



## “Torchbearer of the nation”: “NS-Ordensburg” Vogelsang

[GC6KWXF](#)



### English Version

“You are the torchbearers of the nation. You carry forth the light of the spirit in the Fight for Adolf Hitler”. These are the words next to the “Torchbearer”, the 5 meters high martial figure by the sculptor Willy Meller. The sculpture represents the new Nazi “Master Race”. Underneath engraved: a Swastika.



The muscular giant is naked, only on his right shoulder he wears a flowing cape. In his right hand, he holds a torch; the left hand is aggressively clenched in a fist. His glance goes to the distance. The relief made of shell limestone is the largest remaining sculpture of Vogelsang. The plates with the Swastika and the name “Adolf Hitler” were removed after the war by the occupation troops. A lot of bullet holes indicate the anger of the allied soldiers at Nazi-Germany.

In 1934 the NS-Leaders decided to mark the external borders of “New Germany” with 3 “Ordenburgen”, where the future elite of the National Socialist Party should be educated and trained: Crössinsee in the east, Sonthofen in the south and Vogelsang in the west. The implementation of these plans should be carried out by the „German Labor Front“ (DAF) under its director Robert Ley.

By naming the buildings „Ordensburgen“ the Regime tried to create a connection to the medieval “Teutonic order”. Its knights are well-known for their participation in the crusades to liberate the “Holy Land” from the “heathens”. In the “Third Reich”, the order was the “NSDAP” and the trainees, called “Ordensjunker”, should follow the “Grandmaster” of the order Adolf Hitler into his holy war.



“NS-Ordensjunker” and medieval knight

In March 1934, Clemens Klotz, one of the favorite architects of the NS-Leaders began the construction of Vogelsang.

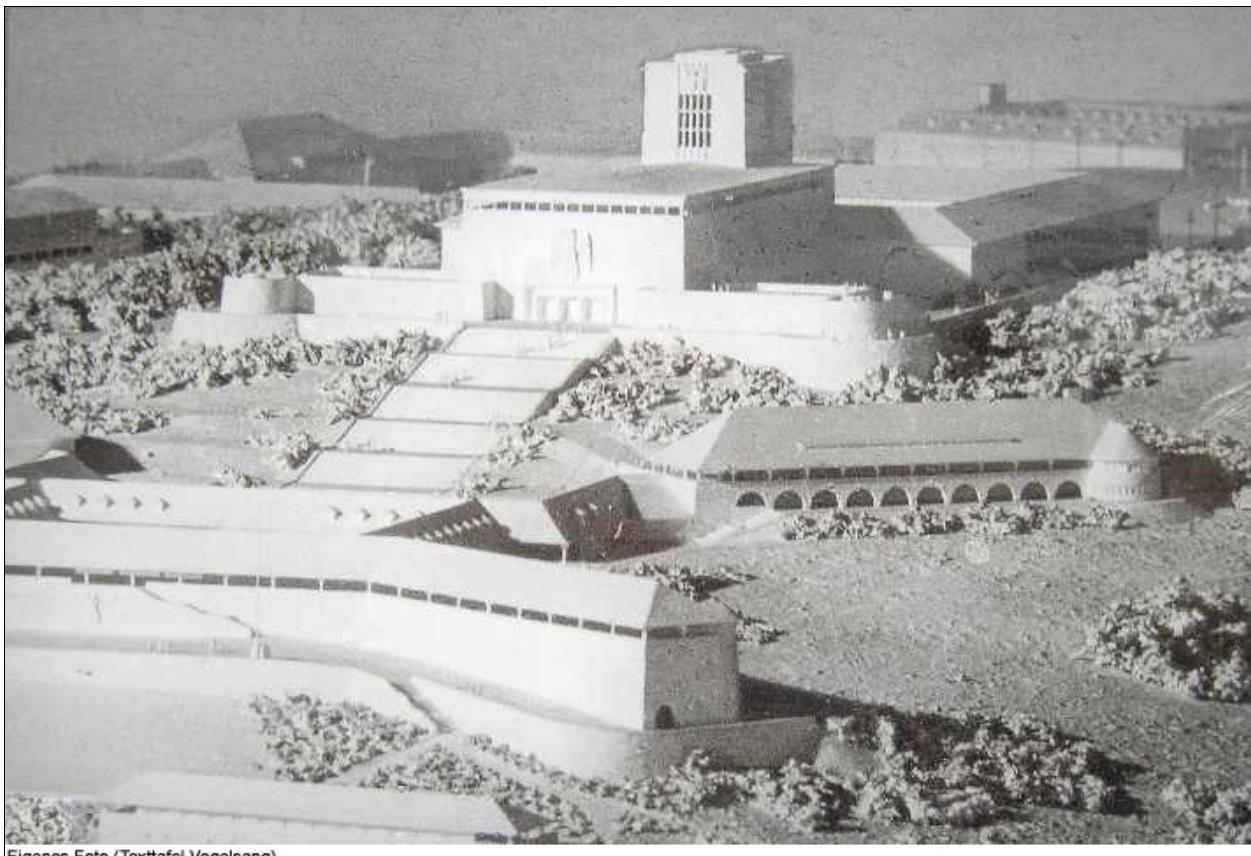


*Erster Spatenstich von Burg Vogelsang bei Gemünd/Eifel*

Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1985-108-07A  
Foto: o. Ang. | 18. März 1934

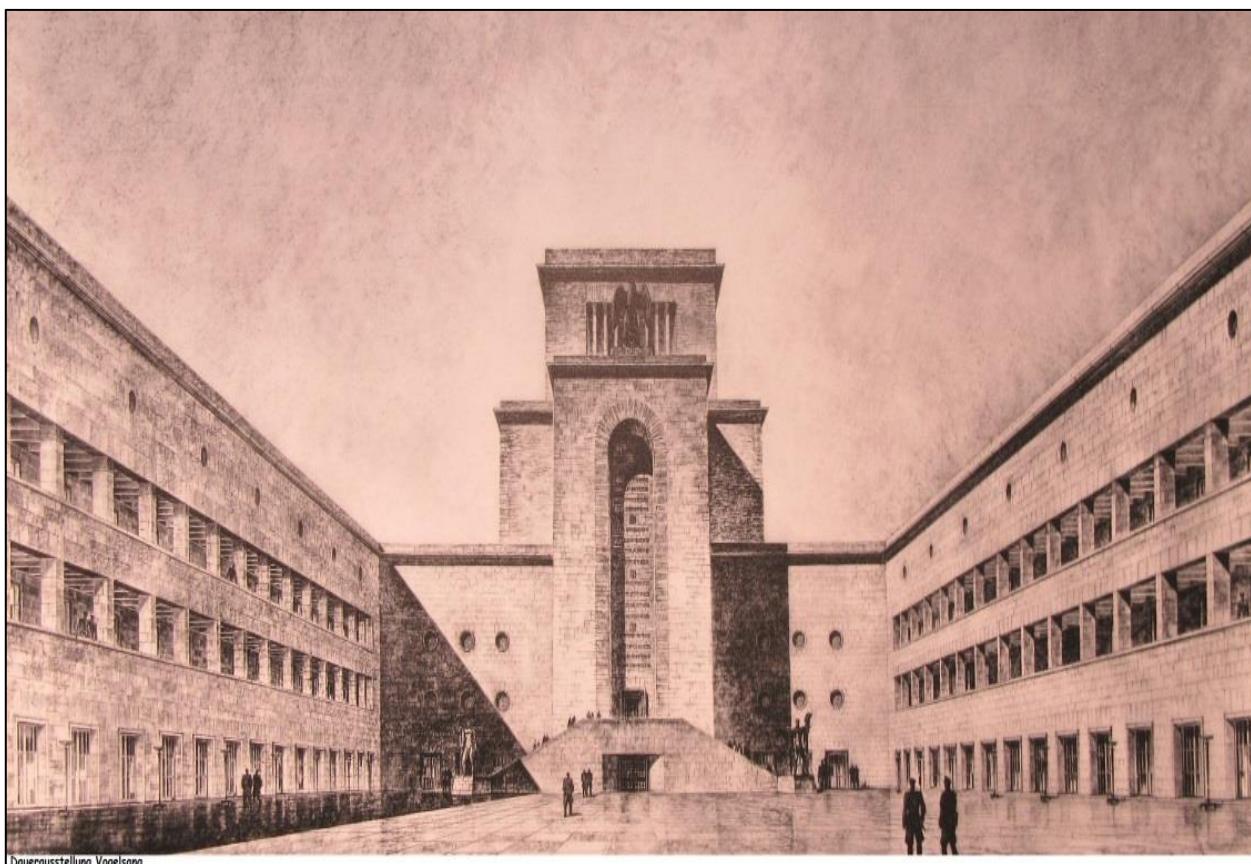
*First groundbreaking of Vogelsang*

For the realization of the project at the planned area blasting operations were necessary that changed whole mountain formations. Temporary 1.500 workers were needed to remove the overburden. In 1936 the first phase of the project with the central area has been completed: "Adlerhof", "Kameradschaftshäuser" and "Thingplatz", followed in 1938 by the "Hundertschaftshäuser", the "Burgschänke" and the Sports facilities. In a third construction phase, the "Haus des Wissens" (House of knowledge) should be built as a tower-like cube with a side length of 100 x 300 Meters. This building with a hall for 2.000 people would have dominated the whole complex like a cathedral.



Eigenes Foto (Texttafel Vogelsang)

*Model of Vogelsang with the "Haus des Wissens" as central building complex*



Dauerausstellung Vogelsang

*Courtyard of the "Haus des Wissens" (drawing of the architect Clemens Klotz from 1939)*

But after 1938 the priority of the Nazi-Regime was to expand the West Wall. So only the base walls of the “Haus des Wissens” were finished. After the Second World War, the Belgian occupation troops used the walls for the construction of their barrack “Van Dooren”.

With the beginning of the war in 1939, all construction activities were finished.

Robert Ley planned as an additional monumental expansion of all three "Ordenburgen" the construction of "Kraft durch Freude (KdF)-Hotels", each with 2.000 beds. But also these plans have never been implemented.

The entire facility should be used officially for the education of the political elite of the NSDAP. But for this purpose, simple, functional buildings would have been sufficient.

The overloading of the whole area with Nazi-symbolism leads to the conclusion that Nazi-Leaders wanted primarily to create a powerful manifestation of national socialistic ideology at an elevated landscape position - widely visible, like a church.

At the floor area of the tower, there was a so-called „Kultraum“ (Cult Chamber):



At the center of the chamber stands the sculpture “Der neue Mensch” (“The new human being”). It was designed by Willy Meller, the sculptor of the “Torchbearer”. In contrast to the “Torchbearer”, this figure was looking frontally to the visitor welcoming him with the right arm raised. On both sides, bronze letters with the names of the 16 killed Nazis at the “Hitler-Putsch” from November 9, 1923, were installed at the wall. In front of the figure, a swastika was embedded in the floor.

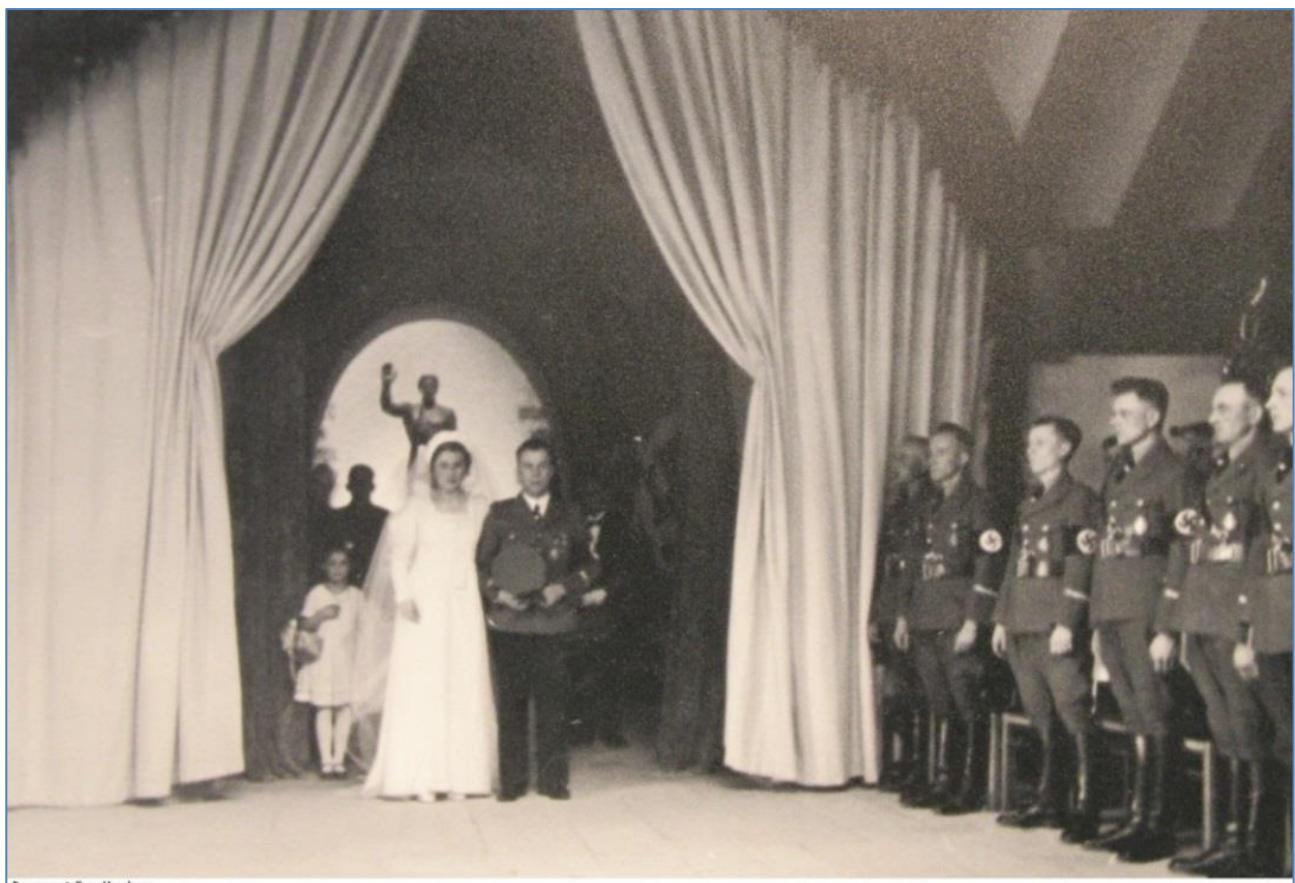
The adjacent training room lies lower, separated by three steps from the “Kultraum”. Only selected visitors were allowed to enter the room. A darkened entrance decorated with swastika flags leads to the “holy place”.

Again, the presentation evokes associations between Vogelsang and a church:

The “Kultraum” was equivalent to an altar area where the lower and middle management of the NSDAP-party leaders could adore their martyrs and the “New Master Race”.

In NS-ideology, this sculpture symbolizes the “perfect man” serving as a model for the trainees. After their education and training, they should correspond to this image and serve as “priests” to the substitute religion National Socialism proclaiming the “Faith” in the unconditional leadership of Adolf Hitler out into the world.

Even weddings were celebrated here: At the so-called “brown weddings” the couple entered after the civil wedding the “Kultraum” to seal their bond of marriage with “blood and honor”.



“Brown wedding”



Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1985-108-22A  
Foto: o. Ang. | April 1937

Meeting of NSDAP-District Leaders at Vogelsang (22.-29.04.1937)

Today remain only the three wooden poles in the wall where the “Neue Mensch” once stood.

The conditions for the “education” at Vogelsang were not particularly demanding: 25 - 30 years old, a party member of the NSDAP, “Aryan” descent, and physical fitness.

In addition to the physical training, the education program consisted of three main areas: Racial political, geopolitical and historical political training.

These contents were part of the NS-propaganda rather than scientific disciplines. But this fitted quite well into Hitler’s concept of youth education in the “Third Reich”:

*“My education will be hard. Weakness will be knocked out of them. In my ‘Ordensburgen’ a new youth will grow up - a youth the whole world will tremble. A violently active, dominating, brutal youth – that is what I am after. Youth must be indifferent to pain. There must be no weakness and tenderness in it. I want to see once more in its eyes the gleam of pride and independence of the beast of prey. I will have no intellectual training. Knowledge is ruin to my young men. I would have them learn only what takes their fancy. But one thing they must learn – self-command. They shall learn to overcome their fear of death under the severest tests. This is the heroic stage of youth.”*

[from Hermann Rauschning, Conversations with Hitler, Zürich, New York 1940, S. 23]

In fact, usable instruments for the will of the “Führer” should be created at Vogelsang. The focus was on physical and military drill on the extensive sports facilities.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1985-108-27A  
Foto: o. Ang. | April 1937

*Hitler is visiting Vogelsang (1937)*

A former “Junker” describes the daily routine: “6 a.m. rousing, morning toilet, barrack room duty. 7 a.m. flag parade. 7:15 a.m. breakfast in the dining room. From 8 a.m. summarizing the daily newspapers and discussing world affairs. 10 a.m. lecture at the lecture hall. 12:15 p.m. daily briefing. 1 p.m. lunch. 2:30 to 5 p.m. sports. 5:30 p.m. working time with the comrades, uniform maintenance. 10 p.m. night’s rest. Pocket money was 1 Mark daily, paid every 10 days.”

Between 1936 and 1938 only 800 trainees completed in 3 years the education at Vogelsang. After the outbreak of war, the complete area was handed over to the “Wehrmacht”. The trainees were sent to the front or used for the administration of the occupied territories in the east.

More than 400 former “Junker” worked in the administration of the “Reichskommissariat Ukraine and Ostland” (Latvia, Lithuania, parts of Belarus).

80 contributed as “Gebietskommissar” (regional commissioner) to the use of forced laborers, the exploiting of the occupied territories and to the resettlement measures of Jewish people.

Former “Ordensjunker” also have been involved in massacres of the civilian population. The permanent exhibition at Vogelsang “Bestimmung: Herrenmensch” (Destination: Master race) goes into the details to these cases.



[U.S. Army Signal Corps Collection, National Archives](#)

*Bomb Damages at Vogelsang 1939*

After the Second World War, Vogelsang and the surrounding terrain were used first by British troops and later from 1950 by Belgian as a military training area. Since 2006 the area is open to the public. In 2013 Vogelsang was placed under protection as a historical monument.

What remains are architectural relics which demonstrate the sense of mission of the NS-State: Sawing the German “race” as elected to enslave or to destroy the rest of humanity. The “Junker” as bred prototype of the new “Master race” should carry the torch forward in Hitler’s wars. But the lightning torchbearers led Germany in the darkest era of its history.

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Nobody else illustrated this “torchlight procession” as well as A. Paul Weber who foresaw the disaster already 1931/32 in his lithography “Deutsches Verhängnis” (German disaster):



(c) VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2016

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### The Cache

The Multi leads you over 5 km and 19 stages to the most interesting architectural and historical places of Vogelsang. At 16 stages you must identify pictures and assign the correct number to the stage letter. At most of the stages, there are display boards with detailed multilingual information (German, English, French, Dutch) about the historical place. At the Entrance-area, the castle tavern and the sports facilities, the info boards are placed a bit further from the associated stage. We marked them as reference points 1-3.

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More information (in English, French and Dutch) about the area here:

## VOGELSANG IP

Download the photos in good quality here:

## photo collage

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>P</b>

### Checksum numbers A - P = 148

Now, have a break in the visitor's restaurant and calculate the coordinates for the Final. Do not forget to visit the permanent exhibition "Bestimmung: Herrenmensch" (Destiny: Master race). Entrance is 8 €. The exhibition explains many aspects of the multi more detailed.

### Final:

**N50° 3 (M - I). (B - K - L) (D - H) (N + F - G)**  
**E006° 2 (J - E). (P + O - A) (C - F) (M + E - J)**

**Do not forget the Bonus ([GC6VYBV](#))!**  
**More Information in the logbook...**

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#### Links, sources and picture credits:

Permanent Exhibition at Vogelsang: „Destiny: Master Race. National Socialist Ordensburgen – Both Fascination and Crime“

Monika Herzog: Architekturführer Vogelsang, 2006

[Harald Scholtz: Die „NS-Ordensburgen“, in: VfZ 15 \(1967\) Heft 3, S. 269 - 298](#)

[Christian Gödecke: NS-Ordensburgen. Relikte des Wahns, 2011](#)

Franz Albert Heinen; Christina Threuter: Vogelsang - Im Herzen des Nationalparks Eifel. Ein Begleitheft durch die ehemalige "NS-Ordensburg", 2012

Franz Albert Heinen: Ordensburg Vogelsang: die Geschichte der NS-Kaderschmiede in der Eifel, 2014

Franz Albert Heinen: NS-Ordensburgen: Vogelsang, Sonthofen, Krössinsee, 2011

[Geoff Walden: Third Reich in Ruins](#)

Bundesarchiv Koblenz

VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

[Wikipedia](#)