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

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of KESSELRING, Albert

By: Colonel C. L. Williams, 29 October 1945, a.m.

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Persons and organizations implicated, and subjects

1. KESSELRING

- a. Education and military career (2)
- b. Made Commander-in-Chief South and transferred to Rome November 1941 (2)
- c. Commander of 10th and 14th Army (3)
- d. Vietinghoff acted for Kesselring from October 1944 to January 1945 (3)
- e. Treatment of commandos (4-5)
  - (1) La Spezia incident involving killing of 13 Americans in uniform (5-7)
  - (2) Hitler's order of 18 October 1942 dealing with treatment of commandos (6)
- f. Partisans (7)
  - (1) Extreme measures (8)
  - (2) Action taken by Himmler (10-11)
- g. Order of 16 December 1942 (11)
- h. Visit to Fuehrer Headquarters in East Prussia
- i. Order of 1 May 1944 - re Partisan treatment (11-12)
- j. Order of 18 July 1944 - anti-partisan action (13-14)
- k. Istria (15-16)

2. WOLFF (11)

3. GENERAL WESTPHAL

- a. Chief of Staff CBSW until 10 June 1944 (3)

4. GENERAL ROETTIGER

- a. Succeeded Westphal (3)

5. GENERAL ANTON DOSTLER (7)

6. RANIER

- (a) Responsible for action against Partisans  
(15-16)

7. GLOBOTONIA

- (a) Police and SS Chief in Istria (15-16)

EDUCATION AND MILITARY BACK GROUND

Carrer from 1906 to 1940 (p. 1-2)

End of November 1941, he was named Commander in Chief South, transferred to Rome, Italy.

When Tunisian campaign started, he became Commander in Chief Southwest. He relinquished command of the air forces to von Richthofen, shortly before the invasion of Sicily. Remained in Italy until March 10, 1945, when he was named Commander in Chief West; ( 2-3) during the final days of war, he was C in C South. (1-3)

After the French campaign, he was promoted to rank of Field Marshal (3)

May 14, 1945, was sent to Augsburg, as POW. Subsequently, was moved to Mondorf, then to Wiesbaden, to Oberursel and, finally, to Nuernberg. (3)

General Westphal was his chief of staff in OBS until June 10, 1944; Westphal's successor was General Roettinger, until Kesselring relinquished his command to von Vietinghoff. (3) Says that in the interim period, from Oct. 1944 to mid-January, 1945, he-Kesselring- was in hospital, had a skull fracture; at that time Vietinghoff was the acting Commander in Chief. (3)

The 10th and the armies were under his command. Temporary formations, as for instance the Army of von Zangen and that of Graziani, were also under his command. (3)

Richthofen had to take orders from K. for about one year following Kesselring's assignment there, subsequently they had to cooperate with each other. (3)

If Kesselring issued an order to his command, he did not include the air force under Richthofen if strictly army matters were concerned. The Air Force and the Navy each had a liaison officer at his headquarters. (4)

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Admits the capture by his army of several groups of individuals making commando raids in the rear of his area. Says he had forgotten an order outlining the treatment of enemy commandoes, which had been shown him during an interrogation at Oberursel. Now he remembers it. It came from the OKW, at a time when he was not at all interested in the subject. General his view was that uniformed soldiers had to be treated as soldiers. He never changed this viewpoint.(5)

Refers to his interrogation at Oberursel where he said that the Spezia incident--execution of 13 U.S. soldiers by General Dostler near La Spezia according to Fuehrer's order of Oct. 18, 1942, etc.-- was not known to him.(5) Incidents of that nature would probably not have been reported to him or his headquarters (6).

On being shown the Fuehrer order, October 18, 1942, says he must assume that he received it at the time; that it strikes a familiar chord. Repeats he generally stuck to the view that uniformed soldiers were to be treated as soldiers, and that he passed this view down to his subordinates.(6)

States he uses the term "generally" because he could not be informed of all minor incidents, etc., in his theater (6).

Repeats he has no recollection whatever of the case (execution of 13 U.S. soldiers by General Anton Dostler); thinks it is possible that his policy concerning commandoes had not become known to Dostler, as there was precedent of that nature in his theater until that date (7).

Kesselring states that partisan activities began after the defection of the King of Italy, after the Sicily campaign. As result of incomplete disarmament of Italian divisions in Northern Italy; of the very inefficiently executed demobilization of Italian forces in the Rome area and similar deficiencies, much equipment fell into the hands of people who became partisans.(7)

The partisan bands in the Balkans was the responsibility of the Italian general, Roatta. But, after the Italian defection, when the Germans took over the command in the entire theater, Kesselring's area of responsibility was extended to the areas in which these bands were active (7).

Concedes he knew of one written order by Hitler, that extreme measures were to be applied in the fight against partisans, but says there may have been more. On being shown the order, entitled "Combatting of Partisans", of December 16, 1942, from the Chief of High Command of the Armed Forces,

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particularly directed to the Balkans, he stresses that he had just before stated that one such order was known to him.

At the time of this order, he was traveling in Tunisia, yet such orders must have become known to him in some form, and thus he must assume that he has seen this particular order (8).

Concedes he knows that such an order was issued by the OKW to the forces under its command, but that at that time he had nothing to do with such problems, and for that reason, "all one does is look at such an order and file it." (8)

Admits that he remembers the contents of the order of Dec. 16, 1942 (9).

Kesselring says he visited Fuehrer headquarters in East Prussia on several occasions, cannot say whether he did in May or June, 1944. The fight against partisans was frequently discussed. He was criticized for not having cleaned up the Italian bands. (9)

The fight against partisans not actually in the combat zone were the responsibility of Himmler, who directed the fight through his subordinates in these areas. In the particular case, it would be Obergruppenfuhrer Wolff. (9+10)

Says he never was responsible for the area in the rear of the combat line, called the "Green Line". Yet, since these operations concerned military operations, he had to take some interest in them by conferring with Wolff on these matters. Adds that the cooperation with Wolff was extremely pleasant, etc. (10) Wolff's attitude was extremely sensible, etc. (10)

Denies having been supreme commander of operations against partisans in Italy; was never designated as such. (10)

Finds it difficult to describe the exact set-up in the campaign against Italian partisans. Although Wolff was not his subordinate, he came close to regarding himself as such. Wolff had to submit monthly reports to Himmler, sending information copies to Kesselring. (11)

Concedes that he was G.O.C. in C. of Southwest in Italy, on May 1, 1944. (11)

Claims not to remember at all, at the present time, "An Order governing the responsibility for operations against the partisans in Italy", of May 1, 1944, from Keitel's headquarters and addressed to him, etc. (11-12) Says if it



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was issued, it must have reached him.(12) At the time of issue, he and his forces were involved in heavy fighting in the Rome area, that is why he cannot recall the order.

Says General Westphal, who did all the spadework, should be asked about it. On being pressed for a direct reply, repeats he does not know about it but must assume responsibility. Says he would have to lie if he were to say he knew to have received the order, ect. (13)

On being shown an order of July 18, 1944, signed by himself, in which he assumes the Supreme Command for anti-partisan operations, etc. throughout Italy, and after reading it carefully, admits that the order was issued by his headquarters; and also that he was familiar with the previous order designating him as commander in chief against the partisans in Italy (13-14), dated May 1, 1944.

With regard to Istria, Kesselring says the question was never cleared up satisfactorily. Rainer was commissar in that area, also responsible for the fight against the partisans there. There was much friction resulting from the fact that Rainer was the superior of Globotchnik, police and SS chief of Istria.(15) Both had come from Austria. Rainer had very sound policies in his zone; Globotchnik's activities and experience also are judged favorably by Kesselring.(15-16)