

**WALTER MATERNA PAPERS, 1916-1969**  
**2021.159.1**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
Washington, DC 20024-2126  
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**Descriptive summary**

Title: Walter Materna papers

Dates: 1916-1969

Accession number: 2021.159.1

Creator: Materna, Walter, 1898-

Extent: 3 boxes, 2 oversize folders

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The Walter Materna papers include Materna's World War I diaries (volumes 1, 3, and 4), World War II diaries (volumes 1-3, 5-10, 13-17), additional World War II photographs, nine volumes of miscellaneous booklets and ledgers, and loose materials that had been inserted between the pages of the diaries and volumes. Materna's World War II diaries describe events in Poland (Generalgouvernement), Ukraine (Kharkiv, Berdychiv, Donetsk, Dnipro), and Russia (Voronezh, Livny). The diaries include numerous antisemitic statements and descriptions of local Jewish populations by Materna, including a description of a mass shooting of Jews inside the citadel of Berditchev (Berdychiv) dated July 28, 1941. Of particular interest in the collection is a photograph depicting the mass shooting of Jews in Berdychiv by SS, a photograph that had been previously identified as being located in Vinnytsia. The diaries also include a description of an execution by martial law of non-Jewish civilians over which Materna presided as the rank highest officer of his unit.

Languages: German, Russian

**Administrative Information**

Access: There are no known restrictions on access to this material.

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Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Walter Materna papers (2021.159.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The collection was donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2021 by an Anonymous donor.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, November 2023.

### **Biographical note**

Walter Materna was born October 13, 1898, in Wultendorf, near Mistelbach, in Lower Austria (Niederösterreich). During World War I, Materna served from 1916 to 1918 at the Italian front. Materna was married on May 16, 1925 to Cora Materna. Their son, Werner Materna, was born February 2, 1939. The Maternas lived at Obere Weißgerberstraße 14/II/II/15 in 1030 Vienna. In civilian life, Walter Materna was a bank employee at the Creditanstalt Wien.

According to his World War II service record available in the German Federal Archive (Bundesarchivsignatur: B 563/30764), Walter Materna held the rank of a Zugführer as of January 8, 1940. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on April 1, 1940. On August 1, 1940, Materna was promoted to Hauptmann der Reserve (ohne RDA) and on February 1, 1941 he became Hauptmann der Reserve. He was assigned in 1940 to the 2. Kompanie Bau-Pionier-Bataillon 219. Effective April 15, 1940, Materna is listed as Fuehrer des Bau Bataillons 219, i.e. the commanding officer of Construction Battalion 219 (an auxiliary pioneer battalion of the Wehrmacht).

After first being stationed in Germany and France, Materna was detailed to Nazi-occupied Poland on June 6, 1941. The entries in his service record (Wehrstammblatt) for the duration of the war are as follows:

6.6.41-24.7.41: Sicherung des Generalgouvernements  
25.7.41-16.1.42: Verwendung im Operationsgebiet in Russland  
17.1.42-11.5.42: Abwehrkämpfe nördlich Charkow  
12.5.42-27.5.42: Frühjahrsschlacht bei Charkow  
28.5.42-29.6.42: Verwendung im Operationsgebiet der Ostfront  
30.6.42-8.7.42: Durchbruch und Vorstoss zum mittleren Don  
19.11.42-14.1.43: Stellungskämpfe im Don und im Raum Woronesh-Liwny  
15.1.43-8.2.43: Abwehrschlacht zwischen Don, Aidar, und Donez  
9.2.43-13.2.43: Abwehrschlacht im Raum Charkow  
14.2.43-4.3.43: Schlacht zwischen Donez und Dnjepr  
5.3.43 - 31.3.43: Angriffsschlacht im Raum Charkow  
1.4.43 - 9.12.43: Te.. (?) an WBK Wien I, 20.06.44

Materna was wounded twice, the first time by a hand grenade splinter on December 4, 1942, and the second time by a bomb splinter on February 22, 1944. He was captured and released from a POW internment camp on October 10, 1945.

After the war, Walter Materna returned to his career as a bank employee.

### **Scope and content of collection**

The Walter Materna papers include Materna's World War I diaries (volumes 1, 3, and 4), World War II diaries (volumes 1-3, 5-10, 13-17), additional World War II photographs, nine volumes of miscellaneous booklets and ledgers, and loose materials that had been inserted between the pages of the diaries and volumes.

Materna's World War II diaries describe events in Poland (Generalgouvernement), Ukraine (Kharkiv, Berdychiv, Donetsk, Dnipro), and Russia (Voronezh, Livny). The diaries include numerous antisemitic statements and descriptions of local Jewish populations by Materna, including a description of a mass shooting of Jews inside the citadel of Berditchev (Berdychiv) dated July 28, 1941. The diaries also include a description of an execution by martial law of non-Jewish civilians over which Materna presided as the rank highest officer of his unit. The diaries include inserted World War II and immediate post-war materials such as clippings, leaflets, photographs, programs, telegrams, and personal documents.

The war diaries are supplemented with several photographs, including, significantly, a photograph depicting the mass shooting of Jews in Berdychiv by SS, labeled on the back by Materna with the description "Ende Juli 1941. Hinrichtung von Juden durch SS in der Zitadelle von Berditschew. 28. Juli 1941." A poor copy of this photograph has been on display in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's permanent exhibition, in section 3.15 Mobile Killing Units, which describes the location as Vinnytsia. In his diary entry of July 28, 1941, Materna writes the following:

Additional photographs include two images of Materna and his men celebrating Christmas evening 1941 in a former synagogue, two images of Materna interrogating two locals before their execution, an image of Hitler's limousine in Berdychiv, and an image of General von Rundstedt.

The collection also contains nine volumes of miscellaneous booklets and ledgers, such as an address book and an accounting ledger, and miscellaneous ephemera such as newspaper clippings and leaflets.

### **System of arrangement**

The Walter Materna papers are arranged in 4 series.

- Series 1: World War I Diaries, 1916-1930
- Series 2: World War II Diaries, 1940-1951
- Series 3: World War II Photographs, 1941
- Series 4: Booklets and ledgers, circa 1925-1969

### **Indexing terms**

World War, 1914-1918.

World War, 1939-1945--Campaigns--Eastern Front.

Berdychiv (Ukraine)

Kharkiv (Ukraine)

Donets'k (Ukraine)

Dnipro (Ukraine)

Voronezh (Russia)

Poland.

Italy.

Clippings.  
 Diaries.  
 Photographs.  
 Leaflets.  
 Telegrams.

### CONTAINER LIST

#### Series 1: World War I Diaries, 1916-1930

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Vol. 1, 1917
1.2, OS 1	Vol. 1, loose material, circa 1916-1930
1.3	Vol. 3, circa 1917-1918
1.4	Vol. 4, 1918

#### Series 2: World War II Diaries, 1940-1951

Box/Folder	Title
1.5	Vol. 1, 1940-1941
1.6	Vol. 1, loose material, circa 1940-1941
1.7	Vol. 2, 1941-1942
1.8	Vol. 2, loose material, 1941-1943
1.9	Vol. 3, 1942-1943
1.10, OS 2	Vol. 3, loose material, 1943
1.11	Vol. 5, 1943
1.12	Vol. 6, 1943
1.13	Vol. 7, 1943
1.14	Vol. 8, 1943-1944
1.15	Vol. 9, 1944
1.16	Vol. 10, 1944
1.17	Vol. 10, loose material, 1944
2.1	Vol. 13, 1945
2.2	Vol. 13, loose material, 1945-1948
2.3	Vol. 14, 1945
2.4	Vol. 14, loose material, 1945
2.5	Vol. 15, 1945-1946
2.6	Vol. 15, loose material, 1946-1948
2.7	Vol. 16, 1946-1948
2.8	Vol. 16, loose material, 1947-1951
2.9	Vol. 17, 1948-1951
2.10	Vol. 17, loose material, 1948-1950

**Series 3: World War II Photographs, 1941**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	
2.11	Photographs, 1941

**Series 4: Booklets and ledgers, circa 1925-1969**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	
2.12	1, 1925-?
2.13	2, circa 1940-1945
2.14	3, 1945-1949
2.15	4, 1967-1969
2.16	5, Undated
2.17	6, Undated
3.1	7, Undated
3.2	8, Undated
3.3	9, Undated
3.4	Loose material, circa 1925-1969