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

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of KEITEL, Wilhelm

By: Mr. T.J. Dodd, 29 August 1945, P.M., Nurnberg

PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IMPLICATED, AND SUBJECTS

1. Keitel, Wilhelm
 - a. Requirements of the Wehrmacht submitted to OKW and Secretary of Ammunition (1-3)
 - (1) Responsibility for Distribution of Armaments (p.12)
 - b. OKW and Secretary of Ammunition--monthly reports of armaments available (12)
 - c. Necessity of foreign raw materials for armaments (7).
2. Hitler
 - a. Approval of Requirements of the Wehrmacht during latter part of war (p 1).
 - b. Receipt of monthly reports by OKW concerning losses (12)
3. Speer
 - a. Responsibility as Head of Ministry of Production and Armaments (6)
4. Gen. Thomas
 - a. Responsibilities as Head of Office for Military Industries (before establishment of Ministry for Ammunition) (7)

DISTRIBUTION OF ARMAMENT

The three branches of the Wehrmacht calculated their respective needs for armament and submitted their requirements to the Secretary of Ammunition and to OKW. During the last part of the war, all armament requirements were submitted to Hitler and from there passed on to Keitel and to the office concerned. The OKW made the distribution when armament became scarcer after the fall of 1943 (p 1).

Hitler got monthly reports concerning losses in men, horses, and material. The reports were combined by the OKW. The Secretary of Ammunition also made a monthly report concerning the amount of armament available which Keitel had to distribute (p 12).

In calculating the respective needs, losses and reserves were taken into account. Keitel also admits that the requirements for a definite action, such as the Ardennes Offensive, were likewise taken into account and prepared several months in advance (p 2, 3).

In distributing armament, special reservations were made for special action (p 3). The demands made by the various branches of the Wehrmacht could not always be filled; in that case a certain percentage of the actual demand was distributed (p 3). Keitel asserts that it never happened that a military operational plan had to be altered because of insufficient armament production, with the possible exception of the Air Force about which he is not informed (p 4).

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Keitel admits that SS Divisions and special troops of the Hermann Goering Division were issued better weapons (special parachute rifles produced only in small quantities) but doubts that, in general, the heads of the various Wehrmacht branches were able to use their influence to obtain better equipment. (p 7)

ORGANIZATION OF ARMAMENT PRODUCTION.

Keitel stated that the Germans entered the war on the basis of quality production and ended with a system of mass production of war materials. The Ministry of Production and Armament under Speer was in charge of execution of production programs and of exploiting manpower, raw materials, and industrial capacity for this purpose. The OKW and Speer worked closely together since Speer preferred to work with Keitel rather than to have to deal with the heads of the several branches of the service. During the last year of the war textile and leather production heretofore organized for the Army Quartermaster Office was to be subordinated to Speer, but Keitel interfered and demanded the necessary quantities for the Armed Forces (6).

"It was tried to convert civilian producers into producers for armament but it never became practicable" (p6).

Before the establishment of a Ministry for Ammunition, there was an office for military industries in the OKW, headed by General Thomas who "had maneuvers with his armament inspectors. The factories never knew what Thomas was doing as the maneuvers never went that far". (p 7)

The scarce articles in the German War Economy were wolfram, nickel, manganese, and hard steel.

German war strategy was influenced by the necessity of obtaining or maintaining sources of foreign raw materials required for war production. This was particularly true with reference to strategy in the Balkans, southern Russia, and in Finland. (p 7).