

# W A R N I N G

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INTELLIGENCE SECTION

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WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY - No. 4.

(Note: The following is a Summary of matters of interest received at PWD during the past week, and is for guidance only.)

B. WEHRMACHT MORALE

(covering the period Aug 19-26)

I. OFFICER MORALE:

More than 100 German officers belonging chiefly to Infantry Units which were captured in Brittany between 1 and 10 August have been interrogated; about half were administrative or other non-combat men.

(1) General outlook: A fairly sharp division could be made between young over-confident, truculent officers, and disillusioned and sober older people. The younger men combine ignorance of the World with dogmatic acceptance of all the stereotyped Nazi themes. They have strong belief in the Fuehrer and in the value of National Socialism, they expect Germany to win by the miracle of its spiritual strength and its new wonder weapons and claim that she has still great reserves of fine troops. These factors will, in their view, soon produce a striking change in the military situation. The older men, who have usually a wider range of non-military experiences and are also generally better educated, are more pessimistic, especially about the outcome of the War. It can be said that as compared with samples of enlisted men loyalty to National Socialism and to Hitler personally is very much higher among the officers - at least on the conscious level.

(2) Attitude to the attempted Generals' revolt: A few among the more senior officers have implied that they were sorry the "Putsch" did not succeed, although in their explicit statements, they expressed loyalty. The great majority of young officers are unquestionably on Hitler's side, even though some long for peace. Here and there a young fanatic would enlarge on the iniquity of the great number of senior officers choking the higher levels of the Wehrmacht and saying that these men should be got rid of. In general, the captured officers accept the official Nazi explanation of the plot as the work of disgruntled, incompetent officers, who had been discharged because of incompetence.

(3) Attitude to their Men. On the whole, the officers interrogated declare that it is the primary duty of officers to look after the welfare of their troops. Among older officers especially, a benevolent fatherly concern is frequently expressed. For this reason few of them have accepted literally the Fuehrer's orders to hold out to the last man. The prevailing view has been that such orders need to be interpreted in the light of the existing tactical situation and merely embody a general directive. There have been a good many cases, both among young and older officers, who have frankly admitted that they gave "Cease fire" or surrender orders when they were satisfied that further resistance was useless.



(1) (4) Officers' opinions as to why German soldiers fight on; A considerable consensus exists on the proposition that the German soldier feels that if he loses the War, all his chances of a good life and of his German way of life will be irretrievably lost. The argument that this fate would follow from the loss of the War is supported by reference to the influence of the Soviet which will prevent the Western Allies from asserting their more humane principles. Officers themselves share this dread of coming under Russian control, which for them means forced labour, death or sterilization. Paradoxically enough, they fear that the Anglo-American occupation will not be long and thorough enough. The lack of clear statements by the Anglo-American leaders on this point is taken as further evidence that Russia will dominate all of Germany in the post-war era.

(2) (5)(a) Officers own reasons for continuing the struggle; Complementary to this, is the officers' view that the Western Powers have given no kind of assurance of any private security or minimum standard of living to the Germans. Officers themselves, especially Regulars, feel that they have nothing to gain from Germany's surrender. When interrogators counter these observations by quoting statements of leading Allied Statesmen that it is not desired to have chaos in Germany, Ps/W cite Wilson's 14 Points as a warning example of a previous "breach of faith."

(b) Faith in the soundness of Hitler's judgment, makes officers, especially young ones, say frequently that he would not continue the War if he had lost his confidence in victory. So long, therefore, as he does not consider the German cause as hopeless, there is no reason for them to give up.

(2) (c) Loss of National Unity; Many officers identify their own personal fate with that of a dismembered Germany. There is practically no separatist sentiment such as would make the division of Germany into small regional units acceptable. A few exceptions may be found among anti-Nazi Bavarians and Austrians. The prevailing attitude is "we are, after all, Germans first."

## II. ENLISTED MEN'S MORALE.

### (1) General Morale Impressions:

A report, dated 18 August, from 21 Army Group covering 35 recently captured prisoners from the Conde area, speaks of a morale that "could not have been lower." Men had the feeling of being left in the lurch and on some occasions that their officers had beaten a hasty retreat after ordering them to hold out. This latter feeling against the officers is said to have been prevalent among prisoners taken during the third week in August in the Second Army cage. Many of these prisoners were men from reserved occupations who had only been enlisted a few months ago.

According to a report dated 6 August, French civilians in the Cherbourg area have made the following observations on German Army morale:

The Allied landing produced marked deterioration in all but a few crack Units, which was further emphasized by their knowledge of heavy air raids on the German Home front.

Several informants reported much home-sickness among German soldiers, coupled with worry about the fate of their families. The reports of misconduct of German women with foreign workers has made a deep impression, but soldiers are said to refuse to discuss this point except with intimate friends.



This feeling of worry about home is enhanced by the irregularity and non-arrival of home mails.

(Whilst the French civilians cannot be called unbiased, observers, the above points bear out Intelligence from other sources. It should, moreover, be pointed out that these observations were made in the Cherbourg area.)

## (2) Modes of Surrender:

The various modes of German surrender as reported by P/W interrogation can be summarized as follows:

(a) Deserters: The active voluntary deserter is a lone individual of exceptional type who is willing to face the physical dangers of moving across the combat lines and who is not deterred by threats of reprisals against his family. He is usually an individual who, because of a traditional anti-Nazi background, deep resentment or personal peculiarities, has not made a full identification with the Army. During recent weeks, such individuals have come over singly or at most in pairs with someone of their own kind. Active voluntary deserters account for only a very small fraction of prisoners taken. On the other hand, the swiftly moving front has made it possible for many German soldiers, approaching the state of mind of the active voluntary deserters, to surrender passively after being overrun by Allied troops.

(b) Passive Surrender: This type stays in position until he can be taken prisoner, after non-resistance or after token resistance. Of a group of 150 German prisoners captured between 1 and 17 July in the Carentan and St. Lo area, consisting predominantly of Infantry, it was found that 72 surrendered of their own free will without offering much resistance. The overwhelming majority of entire groups stated that they surrendered because the situation was hopeless for various reasons: (surrounded, inadequate weapons, general exhaustion, etc.) Such men usually surrender in groups of less than 5 people.

It has been found that there is a significant correlation between a general defeatist attitude and the disposition towards passive surrender.

(c) Surrender on Order of an Officer: People taken under these conditions frequently surrender in larger groups than those captured under passive surrender conditions. Of the 150 Ps/W mentioned above, 30 surrendered on order. The surrender then becomes merely an expression of the state of mind of the officer in question, although some of the men under him may have desired to continue resistance.

(d) "Last Ditchers": A sizeable minority of soldiers fight on until overwhelmed or destroyed. Their attitude is, as expected, highly correlated with youthfulness, fanatical Nazi faith, belief in victory but, curiously enough, no marked pessimism as to their personal fate on defeat. Statistics of captured Germans falling in this category is of limited value since the number of those captured after determined resistance does not reflect how many fought their way back to new positions, or how many fought until death. However, of the group of 150 Ps/W mentioned above 45 stated that they surrendered against their Will.

## (3) Wehrmacht Attitudes towards Waffen S.S.

No serious split or friction can be observed between the Wehrmacht and the Waffen S.S. During the last week, continued reports of criticism of one group towards another have been received, but none of these reports conclude that these criticisms are interfering with battle behaviour.



More than 3/4 of a sample of 160 (largely paratroopers) captured between August 1 and 10 believed the Waffen S.S. to be good and comradely soldiers. It is significant that this opinion is held by paratroopers, concerning whom many stories of rivalry and friction with the S.S. have been circulated.

### III. ATTITUDE OF GERMAN SOLDIERS TO THE FRENCH POPULATION SINCE D-DAY.

Since D-day, German behaviour towards the French population has undergone a complete change. Previously "correct", the German soldier has now taken to organized pillaging and brutality, not only in the rear, but also in the front line. For example; at Averanches, a looting party was organized by the local Commanding Officer because his own supplies had not arrived. Rape and other forms of sadism without expectation of material gain are also said to be on the increase.

The German soldiers believed that by what they call correct and lenient treatment of the French population, they had managed to dispel the French hatred of the invader. They were genuinely distressed and horrified when the French Forces of the Interior came out into the open - a situation which the Germans interpreted as treachery which stimulated the characteristic German sentiments of self-pity and injured innocence. The following remark is, perhaps, typical: "the trouble is we Germans were too soft and treated them too well; we should have been more brutal."

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