

## Former Raid Wardens Plead Guilty in Midst of Spy Trial

*Post 9-17-43* By the Associated Press

New York, Sept. 16. ~~Ernest Frederick Lehmitz, 57, and Edwin Harry De Spretter, 52, former Staten Island air raid wardens, pleaded guilty today in the midst of their trial on espionage charges in Federal Court.~~

The pleas were made shortly after the prosecution had rested its case.

After admitting a conspiracy to violate the Wartime Espionage Act, they were asked by Judge Mortimer W. Byers whether they realized the full penalty that might be imposed by their pleas—prison sentences of up to 30 years or death. Both replied in the affirmative.

The court set September 21 for sentencing.

Government witnesses at the trial testified Lehmitz transmitted to Germany by invisible ink writings on apparently innocuous letters, information on ship sailings, convoy movements and other military information. The letters, to "friends," reached the Axis by way of Spain and Portugal, an FBI agent said.

De Spretter, a consulting engineer, was charged with obtaining a book of aviation information, published by the Brewster Aircraft Corp., and turning it over to

Lehmitz. For this, according to a signed statement by Lehmitz, he received \$100. Lehmitz said in the statement he had received information from De Spretter for espionage purposes "about a dozen times."