Message for Frau Kraemer

One night in June 1941, Moscow's German speaking radio announcer asked German listeners at Elberstadt, near Darmstadt, Germany, to call Frau Erma Kraemer to listen to him. Then, in a quiet, sympathetic voice he said:

"Frau Kraemer, it is with the deepest regret that I have to inform you that your husband, Lance Corporal Ludwig Kremer, serving with the 116th Infantry Regiment, has died. He met his fate in the following circumstances:

> In a five-hour encounter we repelled the onslaught of the German regiment which retired, leaving 1,300 dead and wounded on the battlefield. Our medical corps tried to help friend and foe alike, although German snipers attacked them.
>
> YOUR HUSBAND, WITH A WOUND IN THE LUNG, WAS TAKEN TO A FIELD HOSPITAL, WHERE HE DIED 18 HOURS LATER.

Frau Kraemer – may we ask you what your husband was doing at the Beresina? [a river]. He was a locksmith and was contented with his work. He died holding photographs of you and your two children in his hand. Fom documents he left behind we know that your husband was a good soldier, that he took part in the campaigns in Poland, in France and in the Balkans. He was decorated with the Iron Cross, first, and second class.



In a few days you will receive a letter from the German military authorities notifying you that your husband died fighting for his country's honour.

Now Frau Kraemer, is it an honourable thing to break into a foreign country under cover of darkness?

IS IT AN HONOURABLE THING TO BRING DEATH AND DESTRUCYION UPON OTHER PEOPLE?

From your letters to him we know that all you wanted was to have your husband at home, that you wished he might return soon. You, like a million other women, have been widowed and your children made orphans by Hitler, the wifeless and childless man whose aim is to stave off the day of bankruptcy with new adventures.

War is not your business. Help us to shorten it.

TELL ALL YOUR RELATIVES, ALL YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS THAT YOU ARE DEFENDING A BAD CAUSE. ENOUGH BLOOD HAS BEEN SHED."

Soldiers were always directed to leave any letters, notebooks etc back at base before they went into battle as these can give the enemy valuable information if they are discovered. Clearly Lance Corporal Kraemer's letters were discovered on his body by the Russians and they were able to use the contents in this broadcast to the German people.

Frau Werner, we got your Letters

Exactly one month after telling Corporal Kraemer's wife of his death, Moscow Radio interrupted its news in German, asking listeners to call Frau Lotte Werner, wife of Lieutenant Gottfried Werner, of 8, Adolf Hitlerstrasse, Sebnitz, Saxony. At the end of the news the announcer gave this message:

"Frau Lotte Werner, you have repeatedly sent letters to your husband, Senior Stormtroop Leader Lieutenant Gottfried Werner, at the front. On June 28th you wrote saying:

> 'I have only one desire, that you should remain at the base. Do your duty, but think of me and your family.'

On July 29th you sent him a letter giving detailed instructions of how he should think of his wife. You said, in fact:

> 'Would it not be possible for you to get a fur coat for me from one of those dirty Jews? It would not hurt those dirty scum and there are many of those scoundrels in Russia.'

Full of Pride

Then you described, full of ride, the details of your new furniture, and went on to say:

> 'Do not forget to organise the booty. That gang of criminals need no soft handling. I need some cloth and a fur coat, besides a pair of shoes, size 5.'

Frau Lotte Werner, we have to inform you that you cannot expect either a fur coat, a length of material or a pair of shoes. Your husband has received your instructions, but has been unable to carry them out.

Instead of a fur coat, he has found his death in Russia. Instead of shoes for No. 5 feet, he got five feet of Russian earth to cover him. You wanted to get bargains in Russia, and now you have to pay with the dearest thing you had.

Frau Werner, tell this to all the women whose husbands are with the German Army in Russia. In Russia robbers are shot. As you said yourself, there should be no mercy for such scum.

This is our reply to your letters, Frau Werner, of 8, Adolf Hitlerstraase, Sebnitz."

If there was no such person and no such address then the German authorities would have been easily able to refute these broadcasts. However, they carry enough detail that many people would know those involved and the places where they lived. It is difficult to know how many of these broadcasts were made, but as many German soldiers would have carried letters on them, it would seem that there would be no shortage of material.