

= Vorbunker =

The Vorbunker (upper bunker or forward bunker) was an underground concrete structure originally intended to be a temporary air @-@ raid shelter for Adolf Hitler and his guards and servants . It was located behind the large reception hall that was added onto the old Reich Chancellery , in Berlin , Germany , in 1936 . The bunker was officially called the " Reich Chancellery Air @-@ Raid Shelter " until 1943 , when the complex was expanded with the addition of the Führerbunker , located one level below . On 16 January 1945 , Hitler moved into the Führerbunker . He was joined by his senior staff , including Martin Bormann . Later , Eva Braun and Joseph Goebbels moved into the Führerbunker while Magda Goebbels and their six children took residence in the upper Vorbunker . The Goebbels family lived in the Vorbunker until their deaths on 1 May 1945 .

= = Construction = =

In 1933 , Adolf Hitler decided to expand the Reich Chancellery (Reichskanzlei) , which he considered too small for his needs . On 21 July 1935 , Leonhard Gall submitted plans for a large reception hall (that could also be used as a ballroom) to be built onto the old Chancellery . The drawings were unique because of the large cellar that led a further one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half meters down to a bunker which later became known as the Vorbunker .

The Vorbunker 's roof was 1 @.@ 6 meters (5 @.@ 2 ft) thick , twice as thick as that of the bunker underneath the nearby Air Ministry building . The thick walls of the Vorbunker supported the weight of the reception hall overhead . It had three entry points , to the north , west , and south . Construction was completed in 1936 . It had 12 rooms branching out from a single corridor .

The Führerbunker was built by the Hochtief company as part of an extensive program of subterranean construction in Berlin . It was finished by 1944 and was connected to the Vorbunker by a stairway set at right angles (not a spiral staircase) . The two bunkers could be closed off from each other by a bulkhead and steel door . A permanent guard detail was posted by the steel door . The Führerbunker was located about 8 @.@ 5 metres (28 ft) beneath the garden of the old Reich Chancellery , 120 meters (390 ft) north of the new Reich Chancellery building at Voßstraße 6 . The Führerbunker was located 2 @.@ 5 meters lower than the Vorbunker and to the west @-@ southwest of it . The accommodations for Hitler were moved to the Führerbunker , and by February 1945 it had been decorated with high @-@ quality furniture taken from the Chancellery , along with several framed oil paintings .

= = Events = =

The first air @-@ raid drills for the Berlin central government district , which included the Reich Chancellery , occurred in the autumn of 1937 . The protocol for the drills stated , in part :

To carry out the air raid drills , a precise regulation is required for the three office buildings , Wilhelmstraße 77 , Wilhelmstraße 78 and Voßstraße 1 ... The officials and residents of Wilhelmstraße 78 and Voßstraße 1 can go to the substitute shelters in Wilhelmstraße 78 and Voßstraße 1 . The inhabitants of the Reich Chancellor House , Wilhelmstraße 77 , will use the shelter under the ballroom .

The only residents of Wilhelmstraße 77 were Hitler and his bodyguards , adjutants , orderlies and servants . It is unknown if the Vorbunker was used before January 1945 . Hitler transferred his headquarters to the Führerbunker in Berlin on 16 January 1945 , where he (along with his influential private secretary , Reichsleiter Martin Bormann and others) remained until the end of April . Thereafter , the Vorbunker was used by various military officers and housed men from Hitler 's personal bodyguard . In April 1945 , as the Battle in Berlin raged on , Joseph Goebbels showed his strong support for Hitler by moving his family into the Vorbunker . He occupied a room in the Führerbunker which had recently been vacated by Hitler 's personal physician , Theodor Morell . Two rooms in the Vorbunker were used for food supply . Constanze Manziarly , Hitler 's personal cook / dietitian , made meals in the kitchen , which was equipped with a refrigerator and a wine store

On the evening of 1 May 1945 , Goebbels arranged for an SS dentist , Helmut Kunz , to inject his six children with morphine so that when they were unconscious , an ampule of cyanide could be crushed in each of their mouths . According to Kunz 's later testimony , he gave the children morphine injections but it was Magda Goebbels and SS @-@ Obersturmbannführer Ludwig Stumpfegger , Hitler 's personal doctor , who administered the cyanide .

Afterwards , Goebbels and his wife went up the stairs to ground level and through the Führerbunker 's emergency exit to the bombed @-@ out garden behind the Reich Chancellery . There are several different accounts on what followed . According to one account , Goebbels shot his wife and then himself . Another account was that they each bit on a cyanide ampule and were given a coup de grâce immediately afterwards by Goebbels ' SS adjutant , Günther Schwägermann . Schwägermann testified in 1948 that the couple walked ahead of him up the stairs and out into the Chancellery garden . He waited in the stairwell and heard the " shots " sound . Schwägermann then walked up the remaining stairs and outside . There he saw the lifeless bodies of the couple . Following Joseph Goebbels ' prior order , Schwägermann told an SS soldier to make sure Goebbels ' was dead . The soldier fired into Goebbels ' body , which did not move . The bodies were then doused with petrol , but the remains were only partially burned and not buried .

At 01 : 00 on 2 May , the Soviets picked up a radio message from the LVI Panzer Corps requesting a cease @-@ fire and stating that emissaries would come under a white flag to Potsdamer bridge . Early in the morning of 2 May , the Soviets captured the Reich Chancellery . General of the Artillery Helmuth Weidling , the commander of the Berlin Defense Area , surrendered with his staff at 06 : 00 . Down in the Führerbunker , Chief of the Army General Staff General Hans Krebs and Hitler 's Chief Adjutant Generalleutnant Wilhelm Burgdorf committed suicide by gunshot to the head . Johannes Hentschel , the master electro @-@ mechanic for the bunker complex , stayed after everyone else had either committed suicide or left , as the field hospital in the Reich Chancellery above needed power and water . He surrendered to the Red Army as they entered the bunker complex at 09 : 00 on 2 May . The bodies of Goebbels six children were discovered on 3 May . They were found in their beds in the Vorbunker ; the clear mark of cyanide appeared on their faces .

= = Post @-@ war events = =

The ruins of both Chancellery buildings were levelled by the Soviets between 1945 and 1949 as part of an effort to destroy the landmarks of Nazi Germany . The bunker complex largely survived , although some areas were partially flooded . In December 1947 the Soviets tried to blow up the bunkers , but only the separation walls were damaged . In 1959 the East German government began a series of demolitions of the Chancellery , including the bunker complex . In 1974 , 1 @.@ 5 meters (4 @.@ 9 ft) of water was pumped from inside the bunkers , and the East Germany Stasi conducted a survey of the interior of the Vorbunker and took external measurements of the Führerbunker . Since it was near the Berlin Wall , the site was undeveloped and neglected until after reunification .

During the construction of residential housing and other buildings on the site in 1988 ? 89 , several underground sections of the bunker complex were uncovered by work crews . In April 1988 , the East German government allowed several visits to the site by photo @-@ journalists . Water was pumped out of the Vorbunker for four days before access could be made via the underground passageway which led from the Chancellery . The interior floor of the Vorbunker was covered with a muddy sludge from having been underwater for so many years . Old empty wine bottles were found on the floor of the kitchen and wine store room . Still present in the room next to the kitchen were the broken frames of the bunk beds used by the Goebbels children . At the end of the hallway were the stairs leading down to the Führerbunker . However , the men could go no further than the mid @-@ landing , as the Führerbunker was still underwater and the ceiling beyond the doorway had collapsed due to the demolitions performed in 1947 . After these inspections , work crews for the most part removed and destroyed the bunker complex . The Vorbunker 's top and external walls were the first structures to be torn down . The construction of buildings in the area around the

complex was a strategy for ensuring the surroundings remained anonymous and unremarkable . The emergency exit point for the Führerbunker (which had been in the Chancellery gardens) was occupied by a car park .

On 8 June 2006 , during the lead @-@ up to the 2006 FIFA World Cup , an information board was installed to mark the location of the bunker complex . Hitler 's bodyguard , Rochus Misch , one of the last people living who was in the bunker complex at the time of Hitler 's suicide , was on hand for the ceremony . The board , including a schematic diagram , can be found at the corner of In den Ministergärten and Gertrud @-@ Kolmar @-@ Straße , two small streets about three minutes ' walk from Potsdamer Platz .