

T O P S E C R E T

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SEVENTH ARMY INTERROGATION CENTER  
APO 758 US ARMY

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If the information contained in this report is required for further distribution, it should be so paraphrased that no mention is made of the prisoners' names or of the methods by which the information has been obtained.

The following are the names and secret numbers of the prisoners mentioned in this report:

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank, Position</u>	<u>Secret No</u>
GUDERIAN, Heinz	GENOBST (Col Gen) FUEHRERRESERVE (Officers Pool). Formerly Chief of Staff German Ground Forces and Inspector General of Armored Units.	45/1559
VON GEYR, Leo	GEN D PZTRUPPE (Lt Gen), Inspector of Armored units, formerly German Mil Attaché in LONDON.	45/1562
HAUSSER, Paul	OBSTGRUF (Col Gen of WAFFEN SS), ex-CG, Army Group "G".	45/1561

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T O P S E C R E T

T O P S E C R E T

Ref No SAIC/X/6  
28 May 45

I. THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN

GUDERIAN: Everything went well at the start. After the fall of SMOLENSK our high command was faced with the same choice of decisions as NAPOLEON in 1812: Should I first go to MOSCOW, or should I first conquer the UKRAINE and occupy Russia's national granary,..... or should I go to conquer LENINGRAD in order to get the Baltic Sea under my control. This problem had been considered earlier, because everyone knew that such a decision would have to be made sometime. Even before this campaign the FUEHRER had decided to take LENINGRAD first, in order to have the entire Baltic Sea under his control, and thus establish a naval base supporting the German left flank. At the time when our troops stood at the gates of LENINGRAD, and when the drive was held up at KIEV, on our right flank, he suddenly changed his mind. He abandoned the idea to take LENINGRAD first--an attempt which could have succeeded. Nor did he attempt to take MOSCOW as NAPOLEON had done--in spite of our firm conviction that MOSCOW could be taken. In fact, I had already given orders for an attack on MOSCOW for 15 Aug with my PANZER Army. Instead he decided, after weeks of thought, to conquer the UKRAINE first. Thus, on 25 Aug, I had to head back in a southwesterly direction toward KIEV, instead of being allowed to start my drive toward MOSCOW. Well, at least the capture of KIEV resulted in the isolation and surrender of an army group. But it set us back 4 weeks in our advance toward MOSCOW. It got us into the muddy season, where the mud made traffic on ordinary roads impossible, and retarded it very much even on hard-surfaced roads. It was winter before it got too cold. You mustn't underestimate MOSCOW's importance. MOSCOW is not only the capital of Russia, but considering the conditions of 1941, it was the hub of Russia's communication system. All the connections between North and South which were still usable, all double-track railroad line, all the main telegraph and telephone lines, all canals and navigable rivers,...everything passed through MOSCOW. Whoever controlled MOSCOW also controlled the political affairs, a powerful armament industry, and a traffic and communications center of that nation, and could split Russia into two parts. I personally presented this case to the FUEHRER on the night of 23 Aug 1941. Then he was still undecided. Later the order was given to take the UKRAINE. I was called to him to present my plan for the attack on MOSCOW once again. And once again I tried to change his mind. At that time he still could control himself sufficiently to listen to me and let me finish my story. Once more I pictured the vital importance of MOSCOW to us and explained to him, that if we could capture MOSCOW in the early fall toward the end of September, we could cut Russia in two parts. And then we could still decide whether to occupy the Southern or the Northern half first. That was the purely military angle of the affair. Now let us consider the political angle, which was equally important. It was believed that the STALIN regime would break down politically. But in order to bring this regime to a collapse it was necessary to occupy MOSCOW. We should have pursued a policy of convincing the Russian people that they would get a better deal if they cooperated with us. We should not have said, as we did: "We shall cut Russia into small pieces. We shall divide it and make a German colony out of it." Thus the Russians, even those who were against STALIN, the White Russians, said: "No, we won't have that." This was our great political error. The decision to take the UKRAINE first, which resulted in the unsuccessful winter campaign against MOSCOW, and the misguided policy toward the Russian people--these two were the reasons why we did not find the necessary support among

T O P S E C R E T

the population, nor the military strength to finish this campaign as quickly as possible. And this was so essential, because there still was an undefeated enemy in the West. On top of everything, Japan and America came to grips, and we thought we might have to enter that conflict too. So we issued a new declaration of war, which added America to the side of our enemies. I don't know the reasons for this last decision. But I was at the front, commanding my army, and thus couldn't familiarize myself with every detail.

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(Re: Why KIEV was taken first and not MOSCOW)

GUD: I conferred with the FUEHRER twice about this question; once on 3 Aug and once on 23 Aug. At that time the general staff, too, was in favor of attacking MOSCOW first.

GEYR: When the PANZER Army GUDERIAN finally did attack, we had a temperature of 35 deg (C) below and an icy wind..... At that time the only way to employ armored divisions was to gather the tanks of a number of different divisions. That shows how few tanks we had left. There was no time for repairs, nor did we have the necessary equipment and spare parts. My own division, which I had led up to that campaign, was reduced to 12 tanks at MOSCOW.

INTERROGATING OFFICER: How high do you estimate the casualties at that time?

GUD: During the winter campaign of 1941 they were not too high. Our principal losses were caused through the cold. But to be honest, our casualties weren't abnormally high until we came to STALINGRAD. Those were our first catastrophic losses. Then we had these terrific envelopments. We had some 300,000 casualties there. From then on, with these continued envelopments of large units, we suffered our first irreplaceable losses. That was also where the German soldier's morale started its downward slide. There he lost his sense of invincibility. Our men took part in practically every attack, without complaint. But in this final campaign we no longer could attack. None of our attacks succeeded. And before that, not even our most difficult attacks failed.

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(Re: Count VON SCHULENBURG)

GUD: He was a native of MOSCOW, went to school there, and was said to be exceedingly well acquainted with the country. From a military point of view, he was one of the best authorities on Russian tactics, and in addition to that he had very good connections in Russian military circles. I knew that for a certainty. He operated just like a Russian. The Russians were more open and more friendly toward him than they were toward most foreigners. Thus we always were well informed. Nobody can say that his reports were incorrect, but no one would believe them.

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GUD: If fewer of our outstanding strategists had been dismissed in 1943 and at the end of 1941, we would have fought an entirely different war. I myself, was relieved of my command on the basis of a false report which a senior general had made about me. In Jan 1942, after returning from Russia, I demanded an investigation by a military court. It was my intention to have the facts straightened out. My

T O P S E C R E T

Ref No SAIC/X/6  
28 May 45

request was not granted. In the case of another general, an investigation was also refused. One general filed a suit, which, however, was not carried through. In the following spring a law was passed which suspended the regular courts. Thus the dictatorship was firmly entrenched in the army. From then on it was impossible to file a suit, or to demand a trial. Later, when the law was intensified, it even became impossible to resign. My predecessor as Chief of the General Staff handed in his resignation five times, but it was never accepted. When I was assigned to the General Staff without being consulted about the assignment, I was received with these words: "I do not want you to start out by tendering your resignation. It wouldn't be granted anyway. It is up to me (HITLER) whether you stay in your office or not--your wishes are of no consequence. I alone am responsible for what happens--not you!"

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II. THE INVASION

IO: There is a sharp difference between the tank battles on the Eastern front, and those of the Western front. Those in the EAST were always on a larger scale.

GEYR: That is just what we wanted. We wanted to spare our tanks, in order to be able to engage the Americans and the English in a real fight where we could put our experiences of the Eastern front to good use. I was of a different opinion than ROMMEL. I expected your landing to be successful. The Anglo-Saxon world had prepared itself for a landing--and we could not stop the guns of the Anglo-American fleet and its aircover with merely a few mines. The troops would simply walk ashore. There was our one chance to engage the Allies in a real tank battle, while PATTON was still assembling his units. It would have been a boon to my old days, if I had another chance to fight with the divisions I had trained myself. But fate wouldn't have it so....ROMMEL's armored divisions were largely dispersed, and under constant AT fire.

IO: But it was almost 2 months after the invasion before PATTON broke through at AVRANCHES.

GEYR: That made our mistake a worse one yet.

IO: He forced you into a very small pocket.

GEYR: That is the reason why I was relieved. After CHERBOURG was taken, everyone realized, including MARSCHALL RUNDSTEDT that the CAEN bridge head would have to be vacated. I proposed that in order to save the armored divisions, so that I could let them get some rest and then commit them on the left flank. Every would-be officer realized that the Americans would come down from CHERBOURG to break through our 7th Army positions. I had the divisions (to stop them) but was not permitted to employ them in this manner.

IO: It was too late, even then. We already had CHERBOURG.

GEYR: There was slim chance of success. But our chances would have been much better at AVRANCHES. At that time you could have been defeated.

IO: I still remember that there were armored divisions opposing us. And we always wondered when they would be committed.

T O P S E C R E T



T O P   S E C R E T

Ref No SAIC/X/6  
28 May 45

GEYR: I can tell you exactly, which divisions I had in store for you. The 17 SS Division and the division "DAS REICH," a first rate outfit, were reserved for the Americans. Then we had saved for you the "LEIBSTANDARTE" and "HITLERJUGEND" divisions and large components of the 21 Armored and the 5 Armored. That was quite a far cry from the overstrained 17 Division. They were a brave new unit, more or less the only ones in the 7 Army sector who fought brilliantly. Besides that there were a few medium-sized armored units which did not belong to the 7 Army sector.

HAUSSER: There was also the LEHR division. It was further back, on the right flank.

GEYR: According to the original plan, the (PANZER) LEHR division was not to be committed. But I could not withdraw it from the vicinity of BAYEUX except by vacating the CAEN bridgehead. That bridgehead was no longer of any use to us anyway. The time for throwing the British from the bridgehead back into the sea had long passed. It was only a matter of holding a few plain fields... Unfortunately I was not to have the pleasure of crossing swords with General PATTON. I really would have enjoyed that. It was beyond me, why we could not have committed a PANZER army in this decisive battle against your forces. Then at least we would have fought on an even basis.

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GEYR: The situation at CAEN was as follows: On the morning after the attack there were but 300 men left with the surviving commander of the division which had been hit on the coast! That is what I found when I took over two days later, having missed the beginning. The remainder of the division had been destroyed by the allied warships of which you know more than I do. But I know how effective they are! And then no one wanted to believe us when we told them how far inland the guns of these warships could fire. They just wouldn't believe our reports. There I had but one reply: "Gentlemen, just stand there for a while and you'll find out how far they can fire."

GUD: In our reports to headquarters these and many other descriptions were simply not believed. That was our hard luck. Our misfortune in this war, one of many, was that the majority of our leading personalities never had any front line commands during the war. When it was reported, for example, that the British fleet was outside CAEN, that they could fire as far as 30 km inland, and that therefore it would be senseless to leave our armored divisions within the range of their artillery--someone would simply maintain that they couldn't fire that far. And they would claim next, that just these last 3 or 5 km would make all the difference. The people who made these statements never took an active part in the war themselves. They got all their experience at sessions around conference tables.

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IO: We could not understand why the invasion in the South of France succeeded so easily. You must have been prepared. After all, you had daily reconnaissance missions over Corsica, North Africa, and Italy. You must have suspected something. And you must have seen our boats which were on reconnaissance patrol along the coast.

T O P   S E C R E T

T O P   S E C R E T

Ref No SAIC/X/6  
28 May 45

GUD: The reason for this lies in our peculiar evaluation of defensive strength, which is indicative of our strategy during the last year of this war. It was purely a strategy of lines (LINEAR-STRATEGIE). Our system of fortifications was arranged along a number of lines. First the WESTWALL, which was only one line for all practical purposes. The line behind it had not been completed. Then the ATLANTIKWALL was built, again nothing but one line. And this was the line in which all available divisions were committed. When it was suggested to assemble our armored divisions behind it, as a mobile reserve which could be used to oppose an attack, regardless of where it may come from, we were told: "No, they would be too late, everything will have to be thrown into the front line." ROMMEL was the main proponent of this strategy.

IO: How is it, that ROMMEL favored such a theory? He should have learned his lesson in North Africa.

GUD: ROMMEL was the principal proponent of this theory in France. Later on KLUGE followed suit. And it was impossible for me to do anything against it. A fortress such as ANTWERP, for example, was not utilized. It had neither ammunition or armament worth mentioning. That was the worst blunder we could possibly have made. And we did not fortify PARIS! Nor did we repair the fortresses VERDUN, EPINAL, BELFORT, METZ, or STRASSBURG so that they could be used. We simply had two lines: the ATLANTIKWALL--which was expected to fail like any other installation of its kind wherever the enemy would attack; and then the WESTWALL--another line which was expected to succumb wherever the enemy would concentrate all his efforts.

H: ROMMEL and I were at odds about this for many months. Then General GUDERIAN himself came to France in order to back me up. But unfortunately it was impossible to achieve anything.

GUD: I was sent to ROMMEL for that particular purpose. But HITLER told me: "I can't tell the Fieldmarshal in command how to run his business."

H: We knew exactly, even before the invasion started, that the ratio of allied armored recon cars (PANZERSPAEHWAGEN) to ours was 15 to 1; tanks, 10 to 1; and planes, 30 or 50 to 1. And in view of this situation our only hope for victory lay with mobile warfare.

GEYR: ROMMEL was a fairly good tactician, but he didn't have the faintest idea about strategy.

GUD: ROMMEL was excellent as high up as a corps commander. He was a first rate divisional commander, because he was courageous, went to the front, and participated in everything. But later, when he commanded an army, using the same technique, he lacked the vision which is essential for such a task. You know, it takes time to learn to lead large and fast armored units. And ROMMEL was not a tank expert. After all, you can't suddenly replace years of schooling by intuition. ROMMEL lost some of his nerve in Africa.

IO: What do you think of our General PATTON?

GUD: General PATTON did what we would have liked to have done and what we used to do. He was very fast, which could already be seen in NORMANDY. I was with the FUEHRER when PATTON's drive started. He said:

T O P   S E C R E T

T O P S E C R E T

Ref No SAIC/X/6  
28 May 45

"That is nothing but the shameless daring of a few tanks. Our Generals never could have done that." I told him that our breaking through the French Maginot line toward the Atlantic coastline had proceeded in the same manner. Our breakthrough to the Swiss border, our closing of the Russian pocket, both were based on the same principle. A tank commander who doesn't lead recklessly can never be successful. Fate gives him just a few minutes or a few hours in which to do his stuff.

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GUD: The coordination of your air force with your armored force in the Lorraine campaign was so outstanding, that I immediately included these American tactics into the curriculum of our armored forces' school at BERGEN.

GEYR: Even earlier than that, in NORMANDY, we could distinctly recognize the American spearheads by the planes which circled over them continually in order to clear the way--and which gave us no end of trouble. Did you know that the TIMES (London Times) gave us the clue as to the length of time for which American armored divisions would not be liable to attack! I saw the article myself where the censor missed it, and I also showed it to MARSCHALL RUNDSTEDT. I knew the TIMES very well, and therefore read it very thoroughly. If you know the British well, you'll know that not one of them reads the first or second page of a paper--including their censors. They begin with the middle. Since I am very much interested in English reading matter, ..... I discovered on the second page--among notices of the pork market and agricultural news--a short report of a meeting between representatives of American armored units, the War Office, and landholders, dealing with negotiations for maneuver areas for American armored divisions. Speeches were made, warning the landowners that they would have to expect quite a lot of damage, since the maneuvers were to be primarily night operations. All this was printed in the TIMES, as well as the fact that the divisions would not arrive before 15 Feb, if I remember the date correctly. We could deduce from that, how long it would take you to get ready for an invasion.

H: Right after the invasion started, and when the FUEHRER complained because we hadn't pushed the Americans into the sea, I explained to him that I couldn't make up with my armored contingents alone for the failure of the Navy and the Air Force.

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### III. MISCELLANY

GEYR: I was deeply grieved when I heard that ALSACE was definitely to become French. ALSACE is German soil--LORRAINE is French. I was hoping that there was the possibility of a compromise using the U.S.A. as an intermediary, and that the decision might be postponed for the time being. After all, no true German can ever forget ALSACE. Twice, Germany treated the Alsations awkwardly. The first time after 1870 and again this time. The point at present is not to incorporate ALSACE into Germany. It would be a better policy, if the Alsations would have a neutral administration like that of the United States for a few years, and were then given the chance to hold a plebiscite..... Therefore it was considered good news, that the

T O P S E C R E T

T O P   S E C R E T

Ref No SAIC/X/6  
28 May 45

SAAR territory was to be under American jurisdiction. No European can be unbiased about these questions, not even the British. The idea of a "Balance of Power" is of prime importance to the Englishman. There was a bitter struggle between EDEN's and SAMUEL HOARE's schools of thought concerning this point. England under her present leadership is not in the position to be as impartial toward European problems as the United States would be. One must look at this realistically. A farreaching and fair solution of Europe's economic problems is possible only under the leadership of the United States.

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(Re: DACHAU)

GUD: We can't understand that. Even our own circle was affected. The chief of my operational department was in DACHAU. I never got any news from him. My wife couldn't utter a word, or she, too, would have been sent to DACHAU. We knew of a few of these dirty affairs in the concentration camps.

IO: Couldn't you go there yourself?

GUD: No, that was impossible.....HITLER was responsible for all the atrocities.

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GEYR: I was with RIBBENTROP for one year as a military attaché. I only stayed with him out of a sense of duty. He was no professional diplomat who knew his business. He had lived in Canada for a while, and thought that the British were just like the Canadians. But they are quite different--you can't compare the two nations. And guided by his ignorance he believed that he understood the English people.

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GUD: In the Summer of '43 and the Fall of '44 our generals explained to our Foreign Minister that a two-front war would be impossible. The front in the East could be held only if the West could be pacified. We would have to be free on one side. I presented these ideas not only to the Foreign Minister, but also to the FUEHRER. It was impossible to get them to consider these questions seriously.

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GUD: During the Polish campaign, the FUEHRER was with me, only 50 meters behind the front line--he was still with me in France--but never in Russia.

IO: He would stay around as long as everything went well, but no longer.

GUD: That was not the reason--he left because he had to fly South. Only a few weeks ago he was still with some divisional headquarters near the ODER. He was not to be blamed himself; the FUEHRER was no coward. But the fault lay with his friends, who kept him more and more in the dark, without themselves knowing anything about warfare. Too bad he didn't follow my advice to join his men. However, his health wasn't up to standard anymore. There actually were some men in his

T O P   S E C R E T



T O P   S E C R E T

Ref No SAIC/X/6  
28 May 45

circle, men of Supreme Headquarters such as JODL, ZEITZLER or BORMANN, who never came anywhere near the front.

GEYR: At least ZEITZLER commanded a Corps at one time.

H: But he never left his headquarters to go forward. He never came closer to the front than his corps headquarters. I remember him from the French campaign with the PANZERGRUPPE KLEIST, where he was my superior. Not once during the entire campaign did he come to my headquarters.

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GUD: I never heard anyone present a viewpoint at the FUEHRER HQ which differed from that of the FUEHRER.

IO: That is not what GOERING told us. He claimed that he had numerous quarrels with HITLER about the employment of the air force.

GUD: That is unquestionably true. They argued at every meeting...but those were onesided arguments.

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*Paul Kubala*  
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Maj, MI,  
Commanding.

T O P   S E C R E T