An INTERVIEW WITH
Genmaj Otto REMER

THE 20 JUL 44 PLOT

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BY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Note to: ETIHN 63
By: Kenneth W. Hochler
Major, Infantry (Res)

No record in German was made at the time of this oral interview, in such as Lt. Verriam took notes in English on the remarks of General Fresser as they were translated by the interpreter. Lt. Verriam then used his English notes as the basis for this report which he prepared after the completion of the oral interview.

This was the only oral or written interview which Lt. Verriam had concerning matters other than the Ardenne Offensive. From previous reading at the 20 July 1914 plot, Lt. Verriam was particularly interested in collecting details on this affair, with the possible hope that he might later publish a book or magazine article devoted to the German story behind this plot.

(The first paragraph of the above is based on a general knowledge of the way in which Lt. Verriam operated; the second paragraph is based on what Lt. Verriam told me personally.)
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1. After five years of fighting with Bo Peep "Great-Mother-Land," in France, the Balkans, and Russia, I was brought back to Berlin for a rest, and was given command of the Pioneer Battalion, under the command of the Field Marshal. Prior to this command, I had been acting as commander of a pioneer grenadier battalion in Bo Peep "Great-Mother-Land." This task (Great) in, besides having the mission of supporting the Government, also represented the duty of soldiers.

2. Then I came to one of the battalions, in which I took part in the most heroic action in 1863 (ceremony in April), a part that had been against the French, and had been performed in the name of the party. Further, as well that this part of the French had never been cleaned, and was in Trier, here. It was there that I was in the last line, in the East, and had the honor of being a part of the French in the East. I was in the last line, and had the honor of being in the East, and had the honor of being in my regiment.

This is a part of the action for the defense of the East, which I took part in. The people who were there, and who were there for the defense of the East, were the people who were there for the defense of the East, and who were there for the defense of the East. There are many who were there for the defense of the East, and who were there for the defense of the East. There are many who were there for the defense of the East, and who were there for the defense of the East.
4. About 1500 on 23 Jul 44, I received a telephone call giving the code word "Contraunt." This call came from the Office of the Military Governor in Berlin, Gen von Hausen. I was ordered to report to him immediately. I arrived at the Governor's office and found a number of general officers and other high personnel already assembled there.

Then, I opened the door, I noticed that the G-2 (not further identified) appeared very pale and that apparently a note—by the name of Maj von Hahn—had replaced him. The atmosphere was very tense. I was told that the situation had changed that a revolution had broken out that the execution powers had passed to the Army, and that I was to blind each and every instance of the Governor's authority so that no one could put it to use.

5. The statement, combined with the impression of the situation, gave me an idea of the situation in Berlin and the order in which it had to be carried out. I decided to follow my orders to the letter.

(a) I was arrested
(b) I had an explanation
(c) I was placed in the Governor's office
(d) I was denied access to the Governor's office
(e) I was ordered to "do as I said"
(f) I was given the order to maintain the government's authority

6. I needed to act as a witness to these events.
However, I returned to my battalion and immediately called a conference of officers at which I ordered a ring placed around the Government buildings, and gave instructions that no one was to accept any orders unless they were given by me personally. The entire situation looked suspicious to me, but I did not know what was going on.

7. Although the ring was placed around the Government buildings, it was not complete because the enemy had not been cut off, nor had communications been cut. The Army headquarters had been told that an officer known to be done to assist me in these technical matters.

When this officer arrived, he immediately said that I need not be afraid of him, that he was not a spy. This made me extremely suspicious because I could not understand why he would think I would regard him as a spy unless something unusual was going on.

8. After the meeting of my officers, one of my lieutenants, named Hagen, called me aside and told that he wished to report that a similar incident had occurred in the streets. He explained that a man, who at this time was an officer, had been retired for some time and was not often seen in Berlin. The lieutenant suggested that he might make a run for what he called prior to his entrance into the Army. He said this man was not one of the "dbus men" and might be able to give me suggestions on the situation. I sent him to see this former employer of his.

9. After we formed the ring around the Government buildings, I was ordered to watch particularly the section near the railroad station, which was where the security police were located. A short time later, as I was riding through the streets, I spotted an East German, whom I
superior, I finally decided that I should go to see him despite the fact that Von Hassel had refused my request.

13. I went to Hassel's office and was immediately ushered in to see him. Before I had gone in, I had told a group of my men that I had brought with me that if I were not back in 30 minutes they should come up to get me. I did this because I did not feel that Hassel and we were not involved.

14. I was immediately admitted to Hassel's office and the first question that he asked me was, "Are you a fascist officer?" I told him that I had taken my oath to the Hitler and that I intended to keep it even if he were killed. Hassel then said, "What do you know about the situation?" I told him that I had previously been, and I said that men could not be untrue because he had talked to the Hitler and to the people. I then asked Hassel if he could explain the history of events, and he said he could. I said, "You know better" and I told him that I would not allow the people to get the best. I told him that I would do it with the power of the people for myself. He said that he was willing to give me the power to do it for myself. He said that he was willing to give me the power to do it for myself.
At the end of the conversation, Goering, who was present, asked me what
the Führer had said and I related the conversation in substance. I
also told Goering that I had immediately confirmed the actual situation
to the Führer; I was then ordered to return to Berlin and that I would inform
Goering of the situation and do everything I could to prevent unnecessary
problems.

19. By this time, a task formation had been alerted and was
assembling in the Berlin area. Although this group thought that I was
with the revolution, I was able to get in touch with them just in time to
prevent any mistakes. I then reported control of the troops and asked them
to help prevent any abuse being used. The officials in charge recognized
the value of this and later we talked about what I was doing. I told the officials
that I had been selected to carry out difficult tasks. Fortunately,
Goering understood my point at once and I told him that
that I had no choice. This is one of the reasons why I had to
be in Berlin.

20. At this time, there was a report of two elevators being
used which I think the Führer had. The building of the station was
expected to be reached by the group as a part of the plan to
break up our organized resistance. I was able to call out troops in the to
cr of our position. The troops were not the division which
had been enjoined by Goering. From the Führer's (at that time The
Bronze) in the night and they had the main line of
the two elevators open. That was my only chance.
Tutruren (Chief of Security Police and Security Service), also came and shortly thereafter Hitler arrived; the crisis had passed.

17. I will not relate to you the happenings at the Rinderklack, which I have heard only from people who were there. Count von Stauffenberg, who had placed the bomb in Rinderklack, returned to Berlin by airplane, but, typical of the ineptitude of the plotters, had neglected to arrange for a car to meet him at the airport. As a result, he had to wait an hour for transportation into town.

18. Von Stauffenberg went to the Rinderklack, where, with some other fugitive officers, he tried to plan an assault. In this case, he had wanted to arrest Stauffenberg, but instead was arrested himself by the Military Police. (As to this officer, we are indebted to Senator Fredrick From, General Remar's escort of the car that followed in attendance. In Berlin, From was arrested by the Military Police in the excitement following the attempted assassination of the Fuehrer. He can only be presumed that either he was too innocent of a crime or that he was innocent of a crime, seeing that the plot was doomed to failure. He decided to try to save himself by turning on the Fuehrer and electrocuting him.) At this point, From requested von Remar to come to the Rinderklack. Von Remar had been asked to participate in the Fuehrer's death, but he had not received and was not returned to his house. The General of Reserve in the XIX, von von Nordeissen, was also invited to participate, and was informed when he refused to take part.
The enemy thing was very naivé. Telegraphs were insta-

ted and another the prophecies for the Army was against it. In the

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SECRET

SIR:

SUBJECT: 31st U.S. Army

DATE: 20 August 1945

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102. 1 -
I. Cover and Deception Prior to the ARDENNES Offensive

This report was prepared in answer to USSF Interrogation Brief No. 3, dated 13 July 1945.

Preamble. Generalmajor Otto Ernst ARGER, source for the answers to this questionnaire, in the Major ARGER, formerly in command of the "Feldartillerie" in Berlin, who was instrumental in checking the military follow-through of the 20 July 1944 plot against HITLER's life. He assumed command of the Fuehrer Begleit Brigade (brigade ARGER) shortly before the ARDENNES offensive.

The Fuehrer Begleit Brigade left OSTENBURG, Ostpreussen, about 25 November for HOOZ, (HHOZ 4146/1 A 51/L 3572) and was first committed in the ST III sector (HHOZ 4146/1 A 29), whence it advanced towards LANSD (HHOZ 4146/1 A 47). On 27 December Brigade ARGER was committed west of R. BERNHARD (HHOZ 4146/1 A 295) in order to secure German positions in this sector.

Brigade ARGER was composed of the following elements at the start of the ARDENNES offensive:

- Flak Abteilung
- Grenadier Bataillon 1 (31°)
- Grenadier Bataillon 2 (30°)
- Grenadier Bataillon 3b/928 (later Grenadier Bataillon 9)
- Artillerie Abteilung
- Panzer Abteilung
- Flak Sturmgeschutz Abteilung 230
- Panzer Regiments Stab
- Nachrichten Abteilung
- Feld Ersatz Abteilung

In reply to the questionnaires:

1. That security measures were adopted by German unit commanders between the time they received initial orders concerning the ARDENNES offensive and 16 December 1944?

a. Radio security. From the arrival of the Fuehrer Begleit Brigade in the west in early December 1944 until the commitment of the brigade on 16 December 1944, the unit kept a strict radio silence. There were no exercises with radio-communication sets. Even the use of private radio sets at lowest level was prohibited.

b. False radio traffic. Although the Brigade ARGER used no false radio traffic, some was employed by higher echelons.

c. Security of troop movements to avoid identification by aircraft. Before and during the offensive all troop movements were executed by night or in unfavorable flying weather.
I. Cover and Decoy Prior to the ALEXANDER Offensive
(Continued)

In clear weather only single vehicles were permitted to travel on roads. In order to prevent the convoy from being spotted, only single vehicles or columns of 3-5 vehicles were permitted to travel during daytime in an easterly direction in order to deceive the enemy by driving a withdrawal of troops from the front lines. Vehicles, particularly tracked armored vehicles, were parked in roads outside of towns. All defenses were passive, and only in case of an air attack on military targets were they to open fire.

Special care was taken to enforce enforcable discipline in towns, villages, and around camps; the assembling or massing of large bodies of men was prohibited. The use of road-marches and outposts by units in villages or on roads was prohibited; unit markers were not displayed on billboards. Only during actual road marches could markers be posted, showing the names of commanding officers as unit identification. Road control by military police was very strict, and roads could be used only by unit convoys only in accordance with vehicle breaching markings painted over. During the transport of tanks on railway flatcars, camouflage had to conceal the vehicles in such a way that they could not be recognized from the air as tanks.

Supply dumps of all kinds were disguised very skillfully in forests, especially pine woods. Roads leading to supply dumps were widened to avoid traffic jams. All trains near the area of operations were kept in tunnels or in woods during daylight. The unloading of trains was spread over many small stations, and facilities were spread over a large area. Unloading could be done very quickly. Motor vehicles could drive only to within 10 km of the front. Artillery, ammunition, and bridge-building equipment was moved by horse-drawn vehicles or foot.

At night, strict blackout discipline was maintained.

Many of these security measures had been SOP in the Wehrmacht for some time. However, during the period in question a greater emphasis was placed on strict execution.

d. Inspection of detailed orders only to senior officers. All instructions for the offensive were carefully reviewed by a tactical commander as well as from the troops. Orders were given indicating that the troops were not to enter enemy-held areas, but to attack from north of the line. Orientation was given to small groups of officers, scheduled according to the importance of each unit's mission, and held as shortly as possible before the start of the offensive. This schedule (Tägliche) was approximately as follows: briefing for corps commanders 2 minus eight days; for division commanders, minus six days; for army corps unit commanders, minus three days, and briefing, each officer was sworn to secrecy, and told that violation would be punished by death.
1. Cover and Deception Prior to the 1945 Offensive (Continued)

Rommel himself took part in two briefings and sandbag exercises. The first one took place at Corps headquarters approximately eight days before the start of the offensive. He was not told which corps it was. Here he was informed about his mission for the first time. The second briefing was held at headquarters of General KREUGER's XVIII Corps.

The following problems were discussed: movement into assembly area and jumping-off areas; artillery, positions and ammunition supply; disposition of elements not taking part in the attack; strength of bridge-building equipment; method of using forward units for the capture of jumping-off points; shock-troop training for rear guards; all details of re-inforcements; briefing with respect to resistance in overrun areas; supplies.

He noted that he was to take during the briefings, and maps and orders were also collected again at the end of the meeting. Details and problems which came up during the exercises could be referred to or deployed only indirectly in discussions with other officers or in the training of troops. Details, written and verbal, were, etc., could be handled only by a liaison officer especially assigned to this job. During the movements or on the march into the assembly area, nothing could be disclosed to the man and only on day before the conduct were they informed about their mission.

2. Consular. Shortly before and during a move by rail, motor, ship, or other communications could be sent by the troops, and censorship of mail in rear areas stood in the same way as before the start of the offensive. Troops were strictly forbidden to use the civilian postal system or to telegraph, telephone or release any kind of information through it. The civilian postal system was also placed under censorship.

3. Special security information of individuals. The formal deactivation of the security subject matter of the security office was usually given to troops in their unit command; however, this information was given more frequently during the period before the start of the offensive. In a situation where an XX/C I was not for the auditory awareness of the troops.

4. Only details were given to the command of troops immediately prior to the 1945 Offensive.

5. The plan of deception. The Brigade RKN was left in the area of NOVEMBER 20, and the 15th团 on 25 and 26 November 1944. It comprised only units of the Brigade stationed in the vicinity of KLASIA.
I. Cover and Deception Prior to the ARDENNES Offensive

(Continued)

b. Time and place of arrival. The units mentioned in a. above arrived in the area of D. U.S. (Lisal) (DGCS 4396/51/L 5577), on 29 and 30 November 1944. The following units arrived in the D. U.S. area in the order listed below during December, the last one arriving 15 December 1944:

- Artillery Abteilung (newly activated)
- Heeres Sturmgeschuetz Abteilung
- Panzer Abteilung
- Panzer Regiment Stab

b. Method of transportation. Transportation was by rail, save for a few small motor convoys.

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