD--3-44

SHAEP



Britton's men added the following to the bare bones of the arrest report:

The arrest of Heinrich HIMMLER.

During the morning of 20 May 45 a group of five German officers and seven other ranks were detained at the bridge control at BRUNNENWÖRDE 9444 and referred to the NCOs of 45 FS Section and 1003 FSHD for checking. At first the Germans denied being all in the same party, and one of them, a doctor, claimed that the OFs were in his care as walking patients.

All the members of the party carried discharge papers issued since 1 May 45, and some of these papers were stamped G.F.P. Under interrogation one of the OFs admitted that they were all in the same party, and were all in fact G.F.P.

The party stated that they were policemen from MUNICH, and had received orders from the unit to report to the Polizei Präsidium there.

The party expressed concern about two other comrades, whom they had been forced to leave behind at a farm, since they were sick. The FS NCOs offered to go to collect the missing members, and one of the German officers was taken along as a guide. They drove to the supposed resting place of the other two, but found no one.

The German expressed his apologies and said the other two must have gone.

That evening the twelve G.F.P. men were despatched to WESTERTIMKE and a general warning was issued that two further members of the party might turn up in the area.

At 1700 hrs 22 May a party of three German civilians were detained at the same bridge control at BRUNNENWÖRDE. Their papers indicated that they were recently discharged from the German Army, and the tall-tale G.F.P. (SD) stamp was again present. They were put under arrest by Sjt. BRITTON of 45 FS Section.

In interrogation it became clear that they were the rearguard of the G.F.P. and stated that they were en route for MUNICH.

One of the second party was Sjt. Heinrich KIZINGER, an unimpressive figure with several days growth of beard, long hair, no glasses and a patch over one eye. He was dressed in an odd collection of civilian garments, with a blue raincoat on top.

They were despatched to WESTERTIMKE and thence to Oll, and Heinrich KIZINGER's arrest report was duly submitted.

ed Smith
Sjt. Day, S.C.
Arthur W. Cousins
James A. Rimmer
S. W. White
of Buxfield
J. R. R. R.
H. K. K.
Capt
Blount
J. J.

A very brief interview of Arthur Britton filmed by British Movietone is to be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBfs_SYreIs on YouTube. A more detailed interview of Britton was done by Belgian RTBF television in September 2002. The title is "Le Coup de Filet d' Arthur Britton Arrestation d' Himmler," and is in French. A copy with English language subtitles, posted September 4, 2018, is available on

YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVZU-1Bv-6M&list=PLfO3-TNAQN-paJ3iZVjxoYVJtJoyU1AQ> .

During interrogation by the British officers, Hitzinger/Hizinger finally admitted to his identity: *“I am Heinrich Himmler.”* Shortly thereafter, he committed suicide, using a cyanide capsule hidden in his mouth [..].

After the liberation, Arthur Schrynemakers, regarding Himmler, he said: *“You have read in the papers the end of the wanted criminal. Thus destiny would have it that the Boy caught the Biggest of the Bunch because this man had more to say than even Hitler.”*



The end of Himmler