

# 'We've won!' terrorists exulted just before they died

From Wire Service Reports

BONN, West Germany — West German officials tricked the four Arab-led hijackers of the Vufthansa jetliner into thinking their imprisoned comrades had landed at Mogadishu airfield in Somalia, security officials say.

"We've won, we've won!" the jubilant hijackers cried as a Lufthansa Boeing 707 landed at the airport. They embraced each other in triumph.

The jetliner was actually carrying the commandos who soon would storm the airliner and free 86 hostages within seven minutes. Three of the hijackers died in the assault and the fourth, a woman, was wounded.

But "Captain Mahmoud" thought the aircraft had brought 11 jailed members of West Germany's Baader-Meinhoff terrorist gang whose freedom he had demanded in return for the hostages.

He had been fooled by Minister of State Hans-Juergen Wischnewski, 55, a portly, bespectacled former Cologne labor union leader who is Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's Arab affairs expert.

Security officials said Wischnewski's ruse helped end a hijacking last Tuesday that began on a flight from the Spanish vacation island of Majorca to Frankfurt.

"Mahmoud," his patience at an end, had set what he called his final deadline of 5:30 p.m. last Monday for blowing up the plane with the hostages unless Andreas Baader and the other terrorists arrived.

Wischnewski, who received the radioed ultimatum in the control tower, shivered despite the desert heat. He

and the Somali officials with him were struck by the fanatical shriek of "Q ahmoud" and had the dread feeling this time he would carry out his threat.

Shortly before the expiration of the deadline, Wischnewski told "Mahmoud" his comrades were on the way: "I've succeeded. The 11 are airborne."

He was ready with all the necessary technical data — time of takeoff from Frankfurt, flight plan, estimated time of arrival.

The ruse worked. The hijackers prolonged the deadline 10 hours, the duration of the supposed flight of the 11 terrorists.

The delay was necessary, not for the reason Wischnewski gave, but to give the government commandos time to fly from the Greek island of Crete and prepare to go into action.

Wischnewski continued to chat with the hijackers to keep them in the cockpit, an easy target for the 28-man commando squad commanded by Lt. Col. Ulrich Wegener.

The commandos, wearing bullet proof vests, crept toward the hijacked aircraft's four doors.

Told that the two male and two female hijackers were at the front of the plane, Wegener gave the command "Go" in English at 2:05 a.m. and the squad stormed the plane up light metal ladders covered with rubber to make them noiseless.

Two members of Britain's Special Air Service on loan for the operation fired "stun" grenades. They blind an

enemy with a glare of 50,000 watts and explode at the same time with such a deafening roar that they have been compared to having Big Ben strike the hour in your ear.

They immobilized the hijackers for six seconds — long enough for the commandos to get the upper hand.

Within two minutes the first hostages left the plane and all were out in seven minutes.

"The job is done," said Wischnewski in a phone call to Schmidt.

The slaying of the hijackers triggered swift repercussions in Europe and precipitated the deaths of three imprisoned terrorists and West German industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer, a terrorist captive. One of the three German terrorists found dead in their prison cells last week had predicted he and his comrades would be "bumped off," the magazine Der Spiegel reported today.

Andreas Baader, his mistress Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe also told members of the radical Red Army Faction they founded that if they died in jail their followers should assume they had been murdered, the magazine said.

West German authorities said the three committed suicide last Tuesday in despair that government commandos had smashed a hijacking plot to free them.

But, according to Der Spiegel, Baader told his lawyer at the height of the drama, "Before there is really an exchange (of hostages), we will be bumped off."

His girlfriend, a preacher's daughter, also told her lawyer several months earlier she expected the three

would be killed, Der Spiegel said, and the terrorists relayed the message to the Red Army Faction that their deaths should be viewed as murders.

"Should one of the prisoners be murdered, we will answer immediately at home and abroad," an Red Army Faction bulletin said early in September.

Baader and Raspe shot themselves and Ensslin hanged herself, West German authorities said. Der Spiegel said investigators who have questioned more than 100 prisoners, guards and their relatives have not ruled out bribery as the explanation for how the terrorists obtained pistols.

"You could easily earn a million," Der Spiegel quoted one of the guards as saying.

In a last ditch-attempt bid for release from prison, Baader tried to persuade a government official he was not directly connected with hijackers or with the kidnapers of Schleyer, the magazine said.

He also promised he would try to persuade them to abandon violence in the future if he were released, and he would never return to West Germany, it said.

Sympathizers of the so-called Baader-Meinhof gang in France and Italy have launched a campaign of bombings and street demonstrations to avenge the trio's deaths.

The terrorists holding Schleyer killed him and dumped his body in the trunk of a car. Police in six West European countries have launched a massive hunt for the kidnap gang.