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ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
Psychological Warfare Division
INTELLIGENCE SECTION

M 18 JANOWITZ
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SUBJECT: Interrogation of 24 German Officer Ps/ow.

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(This report was prepared by PWD-SHAFF Interrogators.)

1. Introduction: On 5 March 1945 this team interrogated 24 German Officer Ps/ow who had been captured in the Dueren-Juelich sector during the period of 24 to 27 Feb 45.

a. Units: The Ps/ow belonged to the following units:

- 12 Ps/ow from 363rd VGD
- 5 Ps/ow from 12th VGD
- 3 Ps/ow from 338th Inf Div
- 1 P/ow from 176th Inf Div
- 1 P/ow from 59th Inf Div
- 1 P/ow from 212th VGD
- 1 P/ow from 9th Panzer Div

b. Age groups:

20 - 21 yrs	7 Ps/ow
22 - 28 yrs	11 Ps/ow
29 - 35 yrs	5 Ps/ow
42 yrs	1 P/ow

c. Dates when commissioned: 5 of the Ps/ow were commissioned within the last 4 months. 3 of the Ps/ow have been officers for 3 yrs and longer. The remaining 11 Ps/ow were commissioned between those two periods.

d. Ranks and Positions: The Ps/ow included 4 Captains, 5 1st Lieutenants, 15 2nd Lieutenants. One Captain was Bn Comdr; one Captain was Artillery Liaison Officer; one Captain was CO of a Kampfgruppe, which at the time consisted of 22 men, and which was in the process of being organized when it had to be thrown into battle hastily because of general conditions; one Captain was Company CO. All of the 1st Lieutenants, with the exception of 1 Adjutant, were Company Commanders. 10 of the 2nd Lieutenants were Company Commanders, 3 were Adjutants and 2 were platoon leaders. Many of the officers were former Regtl or Bn Staff Officers, who were thrown in as line officers at the last minute.

e. Education and Professions: 5 of the Ps/ow were professional officers; 7 were students; 4 were civil servants; 6 were white collar workers and merchants; 2 were skilled tool makers. 13 out of the 24 Ps/ow had made their Abiturium; 10 have "Mittlere Reife" (approx. same as U.S. Highschool education) and 1 had a plain elementary school education.

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f. Regions of origin:

Russian occupied and immediately threatened:	5
Western occupied and immediately threatened:	5
Central Germany and other areas	: 12
Austria	: 2

2. General impression: One of the outstanding impressions immediately gained by the interrogators was the fact, that in contrast to previous lots of Officers, these men presented a clean and neat-looking picture, giving the impression that they had been more or less quietly sitting in CP's or bunkers without ever having been exposed to field warfare or foxholes. Yet as far as their competence and intelligence as Officers were concerned, almost all of them were of a high caliber.

3. Circumstances of capture: The Officer Ps/OW were captured with groups of men as follows:

7 of the Officers in groups of 3	- 6 men
7 of the Officers in groups of 7	- 15 men
6 of the Officers in groups of 16	- 25 men
3 of the Officers in groups of 35	- 40 men
1 of the Officers in groups of 80	men

All the Officers were under orders to fight to the last bullet. This order appears to be generally interpreted by the German Officers as meaning that they are only allowed to retreat after having tried everything in their power to hold their positions. 6 Officers reported that they fought to the last and were captured after all their ammunition had been used up or they were hopelessly outnumbered and outfought or any attempt to withdraw would have meant certain death. 14 others did not admit that through some action they could have avoided capture; they seem to have carried out their orders to resist knowing that that failure to withdraw would result in capture admit frankly that half a year ago, under similar circumstances, they would at least have tried to break through to new positions. Quotations: "Ich war schon oft in solchen Situationen. Das war aber noch zu einer Zeit als der ganze Krieg noch nicht so aussichtslos schien." (Often I was in such situations and decided to fight my way out with my men. But that was at a time when the war didn't seem so purposeless. Lt. Richard Berg, Co Comdr., 3rd Co 957 Regt 363 VGD). "Man wird ja innerlich so resigniert, dass man Gefangennahme als etwas langerwartetes und unvermeidliches entgegennimmt und sich nicht mehr dagegen wehrt." (One becomes so resigned inside that captivity is accepted as something long-sought and unavoidable and one no longer resists it. Oblt. Franz Josef Hanser, Ordonnanz Offizier, Regt Stab 759 Gren. Regt. 338 Inf Div.). "Im der Normandie haette man das nochmals versucht, jedoch hier war die Hoffnungslosigkeit so gross. Es bricht doch alles ueber uns zusammen, warum soll man schliesslich noch 5 Minuten vor Torabschluss das Leben seiner Leute aufs Spiel setzen." (In Normandy one would try again, however here the hopelessness is so great. Everything is collapsing on us, so why should one risk the lives of his men just five minutes before the end. Oblt. Walter Orgzahl, Co Comdr, 1st Co, Pionier Bn 363, 363 VGD.). "Wenn die allgemeine Lage Aussicht auf Erfolg gehabt haette, waere ich bis zum Aeussersten gegangen, aber der Kampf heute bedeutet ja nur noch ein Hineinfuehren in die Gefangenschaft." (If the general situation had a chance of success, I would have gone to the extreme, but the war now means only passing over into captivity. Capt. Erich Rehm, Co Comdr, 1st Co, Gren. Regt 89, 12 Inf. Div.). "Gefangennahme ist heute die beste Loesung. Wir freuen uns ueber jeden Bekannten den wir hier sehen (P/W enclosure). Die leben wenigstens noch." (Capture is the best solution today. We are very happy about every acquaintance we meet here. At least they are alive. Oblt. Hans Juergen Koehn, Co Comdr, 10th Co, Fusilier Regt 27, 12 VGD.

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4. Outcome of War:

The following is a tabulation of these 24 officers' expectations about the outcome of the war, as expressed after capture:

- 15 Officers believe the war is lost for Germany.
- 3 Officers believe in compromise peace as result of a stalemate.
- 4 Officers still believe in the possibility of avoiding a German defeat. They consider the creation of a new weapon possible but are not certain of it.
- 2 Officers believe in German victory, because
 - (a) one is certain that there is a new war-decisive weapon which will be used shortly, and
 - (b) the other one is of the opinion that the German Army compressed into a small area, is strong enough to beat Allies and Russians.

The consensus of opinion among the Officers is that the material superiority of the Allied armies is so overwhelming and their own lack of material in comparison is so great that there is no chance for Germany to win. "Es ist nur noch ein Katze und Maus Spiel". (It's only a cat-and-mouse game. Oblt. Walter Orgzahl, 1st Co. Pionier Bn 363, 363 VGD) "Der gute Glaube allein hilft nicht. Selbst Hitler's Reden enthalten nichts mehr das einem Hoffnung geben kann, hoechstens nur noch eine Situation fuer Goebbels". (Good faith alone doesn't help. Even Hitler's speeches contain nothing that can give hope, only another opportunity for Goebbels. Lt. Erich Schoppmeier, 3rd Co. Gren. Regt 759, 338 Inf. Div.) "Man vergleicht unsere Lage mit der Friedrich des Grossen. Der konnte es noch mit Taktik schaffen, aber jetzt kann man einen Krieg nur mit einer Masse Material gewinnen und daran fehlt es uns." (Our position is compared to Frederick the Great's. He could do it with tactics but now a war can only be won with masses of material and therein we are lacking. Lt. Phul, 14th Co. Gren. Regt. 959 363 VGD). One Officer states that the expected counter-offensive against the Russians will show the Western Allies that Germany is still in a position to go on fighting and that England and America will then decide to come to terms with Germany (Vergleichsfriede). "Jeder Fussbreit Deutschen Bodens, den Ihr von nun an erkampfen werdet, wird Euch soviel Blut kosten, dass Euch Amerikanern die Geduld bald ausgehen wird. Mit den Russen werden wir schon allein fertig werden." (Every foot of German soil that you gain from now on, will cost you so much blood that you Americans will soon lose patience. We'll take care of the Russians ourselves. Lt. Paul Lachmann, 9th Panzer Division). One officer who believes in a complete German victory, does so, because as he states "Ich kann mir nicht vorstellen, dass die Fuehrung soviel deutsches Blut und Gut opfert ohne die bestimmte Aussicht auf einen endgueltigen Sieg." (I can't believe that our leadership is sacrificing so much German blood and property without the real chance of a final victory).

5. Do German leaders fight to save their skins: 14 of the Ps/OW are of the opinion that the fighting now merely continues because the "Fuehrung" realizes the jig is up and they are therefore prolonging the war in order to prolong their own lives. 10 of them are of the opinion that the German government is continuing the fight because they believe it is in the interest of the German people. Amongst

the former group of 14 Officers there is a growing trend to include Hitler personally into the term "Fuehrung". Formerly the majority opinion was that Hitler himself would end the war when he realized that the situation had become hopeless. Hitler would not sacrifice the German people. "Selbst ein Hitler kann so blind sein um nicht zu sehen, dass der Krieg verloren ist. Entweder kaempft er um sein Leben zu veraengern oder weil er uns alle mituntergehen sehn will". (Only a Hitler can be so blind as not to see that the war is lost. He fights on either to lengthen his own life or because he wants us to go down with him. Lt. Reinhardt Schaefer, CO, 10th Co, Gren. Regt. 957, 363 VGD.) "Ich habe oft darueber nachgedacht. Uebergabe wuerde Hitler's Tod bedeuten, deshalb kaempft er weiter". (I've thought about it often. Surrender would mean Hitler's death; therefore he fights on. Lt. Erich Schoppmeier, CO 3rd Co, 759 Regt. 338 Inf. Div.) "Man wehrt sich gegen die Erkenntnis, dass Hitler tausende von Menschenleben opfert nur um sein eigenes Leben zu veraengern. Es ist das leider aber nur die einzigste Erklaerung". (One resists the thought that Hitler is sacrificing thousands of human lives to lengthen his own life. Unfortunately that is the only explanation. Lt. Jochen Kroos, Bn Adj Fusilier Regt. 27, 12 Inf. Div.) "Die Fuehrung kaempft weiter um das Volk zu erhalten, wenn sie nichts haetten, waere es ein ungeheures Verbrechen weiter zu kaempfen und das kann ich mir nicht vorstellen". (The leadership fights on to uphold the people. If they had nothing it would be a terrible crime to fight on. I can't imagine that. Hpt. Wilhelm Maasmann, CO, Kampfgruppe of same name, 59 Inf. Div.) "Wir kaempfen nur noch fuer Himmler und die SS". (We fight on only for Himmler and the SS. Hpt. Erich Rehmer, CO, 1st Co, Gren. Regt. 89, 12 Inf. Div.) "Wir koennen alles gewinnen und haben nichts zu verlieren, denn ein Verlust des Krieges wuerde ein Leben fuer uns bedeuten, dem der Tod vorzuziehen waere". (We have everything to gain and nothing to lose since loss of the war would mean a life for us to which death would be preferable. Hpt. Ludwig Monke, Bn CO, 958 Gren. Regt. 363 VGD.)

6. Why Officers fight on: The following reasons and motives were produced by the Officers as reasons why they continue to fight: Their Oath and their military as well as personal honor. The attitude of "Befehl ist Befehl und er muss ausgefuehrt werden". (Orders are orders and they must be carried out). Belief in the "Fuehrung" is still strong enough. Their uncertainty of Germany's future after defeat is due to their ignorance of Allied Post War plans. Fear that Germany's fate after defeat will be worse than the present conflict, worse than death (Russian fear, economic chaos, etc). The latent hope that perhaps Germany may yet have somewhere, somehow enough weapons and strength to stave off complete and utter defeat. "Wir haben die Gewissheit, dass wir den Krieg gewinnen wollen, aber wir koennen unsere Staerke nicht genau. Obzwar wahrscheinlich, es ist vielleicht doch noch etwas da." (We are certain that we want to win the war but we don't exactly know our own strength. Although improbable, there may be something). "Wehrlos, ehrlos. Ein anstaendiger Deutscher kann dann nicht schlafen." (Defenseless, honorless, a decent German couldn't rest then).

7. Von Seydlitz Free German Committee and events of 20 July 1944: Every one of the Officers interrogated had knowledge of the existence of the Committee. 14 of them rejected the Committee and what it stands for. "Seydlitz gehoert derselben Klique an die am 20. Juli sich nicht gescheut hat ein Attentat auf den Fuehrer zu versuchen. Ihr persoennlicher Machthunger ist so gross, dass sie bereit sind das deutsche Volk zu verraten", "Mittel zum Zweck", "Schweinerei". (Seydlitz belongs to the same clique that did not shy away from the attempt on the Fuehrer's life. They

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are so hungry for power that they are ready to betray the German nation. Means to an end). 2 Officers expressed themselves in favor of the Committee, while the remaining 8 took a non-committal attitude. "Das Seydlitz Komitee waere vielleicht eine Moeglichkeit Ordnung in Deutschland nach Verlust des Krieges zu bewahren". "Seydlitz hat weiter vorausgesehen als wir alle." (The Seydlitz committee would perhaps be the possibility for keeping order in Germany after the loss of the war. Seydlitz has greater foresight than we.) As to the events of the 20th of July 44, the majority of the Officers agree that a successful attempt on Hitler's life would have meant the end of the war and have therefore come to the conclusion that it would have been well if the affair at that time would have been successful. 15 Officers who voiced the above stated opinion maintained that the Motives of the organizers of the 20 July attempt were sincere and idealistic, aiming to end the war and saving what remained to be saved of Germany. The rest of the Officers stated that the Officers responsible for the "Putsch" were traitors and instigated the entire affair in order to further their own personal ambitions for power. Some of the Officers were of the opinion that had it not been for the events of the 20th July, the present military situation would be decidedly more favorable. One Officer asked about what had happened to Hess in British captivity, and declared with thoughtful nodding of the head: "Hess war ganz besonders schlaeu". (Hess was particularly clever). Most of the Officers agreed that the Generals involved in the "Putsch" were in positions which permitted them to get a clear picture of the German war situation and that they acted in the knowledge that it was impossible for Germany to win the war.

8. Yalta Conference: All the Officers interrogated had knowledge of the Yalta conference. They all showed eagerness to find out from the interrogators what had been decided there. Some typical reactions: "Die Yalta Konferenz hat beschlossen den Nationalsozialismus und den deutschen Militarismus auszumerzen, wie weit sie das deutsche Volk damit indentifizieren wird die Zukunft zeigen". (The Yalta Conference decided to exterminate National Socialism and German Militarism; how far the German nation is identified with them only the future will tell). "In Yalta haben sie endgueltig den Morgenthau Plan zur Durchfuehrung angenommen, der Plan besteht aus einer vollkommenen Zerstoeerung der deutschen Industrie, Massenverschickungen nach Russland und vollkommene Aufteilung des Landes". (At Yalta the Morgenthau Plan has been accepted; the Plan provides for a complete destruction of German industry, mass deportations to Russia and a thorough partition of the Nation). "Das Schicksal Deutschlands ist dort ein fuer allemal besiegelt worden". "Wie stark muessen sich diese Leute fuehlen, dass sie schon jetzt eine Nachkriegskonferenz angesetzt haben". (The fate of Germany has been sealed forever. How strong these fellows must feel that they've set up a Post War Conference).

9. Russian offensive: Even those of the Officers who are not as yet convinced of the inevitability of German defeat fail to envisage any measures which would stop the Russians while the present war situation exists. Some hope that continued resistance in the West will result in cessation of hostilities on that front and that the freed forces will then deal with the Russians successfully. Today the events on the eastern front are no longer predominant over those on the western front, but are considered as equally

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critical and decisive. Though the old fear of Russia is largely unchanged, it can be noticed, especially among Ps/W from Russian occupied or immediately threatened areas, that certain doubts as to the truthfulness of the German propaganda regarding the Russian occupation are being encountered; these are in part consequences of unconscious wishful thinking. The only outstanding difference is the fact that all Officers interrogated maintain that the fall of Berlin will have no influence on the continuation of the war.

10. Western Offensive: Though the Rhine will mean a temporary slowing down of the Allied offensive, the majority of the Officers have no illusion as to the inevitability of the offensive's success. They consider it the "Todesstoss". Even those Officers who are still hoping for German victory are unable to give any but vague reasons of why they think the Allied offensive will be stopped. They do not attach any decisive importance to the expected crossing of the Rhine, that is as far as the immediate end of the war is concerned. "Weder der Fall Berlin's noch die Uberschreitung des Rhein's wird die Haltung der Fuehrung beeinflussen. Der Krieg wird beendet sein, wenn sich die Truppen der Westmaechte und die der Sowiet Union die Haende reichen". (Neither the fall of Berlin nor the crossing of the Rhine will influence the attitude of the leadership. The war will be over when the troops of the Western Powers join hands with those of the Soviet Union). One of them believing in a stalemate made the following statement: "Unser aller Hoffnung ist der Rhein. Wenn der Amerikaner das schafft und herueberkommt, dann ist's vorbei". (All our hope is the Rhine. If the Americans accomplish that and cross it, then it's all over).

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