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Interrogation of Werner von BLOMBERG
By Lt Col T. S. HINKEL
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BLOMBERG was interrogated regarding his knowledge of the 100,000 man German army permitted by the Versailles Treaty. He stated that efforts were made to select applicants for the army who were intelligent and who were interested in soldiering as a career (there was a 12-year enlistment), but that the whole attitude of the German people throughout the 1920's and early 1930's had been such that not the best people had presented themselves for enlistment. He further stated that efforts were made to give the enlisted men and the non-commissioned officers advanced training while in the army so that they would be fitted to hold higher positions. He said that he didn't know the percentage of the 100,000 man army that became officers in World War II but that he doubted very much if it was high.

BLOMBERG identified the substance of the HASZBACH minutes (Document 386-PS), stating that it was in substantial conformity with his recollection of the meeting, although his memory of the details was not too clear. He stated that he believed that HITLER himself had dictated the minutes to HASZBACH a few days after the meeting and he pointed to the detail contained in the minutes as support for his statement.

BLOMBERG stated that in the early days of his tour of duty as War Minister, SA troops were given superficial training such as close order drill and manual of arms. He stated that there was a point of conflict between the SA and the army because the army believed that the SA had the intention to eliminate it or to crush it by mere weight of numbers. HITLER continued the SA as a parallel military organization to the army until BLOMBERG objected strenuously. BLOMBERG stated that the army had rejected the SA as a reservoir for soldiers due to the oath of the members to ROEHM and that he (BLOMBERG) did not seriously consider the SA as a reserve for the army.

BLOMBERG stated that there had been some secret matters prior to 30 January 1933 with respect to the armed forces. These were (1) the establishment of three training centers in Russia (from at least 1925 until 1933) devoted to the training of air force, armoured vehicles and anti-gas defense, and (2) that "volunteers", principally former members of the German army, were used on maneuvers to expand the 100,000 man army. BLOMBERG stated that so far as he knew no munitions were produced from 1925 to 1933 (the period with which he was connected with the German General Staff) except those permitted by the Versailles Treaty.

BLOMBERG stated that the rearmament program started principally in 1934 when fighters and bombers for the air force and armaments for the army were contracted for (plants had previously been selected for their manufacture); the navy began its expansion after the English-German Naval Treaty of 1935. BLOMBERG admitted that all of these matters were in violation of the limitations imposed by the Versailles Treaty.

BLOMBERG stated that the financing of the rearmament program was done principally by the issuance of bills of exchange called MEFOS. This was a device arranged by SCHACHT and the procedure was that the army, navy and air force would submit their estimated requirements to him (BLOMBERG) as War Minister, that these estimates would then be pared down by him, and that thereafter the consolidated estimates would be submitted to SCHACHT who in turn would reduce them to the amount which, in his opinion, could be obtained without up-setting the German economy. Various conferences were held between BLOMBERG and SCHACHT on the amount of money that could be furnished through MEFOS and BLOMBERG stated that he and SCHACHT always came to an ultimate agreement so it was unnecessary to admit differences to HITLER. BLOMBERG also stated that so far as he knew no money was furnished the military program except from SCHACHT, i.e. none was furnished from the regular budget.

BLOMBERG stated that universal conscription was adopted in 1935 in violation of the Versailles Treaty. He stated that this was necessary because of the expansion of the German army sought by HITLER. He said that HITLER ordered the army expanded to 36 divisions; whereas the army wanted it expanded to 21 divisions (from 7 divisions). He justified this action, as well as that of the rearmament, on the basis that no other nation had disarmed and that he thought that Germany should have parity with them.

BLOMBERG stated with respect to the reoccupation of the RHINELAND in 1936 that he first heard of it during the winter Olympic Games at Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Before the occupation occurred BLOMBERG stated that he was assured by HITLER that should France or England create difficulties or threaten a war, the soldiers would be withdrawn.

BLOMBERG stated that a German General Staff existed after the First World War as every army needed a staff in order to function. He stated that this staff carried on the traditions and ideals of the former staff. In 1935, however, the form of the staff was changed by the introduction of the concept of the OKW.

HIMMEL