

OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL
FOR THE PROSECUTION OF AXIS CRIMINALITY

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogations of DOENITZ, Karl

By: Lt. Colonel Hinkel 11, 18, 28 September 1945;

2, 4, 6, 9, 18, 22, 24 October 1945, Nuremberg.

PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IMPLICATED, AND SUBJECTS

1. DOENITZ, Karl

- a. Naval career (pp. 2, 7, 8 Interrogation 11 September 1945 a.m.)
- b. Meetings with Hitler (p. 5, Interrogation 11 September 1945 a.m.; 2 statements dated 12 September 1945)
- c. Basis for his faithfulness and obedience to Hitler (signed statement of 30 September 1945)
- d. Participation in political and strategical decisions
 - (1) Did not participate in political decisions except one (pp. 5, 6, Interrogation 2 October 1945)
 - (2) Made no strategical decisions (p. 11, Interrogation 11 September 1945; pp. 4, 5 Interrogation 2 October 1945)
- e. Relations with SS and SHO
 - (1) No relations with SS (pp. 12, 13, Interrogation 22 October 1945)
 - (2) Did not approve of SHO (pp. 12, 13, Interrogation 22 October 1945)
- f. Naval program prior to 1939
 - (1) Hitler did not favor U-boat program (pp. 6, 7, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
 - (2) Naval program changed from super-marine vessels to U-boats (pp. 10, 11, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
- g. Sinking of "Robin Moor"
 - (1) Details of incident (p. 4, Interrogation 18 September 1945, a.m.)
 - (2) U-boat Commander Metzger (p. 5, Interrogations 18 September 1945 a.m.)
 - (3) Explanation for error (p. 6, Interrogation 18 September 1945, a.m.; statements 18 and 21 September 1945)
 - (4) Trial of Metzger (p. 7, Interrogation 18 September 1945)
- H. Unrestricted submarine warfare
 - (1) When it started (p. 13, Interrogation 11 September 1945, a.m.)
 - (2) Raeder decided on form of U-boat war (p. 11, Interrogation 11 September 1945, a.m.)
 - (3) Doenitz advised Hitler on use of U-boat (p. 13, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
 - (4) Real U-boat war started 1942 (p. 10, Interrogation 11 September 1945)

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- "Wolfpack" Tactics (p.14, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
- i. Machine gunning of survivors (crimes)
 - (1) Captain Eck case (pp.7,8, Interrogation 4 October 1945; statement 7 October 1945)
 - (2) Crews of sunken ships (pp.7,8, Interrogation 2 October 1945)
- k. Life saving (crimes)
 - (1) Order of 17 September 1942 (pp. 6,10, Interrogation 4 October 1945; statement 7 October 1945)
 - (2) BDU Diary entry of 17 September 1942 (statement 7, 10, 19 October 1945)
- l. Violation of rules of naval warfare
 - (1) His directives did not violate rules of naval warfare (pp.4, 5, Interrogation 2, October 1945)
- m. Transportation of agents in foreign countries
 - (1) Spitzbergen, Greenland, South America (p.16, Interrogation 4 October 1945)
- n. War planing
 - (1) Occupation of the East (p.4, Interrogation 28, September 1945)
 - (2) Norway (pp.14,15, Interrogation 4 October 1945)
- o. Violation of Prize Law
 - (1) No violations (statement 24 October 1945)
- p. Concentration Camps
 - (1) No responsibility (pp.6,10, Interrogation 18, September 1945)
- 2. HITLER
 - a. Appointed Doenitz Keitel's successor because of disagreement on Naval Programm (p.17, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
 - b. His attitude regarding West and action taken to avoid Western conflict (p.11, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
 - c. Wanted to avoid war with U. S. (p.5, Interrogation 2 October 1945)
 - d. Reason for appointing Doenitz his successor (pp.18,19,20, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
- 3. RAEDER
 - a. Decided on form of U-boat war (p.11, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
 - b. Wanted U-boats to attack American destroyers in 1941 (p.6 Interrogation 2 October 1945)
- 4. KALTENBRUNNER
 - a. Doenitz spoke to him only once (pp.7,8, Interrogation 28 September 1945)
- 5. CAPTAIN METZER
 - a. Sank "Robin Moor" unintentionally (p.7, Interrogation 18 September 1945)

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6. OKM
 - a. Responsible for location and manner of U-boats operation (p.4, Interrogation 2 October 1945)
7. HIMMLER
 - a. Attended military conferences and spoke on Waffen SS (p.5, Interrogation 28 September 1945)
8. GOERING
 - a. Was arrested (p.19, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
9. CAPTAIN GOTH AND HESSLER
 - a. Members of his staff (p.9, Interrogation 6 October 1945)
10. CAPTAIN JUNGE AND CAPTAIN HASSMANN
 - a. Liaison Officers with OKW (pp. 8,9, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
11. ADMIRAL KREISCH AND LATER CAPTAIN HARTMANN
 - a. In charge of U-boat operations in Mediterranean (p.3, Interrogation 11 September 1945)
12. CAPTAIN PETERS AND LATER COMMANDER SUHRE
 - a. In charge of U-boat operations in Arctic Ocean (p.3, Interrogation 11 September 1945)

KARL DOENITZ'S PERSONAL HISTORY AND NAVAL CAREER

Defendant was born in Berlin in 1891, is married, and has one daughter.

He joined the Navy in 1910 upon completion of his naval education. In 1912 he was assigned to the cruiser "Breslau". In 1916 he was transferred from the "Breslau" to the submarine arm. In 1918 he was taken prisoner by the British and upon his release he was made Commander of a torpedo boat, which post he held until 1923. From 1923 to 1924 he held the position of Adjutant to the Office of Torpedo Inspection. In 1927 he was transferred to the Supreme Command of the Navy in Berlin to work as an expert in the Organization Section, which was responsible for details of staff work and organization. From October 1927 to October 1928 he was a Navigation Officer on the cruiser "Nymphe". From October 1928 he was Commander of the Fourth Torpedo Boat "Half Flotilla". Later he joined the staff of the Naval Station in Wilhelmshafen where he remained until the fall of 1934. In the fall of 1934 he was put in command of the cruiser "Emden", a training ship which went on a world cruise through Africa, India, and back through the Mediterranean, returning in the summer of 1935.

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From 1935 he was in charge of submarine training of the new German U-boat fleet, which post he held until the beginning of the war.

When the war started he was put in charge of operations of submarines and at the same time in charge of training for U-boat crews at home until 1 February 1943, at which date he was made Supreme Commander of the Navy. He was promoted to Rear Admiral, October 1939; Vice Admiral, September 1940; Admiral, March 1942; and Great Admiral, February 1943; May 1945 was appointed by Hitler to be his successor.

While he was in charge of submarine operations his responsibility was limited to U-boat operating in the Atlantic Ocean. Those U-boats operating in the Mediterranean were under Admiral Kreisch, who was later replaced by Captain Hartmann. U-boats operating in the Arctic Ocean were under Captain Peters who was succeeded by Commander Suhre. Any boats operating in the Baltic were under the direction of the Commanding Admiral of that area. All these Commanders were directly responsible to him when he became Supreme Naval Commander in February 1943 for the reason that after he became Supreme Commander he still maintained personal control over submarine operations in the Atlantic and as Supreme Commander of the Navy, all the operations were under his direction.

RELATIONSHIP TO HITLER AND MEETINGS WITH HIM.

The defendant testifies that he met Hitler for the first time in October 1934 prior to leaving on a world cruise with the "Emden". On return from the cruise in 1935 he again reported to Hitler. In 1936 he saw Hitler in connection with the submarine maneuvers. In January 1938 he was invited to a large dinner given by Hitler in the Chancellory in honor of the Generals and Admirals. He again saw Hitler at Wilhelmshafen in September 1939. He reported to Hitler in the Fall of 1940, near Paris, on submarine warfare. In 1941 he saw Hitler once in September at a conference with Admiral Raeder concerning the attacks of American destroyers on German U-boats. During the year 1942 he saw Hitler twice, in May and September. Both visits were made in connection with reports in line of duty dealing with submarine warfare on a large scale. After becoming Supreme Commander of the Navy, he conferred with Hitler on naval matters every two or three weeks, and he was frequently present at Hitler's luncheon parties. The luncheon invitations ceased after the attempt on Hitler's life 20 July 1944 and after this date he only saw him at official military conferences whenever he was present at headquarters, with one exception; on 1 January 1945 he attended a luncheon for all visiting Ministers and Generals given by Hitler. At this luncheon General Rundstedt was also present.

The conversation during the luncheon did not deal with military matters but they were purely after-dinner discussions such as music and art. (See statements of 11 and 12 September 1945).

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PARTICIPATION TO POLITICAL AND STRATEGICAL DECISIONS

Doenitz testified that he took no part in political decisions, with one exception, in September 1941 he attended a conference with Hitler together with Great Admiral Raeder concerning the attacks by the American destroyers on German U-boats. At that conference Raeder favored attacking American destroyers and Hitler asked Doenitz what he thought this action would bring about. To this he replied, "The danger is too great" and after the conference the standing orders that no attacks be made by German submarines on American destroyers were kept unchanged. (Pages 5 and 6, Interrogation 2 October 1945)

Doenitz testified that directives concerning the disposition of the submarines came direct from OKM and he concerned himself only with their execution. (See Page 11, Interrogation 11 September 1945; Page 4, Interrogation 2 October 1945)

RELATION WITH SS AND SHO

Doenitz testified that the SS had no relations with the Navy. Concerning the incorporation of SHO people into the Navy with authority equal to that of commanders and captains. Doenitz testified that this was something which originated from the Army and Hitler ordered it but he opposed it and told Hitler and Keitel "You do this on my dead body". (See Pages 12 and 13, Interrogation 22 October 1945).

NAVAL PROGRAM PRIOR TO 1939

Doenitz testified that Hitler did not favor U-boat Program and, the German Naval Program, as planned prior to 1939, advocated the construction of heavy ships, such as the "Tirpitz" and that at the outbreak of the war, the Germans had only between twenty and thirty subs. The entire program had to be changed, and in September 1939 the production of submarines was stepped up from two per month to twenty or thirty per month. Prior to 1939 Raeder allowed Doenitz certain discretion on what type of U-boats should be constructed. (See Page 10, Interrogation 11 September 1945).

HITLER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD WAR IN THE WEST

Doenitz testified that he was certain that Hitler had no intention to extend the war to the West for the following reasons: (See Page 15, Interrogation 22 October 1945)

- (1) At the beginning of the war in 1939, Hitler ordered the Navy not to attack French shipping or stop them.
- (2) They were ordered not to stop or attack any British passenger ships or any ship on a convoy. (See Pages 10 and 11, Interrogation 11 September 1945).
- (3) Before 1 September 1939 the entire German Navy Program was changed, with the result that only those heavy ships which were in the state of completion could be finished. All others had to be scrapped and the submarine construction stepped up.

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- (4) On 22 July 1939, Raeder visited Doenitz and all his officers and after having witnessed the submarine attacks during the exercises, he told all the officers no war will come. The following morning Doenitz asked for leave and obtained it, but in the middle of August he was called back by telephone and was ordered to send submarines in the Atlantic and the Craft Spee and the Deutschland. (See Page 16, Interrogation 22 October 1945)

THE SINKING OF THE AMERICAN VESSEL "ROBIN MOOR"

When questioned concerning the sinking of the American vessel "Robin Moor" on 21 May 1941, Doenitz testified that the sinking was due to a mistake in identify made by the U-boat commander and pointed out that the attack was made at dawn. In support of his statement concerning this mistake Doenitz stated that human errors must be anticipated especially in the light of the 5 1/2 years of submarine warfare where four similar incidents took place; two against Spanish ships and two against American ships. In support of his answer, under direct interrogation, Doenitz submitted two written statements, dated 18 September 1945 and 21 September 1945, respectively, explaining the cause of the sinking and the action taken against the commander of the submarine plus subsequent orders issued to all sub-commanders directing that future incidents of this type be avoided. From the investigation made concerning the sinking, he found that Captain Metzger had acted against orders but had not intentionally made the attack. (See Pages 3,5 and 7, Interrogation 18 September 1945; signed statements of 18 and 21 September 1945) Under Hitler policy U-boats were not to interfere with American destroyers.

ORDER OF 17 SEPTEMBER 1942 AND DIARY ENTRY OF THE SAME DATE
REFERRED TO AS (L - 189)

Doenitz was questioned concerning the issuance of an order on 17 September 1942 directing submarine commanders to disregard survivors of torpedoed vessels and to think of their own safety first because primitive demands of warfare require the destruction of the merchant ships and their crews and that the safety of the submarines was paramount. Doenitz made an extreme effort to justify the issuance of this order and in support of his testimony given under direct interrogation he submitted a written statement dated 7 October 1945 which should be read in connection with the testimony given on 6 October 1945 p.m. The defendant states that the radio order of 17 September 1942 was issued as the result of the situation created by the American Air Force which was attacking German submarines engaged in rescuing survivors of the steamship "Laconia" and with survivors on deck making it impossible for them to dive. (See Page 3, Interrogation 4 October 1945). During the rescue operation he received several messages from the U-boats on the scene describing the seriousness of the situation concerning their safety due to continuous attack by the American Air Force and Kaltenstein sent a message requesting that the entire area be declared neutral. All the messages received were

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referred to Raeder and this particular request that the area should be declared neutral was phoned in by Doenitz to Raeder who replied that it was impossible. Hitler, at the same time, insisted that the submarines be saved. The situation reached the point where one U-boat was lost, one severely damaged, the survivors' safety endangered by the aerial attacks, and other submarines who had left their battle station to come to the rescue against orders were also subject to being sunk. He therefore sent the radio message that the subs should dive and the survivors should be put on rafts, and, at the same time, he was ordering the French cruiser "Laguer", who was then at Dakar, to proceed to the scene to pick up survivors. The French cruiser arrived four days later. (See Page 10, Interrogation 6 October 1945).

Doenitz testified that this order was a general order but meant only for the submarines near the "Laconia". (See Page 6, Interrogation 6 October 1945) He further testified that this could not be a standing order to all submarines because two months later he issued a further order that U-boats were to remain submerged during the day. He further stated that if Raeder had declared the area neutral, he would not have issued this order.

With respect to the extract of the entry from BDU diary described as D-2 and relating to the above message which stated that the order issued contradicted any "primitive law of warfare", he admitted that the entry was an unfortunate notation that he was responsible for it but it did not correctly represent the situation.

He also testified that he consulted Captain Goth and Captain Hessler concerning the situation and they did say that the telegram was ambiguous and may be misinterpreted. (See Page 10, Interrogation 6 October 1945) However, at that time, he was concerned with the safety of the submarines and could not anticipate that at this date he would have to discuss this matter with American officers. (Statements dated 10 October 1945 and 19 October 1945)

CAPTAIN ECK

When the defendant was interrogated concerning the machine-gunning by Captain Eck of survivors, he stated that he did not know anything about this. In fact, he did not even know he was prisoner of war (See Page 7 and 8, Interrogation 4 October 1945) and on Page 4 of his statement of 7 October 1945 referring to the same officer and the incident, he stated that he condemned it to the utmost and regretted it deeply and added "I believe this is the spot (black mark) in the 5 ½ years' fighting of my U-boats, the behavior of Captain Eck cannot find any spot in the given order."

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UNRESTRICTED SUBMARINE WARFARE

The Defendant testified that the unrestricted submarine warfare started in October 1939 after England announced all ships that had been armed and the convoy system begun. He further testified that he started the "Wolf Pack" tactics in 1940 as the result of experience gained from observations made on maneuvers in which German cruisers were subject to attacks by more than one U-boat. (See Pages 13,14, and 16, Interrogation 11 September 1945).

FUNDS FROM PARTY FOR SUBMARINE EXPERIMENTS

When Doenitz was questioned concerning an allegation that he had received funds from the Nazi Party in 1934-1936 for submarine experiments, he flatly denied the allegation stating that money used for submarine experiments was obtained from the Naval High Command. He also testified that he had no recollection of the use of submarines to land weather reporting technicians in southern Ireland, stating that it was his belief that such had not been done. When questioned concerning the disposition of the German Submarine Fleet around England on 26 August 1939 just prior to the war, he stated that it was done on orders of a "careful" High Command. (See Pages 11, 12, 16, 17, Interrogation 4 October 1945)

Doenitz was shown a document pertaining to naval warfare against Great Britain (L-184). He did not identify this document, stating that it was prepared by the Naval War Staff and that he had not seen it prior to the interrogation.

INDICTMENT

On 24 October 1945 the defendant requested an opportunity to talk to the Interrogating Officer and when the meeting took place he spoke concerning his position under the charges brought against him in the indictment. He denied that he had participated in the preparation for the war under count one. He stated that he was a young officer at that time and unknown; that he did not meet the Fuehrer until the fall of 1934; that he only got the "Flotilla" wedding on 1 October 1935 and that before he was with the cruiser "Ende" abroad training cadets in the Indian Ocean, and before the war he was on leave. (See pages 3 and 4) As to the conspiracy charges as pointed out in count one and two, he states that it would be correct if it said "He did not take part" (page 5). In support of his contention that he did not take part in war plans and particularly with reference to the photostatic copy of a plan for Norway which was presumably prepared in his office October 1939, he claims as witnesses all the officers in the Seekriegsleitung and OKW who were at that time charged with planning. (p.5 - See also pages 17 and 18, Interrogation 22 October 1945)

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Concerning the charges under count three, he points out that throughout the indictment there are only crimes committed on land and not a single crime on the high seas (p.6). Then he goes further and again touches on the order of 17 September 1942 dealing with life saving and states that the German U-boat, due to our superiority in the air and our constant surveillance, could no longer engage in life saving from 1942 on and that a prerequisite for life saving is that the attacking warship must be in a position to do so (p.6). He further pointed out that during the war neither the English nor the American Admiralty has charged him with having committed any crimes on the high seas and that he heard the case of Eck only from the interrogation (p.7).

REASONS FOR REPLACING RAEDER AND FOR HIS APPOINTMENT TO SUCCEED HITLER

Doenitz testified that in 1943 Great Admiral Raeder had misunderstanding with Hitler because he refused to scrap the remaining heavy ships. After that he was appointed Raeder's successor and fourteen days after his appointment he himself had to make the same recommendation to Hitler that the heavy ships be retained. (See Pages 17 and 18, Interrogation 11 September 1945)

He believes that he was appointed successor to Hitler because at that time Hitler had a misunderstanding with Reich Marshall Goering and had him arrested; that he was the senior high ranking officer; and that a politician could not be appointed to surrender the armed forces. He describes all his meetings with Hitler as being always on the courteous basis and that he was always referred to by Hitler by his title and rank whereas the others were called by their last name. (See Pages 19 and 20, Interrogation 11 September 1945)

RE: VIOLATION OF PRIZE LAW

Doenitz submitted a signed statement dated 24 October 1945, offering legal reasons why his order of 17 September 1942 to U-boat Commanders did not violate the Prize Law.

DENIALS AND ADMISSIONS

Doenitz denies (1) that he took any part to political conferences (See Page 3, 28 September 1945; pages 3, 2 October 1945) (2) that political persons took part in military conferences except that Himmler talked about Waffen-SS (See page 5, 28 September 1945) (3) had nothing to do with occupation in the East (See page 4, 28 September 1945) (4) knew unofficially existence of concentration camps but had nothing to do with them (See pages 6 and 10, 28 September 1945) (5) only contact with Kaltenbrunner was in July 1944 concerning arrest of some officers in connection with attempt on Hitler's life (See Pages 7,8, 28 September 1945) (6) did not issue order prohibiting U-boats from rescuing crews of sunken ships, but due to bombing by enemy air force security of boat

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must take preference to rescuing (See pages 7 and 10, 2 October 1945; page 3, 4 October 1945) (7) that any of his directives violated rules of naval warfare (See pages 4 and 5, 2 October 1945) (8) that U-boat log book should not show violations of international law, (See pages 7 and 8, 2 October 1945), (9) denies that order of 17 September 1942 concerning life saving was meant as a general order (See pages 6 and 10, 4 October 1945) (10) denies knowledge of machine gunning of survivors by Captain Eck (See page 7, 4 October 1945) (11) denies knowledge and purpose of plan on invasion of Norway, except that it was prepared in his office on demand from OKM (See pages 14 and 15, 4 October 1945) (12) denies transporting technicians to Ireland (See Page 17, 4 October 1945) (13) says U-boats had orders to transmit all matters with political aspects by special code, i.e. "Robin Moor" case (See page 8, 2 October 1945), had only four similar incidents - 2 Spanish and 2 American (See page 9, 2 October 1945) (14) admits transportation of agents to Spitzbergen, Greenland, the U.S., and possibly South America (See page 16, 4 October 1945).

SIGNED STATEMENT OF 30 September 1945

In this signed statement of 30 September 1945 which is to be read in connection with interrogation of 28 September 1945, Doenitz explains his relationship to Hitler and the basis for his faithfulness and respectful obedience to him.