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Copy No....87

The following are the relevant details of the PW mentioned in this report.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Unit</u>
WOLFF	SS Obergruppenfuehrer und General der Waffen-SS	Hoechster SS und Polizeifuehrer ITALIEN.
HUEGEL	SS Stumbannfuehrer	In charge of Abt. VI B.d.S ITALIEN.

If the information contained in this report is required for further distribution, prisoners' names should NOT be mentioned and the text so paraphrased as to give no indication of the methods by which it is obtained.

W.S. Valentine
for (W.S. VALENTINE.)
Lt-Col.
Comd, CSDIC, CMF.

C.S.D.I.C.,
C.M.F.

26 May 45.

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SS Obergruppenfuehrer WOLFF, on the evening of his arrival at CSDIC, CMF, was granted an interview with HUEGEL, with whom he was previously acquainted. In the course of the conversation - virtually a monologue - reproduced below, WOLFF gave an animated and breathless account of the vicissitudes through which he passed during the final stages of the capitulation negotiations in Northern ITALY.

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Personalities mentioned in the text

<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointment</u>
BEELITZ	Colonel. C of S, 10th Army.
DESSLOCH	Col. General. GOC 4th Air Fleet.
DOLLMANN	SS Oberfuehrer. SS LO to C-in-C SOUTH-WEST.
HERR	General. GOC 14th Army.
HOFER Franz	SA Obergruppenfuehrer. Gauleiter of Reichsgau TIROL-VORARLBERG.
LEMELSEN	General. GOC 10th Army.
MENZEL	Major General. C of S to Gen. SCHULZ.
MOLL	Lt. Gen. On staff of 4th Air Fleet.
POHL Ritter von	General. GOC GAF in ITALY.
ROETTIGER	Lt. Gen. C of S, Army Group C.
RUNKEL	Colonel. C of S, 14th Army.
SCHULZ	Major Gen. Successor to VIETINGHOFF as C in C SOUTH-WEST. Formerly GOC 1 Para Div.
SCHWEINITZ von	Lt.Col. Ic/Abwehr, O.B.S.W. Plenipotentiary at the capitulation negotiations.
VIETINGHOFF	Col. General. C in C SOUTH-WEST until shortly before the capitulation in Northern ITALY.
WENNER	SS Obersturmbannfuehrer. Adjutant to SS Obergruppenfuehrer WOLFF and plenipotentiary at the capitulation negotiations.
WESTPHAL	Lt. General. C of S to KESSELRING.

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Conversation held on 18 May 45.

WOLFF : HOFER asked me to go and see him at his estate, and the Archduke of HUNGARY and AUSTRIA - I can't remember his name now - got me a car and I drove over to MERANO. I arrived there at two o'clock completely exhausted. GRAF, SCHIPPENHAUER, ROETTIGER, MOLL from Army Group, then ROLF, HOFER and a Major REICHNITZ (?) a military adjutant, were there. It was a frightful meeting which lasted from two to half past seven - the most depressing thing you can imagine, because not a single practical decision was arrived at and everybody was shaking with fear. HOFER was bitterly disappointed that I did not support all his political demands and that the others seemed quite unmoved by them. He wanted to go on being the leader and feudal lord of the Maria Theresian Reich of his dreams - which, incidentally, was to include BOHEMIA-MORAVIA, SILESIA, BAVARIA, BADEN and WUERTTEMBERG v..

Eventually there was a big row between ROETTIGER and MOLL on one side and HOFER on the other. HOFER made all sorts of demands and said that he was there by order of the FUEHRER, that it was he who shaped the political will of the population, and that the military commanders were only there to enforce the political trends he indicated. Well, his fine hopes were dashed by the rest of us, and he became very despondent.

My representatives, in the meantime, had been given full power to act on my behalf and I told them to take any measures they considered necessary. I gave SCHWEINITZ a kick in the pants and told him not to dare to come back without the signatures I wanted. I thought to myself: we must bring this thing off somehow. We arrived home again at half past seven in the morning and I was so exhausted that I went to sleep for two hours. Then all sorts of other talks went on. At two in the afternoon the partisan leader, a CLN man, who commanded the whole operational zone, came to see me. His name is Dr. DE ANGELIS. I don't know whether you've ever heard of him. Well, to begin with he was very mild and tried the gentle approach, giving in to points here and there and putting his own demands very tentatively and always based on orders he had received from MARK CLARK to take the government more or less into his own hands - or at least to have a share in it. He wanted to post a mixed guard at the town hall and a combined administration, or at least an Italian, in the post of vice president, even if the vice prefect was a German. In short, his conditions were very obscure. Then there were more discussions during the night between half past one and two and I said: "Very well, I am willing to agree. In the first place, because I think it right to choose the way which will avoid further bloodshed. Secondly, I am also willing to receive a representative of MARK CLARK provided he has been given plenary powers, and I shall discuss everything with him whether the terms are generous or not. But the other demands are of such far-reaching political importance that I cannot discuss them". My reason for saying this was partly just that I wanted to teach these partisans to come back the following morning at ten, or at some reasonable time; I had already been conferring with them since two o'clock in the afternoon and I thought that that wasn't the right way to treat a Highest German Police Commander and Army Group Commander - bothering him between half past one and six o'clock in the morning. Apart from everything else, the phone rang every

half hour. Finally Army Group declared that they were in a desperate position and absolutely dependent on the cessation of hostilities. In the meantime, the news from the various Armies had got steadily worse. So I said: "Well and good, if Army Group can no longer hold out for purely military reasons, then I can no longer hesitate; but on the other hand, I want it to be perfectly clear that in that case Army Group will have to bear full responsibility. All right, we'll do it". I was exhausted after everything I had been through and went to sleep, unfortunately without ascertaining first, although I really took it for granted, whether VIETINGHOFF had spoken to HOFER. But he had not done it, and when HOFER heard the news early next morning he felt that he had been tricked by Army Group and got in touch with Field Marshal KESSELRING. KESSELRING was furious and agreed to go and see HOFER on his estate.

HUEGEL : In MUNICH ...

WOLFF : In the meantime, while we had been away, he had become Supreme Commander in Chief for our Army Group and Army Group SOUTH-EAST as well. An appointment which, pleasing as it seemed at first, later had the most catastrophic consequences ...

When I last went to BERLIN I called in on KESSELRING on the way and made our position perfectly clear to him and tried to find out what his attitude would be. He made a very good impression on me and seemed quite ready to fall in with our plans, provided that the thing was done openly, either with the consent of the FUEHRER, or after his death. He didn't want any conflicts, or anything that would mean breaking our oath. Knowing KESSELRING as I do, I was able to see that he would have liked to fall in with our plans, and that he might even have been quite glad if someone took the matter out of his hands; but he himself, both then and afterwards, wanted to keep a clean record. I realised that there might be a way of achieving something. Well, I went on to BERLIN then and got a fairly clear picture of the position. Before I left again I sent DOLLMANN and my other adjutant WIESEL (?) to KESSELRING. I had put WIESEL into the picture first, admittedly only in broad outlines - you know his way, he's a Franconian and they're all like that, very polite, very friendly, very particular about form - not like the Swabians who always like to use brute force. Well, he understood what it was all about, without knowing every detail or even the fact that WENNER and SCHWEINITZ had already gone off with authority to conclude the negotiations. They didn't tell KESSELRING that at all, because he was very nervous of the whole thing and we had no intention of burdening him with all the facts, especially as officially it was not within his province. However, they just hinted at the true state of affairs. Well, when they came back they told me and everybody else that the Field Marshal was highly pleased and thought it marvellous that in the meantime I had had the courage to present all these facts to the FUEHRER, who very seldom learnt the truth about anything that was going on. Well, we all felt that things were going very well indeed, when HOFER got in touch with KESSELRING and poisoned his mind against us by some accusations - I don't know what they were - and amongst other things revealed all the things to him which he had sworn by a solemn oath to keep to himself. He betrayed everything, including the facts that our representatives were on their way with plenary powers to conclude a treaty. Under some pretext of getting KESSELRING to inspect his estate he got him to come down there and again did everything to incite him against us. Unfortunately, the

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Army Group commander, who had always been very much against ROETTIGER, MOLL and SCHWEINITZ, also arrived at HOFER's place, or was summoned there by him, and also helped to put KESSELRING against us. The result was that KESSELRING was infuriated and, a thing he had never done before, without ringing me up or asking me what was happening, he summoned VIETINGHOFF, gave him a tremendous dressing down, and relieved both him and ROETTIGER of their commands. VIETINGHOFF returned immediately with his successor, the infantry general SCHULZ - just a plain, straight-forward soldier, holder of the Oak Leaves with Swords. SCHULZ's Chief of Staff was Major General MENZEL who used to be with the 14th Army. SCHULZ, MENZEL and the sacked VIETINGHOFF returned to headquarters, and there did not appear to be much one could do. We had arranged previously - after we had been isolated and when we realised that we should have to act independently, as the REICH virtually no longer existed and the government could no longer give us support or orders - we had made an arrangement amongst ourselves that if any of us should be replaced by a successor, he would be taken aside, acquainted with the facts and asked whether he would co-operate with us in this matter or not. If not, he was to be very politely but purposefully put on side as long as was necessary to conclude the negotiations. That is what had been decided on, and we had shaken hands on it. What did VIETINGHOFF do? He came back and formally handed over to SCHULZ, and all attempts to keep him to his promises failed, to say: look here, you can't turn your back on us now and refuse to honour the signature of your representative. He disappeared - his courage had given out completely, just as it had done once before when he had also betrayed me, and ROETTIGER and I were left alone with the new Commander in Chief. I now tried very carefully to bring him into the plot. He appreciated the military and political situation very intelligently and even agreed with my estimate of it, but he refused point-blank, as he had been ordered to do by KESSELRING, to take any action whatsoever without KESSELRING's consent. So there we were. KESSELRING did not telephone; I tried to get in touch with him, but although I got through to his headquarters he had me told that he was not available. It was impossible to establish contact with him. So now we had to think what to do next. In the meantime, in the course of this night, WENNER and SCHWEINITZ arrived after a difficult journey. Signals that had been despatched by Field Marshall ALEXANDER saying that they had concluded an honourable armistice and asking whether we would honour the terms, had been undecipherable, so that we had to wait till they finally arrived before we could send our reply. They arrived during the night of the 30th April at about half past twelve, completely exhausted. We made them tell us the whole story and conferred right through the night; and in the morning, between six and half past, we came to the following conclusions:- That it was of no use; SCHULZ wouldn't play VIETINGHOFF had gone off and it was impossible to get hold of him; if the signature of VIETINGHOFF's representative wasn't honoured, then the whole game would be up, the capitulation would fall through, and in that case the last vestige of our own personal reputation with the Anglo-Americans would be gone; all our hopes of a future active part in the reconstruction would be ruined, and the same applied to the political game that was involved; that it would be madness not to conclude the negotiations; and that therefore we would take action. And in the morning - that's to say, half an hour later, when they woke up - SCHULZ and MENZEL would be taken aside and put under arrest. No sooner said than done. They were taken into

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"honourable custody" (Ehrenhaft) till four o'clock in the afternoon and therefore ceased to play any practical part. It wasn't without danger of course. After that had been done we ourselves disconnected our telephones so that Supreme Command would be unable to get in touch with us.

HUEGEL : ROETTIGER was still with you ?

WOLFF : Yes. So far, so good. A troop of officers was patrolling the place to guard SCHULZ. Then NAUMANN (?) raised all sorts of objections and we had to arrest him too. The atmosphere had become very unpleasant and I expected the whole show to collapse at any moment. The night before, when we had come to our decision, Colonels BEELITZ and RUNKEL, Chiefs of Staff of the 10th and 14th Armies, had assured us that their commanders would support us to the end; but suddenly when they heard that we had put SCHULZ under arrest, they decided not to give their support, because, they said, the whole thing was illegal and they could not approve of such an act. Then ROETTIGER broke down, and the whole trio packed up. ROETTIGER was in such a state that I had to hurry down from my quarters to prevent him from blowing out his brains. Then I sat down to lunch with SCHULZ and MENZEL and for two whole hours explained to them what it was all about and what was at stake. I told them that we could not carry on as we were, and asked them whether they didn't want to join us again voluntarily. I told them that this was an opportunity for them to do their duty by their Fatherland and that they had already hinted to me that they did not lack understanding for my plans; that their judgement of our positions was very similar to mine; and whether they would not now join me in presenting these views in the strongest possible form to the Field Marshal. At last I got them so far that they said that they were prepared to acknowledge the honourable motives which had guided my action, although they themselves had been bitterly hurt by it - they had arrived on one day and on the next day they had been put under arrest. After a great deal more talk they at last said: "All right, we are with you again, we shall raise no personal or official objections". SCHULZ is actually a very decent and practical man, and MENZEL also said that he was at my disposal. I said: "Look here, my children, don't let's waste any more time, it's GERMANY that's at stake, and not individuals. You know all these Army Commanders, I don't. Please see this thing through with me. Get in touch with the Commanders and tell them that my orders are to be strictly carried out". They rang them up and a conference of senior commanders was called for 1800 hrs, including General POHL and LOEBITSCHE and myself - that's to say, everybody responsible for this theatre. In the meantime, I got POHL to come, too, and told him that the capitulation terms were already much less favourable because of the delay: firstly, because the Russians had made big advances, secondly, because the English and Americans had advanced, and thirdly because the concentration camp atrocities had become known. POHL was very despondent when he heard all that and said: "Oh, heavens, we really are in a mess. And now you've got us into it, too". I said: "No, POHL, I didn't get you into it, and however difficult this step may be, you have got to admit that it's the only sensible and the only possible way out. Leave it to me". He said: "All right, I'm with you and I'm quite sure that if you let me go to LEMELSEN and let me talk to him, I'll get him over to our side too". In the meantime some of the others had arrived and were arguing one way and the other and I was worried that MENZEL might change his mind again, because two uncertain people who've got to make up each others' minds are hopeless. I said: "Look here, POHL, you've

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been so decent, you won't betray me or stab me in the back, do your very best to get LEMELSEN on to our side". And he was as good as his word. So as soon as we'd released SCHULZ and put him in command again, so that the whole business was above board, HERR gave his support, and LEMELSEN and POHL, too. LOEBITSCH was standing in a corner like a weeping willow and said that the Admiral would never give his consent and no, we shouldn't for heaven's sake force him to do it - all this in his silly, affected way. I let him stand there and treated him as if he didn't exist. Especially as I had the three Army Commanders and POHL on my side. I thought, never mind LOEBITSCH, we've still got SCHULZ. In the meantime all the complaints from the Armies arrived. Some of them had only two guns. The infantry had just about enough ammunition to last them one day, with luck; they didn't even have enough to defend themselves against the partisans in their rear. Then all the gentlemen came to the conclusion that the position of our armies was desperate; that they accepted the arguments put forward by Obergruppenfuehrer WOLFF and guaranteed the honourable acceptance and execution of the terms as they were signed; and that they would issue the necessary orders to the effect that on the following day, at 12 o'clock Greenwich Mean Time the Cease Fire should be sounded. But then SCHULZ said: "All right, this is all very well and good, and I agree fully; I'll see what there is to be done. But without the consent of KESSELRING, no!" We tried to get through to KESSELRING: he wasn't there. Who was there? What are we to do now? Another iron we had had in the fire, with the aid of a middle-man to KESSELRING - BLASGOWITZ (?) - had also failed, because he was too cowardly and clumsy and too interested in his own gain, to have the strength and the courage to get KESSELRING on to our side. And time was passing. It struck eight. We tried again to get through. No good. Half past eight. ALEXANDER had been waiting for our confirmation since 12 o'clock. It was high time to let him know, so that he could give the necessary orders to his tank spearheads and stop them in time. Nothing happened. At a quarter past nine there was a signal from ALEXANDER written in a really very soldierly and tactful form, "I must again ask for an urgent decision whether the signatures are to be honoured or not, as otherwise it will be impossible to hold up my tanks". I sent a signal back: "Will try to let you have decision by ten o'clock". Half past nine. What was I to do? Another signal to ALEXANDER: "Many thanks for tactful reminder. Decision will follow within next hour". It struck ten. In the meantime I'd again tried to get through to KESSELRING at half past nine. With no result. It struck eleven and again ALEXANDER's time limit had been exceeded. We had another discussion and SCHULZ and MENZEL still insisted on having KESSELRING's consent. But then LEMELSEN, HERR, POHL and myself said: "Well, SCHULZ and MENZEL are again shirking the issue, there seems to be no-one who has sufficient guts to make an independent decision even when it is a question of hundreds and thousands of soldiers' lives and of thousands of German families. Therefore we shall make the decision, let them do what they like about it, and KESSELRING too". There was a Major von SPITZ present when we made this decision, he rolled his eyes with fury, he was one of those typical wild General Staff officers. At eleven o'clock, when WESTPHAL had not made good his promise to contact us, my orders were issued. Orders to my 10th Army, orders to my 14th Army, orders to my Air Force, orders to all units of the SS in ITALY: "From to-morrow, twelve o'clock Greenwich Mean Time, fourteen hours Italian time: armistice. Further orders will follow". The major's eyes bulged out of his head. So did SCHULZ's.

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At a quarter past eleven the reply telegram was sent to General ALEXANDER. At half past eleven we were still waiting for word from KESSELRING - we were all completely finished by then - it was so pitiful to witness this tragedy of German obedience and the lack of moral courage and the fear of responsibility.

Well, then fate herself came to our help with the news of the FUEHRER's death. DOENITZ was to be his successor. Before we had sent the telegram to ALEXANDER at about half past nine, when I had been through to WESTPHAL at his headquarters, I had implored him, in the presence of two other generals, to realise that the situation was desperate and that so many things were at stake. I had told him that this was the last chance; but that neither he, nor General SCHULZ, nor the others, were in a position, or were prepared and willing to take the responsibility". There are four Army commanders standing here", I said, "who demand that you give one of us the power to do what is necessary. Not one of us has any personal ambition, none of us has the intention of seeking the protection of the enemy, we are prepared to defend our action and will submit to the Field Marshal's judgement. But this matter must be carried through to the end. The decision must be made now, otherwise it will be too late and the fight will go on. Well, then at about a quarter past eleven came the news of the FUEHRER's death. We breathed a sigh of relief. You know, there were tears in our eyes, because after all the difficulties we had been through and all the wrestling we had had to do with so many people, fate had been kind to us and, according to the agreement I had reached with KESSELRING when I had last seen him, had removed the last obstacle. Now we could go straight ahead. But what happened? A message from KESSELRING's headquarters: "No, it's out of the question. DOENITZ is the FUEHRER's successor, KESSELRING has put himself under his command, the fight goes on". As SCHULZ, in spite of this new development still did not want to support our decision, we became rather more pressing with him, and suddenly, because he felt himself cornered, he became very angry, and showed us the door. "Gentlemen", he said, "up to now I have used a comradely tone, I have given my conditional consent to your decision, I have tried to make the best of a bad bargain. But don't forget the scandalous way in which I was treated this morning and that in spite of it I gave you my moral support. I was ready to fall in with your ideas. But I am bound to obedience. The Field Marshal especially told me that he trusted me and I cannot abuse his trust. I cannot and may not, you have got to understand that. How dare you come here and bribe me and bring pressure to bear on me. Now get out of here, I'm tired of this, do you understand? I'm still the Supreme Commander in this place. If you choose to go your own way, well and good; but then it's on your own responsibility; and for God's sake don't expect me to do the same". And then he showed us out. We lost our temper and told him to go to hell and proceeded to get out ourselves. In the meantime, the passage leading from the house to the tunnel was absolutely swarming with people, officers were standing guard everywhere and were preparing to barricade off the tunnel and take everybody inside - that's to say, us as well - prisoner. Evidently SCHULZ had betrayed the fact that we had already given orders for the cease fire. Now the question was how to get out. We got out through the back and side doors, which I happened to know. All my men and the others who had supported me got out somehow and we returned to my castle, ROETTIGER and his secretary, who had walked up in the rain without hat and coat, eventually arrived too, completely soaked. In the meantime an order had been given for POEL's arrest.

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DESSLACH, the Col. General of the 6th (?) Air Fleet, had telephoned POHL's G1 and ordered him to arrest his general. Fortunately the G1 was a very decent chap and did nothing of the sort. POHL came up to my castle and put himself under my protection, and later he and LEMELSEN drove off to the latter's headquarters. Then it became apparent that new orders were out for the arrest of VIETINGHOFF, ROETTIGER and General KAEMPF, the signals officer who had disconnected our communications, and MOLL. When we realised that we were all to be arrested we went indoors and I ordered my tanks and my assault troops to assemble to defend me. The Army Commanders, who had really intended to spend the night with me, drove off in a great hurry to get back to their armies, under whose protection they would feel more safe. I was implored to escape as well, everybody told me it was not safe to remain so close to the paratroops, who by calling in their units could assemble a whole division in that area. I had no chances against them with my seven tanks and two hundred and fifty men, I should only get them shot to pieces, and I should have to escape. But I wanted to stay. Well, then, at two o'clock, as all the excitement was mounting to fever pitch and our emergency luggage was standing in the hall ready and packed for flight - into the middle of all that, came a phone call from KESSELRING. This conversation lasted for two whole hours during which I implored KESSELRING again and again to see reason and once more explained the whole position to him. All to no avail. KESSELRING was furious and stormed at me "How dare you do anything of the sort, you are not only tearing my own Army Group to pieces, but owing to this wilful and egoistic action on the part of Army Group SOUTH-WEST, which just decides to give up the fight, you are tearing all my defensive plans to pieces and causing the whole carefully built up edifice to totter". I said: Three times in these past months I have offered my help, and that of my Armies, to you and to the REICH, and if you had made use of this offer a lot of human blood need not have flowed and a great deal of destruction would have been avoided. Here in ITALY things cannot go on any longer. We bear the responsibility for our actions, and I can assure you that it was in your interests as well. I could even, if you gave me your permission, get the same terms of surrender for Army Groups G and SOUTH-EAST. I need only send out a signal and the thing is done. And moreover, you seem to have completely forgotten that I kept you in the picture from the very beginning and told you exactly what our position was, although I had no reason for doing so. You knew what was at stake, and now you stab us in the back by removing VIETINGHOFF. It's out of the question that the agreements we have made should not be honoured; we have taken action and we are ready to stand by it and we are at the same time willing to submit to your judgement later. But first this thing has got to be carried through to the end. I am convinced history will vindicate us. Also, I don't think you ought to forget that so far you have always done well to follow my advice. You will do well to do so again this time. You don't seem to realise what is at stake". Then he asked me "Is the result of the capitulation that you are to return to the REICH, and immediately, together with Anglo-American units, continue the fight against RUSSIA?" I said: "Field Marshal, I don't know whether your thoughts are running away with you, but as far as that thought is concerned, it's entirely out of the question. I have at least been able to conclude the negotiations under the best conditions possible with the Anglo-Americans - admittedly in the presence of a Russian, but he simply stood there and neither signed, nor spoke

a single word. I have managed to save a lot of my men; they won't go to SIBERIA or to the BALKANS or to NORTH AFRICA or heaven knows where else; and I could probably do the same for many of the others. The question is whether you will be able to answer to history or to our enemies for continuing the fight after our lines have collapsed. Particularly now that the death of the FUEHRER has become known and you, too, are released from your oath, it is your duty to refuse to transfer this oath to any other person. No oath of personal loyalty is transferable, anyway. I am not in the least interested in Herr DOENITZ. I feel in no way bound to obedience to Herr DOENITZ. Herr DOENITZ means less than nothing to me. Whoever goes on fighting now is the greatest of war criminals; to go on is irresponsibility itself. It is a highly debatable question whether the FUEHRER's final battle had to be fought in BERLIN, and whether the whole population, the women and the innocent children, had to be sacrificed for this piece of cheap heroism - whether it was justifiable that the whole town should have been destroyed. It is a matter for history to judge whether it would not have been possible for him to go fifty kilometres to the East or to the West and to fight and fall there, or whether it had to be BERLIN. But even if you believe that he was justified, even if you didn't feel that his action there released you from your oath - you are released now by his death. And if you don't act now, then I want you to realise that you are one of the biggest and worst war criminals of all time. That is what I have to tell you". Well, that seemed to put the wind up him at last. It lasted for two hours and I was absolutely finished. At times WENNER had had to speak for me, because it was a frightfully bad connection, and all the more difficult to hear anything because MENZEL and SCHULZ, and every single telephone exchange were listening in to this highly interesting conversation and refused to get off the line. Well, half an hour later SCHULZ rang me up, by that time I didn't care a damn what he had to say. The Field Marshal had rung him up and given him permission for the confirmation of the terms of surrender.

Before KESSELRING's call had come through, at about half past one, I had sent another signal to ALEXANDER and made it quite clear to him that although, as a result of HOFER's betrayal, KESSELRING had deprived VIETINGHOFF of his command and he was not therefore in a position to honour the signature of his representative, the General Officers Commanding the 10th and 14th Armies and POHL and myself had given the order for the cease fire on our own responsibility and in spite of KESSELRING's opposition. I had informed him that there were orders out for our arrest and that although we were determined to carry out his terms, our own lives were in danger and there was still doubt as to whether our orders would be obeyed. At half past four I was able to send him another signal to say that the terms would be honoured, and then I fell into an exhausted sleep.

Every action I took during all this time I took knowingly and I feel certain that history will prove me right. KESSELRING, of course, continued the fight for another week and then had to do exactly the same, and under worse conditions than I could have got for him. However, I think he realised his mistake, because for my birthday on the 13th of May he sent me the friendliest possible greetings.