

TOP SECRET

CSDIC/CMF/X 167

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

Name	Rank	Appointment
WOLFF	SS Obergruppenfuehrer and General der Waffen-SS	Military Plenipotentiary in ITALY and highest SS Officer
LINKENBACH	Major General	GOC TRIESTE
DOMIZLAFF	SS Sturmbannfuehrer	On staff of SS und Pol. Fuehrer OBERITALIEN-WEST. Formerly in Abteilung III, B.d.S. ITALIEN
KLAPS	Lieut Commander	On staff of Mil Amt Fuehrungsstelle ITALIEN, formerly Abwehr I (Marine)
HARSTER	SS Gruppenfuehrer und Generalleutnant der Polizei	B.d.S. ITALIEN
DOLLMANN	SS Oberfuehrer	SS LO to C-in-C SOUTH-WEST
HELFERICH	Colonel	LO to SID

If the conversations contained in this report are 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.

C.S.D.I.C.,
C.M.F.
May 45.

RW Snelling Capt
for (W.S. VALENTINE),
Lt-Col,
Comd, CSDIC, C.M.F.

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<u>A.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Appointment</u>
	WOLFF	SS Obergruppenfuehrer and General der Waffen-SS	Military Plenipotentiary in ITALY and highest SS Officer
	LINKENBACH	Major General	GOC TRIESTE

Conversation held on 20 May 45

1. THE LIBERATION OF TRIESTE

LINKENBACH : I was both Military Commander and Garrison Commander of TRIESTE, and my operational zone extended from ISONZO down to South of TRIESTE; but from ISONZO down to TRIESTE there were no troops at all, just an isolated commander. I had a map, though, with God knows how many positions marked on it. When I came there, there was the BERGER Battle Group in the area for the whole zone from ISONZO to South of TRIESTE. The Commander was Colonel BERGER, an Austrian, a very calm sort of man. His Group consisted of a Regiment of 188 Training Division, all completely untrained troops. He had divided the whole area up into the Northern, Central, and Southern sectors. I was second in command of the Central sector, so that though I am a General I was subordinate to Colonel BERGER. Anyway, all the fighting troops we had there were in BERGER's Regiment, which had three infantry battalions, an engineer company, and an HQ company.

Well, General KUEBLER (Comment: GOC Adriatic Coast Command), who was in FIUME, came along to me and handed me over the whole area, including naval ratings and alarm units of men who had come from POLA two days before, clerks and cooks and all the rest of it. KUEBLER said to me "I know it is not yet all over with the SS and the SD, they know too many secrets, and they are probably going to be got out, according to orders from the FUEHRER. But before that happened I wanted to get in touch with you. I did not want to leave TRIESTE without having spoken to you". I had met him before in BELGRADE. The first thing I heard about it was from people who came from the city, who said that all the SS, SD and the Police had left. No one had heard anything about it, but one day they were just not there any more.

Towards the end two sections of the naval harbour defence service were there. Everything was actually arranged only for a defence towards the sea. My HQ was in a village East of TRIESTE, a kind of outpost. On the 28th I had a call from XXXIV Corps: "You are now under my command". I said: "Splendid. And what about the BERGER Battle Group?" "The BERGER Battle Group is to stay there under all circumstances; I make you personally responsible for its remaining". Immediately after I was called

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: up by KUEBLER's Corps ... an order that if the KUEBLER Corps narrowed its area of operations we would come under the command of XCIV (Comment: XCVII ?) Corps.

I rang up XXXIV Corps and said "General KUEBLER has ordered the immediate withdrawal of the BERGER Battle Group under threat of a court martial". At least, I wanted to ring up the Corps Commander, but he was not available. Instead a certain HARTMANN (?) came along, G1(Ops) of SS Gruppenfuehrer RUELSNER.

WOLFF : Where was XXXIV Corps?

LINKENBACH : Somewhere near LJUBLJANA. Well, we spoke about it to Army Group. We had two conversations about it, one of which I had myself and the other one I listened to. We were told: "It is an absolute order that the BERGER Battle Group is to stay where it is". Of course after that I rang up BERGER again, and he said "I am sorry, I have already carried out the order. There's only one battalion there". This battalion was in a place south-east of TRIESTE, and was the first to be attacked by TITO. They were the only troops I had. There was the wildest shooting going on all day and night, without my knowing who was shooting at whom. There were thousands of armed TITO supporters taking part, and supporters of the Committee of Liberation.

The day before the Bishop had come to me and asked me to see that there was no bloodshed in the city. I said to him "My dear Bishop, when people are armed ... if the population behaves itself then not very much will happen". But he had a proposal to make to me from the Committee of Liberation - the Italians wanted to take up the fight against TITO themselves, but without me! I replied "That is very nice of them, I am taking note of the fact, but it is out of the question". Then he said "We might fight TITO's troops with you, but only before the English arrive". Meaning, of course, that I should then be taken prisoner. I told him that I was not giving any thought to that, but he said "Yes, Sir, the English will be arriving".

WOLFF : From which direction did they arrive?

LINKENBACH : From MONFALCONE, that is from ISONZO along the coast road through MIRAMARE to TRIESTE. They arrived on May 2nd in the afternoon. About forty tanks came rolling in first, I had a grandstand view over the whole of TRIESTE from my HQ. I could see each tank as it arrived. I could see all the red flags disappearing and the Italian flags coming out. There were thousands of Italians rejoicing in the streets. The tanks went rolling into the city, and there was a fine shooting match between them and the remainder of our Police who were still resisting in the Law Courts. Then in the evening I managed to get into communication with the English through an Austrian living in TRIESTE called Ritter von HENDRICKWITZ, who came along to my HQ to say goodbye to us. I asked him if he would put me in touch with the commander of the English tanks, and he agreed. He returned about eleven o'clock with two English officers with a monster white flag and a lantern. They took me with them into TRIESTE, and I was amazed to find the streets completely deserted; in a few hours the English had managed to put everything in order. I told him that I had not wanted to fight against the English and Americans, and that if they had not come along and started shooting first I would have requested to surrender. Then I asked them to let me leave with my arms for GERMANY to continue the fight against the Bolsheviks. Of course I realised that this was only a gesture, and there was no question of their accepting it. They told me that the Citadel had capitulated four hours before, and that all the naval personnel had surrendered, and that the Russians were

: their Allies ... I said that under the circumstances there was nothing for me to do but to surrender.

I left TRIESTE about half past three. I asked the Colonel to take in the men from the various other strong points, not only from my own. I had to get permission from the area commander in MIRAMARE, and arrived there about midday the next morning, and was told "Yes, we will do everything possible to take them in". When I came back I sent a signal to GHQ, and received a message that ran very differently from the previous one: "KUEBLER is narrowing his area of operations, so as to have as many troops as possible under his control". Then a second message: "KUEBLER Corps disengaging, proceeding in general direction LJUBLJANA. Commander TRIESTE will fight through as far as possible in same direction". But we had no troops, no weapons, no ammunition, the whole thing was a complete shambles. All the same one has to admit that discipline remained fantastically good up to the end. When I came past the troops, all stood up and saluted me. TRIESTE could have been held with one or two regiments for a week at least against an attack from the seaward side, but not against one from the other direction.

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B. Name	Rank	Appointment
WOLFF	SS Obergruppenfuehrer and General der Waffen-SS	Military Plenipotentiary in ITALY and highest SS Officer
HARSTER	SS Gruppenfuehrer and Generalleutnant der Polizei	B.d.S. ITALIEN

Conversation held on 21 May 45

1. THE CHURCH IN GERMANY

WOLFF : I didn't give up church on instructions from above, or when our movement began. My spiritual development was already ripe for it.

HARSTER : I wonder how the Catholic church has reacted to recent events. I mean, the Church is now more or less the only remaining organised body which counts in GERMANY. How, I wonder, will it set about recovering the ground it has undoubtedly lost in the past years? Because it seems to me that it might be a good thing to encourage such an attempt, since it represents the only possibility of forming some organisation which will embrace all Germans.

WOLFF : I know. And the thought has occurred to me whether, perhaps, we might be able to combine with the Anglican Church, so as to be able to oppose the political menace of the Soviets. As far as ritual is concerned, is the Anglican Church Catholic or Protestant?

HARSTER : On the whole rather Catholic.

WOLFF : Catholic, but free from ROME.

HARSTER : Yes. On the other hand, the influence of ROME is very strong, and we may need it if we're to achieve anything. The question is, to what extent will the people support the Church?

WOLFF : It's an action which will depend on the individual. The masses will be swept away by the torrent and won't find a way out of it.

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2. THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

HARSTER : It's difficult to believe that GERMANY will have no role at all to play in the future.

WOLFF : Yes. God, it's true that the war is over, but now a new phase of development is beginning. The question of who's to lead in Europe appears to have been decided, but otherwise everything's in a state of flux. And even the question of leadership isn't finally decided. There are only three nations which can be considered seriously - ENGLAND, GERMANY, and RUSSIA; and for the time being one of those three is out of the running. If ENGLAND now lays out RUSSIA, the matter's settled. Perhaps, despite nationalism, all Europe may one day form a united entity. Machines, transport, everything tends to produce such a result. So is it perhaps really so very important, as far as people living in say a hundred years' time are concerned, whether ENGLAND or GERMANY enjoys supreme power? Perhaps it's quite immaterial. Won't it perhaps be quite understandable to your grandchildren, and to mine, that we indulged in such frightful bloodshed just to decide whether GERMANY held four out of the five seats in the European Cabinet, and ENGLAND one, or vice versa? Perhaps they'll understand our times as little as I understand all the complications of the Thirty Years' War.

HARSTER : Perhaps we are witnessing the birth pangs of a new Europe.

WOLFF : I believe we are.

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C.	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Appointment</u>
	DOLLMANN	SS Oberfuehrer	SS IO to C-in-C SOUTH-WEST
	HELFERICH	Colonel	IO to SID

Conversations held on 20-21 May 45

1. EVENTS BEFORE THE CAPITULATION

DOLLMANN : We have got so little to lose! I can tell you my honest opinion: that collection up there on Lake GARDA was like a comedy troupe. Someone should have reported to the FUEHRER what sort of ally we had there. And even the Ambassador said that he couldn't stand diplomats - if he can't stand them why did he take it up as a career?

HELFERICH: GRAZIANI was a peasant's son, wasn't he?

DOLLMANN : Yes. A toga would have suited him very well - a representative of the Roman Republic. I remember being of assistance to him when we flew to the FUEHRER's GHQ. I explained the whole atmosphere there to him, and arranged everything for him, and he was grateful to me because he had been treated well and not like other Italians. We should have been more clever and put a different estimate on the Italians.

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DOLLMANN : What do I care about DOENITZ? He should never have been appointed without Parliament even being consulted. Destiny will always overtake us. I can't understand the whole affair, with KESSELRING and the others; they were all very strict soldiers, all they could do was to obey orders, and without orders

they were completely helpless. There was Colonel HERREN (?) and Colonel LAEMMELS - General SCHULZ was quite hopeless - all he said was that he was fond of cakes! TON (?) behaved very decently, he was a Bavarian, from MUNICH, I think. He was the only one KESSELRING had at the conferences. I think POHL must have been taken in custody.

HELPERICH : Really?

DOLLMANN : Yes. He was quite calm about it all. He merely said "I will not sacrifice any more of my men. I have no weapons and no rations. That is my attitude. I am like LUTHER, I can do no more - God help me! Shoot me? I have nothing against it. That is my view". He was the only one who said anything.

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DOLLMANN : The FUEHRER should have fallen on the ODER, in front of BERLIN, then he could still have been considered great. But to sacrifice BERLIN, with women and children and all - since he did that I have altered my opinion of him. The others of course all ran away. He had his worst row with the SS Division in VIENNA. DIETRICH was there. The FUEHRER sent a signal ordering that all badges of rank (?) should be removed from the uniforms. DIETRICH signalled back asking whether this order was to include the 3,000 dead. The FUEHRER then sent another signal, saying that he would not permit such a tone to be used, and that his request followed the example of FREDERICK the GREAT. DIETRICH replied that FREDERICK the GREAT would have given the order on the battlefield, not from GHQ! But FREDERICK the GREAT for HITLER was not a god, but a false god. And then take GOEBBELS and all those men - they all behaved criminally. They knew that we had nothing left. We should have crossed over the PO, and we should have given up the concentration camps, and then we should have shown that we are a cultured people.

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2. GERMAN DIPLOMACY

DOLLMANN : What a lot happened in ROME between the 8th of September (1943) and the 4th of June (1944). We did at least save the city from air raids, and we didn't fight there, although MUSSOLINI wanted us to. We destroyed no bridges, although preparations had been made, and we made a great detour round the city. I wouldn't mind facing an international law-court in defence of my ROME policy!

HELPERICH : It was a tough struggle getting the principle accepted that ROME wasn't to be damaged.

DOLLMANN : In BOLOGNA too, as I told you, the Paratroops wanted to take all males between the ages of sixteen and forty from the town. I 'phoned KESSELRING personally about it. No, world history's not as these people describe it. And the time will come when nobody will read their version.

HELPERICH : After all, the partisans aren't keen on fighting. They only want to rob and plunder.

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- HELPERICH : The great weakness of us Germans is that we were quite hopeless politically, and quite without experience.
- DOLLMANN : True. Even MACKENSEN, who at least was a gentleman, had no idea of politics. You know, legend has it that on the strength of my good connections here in ROME I was MACKENSEN's political adviser. Actually throughout the whole period MACKENSEN asked me for advice on perhaps three occasions, and each time we disagreed with one another. He told me that I was a pessimist, and that he had no use for pessimists. He wanted "positive" people.
- HELPERICH : RIBBENTROP was the chief source of trouble. It's obvious now what complete psychological errors we made. We should have sent a gentleman to LONDON.
- DOLLMANN : Even though he might not be particularly intelligent. But not a commercial traveller in champagne! No, RIBBENTROP was the perfect misfit - even worse than GOERING, who did at least have a certain sense of humour.
- But old MACKENSEN failed too. I said to him once "You, with your name, ought to make a stand against these happenings. You're the son of the old field marshal, and they won't put you in a concentration camp. You have the Fuehrer's confidence, and you an SS general. But no, then he suddenly stiffened, he became a Prussian again. A word from above, and he would do nothing. He used to be panic-stricken when faced by hard facts. His only reaction was to bury his head in the sand.
- HELPERICH : To be any good you must have lived at least ten years abroad, and you want people who have to earn their living, and not the idle rich. Not people who join an embassy and draw their two thousand marks a month from the start.
- DOLLMANN : For that reason all embassies are pretty senseless. What did we achieve in ROME with such an unwieldy organisation - and the uniforms with Hofbrau badges?
- HELPERICH : Madness. Diplomats have to learn their trade, just as soldiers and cobblers.
- DOLLMANN : Do you remember General von BUESLER (?), who came to ITALY with "cultural dug-outs" (Kulturbunker)? I knew him as a common little clerk in Gauleiter WAGNER's office at MUNICH. Imagine culture in dug-outs! But he found RIBBENTROP's favour.
- HELPERICH : Did you know HUPPENKASTEN?
- DOLLMANN : Thank God, no. What a shocking name.
- HELPERICH : He was SS Standartenfuehrer in Abteilung IV, under MUELLER. Because I was investigated because of the 20th of July.
- DOLLMAN : Good God, really? What did he want to know?
- HELPERICH : About my connections with the Vatican. Threads from the 20th of July led to ROME.

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<u>D.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Appointment</u>
	DOMIZLAFF	SS Sturmbannfuehrer	On staff of SS und Pol. Fuehrer OBERITALIEN-WEST. Formerly in Abteilung III, B.d.S. ITALIEN
	KLAPS	Lieut Commander	On staff of Mil Amt Fuehrungs- stelle ITALIEN, formerly Abwehr I (Marine)

Conversation held on 21 May 45

1. ABWEHR IN THE TOILS

KLAPS : The one thing I am afraid of is that they will hand me over to the Italians. . And yet I don't think they have any motive for doing that, have they?

DOMIZLAFF : On the whole I think they would be glad to do it, because the Allies are not anxious to take on the odium of condemning anyone themselves. They were very glad when the Partisans murdered MUSSOLINI, because that saved them a lot of difficulties.

KLAPS : Yes, I quite agree. But my own case is quite different.

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(KLAPS returns from interrogation)

DOMIZLAFF : Been nicely squeezed out?

KLAPS : They won't do it so easily. He wanted to know all the personalities, and I told him that I could not tell him as easily as that, as I had promised not to betray them, and they me. But now they have got the South Tyroleans, and they will tell them everything.

DOMIZLAFF : I told him that I would only give details if he showed me a list of the names first.

KLAPS : That's what I shall tell him too. If he has got the lists, then it is more or less hopeless for me, because sooner or later the others will tell him what he wants to know. I must admit I am in a complete muddle. What am I to do? I know something is going to happen. If I give him the name of one man, the right one, then he will have got something. Perhaps they have caught him?

DOMIZLAFF : Do you know anyone who has been caught? If you do you could give his name.

KLAPS : A lot of people made themselves so conspicuous that they are certainly known. They came along in St. Mark's Square in VENICE and shook my hand. Idiots, shaking a German officer's hand in public like that! I told them here that I had been very little in VENICE.

DOMIZLAFF : VENICE was chock-full with agents. As far as I know it was the centre for British agents.

KLAPS : They knew our office in MILAN too.

DOMIZLAFF: There were certainly some Germans there working for the other side.

KLAPS : I don't know what they can have against me here. What am I to say to them? If I say nothing they will get suspicious. My men are scattered all over the place now, but they will catch them sooner or later. I never thought I should be in such a frightful situation!

DOMIZLAFF: Yes, we never imagined anything like this happening, otherwise we should have got hold of false papers.

KLAPS : But we could never have done that in the senior ranks, we were too well-known. We were a lot of amateurs.

DOMIZLAFF: Yes, we should have learnt from the English. They're very much better than we are, despite our famous German thoroughness.

KLAPS : What am I to do, what can I do? I told him I couldn't tell him anything yet, and he said that it was only a matter of time before he knew everything.

DOMIZLAFF: I was astounded at the amount they knew about our ROME organisation.

KLAPS : I had people from the 10th Flotilla MAS, and they will all be brought in. It's an awful business. It's terrible to think of oneself, and getting better treatment.

DOMIZLAFF: I don't think about it.

KLAPS : I don't think, if I have told them everything, that they will shoot me. I knew a Naval Lieutenant who was the same sort of thing in the last war, and he wasn't shot.

DOMIZLAFF: But in the last war they didn't talk about war criminals.

KLAPS : But I haven't done anything! These so-called SS and SD methods are not worthy of Germans. They are thinking about KOLBER or FICHTE or Ernst Moritz ARNDT.

DOMIZLAFF: I am not so certain that these things did happen.

KLAPS : They certainly did with the Jews.

DOMIZLAFF: Yes, Jews were sent to the East from the Reich, but only to work.

KLAPS : But a lot of them died in the process. I hold that a human being is a human being. You don't torture a bug before you kill it, so why torture human beings? But I must think everything out carefully. I'm certain I shan't sleep well tonight! What am I to say to the man? What is the point of it all? When another one comes, he (the I.O.) will have all the names already, if I tell him, and that will make it easy for him; but on the other hand if I say nothing then the next man will and I shall get cursed. Of course they want to know the names of all the agents, so as to be certain for the next war. It would have been better if peace had been made two or three years ago, but they always insisted on unconditional surrender. But no, I won't tell them anything, I am a prisoner of war.

DOMIZLAFF: What they can bring up against you is more dangerous than what they can against me.

KLAPS : They had written down about me that I was a magnificent trainer.

DOMIZLAFF: What an honour!

KLAPS : In any case I only know the cover names of a lot of people. He told me that I had had people parachuted from BERGAMO.

DOMIZLAFF: And ~~had~~ you?

KLAPS : Yes, of course. They probably caught one of them. But perhaps he doesn't know any details, only that they started off from there. I wish you could advise me. I am probably the first one in a position to give them the names of my people.

DOMIZLAFF: That is, if they are not already known through the Italians.

KLAPS : But what should I think of myself if I betrayed my own people?