

Germans invented birthday cakes, and celebrated birthdays with a cake called "Geburtstagorten". The Germans were known to have been skilled candle makers and may have put small candles on their cakes, possibly for religious reasons.

## Tail-Gunner Joe

November 14 is the birthday of the anti-communist U.S senator Joseph McCarthy (1908-57). From February 1950 until December 1954, he was a powerful force in Washington:

- In 1939, McCarthy began his political career as a judge in Wisconsin, after inflating his opponent's age to 89 (from 66) and reducing his own to 29 (from 31). His campaign slogan was Justice is Truth in Action.
- McCarthy was a marine from 1942 to 1944. He said he was known in the Pacific as Tail-Gunner Joe - serving on 14, then 17, then 30 missions. In 1951, he applied for, and was given, the Distinguished Flying Cross. He had only flown on a few air strikes, as a passenger when resistance was light.
- In 1946, he was elected to the Senate; his campaign slogan was Congress Needs a Tail-

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Gunner.

- In 1950, looking for a dramatic issue for the 1952 election, he was advised that communism was a hot topic. He made a radio speech, claiming to have a list of 205 Communists in the State Department. Surprised by the stir he caused, McCarthy later tried to get a



Originally cards were often sent as an "apology" when a person couldn't visit somebody in person. Today we often sent birthday cards even if we can!

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copy of that speech to check what he had said. Ultimately, he was unable to produce a single name - this led to his downfall.

- Postwar events created sympathy for McCarthyism: Canada's Gouzenko case, the fall of China, the first Soviet atomic test, the treachery of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, the perjury of Alger Hiss, the Korean War, Republican frustration at being out of power for two decades, and the belief Hollywood was influenced by Communists.

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- It is unlikely that McCarthy had deep feelings about what he did. In 1956, at a party, he met a civil servant and former drinking companion he had ruined and said to the man his wife was "talking about you the other night. How come we never see you? What the hell are you trying to do - avoid us?"