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GERMAN GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS
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General der Kavallerie
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August 1948

Project # 6

GERMAN GENERAL STAFF

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF GERMAN

GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS

Vol XXI

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HISTORICAL DIVISION
EUROPEAN COMMAND

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General der Kavallerie,

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After two years in the Junior Cadet Schools at Wallstadt and Naumburg, WESTPHAL entered the Chief Cadet Center at Cross-Lichterfeld, Berlin, in 1917, staying there for one year. In 1921 he underwent training in the Munish Infantry School and received his commission at Lieutenant on 1st December 1922. During World War II he held assignments as Chief of Staff at Division and later at Corps level on the western front, and was then attached to the Franco-German Armistice Commission in Wiesbaden during 1940-41. In 1941 and 1942 he held the joint posts of Chief of Staff and Operations Officer of Africa Panzer Corps in Lybia, and in December 1942, in the rank of Oberst, was given command of the 164 Light Africa Division. After a brief spell as Chief of Operations Division, CiC South, Italy, and later as Chief of Staff, Army Group Italy, he was transferred to CiC West, as Chief of Staff, in 1944, retaining that post until captured on 7 May 1945. He was promoted General Major in March 1943, General Lieutenant in April 1944 and General der Kavallerie in February 1945.

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Remarks Regarding the Text

Westphal's study, which consists of four parts, is the most voluminous of all the contributions. It was not abridged because it expresses opinions on almost all subjects mentioned in the "Questionnaire," and in a manner which affords a good cross-section view of the over-all General Staff problems.

In Part I the study describes clearly and in detail the training undergone by young officers preparatory to a General Staff career, and also deals aptly with the composition, routine work, and merits of the instructor and student bodies during peace and war. It rightly points to the risk involved in assigning to the General Staff because of high wartime requirements, estimated at eight times peacetime needs, a great many officers who were too young, still immature, and without adequate experience in life.

The author's ideas concerning selection and training in wartime are extremely valuable, and I must agree with his proposals regarding a shortened training period. To his various proposals there might perhaps be added one more, namely, that General Staff officers should be trained to make absolutely accurate reports. This happens to be something frequently sinned against during the war, and not only by General Staff officers acting in an irresponsible manner.

The final few paragraphs at the conclusion of Part I will serve the double purpose of a summary and of a table of contents.

Part II begins with a chronological sketch of the history and development of the General Staff from the Reichswehr period, when it was designated "Truppenamt" until its final days. Of special interest is a description of the intially strained relations between the General Staff of the Army and that of the Luftwaffe in which Goering's personality played a particularly unfortunate role.

Then follows a detailed account of the missions and activities of the various General Staff branches in the OKH before the war, and a cross-section view of the inner life and the ideology of General Staff officers.

Light is also thrown on their attitude toward rearmament and the idea of totalitarian warfare. The question is raised whether the Chief of Staff in any headquarters (Chef einer Kommandobehörde) should be "co-responsible" for all measures initiated by his headquarters, or whether responsibility should rest with the Commander in Chief alone. (For opinions concerning the basic principles involved see Part D.)

The author concludes the second part of his study with an investigation of the attitude displayed by the General Staff regarding problems concerning an over-all Wehrmacht command. By discussing all pros and cons he convincingly refutes the charges that the General Staff was prejudiced and behind the times in resisting a central supreme command.

Part III deals with the German General Staff during World War II. It emphasizes the difficulties encountered in procuring adequate personnel replacements, due to increased war requirements as well as to casualties. The subjoined appendices can, as a matter of fact, merely indicate the general situation, as they do not reflect official figures, which are no longer available.

The reasons for the General Staff's reduced efficiency due to the unavoidable "watering down" process during the final war years are competently evaluated.

From his own experience Westphal then depicts life in the higher staffs and the cohesion within the General Staff in the field. At this juncture he writes on the relations between the commanding generals and their chiefs of staff, already mentioned once before in Part II, and the frequently criticized "General Staff channels," which actually were no longer observed in World War I as contrasted to the Ludendorff era.

The report then turns to the General Staff's interest in political and economic matters and describes its paramount influence upon military operations together with proof that from 1941 on the General Staff was increasingly emasculated in its own particular field by Hitler's command system.

The non-German reader will find of special interest the chapter on the supreme military command and the erosive friction between the General Staff,

the OKW, and Hitler, as personally experienced by the author while holding responsible positions in different "OKW theaters of operations."

After a comprehensive survey of the practical experience gained by the General Staff during the War, and of its organization, Part III arrives at the conclusion that the General Staff's training and functions did, on the whole, measure up to all requirements in World War II.

Part IV, the one on the deeper problems, deals briefly from a historical and critical viewpoint with the roots and ideals of the German General Staff, including its weaknesses. These, according to the author, were primarily due to a certain one-sidedness of the professional outlook as exhibited by its members, an underestimation of strategic air warfare, a nonparticipation in the organization of Wehrmacht command, and a somewhat indifferent attitude toward internal and foreign politics.

Of great interest for a comparison between German and foreign General Staffs is the reference to the new historical work, "Social and Cultural Dynamics," by the American professor Sorokin, who proves that Germany, including Prussia, participated in only 8 percent of all the wars waged between 1800 and 1940, whereas England's share for the same period was 28 percent and that of France 26 percent.

(Signature) v. GREIFFENBERG

Part I

The Selection, Education and Training of General Staff Officers in Peace and War

A. Initial Selection of General Staff Replacements

1. During Peacetime

In the 100,000-man Army, every first lieutenant had to pass the so-called "military area examination" before he could be appointed captain. From the candidates, who numbered about three hundred each year, a small group was selected for training as assistant chiefs of staff (Fuehrerergilfenausbildung). The strength of this group varied with the number of vacancies. In 1932 it was thirty-six assistant chiefs of staff, hence, roughly one-eighth of the candidates.

The results of the military area examination were by no means the sole factor deciding the selection. More important was the regimental commander's hearty recommendation of the candidate for General Staff assignment, with regard to his complete qualifications as a line officer as well as his character traits. This requirement was designed to guarantee that only competent line officers of unsullied character would be assigned to the General Staff. The character proviso, in particular, elicited the keenest interest of the Army Personnel Officer. The author remembers instances when inquiries were made about unfavorable marks in efficiency reports dating back for years, and that men assigned to assistant chief of staff training were turned down because of trivial "infractions of conduct."

The compact and stable composition of the 100,000-man Army, in which commanders were well able to become acquainted with their subordinates, accordingly offered the best possible guarantee for excluding undesirable elements from the General Staff. This was all the more true since there were few vacancies and further current screening was not only possible, but even necessary. However, unfit men were selected even during that period, for no one can look into another person's heart. But these were the very few exceptions.

The rules for selecting assistant chiefs of staff remained the same in the conscript Wehrmacht Army after 1935. In it, however, it was not possible actually to maintain the same high selective standards as in the small professional army, because personnel requirements grew at a rapid pace in relation to the precipitate armament program, and since commanding officers had less contact with their subordinates due to the larger size of the Army and frequent transfers. The percentage of men detailed to study at the War College increased from year to year. This resulted, of course, in a lowering of standards. At first, by far the largest majority of the assistant chiefs of staff was drawn from the ranks of the 100,000-man Army, which fact guaranteed that the students were of satisfactory average quality.

2. Military Area Examinations and Preparatory Studies

Only conditions in the 100,000-man Army can be discussed here because my personal experience does not extend beyond that period.

In September of each year the Reichswehr Ministry (Truppenamt, Army Training Branch) made known the names of officers eligible to pass the military area examination in the following spring. Military area headquarters were charged with preparatory work for holding examinations on its premises each March. The preparatory work consisted of sending the future examinees about four times for periods of several days to the seat of military area headquarters, where they were given correspondence course problems. The preparatory studies encompassed primarily problems dealing with applied and theoretical tactics, terrain features, ordnance, history, economic geography, and civics. The problems dealing with applied tactics were those of a reinforced infantry regiment, whereas the problems dealing with theoretical tactics and terrain features were on division level. The Reichswehr Ministry determined each year the specific topics which the examinees had to study in history and economic geography. For instance, in 1932 the history topic was "Dualism in Austria-Hungary After 1866," and the geography subject "The Importance of German River and Ocean Fishing For the National Food Supply." In civics, the Weimar

Constitution of 11 August 1919 was the only subject for preparatory studies and examination problems.

These officers were granted many privileges in order to permit careful and methodical study. After October they were usually relieved from afternoon service and from Christmas on they were given even more free time. Anyone who devoted himself earnestly to his preparatory studies had plenty of work. This applied not only to tactics but especially also to nonmilitary subjects which, naturally, were new to line officers. In addition there was the study of a foreign language, which also was a subject for tests, and which the individual could select himself. In accordance with the then prevailing orientation toward the East, stress was laid on Russian and Polish. An incentive was provided for the study of Eastern languages because they received a 50 percent higher score in examinations.

Military area headquarters assigned experienced General Staff Officers as well as experts to carry out the preparatory work according to a methodical plan. The problems on tactics, terrain features, and ordnance also dealt in theory with tanks and airplanes. The greatest value of the preparatory period was, as intended, due to the fact that each 1st lieutenant in the Army was compelled to occupy himself systematically with subjects which were outside the routine scope of a junior line officer. In this way he acquired the background for handling tactical problems later on as commander of a battalion or other unit, and he refreshed and extended his general education. The military area examinations and especially the five-month preparatory studies were therefore an excellent means for educating and training the army officers aspiring to become commanders of companies or similar units. Consequently, twelve to fifteen years after leaving their respective service schools they were compelled once more to undergo strict intellectual discipline for a fairly long period. The newly-gained and refreshed learning benefited not only the officer concerned but indirectly the entire army as well. The advantage of introducing such an "intellectual overhauling" into every arm and service branch is clearly evident.

The examination problems were uniformly fixed for the entire Army by the Reichswehr Ministry. Similarly, the examination itself took place at the seats of the seven military area headquarters at the same dates and hours, precluding all possibility of illicit collusion. While separated from his colleagues, each examinee had to solve twelve problems within two or two and a half hours each. Specifically, there were four problems on applied tactics and one problem each on theoretical tactics, terrain features, sketch drawing, ordnance, history, economic geography, civics, and one foreign language. In addition, each participant had to submit to a physical test, whose standards were those set for acquiring the "German Sport Medal." Any individual who had acquired this medal within five years prior to the date set for passing the physical test was exempt from it.

The examination papers were corrected and evaluated by specially detailed General Staff officers and experts according to directives issued by the Reichswehr Ministry. In order to preclude any possibility of unfair ratings, the examinees did not write their names on their examination papers but used a coded key number given them by the Reichswehr Ministry. This system was so unobjectionable that in the Reichswehr there was never raised even the slightest criticism about unfair ratings.

The main emphasis, of course, was placed on tactics. The scores for the five problems on applied and theoretical tactics were multiplied by five, and the problems on terrain features by four. Grades in ordnance, history, economic geography, and civics were multiplied by two, whereas map drawing and physical exercises were multiplied by only one. Eastern languages were credits with three points, the other foreign languages with two points. This method of evaluation reserved two-thirds of the points for the purely military subject leaving the remaining third to the other subjects. This ratio was sound. It prevented an examinee from joining the ranks of assistant chiefs of staff solely because of his superior qualifications in nonmilitary subjects.

The names of the men selected on the basis of their scores for

participation in assistant chief of staff training were made public between the end of April and the beginning of May. Simultaneously, all examinees were given their scores. Upon request, the examination could be repeated once or twice. On the average, most candidates were detached for assistant chief of staff training after passing the test the first time.

The training began with a detail to another service branch during the summer months from 15 June to 15 September. The majority of the infantry officers were detailed to the artillery, and the artillery officers to the infantry. The individuals concerned were at liberty to select their troop units and garrisons. After conclusion of the fall exercises, the assistant chiefs of staff were collected in smaller groups at the seat of the military area headquarters, since centralized training was prohibited by the Versailles Treaty as a revival of the War College. For the first time on 1 October 1932 the assistant chiefs of staff were detailed to the newly established officer training courses in Berlin, which were the foundation in 1935 of the revived War College.

3. During Wartime

During wartime, the prerequisite for selection to assistant chief of staff training was meritorious service for at least half a year as front-line company, battalion, or battery commander, an unsullied character record, and an unconditional recommendation for General Staff service by superior commanders.

These rules were entirely successful. They guaranteed that no officer would be accepted by the General Staff who had not proved his mettle in the face of the enemy. Because of a proper interpretation of these rules, extremely few mistakes in selection occurred. With certain restrictions, the same might be said about character ratings. In view of the general watering-down process, superior officers were not always in a position to judge indisputably a candidate's purely professional qualifications for General Staff service. In practice this was quite immaterial, since there was an urgent need to fill vacancies, which could never have been

filled if even more severe standards for screening had been applied. A general danger was undoubtedly constituted by the progressively lower rank and age of candidates eligible for General Staff service. Particularly the past war clearly demonstrated how important it is that all who bear responsibility should possess a mature outlook and worldly experience, which most men can acquire only in the course of years.

Seen as a whole, the selective process was well handled. This is proved, among other reasons, by the excellent behavior of the great majority of younger General Staff officers, especially during their most trying months as prisoners of war.

General Staff training courses supplanted the War College during the war. Military area examinations were discontinued. Only individuals with a meritorious frontline and character record and with high professional qualifications were selected for assistant chief of staff training, which had top priority over assignment to other service branches or staffs.

B. Training at the War College in Peacetime

1. The Faculty

The instructors at the officer training courses in Berlin and at the reestablished War College were carefully selected during the period 1932 - 35, with which the author is familiar. Consequently, they undoubtedly imparted a solid military education to their students. Nevertheless, in the well-considered opinion of the author, the composition of the faculty during these years did not live up to the ideal standards which had to be required from the intellectual leadership of the War College. The reason may most likely be found in the personnel situation which was made very critical by the Army's expansion program and by personnel transfers to the Luftwaffe.

The struggle to obtain first-class instructors for General Staff replacements is an old one. Even General Litzmann could not carry through his point against Graf Schlieffen. An army's most valuable asset are its properly selected officers studying at the War College. The student body is not only the reservoir whence come the assistants of intermediary and higher commanders, but from it also rise the future highest army leaders.

The full development of a man's faculties requires others who are superior because of their maturity of intellect, spirit, and character and who are able to serve as examples of the military and civilian virtues. The training of General Staff replacements therefore requires the best possible teachers who can be obtained within an army. Their fitness as teachers should not be measured exclusively by tactical and operational knowledge and the ability to impart a realistic picture of war, but they should also have a deep understanding of human nature and how to deal with men. Only officers who themselves are slated for future positions of command in the Army should become teachers, at least in the final year of study at the War College. In this connection it should be remembered that men like Beck, Manstein, Kluge, and several other future army group commanders had for years been training assistant chiefs of staff. The university professors and other instructors who teach the various subjects

still to be discussed in section B, paragraph 4, should be equally well qualified. The price paid and the disadvantages accepted will often bear rich fruit.

It was a wise arrangement at the War College to systematically divide the students into a command staff and, according to their seniority, into classes. In a like manner, it proved successful to split up the various courses into "classrooms," each headed by an instructor in tactics as classroom chief. The number of students making up each classroom, as a rule about twenty, was too high.

2. The Students

According to their branch of service, the composition of the students corresponded, on the whole, to the numerical strength of the various branches. About half were infantrymen. The remainder came from other branches, with the artillery sending the relatively largest contingent, and the cavalry for a long time, a very small one. From 1938 on, the number of officers detached to the War College from the cavalry and the mobile troops grew steadily.

The solidarity between the various classes during duty hours was satisfactory. There prevailed the spirit of comradeship among officers customary throughout the army. Every form of showing off was excluded from the start. Sporadic cases of false ambition failed to get very far, quite apart from the fact that they were quickly seen through by their teachers, because they were immediately opposed by a united front of their fellow students.

The solidarity between students during off-duty hours was very loose and, from the point of view of training and esprit de corps, unsatisfactory. The reasons for this were manifold. They were to be found in the fact that, after duty hours, every one rushed all over the huge metropolis. Moreover, most men were married and wished to join their families. Varying interests, larger or smaller purses, the different social ties and outlook of South and North Germans, all did their part to prevent any real solidarity from developing outside of duty hours. Nor was this situation changed by regularly recurring social meetings between students and their ladies.

For the above-mentioned reasons there also existed, as a rule, no strong inner cohesion between instructors and students. The students felt a certain sense of inferiority toward the instructors on whose judgment so much depended for their future careers. Some instructors, on the other hand, practiced extreme reticence for fear of indicating any sort of favoritism. The stiffness natural to North Germans occasionally helped to increase the lack of sociability!

Intellectually, most of the students were of good average quality. Only a few were obviously below standard, a fact which proved the success of the initial selective screening. Just a few were those whose intellectual abilities rose far above average. In some classrooms, indeed in some age classes, there was not even one man with outstanding talents. Nonetheless, generally one or two of the students could be said to justify great expectations because of the impression conveyed by their entire personalities in their manifest capabilities.

In retrospect, and from a pedagogical viewpoint, it is regrettable that the War College was located in Berlin proper. Its location some distance from the Reich capital would have greatly increased solidarity among its members and afforded ample opportunities to profit from Berlin's many advantages. This, of course, would have required a large-scale and very expensive building program.

3. Education and Training

Education and training at the War College were aimed at procuring competent assistants for intermediate and higher commanders. No specialized training was given for any particular branch of the General Staff, such as the quartermaster or Ic service. Nor would this have been possible within the time limit of three, and subsequently only two, years. Training was therefore deliberately restricted to familiarizing the student with the important, many-sided, and responsible tasks entrusted to the first General Staff officer of a division. Chief emphasis was placed, consequently, on tactics, it being the main subject in addition to military history. In comparison with these subjects, all others such as supply, transportation,

aerial tactics, motorization, and signal communications were regarded as of secondary importance. Further, each student had to learn one language of his own choice. In addition, many lectures were given which dealt with military or general scientific topics.

Four mornings a week were devoted to training in the classroom. The same afternoons were usually free. On a fifth weekday the whole class rode to the more distant vicinity of Berlin in order to take part in tactical exercises. The sixth weekday, generally a Thursday, was off-duty and available for self-study. Several times, generally at the beginning, middle, and conclusion of a training year, training tours to more distant parts of Germany took place which lasted about ten days. One tour always led to East Prussia, then separated from the Reich by the Polish Corridor. These training tours were almost exclusively designed to promote tactical training. On these occasions battlefields, places of interest, factories, and so forth were also visited.

The students were not given regular home work, so that their time was not taken up too much by official duties. As a rule, they had to write at home only one fairly long report on tactics per year. During the first year, the topic of the assigned report dealt with the planning of a regimental inspection on a drill ground, and during the second year with a plan for a divisional maneuver lasting several days. In addition, each student had to plan and take charge of at least one map exercise or war game and of one tactical ride (Gelaendebesprechung). He also had to prepare and deliver extemporaneously one lecture on military history each year.

History was not taught. Political problems were discussed by speakers from the National Socialist Party and by individual Foreign Officer officials. The lectures delivered by the former were obviously colored and therefore rejected, whereas those given by the latter were usually very objective.

Consequently, tactics occupied the teaching program almost exclusively. There was no introduction to strategic interrelations except as it occurred within the framework of conventional courses on military history.

In the first year, tactical training was given on the level of a reinforced infantry regiment and then on the level of an infantry division. Occasionally, problems of a cavalry division and increasingly those of a Panzer division had to be solved. Problems at corps or army level were not treated at all during the period from 1932 to 35. At first, the tactical situations were merely worked out in war games, that is, with the students playing only one side, while the game supervisor played the other. Later, the situations were worked out in war games with full teams on both sides. Unfortunately, in 1934, the latter method was forbidden by the commandant of the War College in all cases where students acted as game supervisors, on the grounds that these problems were beyond their abilities.

The training period, reduced to two years as a result of the Army's expansion program, just about sufficed for this type of limited curriculum. But with so little time available, and with a cutback in the curriculum as described, it was virtually impossible to obtain really outstanding General Staff officers. Not all of them were able to gradually close the gaps in their education by their own efforts. Nor did all of them have the kind of superior officers who would help them to make up for the training which they had missed. A three-year training period is essential, for otherwise the result will be an incomplete patchwork. Such a training period is absolutely indispensable unless, as will be described below, the curriculum is drastically revised and enlarged.

The War College should not confine its aims merely to providing aides for intermediate commanders. The author believes that its training should impart to students a thorough understanding of tactics, and ability to judge quickly any situation and to make decisions instantly, and most important of all, a highly perfected technique of issuing commands that are terse and yet contain every essential point. Such training should also cover the fundamentals of strategic command. Of course, this should not exclude training in the peculiarities of naval and air warfare, and hence, training in the command of the over-all Wehrmacht. Exhaustive training

on all questions pertaining to the over-all Wehrmacht command is naturally a matter to be handled by the Wehrmacht College. In addition supply and transportation problems, the decisive importance of which was again strikingly proved during World War II, should not be taught as a "side-line" but far more intensively than was done before the War. Students should also take part in at least one supply service training tour as assigned tactical commanders, supply experts, or in some similar capacity.

It is further necessary to arouse and widen the interest of General Staff replacements in current problems. The fundamental principles and realities of historical, geographic, and political relations, of the opportunities for technical developments, of the imponderable factors and the capacity of industry and agriculture, as well as of social services must become firmly imbedded in the minds of the future assistants to army commanders. A great deal of time should be devoted to these subjects, and none but top level instructors should be hired, irrespective of cost. Only General Staff officers who are thus equipped with an abundance of mental tools may be regarded as fully trained according to modern standards. This type of general education should be considered just as important as the purely military training at the War College. Any over-evaluation of purely military subjects might easily lead, unintentionally of course, to the development of one-sidedness and of a narrow horizon.

Training in the special branches of the General Staff service, such as security matters, or quartermaster service, including the military administration of occupied territories, is impossible within the scope of a three-year training period at the War College. Military training must therefore be confined strictly to command functions, in which connection the supply service, as already mentioned, should be treated far more thoroughly than before. In wartime it is necessary to make sensible decisions on short notice and to carry them out rapidly. Special attention should therefore be paid, and adequate ratings accorded to speedy work performed under severe pressure of time. Even though no General Staff officer has the authority to act as judge in court martials, it is

nevertheless absolutely essential that he should receive thorough training in jurisprudence and international law.

During the entire training period, the foremost aim must be the probing of the student's character, and his development into an individual who will live up to the ideals of the General Staff. Those who are unfit must be excluded while still in the War College. It is a well-known fact that, under the pressure of everyday routine, superiors will easily lose sight of their mission of probing into and developing the characters of their subordinates. To be sure, this task is a very difficult one. So-called 'phonies' generally understand only too well how to camouflage their weaknesses. It is therefore all the more necessary to keep them under constant observation. A sound knowledge of human nature is an absolute requisite for every teacher and assistant chief of staff.

4. Detachments to Various Arms

Each year classes closes on 30 June and commenced again on 1 October. In the intervening three months the assistant chiefs of staff were detached to different arms branches, where they took part in autumn maneuvers.

For example: A cavalry assistant chief of staff was detached as follows: before the beginning of his first training year at the War College, from 15 June to 15 September, to the artillery; between the first and the second training years, half time each of the engineers and to the Signal Corps; between the second and the third years at the College, to the armored troops; and after the conclusion of his assistant chief of staff training, to the Luftwaffe, as aircraft observer.

During that time it was a common rule that the assistant chief of staff should be trained and assigned, in the Army, as company or battery commander, and in the Luftwaffe, as observer. On the whole, this rule was observed. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the entire three months were available for detached service. This was true only if the individual in question was willing to cut his leave to two weeks and take it after 15 September, and further, if the unit to which he was

detached was not also at that time on leave, which usually lasted six weeks. Irrespective of such encroachments on time, this type of detached service was very beneficial, and indispensable for assistant chief of staff training. A longer period of detached service would of course have been necessary to really acquaint the men with the nature and characteristics of other arms. But there simply was not enough time for this. The interest which superior officers showed in the assistant chiefs of staff assigned to them was not always entirely satisfactory. But this resulted in hardly any harm, because the students were almost all ambitious men interested in the cause for its own sake. The commanders concerned were not required to rate the assistant chiefs of staff as their period of detached service was too short.

5. Final Rating

At the completion of the War College period the important decision had to be made as to which students were to be accepted for assignment to the General Staff on a probationary basis, and which were to be judged disqualified. Students were rated according to the over-all impression made on the faculty by their proficiency and personality. The judgment of the instructor in tactics, who also was the classroom supervisor, carried the greatest weight. Next to him it was the opinion of the instructor in military history which counted the most. There was no final examination. However, on the final training tour in which the students participated, present ratings were again reviewed, but substantial changes were made very rarely. No certificates were issued. The students were merely told either that they had been accepted for assignment to the General Staff, or else briefly the reasons why they were not.

This procedure had the disadvantage that it was more difficult to convince a disqualified student of the fairness of the judgment passed on him than if he had undergone the kind of preliminary examination given at military area headquarters, with such safeguards as anonymous code names.

In case the curriculum were to be extended to cover the subjects suggested in Chapter B, item 3, a written final examination on at least these subjects would be indispensable. It appears practicable, therefore, that the judgment formed regarding students while at the War College should be confirmed by a written examination covering all subjects.

C. Training at General Staff Schools During Wartime

During the War, because of the many reorganizations and the extraordinary loss of entire armies and army groups, the need for General Staff officers grew to almost unlimited proportions. It was at least eight times the peacetime requirements during a comparable period, on the basis of an estimate which is very inadequate due to a lack of files. Except as the initial mobilization table provided for such needs, no provisions were made for them, inasmuch as the Army High Command did not count on an early war nor on so many vacancies. Aside from these facts, it would simply have been physically impossible to make all preparations during the time available before the outbreak of the war. Under urgent conditions the difficult tasks had to be resolved, so to speak, extemporaneously. This made unavoidable a system of expedients. Just as unavoidable were certain errors of judgment. Seen as a whole in retrospect, the number and quality of the General Staff replacements who were trained represents an actual accomplishment deserving full credit. This accomplishment was no less because as the conflict wore on the efficiency of all General Staff officers was no longer the same as at the start of the war.

In the following pages the author will briefly discuss all the facts surrounding General Staff training during the War on the basis of observations made at the front.

All the officers assigned to General Staff courses had personally faced the enemy and had combat experience. They knew what war really looked like, what the troops really could do, what they thought, what they needed, and where the shoe pinched. This was a more valuable endowment than could possibly be approached by even the most imaginative peacetime training on no matter how extensive a scale. It is impossible to conceive of a more ideal human material for training as assistants to commanders than soldiers tested and matured at the front.

These were the factors which immensely facilitated General Staff training during the war. They were counterbalanced by difficulties which

will now be briefly dealt with. First, there was the procurement of top quality teachers. It is a well-known fact that even in peacetime it was not easy to procure them. How much more difficult was this problem at a time when there were several times as many field army headquarters staffs, all rightly clamoring for and absolutely needing competent General Staff officers. It is an outsider's impression that in spite of all the difficulties, especially during the period before the autumn of 1942, instructors were selected systematically and with great care.

In Chapter A, item 3, there have been mentioned the factors which make more difficult a proper evaluation of the purely professional qualifications necessary for General Staff service.

Another difficulty was the pressure of time under which the training had to take place. More than six months were generally not available. It was for this reason that the curriculum had to be sharply curtailed. In the author's opinion, the condensed training of General Staff replacements during wartime should include, as far as possible, the following subjects:

- a. An introduction into the connections between military command and politics.
- b. A discussion of all the sufferings and requirements which a modern war now exacts from the life of the whole nation and all of its resources.
- c. A careful treatment of the problems of Wehrmacht command and military top level organization, as well as of the nature and capacity of the individual Wehrmacht branches.
- d. A thorough training in troop command, including troop supply, with emphasis on division levels, taking into account that the command technique within this framework must be brought to the highest point of efficiency.
- e. Briefing in all problems pertaining to military administration in occupied territories, and international law.

With regard to the training of the generally very young assistant chiefs of staff it becomes particularly necessary to increase their ability to recognize quickly the essential points of a situation. Moreover,

they must also be trained to exploit audaciously any favorable situations. Additional careful attention must be paid to training them to become capable of sober, completely dispassionate evaluation of situations and the cool weighing of facts. The dangers of cheap optimism cannot be stressed emphatically enough. The duty to always care for the troops should be seriously emphasized. The General Staff replacements must be impressed with the fact that they should always observe a deep feeling of modesty, that they should consider their own personal aspirations as secondary to the larger cause, and that they should practice a sense of responsibility as well as the highest devotion to duty.

If fully competent instructors are available for properly selected replacements, it appears possible to train within one year adequate assistant chiefs of staff who possess all the qualifications described in the foregoing. It is self-evident that they could not possibly live up to all the demands on proficiency and character which were raised in Chapter B, item 3.

D. Probationary Service and Final Transfer to the General Staff

1. In peacetime

After being pronounced fit for assignment to the General Staff, the assistant chief of staff was transferred for probationary service in the General Staff for a period of one year, provided he had studied at the War College for three years, and for a period of one and a half years of probationary service, provided he had studied only two years. At this juncture it should be noted that this was standard procedure in the Prussian General Staff before World War I. It was discontinued by the 100,000-man Army but reintroduced by Generaloberst Beck in 1934. This revival of an old custom was frequently criticized because it was considered pedantic. The judgment by the War College was supposedly sufficient. After two or even three years of the training, during which time his instructors had ample opportunities to get an exhaustive impression about him, the assistant chief of staff was supposedly either qualified for General Staff service, or he was not. Any new period of testing would mean nothing more than an unfair hardship.

The author takes the following viewpoint: None but those who are fully qualified as to competency and personality should be assigned to the General Staff. The replacements can therefore not be screened thoroughly enough. But careful screening requires a great deal of time. It calls for the judgment of several experienced superiors. It is impossible to leave such a decision almost entirely to the instructor in tactics and the classroom supervisor at the War College. On the contrary, it is particularly important that not only the opinions of his superiors in the General Staff be heard, but those of others as well, for instance the divisional commanders under whom the assistant chief of staff is working. Furthermore, it is by no means an established fact that an individual who had good marks in theoretical subjects at the War College would automatically prove his worth in actual General Staff practice. For the sake of a really effective selection and a continued screening one is bound to agree with the above-mentioned procedure. In the last analysis it is

unquestionably better for both the assistant chief of staff, no less than for the prestige of the institution, for him to be transferred back to the line before his permanent assignment to the General Staff than if he is compelled to remove the insignia he has been wearing, after perhaps only a short time.

2. During Wartime

Probationary service with the General Staff was then reduced to nine months. As regards the retention of this measure, the spirit of what was said in paragraph 1 applies equally to wartime as well. The reduction of the peacetime probationary period to half in wartime was a timely and justified measure.

E. Education and Training in the General Staff Itself

1. In Peacetime

The intellectual and character development of General Staff officers during peacetime was under the constant supervision of the superiors concerned. It was carried out by the submission of efficiency reports almost every year to the Army Personnel Office and the Army Chief of Staff. The competent disciplinary superiors were responsible for making out these efficiency reports. They were, in the case of officers assigned to General Staffs with troops, the divisional commanders or the chiefs of staff at army corps or army group headquarters level. It was a standing rule that the corps commander would review the reports on all General Staff officers in each army corps command.

Efficiency reports for General Staff officers assigned to the Army High Command and Wehrmacht High Command were filled out by their respective branch chiefs, to be reviewed by the next higher superiors (Army Deputy Chief of Staff, and the branch and section chiefs in the OKH and OKW). All efficiency reports on General Staff officers were collected at the Central Branch (Zentralabteilung or GZ) of the Army General Staff, where they were evaluated and submitted to the Army Chief of Staff. None but their respective superiors rated General Staff officers serving at the front. If they were slated for reassignment to the General Staff, their efficiency reports also were channeled through the Army Personnel Office to the Army Chief of Staff, who was thus also informed about their qualifications.

For the general mental and tactical training of General Staff officers with the field forces the appropriate corps commander was responsible, whereas the branch chiefs of the respective staffs were themselves responsible for the training of General Staff officers within their staffs. For the General Staff officers working in top-level agencies (OKH and OKW), the Chief of Army General Staff reserved training authority to himself, and delegated responsibility in this respect to the "4th Branch" (4. Abteilung--training branch), and subsequently to the "11th Branch" (officer training

branch), of Army General Staff.

Advanced training at army corps level took place by way of one Corps General Staff training tour per year and through terrain discussions, augmented in winter by various written problems. Advance training for General Staff officers in the OKH and OKW was regulated in a similar manner. They also had to solve various problems in military history submitted by the Historical Division of the General Staff.

To the extent that their other duties permitted, as many General Staff officers as possible were detached for training assignments with the supply, transportation, and other branches. A good opportunity to advance their tactical training was provided General Staff officers with the field forces by preparatory planning for the yearly autumn maneuvers and other exercises (e.g., for communications, field fortifications, etc.) and by work in the respective command staffs.

The Army Chief of Staff retained control of the General Staff officers' operational training. This training was given to all General Staff officers above the rank of captain and entailed at least one operational problem each winter. All chiefs of staff of army group headquarters and army corps, as well as senior General Staff officers slated for possible assignment as chiefs of staff participated in the yearly training tours sponsored by the Army Chief of Staff. These tours, which lasted about two weeks, were important not only because they offered the participants an occasion to meet each other, but also and more especially because they gave the Army Chief of Staff, who was personally in charge, an opportunity to inform senior General Staff officers about command procedures and their implementation in a contingency.

Consequently, education and training of General Staff officers was under the constant control of the superior in charge. The Army Chief of Staff was the disciplinary superior of only those General Staff officers working in the Army General Staff but not of those assigned to OKH, OKW, and the General Staffs with field forces. His prestige was so great, however, that he exercised full authority over all General Staff officers.

In principle, the training procedure described in the foregoing was patterned after that prevailing in the pre-1914 General Staff period. This type of procedure also proved successful during the period preceding World War II. A still more intensive advanced training, such as in the interrelations of politics, history, economics, etc., was precluded by the immense amount of work which General Staff officers had to perform as a part of the Army expansion program.

Integrated into the training program were all those measures which provided that General Staff officers should preserve their ties with the troops in the field, lest they become estranged from them in the course of protracted desk duties. This required a regular exchange between the General Staff and troop units, as well as frequent, though brief, detached service assignments. The likelihood of estrangement was of course greatest in the case of General Staff officers employed in central agencies. There, however, because of the accelerated Army expansion, their loss was felt the hardest. As a result of the Army's increasingly precipitate expansion, which brought about an over-all shortage of General Staff officers, and the constant overtaxing of all agencies, the scheduled exchange of officers between the General Staff and the troop units was hampered by the greatest of difficulties. It should therefore be recognized as an achievement that it was actually possible, even during the reconstruction years, to assign each General Staff officer for one year as company commander, and for two years as battalion or regimental commander. That these assignments were too short is obvious. But more time was simply not available then.

2. During Wartime

War was itself the most effective of teachers. The Army Chief of Staff's influence upon the widely dispersed General Staff officers was necessarily on the wane. Within the field forces, the sphere of influence exercised by the chiefs of staff of army groups, armies, and corps did not on the whole extend beyond the General Staff officers in

their own staffs, and the chiefs of staff and the Ia officers of immediately subordinate headquarters. Their influence upon these men was very strong, however, because of daily meetings or telephone communications. Their influence on supply officers (Oberquartiermeister, Quartiermeister I, Ib officers) was lessened since the latter were frequently stationed at different places. There existed the danger that the latter might lead a life of their own, a tendency which had to be constantly combatted. General Staff officers serving in other agencies could, in actual practice, be influenced only by personal visits. In these instances, just as on so many other occasions during the war, personal contact was of the greatest and most far-reaching value. In this case, as always, a good example showed the best results.

The chiefs of staff from corps up had to review reports on the work performed in the General Staff service which had been made out by the commanders, but they personally rated the General Staff officers of their own staffs.

During wartime, adequate authority for directing subordinates was vested in members of the General Staff, who, as a rule, availed themselves of it insofar as the burden of everyday routine permitted.

Entirely unsatisfactory, however, was the contemplated exchange of personnel between the General Staff and front line units. Although constant attempts were made in this direction, they failed due to circumstances, and were always inadequate, even during the first war years.

3. Personnel Policy

According to directives from the Army Chief of Staff, the Central Branch (Zentralabteilung) was responsible for General Staff personnel policy. Following old traditions, it acted during peacetime solely on objective consideration and it endeavored to provide for long-range requirements. Its personnel policy was hampered because of the precipitate army expansion program carried out in spite of all warnings by the General Staff and the Army Personnel Office. It certainly would have proved fruitful if allowed an organic development.

During the war the Central Branch continued the effort to carry out its steadfast personnel policy. Conditions, such as increasing casualties, never-ending reorganizations, and the most varied kind of interference by the supreme command, impeded its work to a growing extent. Consequently, after 1943, its regular procedures as hitherto practiced became vitiated by the force of circumstances. It is nevertheless a fact that until the end of the War Army General Staff officers were selected, appointed, and employed solely according to strictly professional considerations. It was not until the final war year that the author became aware of two cases in which, upon the request of commanders who enjoyed special favors "higher up," General Staff officers received appointments with which the Central Branch disagreed. But even in these cases the decisive factor was personal viewpoints, and by no means political ones, which never played any part in the Army General Staff.

F. Summary

1. Initial Selection

The methods applied by the 100,000-man Army for the initial selection of General Staff replacements was exemplary. Their continued full application in the re-established conscript Army was impeded only by the requirements and circumstances under which the Army expansion program was carried out.

Similarly, the preparatory studies for the military area examination, as well as the manner in which the latter was implemented, proved completely successful.

The principles for the initial selection of General Staff replacements in wartime were also effective.

2. War College Training

None but first-class men should be hired as teachers at the War College. They should be highly skilled and possess a time-tested and solid knowledge of human nature.

Comradely cohesion between students should be furthered and the inner tie between teachers and students strengthened.

A training period of two years is too short. It must be three years.

The curriculum and its evaluation should not primarily be confined to purely military subjects. These must be broadened to include:

An introduction into the fundamentals of operational command and over-all Armed Forces command;

Greater stress in training on matters pertaining to supplies and transportation;

Instruction in historical, political, and geographic interrelations, as well as in the influence of industry and technology upon the nation and warfare; and

Greater emphasis on psychology and the training of character.

3. Training During Wartime

The training period in General Staff courses was too short. One

year is necessary.

In addition to thorough training in leadership and command techniques on the division level there is needed:

An introduction into the connections between politics and warfare;

An explanation of all that modern war requires and the duties it imposes upon the entire nation;

A detailed treatment of problems relating to Wehrmacht branches;

A familiarization with problems pertaining to the military administration of occupied territories, and with international law;

A broadening of the outlook to permit a speedy recognition of essentials; training to observe sobriety and a cool weighing of the facts in a given situation; training for the development of a sense of responsibility and the highest devotion to duty, as well as to genuine rather than formal obedience.

4. Probationary Service

Both the probationary service and its duration fitted the purpose in peace and war.

5. Training

Measures and methods proved suitable and successful. Continuous screening was absolutely essential for the creation of a genuine elite.

However, in the process of increasing a student's knowledge to the acme of perfection, the shaping and strengthening of his character should never be neglected.

From a decree, issued on 1 January 1921 by Generaloberst v. Seeckt on "The Fundamentals of Army Training" (Die Grundlagen der Erziehung des Heeres") are quoted the following concluding words: "More important than skill and knowledge is living, and strengthening of character should have priority over the training of the mind."

(Signed) Westphal

Part II

The Organization, Work, and Inner Life of the General Staff.

A. The Truppenamt

The Versailles Treaty ordered the dissolution of the Great General Staff, the central headquarters of the General Staff of the old army. On the other hand, the general staffs with field forces at division and larger headquarters were given permission to continue their functions. Moreover, General Staff officers were assigned to one of the offices in the Army Command of the Reichswehr Ministry. This office was designated the "Truppenamt." By a decree, dated 24 November 1919, Generalmajor Von Seeckt was appointed first Chief of the Truppenamt. Beginning with 3 July 1919 Seeckt as the last Army Chief of Staff had to carry out the dissolution of the General Staff. The General Staff officers serving in the Truppenamt and in the general staffs with field forces in army group headquarters, in military area headquarters, with cavalry division headquarters, as infantry or artillery commanders, or in garrison headquarters, wore the uniform of the former General Staff. In the autumn of 1926, after the retirement of Generaloberst Von Seeckt, the first Chief of the Army Command, these General Staff officers were redesignated "Command Group officers" ("Fuehrerstabsoffiziere").

The essential functions of the former Great General Staff were now centered in the Truppenamt, whose organization and work were known to and sanctioned by the Inter-Allied Control Commission. Operating at first in four branches, T1, T2, T3, and T4, the Truppenamt's work covered the following fields of activity:

- a. Military measures to cope with internal disturbances and for border protection
- b. Basic organizational problems affecting the Army
- c. Home defense
- d. Study of foreign armies
- e. Supplies and railway transportation

f. Training

In addition to his regular duties the Chief of the Truppenamt was responsible for the training and replacement of Command Staff officers at higher headquarters. Command Staff officers were responsible solely to their commanding officers. There was no General Staff corps with authority or responsibility of its own. Officers rotated between troop units, the staffs, and the Truppenamt. Command Staff officers were an elite, like General Staff officers in the old army. Most key commanders were therefore drawn from the ranks of former Command Staff officers.

There was a basic difference between the Truppenamt and the General Staff of the old Army, since the latter had been vested with central authority. On all matters within his competency the Army Chief of Staff had reported directly to the Kaiser. His influence had thus been incomparably greater than that wielded by the Chief of the Truppenamt, who was nothing more than the executive organ of his superior, the Chief of Army Command, who in turn was a subordinate of the Reichswehr Minister. In the old army, by way of contrast, the Chief of Staff had been directly responsible to the Kaiser, as the Supreme War Lord, and had been equal in rank to the War Minister.

Co-ordinated with the Truppenamt were the following four other offices in the Army Command:

- a. The Personnel Office, handling personal data of officers.
- b. The Wehramt, directing details of all organizational problems, as well as replacements of enlisted personnel.
- c. The Ordnance Office, in charge of armaments and their technical development.
- d. The Army Administrative Office handling pay, clothing, rations, and billets.

A few Command Staff officers also worked in the above-mentioned offices, in the Ordnance inspectorates, and in the Ministerial Office (Ministeramt) which operated under the Reichswehr Minister. The Truppenamt's main effort was concentrated on training. Each year there

were usually two training tours for the benefit of senior commanders and their assistants. Prepared by the Truppenamt, in full recognition of Germany's military impotence, these training tours dealt with problems of defense against, or the stopping of, an enemy attack, generally not until the enemy had reached the interior of the country.

Education and training was shaped by two principal aims, first, to qualify the professional soldiers as NCOs and thus to obtain the cadre for a larger army in case re-armament was permitted, and second to give combat training, in which the main stress was laid on delaying actions, to gain time while falling back across large areas.

For the first time preparations were made to put the Army on a War basis, by 1 April 1930, while trebling the seven infantry divisions of the 100,000-man army. But the weapons were not sufficient for twenty-one divisions, so that only actual combat troops could be armed while the number of batteries and the number of guns within each battery had to be reduced. Stocks of ammunition were lacking. With the knowledge and encouragement of the Reich government a voluntary border protection service operated in the East, which was relatively strong on the Polish frontier and less so on the Czech border. This service bore the characteristics of an almost untrained militia. It was organized by the military area headquarters according to directives issued by the Truppenamt. The same applies to the Eastern home defenses built on a very modest scale during the early thirties in the "Heilsberg Triangle," in Pomerania, and on the Oder. These "territorial missions" made up an important part of the work performed by Command Staff officers in the military area headquarters and some of these at cavalry division headquarters. In compliance with directives issued by the Truppenamt, these officers also devoted constant attention to promoting the training and proficiency of the individual soldier. This work was closely tied up with the training of assistant chiefs of staff, who, during their first two years in this post, were distributed among the various military area headquarters, and only in the third and final year were all assigned to the T4 branch of the Truppenamt.

It is self-evident that the officer corps, and in it the Command Staff officers, suffered mental anguish because of Germany's defenselessness. But the officer corps and the Command Staff officers took a realistic view of the situation and never entertained any thoughts of revenge. They did not plan to change the Versailles Treaty by violent means, and still less to annex foreign territories. They hoped for a future revision of the Versailles Treaty, which was also increasingly demanded abroad. The Truppenamt wanted to prepare for this event by transforming the German Army into a genuine instrument of national defense, visualizing a trebling of its effectiveness.

Cohesion among the Command Staff officers was good. Their prestige in the Army and among the people insofar as they appeared before the public at all, was also genuine. They were imbued with real patriotism and trained for unpolitical thinking and action.

B. The Army General Staff

The proclamation of military sovereignty on 16 March 1935 freed Germany from the restrictions imposed by the military provisions of the Versailles Treaty, and hence also from the prohibition against maintaining a General Staff. This fact made obsolete the former term of "Command Staff officer." The Truppenamt was redesignated "Army General Staff." Beck, until now Chief of the Truppenamt, took over its command as the first Army Chief of Staff.

But these developments by no means re-established the kind of General Staff which had functioned in the old army. This is a fact worth remembering. The new Army General Staff, like the Truppenamt, was merely an executive organ of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, formerly called Chief of Army Command. The Army Chief of Staff was afforded no opportunities to influence political decisions of the German Government. In this connection it should be realized that the Army Chief of Staff was subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, he to the War Minister, and the latter in turn to Hitler, as Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht. Thus, the Army Chief of Staff still had two intermediate superiors between himself and the Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht, whereas before 1914 the Army Chief of Staff had operated directly under the Kaiser. It is characteristic of the position of the Army Chief of Staff that between 1935 and 1938 General Beck was received altogether only twice by Hitler. He was also given only very few opportunities to report to the War Minister. The author remembers Beck's bitter words in the late autumn of 1937 because for nine months he had not been allowed to talk with the War Minister.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Army was himself also limited to strictly military duties. Like the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, he had the rank of a Reich Minister but no voice in the Reich Cabinet. Only the War Minister, and Goering, in his dual capacity as Minister of Aviation and Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe, had such a voice. All planning military problems having aspects touching on domestic or

foreign policies, which formerly had been worked on in the ministerial office of the Reichswehr Minister, was now done in the Wehrmachtsamt of the Reich War Minister. The reinstated military attaches reported to the Army Chief of Staff on military problems only. Their reports had to be countersigned by their respective mission chiefs before transmission, whereas before 1919 such reports had been sent directly to the Army Chief of Staff.

During the spring of 1935 the Truppenamt was reorganized as the Army General Staff. Reorganization was carried on, outwardly patterned closely after the former Great General Staff, and was in general brought to a close on a peacetime basis by the autumn of 1938. Initially, the following offices were redesignated and reorganized:

- a. T1 (Army Branch) into 1st Branch (Operations Branch)
- b. T1-IV (Transportation Group) into 5th Branch (Transportation Branch)
- c. T1 V (Quartermaster* Group) into 6th Branch (Quartermaster Branch)
- d. T2 (Army Organization Branch) into 2nd Branch (Organization Branch)
- e. T3 (Foreign Armies Branch) into 3rd Branch (Foreign Armies Branch)
- f. T4 (Army Training Branch) into 4th Branch (Training Branch)

In 1935 the following new branches were created:

- g. The Central Branch of the Army General Staff (GZ), formed from P3 (Personnel Group) of the Army Personnel Office
- h. The 7th Branch (Military History Branch)
- i. The 8th Branch (Technical Branch).

For the purpose of lightening the work of the Army Chief of Staff, the posts of Deputy Chiefs of Staff I, III, and V were created. The nine branches now in existence were subordinated as follows:

Central Branch, 3rd Branch and 4th Branch to the Chief of Staff directly;

* Ed: The Quartermaster (Quartiermeister), or Chief Quartermaster (Oberquartiermeister) is a General Staff officer in charge of supply and administration.

1st Branch, 2nd Branch, and 8th Branch to the Chief Quartermaster I (Operations);

5th Branch and 6th Branch to Chief Quartermaster III (Organization)

and 7th Branch to Chief Quartermaster V (Historical Research).

The remaining groups -- Home Defense, Topography, and Military Geography -- were reorganized as independent groups in the autumn of 1936. From them were activated the 10th Branch (Home Defense Branch) and the 9th Branch (Branch for Military Maps and Topography). Both branches were headed by Chief Quartermaster I (Operations.).

In the autumn of 1937 the overtaxed 3rd Branch was divided into the 3rd Branch (Western Foreign Armies Branch), and the 12th Branch (Eastern Foreign Armies Branch). Both branches together with the Attaché Group (subsequently the Attaché Branch) were subordinated to the newly-formed Chief Quartermaster IV (Intelligence). For the same reason, that of decentralization, there was created in the autumn of 1937 the 11th Branch (Officer Training Branch) from elements of the 4th Branch, which now handled enlisted men's training only. Both branches were now headed by the newly-created Chief Quartermaster II (Training).

In 1938 the office of the Chief of Army Archives was established and subordinated to the Chief Quartermaster V. Consequently, the peacetime organization of the Army Chief of Staff was as follows:

Chief of Army General Staff

Central Branch

Chief Quartermaster I	Chief Quartermaster II	Chief Quartermaster III	Chief Quartermaster IV	Chief Quartermaster V
1st Branch	4th Branch	5th Branch	3rd Branch	7th Branch
2nd Branch	11th Branch	6th Branch	12th Branch	Chief of)
8th Branch	Motion pic-)		Attaché Group)	Army Archives)
9th Branch	ture agency)		(later Branch))	
10th Branch				

Subordinated: Inspectorate for Home Defense.

The Army Chief of Staff was the closest military adviser of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and his regular deputy in current affairs, although a special deputy was designated during prolonged absences. His official authority was not greater, however, than that of the other four branch chiefs in the Army High Command, those of the Army Personnel Office, the General Army Office, the Army Ordnance Office, the Army Administrative Office in comparison to whom the Army Chief of Staff was no more than the first among equals. His actual influence was greater, however, although only in the purely military sphere. This greater influence was due to his position as the confidant of the Supreme Commander of the Army, to his personal prestige, and to his mission of his Office which was to see to it that the Army was always in a state of maximum readiness for performing its mission of safeguarding the national defense, in compliance with orders from the Supreme Command. The Army Chief of Staff had to issue, according to directives received from the Army Commander-in-Chief, the basic orders and regulations pertaining to activations, organization, training, armament, technical developments, preparations for mobilization, and the defense of the national borders. These orders were mainly carried out by the other OKH offices, since it was they who issued the necessary orders in detail. For example, the Army General Staff might request an increased number of reserve divisions in next year's mobilization schedule. The General Army Office would then examine the situation and issue corresponding executive orders to corps headquarters, etc. As another example, the Army General Staff might request the introduction of a certain type of armored gun for the direct support of the infantry. The Army Ordnance Office would initiate research, develop the gun, and deliver it after successful tests.

The requests made by the Army Chief of Staff did not always meet with uniform agreement, for they were frequently opposed by the OKH agencies in charge of their implementation. This refers especially to the General Army Office which, as the agency concerned, carried the main burden and responsibility for army organization, over-all armament, and

mobilization preparations. Such friction was natural and unavoidable. But since everyone was animated by an ambition to serve the cause by following the old traditions of the General Staff and the War Ministry, and since the General Staff under its chiefs, Beck and Halder, never insisted on measures which could not be fully realized, practical compromise solutions were always found when a request by the General Staff could not immediately be carried out in its entirety.

Seen as a whole, the Army Chief of Staff's position within the OKH was one of predominance. However, his influence upon the higher army commands, such as army group headquarters, and corps headquarters, was considerably more limited than was claimed by those who described the Army Chief of Staff as the backbone of the entire Army.

All General Staff officers, including the chiefs of staff with the field forces, were subordinated solely to their respective commanding officers, and received orders only with regard to the education and training of General Staff officers from the Army Chief of Staff. The Army Chief of Staff also exercised a deciding influence upon any personnel actions affecting them. On the basis of efficiency reports which the Army Chief of Staff received from the Army Personnel Office via the Central Branch of the Army General Staff, he transmitted to the former, for submission to the Commander-in-Chief, proposals for filling vacancies in Army General Staff positions.

The Central Branch was the agency which collected and processed all personnel actions. It was also authorized to issue pre-dated commissions. During peacetime, General Staff officers usually received only one pre-dated commission at the time of promotion to major. They thus gained a start of one to two years over their colleagues with the field forces. The Central Branch also issued orders for transfer to the General Staff of officers who had successfully passed their probationary service, which also involved their authorization to wear the General Staff uniform. Introduced around the middle of the 19th century, the General Staff uniform was retained as simultaneously an incentive and a symbol of distinction.

Originally it had been designed because of the necessity of making its wearer clearly discernible on the battlefield. In modern war this was no longer necessary. It might have been more appropriate, therefore, to dispense with the conspicuous red stripes and to be satisfied with a less striking emblem, such as an embroidered collar patch. This would have cut the ground from under those who occasionally made envious and critical remarks. An individual who was not sufficiently attracted by a simple uniform proved that he did not aspire to serve merely for the sake of his country and of honor, and it would have been better if he had never been accepted by the General Staff.

Military publications and historical research, as for instance, the "Military Weekly" ("Militaerwochenblatt") and the "Society for Military Policy" ("Gesellschaft fuer Wehrpolitik") of course received new incentives by the enactment of general conscription and the enlargement of the Army. The Army General Staff furthered and supported these efforts within the limits of available funds, without, however, exerting any pressure. It again published the "Review of Military Science" ("Militaerwissenschaftliche Rundschau"), also called the "Red Booklets" ("Rote Hefte"). This review was edited by the 7th Branch and was the only periodical officially sponsored by the Army General Staff. The Chief of Staff was personally interested in seeing that it maintained high literary standards.

A division, corps (military area), or army group headquarters was headed by a chief of staff, who as the superior of all members in his staffs, commanded all functions in his headquarters. His deputy was the 1st General Staff Officer (Ia), who handled at corps headquarters organization, training and billeting of troops, and preparatory plans for troop concentrations. His assistant was the 4th General Staff officer (Id). All military security problems were in the hands of the 3rd General Staff officer (Ic/AO), while the 2nd General Staff officer (Ib) planned mobilization measures. In peacetime army group headquarters had only the Ia and Id General Staff officers in addition to their Chiefs of Staff. No General Staff officers served in the following sections at corps headquarters:

IIa and IIb -- Personnel Data; III -- Military Justice; IVa -- Administrative Supply; IVb -- Corps Physician; IVc -- Corps Veterinarian; IVd -- Chaplain; V -- Staff Officer for Motorization. Infantry, cavalry, mountain, and armored divisions had only 1st and 2nd General Staff officers (Ia and Ib). Independent brigades, garrisons, and army agencies were assigned only one General Staff officer (Ia). The "Manual for General Staff Service in Wartime" (H.Dv.g. 52) ruled that in wartime all commands, such as the army group, army, corps, and division headquarters should be uniformly organized into:

- a. Tactical groups of General Staff sections (Ia, Id, and Ic/AO), under the Ia
- b. Personnel groups of General Staff sections (IIa and IIb, in divisions only the IIa), under the IIa;
- c. Army headquarters: Chief Administration and Supply Officer Sections (Chief Quartermaster, Quartermaster 1 and Quartermaster 2), under the Chief Quartermaster.
Corps headquarters: Quartermaster section (Qu); under the Quartermaster, Divisions: Quartermaster section (Ib); under the Ib.

Army group headquarters had at first only one Ib. After 1941 they were assigned one deputy chief of staff section.

During the entire postwar period relations between the Army General Staff and the High Command of the Navy were and remained excellent, based on mutual trust. One senior staff officer each of the Army and Navy were assigned as liaison officers to the Naval Operations Branch and the General Staff Operations Branch, respectively, a fact which insured smooth communications between both high commands.

The relations between the Army High Command and the Luftwaffe High Command was a different and more difficult matter. Although the key positions in the Luftwaffe High Command and in the Luftwaffe General Staff were exclusively held by former Army officers, a great many of whom had served in the Army General Staff, it was not possible to maintain

liaison and contacts between the oldest and the youngest Wehrmacht services on a basis of complete friendship and confidence. This was not due to the members of the two high commands, or to any rivalry among them, for the causes lay far deeper. They were to be found in the personality of the Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe. Being primarily a representative of the National Socialist Party, Goering regarded the Army as far too conservative and as an opponent which resisted and hampered the aims which Hitler wished to carry out in the field of internal and foreign politics. He regarded the Army General Staff as the guiding spirit behind the partly imagined and partly real resistance. He hated and fought it, as he himself testified in Nuernberg.

Another factor was that the Italian General Douhet's theory about the superiority of strategic air warfare had gained many followers in the Luftwaffe High Command. The result was that the Army received as few men as possible for AAA and air reconnaissance, that direct air support to the Army was cut to the limit, and that there was serious friction. Another point of controversy was Goering's annexation of all army parachute units. Such hostility against the Army General Staff was bound to have repercussions in the Luftwaffe High Command. This hostility increased from year to year and reached its climax about 1943.

The Army, and in it especially the General Staff, on the other hand, had already expressed misgivings in peacetime because the Luftwaffe High Command was regarding matters too lightly showing an inclination for excessive optimism, and making promises which could not be kept later on. It is evident that such controversies were not conducive to relations of mutual confidence between the OKH and Army General Staff on the one hand, and the Luftwaffe High Command and General Staff on the other. Nonetheless, representatives of both high commands and general staffs made an effort to work in harmony. Thus it was often possible to greatly alleviate the numerous difficulties which had to be faced, but it was not possible to eliminate them entirely, for they were of too basic a nature.

C. Activities of the General Staff

The variety of tasks facing the Army General Staff is best mirrored by the work performed in its different branches, which will now be briefly described.

The 1st Branch, as Operations Branch, had to work on plans for strategic concentrations in case of war. The first such concentration plan since 1914 was put into effect on 1 October 1935. Called "Concentration Red" ("Aufmarsch Rot"), it was a purely defensive concentration plan corresponding to Germany's forces as compared to those of her possible enemies -- France, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Concentration Red provided for the commitment of three weak armies in the West which, in case of enemy attack, were to fight a delaying action and withdraw to the Rhine. The borders facing Poland and Czechoslovakia were each to be held by one additional army headed by a commander-in-chief, as well as by reserve and Landwehr divisions. The remainder of the Army with an army headquarters was to remain ready for movement in the assembly areas. Revised and redistributed each year, this concentration plan remained in force until the beginning of World War II.

In addition, a plan for "Concentration Green" was studied from 1937 on. It also provided for defensive action in the West while the major forces were at once to destroy the Czechoslovak Army by a concentric attack, thus eliminating any threat to the rear of the Western front. Since the same large Army units were given different assignments in the Red and Green plans, the orders of individual commanders had to be carefully co-ordinated to avoid confusion. Concentration orders, which of course could contain combat directives only for the first few days, were issued to those headquarters which had to plan the assembly of the various armies. These were the army group headquarters and the western border corps headquarters. There the Ia officers were responsible for planning.

In addition, the 1st Branch had to prepare the yearly training tours of the Army Chief of Staff in which the chiefs of staff of army group headquarters and corps headquarters participated, as well as officers

slated for such positions. From 1935 to 1938 these training tours, lasting about two weeks, dealt almost exclusively with German defense problems in the West. The 1st Branch also had to prepare the so-called general officer training tours which were commanded by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and attended by commanders-in-chief of army groups and other commanding generals for the purpose of studying the command of large units. Furthermore, the 1st Branch worked on the problems issued each year by the Army Chief of Staff, which had to be solved by General Staff officers from major up. Finally it was the duty of the 1st Branch to submit the necessary operational requests pertaining to organization, training, communications etc., to the branches and inspectorates concerned.

Until the 10th Branch was set up, operational problems relating to national defense were also worked out by the 1st Branch. Requests by commanders for building up national defense, inclusive of field positions which, however, were not actually to be prepared until the time of mobilization, were transmitted to the inspectorate of fortresses. At first the main effort was directed toward strengthening the Oder-Warthe Bend near Kuestrin, but after the remilitarization of the Rhineland it switched to the West.

The 2nd Branch, as the Organizational Branch, had to handle a particularly large volume of work. It had special sections dealing with the expansion and the organization of the peacetime and wartime Armies. The General Army Office issued the necessary executive regulations following the basic directives worked out by the 2nd Branch. It also prepared each year anew Special Amendments 1-9 for the Army Mobilization Plan. Among other matters, these amendments contained a list of wartime Army units, a complete wartime organization table, a wartime top level command organization table, all possible precautionary measures anticipated for emergencies, and plans for providing staffs and troop units with maps. Except for ammunition and fuel, the 2nd Branch also made out requisitions for armament materiel, primarily to the General Army Office and the Army Ordnance Office.

The 4th Branch, as the Training Branch, issued directives and orders for troop training, including the allocation of training ground sites; autumn exercises and such special exercises as communication, reconnaissance, obstacle, fortification, and similar exercises; and the training of reserve and Landwehr units. The 4th Branch revised the manual "Troop Command" ("Truppenfuehrung" -- TF) which first appeared in 1936 after General Beck had drafted its essential parts himself. Further, the 4th Branch examined all training instructions originating in the ordnance inspectorates before their issuance to the units.

The 11th Branch, as the Officer Training Branch, issued directives for officer training, including the advanced tactical training of General Staff officers. The 11th Branch was also responsible for training at the War College, set the problems for the military area examinations, supervised the training of interpreters, and currently revised the above-mentioned "Manual for General Staff Service in Wartime."

The activities of the 3rd and the 12th Branches were devoted to the study of foreign armies and of military-political foreign problems by evaluation of reports by military attachés and officers on detached service with foreign armies, of publications, and of information received from intelligence channels. The conclusions regarding foreign armies reached by these two branches formed the basis for the planning of the 1st Branch. They pointed the way for keeping abreast in the fields of organization, armament, etc.

The Attache Group, subsequently redesignated Attache Branch, was responsible for German as well as foreign military attachés accredited in Berlin.

The military security organization operated not under the Army General Staff but under the War Minister, and later on, as a part of the entire Wehrmacht, was controlled by the Wehrmacht commander-in-chief.

The 5th Branch was responsible for all Wehrmacht transportation. It sent to the Transportation Ministry all requisitions pertaining to the continued development of the railroad, highway, and inland waterway nets.

In conformance with the mobilization and strategic concentration plans, the 5th Branch prepared the annual mobilization and strategic concentration plans. Detailed transportation problems were worked out by the chief transportation officer at corps headquarters in collaboration with the Federal Railways.

The 6th Branch, as the Quartermaster Branch, was in charge of procurement for the wartime Army and handled the "Special Procurement Directives" which supplemented the mobilization orders. This branch submitted requisitions for the manufacture and procurement of ammunition, fuel, and food and also regulated their stockpiling in the strategic army concentration areas.

In addition, it was the responsibility of the 6th Branch to act on requests by the command for the setting up and the organization of rear services and other supply installations. Manual "H.Dv. 90," which was the basis for all procurement in wartime, was worked out and issued by the 6th Branch. Moreover, this branch was also in charge of preparations for evacuating personnel and materiel located in areas menaced in the event of war. With Germany's increasing military strength, these time-consuming and voluminous preparations gradually lost their importance. Finally, within the framework of the Army General Staff and in collaboration with the Army Administrative Office, the 6th Branch handled general economic problems, whereas "military economic matters" ("Wehrwirtschaft") were controlled by the Military Economic Staff, later on by the Military Economic Office in the War Ministry, and subsequently by the OKW.

The research and evaluation of military history was handled by the 7th Branch of the Army General Staff. This branch published the already mentioned "Military Science Review." It also maintained close contacts with the Reich Archives and army libraries.

The 9th Branch of the Army General Staff submitted requisitions for the printing of maps to the Reich Office For Mapping and Survey, operating under the Ministry of the Interior. This branch handled the supplying of staffs and troop units with military maps, and their storage. It also

controlled the printing of geography manuals and periodicals. The Cartographic Bureau (Kartographenbuero), which itself was needed for General Staff work, was attached to the 9th Branch.

All technical problems of interest to the Army were handled by the 8th Branch which, for this purpose, had to collaborate closely with the Army Ordnance Office.

For the event of war the Central Branch planned the assignment of officers for all staffs down to division level, and the mobility of the OKH, including the provision of alternate headquarters.

The closest co-operation among the various General Staff branches was a prime requisite if overlapping, confusion, and perhaps even contradictory orders were to be avoided. It was therefore essential that all of the more important orders concerning organization, armament, and training should before being issued be checked not only by all General Staff branches interested but also by all OKH offices and inspectorates involved. The resulting delay was unavoidable.

D. The Inner Life of the General Staff

In regard to social origin and composition, General Staff officers mirrored the Army Officer Corps as a whole. During the first years after 1935, the General Staff was still dominated by men who had come from the 100,000-man army. But there soon appeared in its ranks also officers taken over from the rural police who had passed the military area examination and had attended the War College. From 1938 on they were joined by comrades from the former Austrian Federal Army.

Conspicuous was the high percentage of South Germans and artillery officers, while the cavalry was at first represented in the General Staff by only a few officers. The reasons were merely the special proficiency and ambition of South Germans, the high quality of the artillery officer corps, and the initially small classes of young cavalry officers. The completely non-partisan selection of General Staff officers was so widely known and so undisputed that it was considered an established fact and never even discussed. In the German Army no officer was accepted by the General Staff as the result of pull, but solely because of recommendation by his superior and because of his own achievements.

In spite of its dispersal all over the country, its heavy workload, and its heterogeneous origin, the Army General Staff constituted a large family infused by a sound esprit de corps and genuine comradeship. The members of this family were linked together by a devotion to their inconspicuous and often sacrificial work for Army and fatherland. They completely lacked all political aims and political ambitions. On one day each year, 28 February, the birthday of Generalfeldmarschall Graf Alfred Von Schlieffen, General Staff officers met in Berlin under the auspices of the Schlieffen Society for a lecture and banquet. Generalfeldmarschall Von Mackensen was the head of this society, which had been formed by retired General Staff officers of the old Army. All General Staff officers of the new Army also belonged to this society as a unit.

Serving as examples to the General Staff officers were the lives, accomplishments, and conduct of the great soldiers who had come from their ranks, led by Generalfeldmarschall Graf Helmuth Von Moltke, Generalfeldmarschall Graf Von Schlieffen, Feldmarschall and President Von Hindenburg and Generaloberst Von Seeckt.

The prestige enjoyed by the General Staff in the Army Officer Corps was, aside from customary, unavoidable, and therefore sound criticism, as great as could be desired. Except as caused by an occasional case of arrogance, there existed no chasm between General Staff and line officers. Nor could this have been otherwise, if the General Staff were not to set out on a wrong course. For, according to the carefully observed rules, no one was to be transferred to the General Staff who did not have an unsullied record of efficiency as well as character. Only rarely did the faster rate of promotions, through pre-dated commissions, arouse any envy, because they were considered fair compensation for the much greater workload which General Staff officers had to accomplish. Fortunately, moreover, line officers were also accorded preferential promotions in an increasing degree.

On the whole, General Staff officers displayed a lively interest in the social, intellectual, and artistic currents of the times. Involvement in problems dealing with foreign and internal politics undoubtedly suffered because of the measures which Seeckt carried out to keep soldiers out of politics. However, measures which proved efficacious in the period of the 100,000-man Army turned into fateful liabilities during a dictatorship. But to go into the details of this subject would transcend the scope of this work.

The relations between the General Staff and all the various professions and segments of the population were satisfactory, unless individuals among them were opposed to the military as such.

The bitter strife waged against the Church by the Party and especially the circles around Himmler was opposed by the entire officer corps, except for a few outsiders, and thus also by the General Staff officers. It is characteristic of the attitude of the officer corps that Goering, in a speech addressed to senior Wehrmacht commanders at the beginning of 1938, expressly reproached the Army for its stand on ecclesiastical matters. Similarly, the General Staff repudiated the persecution of the Jews, and especially the methods applied in this connection during the period from 1933 to 1939.

Relations with the National Socialist Party always remained cool, notwithstanding the fact that the Army was ever ready to co-operate with it in the interests of nation and country. In particular, all the excesses and violent methods of the Party were sharply opposed to the basic concepts of the officer corps, and hence also of the General Staff officers.

E. The General Staff's Attitude Toward Procedural Problems

1. Rearmament

It is self-evident that the proclamation of military sovereignty was received with joy and undivided acclaim by all General Staff officers. This feeling rested to a considerable degree on moral satisfaction with the fact that Germany was now again enjoying equal rights in the society of nations. To the majority this feeling was more important than the questions of military strength itself. To the leaders of the Army and the General Staff the proclamation of military sovereignty meant the end of a nightmare from which they had suffered for the past fifteen years because of Germany's military impotence. During that period Germany had had available for a contingency only 21 poorly equipped divisions, without tanks, heavy artillery or airplanes in the face of 110 French, 40 Polish, and 32 Czechoslovak divisions. The strength of 36 divisions mentioned in the proclamation was the number decided on off-hand by Hitler. Had he listened to the General Staff's opinion, the 100,000-man Army would have been tripled at once. Such a size would have been in line with the Army's capacity and previous plans.

During the following years of reconstruction the General Staff advocated a step-by-step expansion, since precipitate haste was bound to weaken the Army's value. Its ability to defend Germany, as envisaged by the General Staff, would have thus been jeopardized. Furthermore, a precipitate growth in army strength could easily create an appearance of power which might induce Germany's supreme leader to draw false political conclusions. With this in mind the Army General Staff warned time and again against hasty action. It always maintained that the Army expansion program could not be completed before 1943, at the earliest. The Army General Staff did not wish to reduce quality in order to obtain quantity. As was natural, it desired an Army of the highest possible quality with the best weapons.

At every available opportunity the Army General Staff pointed to Germany's inability to wage a two-front war. With the functioning of the

League of Nations and the enactment of the Kellogg Pact, this meant, in addition, a very clear stand against any war of aggression.

This attitude brought down on the General Staff accusations of backwardness and weakness. These accusations grew in intensity to the point where it was accused, unjustly of course, of sabotage. None other than Hitler, Goering, and Himmler personally made these charges. In these charges lies the basic cause for the suspicion which the highest party leaders always entertained against the General Staff. Bereft of any political influence, the latter was unfortunately not in a position to make its opinions prevail.

2. Total Warfare

The concept of total warfare is, like everything else in human history, not new. Although not thus named, we can recognize even in antiquity total wars which drew on and exploited all of a nation's resources. During the inter-city wars of the Middle Ages women occasionally fought on the battlements in the front ranks. In more recent times we have seen the practice of mass conscriptions.

In Germany after World War I, Ludendorff advocated the thesis of total warfare by referring to the development of mass armies, the ever more destructive effect of modern weapons, the starvation blockade with its cruel consequences, the great possibilities offered by modern propaganda, and so forth.

The Army General Staff espoused the following opinions: The nature of warfare has undergone changes for the reasons mentioned by Ludendorff. Any future war will draw on the entire resources of a nation if it wishes to emerge victorious or at least to maintain its independence. Seen from this vantage point, the war of the future will be a total war. A large part of a nation's strength will be claimed by the mass armies, another part by armaments and by defense against enemy air attacks. In spite of all defense measures it will prove impossible to protect the civilian population, the women and the children, as in former times. Especially in view of Germany's location in the heart of Europe and the large number

of its potential enemies, all manpower, moral, and material resources must be concentrated to survive such a conflict. But this does not mean that war should be extended to a level where "all fight all." As in the past, only regular soldiers should bear arms. No irregular military operations should be carried out, inasmuch as they would lead to a general perversion of warfare. Not only combat forces, but also governments must therefore in future strictly observe international agreements, such as the Hague Convention on Land Warfare and the Geneva Convention. Racial and religious problems must under no circumstances be used to inflame national feelings. This also includes the well-known theories about "living space" and the "master race" which have always been repudiated by the German Officer Corps.

In other words, the General Staff believed that, although the next war would require the harnessing of all national resources, it should be waged only by regular soldiers according to international rules and in the old tradition of the German Army. The General Staff was sharply opposed to waging war under the influence of ideologies because these -- as clearly proved, for instance, by the religious wars and the American War of Secession -- seriously threatened to deviate from recognized rules of warfare. This standpoint was diametrically opposed to the views of the top party leaders, which, during that time, were more or less only felt and not yet openly expressed. The question of rearmament, the impossibility of waging a two-front war, and the problems of total war gave rise to the kind of opposition which is the profound reason for the Army Command's subsequent complete emasculation.

F. Repeal of the Coresponsibility of General Staff Officers

In the German Army it was standard practice for the chiefs of staff from corps level up, but not for the 1st General Staff officers in divisions, to be entitled, in important cases, to set forth in writing any of their opinions which were at variance with the orders of their commanding officers, thus putting them on record. Without regard to the facts, it was of course mandatory for them to carry out the will of the commander with all their energy, even if it was entirely against their own opinions.

I do not remember the exact date, but it was shortly before the war, probably early in 1939, that coresponsibility as expressed by the above-mentioned privilege was repealed.

The author does not know whether Hitler took the initiative in repealing coresponsibility, or whether it was ordered as a purely military means of guaranteeing unlimited powers to commanders. Nor has he detailed information about its effect on the position of the Army Chief of Staff, especially with regard to any possible restriction of the latter's influence upon "higher ups." The author is convinced, however, that this measure was in no way prejudicial to the Chief of Staff's position in the Army. For the natural authority inherent in this position and exercised by its incumbents was very great until the time when Generaloberst Halder was relieved. After September 1942, it was impossible to speak of an Army Chief of Staff in the former meaning of the term.

In the Army, the Chief of Staff had always been and continued to be the first military adviser of the Commander-in-Chief, and his duly authorized deputy.

Speaking from the viewpoint of a Chief of Staff in a front command, the following can be said on the basis of years of experience: Commander and Chief of Staff have passed through the same school of military education and training. They must harmonize and supplement each other. In addressing higher and lower level they use only one terminology, that of command. Everything that may have been expressed before during arguments will remain hidden in their own minds. If the Commander has real confidence in his

Chief of Staff, he will listen to his advice. If that is not the case, they should be separated.

When seen from this point of view it is not necessary to lay down any rules for the coresponsibility of the Chief of Staff. His moral coresponsibility will continue, in any event, for no one can free him from it.

Aside from this set of facts, on the basis of his personal experience the author believes that the privilege of coresponsibility should not have been taken from the Chief of Staff. Such coresponsibility might ordinarily have had little importance within the frame of an army corps or even of an army flanked by other units. But it is different at the level of army groups or in independent theaters of operations. There it appears expedient, on the basis of the author's own experience, to strengthen the influence of the first aide to the commander when difficult situations have to be faced and, on special occasions, to put, in a manner of speaking, a brake on the unbridled will of the commander. But this privilege of coresponsibility should be exercised only on occasions which are really decisive for the existence of the army units concerned, for otherwise it would be abused and would suffer from too frequent application.

G. The General Staff's Opinions Regarding an Over-All Wehrmacht Command

The necessity of co-ordinating the missions and the commitment of the Army and the Navy already had become apparent during World War I. This was all the more true because the Supreme War Lord interfered but little in these problems. The problem of an over-all Wehrmacht command was not resolved then. No great difficulties arose under the Third Supreme Army Command (3. Oberste Heeresleitung) because of the great prestige enjoyed by its top leaders, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, and thanks to the understanding co-operation of Scheer, the Chief of Naval Operations.

From 1919 to 1935 the creation of a unified Wehrmacht command in case of war was frequently considered. This was also especially necessary since the Reichswehr Minister was not a soldier but a member of parliament. As far as the author knows, while Generaloberst Von Seeckt was still in office it was decided that, in the event of war, the Chief of Army Command should take over as "Chief of the Wehrmacht" by combining in his hands command over the Navy and the Army.

In 1935 the problem was apparently resolved by the appointment of a Reich War Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht. Being a soldier, he took charge of the Army, the Navy and the newly-established third Wehrmacht branch, the Luftwaffe. As matters actually turned out, the Luftwaffe under Goering soon chose to go its own way and largely avoided taking orders from the War Minister. The Navy had somewhat different interests. Having been an Army officer himself, the Reich War Minister concentrated his command powers to an increasing degree upon the Army. But the Army's opinions and those of the Reich War Minister were frequently at odds, that is to say, the Minister was not in a position to make his views prevail.

At the end of 1937, the OKH made a decisive move to establish a uniform Wehrmacht command in case of war. It departed from the premise that Wehrmacht command could not be separated from Army command. In any war which Germany might have to wage the outcome would certainly be decided on the

ground. The Army's requirements should therefore receive priority. Luftwaffe and Navy action as well would have to be brought into line with Army plans. This applied especially to Douhet's theories on strategic air war (See p. 39 above) which had been strongly opposed by the Army General Staff. According to its views, Wehrmacht command and Army command had to operate **under** one head in case of war. The serious controversies which followed led to a break between the War Minister and the OKH.

The events of 4 February 1938 put an end to these arguments. Hitler himself took over the supreme command of the Wehrmacht. The Reich War Ministry was dissolved and reorganized as its Operations Staff with the designation of High Command of the Wehrmacht, or OKW. The attitude of the Army General Staff remained critical of this kind of solution to the problem of Wehrmacht command, which would properly take into account the Army's requirements. This view was confirmed by the events of the war in a truly tragic degree.

For the Army General Staff to oppose the type of Wehrmacht command first represented by War Minister Von Blomberg, and subsequently in the Wehrmacht High Command by Keitel, has often been called a mistake. It would have been better and more successful -- so it has been said -- if the Army General Staff had not tried to force the Wehrmacht command to co-operate with the Army, but if, on the contrary, it had shown a conciliatory attitude and had sent its best men to the OKW, and in a manner of speaking, had infiltrated into the Wehrmacht command. Only in this manner would it have been possible to gain a real influence upon the shaping of events. For the General Staff did not even understand the concept of an over-all Wehrmacht, as it had been exclusively occupied with Army problems and had thus held fast to outmoded ways of planning.

However, these arguments and assertions do not point to the core of the matter. For they leave out of consideration the one decisive factor, Hitler's personality. No measurable profit would have resulted from any "infiltration" into the Wehrmacht command by a few General Staff officers of outstanding ability. They would have been absorbed, for this is exactly

what happened in the case of General Staff officers transferred from the Army to the OKW. Such a measure would have been practicable and would have led to a truly decisive influence by the Army upon the Wehrmacht command only if the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, or the Army Chief of Staff could have taken over the functions of a Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht or those of a Wehrmacht Chief of Staff. But Hitler would never have been willing to agree to this. For then he would not have needed a day like 4 February. Hitler wanted to command the Wehrmacht himself, and himself only. The Wehrmacht High Command was expected to serve merely as an instrument to carry out his wishes and to handle matters which did not interest him. In Keitel he found the kind of office manager which he needed.

In view of the situation after the failure suffered at the end of 1937, and particularly after the events of 4 February 1938, the Army General Staff had no other recourse left but to carry on the struggle to protect Army interests from the outside. The Army General Staff was certainly not hostile to the concept of an over-all Wehrmacht. For, after all, the Army was and remained the only Wehrmacht service which was really "commanded" by the Wehrmacht High Command and which also observed a truly soldierly attitude toward it.

As to the rest, the concept of an over-all Wehrmacht had already been studied a long time before 1933, by the 100,000-man Army. A great deal of attention had been directed on this problem in courses supervised by General Reinhardt.

The Army General Staff merely claimed a decisive share in the Wehrmacht command for the Army as the strongest Wehrmacht service, for in case of war it would have to carry the main burden of battle. The Army General Staff's failure to win out in this struggle for predominance turned into tragedy for the Army, and thus for our people as well.

(Signed) Westphal

Part III

The General Staff in World War II

A. The Over-All Development of the General Staff in Wartime

1. Expansion and Losses

The expansion of the General Staff could not fully keep step with the precipitate pace of the Army enlargement program. Annex I shows the German peacetime Army's requirements for general staff officers, as of August 1939, as far as the author can reconstruct from memory.

The Army Chief of Staff's personnel policy aimed at having at least a double complement of general staff officers available for the peacetime army, in order to enable their regular rotation between staff and field assignments, and also to have a sufficient number on hand to meet initial needs in case of war. That would have required at least seven hundred general staff officers in 1939. Their total number, however, was then considerably lower, including those detailed to line duty and others detached for probationary service with the General Staff.

The initial organization of the wartime Army, including the field army and the replacement army, even at the outbreak of war at the end of August 1939 required roughly double the peacetime strength. (Annex II).

Only by drawing on War College students, most of whom were assigned as division Ic officers, could this initial demand be met. It increased considerably during the months leading up to the Western offensive owing to the formation of more than forty new divisions, the setting up of an additional army headquarters and of several corps headquarters, and preparations for the military administration of Norway, Denmark, and the Western territories to be occupied. It was therefore necessary to reinstate general staff officers who had served with the old Army in World War I. They were primarily employed in military administration staffs, in the deputy corps headquarters of the replacement army, and in the quartermaster service. It also soon became necessary to fill with reserve officers the posts of the 3rd general staff officers (Ic) on division level, in

order to release active officers with War College training for other assignments.

Between the completion of the Western campaign and the beginning of the offensive against Soviet Russia, approximately fifty additional divisions with a corresponding number of headquarters were newly activated. The requisite general staff officers could only be found through the intensification and shortening of replacement training courses, additional reinstatements of general staff officers retired from the old Army, the employment of individual officers who had formerly not been transferred to the General Staff, and a reduction of general staff positions. Thus, positions of "Quartermaster 2" at army headquarters were filled with non-general staff officers (mostly reserve officers), whereas the quartermaster positions in infantry divisions (Ib) were first filled partly, and later on mainly, by line officers most of whom came from reserves. From 1943 on only reserve officers were assigned as 3rd general staff officers at corps headquarters (Ic).

But not even these economy measures sufficed because, from the summer of 1941 on, the General Staff suffered the first serious casualties. These increased during the winter reverses in 1941 - 42, and from 1943 on reached catastrophic proportions. At Stalingrad alone the General Staff lost approximately sixty members attached to the Sixth Army, through death or capture. Thirty-five, also a very high number, were lost when Army Group Africa surrendered. As the result of these two defeats the General Staff was deprived of about one-fourth of its peacetime strength within three and a half months. Additional grave casualties were suffered on the Eastern front in 1943, but by far the heaviest were experienced in 1944, as the result of serious defeats, especially in the East. The German General Staff lost at least 150 officers as the result of the almost complete annihilation of Army Group Center, the loss of most of Army Group Southern Ukraine and of large parts of Army Group Northern Ukraine, and because of the aftermath of the events of 20 July 1944.

Due to the lack of documentary material, the total German General

Staff casualties during World War II would have to be roughly estimated at 350 officers, a number equaling their peacetime strength in 1939. These losses were several times higher than those sustained in World War I. In the recent war most casualties were captured. This was due to measures by the Supreme Command which never hesitated to sacrifice entire armies in order to remain true to its principle of holding on to every inch of ground. But more than one-third of the casualties had lost either life or limb. A minority became victims of the events which took place on 20 July 1944, whereas about hundred General Staff officers paid with their lives, either on the battlefield, as the result of serious wounds, or in airplane and other accidents. These high death rates indicate that the German general staff officer of World War II did not try to avoid hazardous duties, and that he did not keep aloof from the troops to whom all his labors were devoted.

The large numbers of general staff officers needed at the beginning of the final war years is shown in Annex 3. In connection with the major losses sustained in 1943 and 1944, these numbers convey a starkly realistic picture of the difficulties in meeting critical personnel requirements.

2. Effects on Training, Proficiency, and Attitude

All officers occupying important general staff positions at the outbreak of World War II had already participated as front officers in the First World War. This applies to the Army Chief of Staff, his deputy chiefs of staff and branch chiefs, the chiefs of staff of army groups and armies, their first assistants (Ia officers), all corps commanders, and numerous 1st general staff officers of divisions. All these officers could look back not only on their own wartime experiences but also to a very thorough education and training in line and general staff service. Their proficiency and accomplishments were of a high order. It is therefore not in the least surprising that, in the course of a long war, several headed armies and even army groups, and that most of them reached the rank and position of a commanding general or at least that of a division commander.

The remainder of general staff positions in 1939-1940 were also still held to a considerable extent by World War I veterans. All general staff officers had also received, however, a solid peacetime training in general staff functions. It is no exaggeration to say, consequently, that the general staff officers in the 90-division-Army during the autumn of 1939 were the best during the whole war. Nor was their efficiency reduced in any noticeable degree by the new activations effected before the summer of 1940. The high quality of the General Staff at that time is in addition amply demonstrated by its accomplishments in the Polish and Western campaigns. In this connection it should be considered, however, that the higher and intermediate positions were then held by first-class commanders, and that Hitler interfered with military operations in exceptional cases only.

In any event, during the first war year neither training, qualifications, nor conduct of general staff officers gave cause for criticism. There were hardly any outright "misfits". The prestige which the General Staff enjoyed in the army was unlimited. The author noticed this clearly on several occasions during the 1940 Western campaign.

As the War continued General Staff standards were largely watered down on account of the constantly required new activations which led to increased current personnel requirements, and because of losses which in turn caused further critical shortages. Replacements could receive only a very brief six-months' training in general staff schools. This was an emergency measure which could not be helped.

Thus, more and more general staff officers were appointed to positions, for which they were still too immature with regard to age and seniority, and hence also with respect to experience and military proficiency. To a certain and very valuable extent this was balanced by the strict application of the rule that only officers who had excellent ratings after serving at least six months as battalion, company, artillery or battery commanders could be detailed for general staff training. On the other hand, a feature common to all protracted wars became noticeable: the

qualifications of commanders and the efficiency of the troops was at times lowered to a very considerable degree. And as was true of the Army as a whole, the qualities of general staff officers also deteriorated. This decline in quality standards was still hardly discernible in 1941. Later on it became clearly evident as it reached its climax at the end of 1944. Seen in proper perspective, this applied to all General Staff positions. Of course, there were exceptions since, as in every war, some leaders stepped to the fore and distinguished themselves.

Although training and proficiency of general staff officers no longer came up to ideal standards during the final war years, on the whole their conduct nevertheless remained beyond reproach until the end of the conflict, this being the case after the capitulation as well, when, as prisoners of war, they had to undergo conditions which at least in part were very difficult to bear.

B. The Life of General Staff Officers Within the Staffs:
Cohesion Within the General Staff

In wartime, the general staff officer's life was made up of work and ceaseless activity from early morning until late at night. He knew no such life of his own as did his comrades at the front who could at least occasionally relax during a rare rest period. For him there was no respite. And if he had the right spirit for his mission, and was willing to fulfill it, as the preponderant majority of his class did, he was the servant of his commanders and his troops.

At division level the main burden rested on the Ia, at corps headquarters, particularly after the replacement of older Ia officers, primarily on the corps chief of staff, whereas at headquarters of army groups and armies the full burden of work devolved on the chief of staff, the Ia, and the deputy chief of staff. But all other general staff officers were also always overworked. No sinecures existed in the German field army.

For the general staff officer at headquarters the day started with the receipt of morning reports, but it by no means ended with his own daily reports which usually could not be completed until after midnight. The author was Ia in a division, corps, and army, and chief of staff of an army, army group, and army theater of war. In these positions he as well as his assistants could hardly ever go to sleep before 0200 hours. But even afterward there were telephone calls almost all night long. This was especially true in theaters operating under the OKW, since Hitler's well-known abnormal working schedule was necessarily followed by the Wehrmacht Operations Staff. The new working day already had begun at 0700, leaving on an average only four or five hours for sleep. Thus, after deducting time for meals, sixteen hours were the normal day's work. However, since general staff officers considered it a point of honor to be always within easy reach, they rarely had even during the day an hour to themselves for relaxation. Trips to the front were thought of as a

wonderful vacation and therefore very much in demand. But they were prevented from engaging in too many such trips because of the usual heavy workload and the rule that chiefs of staff and Ia division officers could not be absent from headquarters at the same time as the commander.

The general staff officer's absorption with work determined his outlook upon his duties, in the fulfillment of which he set an example to his fellow workers. It was a very rare exception when a general staff officer had to be removed from his position because he had not lived up to the very strict requirements regarding devotion to duty. On the other hand, transfers because of incompetency were far more often the case.

But the Supreme Command, meaning Hitler, in his madness did not listen to the Army General Staff or to the suggestions made by army group headquarters when he decided important problems of troop deployment and the command of operations.

More on this subject will be found in Chapter E. It was this spirit of "not listening to others" which drove senior general staff officers especially more and more into a certain muffled desperation. In consequence, many tried to drug themselves by a still greater devotion to work and duty. But this should by no means convey the impression that they wished to discharge their obligations to their troops and their fatherland merely by a mechanical handling of duties. On the contrary, they always endeavored "to make the best of it," that is to say, by adroitly modifying orders from "above" which often were impossible of execution, they aimed at obtaining the best possible results for the cause. Needless to say, such scheming was of course frequently detected, thus becoming an additional factor in further intensifying suspicion against the General Staff.

During the War, general staff officers were distributed over all fronts and within these as individuals to the various staffs. War conditions made it as a rule very difficult for the Army Chief of Staff to exercise control over them. This control was still further reduced when all theaters of war, except the Eastern one, were placed under OKW in 1941.

Neither the Army Chief of Staff nor the chiefs of staff of army groups and armies ever had an opportunity during wartime to assemble around them, even for a single day, the General Staff officers under their command. Any personal and direct opportunities for exercising control by chiefs of staff at frontline headquarters was as a rule restricted to general staff officers working in their own staffs and to the first assistant chiefs of staff in directly subordinate staffs.

Thus there were on hand all the prerequisites for a far-reaching breakdown of the cohesion which had existed among general staff officers in peacetime. Nevertheless, this breakdown did not materialize. Although outward ties were lacking, a large degree of internal cohesion among general staff members was preserved until the end. Internal cohesion continued even though the Army Chief of Staff had already lost long before all influence upon the shaping of events. As in the past, all general staff officers were linked by their ethics of duty and a singular devotion to the cause, which were deeply and firmly implanted in their breasts as a legacy from their great Chief. Thus they could not be made to flinch in the face of spiteful criticism spread by the Party's propaganda machine, nor did they lose faith when constantly neglected in the awarding of decorations or when suffering similar obvious injustices. The same ethical and mental outlook linked them together in invisible but firm ties.

C. Relations Between the General Staff Officer and his Commander-in-Chief: General Staff Channels

The "Manual For General Staff Service in Wartime" (H. Dv. g. 52) contained the following sentences of basic importance, the substance of which is given here:

The Chief of Staff is the first adviser of his commander-in-chief. During brief periods of the latter's absence, he will act as his deputy in matters concerning current affairs. But decisions will be exclusively rendered by the commander. In a manner of speaking, the Chief of Staff is the executor of his commands. He will sign documents which are not of basic importance and contain no final decisions, and also special orders which are a part of the operational orders.

Thus is clearly defined the authority of the first aide to the troop commander. This authority applied in the case of the 1st General Staff officer on division level as well as the Chiefs of Staff in corps, armies, and army groups, no less than to the Army Chief of Staff. In the following pages there will be discussed the role of the latter as adviser and executor. The Army Chief of Staff was obliged of his own accord to express a frank opinion and to make pertinent suggestions. If the commander was of a different opinion, the Chief of Staff had to comply with it and to carry out his intentions without inner reservation. He translated the commander's decisions into orders and reports. From 1939 on the Chief of Staff exercised neither a veto power nor any legal coresponsibility.

The commander alone was exclusively responsible to superiors and subordinates for success or failure. But this fact did not relieve the Chief of Staff's moral coresponsibility before his own conscience. No one and nothing could release him from that.

Consequently, the proper selection of commanders and chiefs of staff is of utmost importance. The Army Personnel Office and the Army General Staff's Central Branch were often criticized for their measures, and sometimes with justification. However, they should be credited with having had a good knowledge of human nature, and thus they made few incorrect assignments.

In the majority of cases it could be observed that the personalities of the commander and his chief of staff supplemented each other in a wholesome manner. If it became evident that the two members of the team were unhappily matched, standard operating procedure provided for the intervention of superiors who would effect changes in assignments. The prerequisites for proper selection and team work were thus rarely lacking. Collaboration for the benefit of the cause was left up to the individual commander and chief of staff themselves. Their relations were often harmonious from the start, although in some instances the two had to first "fight it out" among themselves.

This mutual relationship required that the commander should allow his chief of staff a certain freedom of action, that he should not cramp his style, and that he should shield him before outsiders even if he did not agree with all the particulars of orders issued in his name. To borrow a phrase from commerce, the commander had to give his chief of staff broad powers of attorney. The commander should not try to know and order everything himself. He should delegate to his chief of staff all routine work, in order to remain fresh and free for truly important decisions.

Tact and modesty were the main requirements of a Chief of Staff. By a clear recognition and observance of the visible and invisible limitations he always had to prove himself worthy of the confidence bestowed on him. Outsiders were to know only one will and only one decision, that of the commander. Whatever happened until arguments and controversies ripened into final decisions was forever to be kept a secret in the breast of the Chief of Staff. Any kind of arrogance on his part was bound to disqualify him for his post.

So much for the principles, written and unwritten. But how were they applied in practice? Many World War II commanders had formerly attended General Staff schools. Some of them had served for long periods as chiefs of staff. Thus they personally possessed solid skill and experience in troop command. Moreover, they knew how to appreciate the value of the work and advice of a chief of staff. These were the kind of commanders who were

bound to make the best use of their chiefs of staff and not allow them to gain a preponderant influence. Only a few among this group of commanders believed that they could do without the advice of their chiefs of staff.

Somewhat different were conditions at headquarters whose commanders were without general staff experience. A few very headstrong individuals among them believed that they did not need the advice of a chief of staff to make up their own minds. They reduced him, in a manner of speaking, to the role of an office supervisor.

During the second half of the war there appeared another and somewhat larger group of commanders who, while still cautious when commanding bigger troop units, leaned rather heavily on their chiefs of staff for reaching decisions. This was especially true at division and corps levels. In such cases the general staff officer concerned was often pushed against his will too far into the limelight. It was not surprising then if some still insufficiently mature individuals succumbed to the temptation of letting others know their own accomplishments and influence. They forgot the saying that "General Staff officers have no names." But all such cases, whether they involved the by-passing of the chief of staff, or a too great reliance on him, which was bound to establish him in a position of unsound superiority, were merely exceptions which merely confirmed the rule that commander and chief of staff were usually well matched. In almost all headquarters and division staffs there existed a close and confidential relationship between the commander and his first adviser. This is best illustrated by the fact that a commander very rarely requested the transfer of his chief of staff, that he usually felt it very difficult to get along without him when the latter was reassigned, and that the overwhelming majority of chiefs of staff were and remained the admirers and friends of their commanders. Thus, when seen as a whole, the relations between commanders and chiefs of staff during the recent war were healthy and therefore highly salutary.

The Army Chief of Staff and the chiefs of staff with troops were authorized to correspond directly with subordinate general staff officers on purely technical general staff subjects. Such letters might often refer to education, training, and technical routine procedures of general staff officers.

Concerning the last subject the author still remembers a letter written in the autumn of 1939 by the Army Chief of Staff in which he requested, because of experience gained in the Polish campaign, that all tactical reports be written with great accuracy and objectivity.

In the General Staff there existed no direct channels dealing with problems of troop command. All questions pertaining to military operations were exclusively reported and processed through official channels. Of course, this did not exclude the possibility of an occasional written exchange of views between two chiefs of staff on timely strategic and tactical problems. But this never happened behind the back of the commander concerned. The kind of general staff channels which operated, and were so often criticized, during World War I, no longer existed. The general staff did not assume the functions of command. Chiefs of staff of superior headquarters were allowed to review the efficiency reports made out on general staff officers by their division commanders or chiefs of staffs only with regard to the performance of the individual concerned as general staff officer.

D. Influence of the General Staff

1. On Politics, International Law, Propaganda, and War Economy

It has been already pointed out (in the report on Topic II) that the German Army General Staff, as it existed from 1935 to 1945, should be regarded with entirely different eyes from the General Staff of the old Imperial Army, for its influence was considerably smaller and it became weaker in step with the growing emasculation of the Army. This situation in itself supplies an answer to the broader question asked above. Here is the key to this question:

The General Staff did not exercise any influence at all. When seen in retrospect, this can be only regretted in the interests of our people. That the German Army command lacked all political influence is a fact supported by history. It is therefore not necessary to cite particulars. It should have been mentioned as characteristic that the Foreign Office received orders even before the War not to inform either the Army Commander-in-Chief or the Army Chief of Staff about foreign political developments.

Problems of international law were handled by the Foreign Office and the OKW. The General Staff neither dealt with nor influenced them. The well-known discriminatory orders, such as the hostage orders, the night and fog decree, the commando orders, and the original commissar order, were not written by either the OKH or the Army General Staff. These orders were conceived by Hitler alone, and some parts were even drafted and formulated by him personally. Their execution he assigned to his military working staff, the Wehrmacht Operations Staff in the OKW!

Insofar as the General Staff was in any position to express an opinion, it always advocated the view that, entirely apart from the expected repercussions on the German troops, the recognized rules under international law should be observed, if for no other reason than to prevent an other wise almost inevitable degeneration in the customs of warfare. It is undoubtedly true that the majority of the commanders and their General Staff officers acted with these considerations in mind, a fact which is now being more and more generally realized by the public.

Only a single striking proof for the attitude displayed by the Army

Command, and thus also by the General Staff, with regard to international law will be mentioned here. This proof consists of the misgivings which the Army Commander-in-Chief emphatically expressed in the winter of 1939-40 against any violation of the neutrality of The Netherlands, of Belgium, and of Luxembourg.

The General Staff was allowed no more influence in propaganda matters than in the fields of politics and international law. All propaganda affairs touching on military interests were centrally handled for the entire Wehrmacht by the OKW through the Wehrmacht Propaganda Branch, which also issued orders to the "propaganda companies" operating with the various armies.

The OKW, acting through the Economic Armament Office (WiRueAmt) also handled military economic problems, the General Staff being excluded from any influence. After the creation of the Reich Ministry for Armaments and Ammunition under the party men, Todt and subsequently Speer, and after the Army Ordnance Office was subordinated to this supreme Reich authority, the Army was no longer able even to select its own weapons.

2. On the Operational Command and on the Administration of Occupied Territories

It should be mentioned at the very outset that, as regards the purely military field, the General Staff could exercise direct influence on none but Army operations. As to the commitment of Naval and Luftwaffe forces, it could only submit suggestions and express requests which were often not complied with, especially in decisive points, by the Luftwaffe. The result in many cases was that Luftwaffe operations were not co-ordinated with Army requirements. In some instances the Army was even required to follow Luftwaffe directions. In addition, during the first war years, high-ranking Luftwaffe officers strongly and very effectively criticized measures of the Army Command and especially of the General Staff. With the almost complete elimination of German flying units from the air because of enemy superiority, this criticism came to an end. On the other hand, because of its alleged conservatism and pessimism, the General Staff had to face new enemies in influential SS - circles close to Hitler, and after 1944 in the Navy also.

With respect to Army operations the General Staff was not for the time being substantially hampered. Consequently, no particular friction developed during the Polish campaign. The same applied, aside from preceding arguments over the date of the attack, to the Western campaign, except for the momentous decision reached at Dunkirk. The increasingly irreconcilable bickerings between the Supreme Command and the Army Command led to the dismissal of the Army Commander-in-Chief during the winter of 1941. Hitler was now not only the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht but also of the Army. From this moment on he particularly claimed for himself the over-all command of Army operations. Thenceforth the Army General Staff was condemned to gradually losing all influence on strategic planning. In September 1942 there came the dismissal of Generaloberst Halder. Only in name was his successor still Army Chief of Staff. Actually, Generaloberst Zeitzler's authority was confined to Eastern operations. In other theaters of war he exercised no influence whatever. In spite of constant efforts, Zeitzler was rarely successful, and then only after it was too late, in overcoming Hitler's obstinacy, which induced him to cling to the maxim that every inch of ground had to be defended.

Generaloberst Guderian, who succeeded Zeitzler after the events of 20 July 1944, was unable to gain any substantial control over Army operations. He, too, had to yield in the end since Hitler was no longer willing to listen to his advice. It was a sad fact that the German Army General Staff had, in its very own field of endeavor, been deprived of power, at first gradually, beginning with 1941, and soon afterward completely. The Wehrmacht Operations Staff in the OKW, which was in charge of the other theaters of operation, could in only a few undecisive instances induce Hitler to change his command methods.

Not all of the occupied territories were placed under military administrations. In Poland, for instance, a civilian governor ruled from 1939 on. Norway and The Netherlands were governed by civilian Reich commissars. The same applied to the East where the zone of operations was confined to a minimum, while the large rear areas also fell under civilian Reich commissars.

Accordingly military administrations functioned in Belgium and France only, and later on in Serbia also. The administration in the West was conscientiously carried out by the Army Commander-in-Chief with the assistance of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff. After the dismissal of Feldmarschall Von Brauchitsch, Hitler in his double capacity as Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht and of the Army issued orders for the administration of the occupied territories either personally or through the Chief of the OKW. The Army Chief of Staff was now deprived of any influence over the functioning of the military administration. Executive power in the occupied territories was taken away from commanding generals and turned over to the SD and the Gestapo.

Commanders of army groups and armies were allowed absolutely no control over the military administrations, to which they could only issue tactical orders in case of major attacks or large-scale landings.

E. The General Staff and Measures Taken by the Supreme Military Command

The deliberations and actions of the German General Staff were based on a careful and realistic evaluation of the situation, as well as on a dispassionate consideration of all pros and cons. It still emulated the great Moltke's maxim "First weigh, then risk." The fact that an incorruptible realism guided all its planning precluded any overevaluation of its own forces as well as an underevaluation of the enemy's skill and strength.

Opposed were the National Socialists. They initiated many practical ideas which could be approved in principle. But they also brought along other ideas which, in case of actual or even attempted realization, appeared to be risky from the start. These notions, characterized by a lack of realism and by overweening self-conceit, marked this period and grew into excesses which caused our present situation. These excesses extended to military affairs and were personified by Hitler. He felt an inner call to lead the Wehrmacht himself. He was completely wrapped up in the idea that his leadership alone could insure success. As a combat soldier of World War I, he believed that he knew military affairs from the ground up. Having read with great interest an extraordinarily large amount of military literature, he had acquired an amazingly compendious knowledge on the subject. Passionate and eager for success, Hitler had an innate hatred for all objective thinking and cool calculation of pros and cons by others. He was inclined to belittle an adversary who obstructed his aims. He made it a rule not to base his own decisions on a correct estimate of the enemy's plans and actions. In this he was confirmed because, in several instances, especially the one concerning the correct estimate of French military power, his own views proved better than those of the General Staff.

Later on, when enemy superiority became increasingly overwhelming, Hitler demanded, even for the long pull, that it be countered by greater resolution. Whenever, during the final war years, he lacked adequate means to wage war commensurate with his aims, he believed that he could substitute "means" for power. The factors of time and space he was inclined to ignore

if they did not fit in with his plans.

Hitler's command procedure, all too often dictated by emotion, were diametrically opposed to the doctrines practiced by the German General Staff, whose realistic appraisal of facts, paired with the necessary skepticism, he regarded as defeatism. He described an objective estimate of enemy strength, if it did not suit his plans, as pusillanimity. Any reserve toward untested, novel, and supposedly infallible measures he labeled senility.

Thus, in the final analysis, two opposing ideologies were face to face. They remained irreconcilable, because Hitler was quite unwilling to compromise on any subject. "Death to the expert," a slogan widely circulated at that time, could also be applied to the General Staff.

The most serious fault of the Supreme Military Command, in the eyes of the General Staff, was its recklessness, which gave rise to an exaggerated opinion of German strength, as well as to a light-hearted underestimating of the enemy and his resources and finally resulted in a frittering away of our strength in a war on many fronts, although World War I had already demonstrated that Germany could not even win a protracted two-front war.

A second serious reproach stemmed in part from factors mentioned above. It concerns advance thinking and planning, which were more and more dispensed with from 1941 on. People lived from day to day and from hand to mouth. When disagreeable situations developed they were ignored because no one wished to face them, preferring to let the enemy set the tune. Withdrawals, if carried out in time, would have enabled a systematic saving of strength. Instead, irretrievable losses had to be suffered time and again, which gradually led to the destruction of the Army's substance and to ominous consequences ending with the collapse of all fronts. The Supreme Command had no conception of how to husband German strength.

The thoughtful General Staff officer was constantly driven to desperation when forced to realize that almost all decisions and measures by the Supreme Command since the early part of 1942 seemed to be under the spell of an invisible motto, "Too late." Strategy was a thing of the past. The only chance of making up for inferior manpower by skillful leadership, especially in the

East, was thus lost. In view of the depth of Soviet territory held until the end of 1943, withdrawals for a hundred kilometers or more would have been entirely inconsequential, inasmuch as a counteroffensive had excellent prospects of regaining the lost area. Instead, defense at any price was raised to the status of a command maxim which alone promised success. This rule was rigidly adhered to, although the counterattack against Kharkov in the spring of 1943 had clearly shown how initiative could be regained, and in spite of the fact that a tenacious defense of territory repeatedly occupied led to very heavy casualties and to the most grievous defeats ever suffered by the German Army.

The author cannot discuss the details of the numerous controversies raging between the Supreme Military Command and the General Staff, as this would by far exceed the scope of this treatise.

The Supreme Command concentrated increasingly on holding in check the army group and on supervising them closely with regard to all operational details. It ordered daily reports on countless particulars which were not worth knowing for the army groups, and of still less interest to the OKW.

These reports, which had to be made out for the so-called OKW theaters of war, took up a considerable part of the general staff officer's working day, thus sidetracking his attention from far more vital matters; and they were usually already outdated when received at the OKW, where the reports also resulted in much waste motion and, which was worse, obscured the OKW's perspective for truly important matters.

Actually, there existed no Wehrmacht Command whatever as such. Since the Luftwaffe, and after 1943 the Navy under Doenitz also, had chosen to pursue their own courses, the activities of the Supreme Command were almost exclusively restricted to the Army. After the Allies had gained absolute control of the air, and in view of the German Navy's inferiority, the Army was now the only service branch carrying on the fight. At the same time it was always at fault and became the "whipping boy" for all failures, which to a large extent were due to the incapacity of the two other Wehrmacht branches. It was of course self-evident that a large part of the "guilt"

for the alleged failure of the Army Command was charged to the account of the General Staff.

The Army had become the Cinderella of the German Wehrmacht. This statement applied, in contrast to units of the Waffen-SS and the parachute divisions, not only to its supply and equipment, but also to its personnel replacements. High-class human material was assigned to other Wehrmacht branches and especially to the Waffen-SS. The remainder sufficed for the Army. How much more combat strength would the Army divisions have gained had they only been given the first-class manpower assigned instead to the Waffen-SS!

The General Staff, under its Chief of Staff, was by no means willing to accept the situation with resignation. It was and continued to be the vexing exhorter and caller in the battle for a sensible command. Its sense of responsibility to the Army, the nation, and its own conscience required it time and again to combat these conditions. All attempts at a change failed, however, because of Hitler's obstinacy, and his deep-rooted suspicion of the Army in general and of its general staff in particular. Success was denied to the General Staff, the more so as it unfortunately did not have in the Chief of the OKW a champion of its interests, although he had himself come from the ranks of the Army and had served in the general staff. The Army officers in the OKW recognized the cares and needs of the army. But they, as branch and section chiefs, were not in a position to provide effective remedies. Only in individual instances could they throw some help in the way of the Army.

F. Wartime Lessons for the General Staff

This chapter will be concerned with only a brief discussion whether or not the training and the organization of the General Staff sufficed for the requirements of World War II, as problems appeared anew or were not adequately taken into consideration before the War, and finally, what conclusions are to be drawn.

The training of general staff replacements before World War II was not universal enough. It was confined too narrowly to the purely technical aspects of commanding Army units. It should have embraced a wider scope in military and general scientific subjects. The training of general staff officers should also extend to the basic principles of operational and Wehrmacht command, to a knowledge of the nature and the capacity of other Wehrmacht branches, to the lessons of historical, political, and geographic interrelations, as well as to the influence of industry and technology on military operations. It should also convey to the general staff officer and ability to evaluate political events.

The same applies to the training of general staff replacements in wartime. In the course of the recent war the ability to judge a situation quickly, accurately, and realistically, as well as the technique of issuing proper orders, deteriorated considerably. This was of course especially the case with young general staff officers, and caused occasional disadvantages. A thorough training in both subject-matters on a division level is therefore of utmost importance for the training of general staff replacements.

Education and training in troop supply was by no means intensive enough before the war. The supply service is of such overriding importance in modernly equipped armies that training in this subject calls for special attention.

The last war, too, had demonstrated how tremendously important is character training. The supervision of personality development frequently did not receive its full due in the German General Staff. In the last analysis, all knowledge is without value, in fact dangerous, unless it is possessed by an entirely unsullied and firm personality.

General Staff organization and techniques did, on the whole, prove successful. Regarding details, the following should be remarked.

1. War College

It was a mistake to temporarily close down the War College at the outbreak of war. On the contrary, it should have continued under full steam.

2. Corresponsibility of the Chief of Staff

On the basis of his own experience, the author is in favor of corresponsibility for Chiefs of Staff down to army group and army level in independent theaters of operation.

3. The Organization of the Army Chief of Staff

On the whole, it was purposeful. From 1943 on, when the positions of Chief Quartermaster (Deputy Chief of Staff) I and IV were discontinued, the Army Chief of Staff was so overburdened with work that he hardly ever had a chance to visit the front.

As was desired by the Army, the Quartermaster General should have handled not only all Army procurement but also the procurement of the so-called primary materials, such as food, fuel, etc., for the other Wehrmacht branches.

The relations of the Army General Staff to the Army Ordnance Office and to OKW (via the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, Counterintelligence Office, Economic Armament Office) were not close and intimate enough. The same applies to relations to the Navy and Luftwaffe High Commands, as well as to the Foreign Office. Liaison officers must be men of high caliber who enjoy the confidence not only of the Army Chief of Staff but also of the branch and section chiefs to whom they are assigned.

4. Headquarters of Army Groups and Armies

Their organization was efficient.

To the Operations Staff there should be assigned a General Staff officer of the Luftwaffe as IaL, and as far as the staff concerned has to work together with the Navy, also an Admiralty Staff officer, as IaM. These men

should not be liaison officers on detached service, but members of the headquarters concerned, the interests of which they must represent before their own Wehrmacht branches. Conversely, Army General Staff officers should in turn be assigned to corresponding Luftwaffe and Navy staffs. Sections for armament and war production should be attached to the Deputy Chief of Staff.

5. Corps Headquarters

The assignment of junior general staff officers as corps Ia officers proved entirely successful, since the Chief of Staff and the senior Ia should not fully devote themselves to this type of work.

6. Divisions

In practice, the Division Ia is simultaneously Chief of Staff. All other foreign armies have adopted this designation for this position. Even though the Ia officers concerned are too young, they should nevertheless in any event be vested with the functions of a Chief of Staff.

Establishing the position of Chiefs of Staff at division level would have the great advantage that General Staff officers could be employed in these positions even if they had the rank of colonel without in any way slighting their feelings.

7. The General Staff Uniform

The General Staff uniform was obsolete. An embroidered collar patch as rank insignia suffices.

G. An Over-all Evaluation of General Staff Successes

After our sweeping defeat the question, among others, arises whether and to what extent the General Staff was coresponsible for it, and also whether, on the whole, it proved successful or not.

It is a proven fact that the German General Staff did not engage in warmongering and that, on the contrary, it warned against war. In the meantime leading circles abroad have probably recognized how utterly wrong the assumption was that German policy was dominated by a military caste bent on war, conquest and revenge, and personified by the General Staff.

As the situation happened to be, the General Staff had no other choice as soldiers but to make the best of unalterable conditions, and to do everything in its power to lead the Army in an unwanted war as resolutely as possible, to final success.

For an old member of this institution it is a very delicate proposition to judge objectively whether the General Staff really did its best in this endeavor. It stands to reason that the author will speak on his own behalf. He wishes to limit himself, therefore, to stating that, according to observations which he made during five and a half years of wartime service in the General Staff and which enabled him to form a critical viewpoint, a number of defects were certainly noticeable. These defects were due to a few and in part unavoidable shortcomings inherent in the organization of various headquarters, to faulty training, and to inadequate performances by some individuals. On the other hand, the author feels bound to assert that all General Staff officers whom he met, with insignificant exceptions, placed their whole lives and qualifications without regard for any sacrifice in the service of the Army and the fatherland. It was not their fault -- and this is the pathetic tragedy of the German General Staff -- that all its devotion counted for nothing.

It shall be left to German combat soldiers and future less biased age to judge whether and to what extent the German General Staff, within its prescribed narrow scope, and in spite of constant interference by the Supreme Command, fulfilled its obligations toward the Army and the German nation,

To be sure, military leaders and analysts in Great Britain and in the United States have expressed the opinion that "the German General Staff has, as always in the past, performed its work until the end in an excellent manner " (General Beddell Smith in Butcher, "My Three Years With Eisenhower").

(Signed Westphal)

General Staff Personnel Requirements in the German

Peacetime Army *

Status in August 1939

A. Army High Command

1. Army General Staff	
Chief of Staff	1
Central Branch	3
Chief Quartermaster I,	
II, III, IV, V, one each	5
1st to 6th and 12th	
Branches, six each	42
10th Branch	4
7th Branch	3
11th Branch	5
8th and 9th Branches,	
2 each	<u>4</u>
Subtotal	67
2. Adjutant to Army C-1-C	1
Army Personnel Office	1
Army General Office	6
Army Ordnance Office	2
Fortress Inspectorates	2
3. In addition:	
War College	14
Military attaches	<u>15</u>
Total A	<u>108</u>

B. Command Headquarters & Staffs

6 Army Group Headquarters	18
18 Corps Headquarters	90
35 Infantry divisions	70
3 Mountain divisions	6
4 Mechanized divisions	8
5 Panzer divisions	10
4 Light infantry divisions	8
1 Cavalry brigade	1
14 Army agencies	14
Kommandantur Berlin	<u>1</u>
Total B	226

C. <u>OKW</u>	20
Total A-C	<u>354</u>

* Compiled from memory without data, so that minor discrepancies are possible.

General Staff Personnel Requirements in the German

Wartime Army *

Status on 1 September 1939

Army High Command	about	100
Wehrmacht High Command	about	40
3 Army Groups		24
9 Army Headquarters		72
30 Corps Headquarters		120
88 Divisions		264 3
Frontier Guard Sector Command, etc.		30
Replacement Army		<u>80</u>
Total		730

* Estimate without official data.

General Staff Personnel Requirements in the German

Wartime Army *

Status Early in 1945

Army High Command	about 100
Wehrmacht High Command	about 40
10 Army Groups	80
26 Army Headquarters	182
60 Corps Headquarters	180
200 Divisions	400
Replacement Army	80
War College	15
Military Attaches	5
Other Agencies	<u>about 20</u>
<u>Total about</u>	<u>1,100</u>

* Estimate without official data.

Part IV

Basic Problems of the General Staff

A. The Roots

1. Formative Forces

a. Prussianism. The Prussian General Staff was created on 1 March 1809. It formed the Second Division of the General War Department in the Prussian War Ministry, which was established upon Scharnhorst's insistence at the same time. The Ministry's predecessor had been the Quartermaster General Staff which, however, mainly handled home affairs, such as the transport of supplies and the building of depots and warehousing. Frederick the Great had still been in sole command, with neither a Chief of Staff nor other advisers on strategy.

The Prussian General Staff, which developed into the German General Staff, was thus the offspring of the early 19th century. Its intellectual background, however, reached back to the era of Frederick the Great, where it had its ethical, and in fact even its purely military roots. In this epoch Prussia advanced from a small state to the rank of a world power, and its army grew to be the strongest in Europe. A large amount of military experience was provided by the three Silesian Wars. Some of the battles then fought still serve as examples for the victory of inferior forces through superior leadership.

During this time there also was born the concept of the Prussian State. It represented the idea of Prussianism, the devotion of all human qualities to the service of the fatherland. The ethical vigor of this idea cast a spell over the officer corps and especially the General Staff. The age of Frederick the Great thus provided the General Staff with a firm foundation which exercised its influence until recent times without, however, saddling it with certain excesses of Prussianism.

b. The Era of Liberation Wars. This very eventful formative period placed a strong mark upon the evolution of the General Staff. During

the era of Prussia's liberation from Napoleonic domination a people's army developed from a professional army, important and apparently impregnable social barriers fell, and for the first time the planned exploitation of all national resources for war was seen. The regular unit with mixed weapons, the division, was created. The organization of a high command, army corps, and armies with the necessary staffs was also in process of formation. The art of war turned to radically new techniques. Napoleon, by further advancing Frederick the Great's strategy, became the great teacher of his age. He discarded frontal tactics and the hitherto customary maneuvering. He taught how, without faint-hearted clinging to rear communications, it was possible to inflict annihilating defeats in quick succession. To be sure, in the end he himself was defeated by German strategy.

This climax of military greatness was followed by a long period of quiescence and retrogression in the Prussian and other German armies. General conscription remained incomplete. The military became petrified in forms without substance, and routine garrison service was at its height. All evolutionary processes stagnated.

During this long period of peace the Prussian General Staff lost its influence upon Army developments. It radiated no important new inspiration, although, as perhaps the only official authority, it was alive with the conviction of Prussia's mission in Germany.

But the minds of men did not rest. During this time there stepped forward from General Staff ranks two great men. One of them compiled the lessons of strategy in a book of lasting value. The other became the greatest military genius during the second half of his century. His victorious sword led the German people to the fervently desired union in a common German Reich.

c. The German Reich. All planning by the General Staff was centered on the welfare of the German Reich. Although, until the end of World War I, there still existed Prussian, Bavarian, Saxon and Wuerttemberg General Staff officers, they were all animated by the same German spirit. This German spirit ripened to its greatest perfection when the Reich was under the

threat of dissolution because of the shock inflicted by the revolution of 1918. General Staff officers then marched ahead as leaders, unfailingly showing the road which leads to performance of duty, a way which prescribes that above all else comes the obligation to the nation. Thus they surmounted all difficulties, thus, for a long time, they sacrificed what was dear to their hearts, thus they forgot all insults, and thus they worked in unison to save the Reich. Thus they also preserved through sacrifice and labor the small professional army as an absolutely reliable instrument of the republican regime. Loyalty to the Reich, to the fatherland of the German people, became the purpose of their being the guide of their actions. It was also this loyalty to the Reich, and by no means enthusiasm for the ideas propagated by National Socialism, that commanded their service to the totalitarian regime as a service to the fatherland.

2. Formative Personalities

Not only certain periods of time, but especially the outstanding men then living have left their imprint on the General Staff's evolution.

a. Frederick the Great. The first to be named in chronological sequence is King Frederick II of Prussia. His strength of character in almost hopeless situations, his tenacious fight against often crushing superior enemy forces, his military genius especially, and the memory of a glorious period in Prussian history owed to him, serve as an example to the officer corps until this very day. To whom could the deeper sense of his motto, "I serve," mean greater stimulation than to men who had pledged their entire lives and talents in the service of their fatherland, men who were not to know any personal ambition, who had no claim to outward honors or to remuneration, men to whom the feeling of duty well performed had to be the highest reward?

b. Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. Both generals were the first typical representatives of the newly-created General Staff. Neither man was a native Prussian. That is the more reason why they became an integral part of the entire German General Staff.

Scharnhorst continued to inspire the General Staff as the man who paved

the way for the renaissance of the Army, who was devoted to the cause with a singleness of purpose, who time and again and unconditionally subordinated his own being to its higher objectives, and who through his tenacity and selflessness brought nearer the desired aim of a people's army.

Through his work while serving with Bluecher's Army, Gneisenau created that type of Chief of Staff under a Commander-in-Chief that has since been our ideal. To quote Schlieffen, he even became "the real founder of the General Staff."

His doctrine of unrelenting pursuit and annihilation of the enemy -- at a time still dominated by the concept of "terrain strategy" -- places him among the great soldiers of the German Army.

c. Clausewitz, Moltke, and Schlieffen. The General Staff produced these three men within one century. All three were destined to become its teachers. Clausewitz set forth the basic doctrine of strategy in a book of lasting value. Moltke applied this doctrine and achieved annihilating victories of classic importance. His own fame won worldwide renown for the institution he headed. Schlieffen continued directly where the others left off. He developed the strategic concept of annihilation to the highest point and the General Staff to the pinnacle of technical performance. Incidentally, only Schlieffen was a native-born Prussian.

d. Hindenburg, Ludendorff. Hindenburg exercised influence not so much through his military successes in the East in 1914 - 15 as by his example in the postwar period. Because, as a confirmed monarchist, he accepted at an advanced age the burden of the presidency which he bore until death, he became the symbol of loyalty and self-sacrificing devotion to duty. On account of the many years during which he served as Chief of Staff of the field army, he remained very closely linked to the General Staff when he became head of state and thus the supreme commander of the Wehrmacht. Hindenburg, like Moltke before him, regarded himself until his death as the "supreme General Staff officer."

Ludendorff's achievements as General Staff officer in World War I were exemplary. His barbed controversies with Hindenburg, and especially the

peculiar character traits which he manifested in this connection, resulted in a chasm between him and General Staff officers. His fight against the "super-state powers" and for a "German-Teutonic religious brotherhood" found no echo in the General Staff.

e. Seeckt, Beck. Seeckt preserved alive the intellectual and ethical traditions of the Moltke and Schlieffen schools. He was interested only in the welfare of Germany, in its consolidation and renaissance, according to the inexorable requirements of a new age. Nothing characterized him, the postwar General Staff, and their mutual intentions better than the words which he addressed in 1919 to the latter: "The outward form changes, but the spirit remains the same. It is the spirit of silent, selfless devotion to duty in the service of the Army. General Staff officers have no names."

Beck, who himself was very strongly linked with tradition, irresistibly continued on this road. Strongly reminiscent of Moltke because of his refined, highly intellectual, and noble character, he was also modest and inconspicuous in conduct but nevertheless gained to a high degree the admiration and loyalty of General Staff officers. Although removed from his office as early as 1938, he nonetheless remained tied to the General Staff by bonds of friendship. The reason for his dismissal, an upright opposition against the adventurous policies of the Reich government, merely increased his prestige.

It would have been intolerable if this noble man also had had to ascend the scaffold after 20 July 1944.

B. Ideals

1. Examples

In the preceding chapter there were mentioned the men who primarily imposed the mark of their personalities on the General Staff. At the same time they also were or became its outstanding models.

These men also of course inspired their contemporaries. But the full measure of their work and accomplishments was not generally recognized until much later. Consequently, their influence continued to radiate beyond their lives. The greatest man produced by the German General Staff, Generalfeldmarschall Graf Von Moltke, exercised the strongest and most lasting influence, which made itself felt already during his own time, approximately since 1871. The influence which he exercised was manifold. It consisted not merely in the fact that he, as a master of strategy, served as a unique model to all soldiers. It also extended especially, and thus in an all-embracing manner, to the sphere of ethics and personality. The selflessness with which Moltke was always willing to subordinate his own person to the cause showed how truly worthy of emulation the greatness of his character was. Since he always correctly recognized and observed the limitations of his work as Chief of Staff, he became a genuine example for every General Staff officer. His maxim "Accomplish much, but remain in the background," subsequently supplemented by Graf Schlieffen's dictum, "Be more than you appear to be," was adopted as a motto by the General Staff. His high idealism and his noble purity have undoubtedly exercised a greater and more lasting influence than those of all the other models. With full justification did his successors consider it their task and heartfelt duty not to let this legacy die out. The continuance of Moltke's tradition was most vividly personified by Graf Alfred Von Schlieffen and Generaloberst Ludwig Beck, whose own exemplary conduct resembled most closely that of their model.

2. Emulated Ideals

The concept of the ideal General Staff officer embraced not only purely professional efficiency but also the highest development of character and personality.

The General Staff was expected to have all the following leadership qualities: enterprise, audacity in making decisions, a cheerful acceptance of responsibility, tenacity, a clear perception for the possible, patience to await the right moment, and the ability to speedily and adroitly exploit favorable circumstances and opportunities. He was to be free of all petty and narrow-minded preconceptions, in order to be able to comprehend the greater interrelations. It was demanded of him that he should always see only the essential core of a subject, keep his heart and mind wide open to the demands of the time, never insist on outdated and purely outward matters, but always create and stimulate.

Aside from these and other leadership qualities the General Staff officer had to possess still more qualifications, those that required a maximum of self-discipline and inner modesty. From him was also demanded absolute selflessness compounded of complete devotion of his own person to the cause of the fatherland, the absolute ultimate of self-discipline, and large-scale renunciation of life's pleasures. The General Staff officer should not work for his own glory or advantage, he must devote everything to the idea. But this idea can consist only of the welfare of the fatherland, even though, he himself, as an individual, may pass away unknown and unrewarded. In this effort the General Staff officer should therefore be free from personal ambition directed to his own preferment. He must be imbued only with that different kind of ambition which always passionately strives to achieve the highest degree of perfection in military proficiency and character. The General Staff officer must always practice the highest devotion to duty and yet himself always remain in the background. He has to content himself with ever being in second place, while glory for success is solely the reward of his commander.

The General Staff officer must not know envy and intrigue. On the other hand, he should be imbued with a spirit of genuine comradeship. His entire heart should belong to the troops whence he originated, and which someday

perhaps he may himself have to command *.

Only if equipped with such character traits could the General Staff officer render excellent and versatile work. The primary prerequisite for this was a basic agreement in thinking and action which could only be obtained by a uniform education and training. It was also absolutely essential that he be endowed with absolute reliability, independence of judgment, and a speedy and unbureaucratic manner of working which is free from any prejudice and any desire to interfere with details.

The uniformity of his thought processes required absolute clarity about the main line to be followed, the basic strategic idea. Considering Germany's military and geographic location and the development of the political situation since the end of the 19th century, this basic strategic idea could mean nothing else but "war against superior forces" and "annihilation of the enemy," according to the doctrines of Moltke and Schlieffen.

3. Deviations of Reality

A number of the virtues demanded of General Staff officers in the preceding chapter are frequently united in the soul and mind of a single individual. But even extraordinarily endowed men could only rarely boast of possessing the greater majority of these virtues. It is therefore hardly possible to expect to find the entire number of these outstanding intellectual and soldierly traits of character combined in one man.

The ideal picture is therefore set so high, so as to be almost unattainable in view of human inadequacies. Reality always trails behind the ideal. It remains to be examined whether everything was done to reach the ideal as closely as possible. Then will be seen how great the distance actually was

* Note: At this place the following should not be left unmentioned: Only the best front officers should be selected for General Staff assignments. Any difference between them and their comrades who remain in field service may only be made insofar as all General Staff officers had to possess all soldierly, intellectual, and character qualities to the highest degree. But this fact should never be construed as constituting a contrast between the two types. The General Staff officer is and remains a front officer. If in individual cases such a contrast nevertheless appeared, the reason was either wrong selection or inadequate supervision of the training of the General Staff officer concerned.

between reality and the ideal.

All men who occupied the office of Army Chief of Staff were conscious of their mission to maintain the institution entrusted to their care at the highest operating efficiency. The means of achieving this on a broad scale were selection, constant screening, education, and training. They were free to choose the means for solving this mission. The only restrictions imposed on them were supply and demand, and the time factor. The restrictions, however, were in effect only at certain times. In normal times, hence during peace, the supply was great, whereas the demand limited, so that a strict screening of General Staff officers was possible. In peacetime there was also sufficient time available for education and training.

It was different in periods when demand far exceeded supply and there was a shortage of time. This was particularly the case in the second half of World War I, to a certain extent also during the Army's expansion program from 1935 to 1939, and to a specially pronounced degree in World War II. During these periods it was impossible to carry out screening as carefully as was otherwise customary and desired. A lowering of standards was the inescapable consequence of these emergency times. Since the autumn of 1942 it became most noticeable, but it also had its cause to some extent in the high casualties suffered by General Staff officers. But even in this final chapter in the history of the German General Staff its accomplishments were still of a very high quality, and its members' personal and soldierly conduct was until the end almost completely excellent.

C. Tradition and the Demands of Modern Times

The German General Staff was firmly shaped by formative forces and personalities. Its feeling for tradition was very strong. To what extent did this sense of tradition come in opposition to the demands of modern times, and to what extent did it retard the General Staff's progress?

Actually, this was never the case during the long period of time between the Liberation Wars and the end of World War I. The General Staff realized at an early moment Prussia's mission in Germany. It exercised no political influence, though it proved its clear political judgment when faced with momentous problems. Thus it realized in time the political constellation in which Germany found itself from the start of the 20th century. It drew the necessary military deductions for the defense of the Reich. In the military sphere it was always the General Staff which pointed out the direction to the Army's further development. In the autumn of 1918, its leaders demanded, in the national interest, the negotiation of an early armistice.

During the upheavals following the revolution it was again the General Staff which surmounted all enmity and obstacles. Although the officer corps was almost entirely in favor of the monarchy, the General Staff put itself at the disposal of the Republic. It did not throw overboard the sound elements of tradition, it merely placed it in the service of a great cause. "The outward form changes, but the spirit remains the same." (See page 88).

The same patriotic and constructive attitude was continuously displayed during the entire period of the Second Reich by the General Staff. It shaped the Army's expansion and the adaptation of its training program to the new situation. It took measures to see to it that in spite of the ban on all modern weapons, contact with technical developments abroad was not lost.

The attitude of the General Staff remained unpolitical. Nevertheless, many of its members foresaw in time the dangers of National Socialism and of dictatorship. This is not the proper place to discuss the reasons why the General Staff was unable to oppose a political movement and a regime which were supported by the majority of the people until a long time after the war had started.

The actions of Generaloberst Beck and his successor, Generaloberst Halder, in the autumn of 1938, when war was imminent as a result of the Sudeten crisis, give adequate proof that they had clearly recognized the over-all political situation throughout the world.

Although the General Staff had not engaged in warmongering, but on the contrary had warned against war, it nevertheless did its best to build up the finest army possible. It must be admitted, to be sure, that around 1935 there existed circles in the General Staff that still distrusted the operational commitment of tanks. In addition, it cannot be denied that before the War the doctrine of the Italian General Douhet on strategic air warfare was rejected in theory by the General Staff. It is also possible that before the War the General Staff thought too much along continental lines, that it still saw everything too much from an exclusively Army viewpoint, and that for this reason it did not do everything in its power to take part in the Wehrmacht command then in the process of enlargement. Finally it is also a fact that, although the problem of total war had been realized, it had not been thought through in all of its consequences. Considering all the facts, the General Staff was even during this period by no means backward, as has often been asserted by National Socialist circles. With regard to Army matters the General Staff always tried to create and stimulate.

D. Weaknesses of the General Staff

All institutions created by man are characterized by strong and weak points, and the German General Staff was no exception to this rule. They were especially noticeable during both world wars, inasmuch as strong and weak points always become most evident in times of great stress.

In World War I the General Staff came too much to the fore after the Army Commander-in-Chief had been replaced for the third time. It was then even customary to talk about the "hegemony of the General Staff." What Moltke had so successfully striven to avoid during his tenure of office now happened, and the General Staff divested itself of its anonymity. Ill feelings and animosity against it were the results. It would lead too far afield to discuss the reasons for this discord, which, however, did not originate with General Staff officers but are rather to be sought in the fact that Ludendorff, in his daily contacts with subordinate headquarters, did not deal directly with the commanders but with the General Staff officers whom he actually held largely responsible. An additional factor was that not all higher commanders of World War I were fully equal to their tasks.

This evil was recognized and corrected in the postwar period. "General Staff officers have no names" was told them in 1919 by their last Chief of Staff who became the first Chief of Army Command (see page 88).

The changeover was all the easier as the preponderant majority of the officers had now reached senior commands, and as they themselves had passed through General Staff schools. The Chief of Staff's former coresponsibility was now repealed. Moreover, the General Staff no longer possessed the same privileged position as in the Imperial Army, inasmuch as it now constituted only one of the five offices of the Army Command, or of the Army High Command, as the case might be. From 1919 to the end of World War II it would have been impossible to speak of the "hegemony" of the General Staff.

The pendulum now moved to the other extreme. Even before World War II, and especially during it, the General Staff was not granted the influence it was entitled to in the interests of the cause by the Reich Government when

the latter decided on actions which entailed military consequences. The Army Chief of Staff's participation in great decisions was entirely inadequate in fact, he was deliberately and increasingly deprived of any influence; The fateful results are well known. The repeal of the Chief of Staff's responsibility deprived the Army Chief of Staff of the right to insist at least on being heard.

Another weakness was inherent in the General Staff itself, for it was undoubtedly characterized by a certain onesidedness, resulting from its too great restriction to the purely military field, and within it, to the Army and its mission. This weakness was further aggravated because the type of the "unpolitical soldier," as created after World War I, was developed to extremes. The main consequences consisted of an at least temporary under-estimation of strategic air warfare, a failure by the General Staff to show interest when the Wehrmacht command was established, and a somewhat indifferent attitude toward internal and foreign affairs. The reason for this onesidedness was the fact that advanced intellectual training had been tied too long to outdated formulas and that it had not been brought in line with new requirements. Only by a more comprehensive training program could the necessary widening of mental horizons have been possible. Such training should have included an intensive occupation with the lessons to be derived by studying historical, political, and geographic interrelations and the influence exercised by technology and economy of the life of the nation and on warfare. It must be admitted, however, that since all General Staff officers were overtaxed by work during the Army expansion years before World War II, such advanced training was simply impossible due to lack of time.

B. Comparison with other General Staffs

The developments of modern warfare no longer permit that one man, the supreme commander, should alone command, as formerly, the fewer greater forces required. From now on he has needed a number of trained assistants. Following this absolute necessity, all armies developed during the 19th century their own General Staffs. The military missions which they had to handle were in principle the same in all armies. Some armies, in the Balkans and in South America, gained through their General Staffs political influence as well. At the Nuernberg trials it was irrefutably proved that this was never the case with the German General Staff, regardless of how often it may have been asserted.

The existence of a General Staff was thus no feature peculiar to the German Army alone. Nevertheless, it was particularly the German General Staff that time and again came in for special mention, partly in praise, more often in criticism. Was there any difference between the German General Staff and its counterparts in other armies, and if so, in what did it consist?

Such a difference did exist. But it was not due to the fact that the German Army was in any way more warlike than other armies, that it had waged more wars, thus affording it more opportunities to gain greater experience. A recently published book on history* sets forth that Germany, including Prussia, participated in only 8 percent of all the wars waged from 1800 to 1940, whereas Great Britain's share during the same period was 28 percent and France's 26 percent.

The difference must therefore have another cause. This cause was the fact that the German General Staff produced during the 19th century three great men. This is not mentioned in its favor, but merely as a fact worth recording. These three men -- we know that no others could be meant but Clausewitz, Moltke, and Schlieffen -- became the educators and trainers of the German General Staff. They shaped it into an institution which was probably unique with regard to uniformity of strategic and tactical thinking.

* "Social and Cultural Dynamics," by Professor Pitirin Sorokin.

They imparted to it the maximum of the qualities required of General Staff officers. It was their contribution that the General Staff became an institution for exercising constant intellectual influence and stimulation upon the commanders of the German Army.

The German General Staff enjoyed international prestige. In some respect it became the model for other armies, which endeavored, sooner or later, to create something equivalent to it and also carried on a planned program of training assistants for their commanders. The great German soldiers and military writers inspired this training to a large extent. Clausewitz's book "On War" is even today the top classic in the US Army; until recently it was also the top military textbook in the Soviet Union.

The particular importance of the German General Staff is accordingly due to the fact that its founding and its training and working procedures served in many ways as models for various foreign armies.

But this does not mean that the German General Staff was exclusively responsible for developments in the General Staffs of foreign armies. On the contrary, until the end of World War I it was possible to observe two additional trends in the development of General Staffs that exemplified by the Austro-Hungarian General Staff of the Imperial and Royal Army, and that shown by the Corps d'Etat Major in the French Army. The former operated very efficiently with regard to scientific and theoretical problems, but was reputed to have been hampered by a "conference table" outlook. Indeed, the plans of the Austrian General Staff during World War I often did not take sufficient account of the actual situation. After 1919 this trend disappeared. A few officers taken over from the Austro-Hungarian General Staff after its dissolution by reason of their citizenship were still serving in the General Staffs of Balkan states and of Italy at the beginning of the recent war.

The French General Staff retained Napoleon's basic concept of a strategy of annihilation. It sought to attain this aim by the application of far more procedural techniques than were applied by the German General Staff. The French General Staff believed that it was necessary to reduce all risks to

a minimum, and to advance step by step. It laid greater stress on defense than did the German General Staff, which was natural considering the differences in their military and geographic situations and national characters.

The French style of fighting was followed by a number of European General Staffs. Even the British Army, which did not organize its General Staff until World War I, adhered to the French trend of cautious leadership. All campaigns led by Field Marshal Montgomery bear this characteristic. The United States Army, on the other hand, provided a surprise because its command showed considerably greater initiative than could be expected according to the experience of World War I. By and large, the Allies applied in World War II, as before, only such methodical procedures as avoided all risks. This very methodical leadership constituted an important reason why the Allies, in spite of overwhelming superiority in manpower and materiel, did not succeed sooner in defeating the German Wehrmacht. In this connection it should also not be forgotten that Hitler's "military genius" actually played into the hands of the enemy. Hitler completely sidetracked the initiative which distinguished the German General Staff from all other General Staffs, and carelessly ignored its judgment.

(Signed) Westphal