

OFFICE OF US CHIEF OF COUNSEL
AFO 403, US ARMY
INTERROGATION DIVISION

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Brief of
Interrogation of Hugo SPERRLE

by
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SPERRLE was interrogated with regard to the meeting of 21 April 1938, held to review plans for the attack on Czechoslovakia. He had no knowledge of the meeting, but referred to a luncheon he had had with Hitler shortly before the signing of the Munich Pact, at which he states that Hitler said it would be necessary to use force against Czechoslovakia since her existence was a threat to Germany in that it provided bases of operation for the Poles and Russians. Sperrle says that he was not of the same opinion but that he said nothing because it was his general practice not to interfere in matters of policy and further, because he understood that another general had been reprimanded for publicly taking a view on this matter contrary to that of the Fuehrer shortly before this time. The part taken by the Air Force in the occupation of the Sudetenland and the occupation of the remainder of Czechoslovakia was according to Sperrle a minor one. In both cases the Air Force was expected to be available to support the troops if necessary, and, in the case of the Sudetenland, the troops were to drop propaganda leaflets. In fact, no incident occurred and it was not necessary to use the Air Force in support of the troops. Orders for the impending action reached Sperrle only shortly before the moves into Czechoslovakia occurred in each case.

Sperrle has no knowledge of the meeting on 23 May 1939 called to discuss the attack on Poland. He was not involved in the planning or discussions for the Polish campaign and was moved shortly before this campaign began with his entire staff from Munich to Bad Orb to take up his new responsibility as Chief of the Third Air Fleet in the West.

He had no responsibility or knowledge of the proposed campaign against Norway and Denmark.

Prior to the campaign against Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg, he was called into conference in Berlin and the Fuehrer at that time explained the necessity for the campaign against these countries, stating that he expected the campaign to be a short one. Sperrle does not remember the details of this conference other than as stated above. He states that he and many of his fellow officers were not of the same opinion as the Fuehrer since they anticipated that this action would ultimately bring the U.S. and Russia into the war.

He had no responsibility for the campaign against Yugoslavia and Greece and no knowledge of plans. He states that this action came as a surprise to him as he understood that Goering was on very friendly relations with the Regent Paul.

He had no responsibility for any matters connected with the Russian campaign.

He had no knowledge of any orders with regard to the treatment of foreign airmen and maintains that, so far as the Luftwaffe is concerned, its treatment of Allied airmen was entirely correct and according to the principles of international law. He says, further, that if any order had come to him regarding the killing or brutal treatment of captured Allied airmen, he would have refused to execute it.

With regard to the operations in the East against Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Russia, Sperrle states that Generals Stumpff and Kesselring and Colonel Brauchitsch, aide to Jodl, can give much more complete information than he is able to do.

I do not believe that there is much further to be gained from Sperrle by additional interrogation and do not contemplate interrogating him again unless specific requests are made for interrogation on particular points with regard to which he may be presumed to know something.

His attitude throughout the interrogation has been entirely cooperative although his memory appears to be weak with regard to details. In general, it appears that Sperrle followed very carefully his practice of not injecting himself into the political aspects of action contemplated by the Fuehrer or the High Command, nor does he appear to have been consulted frequently in these matters. As an old school general, he does not seem to have thought in his province to question the motives of his political leaders.

No attempt has been made to interrogate him with regard to the tactical or strategic aspects of his job as these matters do not appear pertinent to the present case. It is recommended that he continue to be held in the Internment Section of the jail for corroboration on points which may arise in other interrogations.