

Space Pioneer, Once Hitler's

FT. MONMOUTH — It was 1924 and Adolf Hitler was strolling in the park in Munich, dressed in a trench coat and Bavarian hat and carrying a walking stick.

Thirty-four years later, America launched its first successful satellite, Explorer I, a device that sent back data on the composition of earth's atmosphere.

Dr. Hans K. Ziegler witnessed both those scenes.

They are among the high lights of his colorful and exciting life and his 40-year career as a military scientist.

Ziegler, of Colts Neck Township, retired March 1 as director of the Electronics Technology and Devices Laboratory at the Army Electronics Command (ECOM). He is staying on, however, until a successor is named.

HE STARTED at the fort in 1947 as a member of "Operation Paperclip," which brought German scientists to the United States after World War II.

Ziegler was born in Munich and has vivid memories of the city's political activities during the 1920s and 1930s, including the storm trooper demonstrations in the streets and the jailing of Hitler.

"I saw Hitler many times," he recalls. "We knew him by name because we knew he had been put in jail."

In 1923, Hitler tried to start a revolution in Munich and set himself up as the dictator of Bavaria. He was jailed for eight months in the fortress prison of Landsberg.

"HE USED to walk in the park every day in sort of an absent-minded way. He would dress in a trench coat, a Bavarian hat and carry a walking stick.

"I can even recall him walking down the street in front of our house. He only lived about four houses away from us at the time.



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Dr. Hans K. Ziegler holds a communications component prototype of the type used in Score, a satellite he helped develop.

"I can remember looking out the window at night and seeing his party members march down that same street. The last memory I have of my father, after he was drafted in the Army, was of him walking down that street waving goodbye to me. He was killed in the war in 1918."

Ziegler received his bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering in 1932 at the Munich Technical University. Two years later

he received his master's degree at the university and later his doctorate, summa cum laude, in 1936.

HE WENT to work in industry and during the war years became an expert on proximity fuses. These devices trigger an explosive charge, either acoustically or electrostatically, at a predetermined distance from the target.

When Germany fell to the Allied armies, he and his wife, Friederika and their young children, Hans P. and Friederike were living in Bavaria.

He recalls that the fighting was fierce in that area. He and his family were forced to take cover in a building among file cabinets during the artillery barrages.

"SHELLS WERE falling all around the building but never hit it," he says. "It was a miracle we were never touched by the shell fragments."

The family hid for a day until found by American soldiers. After being searched, they were allowed to return to their home where an Army command post was set up.

Ziegler later joined the "Operation Paperclip" team and helped locate other scientists before they were captured by the Russians. He once was sneaked through the Russian lines to bring back Bavarian scientists.

"IT WAS very exciting work, but you had to be careful," he said. "I couldn't dress in American clothes because it would have given me away.

"The operation was originally to deny the Russians of scientists. But after we were brought to this country, we were given responsible jobs and shared in the research that was going on.

"That's a credit to the Army, because this didn't happen with the scientists

kidnaped by the Russians. They were milked dry and kept away from the new work that was taking place and were later returned to Germany.

"I know because I interviewed some of them when they got back to Germany. They had no knowledge of the new work going on in the world and were behind us technically.

"IT STILL amazes me that I was brought here and allowed to attain various high positions working for the government. I was even put over workers who had been with the Army many years."

Prior to becoming director of the Electronics Technology and Devices Laboratory in 1971, Ziegler was chief scientist for ECOM and its predecessor laboratory organization, the Army Signal Research and Development Laboratories.

He played a leading role in the early U.S. space efforts,