

Großväterland – Memories from World War II come alive in Graphic Novel

In 2015, the world will remember the end of World War II 70 years ago. There aren't that many grandfathers left to talk about their traumatic experiences from this period. Markus Freise, Alex Kahl and Dr. Christian Hardinghaus have launched a crowd-funding campaign on this occasion. The result of this will be Großväterland – a Graphic Novel that portrays war stories from the very last living eyewitnesses. Younger generations in particular who can no longer ask their great grand-parents should be touched and enlightened by the book beyond the scope told in history classes: without sugar-coating or moralizing, but with a sound historical basis and a sense for social responsibility. 18,000 US dollars are the minimum budget for launching the project.

(Bielefeld / Osnabrück, Germany) Grandpa with a machine gun? Granny in the ruins after liberation from the National Socialists? For lots of young people these pictures are hard to imagine or comprehend. Comic-artist Markus Freise, social media consultant Alex Kahl from Bielefeld and the historian and author Dr. Christian Hardinghaus from Osnabrück would like to change this. Through interviews with German eyewitnesses and extensive research, they intend to collect the last remaining, still untold stories of traumatizing experiences at the front, in POW camps or back home in bombed-out cities, illustrated as a graphic novel.

"We are convinced that the comic is the right medium for reaching a wide readership in an innovative way. The final book will contain the stories in English and German over more than 100 illustrated pages." said Freise, an experienced comic-artist known for the depth of detail in his drawings.

The crowd-funding platform Indiegogo allows interested supporters and readers to buy the product in advance via so-called perks. These perks include different packages of the book, with several extras such as postcards or a booklet with sketches. In this way the team is able to intensify work on the project and deliver the final product. As a special offer, six supporters get the opportunity to place themselves as a character in one of the episodes. If the minimum budget of 18,000 US dollars is reached, the team begins work and the graphic novel will be released in autumn 2015. If a higher sum is acquired, more pages and stories will then be added to the book. In case the project does not reach the minimum budget every paying supporter will be completely refunded.

"We are aware of our responsibility of handling the topic of WWII very sensitively. One part of the budget will be donated to organizations that work against racism and xenophobia," stated Hardinghaus. A doctor of philosophy, the historian specialising on the Third Reich will check historical facts and write story outlines, to be drawn by Freise. These story outlines will evolve from interviews conducted with eyewitnesses by Alex Kahl. "Großväterland is not only about stories. It's also supplemented by short historical facts. It is very likely that the book will be used in schools to support modern methods of teaching history."

The team promises a Christmas-Special: "Everybody who supports the project in November by ordering a printed edition of Grossväterland, will get a 40-page booklet with two complete episodes, historic background and some surprises" says Freise.

The crowd-funding campaign has already been launched and ends on 28 December. It can be found via <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/grossvaeterland> where the product packages can be ordered and bought.

The first episode of **Großväterland** and more information about the progress of the project is documented on www.grossvaeterland.com

For questions, please contact Alex Kahl on +4917655533603 or mail@alex-kahl.de

We would be happy if you could tell your readers about Großväterland. High-res pictures can be found here: <http://www.grossvaeterland.com/presskit/>