

The standard of 7. *Schiffstammabteilung*. (WH col.)



I am now a sailor in the *Kriegsmarine* although some people, seeing this picture, might suspect I had joined the Vienna Choir Boys. (WH col.)



(Below) I believe I never again looked as warlike as in this picture, which shows me on guard duty. (WH col.)



Our Guard of Honour marches past Admiral Marschall, the Inspector of the *Bildungswesen* (the *Kriegsmarine* training organization) shortly after our oath-taking ceremony on 27 October 1940. We did not find the *Parademarsch* or “goose-step” all that useful at sea. (WH col.)



Playing the accordion gave me the advantage of entertaining my comrades while they cleaned the barracks before inspection – better to play than work. (WH col.)

Enlisted personnel, as well as officer cadets, also underwent basic training at the Dänholm, but during the time I spent there in October and November 1940, we were all officer-aspirants because the two groups never trained at the same time. Our days certainly did not end at 5 P.M. and when they did end, we were much too tired to do anything, particularly to get into trouble. I cannot remember much about what we did in our limited spare time but we probably talked, read, played cards and so on.

Near the end of October we experienced the most important day of our short time in service when we underwent the solemn swearing-in ceremony. This day began with a moving service at the magnificent Nikolai Church in Stralsund, where the navy chaplain delivered a sermon that left a deep impression on me. It contin-

ued with the administration of the oath under the eyes of *Admiral* Wilhelm Marschall in the big drill square.* After swearing our loyalty to our country, we finally felt we had become real soldiers.**

From this day on, we were entitled to “shore leave” and we received our first pass to get out of camp for a few hours, which we did in our blue dress sailors’ uniforms. We went no farther than Stralsund and did little more than go to a restaurant and have a good meal,

* *Admiral* Wilhelm Marschall (1886-1976) joined the Imperial German Navy as a cadet in 1906 and won the *Pour Le Mérite*, the highest German decoration during the First World War, as a U-boat commander. He rose steadily in rank and by 1941 was inspector of training in the *Kriegsmarine*. He held a series of important operational commands from 1941 to 1944 and survived the war.

** The German custom is to use the word *Soldaten* to include not only members of the army but also the navy.