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August 15, 2003

Arnie still on course despite Nazi family past

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

ARNOLD Schwarzenegger's run for Governor of California yesterday flushed out new information about his father's Nazi past, revealing that he served as one of Hitler's Brownshirts.



Arnold Schwarzenegger talks to Ariana Huffington, his rival in the Californian vote, whose campaign has stumbled

A document found in Austrian archives by the *Los Angeles Times* shows that Gustav Schwarzenegger joined the Sturmabteilungen (SA) "storm troops" on May 1, 1939, about six months after the Brownshirts ransacked Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues across Germany and Austria on Kristallnacht.

At the time, Austrian men had to apply to join the Brownshirts, unlike the German Army, into which they were drafted after the country's annexation by Germany in 1938.

The *Terminator* star began investigating his father's background more than a decade ago after a report described Gustav Schwarzenegger as a member of the Nazi party. The Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Los Angeles, which hunts Nazi war criminals, found that Gustav Schwarzenegger voluntarily applied for membership of the Nazi party in 1938. But the investigation uncovered no evidence that he had been involved in war crimes.

The newly found document was apparently not public at that time because of a 30-year rule restricting the release of information until long after a person's death.

Other papers now available in the Austrian archives show that Gustav Schwarzenegger served as a military policeman with German Army units during the invasions of Poland and France and on the brutal Eastern Front as German troops rampaged into Russia and laid siege to Leningrad.

He became a master sergeant with the Feldgendarmarie, the military police force nicknamed the "Chained Dogs" because of the metal links they wore around their necks as part of the uniform. Many served as frontline combat troops to suppress the civilian population for the advancing German Army.

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The Austrian records show that Gustav Schwarzenegger contracted malaria and may have been wounded before leaving the German Army in 1943. Documents from the de-Nazification process say that in 1947 it was determined that he could work for the postwar Austrian state because he was linked with no specific war crimes. He worked as a police officer until his death in 1972. Arnold Schwarzenegger once generated controversy by inviting Kurt Waldheim to his wedding in 1986 just weeks after the former Austrian President had been publicly accused of lying about his wartime past in Hitler's army. Herr Waldheim did not attend but he sent a gift and received an effusive toast by Mr Schwarzenegger.

The latest revelations about his father are unlikely to damage the film star's campaign because he has good relations with the state's Jewish community and has donated money to Jewish causes, including \$750,000 (£466,000) to the Simon Wiesenthal Centre.

But another celebrity in the field of 135 candidates may not be so lucky. Arianna Huffington, the TV pundit and author who launched her campaign by criticising "fat cats" who fail to pay their fair share of taxes, admitted that she had paid no individual state income tax and just \$771 in federal taxes during the past two years.



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