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Esther-Julia Krug

Date

***“Holding down the Fort?” The War Historical Cooperation of the U.S. Army and
Former German *Wehrmacht* Officers, 1945-1961***

By

Esther-Julia Krug
Master of Arts

History

Fraser J. Harbutt, Ph.D.
Advisor

Angelika Bammer, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Astrid M. Eckert, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

Date

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Abstract

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By Esther-Julia Krug

In July 1945 the U.S. War Department sent a special historical interrogation mission to Europe to interview high-ranking German prisoners of war with the goal to achieve a more accurate understanding of the war and the circumstances leading up to it. After this so-called Shuster Commission finished its work, the U.S. Army's Historical Section in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) picked up the idea and in January 1946 created the Operational History (German) Section to organize and oversee the interrogation of hundreds of high-ranking German officers and General Staff officers. Soon, the Germans not only answered questionnaires, but also received specific topics to compile historical studies on their own. Released from their prisoner of war and civilian internee status respectively in 1947 and 1948, many continued to work for the U.S. Army from their homes as civilian employees. Against the background of increasing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union the U.S. military soon found a particular interest in the German officers' first-hand experience with the Soviet Union in general and the Red Army specifically. Until 1961, this remarkable cooperation produced more than 2,500 military studies on a variety of strategic, tactical, technical, and military-political questions, at times involving over 600 former German officers.

This thesis attempts to trace the origins and the organizational development of this remarkable cooperation between the U.S. Army and former German Wehrmacht officers. Moreover, it raises questions for specific goals and agendas, which the U.S. Army as well as the German participants associated with the project. The thesis examines the specific character of the relationships between German and American officers and how these developed and changed over the course of their cooperation. The analysis of the German-American history project also sheds light on transnational aspects of a selective exposure to war memory, its ideological spin and political exploitation, and the parameters of the postwar and emerging Cold War mentality in both West Germany and the United States.

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Table of Contents

I) Introduction	1
1. The Topic — A Rapprochement to its Explanatory Potential	1
2. Current State of Research	6
2.1 <i>Cultural Cold War History and the new Paradigm of ‘Westernization’</i>	6
2.2 <i>German-American Military Contacts</i>	10
2.3 <i>Politics of War Memory</i>	12
3. Sources.....	15
II) Origins and Development of the German-American War History Project	19
1. Initiation 1945.....	19
1.1 <i>The Development of official American War History: A short Overview</i>	19
1.2 <i>The Shuster Commission</i>	23
1.3 <i>Paving the Way: Kenneth W. Hechler’s Interrogations in the Summer of 1945</i>	27
1.4 <i>St. Germain: Winning the Doubters</i>	31
2. Transformation and Extension: From Oberursel to Neustadt (1946-1948)	35
2.1 <i>Transition from St. Germain to Oberursel</i>	35
2.2 <i>Allendorf and Garmisch</i>	38
2.3 <i>Neustadt: Operation STAPLE, Denazification and Hiring as Civilian Employees</i>	42
Excursus: Morale and Amenities	49
3. Entering a new Stage: The Control Group.....	54
4. Phase Out and Termination	56
III) The Hidden Agendas of the Historical Cooperation.....	58
1. “To Raise a Monument for our Troops” – or: Restoring the Image of the German Officer	61
2. Brothers in Arms: The Utilization of German Military Knowledge	66
2.1 <i>Gathering Information on the new Enemy</i>	66
2.2 <i>Lessons to be Learned: German Studies as Training Material and Resource for Doctrine Development</i>	69
2.3 <i>Injecting German Military Thought into the U.S. Army</i>	78
3. Competing Interests	83
3.1 <i>Conflict with the War Crimes Branch</i>	85
3.2 <i>Conflict with the Military Government</i>	88
3.3 <i>Public Criticism</i>	95
IV) Holding down the Fort? Personal and Ideological Rapprochements	104
1. The Role of Transnational Networks	104
1.1 <i>The Cooperation of the Reichswehr and the U.S. Army during the Interwar Period</i>	104
1.2 <i>American Encounters with Germany</i>	109
2. Reciprocal Perceptions	113
2.1 <i>General Perceptions of Germany</i>	113
2.2 <i>An International Club of “Chivalrous” Military Professionals: German-American Encounters within the Historical Division</i>	115
3. An Agency of Articulation: The Role of the Historical Division in Shaping the Memory of World War II.....	120
3.1 <i>Memory-construction in the German-American War Historical Cooperation</i>	120
3.2 <i>Past, Present, and Future: Germany’s Arrival in the West</i>	125
3.3 <i>Two different “Wests”?</i>	138
3.4 <i>The Necessity to Regret and to Forget and the Legend of the “Clean” Wehrmacht</i>	142

V) Conclusion.....	150
Abbreviations.....	155
Bibliography	156
1. Archival Sources.....	156
2. Published Sources.....	157
3. Periodicals.....	157
4. Memoirs.....	158
5. Internet Sources.....	158
6. Secondary Literature	158

I) Introduction

1. The Topic — A Rapprochement to its Explanatory Potential

The Second World War was hardly over in Europe when historians of the U.S. War Department's Historical Section developed the idea to interview German prisoners of war in order to achieve a more accurate understanding of the war and the circumstances leading up to it.¹ Concerned that interrogations conducted by other intelligence agencies failed to completely explore the overarching historical narrative that German POWs might provide, they encouraged the creation of a special historical interrogation commission to carry out a more comprehensive examination. Following this suggestion, Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson sent a group of handpicked experts to Europe in early July 1945. In the following three months, this so-called Shuster Commission—named after its head, Germany expert and president of the New York Hunter College, George N. Shuster—interviewed numerous high-ranking German soldiers and civilians in various POW camps.²

After the Shuster Commission finished its work, the U.S. Army's Historical Section in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) picked up the idea and in January 1946 created the *Operational History (German) Section* to organize and oversee the interrogation of hundreds of high-ranking German political leaders and General Staff

¹ Troyer S. Anderson, "Examination of leading German prisoners of war in order to gather historical information, 18.5.945," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. Records of the Office of the Chief of Military History. Records of the Historical Services Division. Files of Troyer S. Anderson, 1941-1946. Box 13. Folder 1* (NARA).

² Kenneth W. Hechler, "The Enemy Side of the Hill: The 1945 Background of the Interrogation of German Commanders," in *World War II Military Studies. A Collection of 213 Special Reports on the Second World War Prepared by Former Officers of the Wehrmacht for the United States Army*, ed. Donald S. Detwiler (New York 1979).

officers. Soon, the Germans not only answered questionnaires, but also received specific topics to compile historical studies on their own.³ Released from their prisoner of war status and civilian internee status respectively in 1947 and 1948, many continued to work for the American Army from their homes as civilian employees. In addition, a so-called *Control Group*, consisting of eight former German General Staff officers, was established in Königstein (Hesse) for the coordination with the Historical Division and the supervision of the German home workers.

Until 1961, this remarkable cooperation produced more than 2,500 studies on a variety of strategic, tactical, technical, and military-political questions, at times involving over 600 former German officers.⁴ Against the background of increasing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, the U.S. military found a particular interest in the information that the Germans could provide, especially their first-hand experience with the Soviet Union in general and the Red Army specifically. More than just war history, an actual operational interest prompted the Americans to intensify a project that rapidly developed from the exploitation of a defeated enemy into a professional cooperation between equals.⁵ Without doubt, the political, military, and ideological enmity toward the Soviet Union provided a common ground on which

³ "Chronological History - Foreign Studies Branch USAREUR," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. U.S. Army Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files), 1943-1984. Box 11. Folder 5.* (NARA), Howard P. Hudson, "Speech prepared for Colonel Pence for use at Conference of ETO historians, February 1946," in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. U.S. Army Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files) 1943-1984. Box 11. Folder 4* (NARA).

⁴ Cp. Paul M. Robinett, "Foreign Military Studies, June 1956," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. U.S. Army Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files) 1943-1984. Box 63. Folder 5* (NARA), Earl F. Ziemke, "Memorandum. Control Group, USAREUR, 23.3.1961," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. U.S. Army Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files) 1943-1984. Box 62. Folder 3* (NARA).

⁵ Paul M. Robinett, "German Participation in the U.S. Army Historical Program," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers. Box 16. Folder 19* (George C. Marshall Research Library). Without date but certainly written after 1972.

American and German officers met after World War II.

Interestingly, German as well as American historians have long disregarded this particular episode in postwar cooperation between the United States and (West) Germany, despite the fact that it reveals certain dynamics in the development of German-American relations after the Second World War. For example, examining the historical project would provide a deeper insight into the complex transformations of postwar German society, transformations, which eventually allowed for Germans and Americans alike to merge their worldviews in a strategic alliance against Communism. Furthermore, such an analysis would reveal disruptions and continuities in ideology, stereotypes, and reciprocal perceptions extending from the war to the postwar period and whether elements of National Socialist ideology persisted and possibly even found reciprocation from within the American officer corps. An analysis of this German-American history project can thus shed light on transnational aspects of a selective exposure to war memory, its ideological spin and political exploitation, and the parameters of the postwar and emerging Cold War mentality in both West Germany and the United States.

Because the project spanned from 1945 to 1961, any analysis has to consider the context of the immediate postwar period, a time characterized by a state of shock and despair on the part of the Germans and a phase of trial and error in denazifying German society on the part of the Allies. This fluid period was then of course followed by the emerging Cold War and the development of antagonistic blocs—elements, which also provide an important background for the study. Therefore, this analysis is set at the interface of military, diplomatic, and cultural approaches to German-American relations in the early Cold War era. Moreover, it draws on conceptual approaches from the fields

of memory studies, group biographies, and transnational networks. For example, the cooperation under discussion raises questions of the specific character of the relationships between German and American officers and how these developed and changed over the course of their cooperation. After all, these men had only recently fought on opposite sides. How did they encounter one another in the realm of war history? And what military and political goals defined the common interest of German and American militaries in writing the history of World War II?

In the midst of a general agreement between German and American officers, it is also essential to detect divergent and conflicting interests, not only along the lines of differences between Germans and Americans, but also within these nationally defined groups and even across their boundaries. Such an exploration reveals the divides between certain agencies and individuals within the American military, allowing the identification of different interest groups. In the early postwar years the Historical Division, for instance, engaged in a continuous struggle over access to German officers with the War Crimes Branch and other persecuting agencies. In addition, the project faced a serious crisis when Military Governor Lucius D. Clay in 1947 attempted to bring the project to a close.

Considering the specific purpose of writing war history and the enormous amount of studies that the historical project produced, an examination consequently has to take the role of memory and its influence on historical writing into consideration: it needs to address the complex interactions between individual, social, and cultural memory; the creation of historical narratives and their exploitation for concrete policy agendas; and the mechanisms and dynamics of politically purposeful rhetoric. By collecting and recreating

their individual memories in an organized effort and even putting them down in writing, the German officers were able to transform their personal retrospections into a social memory. Furthermore, because Western military institutions as well as academic institutions used these studies, their specific memories transcended the boundaries of a confined social group and were incorporated into the transnational cultural memory of the Second World War.⁶

However, the issue of memory is a very difficult one and over the course of the project, one must keep in mind the changing circumstances of the German officers and their relationship with the American military. After all, the German officers were prominent members of a totally defeated army. After several exhausting years of combat they found themselves prisoners of war; in many cases they were unsure about the fate of their families; personally they had to deal with being blamed for the war not only by the world but also by their own people; many faced war crimes trials. This situation certainly affected their ability or willingness to first remember and then reveal certain aspects of their war experiences. Over the next couple of years, however, the historical project moved along while the Allies slowly turned their back on denazification and reeducation, accelerating West Germany's incorporation into the Western alliance. Thus, many participants of the historical project, after having been released from their POW- and civil internee status, continued to work for the Historical Division, motivated by their contribution to the defense against Communism.

⁶ On memory and identity in the context of German exposure to the Nazi past cp. for example Siobhan Kattago, *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity* (Westport, Conn. 2001), for the interdependency of individual and collective memory after World War II and its transnational aspects cf. for example Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Crises of Memory and the Second World War* (Cambridge 2006), on 'memory' as object of research cf. Jay Winter, "The Generation of Memory. Reflections on the Memory Boom in Contemporary History," *Contemporary Historical Studies* 21, no. 1 (2001): 52-66.

2. Current State of Research

2.1 Cultural Cold War History and the new Paradigm of ‘Westernization’

In the course of the last decade or so, the historiography on the Cold War underwent a refreshing widening and reorientation. Cold War historians have increasingly discovered the examination of the conflict's cultural aspects as fruitful for new insights into its origins, development, and dynamics.⁷ A little delayed, the scholarship on the conflict thus followed the cultural turn in the historical profession that had first emerged from new ideas and approaches among social historians in the 1970s. In the process, a younger generation of historians has now shifted the focus from the mere political, diplomatic, economic, and military aspects of the conflict to an analysis of ideas, rhetoric, and symbolism.⁸ Numerous recently published studies have cut insightful aisles through the thick cultural lining of the Cold War struggle.⁹ These studies look, for example, at the self-perception of the combatants or institutional and personal networks of politicians, diplomats, and military personnel as well as intellectuals, artists, and writers.

This recent emphasis on the cultural dimension of the Cold War ties in with yet another fresh research track of intercultural transfer that has played an important role in

⁷ See for example Volker Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe. Shepard Stone between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy* (Princeton 2001), Peter Kuznik and James Gilbert, eds., *Rethinking Cold War Culture* (Washington 2001).

⁸ For an overview on recent cultural studies on the Cold War cf. Dominik Geppert, "Culture in the Cold War," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute London* 24, no. 2 (2002): 50-71.

⁹ also cf. for example Berghahn, *Intellectual Cold Wars*, Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945-1955*, Eisenhower Center studies on war and peace (Baton Rouge 1999), Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York 1999), Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington 2000), Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who paid the piper?* (London 2000).

the newer German historiography on the post-World War II era. In the field of transatlantic relations, the work on the relationship between America and the Federal Republic has taken up an especially prominent place, since Germany's political, economical, and societal recovery was inevitably closely linked and, in fact, depended on the liaison with the occupying powers, particularly the dominating United States.

Since the 1980s, historians have been drawing on the theoretical concept of *Americanization* to analyze German-American relations, thereby mainly focusing on the American influence on socio-political developments, culture, and lifestyle in postwar Germany. The focus lay on the transfer of political and economical concepts, ideas, and cultural as well as behavioral patterns from America to Europe in general and West Germany in particular.¹⁰ As the term implies, *Americanization* is mainly seen as a one-way process that transmitted components of American mass consumption and mass culture to Europe; the approach, thus, stresses the revisionist interpretation of the United States as aggressive imperial power aiming at cultural hegemony.¹¹

However, accompanying the growing trend toward analyzing the cultural aspects

¹⁰ For a short summary on the research paradigm of 'Americanization' see Volker Berghahn, Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, and Christoph Mauch, "The American Impact on Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective. Introduction to the Conference " in *The American Impact in Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective*" (Washington D.C. : German Historical Institute Washington D.C., 1999). <http://test.ghi-dc.org/conpotweb/westernpapers/introduction.html>, classical studies on Americanization are e.g. Volker Rolf Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German industry, 1945-1973* (Cambridge [England] ; New York 1986), also see Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Wie westlich sind die Deutschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen 1999), Hermann-Josef Rupieper, *Die Wurzeln der westdeutschen Nachkriegsdemokratie: der amerikanische Beitrag 1945-1952* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993).

¹¹ See Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, "Transatlantic Exchange and Interaction. The Concept of Westernization," in *The American Impact in Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective* (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute Washington D.C., 1999), pp. 4-5, Holger Nehring, "'Westernization': A new Paradigm for Interpreting West European History in a Cold War context," *Cold War History* 4, no. 2 (2004): p. 177.

of the Cold War, historians refined the Americanization-concept. The new approach, called *Westernization*, transcends the limitations of the Americanization-paradigm and places more emphasis on interaction and exchange, offering a more sophisticated theoretical model for the interpretation of transatlantic relations after 1945. According to this theory, it was not a unilateral transfer of American concepts and values to Europe that characterized the postwar era, but rather a back and forth of ideas across the Atlantic. Moreover, this exchange led to an amalgamation of European and American values that manifested itself in the cooperative creation of a specific transatlantic community of values.

The term *Westernization* therefore refers to the evolvement of a unifying ideological framework in the 20th century that resulted in a particular, though often rather abstract, self-perception of belonging to *the West*.¹² As the German historian Anselm Doering-Manteuffel pointed out, this construct of a Western community of shared values was not an invention of the 20th century. Starting with the European Enlightenment, *the West* has emerged over a period of about 200 years, spanning rival political and social concepts such as Enlightenment, English pragmatism, and variations of liberalism.¹³ Up to the First World War, *the West* constituted a rather heterogeneous community held together by a loose liberal conceptual framework. Eventually, it was the ideological opposition of the First World War that led to the homogenization of *the West* as a

¹² Berghahn, Doering-Manteuffel, and Mauch, "The American Impact on Western Europe: Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective. Introduction to the Conference ", pp. 5-6, Nehring, "'Westernization': A new Paradigm for Interpreting West European History in a Cold War context," pp. 176-178.

¹³ Doering-Manteuffel, "Transatlantic Exchange and Interaction. The Concept of Westernization," pp. 5-7, Michael Hochgeschwender, "Was ist der Westen? Zur Ideengeschichte eines politischen Konstrukts," *Historisch-Politische Mitteilungen*, no. 11 (2004): p. 1.

political configuration that excluded and opposed the Germans. Consequently, *the West* henceforth contained Great Britain, France, and the United States, with America increasingly assuming a leadership role.¹⁴ Only after World War II would Germany eventually be incorporated into this Western community.

In fact, political scientist Patrick T. Jackson recently pointed out that the rhetorically constructed notion of *the West* or a *Western Civilization* played a crucial role in the formation of the postwar world, and was especially important for the reconstruction of Germany and its inclusion into this self-proclaimed community. The admission of this former dire enemy points to the ambiguity and pliability of the Western alliance.¹⁵ By analyzing public rhetorical contests, Jackson shows that the rhetorical commonplace of *Western Civilization* functioned “in both the German and the American context as a discursive resource for delegitimizing policy options opposed to Germany's incorporation into American-led military and economic institutions.”¹⁶

Jackson points out that the interests of the actors in these debates were not necessarily fixed, but that, in fact, social ties and transactions between German as well as American participants shaped the rhetorical construction of *the West*. Furthermore, in his view the concrete policy outcomes of the discussion originated in the “social production and reproduction of patterns of meaning.”¹⁷ Jackson, thus, seems to seize a suggestion made by the German historian Holger Nehring who in 2004 called for the establishment of “a more elaborate framework for the transfer of ideas which sets out in detail to what

¹⁴ Cf. Doering-Manteuffel, "Transatlantic Exchange and Interaction. The Concept of Westernization," pp. 5-7.

¹⁵ Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy. German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West*, (Ann Arbor 2006), pp. vii-x.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

extent the biographies, the world views, the media employed for the transfer, and indeed the structure of the ideas itself influence the transfer of ideas and their accumulation.”¹⁸

By recognizing that the notion of a *Western Civilization* lacks concrete entities with a concretely defined essence, the goal can thus not be to determine what *the West* really *is*, but rather to explain how competing factions exploited the rhetorical concept for their various agendas. According to Jackson, the opposing sides in the struggles over public policy were largely constituted by different arrangements of similar commonplaces such as anticommunism and the preservation of liberty. Arguments about defending or acting on behalf of Western Civilization thus relied on the widespread dissemination and availability of these commonplaces.¹⁹

2.2 German-American Military Contacts

Surprisingly, detailed studies on German-American military contacts still comprise a desideratum in the scholarship of transatlantic relations. The exchange of officers between the *Reichswehr* and the U.S. Army in the 1920s, for example, has been largely ignored and the first monograph on this interesting topic still awaits publication.²⁰ This is especially unfortunate since the military cooperation in the interwar period could provide important background information for the analysis of the rapprochement of German and American officers after 1945.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁸ Nehring, "'Westernization': A new Paradigm for Interpreting West European History in a Cold War context," p. 185.

¹⁹ Cf. Hochgeschwender, "Was ist der Westen," p. 2, Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*, pp. x-xi.

²⁰ Michael Wala, "Die Abteilung 'T-3' und die Beziehungen der Reichswehr zur U.S. Army," in *Diplomaten und Agenten. Nachrichtendienste in der Geschichte der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen*, ed. Reinhard D. Doerries (Heidelberg 2001), ———, *Reichswehr und US Army: Deutsche Reichswehroffiziere in den USA der Zwischenkriegszeit* (anticipated for 2009).

Moreover, historians have similarly neglected the post-World War II collaboration of German officers with the U.S. Army's Historical Division. Although the cooperation is mentioned in several studies on West German rearmament and is, furthermore, discussed in a few articles, no monograph has dealt with the subject in detail. In their articles, Christian Greiner, Bernd Wegner, Charles Burton Burdick, and Klaus Naumann provide basic information on establishment, duration, and outcome of the historical work.²¹ Alaric Searle provides a more profound analysis in his book *Wehrmacht Generals, West German society, and the Debate on Rearmament*, but due to the specific focus of his study can only briefly touch on the Historical Division.²² Furthermore, all studies dealing with the German-American historical cooperation focus on the German participants and, almost exclusively, on the person of the former Chief of the German General Staff Franz Halder, who assumed an especially prominent position in the historical cooperation.²³ Nevertheless, even Halder's role has been only superficially analyzed, thereby neglecting his important and influential role as intermediary between the American military and the former *Wehrmacht* elite. On the other hand, the vast majority of German participants in the historical cooperation, still

²¹ Charles Burton Burdick, "Vom Schwert zur Feder. Deutsche Kriegsgefangene im Dienste der Vorbereitung der amerikanischen Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung ueber den Zweiten Weltkrieg. Die organisatorische Entwicklung der Operational History (German) Section," *Militaergeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, no. 2 (1971), Christian Greiner, "'Operational History (German) Section' und 'Naval Historical Team': Deutsches militaerstrategisches Denken im Dienst der amerikanischen Streitkraefte von 1946 bis 1950," *Militaergeschichte* (1982), Klaus Naumann, "Der Beginn einer wunderbaren Freundschaft. Beobachtungen aus der Fruehzeit der deutsch-amerikanischen Militaerbeziehungen," in *Westbindungen. Amerika in der Bundesrepublik*, ed. Heinz Bude and Bernd Greiner (Hamburg 1999), Bernd Wegner, "Erschriebene Siege. Franz Halder, die 'Historical Division' und die Rekonstruktion des Zweiten Weltkrieges im Geiste des deutschen Generalstabes," in *Politischer Wandel, organisierte Gewalt und nationale Sicherheit. Beitrage zur neueren Geschichte Deutschlands und Frankreichs. Festschrift fuer Klaus-Juergen Mueller*, ed. Bernd Wegner (Munich 1995).

²² Alaric Searle, *Wehrmacht Generals, West German Society, and the Debate on Rearmament, 1949-1959* (Westport, Conn. 2003).

²³ Cf. for example Wegner, "Erschriebene Siege."

remains unknown.

Most recently, Ronald M. Smelser and Edward J. Davies picked up on the cultural aspects of the cooperation in their book *The Myth of the Eastern Front. The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture*.²⁴ Smelser and Davies raise some interesting questions, some of which will be dealt with in this thesis as well. However, in their study too, the historical cooperation is only one among various examples. Consequently, they do not offer a comprehensive overview on the organizational and institutional development of the project. Moreover, even though they emphasize the influence of German officers on “the U.S. military” and “widening circles of government and politics”²⁵, they do not support this thesis with sufficient source material, nor do they attempt to explore the personal relationships between Germans and Americans in any detail.

2.3 Politics of War Memory

An examination of the joined historical work of German and American officers after 1945 necessarily needs to take into consideration the complex issue of memory, its formation, transfer, and exploitation. Since the 1980s, memory studies emerged across a wide disciplinary spectrum and developed into a thriving field of interdisciplinary research. Besides anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and political scientists, historians became increasingly fascinated with *memory* and by now a vast number of studies incorporate theories on individual, social, and cultural memory—so much so that

²⁴ Ronald M. Smelser and Edward J. Davies, *The myth of the Eastern Front: the Nazi-Soviet war in American popular culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

some even speak of a “memory boom”.²⁶ Memory, and in close conjunction with it the formation of identity, have been recognized as especially pertinent by scholars of 20th century Germany, who focus on the Third Reich and the exposure to the National Socialist past in postwar Germany.²⁷

However, *memory* is a rather vague term and the conceptual frameworks and approaches differ remarkably. Thus, memory, and especially war memory, can be understood as public discourse on a country's past whereby the perspective is confined to official collective memory as constructed by politicians and intellectuals and represented in commemoration days, memorials, or museums. This state-centered approach as represented by Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson, takes a top-down perspective on the construction of collective memory and national identity.²⁸ Others focus, in contrast, on memory as acts of individuals or social groups and examine what is remembered and why. This so-called social-agency approach stresses the significance of psychological dynamics and the agency of the civil society.²⁹

Most memory studies follow one of these two paradigms, which often are seen as unrelated and even mutually exclusive alternatives. However, as T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper point out, this dichotomy and polarization is rather arbitrary, since the processes of remembering and memory production operating in state agencies

²⁶ Winter, "The Generation of Memory. Reflections on the Memory Boom in Contemporary History."

²⁷ Cf. T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, Routledge Studies in Memory and Narrative 7 (London; New York 2000), pp. 3-6, cf. Rainer Schulze, "Review Article: Memory in German History: Fragmented Noises or Meaningful Voices of the Past?," *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (2004): p. 638.

²⁸ Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. and extended ed. (London; New York 1991), Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge 1983).

²⁹ Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, p. 7, Schulze, "Memory in German History," p. 646.

and the civil society are “inter-related and indeed constitutive of each other.”³⁰ In a thoughtful and extensive conceptual introduction to their miscellany, Ashplant and his colleagues subject the described paradigms to a detailed critique and conclude that in both the state-centered and the social-agency approach the complicated relation between the various agencies involved in the creation of war memory are “under-conceptualized”. In their exclusiveness both concepts lead to an “impoverished” notion of war memory and miss “the richness and complexity of personal memory, and the extent to which it is constructed through cultural practices of representation operating at the levels of civil society and state.”³¹ Consequently, Ashplant, Dawson and Roper recommend a widened theoretical approach that considers the inter-relations between different agents, thus “generating a more complex, integrated account of the interacting processes that link the individual, civil society and the state” while at the same time taking into account transnational developments and power relations.³²

By drawing on and consolidating the state-centered and the social-agency approach with insights of oral history approaches, Ashplant and his colleagues then offer a nuanced model of the mechanisms of politics of war memory. Accordingly, *politics of war memory* is defined as the “struggle of different groups to give public articulation to, and hence gain recognition for, certain memories and the narratives within which they are structured.”³³ To trace their development, dynamics, and outcomes, particular struggles should be explored in a threefold manner that regards and distinguishes narratives, arenas, and agencies of articulation.

³⁰ Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, p. 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12; 15.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

The theoretical approach offered by Ashplant is especially practical for the analysis of the complex politics of memory taking place within the German-American war historical cooperation. This thesis thus seeks to explore how the Historical Division provided the former German military elite with an arena in which they could reconstruct narratives of their personal memories in interaction with representatives of the new American world power; and moreover, how the Historical Division functioned as an agency of articulation through which the former *Wehrmacht* generals could promote their specific version of World War II-memory to an international audience of military officers.

3. Sources

Fortunately, the records of the Historical Division and its successor organization, the Office of the Chief of Military History, have remained intact and are today available in the National Archives II-location at College Park, Maryland. These administrative records are of tremendous value for the reconstruction of the development and operational sequences of the historical cooperation between former *Wehrmacht* generals and the U.S. Army. They contain weekly and monthly reports from different levels and branches of the Historical Division, most importantly of the Operational History (German) Section. These reports are especially informative for the inner development of the cooperation and its position within the larger historical program of the U.S. Army.

Equally important sources are correspondence records of the different branches of the Historical Division. They encompass, for instance, correspondence between the European branch and its superior agency in Washington, and thus enable the

recapitulation of the course of communication between Frankfurt and Washington. Of particular interest is the Historical Division's correspondence with other Army agencies such as the War Crimes Branch, the Civil Administration Branch, the Denazification Branch, and the Office of the Military Government for Germany (OMGUS). The records contain, moreover, conference minutes, memorandums, staff studies, budget estimates, as well as several personal accounts of American officers formerly assigned to the Operational History (German) Section.

In addition to these official records, the personal papers of German and American participants in the historical project shed light on motives and agendas connected with the collaboration, as well as the reciprocal perception of Germans and Americans. On the American side, the personal papers of George N. Shuster and S.L.A. Marshall are of particular importance for the examination of the beginning stages of the project in the summer and fall of 1945. For the period of extension and transformation from 1946 to 1948, the semi-personal correspondence of Colonel Harold E. Potter, Captains Frank C. Mahin and James F. Scoggin, and Major Howard P. Hudson are especially fruitful, since they all worked for the Historical Division in Europe and were in close contact with German officers as well as their superiors in Washington. The more distant Washington perspective will be highlighted through the examination of the official records and personal papers of General Paul M. Robinett who from 1948 to 1956 headed the Historical Division's Special Studies Branch.

In regard of the German participants, the extensive personal papers of Franz Halder are of uttermost importance, since Halder's service for the Historical Division from 1948 to 1961 spanned almost the entire duration of the project. Besides

correspondence with numerous other German officers, they comprise official correspondence between Halder and various offices of the Historical Division. In addition, the personal papers of former General Artillery Günther Blumentritt are also of particular interest. Blumentritt was not only a very eager and especially productive home worker, but also kept a lively correspondence with German as well as American officers in which he often discussed his views on contemporary political developments. Finally, the papers of several other former German officers such as Gotthard Heinrici and Waldemar Erfurth also contain information on the historical collaboration.

The actual historical studies compiled by the German generals constitute an enormous corpus of sources. They are today available both in the National Archives in College Park and the German Federal Military Archive in Freiburg. Since the questions raised in this thesis focus on cultural and ideological rather than military-technical aspects of the German-American cooperation, the selection of studies is characterized by their ideological undertones. Of particular interest are studies that address, for instance, the “character of the Russian people” or the “present world situation” and thus reveal the authors' attitudes toward Russia and America as well as their estimation of Germany's future international role.³⁴

Taken together, a cultural perspective on the Cold War era; the examination of the development of the transatlantic relations under the paradigm of *Westernization*; the interpretation of this process as a rhetorical and ideological construction; and finally the

³⁴ For example: Guenther Blumentritt, "Gedanken ueber die angelsaechsische Weltstellung, March 1947," in *MS # B-386* (NARA), ———, "MS # B-635. Persoenliche Gedanken ueber die Weltlage, February 1947," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. "B" Manuscripts, 1945-1949. Box 47.* (NARA), Lothar Rendulic, "MS # D-036. The Fighting Qualities of the Russian Soldiers, 1.3.1947," (NARA), Georg von Sodenstern, "Gedanken zur Gegenwart," (NARA).

consideration of memory theories, provides fruitful theoretical tools for the analysis of the historical cooperation between German officers and the Historical Division after World War II. Embedded in this framework and based on a broad spectrum of archival sources and secondary literature, this thesis sets out to describe and interpret the war historical cooperation between former *Wehrmacht* officers and the U.S. Army.

The first part provides an overview on the origins and the development of the collaboration, thus setting the stage for the further analysis. The second part will then explore the deeper motives and agendas of both Germans and Americans and will, moreover, discuss some important conflicts the project had to face. Finally, the last chapter will provide a deeper analysis of the personal relationship between German and American officers, thereby exploring the roots of German-American military networks in the interwar period. In addition, this part seeks to integrate the episode of the historical cooperation into a broader transatlantic postwar history. While the first chapter is mainly chronological, the second and third parts are arranged thematically. To enhance readability and understandability, quotations from German sources have been translated into English. Any mistakes in the translations are entirely my fault. For longer quotes, the original German wording is given in the footnotes.

II) Origins and Development of the German-American War History Project

1. *Initiation 1945*

1.1 The Development of official American War History: A short Overview

In contrast to the German military, the U.S. Army had no long tradition of official military history and only at the end of the First World War made first steps towards the compilation of an official American war history.³⁵ For this purpose, the War Department established, in the spring of 1918, a Historical Section under the War Plans Division that was transferred to the Army War College later that year. After the armistice, the Historical Section collected some 100,000 documents in Europe and on this basis began the compilation of monographs on the military operations of World War I. However, in the interwar period the work proceeded extremely slowly. On the eve of World War II, the official operational history of the previous conflict was, in consequence, far from completion.³⁶ In a quarter century, the American military had not managed to “establish control over the subject.”³⁷

Not only did the Historical Section of the Army War College fail to efficiently transform the mass of World War I documents into a consistent historiography, the Army had, moreover, neglected to develop a mobilization plan for historical work to be

³⁵ On the development of Prussian-German war historical writing within the General Staff cf. for example Markus Poehlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte und Geschichtspolitik: Der Erste Weltkrieg. Die amtliche deutsche Militaergeschichtsschreibung 1914-1956*, Krieg in der Geschichte (Paderborn 2002).

³⁶ Victor Gondos, "Army Historiography: Retrospect and Prospect," *Military Affairs* 7, no. 3 (1943): pp. 133-134.

³⁷ *Ibid.*: p. 134.

conducted during and after a future war.³⁸ Therefore, the War Department did not even attempt to prepare an official history of the conduct of U.S. armed forces when the United States entered World War II. Instead, the Historical Section decided merely to compile a chronology of the ongoing events—a “running inventory of [...] accumulation documents” and “flash narratives of training battle, and other activities” that could later serve as “a series of guides” for future historians and archivists.³⁹

Only several months later, in March 1942, a first impetus for intensified historical activity came from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who directed all federal agencies to prepare records of their wartime administration. Consequently, Secretary of War Henry Lewis Stimson instructed all branches of the military to appoint historical officers. The directive coincided with the armed forces' growing interest in a serious history of its wartime performance.⁴⁰ However, the lack of clear-cut authority and oversight resulted in improvisation and the co-existence of several different historical agencies, characterized by a diversity of practices and policies, which resulted in different standards in data collection, record processing, administration, and documentation.⁴¹

In order to reach a standardization of these various approaches, the War Department eventually set up a Historical Branch within the Intelligence Branch (G-2) of the War Department General Staff in August 1943 and charged the new agency to plan

³⁸ Ibid.: p. 135.

³⁹ ———, "Army Historiography in the Second World War," *Military Affairs* 7, no. 1 (1943): pp. 66-67, Edwin B. Kerr, "The Army Historical Program since 1942 - A History," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. U.S. Army Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files) 1943-1984. Box 11. Folder 3.* (NARA), p. 1.

⁴⁰ Cf. Gondos, "Army Historiography," pp. 60-61, Kent Roberts Greenfield, "The U.S. Army's Historical Program since 1942 - A Memoir, 18.10.1952," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. U.S. Army Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files), 1943-1984. Box 2. Folder 2.* (NARA), p. 1.

⁴¹ Gondos, "Army Historiography.", cf. ———, "Army Historiography: Retrospect and Prospect," pp. 67-68.

and supervise the historical program for World War II. The Washington based agency was headed by Lieutenant Colonel John M. Kemper as Chief of the Historical Branch; in addition a civilian Chief Historian, Dr. Walter L. Wright, became Kemper's assistant.⁴²

The Historical Branch now assumed control over all historical activities conducted by the American armed forces at home and abroad.⁴³ Its three main objectives consisted of reinforcing and extending the emerging historical activity overseas; the cooperation with the Adjutant General in preserving and organizing the records for a future official history of the war; and finally the publication of pamphlets on certain operations for distribution among wounded troops. Moreover, in the fall of 1944, the Historical Branch began to send historical teams to all theaters of operation to collect records and to conduct interviews with American troops on the scene of action. By 1945 the Historical Branch felt confident enough to proceed with the production of a comprehensive history of the Army's participation in World War II. The proposal allowed for roughly 100 volumes—a daring project without precedent in American war historiography.⁴⁴

In charge of the ambitious task was Colonel Allen F. Clark, a young regular who had previously taught history at West Point and who in 1945 succeeded Lt. Col. Kemper as Chief of the Historical Branch, G-2. To ensure the success of the official war history, Clark reorganized the Historical Branch as a sub-agency of the Chief of Staff. The transformation was complete by November 1945 and the Historical Branch, G-2 became

⁴² Kerr, "The Army Historical Program since 1942 - A History," p. 3.

⁴³ Cf. Gondos, "Army Historiography: Retrospect and Prospect," pp. 138-140, cf. John M. Kemper, "Historical Branch, G-2," *Military Affairs* 8, no. 2.

⁴⁴ Cf. Greenfield, "The U.S. Army's Historical Program since 1942 - A Memoir, 18.10.1952," pp. 2-3, cf. Kerr, "The Army Historical Program since 1942 - A History," pp. 2-3.

the Historical Division, War Department Special Staff (WDSS), now headed by Major General Edwin Forrest Harding (1945/1946).⁴⁵ In the 1950s, the Historical Division would once again be reorganized and operated henceforth under the name *Office of the Chief of Military History* (OCMH).⁴⁶

Like the Historical Branch, G-2 the new Historical Division, WDSS was not a straight-line military organization; responsibilities remained divided. A military Chief shared responsibilities with a civilian Chief Historian who oversaw the quality of the Division's publications. Moreover, besides military personnel, the agency employed at all times several civilian historians for work on the official war history. However, the vast majority of these civilian authors had served as historical officers during the war and thus possessed not only military expertise but were also partially socialized by the military environment. To further strengthen the civilian element, the Secretary of War attached an Advisory Committee to the Division that included a nationwide representation of distinguished historians, among them James P. Baxter, Pendleton Herring, and William T. Hutchinson. The official war history of the U.S. Army was thus the product of an organized partnership between both the military and historical professions.⁴⁷

The Historical Divisions in both Washington and Europe were renamed several times along with the reorganization of the American military organization in the postwar era. To avoid confusion and simplify the terminology, the superior historical agency in Washington will in the following be referred to as *Historical Division, Washington* in

⁴⁵ Cf. Greenfield, "The U.S. Army's Historical Program since 1942 - A Memoir, 18.10.1952," p. 3, cf. Kerr, "The Army Historical Program since 1942 - A History," p. 4.

⁴⁶ Kerr, "The Army Historical Program since 1942 - A History," p. 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

distinction from the *Historical Division, Europe*. Where the term *Historical Division* is used without further specification, the European Branch is meant.

1.2 The Shuster Commission

The ambitious publication project the Historical Division, Washington envisioned on the Army's war conduct required the collection of as much information as possible on World War II operations. In the beginning, the historical officers sent to Europe drew primarily on official Army documents. However, after scores of German military leaders and representatives of the National Socialist regime were captured in the final stages of the war, historians Walter L. Wright and Troyer S. Anderson of the Historical Division in Washington developed an intriguing idea: Would it be possible to exploit German prisoners of war to complement the official American war history?

On May 18th, 1945, Anderson thus sent a memorandum to Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson and proposed the "examination of leading German prisoners of war in order to gather historical information." In the same breath, Anderson suggested that the Historical Division would act as the agency responsible for coordinating such an undertaking.⁴⁸ Judge Patterson was taken with the idea. After all, he had Anderson draft a memorandum to the Deputy Chief of Staff and encouraged the immediate deployment of a small group of experts to Europe in order to "exploit fully the unparalleled but fleeting opportunity [...] for learning the inside story of the Third Reich."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Anderson, "Examination of leading German prisoners of war in order to gather historical information, 18.5.945."

⁴⁹ Troyer S. Anderson, "Memorandum from Undersecretary of War Patterson to the Deputy Chief of Staff, 19.5.1945," in RG 319. *Records of the Army Staff. Records of the Office of the Chief of Military History. Records of the Historical Services Division. Files of Troyer S. Anderson, 1941-1946. Box 13. Folder 1*

Indeed, the Historical Division, Washington was thereafter charged with the compilation of a group of approximately half a dozen experts to be sent on an interrogation mission overseas. The following weeks saw avid efforts to find distinguished experts on German politics and economy.⁵⁰ In June the Historical Division eventually assigned the journalist and educator George N. Shuster, at that time president of the New York Hunter College, as chief of the anticipated interrogation mission. His family background, education and political views made Shuster an ideal candidate. A second-generation immigrant, Shuster remained conscious about his German roots throughout his life.⁵¹ He held great admiration for German authors, composers, artists and architects and not even his experiences as soldier in the trenches of World War I and Germany's fatal development under National Socialism could seriously shake Shuster's sympathies for the German people.⁵²

Besides Shuster, the group finally consisted of Dr. Frank Graham, professor of economy at Princeton; Dr. John Brown Mason from Stanford; Lieutenant Colonel Oron J. Hale, professor of history at the University of Virginia; and Lieutenant Colonel J.J. Scanlon of the Army Service Forces Material Division. Except for Scanlon, all of them spoke German fluently.⁵³ The sixth position was designated for a historian from the

(NARA), cf. Walter L. Wright, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Branch, WDSS. Report for the week ending 19.5.1945," in *RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 4* (NARA).

⁵⁰ Walter L. Wright, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Branch, WDSS. Report for the week ending 9 June 1945," in *RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 4* (NARA).

⁵¹ George N. Shuster, "An Autobiography," in *On the Side of Truth. George N. Shuster - an Evaluation with Readings*, ed. Vincent P. Lannie (Notre Dame 1974), p. 16.

⁵² Cf. Thomas E. Blantz, *George N. Shuster. On the Side of Truth* (Notre Dame 1993), pp. 3-7.

⁵³ Cf. Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," pp. 10-11, Walter L. Wright, "Memorandum to the Chief, Historical Branch. report on the week ending 23.6.1945," in *RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 4* (NARA).

Army. However, because the Historical Division's favorite candidate and former Chief, Colonel John M. Kemper, was unavailable, the spot remained open when the interrogation mission left for Europe on July 6th, 1945.⁵⁴

After their arrival, Shuster and his colleagues first went to Paris where they met with Theater Historian S.L.A. Marshall, the head of the Historical Division, Europe. Since the position of a military representative was still open, Marshall ordered the young historical officer Kenneth W. Hechler (born 1914) to accompany the Commission and to conduct interrogations on his behalf.⁵⁵ Hechler had earned a PhD in political science from Columbia University (1940) before he was drafted into the Army in 1942, where he served with the Historical Division in Europe and eventually rose to the rank of a Major. Since both of Hechler's parents had German ancestors and spoke German fluently, he was considered somehow familiar with German culture and mentality.⁵⁶ In addition to his academic education, Hechler's personal background thus also seemed to qualify him quite well for his new assignment. However, Hechler's attachment to the Shuster Commission at first met some opposition from the Historical Division in Washington, which had "serious doubt regarding [Major Hechler's] qualification as military expert"

⁵⁴ Walter L. Wright, "Letter to George N. Shuster, 22.6.1945," in *CSHU Box 5. Folder '1945'* (University of Notre Dame Archives), ———, "Memorandum to the Chief, Historical Branch. Report for the week ending 7.7.1945," in *RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 4* (NARA), ———, "Memorandum to the Chief, Historical Branch. Report on the week ending 30.6.1945," in *RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 4* (NARA).

⁵⁵ Cf. Howard P. Hudson, "Report on Operational History (German) Section," in *RG 319. Army Staff. U.S. Army Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files) 1943-84* (NARA, 24.7.1946), p. 2, cf. S.L.A. Marshall, "Letter to A.F. Clark, 10.7.1945," in *RG 498. Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 5.* (NARA).

⁵⁶ Neil M. Johnson, "Oral Interview with Kenneth Hechler," <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/hechler.htm>.

and would have preferred a general officer with more operational experience.⁵⁷

Only after George N. Shuster spoke in favor of Hechler did Washington concur.⁵⁸ Hechler himself felt offended by the reservations from Washington. However, excited about the prospect of his new mission, he forgot “past afflictions [...] the minute the plane took off” towards Germany.⁵⁹ In fact, what Major Hechler might have lacked in operational experience was more than compensated by his motivation and enthusiasm. In the long run, he would prove to be of great importance to the initiation and development of the German-American military cooperation in war history. After all, Hechler persistently pointed the Historical Division to the potential utilization of enemy interrogations for the official war history. In addition, it was him, who—within a few weeks and in spite of his early withdrawal from military service in January 1946—set the tone for the relationship between American military historians and former German generals. The following paragraphs therefore concentrate mainly on Hechler’s approach to and attitude towards the German generals, and his dedication to a continuation and extension of the interrogation program.

⁵⁷ Walter L. Wright, "Memorandum to the Chief, Historical Branch. Report for the week ending 14.7.1945," in *RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 4* (NARA).

⁵⁸ ———, "Letter to George N. Shuster, 23.7.1945," in *CSHU. Box 5. Folder '1945'* (University of Notre Dame Archives).

⁵⁹ Cf. Kenneth W. Hechler, "Letter to S.L.A. Marshall, 18.7.1945," in *RG 498. Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 5.* (NARA).

1.3 Paving the Way: Kenneth W. Hechler's Interrogations in the Summer of 1945

After a few days of acclimatization, the Shuster Commission proceeded in mid-July from Paris to Mondorf in Luxembourg where the Americans had gathered the most infamous political, military and economic representatives of the Nazi regime.⁶⁰ To accommodate such prominent captives as Reichs Marshall Hermann Göring, Field Marshall Wilhelm Keitel, Colonel General Alfred Jodl, Admiral Karl Dönitz, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and Julius Streicher, the Americans had constructed *Control Council Prisoner of War Enclosure No. 32*, better known under the code name 'ASHCAN', in a large hotel building. From the outside, the "Palace Hotel" might have given the impression of being a rather comfortable, even luxurious prison. However, the Allied Supreme Command prohibited any "friendly or hospitable treatment" of the Germans and had ordered to give them "only minimum essential accommodations." The building was thus stripped of most comforts and the rooms contained only minimal furniture. The area was furthermore enclosed by a high fence and barbed wire.⁶¹

The interrogation facilities, located in a separate building, were by contrast quite comfortably equipped with upholstered chairs and large tables in order to foster informal and relaxed conversations.⁶² In fact, when the Shuster Commission began its interrogations, the group found the German POWs in a "relatively good frame of mind." The men did not yet know of the Allies' preparation of war crimes trials and were eager

⁶⁰ Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," p. 20.

⁶¹ Cf. Burton C. Andrus, *The infamous of Nuremberg* (London 1969), pp. 22-25, M.D. David, "SHAEF G-4 Division. Inspection of ASHCAN. Memorandum for Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, 15.5.1945," in *RG 331. Records of the Allied Occupational Headquarters, World War II. Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces. General Staff. G-2 Division. Executive Sub-Division. Decimal File 1944-July 1945. Box 6. Folder 1* (NARA).

⁶² Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," p. 27.

to talk to anyone who displayed an understanding attitude toward their plight.⁶³ And the interrogators did indeed show an empathetic attitude. A few years after the interrogations, Major Hechler described his approach to the Germans as follows:

No matter how much you may hate the person you are interviewing, in order to get information you must put yourself in a sympathetic frame of mind. You not only must fake a sympathy, you must really feel it for the period of the interview. You must laugh with and not at the character you are interviewing. You must criticize the incompleteness or vagueness of his answers but never the fundamental philosophy which underlies them.⁶⁴

The first prisoner to be interrogated by Hechler was General Artillery Walter Warlimont. That fact that he spoke English fluently made the middle-aged officer (1894-1976) an especially convenient candidate for a first try. Moreover, Warlimont's personal background suggested that he—much more than most other prisoners—might take a collaborative stance: Since 1927 he had been married to a German-American, Anita Baroness Kleydorff, daughter of Baron Emil von Kleydorff and Paula Anheuser Busch. In addition, he had spent several months with the War Department in Washington in 1929 and 1930 to study the military and industrial mobilization of the U.S. Army.⁶⁵ In fact, Warlimont was very cooperative and, according to Hechler, the interrogations soon took on a conversational character.⁶⁶ On several occasions, the general emphasized his interest in the history of World War II and his willingness to assist the Historical Division in

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 50-51.

⁶⁵ "CCPWE # 32/DI-18. Detailed Interrogation Report. Special Detention Center ASHCAN. Interrogation of Walter Warlimont, 29.6.1945," in RG 498. *Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II). Mis-Y Section. Special Interrogation Center 'ASHCAN'. Detailed Interrogation Reports, 1945. Box 96* (NARA).

⁶⁶ ———, "Enemy Side of the Hill," p. 30.

understanding German operations.⁶⁷ Before long, the interviews became a “gripping experience” for Hechler: In a retrospective account from 1949 he stated that he “unashamedly admired the man, enjoyed talking with him, showed him that [he] regarded it as a privilege, and sometimes even saluted him at the close of a conversation.”⁶⁸

Apparently, Hechler had no difficulties putting himself in an understanding frame of mind and his sympathies for Warlimont seem to have transcended the duration of the interviews. Furthermore, this complaisant attitude was not confined to Warlimont but was a general characteristic of Hechler’s interaction with the German officers. However, as open-minded as Hechler was about their professional abilities and military expertise, it seems likely that he turned a blind eye to their possible involvement in war crimes. Walter Warlimont, for instance, had as Deputy Chief of the *Wehrmachtsführungsstab* (the staff within the German Armed Forces High Command, OKW) signed both the Barbarossa Order and the Commissar Order. Issued in May of 1941, the Barbarossa order had explicitly released German soldiers from persecution of war crimes committed against Russian civilians; the Commissar order of June 1941 had called for the immediate shooting of political commissars of the Red Army when captured by German troops.⁶⁹

It is more than likely that Hechler did not know of Warlimont’s particular involvement in this violation of international law when he first met him. In 1949, however, when Hechler wrote an extensive report on his work with the Shuster

⁶⁷ Kenneth W. Hechler, "Progress Report to Dr. Shuster, week ending 21 July 1945," in *Exzerpt RG 498. Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 5.* (NARA), also cf. Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," pp. 37-38.

⁶⁸ Cf. Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," pp. 88-89.

⁶⁹ For the newest research on the implementation of the commissar order cf. Felix Römer, *Der Kommissarbefehl: Wehrmacht und NS-Verbrechen an der Ostfront 1941/42* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2008).

Commission, the International Military Tribunal (IMT) or one of the subsequent trials had sentenced several of the leaders and generals interrogated at ASHCAN to death or life in prison. Walter Warlimont, for example, was indicted for war crimes in the so-called OKW-case in 1948 and in October 1948 sentenced to life in prison.⁷⁰ In this context, it is revealing that Hechler's report of 1949 lacks virtually any reference to atrocities committed by the prisoners kept at ASHCAN, or even the National Socialist regime in general. In contrast, Hechler's only mention of German crimes displays more empathy with the German military leaders than with the victims of National Socialism; he criticized the showing of movies and lectures on German concentration camps as being "mental tortures for the prisoners."⁷¹ Furthermore, he refused any moral estimation of the interviewed generals since such an approach would limit the opportunity to obtain as much information as possible: "No matter whether the P[risoner of] W[ar] has raped, pillaged and killed defenseless women and children, so long as that PW has a tactical story to tell, it is the duty of the interrogator to put [...] unpleasant feelings out of his head and set himself to the task [sic] with a complete open mind."⁷²

To establish a positive relationship to the German generals and ensure their cooperation, Hechler at several occasions even overstepped his authority; for example when he took an airplane to visit Warlimont's family in Bavaria and to deliver letters and clothes to the general then imprisoned in Oberursel. Warlimont very much appreciated the favor since the POWs were not allowed to receive news, let alone gifts from their families. On another occasion, Hechler sneaked Major Herbert Büchs out of the POW

⁷⁰ Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, Mass.2006), p. 220.

⁷¹ Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," p. 24.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

enclosure and took him for a Jeep ride around Frankfurt and Wiesbaden.⁷³

1.4 St. Germain: Winning the Doubters

Kenneth W. Hechler certainly approached his assignment with a high level of motivation. Only due to his enthusiastic reports did S.L.A. Marshall extend Hechler's mission that initially had been confined to one week.⁷⁴ However, the assignment lacked any sophisticated planning. An indication of the rather improvisational character of Hechler's mission was the fact that he apparently did not bring an elaborate catalogue of questions to Mondorf, but was at first apparently supposed to develop his questions along the way. Shortly after he took up the interrogations, Hechler sent an urgent plea to S.L.A. Marshall to provide him with some guidelines: "I am very anxious to get more questions, because I can get anybody to talk about anything. And I have very few questions about Third Army, none about Seventh Army, and of course the Italian and African Theaters of war might just as well not have existed."⁷⁵ Encouraged by Hechler's reports, S.L.A. Marshall reached out to various agencies such as the War Department and Seventh Army and asked them to submit questions.⁷⁶

However, the Historical Section's rather amateurish approach to the interrogation mission suggests that it was in no case a priority project. Indeed, as excited as Kenneth

⁷³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 143; 145, Johnson, "Oral Interview Hechler."

⁷⁴ Hechler, "Letter to S.L.A. Marshall, 18.7.1945.", cf. also ———, "Enemy Side of the Hill," pp. 46-47.

⁷⁵ Kenneth W. Hechler, "Letter to S.L.A. Marshall," in *RG 498. Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 5.* [Without date. Certainly in July 1945]

⁷⁶ Cf. S.L.A. Marshall, "Letter to Kenneth W. Hechler, 28.7.1945," in *RG 498. Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 5.* (NARA), cf. ———, "Letter to Lt. Colonel Goddard, 28.7.1945," in *RG 498. Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 5.* (NARA).

W. Hechler was about the interrogation of German generals, as skeptical or rather ignorant was the majority of historical officers in Paris. Eager to convince the skeptics of the significance of the interrogations, Hechler flew to Paris on 28 July, equipped with a sample of sixteen interviews and manuscripts. The reactions in the various branches of the Historical Section were rather mixed. Especially Hugh M. Cole, Deputy Chief of the Historical Division, Europe remained critical. S.L.A. Marshall on the other hand responded favorably to the material and henceforth lent much support to the interrogation project.⁷⁷ In mid-August he met with the Shuster Commission in Heidelberg and—inspired by Warlimont's previous offer to work for the Historical Section—proposed a daring idea: Would it be feasible to have a staff of German generals prepare a history of German operations? The thought found zealous support from Hechler, Shuster, and Hale, but for the time being such a project remained a pipedream.⁷⁸

Shortly thereafter, ASHCAN was closed down and the prisoners were either moved to Nuremberg for trial or to Oberursel for further interrogation. Hechler handed his responsibilities over to a general officer who in the meantime had become available for service with the Shuster Commission. Detached from the official interview mission, Hechler then continued his interrogation trips to various American POW camps on behalf of the Historical Division.⁷⁹ Moreover, he kept pondering the idea of a more systematic exploitation of German officers for American war historical writing. To ultimately convince the more relevant members of the Historical Section, Hechler came up with the idea to bring one of the Germans to Paris. Direct interaction could once and for all prove

⁷⁷ Cf. Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," pp. 91-96; p. 104.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-117.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 97; p. 119.

how much the Historical Section could benefit from the German knowledge!

Not surprisingly, general Warlimont was Hechler's first choice for such an experiment. However, since Warlimont was supposed to be transferred to the war crimes prosecutors in Nuremberg, Hechler had to pick another candidate. He decided in favor of Major Herbert Büchs, a “cheerful, cooperative” officer with good knowledge of English—extremely important features to counter the “prejudices” any German would be confronted with by most American officers.⁸⁰ When Büchs arrived at the facilities of the Historical Division in France in the end of August, the reactions ranged from “amused tolerance” over “deep skepticism” to “bitter hatred”. However, the historical officers soon took advantage of having an insider on hand, and in November and December 1945 other German generals were brought to the Historical Division’s domicile at Chateau Hennemont near St. Germain.⁸¹

Even though the American historical officers might at first have been only slightly amicable towards the POWs, the atmosphere quickly eased. Former General Major Carl Wagener, for instance, remembered that an officer of the Historical Division had “liberated” him from the “ignoble conditions” in the POW camp at Oberursel. The unanticipated friendly treatment during the journey to St. Germain obviously impressed Wagener: “For the first time, the trip was carried out without any force and without the common harassments of another prisoner transport that we had undergone just six weeks earlier, compressed in a stock car. At first we took a car to Frankfurt, then an express

⁸⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 142-144.

⁸¹ Cf. “Chronological History.”, cf. ———, “Enemy Side of the Hill,” pp. 146-152, Hudson, “Report.”

train to Paris, first class compartment with reserved seats [...].”⁸² Wagener’s stay at Chateau Hennemont in December 1945 constituted a similar positive experience. In his retrospection, the historical work was characterized by the “greatest harmony” between Germans and Americans.⁸³

Possibly encouraged by this positive development, Kenneth W. Hechler proposed in early October 1945 to put the collaboration on a more formal footing: In a memorandum, he suggested that the Historical Section put together a group of ten military leaders and former *Wehrmacht* historians. This small core group could outline the scope of future historical work, divide the written assignments, and indicate which other German officers should be consulted on special questions. In addition, an American officer could work on securing the necessary documents and personnel.⁸⁴ Only one day later, S.L.A. Marshall approached the War Crimes Commission, asking whether there would be any objections to the use of certain German prisoners now interned in Nuremberg.⁸⁵ With a view on the pending International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, the War Crimes Commission informed Marshall not to count on their release in the near

⁸² Carl Wagener, "Bericht ueber Mitarbeit bei der Hist. Div.," in ZA 1/1312 (BAMA). [without date, probably 1948]. Original German quote: “*Die Fahrt erfolgte erstmalig ohne jeden Zwang und ohne die häufigen Schikanen eines sonstigen Gefangentransports, den wir ja 6 Wochen vorher gerade im Viehwagen zusammengepresst auf derselben Strecke durchgemacht hatten. Zunächst ging es im Kraftwagen bis Frankfurt, dann in den D-Zug Frankfurt-Paris, Abteil 1. Klasse mit reservierten Plätzen [...].*”

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Kenneth W. Hechler, "Memorandum to S.L.A. Marshall. German High Command History of German Operations, 2.10.1945," in RG 498. *Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 5.* (NARA).

⁸⁵ S.L.A. Marshall, "Letter to Colonel Robert J. Gill, 3.10.1945," in RG 498. *Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 5.* (NARA).

future.⁸⁶ Under these circumstances the Historical Section dropped the plan.

In the meantime, Major Hechler received orders to finish his own writing assignment on operation COBRA. After he was discharged in January 1946, he returned to the United States. Following rather short intermezzos as administrative analyst for the United States Bureau of the Budget in 1946/47 and assistant professor of politics at Princeton University from 1947 to 1949, Hechler turned toward politics. From 1949, he worked as special assistant for Harry S. Truman; research director for presidential candidate Adlai E. Stevenson; and legislative assistant for Senator John A. Carroll of Colorado. In 1959 Hechler eventually stepped out of the background of the political circus and became a congressman for West-Virginia (1959 to 1977).⁸⁷

2. Transformation and Extension: From Oberursel to Neustadt (1946-1948)

2.1 Transition from St. Germain to Oberursel

Around the turn of the year 1946/1947 the historical work of the U.S. Army Europe was reorganized. Colonel Harold E. Potter, the new Chief of the Historical Division, Europe and successor to S.L.A. Marshall, was charged with the general coordination and supervision of all historical work of the United States Forces in Europe. Besides a history of the occupation and a chronicle of the administrative history of the theater, the responsibility of the new division also included the compilation of an "Enemy

⁸⁶ Executive Officer War Crimes Commission Robert J. Gill, "Letter to S.L.A. Marshall, 17.10.1945," in *RG 498. Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 5.* (NARA).

⁸⁷ Agust Gudmundsson, "Ken Hechler - Biography," <http://www.kenhechler.us/bio.html>.

History".⁸⁸ In December 1945, first results of the German interrogations had reached Washington, finding a favorable estimation of the staff of the Historical Division. The interrogation project would therefore continue with a clearly defined organizational basis and specifically allotted personnel. On January 8th, 1946, the *Operational History (German) Section* was established as a new branch within the Historical Division, Europe with a staff of five officers, three enlisted men, and four civilians. Its mission was to compile as complete a record as possible on German military operations against U.S. forces through the interrogation of German commanders and staff officers. The practical set up and coordination of the Operational History (German) Section fell within the responsibility of Captain Howard P. Hudson, formerly responsible for the movement and coordination of German prisoners to St. Germain and now Deputy Chief of the Historical Division, Europe.⁸⁹ Furthermore, in January and February respectively, the young Captains Frank C. Mahin and James F. Scoggin were assigned to the Operational History (German) Section⁹⁰—two men, who in the years to come would play an important role for the development of the project.

Along with the move of the American headquarters from France to Germany, the Historical Division relocated in January from St. Germain to Höchst near Frankfurt/Main.⁹¹ Consequently, a new arrangement had to be found for the interrogation

⁸⁸ Cf. Harold E. Potter, "Memorandum to Chief of Staff, USFET. Organization of Historical Division, USFET," in *RG 498. Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 1.* (NARA).

⁸⁹ Hudson, "Report."

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5, Operational History (German) Section, "Weekly Report No. 6, 16.2.1946," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch* (NARA).

⁹¹ Cf. Potter, "Memorandum to Chief of Staff, USFET. Organization of Historical Division, USFET."

project, especially suitable accommodations for the participating German prisoners.⁹² Initially, twenty-three German officers returned from France to the POW camp at Oberursel where they were housed under preferential conditions in a separate building (Florida House). However, the planned extension of the project called for the inclusion of as many German officers as possible and soon a busy search for qualified candidates began. The Historical Division looked for commanders and chiefs of staff of army groups, armies, divisions, and corps who had faced American forces between June 1944 and May 1945. Since the U.S. Army did not keep comprehensive rosters of the generals in their captivity, it was extremely difficult and time-consuming to locate the desired prisoners. The officers of the Historical Division had to visit numerous American, British, and French POW camps throughout Europe. In the meantime, to estimate their qualification for the targeted historical work, the Germans received questions about their position, dates of geographic location, and immediate superiors in the chain of command. By the summer of 1946 over 1,300 German officers had been screened, 549 of whom eventually worked for the Historical Division.⁹³

In the following months, the provision for adequate accommodations for the cooperating German officers became a major issue. The better part of the participating generals were brought to Oberursel, the temporary center of the Historical Division's work, but many others were scattered over several camps in Southern Germany, Belgium,

⁹² Operational History (German) Section, "Weekly Report No.1 " in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch* (NARA).

⁹³ Howard P. Hudson, "Memorandum to Colonel H.E. Potter,," in *RG 319. Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962* (NARA, 5.6.1946), Oliver J. Frederiksen Theodore W. Bauer, Ellinor Anspacher, "The Army Historical Program in the European Theater and Command. 8 May 1945 – 31 December 1950," in *Occupation Forces in Europe Series* ed. Historical Division European Command (Karlsruhe: 1951).

France, and the United Kingdom.⁹⁴ The camp at Oberursel fell in the jurisdiction of the U.S. Third Army, which was in charge of administrative matters concerning the camp and its inmates. Due to increasing disagreements with the camp authorities over the treatment of the prisoners engaged in historical work, the Historical Division decided in April 1946 to move the project to another location.⁹⁵ The new site would ideally be large enough to accommodate all German officers engaged in historical work and thus centralize the scattered writing project.

2.2 Allendorf and Garmisch

In June 1946, the Operational History (German) Section moved from Oberursel to the *Disarmed Enemy Forces Enclosure Number 20* (DEFE # 20) in Allendorf, which shortly thereafter was officially transformed into the *Historical Division Interrogation Enclosure* (HDIE).⁹⁶ The administrative control remained with the Third Army, which in addition to a camp commander provided some enlisted men for administrative purposes as well as 150 Polish guards. Besides, the Historical Division installed a weekly alternating duty officer who served as main contact for the German generals. The main difference to the situation at Oberursel was, however, that the Historical Division now was the sole occupant of the camp.⁹⁷

After the move to Allendorf, the administrative organization of the Operational

⁹⁴ Theodore W. Bauer, "Army Historical Program."

⁹⁵ Hudson, "Report.", cf. Harold E. Potter, "Memorandum to Colonel Pence," in *RG 498. Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II) . ETO Historical Division . Decimal File 1945-1946. Box 3. Folder 5.* (NARA).

⁹⁶ Theodore W. Bauer, "Army Historical Program," p. 54.

⁹⁷ Hudson, "Report.", Harold E. Potter, "Harold E. Potter to A.F. Clark," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe. Headquarters, EUCOM. Special Staff. Historical Division. Administration Branch. General Correspondence (Decimal File) 1947-51, 1948 segment.* (NARA, 11.6.1946).

History (German) Section progressed slowly. Compared to the proceeding of the Shuster Commission and the work done at St. Germain, the Germans no longer answered detailed questionnaires but instead wrote specifically assigned studies on all aspects of operations on the Western front. According to their individual war experience, the generals were therefore assembled in units, so-called *Campaign Groups*, based on different campaigns such as the Normandy, Ardennes, or Rhineland Campaigns. Each campaign group consisted of several German officers and was supervised by an American historical officer, the so-called Campaign Chief.⁹⁸

According to Howard P. Hudson, the Campaign Groups were “the heart of the Operational History (German) Section.”⁹⁹ In addition, different administrative departments were established to support the historical work: A Register Section, for instance, could henceforth ease the location of desired German generals. A Reference and Map Library was set up to provide the writers with background information and to refresh their memory. Finally, a Translating Department, Cartography, and Editorial Production Department assumed responsibility for processing the German reports for distribution to the Historical Division, Washington.¹⁰⁰

In August 1946, Harold E. Potter could report to Washington that the Operational History (German) Section was for the first time operating on an efficient basis. The project “finally began to ‘click’, and produce more than just plans.”¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, Howard P. Hudson had been discharged from the U.S. Army and had returned to the

⁹⁸ Cf. Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," p. 51, cf. Theodore W. Bauer, "Army Historical Program."

⁹⁹ Hudson, "Report," p. 20.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," pp. 51-52, cf. Hudson, "Report," pp. 38-40.

¹⁰¹ Harold E. Potter, "Letter to A.F. Clark, 26.8.1946," in *RG 319. Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 6. Folder 6* (NARA).

United States where he assumed a position as liaison officer between the Historical Division, Europe and the War Department.¹⁰² He had brought with him a sample of the studies recently produced by the Operational History (German) Section that he now used to lobby for the German project.¹⁰³ After some lengthy conversations with General Harry J. Malony, since 1946 Chief of the Historical Division in Washington, Chief Historian Kent Roberts Greenfield, and historical officers John M. Kemper, Allen F. Clark, and Hugh M. Cole¹⁰⁴, Hudson could report back to Potter: “They are [...] amazed about the progress that has been made.” Furthermore, General Malony assured Hudson that the Division in Washington would support Potter “in every way possible”, and especially Hugh M. Cole—who one year earlier had been so skeptical about the interrogation of former German officers—was now “enthusiastic about the manuscripts.”¹⁰⁵

By October 1946, the German studies had attracted attention from the highest of levels. First, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, showed great interest in the work of the Historical Division, Europe during a lunch meeting with Colonel Potter.¹⁰⁶ Shortly thereafter, Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson was apparently so impressed with the German manuscripts that he carried them around with him and

¹⁰² Cf. Kent Roberts Greenfield, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Division. Report of Activities 23.9.-7.10.1946," in *RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 5* (NARA).

¹⁰³ Howard P. Hudson, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Division. Recommendations for Operation (German) Section, Historical Division, USFET, 26.8.1946," in *RG 319. Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 8. Folder 1* (NARA).

¹⁰⁴ Lt. Col. Hugh M. Cole, who in 1945 had served with the Historical Section, ETO had in January 1946 been transferred to the Historical Division, WDSS.

¹⁰⁵ Hugh M. Cole, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Division. Comments on Sample German Reports submitted by Historical Division, USFET, 26.8.1946," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. Office of the Chief of Military History. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 8. Folder 1* (NARA), Howard P. Hudson, "Letter to Harold E. Potter, Washington, 27.8.46," in *RG 319. Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 6. Folder 6* (NARA).

¹⁰⁶ Harold E. Potter, "Letter to Allan F. Clark, 3.10.1946," in *RG 319. Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 6. Folder 6* (NARA).

even quoted from them in a press interview.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, in November 1946, the Secretary officially expressed his appreciation for the work of the Operational History (German) Section in a letter to the Supreme Commander United States Army Europe, Joseph T. McNarney.¹⁰⁸

John M. Kemper, now Deputy Director of the Historical Division, Washington, subsumed the avid interest that the German studies aroused as follows: "The work seems to us to be of inestimable value and we feel that we must take advantage of what ever opportunity we now have to include the Mediterranean and Russian fronts."¹⁰⁹ Potter picked up on the idea of including other theaters of operation into the German program, but used the opportunity to emphasize that such an extension would have to be accompanied by an increase in American personnel.¹¹⁰ In fact, it seems like the interest in Washington was sufficient enough to bolster the broadening of the mission. After all, the Historical Division, Europe opened another branch in Garmisch (Bavaria) in December 1946 to conduct work on the Mediterranean and Eastern fronts.¹¹¹ For this purpose the number of American staff assigned to the Historical Division, Europe was greatly augmented. The overall personnel of the two branches ultimately consisted of 42 officers,

¹⁰⁷ John M. Kemper, "Letter to Harold E. Potter, 4.10.1946," in *RG 319. Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 6. Folder 6* (NARA).

¹⁰⁸ Robert P. Patterson, "Letter to General Joseph T. McNarney, Commanding General, Hq. USFET, 26.11.1946 " in *RG 319. Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 8. Folder 1* (NARA).

¹⁰⁹ Kemper, "Letter to Harold E. Potter, 4.10.1946."

¹¹⁰ Harold E. Potter, "Letter to John M. Kemper, 30.10.1946," in *RG 319. Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 6. Folder 6* (NARA).

¹¹¹ Chief of Staff Major General C.R. Huebner, "General Order No, 347, 7.12.1946," in *RG 319. Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 6. Folder 6* (NARA).

1 warrant officer, 9 enlisted men, 24 U.S. and 26 Allied civilians.¹¹²

Over the course of the next six months, *Prisoner of War Enclosure No. 8* at Garmisch (PW 8) became a center for the compilation of reports on the Italian, African, and Eastern fronts. Colonel Frank J. Vida supervised the work and a German Advisory Board composed of Field Marshall Georg von K uchler, General Infantry Waldemar Erfurth, and General Air Force Egon D orstling assisted him in the practical organization.¹¹³

2.3 Neustadt: Operation STAPLE, Denazification and Hiring as Civilian Employees

Obviously, the cooperation of the Historical Division with former German militaries deepened in the second half of 1946 and began to yield fruits much appreciated by the War Department and throughout various Army agencies. Encouraged by the positive feedback, the Historical Division began to look ahead. Would it be possible to continue the historical work beyond the Germans' soon-to-be-expected discharge as prisoners of war? In fact, when all former German officers in U.S. custody were discharged from their prisoners of war status on June 30th, 1947, this meant for many former generals merely a change in status. Due to their responsible positions within the *Wehrmacht* most officers were affected by the *Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism* of March 1946 and fell into the category of 'automatic arrest'. The officers thus remained detained as civilian internees until their denazification by a

¹¹² Theodore W. Bauer, "Army Historical Program." cp. Chart 9. Organizational chart of the Operational History (German) Section of March 1947.

¹¹³ Cf. Waldemar Erfurth, "Bericht ueber die Arbeiten des Historical Detachment im PW 8 Garmisch, 10.7.1949," in *ZA 1/1821* (BAMA).

German lay court.

Initially, the continuing internment of German officers fitted the interest of the Historical Division since this extended the duration of their direct availability for historical work. Since the beginning of 1947, the Historical Division, Europe therefore developed plans for a continuation of the German-American history project. In May, the agency submitted a study with the title *Operation STAPLE*, proposing to keep a limited number of especially qualified German generals after their release and to transform them into civil employees. According to the STAPLE plan, the project would continue after June 30th, 1947 for another 9 months, until March 31st, 1948, with a permanent staff of 50 and a wider, temporary staff of not more than 100 German writers.¹¹⁴

The plan allowed for a considerable improvement of conditions for the participating officers. The permanent staff members, for example, would receive a monthly salary ranging from 400 to 700 *Reichsmark* (RM), depending on the historical value of the material produced by them. In addition, they were allowed to move their families as well as 1000 pounds of household goods to Allendorf where they were accommodated in 3-room-apartments, heated at the expense of the U.S. Army. At the same time, the generals were assured that their dependents' present homes would not be subject to confiscation during their absence. The Germans employed as temporary staff, on the other hand, were quartered in bachelor accommodations and received a payment of 20 RM per day. Moreover, all generals received a daily 1200-calories noon-meal and a

¹¹⁴ Harold E. Potter, "Memorandum to Chief of Staff EUCOM, 23.5.1947," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Headquarters EUCOM. General Staff. Adjutant General Division. Operations and Records Branch. General Correspondence (Decimal File), 1947-51. Box 1873.* (NARA), cf. also Theodore W. Bauer, "Army Historical Program," pp. 56-57.

limited number of U.S. Post Exchange rations. The Historical Division was furthermore, willing to hire dependents as clerks, interpreters, cooks or the like which made them also eligible for the noon-meal.¹¹⁵

After the Military Government had approved of the plan, the Historical Division consolidated the German project by concentrating the separate compilation of studies on the Western front at Allendorf and the Eastern and Mediterranean fronts at Garmisch in one location. Consequently, *PWE No. 8* was closed in June 1947. Those generals needed for further historical work continued on at Allendorf, while the vast majority of officers was transferred to other internment camps. Shortly thereafter, on July 1st, 1947, the *Historical Division Interrogation Enclosure* relocated for practical reasons from Allendorf to an old caserne in Neustadt near Marburg where the historical work soon resumed.

On the German side, former Colonel General Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the *Wehrmacht* from 1938 to 1942, assumed the coordination and supervision of the German historical project. Halder had worked for the Historical Division since the fall of 1946 and due to his overarching experience and his reputation among his fellow officers, had soon gained a prominent position within the historical project. With the reorganization in July 1947, he now became director of the HDIE.¹¹⁶ In this capacity, Halder had enormous influence on the selection of the 150 officers who would continue to write for the Historical Division. Thereby, a continuation of the work was especially

¹¹⁵ Potter, "Memorandum to Chief of Staff EUCOM, 23.5.1947.", cf. also Alfred Toppe, "Wegweiser durch die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Allendorf und Neustadt, November 1948 " in *ZA 1/1243* (BAMA).

¹¹⁶ Cf. Toppe, "Wegweiser durch die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Allendorf und Neustadt, November 1948 ", p. 54.

attractive for those generals in the automatic arrest-category. Understandably, these detainees had a considerable interest to remain in the relatively protective custody of the Historical Division. When Franz Halder composed his list for the Historical Division, he therefore took the personal situation and future prospect of the available generals into consideration, preferring those men who feared being transferred to another, less comfortable internment camp in order to await trial or denazification.¹¹⁷

Moving forward with the implementation of the STAPLE Plan, the officers of the Historical Division soon encountered three closely related obstacles, the overcoming of which would keep them occupied throughout the remainder of 1947: discharge, denazification, and hiring. The *Law for Liberation from National Socialism* confined all former German General Staff officers to ordinary labor. When the Historical Division in the summer of 1947 attempted to officially hire former German officers falling in this category, this rule caused considerable problems. The question now was whether OMGUS considered the compilation of historical reports to be ‘ordinary labor’ and would therefore allow the employment of former German generals. Initially, the Public Safety Branch as well as the Legal Division denied such a procedure, defining ‘ordinary labor’ as “only unskilled labor in common and menial tasks.”¹¹⁸ Only *after* their denazification and clearance of any accusations of involvement in National Socialism through a German *Spruchkammer*—a court of politically reliable German laymen—

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

¹¹⁸ OMGUS. Internal Affairs and Communication Division, "Employment of former German Commanders and Staff Officers on Historical Project, 19.8.1947," in *RG 260. OMGUS. Shipment 1947. Box 20. Folder 2* (NARA), OMGUS. Office of the Commanding General, "Clarification of Definition of Term 'Ordinary Labor' for Purpose of Hiring Indigenous Personnel for OMGUS, 28.4.1947," in *OMGUS. Shipment 3. Box 166-3. Folder 45* (IfZ), Harold E. Potter, "Employment of Former German Commanders and Staff Officers," in *OMGUS. Shipment 3. Box 166-3. Folder 45* (IfZ).

would hiring be possible.

Pointing to the value of the historical work done by former German officers for U.S. interest, the Historical Division subsequently argued that the needs of the historical program would overrule the requirements of the denazification program and would justify an exception to the general rule. The Historical Division thus asked for exceptional approval of the Military Government to employ the former German officers as historical writers.¹¹⁹ Although reluctantly, the Military Government eventually followed the argumentation of the Historical Division and accepted that the work done by the Germans contributed to U.S. interest, including “national defense and essential military exploitation.” The Historical Division could now officially hire German generals prior to their denazification, which, moreover, would be expedited.¹²⁰

After the Military Government had thus given the green light, the Historical Division could now proceed with their search for a suitable German *Spruchkammer* for the denazification of their generals—an issue that had occupied Potter and his colleagues for a while. The situation was complicated since the *Spruchkammer* trials would tangent the competency of several agencies. According to their former places of residence, the concerned German generals fell under the jurisdiction of either the American, British, or French occupation authorities as well as the jurisdiction of the various German *Länder* and their respective Departments for Political Liberation. The situation worried the Historical Division for two reasons: On the one hand, they feared that the generals’ motivation and willingness to cooperate would suffer from the unsettled state of affairs.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Division, "Employment of former German Commanders and Staff Officers on Historical Project, 19.8.1947."

¹²⁰ Ibid.

On the other hand, they wanted to avoid any disruption or protraction of the historical work through a temporarily absence of the German officers for *Spruchkammer* trials at their respective hometowns.

Since March 1947, the officers of the Historical Division had therefore already wondered intensively about the further proceedings and had come to the conclusion that it would be best to try the German generals at one *central Spruchkammer* within the American zone. At different conferences in March and April 1947, the Historical Division had thus considered the *Spruchkammern* in Marburg, Kassel, and Karlsruhe for such a procedure.¹²¹ However, for various reasons, all of the considered courts turned out to be inapplicable. Only in connection with the solving of the hiring-problem did the Historical Division eventually obtain permission to establish a special tribunal at Neustadt, which would be exclusively responsible for the denazification of officers participating in historical writing.¹²² Furthermore, the Historical Division gained another stage victory when the Military Government authorized the temporary suspension of *Spruchkammer* verdicts, especially in those cases where generals had been sentenced to internment in a labor camp.¹²³

¹²¹ Cf. Operational History (German) Section, "Conference Minute, 15.4.1947," in RG 549. *Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 4. Folder 2.* (NARA), cf. ———, "Proposed Plan for Spruchkammer Clearance of automatic Arrestee Cases Historical Division Enclosure, 12.5.1947," in RG 549. *Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 4. Folder 2.* (NARA), cf. ———, "Report of Conference, 17.5.1947," in RG 549. *Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 4. Folder 2.* (NARA).

¹²² OMGUS, "Letter to Civil Affairs Division, EUCOM. 9.9.1947," in RG 549. *Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 4. Folder 2.* (NARA).

¹²³ Daniel T. Murphy, "Report on Trip to Berlin and Stuttgart, 15.6.1947," in RG 549. *Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence.*

In September 1947, the Historical Division eventually began to take concrete steps towards the establishment of a *Spruchkammer* in Neustadt. In accordance with the Hessian Department of Political Liberation, under whose general supervision the *Spruchkammer* would reside, the court should consist of three independent chambers, representing the different *Länder* within the American occupation zone: one for the defendants from Hesse, one for the those from Wuerttemberg-Baden, and one for the generals from Bavaria.¹²⁴

However, due to the different agendas of the agencies involved the establishment of the *Spruchkammer* turned out to be more complicated and protracted than originally anticipated.¹²⁵ Only in January did the court eventually go into session. Until May, the three chambers tried 254 former German officers for their alleged support of National Socialism. A great majority of 183 officers was acquitted—among them former Lieutenant General August Winter, former Major General Joseph Windisch, and former Lieutenant General Hans Speth; only two officers were placed into Category I for major

Operational History (German) Branch. Box 4. Folder 2. (NARA). In fact, the Historical Division exercised this option in January 1948 in the case of former general Karl Weisenberger. After Weisenberger had been sentenced to two years internment in a labor camp, the Historical Division requested the postponement of his sentence for another two months until Weisenberger would have finished his “special task” for the Historical Division. Cf. A.L. Yakoubian (Office of the Military Government Hesse), “Aufschiebung eines Urteils der Neustadter Spruchkammer (Suspension of a Sentence of the Neustadt Spruchkammer),” in *501/53 Department for Political Liberation* (HHStAW).

¹²⁴ Operational History (German) Section, “Memorandum Denazification of German Officers at Neustadt, 22.10.1947,” in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Armu Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 4. Folder 2.* (NARA), ———, “Report on Spruchkammer Proceedings, 23.10.1947,” in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Armu Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 4. Folder 2.* (NARA).

¹²⁵ Even though the events surrounding the establishment of the Neustadt Spruchkammer, especially the interaction of the Historical Division with the three Departments for Political Liberation, are interesting, they cannot be dealt with in the scope of this thesis. For further information on the difficulties emerging in the course of establishing the Neustadt Spruchkammer cf. the records of the Hessian Department for Political Liberation located at the Hessian Central State Archive in Wiesbaden, Germany.

offenders.¹²⁶

The “successful” denazification of the German writers enabled the Historical Division to move the work of the project to another level. While the trials were still going on in the spring of 1948, the Historical Division began preparations to restructure the project so that it could continue with the Germans as independent civilian employees. The German generals’ final discharge thus marked an important turning point in the relationship between the Germans and their American counterparts: they could now meet on a more equal footing.

Excursus: Morale and Amenities

Naturally, the participation of German Prisoners of War in the historical program had to be voluntary, and both their willingness to cooperate and the quality of their contributions was greatly affected by their treatment in the POW camps. As a consequence, the Historical Division persistently strove to establish and maintain comfortable conditions for their writers. As soon as the Operational History (German) Section had moved from Oberursel to Allendorf in June of 1946, the Historical Division began to offer a variety of leisure time activities: Movie screenings, language classes in English, French, and Russian, and lectures by external speakers served to keep up the Germans’ morale.

¹²⁶ For a collection of statements of claims see Spruchkammer Camp Neustadt, "Klageschriften des Lagers Neustadt," in *MSo 2399* (BHStAM), cf. ———, "Monthly Reports Spruchkammer Neustadt," in *501/1404* (HHStAW), also see the original German manuscript: Toppe, "Wegweiser durch die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Allendorf und Neustadt, November 1948 ", cf. the published English version: Alfred Toppe, "The Story of a Project. The Writing of Military History at Allendorf and Neustadt," in *World War II German military studies : a collection of 213 special reports on the Second World War prepared by former officers of the Wehrmacht for the United States Army* (1979).

As Howard P. Hudson stated in a report of July 1946, these incentives came right in time since “the effects of the internment [were] beginning to show on many” prisoners. Hudson was therefore convinced that “the more movies and lectures [could] be provided the better.”¹²⁷ In addition, the visits of relatives and friends that had previously been prohibited by the camp authorities in Oberursel, were resumed. The visitations soon assumed “terrific proportions” and in the course of only three weeks the number of visitors increased from 55 on July 3rd to 123 on July 24th, 1946.¹²⁸

However, morale continued to be a sensitive issue for the Historical Division. Especially in the first years, until the prisoners’ official discharge in the summer of 1948, the zeal of the German officers remained fragile and their motivation frequently suffered from uncertainty about their future and worries about their families.¹²⁹ In fact, the *Allied Control Council Law No. 34* on the “Dissolution of the Wehrmacht” (issued in August 1946) suspended the discontinuation of all military pensions and other financial and social privileges. In the early postwar period, the law affected primarily the families of former professional soldiers; while the generals themselves were in the captivity at least fed and quartered, their wives and children basically lost their economic basis.¹³⁰ The records of the Historical Division thus contain numerous complaints and petitions

¹²⁷ Hudson, "Report."

¹²⁸ Cf. Ralph Harwood, "Report on DEFE # 20, Week ending 6 July 1946," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch* (NARA, 8.7.1946), cf. John A. La Monita, "Memorandum, Duty Officers Tour of Duty, Allendorf DEFE # 20," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch* (NARA, 29.7.1946).

¹²⁹ Cf. Toppe, "Wegweiser durch die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Allendorf und Neustadt, November 1948", p. 36; p. 43.

¹³⁰ Cf. Georg Meyer, "Zur Situation der deutschen militaerischen Fuehrungsschicht im Vorfeld des westdeutschen Verteidigungsbeitrages 1945-1950/51," in *Von der Kapitulation bis zum Plevan Plan Anfaenge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik 1945-1956* (Munich: 1982), p. 637.

presented by the generals or their relatives.¹³¹

In addition, the Germans oftentimes requested information from the Historical Division on when they would be discharged, whether they were wanted as war criminals, or when they would be denazified. In November 1946, Franz Halder pointed out on behalf of all cooperating officers how much such external factors influenced morale. He asked the Historical Division to assist its writers in personal affairs and demanded countermeasures against the occupying powers' negative portrayal and discriminating treatment of the German officer corps.¹³² The Historical Division reacted to the increasing flood of inquiries and in the spring of 1947 installed a special officer exclusively responsible for the handling of welfare matters—an action much appreciated by the German generals.¹³³

However, morale remained an issue and the writers occasionally reduced or even temporarily discontinued their work to add authority to their dissatisfaction with the internment situation. In January 1947, for instance, the generals showed clear signs of a refusal to work after the Third Army Headquarters had once again restricted the visitation policy, allowing only visits from next of kin, limiting their stay to three hours, and even prohibiting any physical contact. Worried about the negative effects of this regulation, the Historical Division's duty officer, Alfred A. McNamee, reported that "a definitive passive resistance movement towards continuing [the] writing project" had developed

¹³¹ Cf. "Prisoner of War Complaints - Welfare," in *Rg 549. Records of Headquarters EUCOM. Special Staff. Historical Division. Administration Branch. General Correspondence. Box 3140. Folder 3.* (NARA).

¹³² Cf. Franz Halder, "Memorandum to Frank C. Mahin, 26.11.1946," in *RG 549. Records of the U.S. Army Europe. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 9. Folder 1.* (NARA).

¹³³ Cf. Toppe, "Wegweiser durch die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Allendorf und Neustadt, November 1948", pp. 43-44.

among the writers. He therefore recommended an immediate restoration of the visitor's day to the previous procedure and expressed his incomprehension for the restriction:

These generals, allowed furloughs, and about to be paroled, are the only group in a P.W. camp of this nature who are devoting their intire [sic] time in working for the U.S. Gov[ernment]—many on a voluntary basis. It seems unreasonable to classify them in the same category as other P.W.'s who are waiting trial, result of trial, or discharge, and who are not working for us.¹³⁴

Besides the immediate fate of their families, the German generals also worried about their image as soldiers and closely observed how the Allies dealt with former *Wehrmacht* members and how the German military in general and the German officer corps in particular were portrayed in the media. Therefore, the Allendorf inmates were outraged when the IMT sentenced Colonel General Alfred Jodl to death in October 1946. They suspended their historical work and through the Historical Division transmitted numerous protest letters to foreign representatives and politicians, demanding a change in view on the German officer corps.¹³⁵ Even though the historical work was eventually resumed, war crimes trials remained a sensitive issue for the German generals that time and again affected the willingness to cooperate with the U.S. Army. In the following years, the morale regularly reached a low whenever a comrade was indicted for war crimes.

Moreover, those officers who were temporarily transferred to Nuremberg or the

¹³⁴ Alfred A. McNamee, "Problems at Allendorf," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch* (NARA, 21.1.1947), cf. also *Operational History (German) Section, "Weekly Report No. A-7. Week ending 18.1.1947,"* in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1.* (NARA). After a trip by Colonel Harold E. Potter to the Third Army headquarters, the previous visitors day procedure was eventually restored, cf. ———, "Weekly Report No. A-8. Week ending 25.1.1947," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1.* (NARA).

¹³⁵ Cf. Toppe, "Wegweiser durch die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Allendorf und Neustadt, November 1948", p. 45.

interrogation facilities at Dachau as witnesses, grew increasingly irritated with a war crimes policy they perceived as unjust and shortsighted. On their return, these men frequently reported on unsatisfactory conditions and discriminatory treatment and occasionally individual generals felt compelled to end their cooperation. As a result of a recent stay at Nuremberg, General Gustav Hartneck, for example, decided in October 1947 that he would no longer assist in historical writing. Although convinced of the goodwill of the Historical Division, Hartneck did not see any other way to express his protest against the discrimination of leading German military circles. “[M]y conscience and my sense of comradeship for the generals detained there [at Nuremberg],” he wrote, “make it impossible for me to go on working on the project of the Historical Division.”¹³⁶

Hartneck was no exception. The preparation of the OKW-trial in combination with the extradition of an Allendorf inmate to Yugoslavia prompted several generals to terminate their historical work irrevocably.¹³⁷ And even after their denazification and the subsequent reorganization of the historical cooperation under the umbrella of the Control Group, War Crimes trials and sentences against former German officers such as Erich von Manstein or Alexander von Falkenhausen continued to occasionally affect the morale of many home workers.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Gustav Hartneck, "Letter to the German Director of Steinbel Enclosure [Franz Halder], 11.10.1947," in *RG 549. Hq EUCOM. Special Staff. Historical Division. Administration Branch. General Correspondence. Box 3140. Folder 4* (NARA).

¹³⁷ Herbert Buechs, "Letter to Albert Kesselring, 17.11.1947," in *RG 549. Records of the U.S. Army Europe. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 8. Folder 1*. (NARA).

¹³⁸ Cf. Franz Halder, "Vierteljahresbericht, 1.7.1950-30.9.1950," in *ZA1/1829. Vierteljahresberichte der Control Group* (BAMA), Alfred Toppe, "Die deutsche Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Koenigstein/Taunus, 4. Fortsetzung, 1.11.-31.12.1949," in *ZA 1/1828* (BAMA).

3. Entering a new Stage: The Control Group

While the *Spruchkammer* proceedings came to a very satisfactory end in the spring of 1948, the Historical Divisions at Frankfurt and Washington began to devise a new arrangement for further historical cooperation. As a result, the historical cooperation between the U.S. Army and former German military leaders was after three years of constant restructuring and uncertain prospects eventually furnished with an enduring organizational structure in the summer of 1948. In a way, this new set-up followed the proposal Kenneth W. Hechler had made in 1945 and which had envisioned the establishment of a core group of German generals supported by a wider circle of consultants. Now, three years later, the Historical Division could eventually implement this plan by hiring a group of eight former German General Staff officers as so-called *Control Group*. The Americans picked Franz Halder as head of this new organization and, furthermore, asked him to recommend former German generals he sought most qualified to fill the remaining seven positions. Thus, once again, Halder was put in the position to select fellow officers for lucrative positions. Unsurprisingly, he made sure that all Control Group members would have similar attitudes, since “outsiders would not only have disrupted the smooth work [sic] process, but might have harmed the cause itself.”¹³⁹

Besides Halder, the group eventually consisted of Hans von Greiffenberg (1893-1951), Oldwig von Natzmer (1904-1980), Leopold Buerkner (1894-1975), Burkhardt Müller-Hillebrandt (1904-1987), Alfred Toppe (1904-1971), Alfred Zerbel (1904-1987), and Hellmuth Reinhardt (1900-1989). Henceforth, this circle coordinated the further

¹³⁹ Alfred Toppe, "Die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Koenigstein/Taunus von Beginn bis April 1949," in *ZA 1/1824* (BAMA).

cooperation of former German officers with the Historical Division.¹⁴⁰ In May 1948, the Control Group was established in Königstein/Taunus near Frankfurt and granted considerable monetary and material compensation for their assistance.¹⁴¹ Besides the Control Group, a wider circle of several hundred former *Wehrmacht* officers was employed at different times and for different projects as so-called *home workers*.¹⁴²

The Historical Division, which received an increasing number of requests for further German material from various Army agencies and service schools, charged the Control Group with the compilation of studies on certain topics. The Germans then developed an outline for the proposed study and selected qualified writers from the pool of home workers. Provided with original *Wehrmacht* records, war diaries, and maps made available by the Historical Division in Washington from captured German records, the home workers in turn composed whole studies or contributed single chapters. After the Control Group had proofread and edited them, the finished reports were typed, furnished with maps and sketches, and translated into English before they were eventually handed over to the Historical Division.¹⁴³

As Chief of the Control Group, Franz Halder assumed a crucial role in this

¹⁴⁰ The composition of the Control Group changed over the course of its existence. Franz Halder remained its head over the whole period of the cooperation, but Hans von Greiffenberg, for example, died unexpectedly in June 1951, he was replaced by Rudolf Hofmann. In addition, Wilhelm Willemer joined the panel. Günther Pflughaupt left the Control Group in 1952 and was replaced by Friedrich Gabler. In 1955, Burkhart Müller-Hillebrandt and Hellmuth Reinhardt joined the new West German armed forces; so did Willemer a year later. Alfred Gause took a position in the Control Group in 1956, as well as Alfred Philippi in 1957. Alfred Toppe, on the other hand, left the panel in 1957.

¹⁴¹ In addition to a monthly salary of 500 to 700 D-Mark, Control Group members received free accommodations for themselves and their families, as well as free supply of heating material and electricity. Cf. for example Franz Halder, "Letter to Rudolf Hofmann, 30.8.1951," in *BAMA. N220/90* (BAMA), Toppe, "Die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Koenigstein/Taunus von Beginn bis April 1949."

¹⁴² Toppe, "Die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Koenigstein/Taunus von Beginn bis April 1949." For lists of home workers see, for example, the records of Franz Halder at the German Federal Military Archive in Freiburg, Germany: BAMA N220/90.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

construction. He assigned the various topics to his Control Group colleagues, had the final authority over the general outline of a topic and the selection of home workers, and, after completion of a project, compiled a final evaluation before delivering the study to the Historical Division.¹⁴⁴ Halder thus had quasi-final authority in all personnel decisions and, moreover, exerted considerable influence on the general direction and content of the various historical studies. In fact, he acted as a 'gate keeper', closely watching over the stream of information flowing from the former *Wehrmacht* to the U.S. Army while, now and then, intervening to emphasize certain aspects or downplaying others.¹⁴⁵

4. Phase Out and Termination

The demand for German studies reached a peak in the first half of the 1950s. However, influenced by changes in American military strategy and a general downsizing of the American armed forces, the interest in German operational knowledge faded since 1954. When the Historical Division was confronted with financial cutbacks, the budget for foreign military studies was reduced. At first, this led to the cancellation of less important studies.¹⁴⁶ In 1958, further saving measures resulted in an organizational reduction of the Historical Division in Washington, as well as its dependencies abroad and as a consequence of drastic cut backs in personnel, the Foreign Military Studies Program should be terminated on December 31st, 1958. At this date, the Control Group was liquidated as well. In March 1958, Halder received orders to wind up pending

¹⁴⁴ Franz Halder, "Anweisungen fuer den Dienstbetrieb, 1.7.1948," in *BAMA. N220/202. Personal Papers of Franz Halder. Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Vol. 1. 1951/1952* (BAMA), Toppe, "Die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Koenigstein/Taunus von Beginn bis April 1949."

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Toppe, "Die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Koenigstein/Taunus von Beginn bis April 1949."

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Franz Halder, "Letter to Waldemar Erfurth, 3.3.1954," in *N257/v.8. Personal Papers of Waldemar Erfurth* (BAMA), cf. ———, "Letter to Waldemar Erfurth, 19.2.1954," in *N257/v.8. Personal Papers of Waldemar Erfurth* (BAMA), cf. ———, "Letter to Waldemar Erfurth, 30.4.1954," in *N257/v.8. Personal Papers of Waldemar Erfurth* (BAMA).

studies. However, to bring the cooperation to a satisfactory end, the Historical Division suggested that Franz Halder and Walter Warlimont would continue their service to the Americans as liaison men throughout the spring of 1959.¹⁴⁷

Although the termination of the Control Group meant a drastic reduction in German personnel, the cooperation was thus nonetheless continued on a smaller scale. The Historical Division established a so-called *German Historical Liaison Group*, consisting of a chief, two regular members (one of them Warlimont), and a secretary. Assigned as Chief of this liaison group, Franz Halder maintained his leading position.¹⁴⁸ When the summer of 1959 approached, Halder made arrangements to bring his long involvement with the Historical Division to a close and to move to his retirement home in Aschau, Bavaria. However, in May, a charming letter from Clyde D. Eddleman, at the time Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Army, convinced Halder to extend his commitment once again.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, on Halder's request, the entire Liaison Group persisted.¹⁵⁰ And even when the cooperation was eventually officially dissolved in June 1961, Halder remained a historical consultant to the U.S. Army.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Franz Halder, "Letter to Alfred Zeitzler, 18.3.1958," in *BAMA. N220/201. Abbau der Control Group 1958/1959* (BAMA), Edward B. James, "Letter to Franz Halder, 13.3.1958," in *BAMA. N220/201. Abbau der Control Group 1958/1959*. (BAMA).

¹⁴⁸ Lay, "Letter to Franz Halder, 22.10.1958," in *BAMA. N220/201. Abbau der Control Group 1958/1959* (BAMA).

¹⁴⁹ Clyde D. Eddleman, "Letter to Franz Halder, 14.5.1959," in *N220/204. Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Vol. 3. 1954-1961* (BAMA).

¹⁵⁰ Cf. ———, "Letter to Franz Halder, 28.5.1959," in *N220/204. Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Bd. 3. 1954-1961* (BAMA), cf. Franz Halder, "Letter to Clyde D. Eddleman, 26.5.1959," in *N220/204. Personal Papers of Franz Halder. Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Vol. 3. 1954-1961* (BAMA).

¹⁵¹ Cf. Bruce C. Clarke, "Letter to Franz Halder, 9.1.1961," in *N220/90* (BAMA), cf. Franz Halder, "Letter to Bruce C. Clarke, 13.1.1961," in *N220/90* (BAMA).

III) The Hidden Agendas of the Historical Cooperation

Officially established in 1943, the historical program of the U.S. Army remained extremely improvisational. During the war years, a lack of historically trained personnel was accompanied by little understanding for the necessity of historical coverage on the part of higher commanders. In addition, communication between Washington and the Historical Division's European branch was particularly poor. Looking back on his service with the Historical Division in 1945, William A. Sutton aptly summed up the situation: "no one in any one echelon knew what any one anywhere else was doing."¹⁵² Quite obviously, the compilation of official war histories by the U.S. military was still in its infancy when the Second World War ended. However, what the members of the Historical Division lacked in professionalism, they compensated with ambition. By 1945, the historians envisioned the publication of an extensive official history of the recent war. To achieve as comprehensive and accurate an account as possible, they encouraged the inclusion of the Germans' point of view and subsequently sent the Shuster Commission to Europe to gather that information.¹⁵³

Not surprisingly, a closer look at these early stages of the historical cooperation between the U.S. military and former *Wehrmacht* generals reveals that this project was not planned out very well. For example, the Shuster Commission was put together and sent to Europe within only six weeks. Possibly due to this rather constrained time frame, preparations with regard to the course of action were limited to an afternoon conference

¹⁵² William A. Sutton, "Observations on Historical Procedures, 27.5.1946," in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 6. Folder 6.* (NARA).

¹⁵³ Cf. chapter II.

in Washington in the end of June.¹⁵⁴ In hindsight, it seems like the interrogation mission never quite lost this ill-conceived nature; and when George N. Shuster and his colleagues returned to Washington in September 1945, apparently no plans existed within the War Department for further exploitation of German POWs for historical purposes.¹⁵⁵

The consultation of German generals could thus have remained a fleeting whim, were it not for the commitment of individuals such as Major Kenneth W. Hechler, who pressed for a continuation of the collaboration. However, even though the historical project was in 1946 institutionalized under the umbrella of the Historical Division, Europe, it would not lose its rather provisional character until 1948. In fact, especially for these early years, it seems as though the project was kept alive and pushed on by a handful of dedicated individuals from *within* the Historical Division, USFET, particularly by Colonel Harold E. Potter, Captain Frank C. Mahin and Captain James F. Scoggin.

While these men ascribed great value to the German reports from the beginning, it took considerably longer to establish and anchor the cooperation of the German officers into the U.S. Army's official postwar historical program. The first two years were characterized by avid efforts of Potter and his subordinates to promote the German operational history project and to win influential supporters in the War Department and the U.S. Army. In fact, such patronage was quite necessary since the project was constantly struggling with frequent restructuring and cuts in personnel, and even faced a premature close out by the Military Government. Only after the German writers'

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Wright, "Memorandum to the Chief, Historical Branch. Report on the week ending 30.6.1945."

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Walter L. Wright, "Memorandum for Chief, Historical Branch. Report for the week ending 22.9.1945," in *RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 4* (NARA).

discharge and denazification, and the installation of the Control Group in 1948 did the German-American cooperation eventually reach a solid organizational structure and secure funding.

The intense war historical collaboration between historical agencies of the U.S. Army and former German military leaders seems—in spite of its improvisational start—remarkable. What prompted the War Department to venture such a project? More important, what motives led the Americans not only to continue, but also to extend the cooperation? Which individuals and branches within the Army were particularly interested in the project? On the other hand, what brought the defeated and imprisoned German military leaders to cooperate with their victorious enemies? How, and why, did the respective motives of Americans and Germans change over the course of the 15-year liaison?

The following chapter seeks to offer some insights into the respective motives of Americans and Germans as well as the particular agendas both groups pursued through the historical collaboration. Furthermore, it seems necessary to trace the major conflicts the Historical Division was facing over the years. In fact, the preferential treatment the former National Socialist military elite received in return for their historical cooperation not only met with incomprehension on the side of camp authorities, but occasionally also conflicted with directives of the Allied Control Council. The project, furthermore, met considerable resistance from the American Military Government. Finally, the historical cooperation also repeatedly received critical comments in the press.

1. “To Raise a Monument for our Troops” – or: Restoring the Image of the German Officer

From the very beginning the Germans’ motives for cooperating had a specific political coloration. When generals Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg (1886-1974, former military attaché in London) and Heinz Guderian (1888-1954) were, for the first time, confronted with a request to answer historical questions in July 1945, they turned to the senior German officer present in the Seventh Army Interrogation Center, Field Marshall Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb (1876-1956). The wiretap protocol of their conversation reveals that the three officers were indeed concerned with losing sight of the “interests of [their] fatherland” while answering the questionnaire.¹⁵⁶ However, since the Americans already knew the course of operations, the risk of revealing any secrets seemed quite negligible. Instead, the Germans sensed an opportunity to “inform the Americans”, and even to “enlighten the world”, about the character of the allegedly apolitical German officer corps on the one hand, and the character of Adolf Hitler on the other hand. Leeb therefore instructed his comrades as follows:

The German officer has done nothing but his duty in this war. Please emphasize that whenever possible, just as I have done whenever somebody broached the question. The German officer did not care whether his commander was National-Socialist or a HINDENBURG. The lower the rank, the narrower the viewpoint. The German officer was content in confining his interests to his own narrow sphere. There can be no harm in saying this [emphasis in the original, E.K.].¹⁵⁷

In addition, the three generals wanted to convince their interrogators that Hitler was a “madman”, surrounded by minions without any independent opinion, let alone influence.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. "Seventh Army Interrogation Center, Ref No SAIC/X/12, 26.7.1945," in *RG 498. Records of Headquarters European Theater of Operations. United States Army (World War II). MIS-X. Seventh US Army Interrogation Reports 1945. Box 73. Folder 2.* (NARA).

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

The Americans had to be informed about “the fact that a single brain should be responsible for this catastrophe which has come over Germany, Europe, and the whole world.”¹⁵⁸

As the episode between Leeb, Guderian, and Schweppenburg shows, the senior officers kept their leadership function in respect to their former subordinates. For years to come, men like former Major General Franz Halder and Field Marshall Georg von K uchler (1881-1968), for example, played an important role in defining the range of interpretation within which the Germans presented themselves and their role in the course of the Second World War. In March 1947, Georg von K uchler circulated guidelines for the historical writing at Garmisch wherein he left no doubt which bottom line the German officers should follow. The former Field Marshall underlined what he considered to be the real purpose of the cooperation: “We do not want to write American, but G e r m a n war history. [...] We will record German achievements, from the German point of view, and thus create a monument for our troops [emphasis in the original, E.K.]”¹⁵⁹

Von K uchler also sounded a note of caution to his comrades. Instead of revealing secrets about the German leadership, they should merely put down “facts and the course of combat operations and events on the German side.” On no account were the writers to incriminate superiors, comrades, or subordinates. Names would only be referred to in cases already known by the Americans. Finally, all reports, including notes and drafts, had to be turned over to General Waldemar Erfurth (1879-1971) and the “Scientific

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Georg von Kuechler, "Memorandum, 7.3.1947," in ZA 1/70 (BAMA). Original German: “*Wir wollen nicht amerikanische, sondern d e u t s c h e Kriegsgeschichte schreiben. [...] Es werden die deutschen Taten, von deutschem Standpunkt gesehen, festgelegt und dadurch unseren Truppen ein Denkmal gesetzt.*”

Commission” who checked the material before delivering it to the Historical Division.¹⁶⁰

Considering K uchler’s own role during the war, this attitude is little surprising. Initially a conservative critic of National Socialism,¹⁶¹ K uchler was so impressed by Germany’s triumphal victory over France in 1940 that he henceforth subscribed to Hitler’s war policies. In November 1941, he was then largely responsible for the murder of several hundred mentally ill patients in Nikolskoje and a ruthless exploitation of the region around the beleaguered city of Leningrad, which resulted in a severe famine. Impressed by K uchler’s rigorous course of action, Hitler promoted him to the rank of field marshal in June 1942.¹⁶² Eventually, however, K uchler’s attempts to conceal his past proved unsuccessful. He was charged in the OKW-trial and, in October 1948, he was eventually convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity and sentenced to twenty years in prison.¹⁶³

However, for years, it remained an important concern for many German officers to restore the reputation of the vanquished *Wehrmacht*. The Historical Division frequently received complaints about the alleged defamation of the German military, and correspondence between former generals contains numerous remarks on the necessity to enhance the image of the *Wehrmacht* officer corps.¹⁶⁴ Especially in the context of

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Johannes Huerter, "Konservative Mentalit et, milit arischer Pragmatismus, ideologisierte Kriegsf uhrung. Das Beispiel des Generals Georg von Kuechler," in *Karrieren im Nationalsozialismus. Funktionseliten zwischen Mitwirkung und Distanz*, ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld and Tobias Jersak (Frankfurt/Main 2004), pp. 241-242.

¹⁶² Cf. Ibid., pp. 239; 245; 247.

¹⁶³ Cf. Wolfram Wette, "Der OKW-Prozess," in *Der Nationalsozialismus vor Gericht. Die alliierten Prozesse gegen Kriegsverbrecher und Soldaten 1943-1952*, ed. Gerd R. Uebersch aer (Frankfurt/Main 1999), p. 208. Due to old age and illness von K uchler was released in 1953.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Erich Friderici, "Ernste Gedanken eines deutschen Generals, December 1945," in *Z1/1594* (BAMA).

discussions on a possible German military contribution to Western defense, which reached a general public in the early 1950s, the aging military elite highlighted again and again the alleged blameless character of the average German soldier.¹⁶⁵ In a letter to Franz Halder from January 1955, former General Artillery Günther Blumentritt (1892-1967), for instance, expressed what many former German soldiers thought: “In both World Wars, the German soldier proved his quality. Due to a mistaken policy, he fought in both wars as faithful hound against half of the world. Four and a half years in the First World War and over five years in the Second World War, the German soldier did loyally and honestly what he was ordered by an incapable policy.”¹⁶⁶

When Franz Halder, as director of the Control Group, contacted former comrades to invite their participation on specific topics, he often pointed out that the work provided the opportunity to restore a positive image of the German military. In a letter to Waldemar Erfurth from 1952, for example, he expressed his great delight at the fact that the two “old leaders of the German General Staff would now cooperate to raise a memorial for the holy institution of the German General Staff.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Kurt Paetzold, *Ihr waret die besten Soldaten. Ursprung und Geschichte einer Legende* (Leipzig 2000).

¹⁶⁶ Guenther Blumentritt, "Letter to Franz Halder, 28.1.1955," in N220/79. *Personal Papers of Franz Halder. Private Correspondence 1954-1955* (BAMA). Original German quote: “Der deutsche Soldat hat in beiden Weltkriegen bewiesen, was er wert ist. In beiden Kriegen kämpfte er infolge einer falschen Politik als treuer Jagdhund nach allen Seiten und gegen die halbe Welt. 4 ½ Jahre im ersten Weltkrieg und über 5 Jahre im zweiten Weltkrieg hat er treu und brav getan, was eine unzulängliche Politik ihm befahl.”

¹⁶⁷ Franz Halder, "Letter to Waldemar Erfurth, 26.6.52," in ZA 1/2651 (BAMA). Original German: “Ich gebe meiner besonderen Freude darüber Ausdruck, dass wir beiden alten Spitzenmänner des Deutschen Generalstabes zusammenarbeiten können, um der uns heiligen Institution des Deutschen Generalstabs ein Denkmal zu setzen, aus dem die heutige Weltmacht jenseits des Atlantiks Nutzen ziehen kann für die Gestaltung ihres eigenen Führungsapparates.” OCMH had in April 1952 requested a study on the origin, development and function of the German General Staff; in June 1952 Waldemar Erfurth was charged with the compilation of such a study for the period of 1918 to 1945. Cf. ———, "Letter toHelm, 20.5.1952," in ZA 1/2651 (BAMA), cf. Chief Foreign Military Studies Branch Lt. Col. Hans W. Heim, "Letter to Franz

The historical collaboration with the U.S. Army thus provided not only a unique opportunity to work toward a revision of the German military's image, but also to promote the characteristics of the traditional German military organization, which supposedly produced distinguished soldiers. Thereby, the organizational structure of the Operational History (German) Section and its successors encouraged the exchange and adjustment of war experiences and memories. With the formation of the so-called campaign groups, the Americans literally reunited dozens of generals who on different levels of command had participated in certain campaigns. In a joint effort, these officers replicated their specific memories in order to produce comprehensive accounts. Moreover, the Historical Division granted the German generals access to original *Wehrmacht* records and also offered them every administrative and personnel assistance possible to support their work. The Americans thus provided an arena of articulation—a “socio-political space” within which the former German military elite developed a coherent storyline about their role in World War II. Moreover, the cooperation with the Historical Division enabled the Germans to work towards the recognition of their specific war memories by using their studies as propaganda vehicles.¹⁶⁸

These military studies gained a special significance, because they were professionally translated into English and widely distributed throughout various institutions of the U.S. armed forces. In later years, the material was also passed on to the

Halder, 24.6.1952," in *ZA 1/2651* (BAMA), cf. Orlando Ward, "Request for Study on the German General Staff, 15.4.1952," in *ZA 1/2651* (BAMA).

¹⁶⁸ On the concept of arenas of articulation in the context of war memory cf. Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*.

counterpart institutions of the French and British allies.¹⁶⁹ Through the structure of the Historical Division the Germans could, therefore, conveniently reach out to an international audience, using their military studies as vehicles for establishing a specifically positive image of the former *Wehrmacht* in general and the German officer corps in particular.

2. Brothers in Arms: The Utilization of German Military Knowledge

2.1 Gathering Information on the new Enemy

Besides the desire to achieve a German view on American operations, the German interview program contained within it the seed for a shift in emphasis from early on: As early as June 1945, Walter L. Wright stressed that the German interviews would not only be of tremendous value for the American war historiography, but in addition held the opportunity to gather important intelligence for “those who have the responsibility for planning American war mobilization.”¹⁷⁰ The utilization of German knowledge for present and future military planning was thus from the beginning a component in the German-American war historical cooperation—an element that in the context of the evolving conflict with the Soviet Union would increase in importance over the years.

Of course, in the summer of 1945, the war in the Pacific had not yet been won and the Soviet Union was still an important ally. In addition to a lively exchange with the

¹⁶⁹ For distribution of studies to the French and British cp. for example Harry J. Malony, "Letter to Harold E. Potter. Points considered during your visit to the Historical Division, 5.1.1949," in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. OCMH. Correspondence relating to the Historical Program of the United States, 1946-1962. Box 7. Folder 4* (NARA).

¹⁷⁰ Walter L. Wright, "Letter to George N. Shuster, 9.6.1945," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. OCMH. Records of the Historical Services Division. Files of Troyer S. Anderson 1941-1946. Box 13.* (NARA).

British and the French, the Historical Division therefore also cooperated—to a limited extend—with the Russians. On July 27th, 1945, for instance, a group of five Russian officers visited ASHCAN and was allowed to conduct interviews on their own.¹⁷¹

However, instead of pointing to cooperative relations between the U.S. military and the Red Army, the incident much rather confirmed the widening gap between these fair weather allies. The Russian officers were not particularly welcome in Mondorf and apparently could not rely on any assistance from their American counterparts. Instead, Major Hechler, for example, seems to have perceived the Russians as trespassers and was irritated by their supposedly “grim, and vengeful looks”. Feeling considerably closer to the imprisoned Germans than to his supposed Russian allies, Hechler was concerned “what effect their presence would have on the reaction of the prisoners.”¹⁷²

In spite of the fact that this first encounter with the Russian military was characterized by mistrust, a mutual assistance halfheartedly continued. In June 1946 United States Ambassador to Moscow, Walter Bedell Smith, contacted the Soviet authorities on behalf of the Historical Division and asked them for support in securing information from German officers in Soviet custody. Several months later, in April 1947, the Russians forwarded ten reports and in return received three studies on the Eastern front. However, the Historical Division was rather disappointed about the reports and found them “generally of small value”.¹⁷³

Besides the compilation of these few studies on the war in Eastern Europe, which

¹⁷¹ Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," p. 77.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Harold E. Potter, "Letter to the Chief of Staff. German Operations Reports for U.S.S.R., 25.7.1947," in *RG 549. Headquarters EUCOM. Special Staff. Historical Division. Administrative Branch. Classified Correspondence. Box 3159. Folder 1.* (NARA).

merely served as a courtesy service for the Red Army, the interrogation of German officers initially covered only operations involving German and American troops. Against the background of increasing tensions with the Russians, however, the scope of the project was considerably widened in the fall of 1946. In October, John M. Kemper notified Harold E. Potter that the War Department thought it necessary to include the Mediterranean and Russian fronts in the efforts of the Historical Division.¹⁷⁴ Shortly thereafter, in November, a cable from Washington officially instructed the Historical Division, Europe to gather additional information on German operations from the Eastern front. The directive explicitly pointed out that the information was “not desired primarily for historical purposes” and advised coordination with the intelligence branch in the matter.¹⁷⁵ And in December 1946, General Harry J. Malony, Chief of the Historical Division, Washington, stated in a letter to general Joseph T. McNarney, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. occupation forces in Germany: “The project on the Russian front is not primarily for my historians but is of major interest to the G-2 people.”¹⁷⁶

The widening of the project was hailed by the German generals, who themselves had already offered the compilation of studies on the Russian campaign. In April 1946, for example, general Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg had stressed in a conversation with James F. Scoggin, that his “basic policy and viewpoint [was] anti-Russian”, offering to

¹⁷⁴ Kemper, "Letter to Harold E. Potter, 4.10.1946."

¹⁷⁵ WDSHD, "AGWAR, 26.11.1946," in *RG 549. Records of the U.S. Army Europe. EUCOM. Special Staff. Historical Division. Administration Branch. Miscellaneous Records, 1946-49. Box 3172.* (NARA).

¹⁷⁶ Harry J. Malony, "Letter to Joseph T. McNarney," in *RG 549. Records of the U.S. Army Europe. EUCOM. Special Staff. Historical Division. Administration Branch. Miscellaneous Records, 1946-49. Box 3172.* (NARA).

compile a “critical and instructive study on [his] experience in Russia”.¹⁷⁷ Thus, within a year of its establishment, the character of the cooperation of German and American officers had altered, mounting the gathering of intelligence information on the Red Army as another pillar of the German Operational (History) Section.

2.2 Lessons to be Learned: German Studies as Training Material and Resource for Doctrine Development

The professionalization of the German-American historical cooperation in Europe, embodied by the establishment of the Control Group in July 1948, was accompanied by avid efforts to anchor the project more permanently within the larger complex of the U.S. Army’s historical program. Captain Frank C. Mahin played a particularly important role in this endeavor. During the war, the young West Point graduate served with the Historical Division in Europe and after February 1946 had been assigned to the Operational History (German) Section where he stood out due to an enthusiastic commitment to the success and extension of the historical cooperation. After two years, Mahin was certainly one of a few officers who possessed a comprehensive first-hand knowledge of the German studies. When his deployment in Europe came to an end in January 1948, he was therefore assigned to the Historical Division in Washington in order to organize the administration and distribution of the ever-increasing number of German studies.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Cf. James F. Scoggin, "Memorandum to Colonel Pence. Conversation with Geyr v. Schweppenburg, 24.4.1946," in *RG 549. Headquarters EUCOM. Special Staff. Historical Division. Administrative Branch. Classified Correspondence. Box 3159. Folder 1.* (NARA).

¹⁷⁸ Kent Roberts Greenfield, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Division. Report for Period 5-16.1948" in *Excerpt RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 7* (NARA), James M. Whitmire, "Administrative Memorandum No. 18, 15.1.1948," in *RG 549.*

The growing acceptance and appreciation of the German studies program became even more apparent when the Historical Division in Washington created a *Foreign Studies Section* in April 1948, with Captain Mahin as its chief. The purpose of the new branch was twofold: First, it should provide the historians working on the official war history with complementary material; in addition, the branch should call the attention of the service schools and the Army staff to the growing pool of German studies. Over the following months, the Historical Division in Washington dedicated much effort to strengthening this "Second Front" aimed at the utilization of German military studies as training material. In February 1948, for example, Mahin had already planned a series of excursions to various service schools, such as the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, with the objective to increase "awareness throughout the Army of a virtually unexplored, immensely rich source of military information."¹⁷⁹ In April, Mahin took another step in promoting the German studies, publishing on behalf of the Historical Division the first number of a new *German Report Series*, followed by three more volumes a couple of months later.¹⁸⁰

The reorganization within the Historical Division, Washington continued and in August 1948, the Foreign Studies Branch was attached to the newly created *Applied*

USAREUR. *Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 5. Folder 2.* (NARA).

¹⁷⁹ Frank C. Mahin, "Memorandum for Colonel Clark, 16.2.1948," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence, Operational History (German) Branch. Box 5. Folder 2.* (NARA).

¹⁸⁰ Kent Roberts Greenfield, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Division. Report of activities for period 12.4.-23.4.1948," in *Exzerpt RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 7* (NARA), ———, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Division. Report of Activities for Period 12.7.-23.7.1948," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 7* (NARA), ———, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Division. Report of activities for the Biweekly Period 20.8.-3.9.1948," in *Exzerpt RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 7* (NARA).

Studies Branch under the supervision of Brigadier General Paul M. Robinett. This arrangement suggests that the original purpose of the German studies as complementary source for the war historians continued to recede, while their meaning as resource of military intelligence and operational expertise increased. In fact, one of the primary missions of the Applied Studies Branch was “to pump the precious information which the [Historical] Division possesses directly into the bloodstream of the Army”.¹⁸¹ Mahin’s efforts soon yielded fruit, and Chief Historian Kent Roberts Greenfield could thus contentedly report, that “[t]he demand for [the German studies] is becoming voracious and added to those of the Division is driving the Foreign Studies Section hard.”¹⁸²

Thus encouraged, Frank C. Mahin continued his tour of the service schools to further promulgate the existence and availability of German studies. Speaking at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth in November 1949, Mahin pointed out that the German historical studies provided a basis for the development of U.S. Army doctrine. The collected German knowledge could thus serve as a “framework of reference” or “line of departure” for the development of operational doctrines on the conduct of large-scale withdrawal; the defense of fortified beaches; or the protection of lines of communication through partisan land. Promoting the German studies as a “bank of experience”, Mahin stated that in spite of the U.S. Army’s own insufficient experience, for example with large-scale withdrawals, there was now “such a bank open to business

¹⁸¹ Kent Roberts Greenfield, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Division. Report of Activities for the Period 4.-15.10.1948," in *Excerpt RG 319, Army Staff. Records of the OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 9. Folder 7* (NARA).

¹⁸² Greenfield, "Memorandum for the Chief, Historical Division. Report of activities for the Biweekly Period 20.8.-3.9.1948."

in the Army's Historical Division."¹⁸³ Through the Historical Division, and Captain Mahin's endeavors in particular, the U.S. Army now possessed access to German combat experience in the East that was conveniently presented in English.

In the following years, numerous German studies on the Eastern front were distributed throughout the Army, at first as multihilits (a specific form of paper copies). Pursuant to the Americans' intelligence interest, the studies dealt with topics that the U.S. Army thought would be relevant in a possible future military conflict with the USSR. Among these were, for example, studies on guerilla warfare such as *The War Behind the Front: Guerilla Warfare* (Military Study # C-032, 1949) or *Haunted Forests: Enemy Partisans behind the Front* (MS # C-037, 1953). Other studies were more general, discussing, for instance, the *Conduct of Operations in the East, 1941-1943* (MS # C-050, 1949) or *Decisions affecting the Campaign in Russia 1941/1942* (MS # C-067a, C-067b, 1949). Several other studies in turn, aimed directly at the provision of information for a future conflict—among them a study on *The Fighting Qualities of the Russian Soldier* (MS # D-036, 1953), one on *The secret of the power of the Russian state* (MS # P-018e, 1951), and another one titled *Ideas pertaining to a Strategic Counteroffensive by the West* (MS # C-40a).¹⁸⁴ Besides the distribution of these rather loose copies, the Historical Division began in the summer of 1951 to publish several German studies in a Department

¹⁸³ Frank C. Mahin, "Speech delivered to Faculty, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 23.11.1949," in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. U.S. Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files), 1943-84. Box 62. Folder 5* (NARA).

¹⁸⁴ Cf. "Guide to Foreign Military Studies 1945-1954. Catalog and Index," ed. United States Army Historical Division. Headquarters, Europe (1954).

of the Army pamphlet series.¹⁸⁵ Thereby, studies such as *Russian Combat Methods* (DA-Pamphlet No. 20-230), *Defense tactics against Russian breakthroughs* (DA-Pamphlet No. 20-233) or *Operations of Encircled Forces* (DA-Pamphlet No. 20-201) found an even wider distribution within the American military.¹⁸⁶

Not surprisingly, scholars have been wondering if, to what extent, and in which ways these German reports influenced the U.S. Army. Kevin Soutor, for example, credits the studies with “greatest influence in United States Army circles”, especially on the development of American defense doctrine.¹⁸⁷ Soutor argues that the German defensive experiences with the Red Army became increasingly interesting to the planners of U.S. operational doctrine in 1948 when the U.S. military strategy for an envisioned conflict with the Soviet Union changed considerably.

In view of drastic American demobilization on the one hand and unchanged strength of the Red Army on the other hand, Army strategists had, prior to 1948, regarded most of Europe as lost in the case of a Soviet offensive. Since it was thought impossible to stop the numerically superior Red Army, the strategic plans arranged for the immediate evacuation of American troops from Germany and most of Western Europe. The Americans would thus leave the still vastly destroyed continent to the Soviets, only maintaining a bridgehead in Europe. In a second phase, the American bombers would then implement a strategic nuclear offensive to halt the Soviet war effort, to gain crucial

¹⁸⁵ Paul M. Robinett, "Publication Program, World War II, Eastern Front, 31.8.1951 " in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. U.S. Army Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files) 1943-84. Box 30. Folder 5* (NARA).

¹⁸⁶ Cf. "Guide to Foreign Military Studies 1945-1954. Catalog and Index."

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Kevin Soutor, "To Stem the Red Tide: The German Report Series and its Effect on American Defense Doctrine, 1948-1954," *Journal of Military History* 57 (1993): 653-688.

time for Allied mobilization, and to destroy Soviet resistance. With this accomplished, the United States would impose their peace terms. In such a scenario, the European continent would thus be tremendously devastated by a Russian invasion followed by American nuclear air raids.¹⁸⁸

However, by the spring of 1948 the European recovery from World War II had progressed and the Western European countries' ability to withstand a Soviet assault had grown. A hasty exit from Europe would now cost the United States valuable allies and would, moreover, leave the remerging European industrial potential to the Soviets. It thus seemed strategically better to defend Europe instead of turning it into a huge bombing areal. Therefore, the U.S. military adjusted its strategic plans: U.S. forces would now only retreat to the Rhine River, establishing a prolonged forward defense.¹⁸⁹

The development of a suitable doctrine for such a prolonged forward defense posed a challenge to American military planners, because the U.S. Army lacked any experience of long-term defensive warfare. Now, the "bank of expertise" built up by the Historical Division came into play. Kevin Soutor suggests that the Army indeed turned to the Historical Division in its search for applicable examples and began "to identify its current position in Western Europe with the German Army's on the Eastern Front after 1943."¹⁹⁰ Soutor bases his assumption on the fact that an increasing number of German studies on the Eastern front was distributed to the U.S. military since 1947—studies that provided the Army with examples of the *Wehrmacht's* fight against the Red Army, using

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Christian Greiner, "Die alliierten militaerstrategischen Planungen zur Verteidigung Westeuropas 1947-1950," in *Von der Kapitulation bis zum Plevan-Plan*, ed. Roland G. Foerster, *Anfaenge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik 1945-1956* (Munich 1982), pp. 163-180, Soutor, "To Stem the Red Tide," p. 661.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Greiner, "Verteidigung Westeuropas," pp. 163-180, Soutor, "To Stem the Red Tide," p. 663.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Soutor, "To Stem the Red Tide," pp. 663; 668.

mobile defense strategies that allowed counterattacks.¹⁹¹ Moreover, he directly ascribes the implementation of a mobile defense doctrine in Field Manual FM 17-100, published in December 1949, to the influence of the German studies, arguing that “[n]othing in the American Army’s World War II experience foreshadowed this principle, the postwar shortage of armor precluded it, and the Korean War would not begin for another six months.”¹⁹²

Soutor’s thesis seems plausible, and he presents perspicuous arguments to support it, pointing out that the German tactical concepts did indeed hold great attraction for U.S. strategists. For instance, the studies on the Eastern Front contained suitable examples for the initial phase of the Army’s current defense plans for a conventional war with the Soviet Union. After all, similar to the Germans just a couple of years earlier, the Americans would be greatly outnumbered and on the defensive. German experience thus “augmented American tactical thought by filling a doctrinal void resulting from the lack of experience in protracted defensive warfare.”¹⁹³ The increasing number of German pamphlets on the Eastern front indicates a growing interest in German combat experience with the Russians. In addition, in the early 1950s, American officers increasingly picked up examples stemming from these studies and processed them in articles for the *Military Review*, a journal published by the Command and General Staff College. Moreover, the studies were utilized as training material on mobile defense doctrine.¹⁹⁴

In the spring of 1952, the influence of former German officers on American

¹⁹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*: 669.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*: p. 668.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*: pp. 671-672.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*: pp. 675-676.

operational doctrine reached its peak: In February, the Army requested from the Control Group an *Analysis of U.S. Field Service Regulations* (MS # P-133). Henceforth, six German generals reviewed the current American operational doctrine (FM 100-5, 1949) and recommended changes based on former German doctrine and personal combat experience on the Eastern front. The report was delivered in 1953 and then forwarded to Brigadier General Einar Gjelsteen, who had been responsible for the preparation of FM 100-5 in 1949, and the faculty of the Command and General Staff College. When the revised form of FM 100-5 was published in 1954, it included several of the recommendations put forward by the Germans.¹⁹⁵

Obviously, Captain Mahin's distribution efforts proved successful. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the German pamphlets found interested readers among service school faculties who utilized them for the development of a new operational defensive doctrine and as training material. Kevin Soutor rightly points out the striking similarities between the tactical measures presented in the German studies on the Eastern Front and the changes in the American defensive operational doctrine of 1949 and 1954. In fact, it is plausible to assume a connection of some sort between the demand for German accounts on defensive operations and the corresponding changes in American doctrine and even to ascribe the German officers some influence on the U.S. Army's doctrinal development.

Exactly how strong the influence of the German studies was, however, remains difficult to estimate. Even though the number of studies on the Eastern front increased

¹⁹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*: pp. 676-678.

between 1948 and 1954, the studies on other theaters were always in the vast majority.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, the number of studies is a valuable indicator for increasing information demand within the U.S. Army; the appearance of articles in the *Military Review* drawing examples from those studies and the similarities between German defense doctrine and adaptations in the American Field Manuals suggests that the German pamphlets were indeed utilized. However, it seems a stretch to assign “greatest influence”¹⁹⁷ to the German studies based on these numbers and similarities alone, ignoring possible other influential factors in the certainly multifaceted process of doctrine development. Only further research in the records of the service schools themselves would shed more light on the grade of influence the German studies actually had. In fact, Soutor even admits that the influence of the German reports was basically confined to the service schools, especially the Command and General Staff College. However important the effect of the German studies might have been, apparently it did not exceed the doctrinal level: in spite of the inclusion of mobile defense into the defense operation doctrine, the Army’s force structure did not change accordingly.¹⁹⁸

When the Army shifted its focus to the development of nuclear-capable weapons systems in 1954, the German examples lost attractiveness. Thus, mobile defense, inspired by German ideas, might have prevailed in military literature—but it lost in the field.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Cf. "Guide to Foreign Military Studies 1945-1954. Catalog and Index."

¹⁹⁷ _____, "To Stem the Red Tide," p. 669.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.: p. 681.

2.3 Injecting German Military Thought into the U.S. Army

Not surprisingly, Halder and his colleagues felt somehow flattered that U.S. Army agencies ordered not only historical reports, but also sought the Germans' consultation on questions of current importance. This growing demand for German operational and organizational experience, and the obvious American appreciation of representatives of the old German General Staff, boosted the self-esteem of the Control Group members and fed a feeling of superiority towards the American military establishment. These aging German generals considered the German General Staff as *the* most sophisticated form of military leadership organization and saw themselves as the last bearers of traditional German military thought.

After the Historical Division had commissioned a study on the development and organizational structure of the German General Staff in 1952, Halder thus wrote to Waldemar Erfurth:

I consider it a sign for real American open-mindedness when the people in Washington remember that we Germans faced similar problems after 1918 and, in spite of the Versailles Treaty and other obstacles, after all reached solutions that not only created an imposing instrument of military power, but also achieved considerable successes.²⁰⁰

In fact, the assignment of such a comprehensive study fell in line with a secret long-term goal of the Control Group. Convinced that the German General Staff was the "most carefully selected, most consistently trained, most assiduous and most altruistic

²⁰⁰ Franz Halder, "Letter to Waldemar Erfurth, 6.8.1952," in N257/v.8. *Personal Papers of Waldemar Erfurth* (BAMA). Original German quote: "*Es scheint mir als ein gutes Zeichen der echten amerikanischen Aufgeschlossenheit, wenn die Leute in Washington sich daran erinnern, dass wir Deutsche nach 1918 ähnlichen Problemen gegenüberstanden und trotz Versailler Vertrag und anderen Hemmungen immerhin zu Lösungen gekommen sind, die ein achtungsgebietendes [sic] militärisches Machtinstrument nicht nur geschaffen haben, sondern es auch zu nennenswerten Erfolgen brachten.*"

institution” that ever existed,²⁰¹ they saw the German-American historical cooperation as an appropriate way to subtly promote the features of the former German General Staff in order to “help the U.S. Army on its way to build a similar organization.”²⁰²

The cooperation with the Historical Division seemed to be a great opportunity, since the political situation in Germany in the early 1950s gave little reason to hope for a revival of the spirit of the old German General staff. Fostered by the Allies’ demilitarization measures, the political climate and mentality in Germany had changed considerably since the war, resulting in a broad rejection of traditional militarism.²⁰³ When the Korean War triggered prearrangements of a West German contribution to Western military defense, the West German government was careful to keep future German armed forces free from any suspicions of reviving Prussian-German militarism.

Franz Halder and his friends opposed this attitude and observed the establishment of the so-called *Amt Blank*—the predecessor organization of the West German department of defense—and its efforts to build a democratic military organization borne by politically mature soldiers with growing resentment and even disgust. The older *Wehrmacht* elite especially opposed reform-oriented forces such as Wolf Graf Baudissin (1907-1993) and Theodor Blank (1905-1972), who promoted ideas of “inner leadership” and “citizen soldiers”.²⁰⁴ In the opinion of many older generals, such a break with

²⁰¹ ———, "Letter to Hellmut Schultze, 16.3.1955," in N220/79. *Personal Papers of Franz Halder. Private Correspondence 1954-1955* (BAMA), cf. also ———, "Letter to Hermann Teske, 15.9.1955," in N220/79. *Personal Papers of Franz Halder. Private Correspondence 1954-1955* (BAMA).

²⁰² Halder, "Letter to Hellmut Schultze, 16.3.1955."

²⁰³ Cf. Detlef Bald, ""Buerger in Uniform": Tradition und Neuanfang des Militaers in Westdeutschland," in *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau. Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre*, ed. Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek (Bonn 1993), pp. 393-394.

²⁰⁴ On the integration of civilian oversight and democratic values into the Bundeswehr see "Handbuch Innere Fuehrung. Hilfen zur Klaerung der Begriffe," ed. Bundesministerium fuer Verteidigung, Schriftenreihe Innere Fuehrung (Bonn 1957), ———, "Die Wehrmacht als Vorbild. Alte Kameraden in der

traditional military values was utterly most unfortunate and, in view of the increasing conflict with the USSR, even negligent.

Günther Blumentritt, for example, watched the international situation and the Federal Republic's unfolding military policies with increasing concern. Expressing his views on the envisioned new German military, Blumentritt was convinced that, instead of focusing on arbitrary democratic rights of future German soldiers, German politicians should rather remember and recreate the fighting qualities that had distinguished the German troops of both world wars.²⁰⁵ In his opinion, it was obvious that

the United States and the Western countries want a future German soldier who is just as capable and just as hard as the soldiers of the world wars. A soft soldier would not be useful for the struggle with Asians and Bolsheviks. [...] It is in the interest of the West to have hard German soldiers as allies. [...] For the defense against Asian and Bolsheviks we need troops as hard as the German soldiers who fought on the Eastern front in both world wars.²⁰⁶

Franz Halder could not agree more. According to him, the new German military would be “a monstrosity” that, moreover, “from the beginning [would] have to suffer from the comparison with the superior accomplishments and enormous achievements of the

Bundeswehr," *Geschichte, Politik und ihre Didaktik. Beiträge und Nachrichten fuer die Unterrichtspraxis* 29 (2001), ———, "Kämpfe um die Dominanz des Militärischen," in *Mythos Wehrmacht. Nachkriegsdebatten und Traditionspflege*, ed. Detlef Bald, Johannes Klotz, and Wolfram Wette (Berlin 2001), ———, "Militärreform und Grundgesetz: Zum Konzept der "Inneren Führung", " *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 21 (2005), on Baudissin and his influence on military reform in the Federal Republic also cp. Rudolf J. Schlaffer and Wolfgang Schmidt, eds., *Wolf Graf von Baudissin 1907-1993. Modernisierer zwischen totalitärer Herrschaft und freiheitlicher Ordnung* (Munich Oldenbourg 2007).

²⁰⁵ Guenther Blumentritt, "Persoenliche Beurteilung der Lage im Januar 1955 [personal estimation of the situation in January 1955], 5.1.1955," in N252/107. *Personal Papers of Guenther Blumentritt* (BAMA).

²⁰⁶ Ibid. Original German quote: "Die USA und die westlichen Länder wollen aber einen künftigen deutschen Soldaten[,] der genauso tüchtig und genau so hart ist, wie es die Soldaten der beiden Weltkriege waren. Mit einem weichen Soldaten wäre im Abwehrkampf gegen Asiaten und Bolshevisten nicht gedient. [...] Im Interesse des Westens liegt es, in Zukunft auch wieder einen harten deutschen Soldaten als Bundesgenossen zu haben. [...] [Z]ur Abwehr von Asiaten und Bolshevisten braucht man eine ebenso harte Truppe, wie es die deutschen Truppen in beiden Weltkriegen im Osten waren."

German soldier in World War II.”²⁰⁷

Thus frustrated that the German government propagated a break with Prussian military traditions and instead strove for the creation of an army of politically informed citizen soldiers, the former German military elite saw their good reputation in American military circles as a chance to save the features of traditional German military thought for Western defense. The Control Group members therefore agreed that German experience could only be utilized for the military buildup of the West, if it was promoted in the United States “where the least opposition exists and where the soil is fertile.”²⁰⁸

Using the historical cooperation as a springboard, Franz Halder and Alfred Toppe, Halder’s right hand in the Control Group, had sought new ways to inject German military ideas into the U.S. Army since the early 1950s. In their view, the transfer of German experience and military thought should not remain confined to written studies. Rather, they envisioned the establishment of “a group of highly qualified German experts” in the United States who would work towards a “broad dispersion” of German military experience.²⁰⁹ For Halder and Toppe it seemed most desirable to delegate a German liaison officer to the Office of the Chief of Military History (the successor agency of the Historical Division), who would assist the U.S. Army in all questions concerning German military matters, provide advise for the evaluation of captured German documents, and

²⁰⁷ Franz Halder, "Letter to Guenther Blumentritt, 26.1.1955," in N220/119. *Personal Papers of Franz Halder* (BAMA). Original German quote: “Der Tag wird kommen, an dem der uralte soldatische Genius unseres Volkes wieder wirksam wird. Jetzt ist aber dieser Tag noch nicht da. Das was Bonn fabriziert wird eine Missgeburt, die noch dazu unter dem anspruchsvollen Schaffen und der ungeheuerlichen Leistung des deutschen Soldaten im 2. Weltkrieg steht und unter diesem vergleich vom ersten Atemzug an schwer zu leiden haben wird.”

²⁰⁸ Cf. ———, "Letter to Alfred Toppe, 9.3.1953," in N220/203. *Personal Papers of Franz Halder. Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Vol. 2. 1953/1954* (BAMA).

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

serve as an expert in general matters.²¹⁰

These plans did not materialize exactly as envisioned by Halder and Toppe in the sense that no single German officer could be permanently installed in Washington. However, in the second half of the 1950s a growing number of former *Wehrmacht* officers were invited to give lectures at American military institutions, thus indeed helping to disperse traditional German military thought among young American officers.²¹¹

In December 1954, for example, the Army War College at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, asked Franz Halder to deliver a lecture on Soviet operations as part of a course on *Operations and Intelligence*.²¹² In March 1956, former Lieutenant General Anton von Bechtolsheim (1896-1961) held lectures on *German Strategy against the USSR in WW II* at the Armored School, Fort Knox; the Provost Marshal General's School (Camp Gordon, GA), and the Engineer School, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Former Colonel Günther Reichhelm (*1914) gave a talk on *The Russian Soldier* at the Quartermaster School (Fort Lee, VA), the Infantry School (Fort Benning, GA), and the Army Intelligence School (Fort Holsbird, MD). The series was completed by former Colonel Helmut Schulz's lecture *Soviet Partisans, their operations and German Countermeasures*, amongst others presented to the students of the Ordnance School (Aberdeen, MD) and the Artillery and

²¹⁰ Alfred Toppe, "Development of Control Group, 13.3.1953," in N220/203. *Personal Papers of Franz Halder. Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Vol. 2. 1953/1954* (BAMA).

²¹¹ Cf. for example Adjutant General Major General John A. Klein, DoA, "German Lecturer for Army Service Schools FY 1957, 6.8.1956," in RG 319. *Records of Army Staff. Records of OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 7. Folder 12* (NARA).

²¹² Cf. Colonel J.A. Berry, "Letter to Chief, Historical Division USAREUR. Teilnahme des ehemaligen deutschen Generaloberst Franz Halder am Lehrplan der Kriegsakademie [German translation of the original]," in N220/204. *Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Vol. 3. 1954-1961* (BAMA). Halder turned down this particular request.

Guided Missiles School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.²¹³ Apparently, the lectures found appreciation among the American audience and the Germans were invited for further lecture series in the following years.²¹⁴

3. Competing Interests

Ever since the early days of the Shuster Commission, the amicable collaboration between the Historical Division and military representatives of the National Socialist regime did not remain unchallenged. In contrast, from the very beginning, the collaboration met reluctance, and even considerable resistance from other American agencies. Very soon the historical officers pursuing the interrogation of German generals also discovered that they could not necessarily count on support from other divisions within the Army. The attitude of the POW camp authorities towards the German interviewees was hardly helpful, and sometime even counterproductive. In the summer of 1945, Kenneth W. Hechler, for example, took offense at the harsh treatment of the German prisoners at Mondorf that was implemented by camp commander Colonel Burton C. Andrus.²¹⁵

A few months later, in the spring of 1946, disagreement over the treatment of the German prisoners caused a conflict between the Historical Division and the camp authorities in Oberursel. Though the relations with camp commander Colonel Philp were

²¹³ Headquarters Continental Army Command, "Final Schedule for German Lecturers, Fiscal Year 1956, 10.10.1955," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. U.S. Army Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files) 1943-84. Box 62. Folder 5* (NARA).

²¹⁴ Cf. "Lecturers and Lectures available for FY 1957 Series," in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. Records of the Office of the Chief of Military History. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 7. Folder 12* (NARA).

²¹⁵ Cf. Hechler, "Enemy Side of the Hill," pp. 23-24. Later on, Burton C. Andrus served as commandant of the Nuremberg prison. Cf. Burton C. Andrus, *I was the Nuremberg jailer*, [1st American ed. (New York 1969)].

initially good, Howard P. Hudson soon felt that the “cord of goodwill snapped.” While the Historical Division was interested in uplifting the Germans’ morale to increase their willingness to cooperate, the camp administration was apparently far less inclined to provide amenities, and the detainees frequently complained about the lack of clothes, medical care, religious services, and opportunities to exercise. When the Historical Division attempted to find a remedy for such grievances, the camp authorities repeatedly interfered. For instance, the camp command soon prohibited the Historical Division from taking the generals outside the camp for hikes. Another cause of conflict was the matter of family visits. After the Historical Division was allowed to bring the prisoners to a house located outside of the camp to meet with visitors, the camp authorities suddenly canceled this practice and numerous visitors had to be turned away.²¹⁶

In April, the conflict between the camp command and the Historical Division grew more acute. Apparently, both parties had installed informers in the Florida House who fed them with information of questionable value. Colonel Philp, for example, believed that the German generals were anti-American and instead of working would spend their afternoons sleeping. Captain Hudson, on the other hand, was convinced that Philp had recruited General Fritz Bayerlein as an informant in return for the provision of special privileges. Moreover, in search of explanations for the worsening relations, the officers of the Historical Division ascribed the “short-sighted and stupid policy” of the camp authorities to the assumption that “a number of [American] officers and enlisted men at Oberursel [were] former German refugees and [were] motivated sheerly [sic] by

²¹⁶ Hudson, "Report."

revenge”.²¹⁷ The Historical Division eventually decided to look for another location, and in June 1946 moved its program to Allendorf. By hindsight the episode might appear rather ludicrous and the Germans’ actual sleeping habits are indeed of little interest. However, the incident points to the increasing mistrust between the camp command and the Historical Division, and, on a more general level, is an indicator of the relations between the Historical Division and other agencies.

3.1 Conflict with the War Crimes Branch

Besides these comparably minor quarrels with various camp authorities, the Historical Division soon came into conflict with the War Crimes Branch—a struggle that would last for several years. Naturally, the Historical Division was most interested in winning the assistance of those German officers who had served in the highest positions in the General Staff, Armies, Army Groups, and Corps. However, these were the same men who were prominently represented on various war crimes lists. Therefore the prosecutors of the IMT, and subsequent war crimes trials respectively, worked hard on bringing these German officers to trial and summoned numerous others as witnesses. In the run-up to the court cases, the War Crimes Branch usually imprisoned the affected Germans either as defendants or witnesses in one of their detainment centers, such as the Nuremberg or Dachau prisons.

Obviously, the Historical Division and the War Crimes Branch had different interests, which resulted in different, partly contradicting approaches to the former German generals. As discussed above, the fact that the German generals were treated like

²¹⁷ Ibid.

presumed war criminals at Nuremberg rather than important coworkers for the sake of war history was not conducive to a productive work ethic. Therefore, the Historical Division made every effort to keep the generals in their custody, soon finding itself “competing for the bodies of the generals.”²¹⁸

The relationship between the Historical Division and the War Crimes Branch remained strained and was characterized by a reciprocal lack of understanding. Several times, for example, the War Crimes Branch moved German officers from their respective location to Nuremberg without previously notifying the Historical Division.²¹⁹ Harold E. Potter and his colleagues regarded this precedence of war crimes prosecution over war history as most unfortunate. With regard to another request for five generals from Nuremberg, a report of the Historical Division stated in September 1946 that “[t]hey could not have picked a more critical five. The absence of precedence over and cooperation with Nuremberg carries the grave threat of de-railing the entire project.”²²⁰

In September of 1946, Harold E. Potter and Frank C. Mahin went to Nuremberg for a conference with the Subsequent Proceedings Division in order to improve liaison and coordination.²²¹ For a short period of time, the Historical Division felt indeed that the meeting had increased a mutual understanding. However, by December it had become clear that any harmonization was of short duration, and incidents as described in the

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

²¹⁹ Cf. for example Operational History (German) Section, "Weekly Report No. 21. Period ending 1 June 1946," in RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1 (NARA).

²²⁰ _____, "Weekly Report No. 35. Period ending 7.9.1946," in RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1 (NARA).

²²¹ _____, "Weekly Report No. 37. Period Ending 21.9.1946," in RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1 (NARA).

following report increasingly frustrated the historical officers:

A manuscript concerning psychological warfare was received from Nuremberg; it bore a postscript stating that the author had been refused the use of either a table or a chair for its preparation. The occurrence is only one of many which indicate that the Nuremberg-Historical Division cooperation is still, for the most part, a one-way affair.²²²

Consequently, the Historical Division complied only reluctantly with requests from the War Crimes Branch and the relationship remained strained.²²³ Ultimately, the interests of the war crimes prosecutors overruled the demands of the Historical Division in most cases. Therefore, some German officers turned their back on the historical cooperation. Most participants of the historical cooperation, however, appreciated the friendly treatment by the Historical Division even more after they had spent some time in Nuremberg or another interrogation facility and were rather happy to return to Allendorf. Moreover, the vast majority of former German officers was never prosecuted but merely served as witnesses. Some of those who were actually put on trial and convicted, however, continued their historical work from prison. Among those were, for example, Walter Warlimont who worked for the Historical Division throughout and even beyond his detainment in the American prison in Landsberg (Bavaria) from 1948 to 1954, and Albert Kesselring who, between 1948 and 1952, wrote several studies from the British prison in Werl (Westfalia).

²²² ———, "Weekly Report No. A-1. Period ending 7.12.1946," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1* (NARA).

²²³ Cf. ———, "Weekly Reports 1947," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1.* (NARA).

3.2 Conflict with the Military Government

The year of 1947 was, without doubt, the most critical in the fifteen-year long history of the German-American historical cooperation. At the heart of the crisis lay increasing tensions with the Military Government in Berlin, which, over the course of several months, slowly developed into a crucial struggle. In August, the Operational History (German) Section found itself on the brink of cessation.

Apparently, Military Governor Lucius D. Clay had watched the project with increasing suspicion. When Harold E. Potter presented the STAPLE Plan to him in April, canvassing the continuation of the German project, the Military Governor's reaction was reluctant, not to say hostile. Clay "felt that this work was not properly a responsibility of the Occupational Forces, that it had no relation to the occupational mission, and it was questionable whether or not it should be charged to the cost of occupation." He told Potter pretty bluntly that, in his opinion, the cost of the historical project was "not worth the expenses involved." The Military Governor therefore expressed his serious doubts whether a continuation would be at all desirable.²²⁴

After Potter's unpleasant encounter in Berlin, the Historical Division was aware of the unfriendly attitude within highest Military Government levels. In the following weeks, the discrepancies deepened. Anxious to work towards a continuation of the German project beyond the release of the German writers, the Historical Division

²²⁴ Historical Division. Headquarters Europe, "Conference in Berlin, 9 April. 15.4.1947," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 4. Folder 2.* (NARA), cf. also Harold E. Potter, "Letter to Harry J. Malony, 11.4.1947," in *RG 549. Records U.S. Army Europe. Headquarters EUCOM. Special Staff. Historical Division. Administration Branch. Miscellaneous records, 1946-1949. Box 3172.* (NARA).

expedited its preparations for speedy *Spruchkammer* trials. However, the plans were worked out without the knowledge, much less the approval of the Military Government.²²⁵ Corresponding with its desire to determine the historical cooperation altogether, the Military Government, on the other hand, instructed the denazification authorities in the American zone not to grant the generals working for the Historical Division any preferential treatment.²²⁶ Thus hampered in its progress, the historical work almost reached a halt.²²⁷

Increasingly frustrated with the Military Government's "disinclination ... to secure a speedy *Spruchkammer* trial for the writers", Harold E. Potter eventually bypassed the chain of command in June 1947: In an internal route slip directly addressed to the Chief of Staff, he expressed his concerns that the envisioned accomplishments of the German Historical Program were seriously threatened by non-action and at times even hindrance on the part of the Military Government.²²⁸ It is not hard to imagine that General Clay was probably anything but happy about this denunciation and it might even have played a role in his increasing efforts to terminate the German Historical Program all together.

In fact, in spite of the initial approval of the STAPLE Plan, various OMGUS agencies such as Civil Affairs and German Affairs continued throughout the summer to

²²⁵ Cf. Leroy C. Wilson, "Stuttgart Conference 27 May 1947. 31.5.1947," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 4. Folder 2.* (NARA).

²²⁶ Harold E. Potter, "Draft for IRS to the Chief of Staff. June 1947," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 4. Folder 2.* (NARA).

²²⁷ Operational History (German) Section, "Weekly Report No. A-33. Week ending 2.8.1947," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1.* (NARA).

²²⁸ Cf. Potter, "Draft for IRS to the Chief of Staff. June 1947."

interfere with the Historical Division's efforts to find a solution for the denazification and hiring problems.²²⁹ By the end of July, the dissatisfaction within the Operational History (German) Section had increased to the point where it appeared "that the only solution [was] a fullscale [sic] assault on the Commander-in-Chief."²³⁰ Whether such action was taken at that time is unclear, but the tensions between the Historical Division and OMGUS had obviously reached a flash point. The Military Government now shifted from mere interference to serious attack. On August 4th, 1947, General Clay announced "that Operation Staple must cease by 31 December 1947."²³¹

The decision met with incomprehension, even horror within the Historical Division and triggered intense lobbying in Berlin and Washington in order to achieve a reversal of the order. Captain Frank C. Mahin was sent over to Washington to discuss possible strategies to prevent the termination of the German project. Besides the Historical Division, Mahin visited various other agencies such as the Eurasian Branch of the Director of Intelligence to canvass their support. In addition, the Secretary of War was approached.²³² After a lengthy teleconference on August 27th, the officials of the Historical Division in Frankfurt and Washington agreed that the historical coverage of

²²⁹ Cf. the reports contained in Operational History (German) Section, "Weekly Reports 1947," in RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1 (NARA).

²³⁰ _____, "Weekly Report No. A-32. Week ending 26.7.1947," in RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1 (NARA).

²³¹ Frank C. Mahin, "Memorandum to Colonel Potter on Trip to Historical Division, WDSS, 6 Aug - 1 Sep 47; 5.9.1947," in RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operation History (German) Branch. Box 3. Folder 2 (NARA), Operational History (German) Section, "Weekly Report No. A-35. Week ending 16.8.1947," in RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1 (NARA).

²³² Mahin, "Memorandum to Colonel Potter on Trip to Historical Division, WDSS, 6 Aug - 1 Sep 47; 5.9.1947."

World War II would “suffer seriously if the project is not carried to completion and in the detail originally contemplated.” Therefore, Washington promised to “initiate action at once to urge that EUCOM take all steps necessary to complete the job.”²³³

Now, at the latest, the Historical Division sought the support of Commander-in-Chief, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who in the years before had shown complaisant interest in the German studies. As recently as April 1947, he had attended a seminar held by the Historical Division in Washington that apparently impressed him enough to promise to “protect [the Historical Division] in every way possible.”²³⁴ Moreover, a personal link between the Commander-in-Chief and the Historical Division existed through Eisenhower’s son, Captain John Eisenhower, who had served with the Historical Division, Europe in 1946.²³⁵ However, on August 30th, Dwight D. Eisenhower sent a cable to General Clay, kindly asking him to reconsider his directive to terminate the German historical project:

It has been brought to my attention that you feel necessary to terminate on 31 December the German Operational History Project. In the absence of adequate German records the reports by these German commanders of their operations are proving to be not only reliable but the only information we will ever have to as to what occurred on the German side. This is our opportunity to prevent our own military history from being one-sided. Since the fund involved appear negligible and only 6 additional months are required to finish the project on full scale as planned, I would appreciate it if you would look into this matter again and see if it is

²³³ Historical Division, "War Department Staff Message Center. Outgoing Classified Message. Details in Connection with Termination of German Operational Historical Project, 27.8.1947," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. Office of the Chief of Military History. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 7. Folder 8* (NARA).

²³⁴ A. F. Clark, "Letter to Harold E. Potter, 11.4.1947," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe. Headquarters EUCOM. Special Staff. Historical Division. Administration Branch. General Correspondence (Decimal File), 1947-1951. 1948 segment. Box 3142. Folder 7* (NARA).

²³⁵ Cf. Operational History (German) Section, "Weekly Report No. 37. Period ending 21.9.1946," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1.* (NARA).

possible to extend time for completion until July 1 next year.²³⁶

In his response of September 8th, General Clay repeated his arguments for an early termination of the project. The telegram reveals Clay's dissatisfaction with the Historical Division and barely conceals his disgruntlement over the interference from above. It is therefore worth to be quoted in full here:

My desire to close out the Historical Project comes from several reasons: First, I am making every effort to reduce our commitment thus reducing cost of occupation. Second, the project requires German military leaders to be given preferential treatment in pay, food, quarters, and under Denazification procedures which sets bad example and is misunderstood in liberal German quarters as well as internationally. Third, the indirect costs to German economy[,] which we support[,] are large.

Project has dragged on for months. At time when I fixed close-down date in December this gave 6 months to complete as against staff study at 9 months. Now, it has dragged out until July. I am sure that energetic prosecution of the project would have derived maximum benefits by 31 December. However, in view of your wishes, I propose to extend gathering data to 1 April with discharge of German staff on that date and with complete close-out on 1 July.²³⁷

Although "pretty unhappy about the pressure from General Eisenhower" and obviously very reluctantly, Clay complied with Eisenhower's request, extending the writing project until April 1st, 1948, and, in this context, authorizing the hiring and accelerated denazification of German writers.²³⁸

Only weeks after the Historical Division had achieved this important victory, it gambled on an even further extension of the German studies project. The opportunity for

²³⁶ Dwight D. Eisenhower, "AGWAR to CINCEUR," in *OMGUS. POLAD 778/21 (IfZ)*.

²³⁷ Lucius D. Clay, "AGWAR for Eisenhower. CINCEUR personal from Clay," in *OMGUS. POLAD 778/21 (IfZ)*.

²³⁸ James F. Scoggin, "Letter to John Kemper, 23.9.1947," in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. Office of the Chief of Military History. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 7. Folder 8 (NARA)*.

such action had opened in late August, when Brigadier General Arthur Trudeau queried the Historical Division, Europe on the *Wehrmacht's* handling of manpower problems and mobilization during World War II.²³⁹ Probably in connection with this inquiry, the Historical Division in Washington received a request from the Personnel and Administration Branch for information on German war mobilization.²⁴⁰ Only weeks after the Historical Division had won the first battle with the Military Government achieving the extension of the German project until April 1948, the stage was thus set for another attack on General Clay's close-out plans.

In fact, the Personnel and Administration Branch's interest in the German studies provided Harry J. Malony, Chief of the Historical Division, Washington, with a strong argument for the retention of the German studies project. On October 28th, 1947, Malony sent a memorandum to the Deputy Chief of Staff. Pointing to a growing interest of "other agencies" in the German material, he stated that the termination of the German project at a time "when it is returning rich dividends" was, in his opinion, "uneconomical". With view on Clay's criticism of preferential treatment for the participating German generals, Malony made clear that "moral obligation for trial or for other reasons" had to stand behind such economical considerations. He therefore recommended another reexamination of the anticipated termination of the project on April 1st, 1948.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Cf. ———, "Letter to Frank C. Mahin, 22.8.1947," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. Office of the Chief of Military History. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 8. Folder 1* (NARA).

²⁴⁰ Operational History (German) Section, "Summary Sheet. Securing Information on Mobilization and Use of German Manpower, 23.10.1947," in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. Office of the Chief of Military History. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 7. Folder 8* (NARA).

²⁴¹ Harry J. Malony, "Memorandum for Deputy Chief of Staff on Historical Studies, German Army, 28.10.1947," in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. Office of the Chief of Military History. Correspondence*

Certainly expecting counteractions from OMGUS, the Historical Division once again could count on Dwight D. Eisenhower to pave the way. In a personal cable to Lucius D. Clay of October 23rd, 1947, the Commander-in-Chief lamented over the lack of information on German mobilization and manpower. "In the event of another emergency," he wrote, "the manpower problem will be so great that I feel we should leave no stones unturned to find out how other nations used their manpower and thus allow us to better prepare our own plans."²⁴² In Eisenhower's view, the Operational History (German) Section was ideally prepared to provide such information. However, the present close out date would not allow any additional projects. In order to include a study on mobilization, Eisenhower therefore again asked Clay to extend "the date of close out of the German Historical Section" for another three months.²⁴³

This time, however, a telegram was not enough to obtain the Military Governor's compliance. Clay insisted on his viewpoint that the German project was not only improperly charged against occupation funds, but would also foster an inappropriate preferential treatment of former German General Staff officers. Only in December, after Harry J. Malony had flown to Berlin and talked to Clay in person, did the General eventually give in. The German history project was extended until June 30th, 1948. Moreover, Clay's hostile attitude toward the Operational History project now dwindled. In the conversation with Malony, he even agreed to some sort of continuation of historical writing beyond June 30th under a new organizational and legal construction

relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 7. Folder 8 (NARA), cf. also Section, "Summary Sheet. Securing Information on Mobilization and Use of German Manpower, 23.10.1947."

²⁴² Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Cable to CINCEUR. Personal for Clay, 23.10.1947," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. Office of the Chief of Military History. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 7. Folder 8 (NARA).*

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

(compare the chapter on the Control Group above).²⁴⁴ However, whether Malony finally convinced him of the value of the cooperation or whether Clay, in view of the project's support from highest ranks, realized the forlornness of his resistance, is left in the dark. In spite of some minor skirmishes as, for example, over the provisions for the Neustadt *Spruchkammer* personnel, the conflict between the Historical Division and the Military Government was thus settled by the end of 1947.

3.3 Public Criticism

Besides the War Crimes Branch and the Military Government, the media presented the Historical Division with another cause of trouble. Already in July 1945 the Shuster Commission, and especially its head George N. Shuster, were the object of severe public criticism. It was well known that Shuster was a great admirer of German culture and, moreover, opposed plans for a breakup of the central German territory into several small states as proposed by Henry Morgenthau.²⁴⁵ Against this background, rumors that Shuster had been sent on an official mission to Europe stimulated the suspicion of *The Society for the Prevention of World War III*, an organization that concerned itself with the problems of dealing with postwar Germany and advocated denazification and deindustrialization. Assuming that Shuster would promote a lenient attitude towards Germany, the Society over the following weeks "fairly bombarded" the Historical Division, the Secretary of War, and even the President with letters protesting Shuster's

²⁴⁴ Cf. Harry J. Malony, "Letter to A.L. Clarke, 13.12.1947," in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. Office of the Chief of Military History. Correspondence relating to Historical Program, 1946-1962. Box 7. Folder 8* (NARA), cf. also James F. Scoggin, "Letter to Frank C. Mahin, 14.12.1947," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 5. Folder 2.* (NARA).

²⁴⁵ For Shuster's in fact rather balanced attitude towards Germany cf. for example George N. Shuster, "Speech Manuscript for Foreign Policy Association, 16.2.1945," in *CSHU Box 8. Folder "Barnard Forum"* (University of Notre Dame Archives).

deployment.²⁴⁶ In addition, the Society attempted to undermine Shuster's authority within the Commission by sending letters to his fellow interrogators.²⁴⁷

In spite of the criticism, the Historical Division stood behind Shuster and firmly defended his assignment: Well aware of Shuster's opposition to a hard peace, Walter L. Wright argued, that "[t]he fact that, by background and study, he has a sympathetic approach to what is best in German culture seemed to us a qualification for his present assignment, since it didn't seem likely that someone famous for his hostility to all things German would have much chance of getting any information out of former Nazi officials."²⁴⁸ In addition, after reassurance from Troyer S. Anderson, Undersecretary of War Patterson rebutted any doubts in regard to Shuster's loyalty or patriotism, and the matter was subsequently settled in September 1945.²⁴⁹

In 1945 and 1946, the German as well as the American press occasionally published little stories on the interview project that, although annoying to the officers of Historical Divisions, did not cause them considerable worries. However, when the historical cooperation between the U.S. Army and the former *Wehrmacht* elite was extended and institutionalized, publicity became an increasingly sensitive issue for the

²⁴⁶ "Letter to Mrs. Goebel, 13.4.1945 ", in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. Office of the Chief of Military History. Records of the Historical Services Division. Files of Troyer S. Anderson 1941-1946. Box 13.* (NARA).[probably written by Walter L. Wright; wrong date, since the Shuster Commission was deployed in Juli 1945; therefore probably written 13.7.1945], Troyer S. Anderson, "Letter to George N. Shuster, 4.8.1945," in *CSHU Box 3. Folder 20* (University of Notre Dame Archives).

²⁴⁷ Troyer S. Anderson, "Letter to Robert P. Patterson, 5.9.1945," in *RG 319. Records of teh Army Staff. Office of the Chief of Military History. Records of the Historical Services Division. Files of Troyer S. Anderson 1941-1946. Box 13.* (NARA).

²⁴⁸ "Letter to Mrs. Goebel, 13.4.1945 ".

²⁴⁹ Anderson, "Letter to Robert P. Patterson, 5.9.1945."

Historical Division.²⁵⁰ In the fall of 1947, the looming *Spruchkammer* trials seemed to trigger an increasing public interest in the work being done by German officers in Neustadt. To prevent any disgruntlement of the writers, who in the past had always reacted sensitive to any publicity on their work, Harold E. Potter explored in October 1947 whether it would be possible to control the news coverage about the historical project.²⁵¹ Potter was aware of the fact that he could not prevent reports on the proceedings themselves, but wanted to avoid any coverage on the historical writing as such and especially on the studies dealing with the Eastern front. He therefore turned to Colonel George S. Eyster of the Public Information Division, EUCOM for assistance.

Their plan to limit publicity contained several approaches. First, they hoped that the Department of the Army's Public Information Division in Washington would issue a request to the major wire services such as Associated Press, United Press Association, and International News Services requesting "not [to] publish stories about the historical project until the trials are finished." Moreover, any interviews with the German writers should be permitted for the duration of the trials and the press should only be allowed to publish accounts of open court proceedings.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Cf. for example Howard P. Hudson, "Memorandum to Colonel Pence. Publicity on this project, 3.7.1946," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operation History (German) Branch. Box 3. Folder 1* (NARA), Harold E. Potter, "Memorandum to Colonel Pence, 2.8.1946," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operation History (German) Branch. Box 3. Folder 1* (NARA).

²⁵¹ Cf. Daniel T. Murphy, "Recommendations for the Press at Neustadt, 29.9.1947," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operation History (German) Branch. Box 3. Folder 1* (NARA), cf. Harold E. Potter, "Letter to Harry J. Malony, 3.10.1947," in *RG 260. OMGUS. Shipment 5. Box 268-3. Folder 3* (NARA).

²⁵² Potter, "Letter to Harry J. Malony, 3.10.1947.", David M. Fowler, "Memorandum for Record, 2.10.1947," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operation History (German) Branch. Box 3. Folder 1* (NARA).

With these suggestions, Eyster approached the Public Information Division, Department of the Army, as well as Colonel Gordon E. Textor, Director of the OMGUS Information Control Division.²⁵³ Textor handed Eyster's request over to the Press Control Branch, which informed him that the censorship aimed for by the Historical Division was simply not enforceable. The report stated that "[w]ithout a direct order to each of the 48 newspapers in the U.S. Zone, there is no assurance that the history-writing aspect will not appear in one of them. And of course, there is and can be no assurance that the story will not appear in one of the 45 British zone papers, one of the 31 French zone papers or one of the 30 Soviet-licensed papers." Moreover, to actually tell German journalists to restrict their coverage to open court proceedings would mean for the Military Government "to take a long step backward and re-instituting pre-publication censorship of material that does not in itself violate directives."²⁵⁴

Instead, the Press Control Branch recommended that the Historical Division would occasionally release stories about the historical project, thus channeling the direction of the news coverage by stilling the presses desire for information and dispelling suspicions.²⁵⁵ Based on this analysis, Colonel Textor replied to George S. Eyster on October 15th, 1947: The Public Information Division would thus put out a service message to U.S.-licensed newspapers that no interviews with German officers would be granted for the duration of the trials. Other than that, no censorship measures

²⁵³ George S. Eyster, "Letter to Floyd L. Parks, Public Information Division, Department of the Army, 6.10.1947," in *RG 260. OMGUS. Shipment 5. Box 268-3. Folder 3* (NARA), ———, "Letter to Gordon E. Textor, Director, Information Control Division, OMGUS, 6.10.1947," in *RG 260. OMGUS. Shipment 5. Box 268-3. Folder 3* (NARA).

²⁵⁴ Arthur Eggleston, "Memorandum to Colonel Textor on Trials of German Officers, 14.10.1947," in *RG 260. OMGUS. Shipment 5. Box 268-3. Folder 3* (NARA).

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

could be applied.²⁵⁶

Thus, Harold E. Potter's efforts to restrict publicity proved unsuccessful and the small trickle of articles swelled in 1948. Furthermore, the tone of the press coverage changed considerably, becoming more critical.²⁵⁷ On March 16th, 1948, for example, the nationally syndicated *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published a report on the Neustadt camp and its special detainees. The reporter did not hesitate to display his rather critical—not to say cynical—attitude towards the character of the German-American historical collaboration. “The generals,” he wrote, “who once have written with blood the history of the war, have now become considerably more peaceful outwardly, for they are now writing the history of the past years, which they are partly responsible for, this time with ink and under direction of the American Historical Division.”²⁵⁸ The article picked up on the privileges granted to the former officers in return for the cooperation with the Historical Division, such as payment, better provisions, leisure time facilities, and the special *Spruchkammer*

²⁵⁶ Cf. Gordon E. Textor, "Letter to George S. Eyster, Chief, Public Information Division, EUCOM, 15.10.1947," in *RG 260. OMGUS. Shipment 5. Box 268-3. Folder 3* (NARA).

²⁵⁷ Cf. "About 200 Working for U.S. Army Historical Unit Go To De-Nazification Court," *Herald Tribune*, 23.10.1947, Buechs, "Letter to Albert Kesselring, 17.11.1947," Kurt Gerber, "Reports on This Camp Published in the Press and Heard Over the Radio, 11.11.1947," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operation History (German) Branch. Box 3. Folder 1* (NARA), Russell Jones, "Army Denies Favoritism to High Germans," *Stars and Stripes*, 25.10.1947, ———, "Special Courts to Try Top German Officers," *Stars and Stripes*, 24.10.1947, Operational History (German) Section, "Extract from 'Berlin am Mittag, dated 3.11.1947,'" in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operation History (German) Branch. Box 3. Folder 1* (NARA), ———, "Translation of newspaper article published in the 'Neue Zeitung' of 27.10.1947," in *RG 549. Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operation History (German) Branch. Box 3. Folder 1* (NARA), cf. ———, "Weekly Report No. A-45. Week ending 25.10.1947," in *RG 549. USAREUR. Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operational History (German) Branch. Box 1. Folder 1* (NARA).

²⁵⁸ "Generaele unter sich. Zusätzliche Kalorien fuer militäerische Geschichtsschreibung," *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 16.3.1948 1948. Original quote in German: “Die Generäle, die einst die Geschichte des Krieges mit Blut schrieben, sind nun äußerlich wesentlich friedlicher geworden, denn sie schreiben die Geschichte der vergangenen Jahre — für die sie zum Teil mitverantwortlich sind —, diesmal mit Tinte und im Auftrage der amerikanischen historischen Abteilung.“

tribunal.²⁵⁹

Shortly thereafter, on March 27th, 1948, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* published an article by Walter P. Schmidt of the German News Agency DENA. Pointing to the obviously awkward disproportion between the situation of the average German civilian and the privileged treatment of former German officers in the custody of the Historical Division, Schmidt criticized that the generals would “live their own lives, scarcely touched by what happens outside. They know little of the sorrow and distress of the German people, and they cultivate their old ‘traditions’.” As many other journalists, Schmidt was convinced that most of the generals “have not changed in any way with respect to their ways of thinking.”²⁶⁰ In this context, Schmidt pointed out that the specific circumstances of the trials in Neustadt were rather questionable. The work of the *Spruchkammer* had thus been complicated by the fact that the generals testified for each other, routinely stating their anti-National Socialist ideas and negative attitude toward Hitler and stressing their consistent democratic and beliefs. In addition, the *Spruchkammer* personnel, especially the prosecutors, experienced considerable pressure from the community of German officers. The court was, for example, frequently confronted with a partisan audience of internment-camp inmates, who vociferously congratulated their comrades when they were acquitted, while displaying obvious anger and even expressing threats in cases where generals were sentenced to fines or labor camp. According to the article, the Bavarian prosecutor, Dr. Manfred Frey, even received

²⁵⁹ Cf. Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Operational History (German) Section, "Translation of article by Walter P. Schmidt, Generals Write History. A Glance Behind the Barbed Wire Fence of Camp Neustadt, published in the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 27.3.1948," in RG 549. *Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Historical Division. Foreign Military Studies. General Correspondence. Operation History (German) Branch. Box 3. Folder 1* (NARA).

an anonymous letter, calling him “the biggest scoundrel on earth” for whom “the gallows” were “already [...] provided.”²⁶¹

East German newspapers were amongst the most critical voices, often displaying biting polemic. With view on the special *Spruchkammer* in Neustadt, the ‘*Berlin am Mittag*’-newspaper, for example, stated deep skepticism on the value of the denazification proceedings: “[W]e shall experience that Generaloberst Guderian and Halder, Chiefs of Staff for 5 war years, will rise politically cleared like ‘phoenix from the ashes’.”²⁶² The reporter hit the mark when he characterized the project as a “history of the war written by those who have every reason to surround their spectacular defeats with some sort of a myth; a history of the war developed into a doctrine.”²⁶³ Moreover, he clear-sightedly recognized an important point on the hidden agenda most likely to be pursued by the German generals through their historical collaboration: They “already found the means to prove that the dagger thrust against their offensive war was executed by Hitler personally, because he did not listen to their master rules.”²⁶⁴

In May 1948, another East German newspaper, the *Neue Berliner Illustrierte*, also paid close attention to the Neustadt project, publishing several pages with caricatures, ironic poems, and biting commentaries. One poem, written by a B. Idamann, once again pointedly picked up on the allegedly apologetic nature of the German officer’s motives.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Section, "Extract from 'Berlin am Mittag, dated 3.11.1947." Original German quote: “[...] so werden wir erleben, dass die Generalobersten Guderian und Halder, Stabschefs während 5 Kriegsjahren, politisch gereinigt sich wie Phoenix aus der Asche erheben.”

²⁶³ Ibid. Original German quote: “Eine Kriegsgeschichte, verfasst von denen, die allen Grund haben, ihre eklatanten Niederlagen mit irgendeinem Mythos zu umgeben; eine Kriegsgeschichte [...] als Lehrgang entwickelt”.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. Original German quote: “Sie haben schon den Dreh gefunden, um zu beweisen, dass der Dolchstoß gegen ihren Angriffskrieg von ihrem Chef Hitler selbst gefuehrt wurde, weil er auf ihre Meisterregeln nicht hörte.”

Furthermore, the poet pointed to supposedly anti-Russian intentions of the German-American historical cooperation. Idamann thus wrote:

They [the German generals] have the best experience/ in camouflage and mimicry./ They don't receive food without purpose/ these 'masters' of strategy:

The Hundred of the General Staff/ they rushed millions to death,/ now tactically-elastically distancing themselves/ from the responsibility.

They are holding down the fort from past days/ at the moment secluding themselves/ in Care-package resistance nests/ ready for rolling deployment.

They stand on watch in the camp/their horizon already flaming:/ They write—with view to the East,/ on broadest offensive front.²⁶⁵

Several caricatures, surrounding the poem, conveyed the same message, literally painting a picture of diehard German militarists collaborating with the American military in order to wage another war against the Soviet Union.

The East German publications revealed something else. The historical cooperation of former German *Wehrmacht* generals with the U.S. Army had become a political issue in the unfolding Cold War. The East German reporters, possibly directed from the Soviet occupation authorities, supposed that the German's war experience in the East made them "more valuable in the eyes of some Americans who are particularly lusting for war."²⁶⁶

As shown above, such a conclusion was not entirely unreasonable, since the historical cooperation was indeed increasingly targeted at the gathering of intelligence on the Red

²⁶⁵ B. Idamann, "Poem," *Neue Berliner Illustrierte*, May 1948. Original German quote: "[...] Sie haben die beste Erfahrung/in Tarnung und Mimikry./ Man setzt sie nicht zwecklos in Nahrung./ die 'Meister' der Strategie./ Millionen zu Tode hetzen/die Hundert vom Führungsstab./ und von der Verantwortung setzten/ sie taktisch-elastisch sich ab./ Sie halten die Stellung von gestern./ sie igeln sich ein, zur Zeit -/ in Care-Paket Widerstandsnestern./ zum rollenden Einsatz bereit./ Sie stehen im Lager auf Posten./ Es flammt schon ihr Horizont./ Sie schreiben – mit Stossrichtung Osten./ auf breitester Angriffsfront."

²⁶⁶ Section, "Extract from 'Berlin am Mittag, dated 3.11.1947.'" Original German quote: Dies "scheint sie in den Augen einiger besonders kriegslusterner Amerikaner nur noch wertvoller zu machen."

Army as well as the utilization of German military knowledge for doctrine development and training purposes. Well aware that the project was by no means of merely historical nature, the Historical Division considered it to be of “greatest importance” to keep public knowledge on the cooperation between Germans and the Historical program to a minimum.²⁶⁷ For the entire period of the historical project, the Historical Division therefore continued to be cautious and reluctant toward representatives of the press, in order to prevent unfavorable coverage.

²⁶⁷ "Memorandum to Franz Halder [without date, probably November 1950]," in *N220/202. Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Vol. 1. 1951/1952* (BAMA).

IV) Holding down the Fort? Personal and Ideological Rapprochements

The historical cooperation between former German officers and their American counterparts is an interesting aspect of the general development of German-American relations after World War II. The cooperation of German and American officers can serve as a microcosm for the analysis of more general political, social, and ideological transformations in the postwar relationship between Germans and Americans, changes which eventually allowed the adjustment of worldviews and fostered the emergence of a deep-rooted friendship between both countries. This development could draw on a network of various amicable professional and personal relations established in the interwar period. Having been temporarily severed by the outbreak of the war, Germans and Americans resumed their relations after 1945. In an altered international climate, the revitalization of such contacts was additionally fueled by the shared perception of facing an enduring existential threat—the spread of Communism in general and the expansionist efforts of the Soviet Union in particular. Under the impression of this menace, Americans and West Germans became strategic, ideological partners within a very short period of time.

1. The Role of Transnational Networks

1.1 The Cooperation of the *Reichswehr* and the U.S. Army during the Interwar Period

The roots of the amicable relations between German and American officers after World War II reach back to the 1920s, when the *Reichswehr* managed to establish good

informal relations with the U.S. Army.²⁶⁸ The contacts were initiated and directed by the T-3 division of the *Truppenamt*.²⁶⁹ In close cooperation with the U.S. War Department, this agency sent individual as well as small groups of officers on educational journeys to the United States between 1922 and 1929. In 1929, the *Truppenamt* even launched an official officer-exchange-program, dispatching individual officers to various American service schools. The cooperation eventually ended after the National Socialists came to power in January of 1933.²⁷⁰

Historians have largely ignored this interesting cooperation between the *Reichswehr* and the U.S. Army. Therefore, only very little is known about the extent and character of relationships between German and American officers during the interwar period. However, it seems safe to assume that during their rather extended visits, the German officers were able to establish friendly contacts, maybe even friendships, with their American counterparts. Interestingly, several German officers, who visited U.S. Army institutions in the 1920s and early 1930s, became important participants in the Army's post-World War II historical program. It seems therefore plausible to assume that a network of professional contacts and personal relationships established in the interwar period survived the war years and provided an important basis for renewed cooperation after 1945.

²⁶⁸ Wala, "Abteilung "T-3"." As Wala points out, historians have largely disregarded the interesting interwar cooperation between *Reichswehr* and U.S. Army. In fact, Wala's article is the only detailed discussion of the matter; Wala anticipates publication of a comprehensive monograph on the "*Reichswehr und US Army: Deutsche Reichswehroffiziere in den USA der Zwischenkriegszeit*" for 2010.

²⁶⁹ The *Truppenamt* was the successor of the German Great General Staff that had been banned by the Versailles Treaty; officially charged with the conduct of statistics and serving as a contact agency for foreign military attachés, the T-3 division was secretly responsible for the gathering of military intelligence—an activity prohibited by the Versailles Treaty.

²⁷⁰ Wala, "Abteilung "T-3"."

Most important for the establishment of these contacts in the 1920s was certainly Friedrich von Boetticher (1881-1967). As chief of the T-3 division, von Boetticher became the direct contact for American military representatives in Germany in 1920. In the following years, he fostered and cultivated amicable relationships with several American military representatives and in 1922 was the first of many German officers to visit the United States after World War I.²⁷¹

Throughout the 1920s, von Boetticher intensified his contacts to the United States and in April 1933 he was appointed as military attaché with the German embassy in Washington D.C. Considering himself a “traveler in the German cause”,²⁷² he toured the scattered American military institutions, seeking to establish German military tradition as a criterion for interpreting world affairs and to improve Germany’s overall image.²⁷³ Soon, von Boetticher enhanced his circle of acquaintances and friends among the highest-ranking American officers, whom he often invited into his home for social and cultural gatherings.²⁷⁴ Furthermore, his excellent knowledge of the American Civil War and his repeatedly expressed admiration for Robert E. Lee allowed him to enter into a circle of historically interested officers, academics, and public figures, assembled in the American Military History Foundation.²⁷⁵

When Germany declared war on the United States in December 1941, von Boetticher was forced to return home. However, he maintained close ties to America

²⁷¹ Cf. Alfred M. Beck, *Hitler's Ambivalent Attache. Lt. Gen. Friedrich von Boetticher in America, 1933-1941* (Washington, D.C. 2005), pp. 32-33, Wala, "Abteilung "T-3", p. 57.

²⁷² Beck, *Friedrich von Boetticher*, p. 58.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-58; 67, cf. Friedrich von Boetticher, "Eindruecke und Erfahrungen des Militaer- und Luftattaches bei der deutschen Botschaft in Washington D.C. aus den Jahren 1933 bis 1941, 27.4.1947," in *MS # B-484* (NARA).

²⁷⁵ Cf. Beck, *Friedrich von Boetticher*, pp. 67-69.

since his older daughter, who had married a U.S. citizen, as well as his son stayed abroad throughout the war and thereafter.²⁷⁶ After having served with the OKW throughout the remainder of the war, he eventually surrendered to American troops on April 30th, 1945. In the following two years he was detained in POW-camps in Mondorf, Oberursel, Hersbruck, and Allendorf—all of which were used by the Historical Division.²⁷⁷

Aside from Friedrich von Boetticher, the *Truppenamt* sent Walter Warlimont to the United States in 1929, who would also become a prominent long-term participant in the historical cooperation. In the 1930s, several other German officers visited American service schools where they took part in training courses and attended lectures. In September of 1931, for instance, Anton von Bechtolsheim was attached to the U.S. Army and until June 1932 attended advanced courses at the Artillery School, Fort Sill where he participated in several maneuvers.²⁷⁸ One year later, in September 1932, Hans von Greiffenberg was sent abroad to spend a year at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, where he studied American General Staff training as well as American tactical and operative doctrine.²⁷⁹ Fifteen years and another world war later, Greiffenberg became a member of the Historical Division's Control Group and cooperated with some of his former American classmates.²⁸⁰

The previously described lack of research on the German-American military cooperation in the 1920s and 1930s in addition to a lack of biographies for the majority of

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 192.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 209-212; 214.

²⁷⁸ "Biographical Information on Anton von Bechtolsheim," in *RG 319. Records of the Army Staff. U.S. Army Center of Military History. Administrative Files (Finke Files) 1943-84. Box 62. Folder 5* (NARA).

²⁷⁹ "Stellung und Aufgabe waehrend des Kommandos zur Armee der Vereinigten Staaten, 12.8.1932," in *Personnel Record Hans von Greiffenberg* (NARA), Cf. Wala, "Abteilung "T-3"," pp. 77-81.

²⁸⁰ Robinett, "German Participation in the U.S. Army Historical Program."

German military leaders of either the *Reichswehr* or the *Wehrmacht* make it impossible to trace all transatlantic relations of German officers later involved in the historical cooperation back to the interwar period.²⁸¹ However, the examples of Friedrich von Boetticher, Walter Warlimont, Anton von Bechtolsheim, and Hans von Greiffenberg indicate that such connections did indeed exist. Asked to collaborate with the Historical Division in 1946, Friedrich von Boetticher could certainly draw on twenty years of close and, for the most part, amicable relations with the U.S. Army. When Anton von Bechtolsheim advanced to the position of being a sought-after lecturer at various American service schools in the 1950s, he could probably build on acquaintanceships stemming from his own time as a student at the Artillery School.

In addition, the examples of von Boetticher as well as Warlimont indicate that German officers not only entertained professional overseas contacts, but also engaged in close personal affiliations such as marriages and in-law-relationships equipped to survive political frictions between both countries. Finally, the language skills that German officers acquired abroad certainly benefited a mutual understanding.²⁸² As the case of Walter Warlimont shows, it was likely that American officers first interviewed those German officers who distinguished themselves by displaying a positive attitude toward the United States, an attitude based in part on preexisting relationships with Americans and a knowledge of the English language.

²⁸¹ There are for example no detailed biographies on Walter Warlimont or Günther Blumentritt.

²⁸² Hans von Greiffenberg, for instance, possessed a certification as translator for English, cf. "Stellung und Aufgabe während des Kommandos zur Armee der Vereinigten Staaten, 12.8.1932."

1.2 American Encounters with Germany

Comparable to the Germans' prewar exposure to the United States, some of the Americans involved in the postwar historical collaboration had also long been acquainted with German culture; in some cases they had German ancestors. However, like the relations between the *Reichswehr* and the U.S. Army in the 1920s, the complex web of transnational private networks of the Cold War era and their possible roots in the interwar period has still not been sufficiently studied.²⁸³ Therefore, the prewar ties between American officers and civilians in Germany cannot be discussed in detail here. Again, a few examples have to suffice to illustrate that Americans involved in the historical cooperation could in many cases also build on previous positive images and experiences with Germans.

An especially appropriate example is the case of George N. Shuster, whose affinity for Germany has already been briefly mentioned in Chapter II. Shuster's sympathies were reaffirmed when he first spent several months in Germany in 1919, serving with the American occupation forces in the Rhineland. Shuster then visited the country several times for extended periods in the 1930s as a journalist and based on his observations wrote numerous articles and books on Germany's political, social, and economical development.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Cf. W. Scott Lucas, "Beyond Freedom, Beyond Control: Approaches to Culture and the State-Private Network in the Cold War," *Intelligence and National Security* 18 (2003): p. 53.

²⁸⁴ Cf. George N. Shuster, "Germant at low tide," *The Commonweal. A Weekly Review of Literature, the Arts, and Public Affairs*, 19.11. 1930, ———, "A talk with Chancellor Bruening," *The Commonweal* 1931, ———, "Munich: Anno Domini 1931," *The Commonweal*, 11.3. 1931, ———, *The Germans. An Inquiry and an Estimate* (New York 1932), ———, *Strong Man Rules. An Interpretation of Germany Today* (New York 1934), ———, *Like a Mighty Army. Hitler versus Established Religion* (New York 1935), ———, "Twilight in the Third Reich," *The Commonweal* 1938.

Even though he followed the rise of Adolf Hitler with suspicion, Shuster—like so many other intellectuals and politicians around the world—initially underestimated the destructive power of National Socialism. And even though never a sympathizer, he nonetheless temporarily considered the National Socialists as useful counterweight to Communism, which he saw as an even bigger threat.²⁸⁵ However, Shuster's rather naïve estimation of the Hitler-movement changed over the course of the 1930s and slowly gave way to a strict rejection and condemnation of National Socialism. When Shuster eye-witnessed the German invasion of Austria in March 1938, he was “shaken by that experience.” Then, at the latest, Shuster was convinced “that Europe [was] on the brink of irreparable disaster.”²⁸⁶

The outbreak of the Second World War temporarily restrained Shuster's connections to Germany but he remained interested in the fate of the German people and from a very early point began to think about Germany's role in the postwar world.²⁸⁷ In an article published in *Foreign Policy Reports* in October 1943, he indicated that most Germans were not fanatic partisans of Hitler but, in fact, had been “misguided and deceived” by the National Socialists.²⁸⁸ Moreover, he stressed that most Germans were “upright, courteous folk”—people, who had “not swallowed Nazism”, and would therefore “emerge from under the yoke of oppression” once the Allies won the war. In Shuster's eyes, the Germans were themselves victims of National Socialism and should

²⁸⁵ Cf. for example Shuster, "Low tide.", ———, "Munich: Anno Domini 1931."

²⁸⁶ George N. Shuster, "Terror in Vienna," *The Commonweal*, 15.4. 1938.

²⁸⁷ Shuster's intimate knowledge of the continent in general and Germany in particular were in demand in government circles and he served, for instance, on a Council on Foreign Relations committee that should consider the form which the peace in Europe might take once the fight was over. Shuster, "An Autobiography," p. 29.

²⁸⁸ George N. Shuster, "Our Relations with Germany," *Foreign Policy Report*, 15.10. 1943, p. 199.

not be treated as “exemplars of Hitlerism”.²⁸⁹

In 1943, Shuster had already outlined some concrete suggestions for future dealings with Germany, arrangements that were aimed at cooperation rather than punishment; a proposal that corresponded in large in fact with later procedures.²⁹⁰ He called for the establishment of a military government, disarmament, rapid economic reconstruction, and the installment of monetary and credit control.²⁹¹ Shuster’s proposals had, of course, their source in his sympathies for the German people, but they also served a higher goal: to prevent Germany from becoming Communist—a motive that would later on prove essential for German-American relations.²⁹² Shuster’s service with the War Department’s interrogation mission in 1945 was his first visit to Germany after the war. Furthermore, a couple of years later, in 1950, he was appointed *Land Commissioner of Bavaria* in John McCloy’s HICOG administration.²⁹³

Like George N. Shuster, Kenneth W. Hechler also was exposed to German culture early in life through his German grandparents—a fact that possibly made him more sympathetic to the German people when he first encountered them in the summer of 1945.²⁹⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Hans W. Helm, who served with the Historical Division, Europe from 1952 to 1953, possessed even closer bonds to Germany than Shuster and Hechler. In fact, the native-born German spent his formative years in Germany and had

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Cf. for example John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford 1997). See especially chapter 5.

²⁹¹ George N. Shuster, "The Challenge of the Future World," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 7.5. 1943, pp. 557-558.

²⁹² Shuster, "Our Relations with Germany," pp. 200-201, ———, "The Challenge of the Future World," p. 555.

²⁹³ "Shuster, President of Hunter, Named to Top Bavarian Post. McCloy Picks Educator as State Commissioner - Appointed Hailed," *New York Times*, 18.4. 1950.

²⁹⁴ Cf. Johnson, "Oral Interview Hechler."

even temporarily served in the *Reichswehr* as a volunteer in the 1920s. Helm immigrated to the United States in 1928, but his family remained in Germany; and his brothers, serving in the *Wehrmacht*, died in World War II. Toward the end of the war, Helm joined the U.S. Army, but never fought on the front.²⁹⁵ When Helm eventually engaged in the historical cooperation with former German generals in the 1950s, he could thus relate to them not only as a German, but also on the basis of his own experiences in the German military. The fact that his brothers died on the German side might also have fostered an apologetic perception of the *Wehrmacht's* role in the Third Reich and its conduct during the war.

Obviously, several of the German as well as American participants in the postwar historical cooperation possessed considerable direct experiences with the respective other culture. As the example of Walter Warlimont illustrates (for details compare chapter II), those German generals who had already had positive encounters with the United States, were initially more inclined to cooperate with the U.S. Army and possibly played a significant role in the recruitment of fellow German officers for the historical project. In the case of the Americans, a rather positive attitude toward Germany along with language skills certainly played a role in their assignment to the Operational History (German) Section. The encounter with these comparably amicable American officers then further facilitated the Germans' willingness to cooperate. From this surprisingly positive basis, how did the relationship and reciprocal perception of German and American officers develop over the following years? And what place did these relationships take in the

²⁹⁵ Cf. Franz Halder, "Letter to Gotthard Heinrici, 12.12.1951," in *N265/71. Personal papers of Gotthard Heinrici* (BAMA).

general postwar rapprochement of the United States and Germany? These are the questions that will be addressed in the remainder of this chapter.

2. Reciprocal Perceptions

2.1 General Perceptions of Germany

Before 1914, the general American attitude toward Germany was, for the most part, positive or at least indifferent. In accordance with American isolationism, the interest in European affairs was rather limited. World War I, however, strongly altered this amicable, or at least neutral perception and led to an exceedingly negative view of Germany.²⁹⁶ Interestingly—though considering the vivid relations between the *Reichswehr* and the U.S. Army, not completely surprising—a considerable gap existed between Germany's image among a larger American public on the one hand, and the attitude of the American military community on the other hand throughout the interwar period and even during the Second World War. The scientific community and the popular media held fast to a negative picture of Germany propagated during the First World War, an image that focused on the stereotype of a Prussian-German officer corps and condemned Germany as completely aristocratic and militaristic.²⁹⁷ This negative perception was then, of course, reinforced by Germany's aggressive war policies of the 1930s and 1940s.

The American military community, by contrast, showed very little interest in the political or social implications of the German military's organization and structure but

²⁹⁶ Uwe Heuer, *Reichswehr - Wehrmacht - Bundeswehr. Zum Image deutscher Streitkräfte in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika. Kontinuität und Wandel im Urteil amerikanischer Experten*, Europäische Hochschulschriften (Frankfurt/Main 1990), p. 164.

²⁹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-176.

focused solely on the professional abilities of the *Reichswehr*.²⁹⁸ Unlike the larger American public, Germany even enjoyed considerable sympathy within the Army. For instance, American officers regarded the strict military regulation imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty as unjust and understood the Germans' desire for a balance of arms.²⁹⁹ This sympathetic and apolitical frame of mind persisted throughout and even beyond the Second World War. The U.S. military usually refrained from ideologically or ethically motivated assessments in its analyses of the German military and the majority of American soldiers, including many officers, had no sophisticated ideological position in regard to Germany. In fact, many lacked a clear understanding of the political and ethical values they were supposedly fighting for.³⁰⁰

Whatever critical attitude existed toward the *Wehrmacht* within the American military was further weakened after the war in Europe. In contrast to French, British, and Russian soldiers, the emotional concern of American soldiers was far less developed. At no point had the Germans posed a direct threat to U.S. territory and American soldiers never realistically faced the threat of air raids or hostile ground forces. Far away from their own country, Americans were thus more likely to fight for an abstract cause rather than for the defense of their loved ones back home. Moreover, the war that Americans experienced in Africa and on the Western front was very different from the war of extermination that the German *Wehrmacht* waged in Eastern Europe.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Americans were therefore far less concerned with German aggression than their European counterparts whose countries had

²⁹⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 171; 197.

²⁹⁹ Cp. Beck, *Friedrich von Boetticher*, p. 66.

³⁰⁰ Heuer, *Reichswehr - Wehrmacht - Bundeswehr*, p. 230.

been invaded twice within thirty-five years.³⁰¹ Due to the greater dimension of suffering experienced by them, their image of Germans as an enemy proved more persistent than the general American attitude toward Germany.³⁰² In fact, the rather apolitical attitude and lack of critical distance of many American soldiers was reinforced when American troops came into close contact with the civilian population after the cessation of hostilities. The picture American occupation soldiers developed of Germany were thus the result of daily experiences. These mostly positive encounters soon gained greater influence on the attitude of the occupiers while the events of the war faded quickly.³⁰³

2.2 An International Club of “Chivalrous” Military Professionals: German-American Encounters within the Historical Division

The encounter between the U.S. Army and German generals in the realm of the historical collaboration mirrors these general developments. The relationship with high-ranking German *Wehrmacht* officers was characterized by crass utilitarianism; their underdeveloped consciousness of National Socialist crimes in general and the *Wehrmacht's* involvement in genocide and atrocities in particular as well as feelings of transnational solidarity among ‘professional’ soldiers. The historical officers focused almost exclusively on the exploitation of German military knowledge for the U.S. Army’s official war history as well as operational planning and training. The former German generals, on the other hand, quickly picked up on this utilitarian and lenient attitude displayed by their American superiors and provided them with the desired information while presenting themselves as apolitical members of an allegedly

³⁰¹ Cf. Ibid., pp. 230-235.

³⁰² On the persistence of images of enemies cf. Astrid M. Eckert, *Feindbilder im Wandel: Ein Vergleich des Deutschland- und des Japanbildes in den USA 1945 und 1946* (Muenster 1999), p. 32.

³⁰³ Heuer, *Reichswehr - Wehrmacht - Bundeswehr*, p. 227.

supranational military profession.

In the early stages of the historical cooperation, this single-minded American approach was personified in Major Kenneth W. Hechler, who strongly shaped the future relationship between American and German officers. Later on, Harold E. Potter, Frank C. Mahin, James F. Scoggin, Hans W. Helm, and Paul M. Robinett followed this pattern and also established amicable relations with their German co-workers. Beginning in the POW camps used by the Historical Division, the former German generals were treated with great respect and even admiration.³⁰⁴ When members of the former German General Staff visited the United States on lecture trips in the 1950s, they were regularly pleased by the cordial reception they found at the various service schools. Once again, the visitors met with American admiration for the achievements of the German soldier in general, and the methods, knowledge, and superiority of the German General Staff in particular.³⁰⁵

Colonel Potter, for instance, managed particularly well in his relationship with the German generals, creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding. Over the five years of his engagement with the historical project (1946-1950), he gained a great reputation among the Germans. Repeatedly, they stressed the importance of Potter's chivalrous attitude towards them for the success of the historical cooperation.³⁰⁶ In March of 1950, for instance, Franz Halder effusively expressed his gratitude for Potter's untiring efforts

³⁰⁴ Halder, "Letter to Hellmut Schultze, 16.3.1955.", Franz Halder, "Letter to Paul M. Robinett, 4.12.1956," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers. Box 2. Folder 10* (George C. Marshall Reserach Library), Wagoner, "Bericht ueber Mitarbeit bei der Hist. Div.."

³⁰⁵ Cf. Hellmut Schultze, "Letter to Franz Halder, 12.3.1955," in *N220/79. Personal Papers of Franz Halder. Private Correspondence 1954-1955* (BAMA).

³⁰⁶ Cf. for example Franz Halder, "Letter to Orlando Ward, Chief, Historical Division, Washington; 22.3.1950," in *N220/202. Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Vol. 1. 1951/52* (BAMA), cf. Toppe, "Wegweiser durch die Kriegsgeschichtsschreibung in Allendorf und Neustadt, November 1948 ", p. 38.

to establish an atmosphere of trust between Germans and Americans. “You, Colonel Potter,” Halder wrote,

extended your hand to us defeated and ostracized prisoners of war as a comrade and thus appealed to the ideals of genuine military men that are common to the true soldiers of all nations of culture. You showed patience with the inner tensions and hesitations that German officers experienced behind barbed wire. You have proven to be a personal friend to us and many of our comrades, and you always helped when you could help. Thus, in the midst of the difficulties and annoyances of today’s Germany, you provided us with inner peace and inspired delight in our common work.³⁰⁷

The esteem shown by the German generals was by no means one-sided but was in fact reciprocated by Potter himself. In a letter of 1959 to Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg, Potter looked back on his time with the Historical Division, stating how much he enjoyed his assignment in Germany and “the splendid feeling of comradeship” he had with many of the former generals. “Most of us”, Potter wrote,

had much in common aside from our professional training and I left Germany with a warm friendship for many of the German officers with whom I was associated and the feeling that this relationship was mutually reciprocated. I am most grateful for the opportunity of knowing and serving with some of the greatest men and the finest soldiers the world has ever known.³⁰⁸

Besides Potter, Frank C. Mahin, James F. Scoggin, and later on Hans W. Helm, also developed especially good relations to the former German generals. For instance, the

³⁰⁷ Franz Halder, "Letter to Harold E. Potter, 22.3.1950," in N220/202. *Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Vol. 1. 1951/1952* (BAMA). Original German quote: “*Sie, Herr Oberst, haben damals uns geschlagenem und verfeimten Kriegsgefangenen die Hand der Kameraden gereicht und damit an die Ideale echten Soldatentums appelliert, die den wahren Soldaten aller Kulturnationen gemeinsam sind. Sie haben Geduld gehabt mit den inneren Spannungen und Hemmungen, denen die deutschen Offiziere hinter Stacheldraht ausgesetzt waren. Sie haben sich für uns und für viele unserer Kameraden als persönlicher Freund bewährt und stets geholfen, wo Sie helfen konnten. Damit haben Sie uns inmitten der Schwierigkeiten und Unerfreulichkeiten des heutigen Deutschlands die innere Ruhe gegeben und die Freude an der gemeinsamen Berufsarbeit geweckt.*”

³⁰⁸ Harold E. Potter, "Letter to Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg [without date; probably written in 1959]," in ED91/21. *Personal Papers of Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg* (IfZ).

Control Group members found Helm to be of “great receptiveness” and soon regarded him as a comrade in spirit.³⁰⁹ When Franz Halder learned in November of 1953 that Helm should be transferred to another post, he even wrote several letters to Washington, vainly trying to secure Helm’s continued service with the Control Group.³¹⁰

The development of long-lasting relations between Germans and Americans was not confined to the small European circle, but also encompassed higher-ranking officers in the superior agency in Washington. Besides his friendship with Hans von Greiffenberg, which reached back to their common days as students at the Command and General Staff College, Brigadier General Paul M. Robinett (Chief of the Applied Studies Branch), for example, also established a close relationship with Franz Halder that spanned from 1948 to Halder’s death in 1974. Robinett admired Halder as a “wise man”, even “a philosopher” of military history and international relations and was obviously proud to call him “a friend” of his.³¹¹

Franz Halder, in return, also regarded his relationship with Robinett as one of “good understanding and sincere friendship between two old soldiers”³¹², and—similar to his esteem for Harold E. Potter—especially appreciated Robinett’s “gentlemanly attitude

³⁰⁹ Franz Halder, "Letter to Waldemar Erfurth, 2.12.1952," in *ZAI/2651. Correspondence on the General Staff Study (P135, II)* (BAMA).

³¹⁰ ———, "Letter to Paul M. Robinett, 13.11.1953," in *N220/203. Correspondence as Chief of the Control Group. Vol. 2. 1953/1954* (BAMA).

³¹¹ Paul M. Robinett, "Letter to George T. Keating, 11.12.1969," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers. Box 5. Folder 31* (George C. Marshall Research Library), ———, "Letter to George T. Keating, 14.4.1965," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers, Box 5. Folder 31* (George C. Marshall Research Library), ———, "Letter to George T. Keating, 23.12.1971," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers. Box 5. Folder 31* (George C. Marshall Research Library).

³¹² Franz Halder, "Translation of letter of Franz Halder to Paul M. Robinett, 24.7.1957," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers. Box 14. Folder 15* (George C. Marshall Research Library).

toward the German Officers' Corps".³¹³ Furthermore, he picked up on Robinett's notion of a supranational military professionalism that existed aloof from the lowlands of their nation's politics. In Halder's view, it was this professionalism that enabled them to leave former conflicts behind in order to cooperate fruitfully. Referring to Robinett and himself in the third person, he thus wrote in a letter of 1957: "Even though high politics had once placed them in opposite camps, they found and developed a bond between one another, and from their identical military ideals and their belief in the blessings of work done together grew an activity which surely will bear fruit in the future for the benefit of the soldiers of both nations."³¹⁴

Potter, Mahin, Scoggin, Helm, and Robinett, however, eventually left the Historical Division and the decline of financial latitude in the mid-1950s caused repeated restructuring and led to an ever-faster rotation of American personnel in the Historical Division, Europe.³¹⁵ Possibly due to these frequent personnel changes, the Historical Division could not maintain the atmosphere of solidarity and trust that characterized the first half of the cooperation. Now, the aging German military elite often looked upon their young American counterparts with arrogant disregard. In their view some were "nice and friendly" but little qualified, while others had to be "laboriously attuned to the German way of thinking."³¹⁶

³¹³ _____, "Letter to Paul M. Robinett, 6.11.1957," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers. Box 14. Folder 12* (George C. Marshall Research Library).

³¹⁴ Halder, "Translation of letter of Franz Halder to Paul M. Robinett, 24.7.1957."

³¹⁵ Cf. Franz Halder, "Letter to Paul M. Robinett, 6.3.1959," in *Paul M. Robinet Papers. Box 2. Folder 8* (George C. Marshall Reserach Library).

³¹⁶ _____, "Letter to Gotthard Heinrici, 12.9.1951," in *N265/71. Personal Papers of Gotthard Heinrici* (BAMA), Halder, "Letter to Waldemar Erfurth, 3.3.1954."

3. An Agency of Articulation: The Role of the Historical Division in Shaping the Memory of World War II

3.1 Memory-construction in the German-American War Historical Cooperation

After having looked at the origins and development of the personal relations between German and American officers, it is now time to turn to the role of memory construction in the historical cooperation, thereby analyzing how the specific war memory created within the Historical Division was on the one hand influenced by the conditions of the postwar years, and how it impacted, on the other hand, the transatlantic memory of World War II. First, however, it is important to stress again that memory is not a genuine and static accumulation of individual experiences, but a social and cultural construction that is just as much shaped by the present as by the past. Memory is influenced by various actors and changes over time.³¹⁷ Memory therefore constitutes a very complex entity composed of different, though interrelated and interacting layers. To analyze and display the complex mechanisms of memory, scholars usually distinguish different types of memory: the memory of the *individual*, the *social group*, and the *culture*.³¹⁸

On an individual level, the ability to remember is essential for the formation of the consciousness of self, the own identity.³¹⁹ However, individual memory cannot exist in isolation, but is instead always connected to memories of others with which they overlap, intersect, and mingle. In addition, specific personal memories are always shaped

³¹⁷ Cf. Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit* (Munich 2006), pp. 15-16, cf. Suleiman, *Crises of Memory*, p. 2.

³¹⁸ Assmann, *Schatten der Vergangenheit*, p. 23.

³¹⁹ Cf. for example William James Booth, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity, and Justice* (Ithaca 2006).

by and potentially aligned with pre-existing cultural narratives. The medium of this connection is language. When individuals share and compare their experiences with the experiences of contemporaries, they begin to formulate a shared language and to identify common themes. Through narration and exchange, fragmentary individual memories retroactively gain form and structure and in this process are being confirmed, complemented, and consolidated. Individual memory thus always relies on a social context and the regular communicative exchange with others from which common memories evolve.³²⁰

The interaction of individual memories thus leads to the emergence of memories of social groups, the so-called *social memory*. Like individual memory, it depends on constant interpersonal exchange whereas individual memories are enhanced by the experiences of others. Taken together, the hence integrated memories generate a joined social memory in which the past is not only envisioned but also in teamwork construed and held together by linguistic communication.³²¹

While the boundaries between individual and social memory are fluent, the transition between social and cultural memory is far less smooth. The bearers of the individual and social memories are living people. In contrast, cultural memory expresses itself through symbols such as memorials, pictures, museums, archives, texts, and rituals. Memory is being externalized and objectified; experience is being disembodied and formatted. Consequently, people who never had certain experiences can nonetheless perceive and appropriate them. Moreover, Aleida Assmann rightly points out that

³²⁰ Assmann, *Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 17-18.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-34.

memories collected, preserved, and indexed in museums, libraries, and archives have the chance for an extraordinary extension of their existence. Their temporal range is expanded transgenerationally, and they are stabilized and manifested in material and institutional signs.³²² Knowledge is power.

Obviously, memory played a crucial role in the German-American historical cooperation. It was the German generals' first-hand war experience—their memories—that made them so valuable as a source for the American war historians. The Historical Division therefore reassembled leading *Wehrmacht* officers in certain POW camps and encouraged the exchange and adjustment of memories through the establishment of campaign groups. The German officers soon began to share, compare, and align their individual memories of specific operations as well as the overarching narrative of the war.

Especially in the early years of the historical collaboration, roughly from 1945 to 1948, the German officers constituted a very specific social group. Isolated from most external, especially civilian, influences through their imprisonment, they were confined to a selected circle of peer officers as *the* dominant social group to shape their individual and social memories. Moreover, their prisoner of war status also exposed them to the differing social and cultural memories of their American custodians while their work for the Historical Division implied certain expectations, which in turn influenced the German officers' memory construction.

³²² Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, pp. 34-35, cf. also Horst Moeller, "Erinnerung(en), Geschichte, Identitaet," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. B 28 (2001): p. 10.

The reconstruction of the past by former *Wehrmacht* officers on behalf of the Historical Division was naturally never a private matter, but from the beginning served as a means to articulate a specific view on the past war and to pursue active politics of war memory. That the Historical Division provided the former German officers with an *arena of articulation*, within which they could form their own specific view on the past war, has already been discussed. However, how dominant narratives of the past eventually become, depends also on what access their advocates have to influential institutions of either state or civil society and whether they manage to cooperate with those agencies, which take a leading role in preserving and adapting cultural memories. Therefore, the cooperation of former German generals with a powerful state agency such as the U.S. Army played a crucial role in creating a positive view of the German Army in the transatlantic memory of World War II.

By publishing, circulating, and archiving the German studies, the Historical Division constituted a convenient agency of articulation through which the Germans could seek to promote and secure recognition for their interpretation of World War II.³²³ By means of thousands of historical studies, the memories of the German generals transcended their circumscribed social circle and transformed into a political narrative that reached and was embraced by a wider audience in Germany, the United States, and other Western countries.³²⁴

The Historical Division thus provided the former German *Wehrmacht* elite with a convenient platform and institutional framework for the promotion of their specific

³²³ On the concept of agencies of articulation see Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*.

³²⁴ Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, pp. 20; 29.

version of the war. Obviously, the German officers would never have been able to launch such a large-scale campaign in the rampant anti-militaristic atmosphere that characterized postwar Germany without the assistance and protection of the U.S. Army. However, for their memories to achieve significance beyond the boundaries of their own social group, another factor had to come into play: their memories had to tie in with worldviews, images, and fears currently held by their audience, first of all the American officers.

During the war the increased media coverage of the Soviet Union and the Russian people's suffering and sacrifices in the fight against German aggression resulted in an increasingly sympathetic attitude for the Russians within the general American public.³²⁵ In 1942 and 1943, even staunch anti-communist publishers had emphasized similarities between the American and Russian peoples. According to *Life* magazine, for example, the Russians were "one hell of a people . . . [who] to a remarkable degree . . . look like Americans, dress like Americans and think like Americans."³²⁶ For most of the war, even the American military viewed Russia foremost as an ally and paid little attention to possible future conflicts with the USSR.³²⁷ This rosy picture, however, faded slowly in the last year of the war when the looming collapse of the Third Reich "exposed the divergent interests papered over during the war."³²⁸ In the following years, the worsening American-Soviet relations were accompanied by a dwindling flow of information on the Soviet Union and the Russian people. In an atmosphere of uncertainty, suspicion, and

³²⁵ Cf. Peter G. Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations: from the Russian Revolution to the Fall of Communism* (London; New York 1993), pp. 4143, Smelser and Davies, *The myth of the Eastern Front*, pp. 11-25.

³²⁶ *Life*, vol. 14, no. 13., 29.3.1943, p. 23, as cited in Boyle, *American-Soviet Relations: from the Russian Revolution to the Fall of Communism*, p. 43.

³²⁷ Cf. Michael S. Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War: American Plans for Postwar Defense, 1941-45*, Yale historical publications: Miscellany 114 (New Haven 1977), p. 160.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

distrust, the positive images of Russia faded and the developing vacuum was little by little filled with negative stereotypes.

The changing international power relations in combination with shifts in the American perception of Russia thus provided an appropriate screen for the Germans to display their whitewashed memories of the war on the Eastern front. The distribution of allegedly objective historical studies on the German war against Russia throughout various American service schools, for instance, introduced a younger generation of American officers, who probably themselves had never had any negative personal experiences with the Russians, to specifically construct pictures and stereotypes of the character of *the* Russian soldier. How the Germans portrayed and how the Americans perceived the Third Reich's war in the East was thereby decisively influenced by a larger ideological transformation: the recreation of *the West* in opposition to *the East* and the inclusion of Germany in the Western community of values after World War II. How this 'Westernization' shaped and fueled the historical cooperation will therefore be discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.2 Past, Present, and Future: Germany's Arrival in *the West*

In spite of roots reaching back to the 18th century, *the West*, understood as a fairly homogenous community of values, was in fact a more recent product. Challenged by aggressive opponents who propagated fundamentally different core values, those nations who regarded themselves as belonging to *the West* developed in the 20th century a more precise definition of their shared fundamental beliefs. Only through the enmity towards imperial Germany from 1914 to 1918, the Axis powers from 1939 to 1945, and finally

the Soviet Union from 1947 to 1990, did *the West* emerge as circumscribed community whose members were willing and ready to collectively defend their shared core beliefs against external threats.³²⁹ Enforced by two World Wars, the Western community of values determined some fundamental traits: In the political sphere, *the West* featured the existence of parliamentary democracy, a representative government system, and social pluralism. The economic sphere rested on equal opportunities for the individual and the existence of a free market. Finally, the cultural sphere was defined by individualism and the postulate of freedom of art and sciences.³³⁰

In spite of its short-lived experience with democracy during the Weimar Republic, Germany remained excluded from this Western community not only in the estimation of *the West's* main representatives, Great Britain, France, and the United States, but also in its self-perception.³³¹ With its aggressive drive for hegemony in Europe under the National Socialist regime, Germany once again became a threat to *the West*. Only after its total defeat in 1945 and the subsequent fundamental political, social, and ideological transformation under the influence of Allied occupation and reeducation was Germany eventually allowed to enter into the Western community. However, the fast pace with which West Germany was ideologically, economically, and militarily included into *the West* after World War II seems astonishing. Within only ten years of Hitler's defeat, the Western occupation zones had developed into the Federal Republic of Germany—a parliamentary democracy, accepted and born by a great majority of the population and

³²⁹ Cf. Doering-Manteuffel, "Transatlantic Exchange and Interaction. The Concept of Westernization."

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³³¹ Cf. Berghahn, *Intellectual Cold Wars*, pp. 78-107.

ideologically and institutionally anchored into the Western community.³³²

To foster this profound transformation, Germany and *the West* had to find some common ground. As Ernest Renan pointed out in his now famous essay “*Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?*”, past and present are essential factors for the constitution of a nation.³³³ What Renan explained in regard to the formation of nations can also be applied to larger entities. The constitution of a stable union such as the Western community, thus, relies on a shared past—or in other words shared memories—and the political will and necessity to get along and cooperate in the present.³³⁴ As pointed out above, however, *the* past does not exist. The past is not a stable factor but is actually defined and shaped by the present and even the future. It is in constant flux, permanently altered and reconstructed according to the respective political, social, and normative system effective in the present or expected to become effective in the foreseeable future. In times of fundamental change, the content of memory is therefore transformed along with dominant social and political paradigms. In the process, memories are adjusted to modified needs and values.³³⁵

Undeniably, World War II dramatically altered the world; it brought about the defeat of the Third Reich and the subsequent collapse of Germany as an independent state; its temporary though total dependence on the victorious Allies; the decline of European might in general; and the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union as the

³³² Cf. Frank Schumacher, "From Occupation to Alliance: German-American Relations, 1949-1955," in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945-1990. A Handbook. Volume I: 1945-1968*, ed. Detlef Junker (Cambridge: 2004).

³³³ Cf. Ernest Renan, *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation? - What is a nation?* (Toronto 1996).

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³³⁵ Cf. Assmann, *Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 136-138; 150.

only remaining world powers. These profound changes strongly influenced the Germans' view on the past. Geared by a normative orientation to Western values, their interpretation of the National Socialist past took place in the dawning light of a democratic future.³³⁶

Germany's integration into the community of Western nations could not have taken place, had not long established and nurtured feelings of distinctiveness been overcome and replaced with a new awareness of similarities. In other words, from the ruins of World War II a shared past had to be discovered and recreated. After 1945, Americans, British, French and Germans not only cooperated to rebuild Germany politically and economically. Highlighting certain themes and downplaying others, they also rhetorically constructed a postwar world order that now placed Germany within the Western community.³³⁷ *The West* was thus constructed as a community of civilized nations characterized by their shared faith in liberty and democracy—a “specific ideology that sustained the West throughout the Cold War and defined the political culture that anchored Western Europe to the U.S. leadership in the 1940s.”³³⁸

Political parties and interest groups in Germany and the United States drew on this pool of rhetorical commonplaces and exploited them for their specific agendas.³³⁹ The German generals working for the Historical Division constituted such a group that actively participated in the rhetorical inclusion of Germany into *the West*. In their personal interaction with American officers, in their correspondence, and in their

³³⁶ Cf. Kattago, *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity*, p. 6.

³³⁷ Cf. Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*, pp. viii; 3; 12.

³³⁸ Frederico Romero, "Democracy and Power: The Interactive Nature of the American Century," in *The American Century in Europe*, ed. R. Laurence Moore and Maurizio Vaudagna (Ithaca: 2003), p. 48.

³³⁹ Cf. Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*, pp. x-xi.

historical studies, they repeatedly used the image of Germany's belonging to *the West* and its internalization of Western values as a means to define their position in the new political order and their role for the new German-American friendship.³⁴⁰

The studies of Günther Blumentritt, an especially determined participant in the historical cooperation, can serve to illustrate the activities of German generals in the westernization process. The former Infantry General frequently submitted unsolicited studies on contemporary affairs. Picking up some of the commonplaces regularly used in the rhetorical construction of *the West*, he stressed, again and again, Germany's Western character. In a study of March 1948, for instance, he stated

We [the Germans] love personal freedom; we value the individual, the individual human being. We love, in some form, liberalism, democracy, regardless of the respective form of government. We respect and want free speech, . . . free exchange of thoughts, free press, free movies, free art, free theater etc. [emphasis in original, E.K.].³⁴¹

Blumentritt thus emphasized exactly those characteristics as inherently German, which constituted the core values of the Western community: *liberalism, democracy, and individual freedom*. In another study, he declared bluntly that “[p]olitics, future, culture, history of civilization—everything proves that the Germans belong to the coalition of the West.”³⁴²

Probably somehow aware that the members of an imagined community such as

³⁴⁰ Cf. for example Blumentritt, "Gedanken ueber die angelsaechsische Weltstellung, March 1947."

³⁴¹ Guenther Blumentritt, "Unsere Erfahrungen mit dem "Eisernen Vorhang" im Osten, 19.3.1948," (NARA). Original German quote: "*Wir lieben die persönliche Freiheit, achten das Individuum, den Einzelmenschen. Wir lieben in irgendeiner Form den Liberalismus, die Demokratie, gleichgültig wie im Einzelnen die Staatsform ist. Wir achten und wollen freie Meinungsäußerung, . . . freien Gedankenaustausch, freie Presse, freien Film, freie Kunst, freies Theater usw.*"

³⁴² ———, "Gedanken, December 1947," p. 22. Original German quote: "*Politik, Zukunft, Kultur, Zivilisationsgeschichte - alles gibt uns den Beweis, dass die Deutschen zum Bund des Westens gehören.*"

the West needed some sort of a shared past, Blumentritt also sought to construct parallels between the historical development of Germany and the United States as nation states. He pointed out that the old European powers Britain and France observed the young American republic in the 18th century and the newly founded German Empire in the 19th century as similarly skeptical, even adverse.³⁴³ In spite of these similarities, Blumentritt also identified important differences, which in his view accounted for the undeniably different development of both nations in the 20th century: Thus, the extraordinary geographical and political conditions in North America, providing a wide, almost unsettled space, the protection of two oceans, and the lack of powerful hostile neighbors, had clearly benefitted the expansion and growth of the United States. Located in the European heartland, Germany, in contrast, had faced the distrustful powers of France, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. For Günther Blumentritt the conclusion was clear: It was simply more dangerous and more difficult for Germany to become a nation than for the United States. “In Europe it was not possible without power, without strong experience, without an army [emphasis in original, E.K].”³⁴⁴

These remarks had a double function. First, Blumentritt tried to create an image of the past that allowed Germans and Americans to relate. By drawing these rather obscure historical parallels between Germany and the United States, the general tried to point to cultural, ethnical, and ideological similarities suitable to bridge the enmity of the past decades. In addition, with the reference to specific disadvantages in the German case, he offered an explanation for Germany’s disturbingly different path in the 20th century.

³⁴³ Cf. Blumentritt, "Gedanken ueber die angelsaechsische Weltstellung, March 1947," p. 4.

³⁴⁴ Ibid. Original German quote: “*Ohne Kraft, ohne starke Erfahrung, ohne Heer – ging das in Europa nicht.*“

Moreover, Blumentritt was convinced that in spite of any former misunderstandings, the political conditions of the postwar order demanded reconciliation between Germany and the Western nations. As many other Germans—and Americans as well—he saw the Western community as being heavily engaged in a continuing struggle. As one of only two remaining world powers, it seemed that in the Soviet Union the “arch enemy” of *the West* had raised its head, ready and willing to swamp the globe with revolution. There was nothing less at stake than the survival of “Western culture, spirit, and nature.”³⁴⁵ Once again, Blumentritt stressed that, in view of this existential threat, Germany and *the West* should now forget past differences, remember their shared cultural, ethnical, and ideological core values, and join forces to ensure mutual survival. Blumentritt thus sketched the picture of a power struggle between *West* and *East*, whereas the expression “*the East*” stood for a worldview fundamentally antagonistic to what *the West* represented.

According to Blumentritt, this difference between *East* and *West* rooted in the “Asiatic-Slavic mentality” of the Eastern people—a mentality that contradicted basically everything *the West* held fast to. “For Thousands of years,” he wrote in 1948,

they all have been used to obedience, dullness, and subordination. ‘Tyranny’ is no foreign term to them, but the usual form of government. They don’t even want inner ‘freedom’. They would not know what to do with it. They constitute a mass in which the human being, the individual means little [emphasis in original, E.K.].³⁴⁶

³⁴⁵ ———, “MS # B-635. Persoenliche Gedanken ueber die Weltlage, February 1947,” pp. 7-8.

³⁴⁶ ———, “Unsere Erfahrungen mit dem “Eisernen Vorhang” im Osten, 19.3.1948.” Original German quote: “Sie alle sind an Gehorsam, Dumpfheit, an Unterordnung seit Jahrtausenden gewöhnt. ‘Diktatur’ ist ihnen kein fremder Begriff, sondern die gewohnte Regierungsform. Sie wollen aber auch gar keine innere ‘Freiheit’. Sie wissen wenig damit anzufangen. Sie bilden eine Masse, in der der Mensch, das

In Blumentritt's view, their alleged lack of cultural development and character made the Eastern people especially susceptible to Bolshevism and *the East* thus came to stand for Communism in general and the Soviet Union in particular.³⁴⁷ In a study titled *The Fighting Qualities of the Russian Soldier*, former general Lothar Rendulic took a similar position. He described the Russians as having "a certain inertness and submissiveness to life and fate", "little initiative", and a "passive nature".³⁴⁸

The German generals thus constructed, or rather perpetuated, their vision of *the East* as a classic image of an enemy. Such concepts of an enemy are always related to the reciprocal value system, they are anchored in the self-perception in the sense that the negative attributes ascribed to the other are complemented by the contrasting positive attitudes in the self.³⁴⁹ while *the West*, including the Germans, was naturally leaning towards democracy, *the East* was characterized by tyranny; while Western people cherished freedom and individualism, Easterners were literally opposed to freedom and instead found comfort in the mass.

In view of these fundamental differences between *East* and *West*, an existential conflict seemed inevitable. In their studies the German generals not only created a shared past, but also reinforced the perception of a shared present characterized by the threat of *the West* by Eastern Communism.³⁵⁰ In the Germans' view, here represented by former

Individuum wenig bedeutet." Cf. also ———, "MS # B-635. Persoenliche Gedanken ueber die Weltlage, February 1947."

³⁴⁷ Blumentritt, "MS # B-635. Persoenliche Gedanken ueber die Weltlage, February 1947," pp. 6-7.

³⁴⁸ Rendulic, "MS # D-036. The Fighting Qualities of the Russian Soldiers, 1.3.1947."

³⁴⁹ Eckert, *Feindbilder im Wandel*, p. 28.

³⁵⁰ Blumentritt, "Gedanken ueber die angelsaechsische Weltstellung, March 1947.", ———, "Gedanken, December 1947.", Guenther Blumentritt, "MS # B-582. Weltstrategische Lagebeurteilung 1947, 5.5.1947," in RG 549. *Records of U.S. Army Europe. Historical Division. Foerign Military Studies. "B" Manuscripts,*

General Georg von Sodenstern, Europe was in danger of being flooded “with the spirit of Bolshevik-Asiatic culture” that would inevitably lead to “the uprooting of the occidental sense of community.”³⁵¹ Only Europe’s “unification under a consistent political, economical, and cultural direction” could prevent such a scenario.³⁵² And after all, the Germans had something to offer: Their experience in fighting the Red Army would bring essential value to the anti-Communist Western alliance.

Moreover, the looming conflict with the Soviet Union provided the former *Wehrmacht* elite with an opportunity to legitimate their war of aggression against Russia from 1941 to 1945.³⁵³ Once again drawing on vague and highly questionable historical examples, Günther Blumentritt stressed, for instance, that if ever a nation knew and opposed *the East*, it was Germany. “For a thousand years,” he stated, “Germans stood up to the pressure from the East, thus protecting Europe. On German soil, Mongols, Huns, Turks, Slavs have been stopped and thrown back. This was Germany’s mission.”³⁵⁴ Now, after the defeat of the German Reich which had fought Bolshevism to the knife, this important “bulwark” was torn apart and, as a consequence, the Communists had advanced deep into Western Europe.³⁵⁵ According to this story, the aggressive German war against the Soviet Union became a heroic act in order to protect all of Europe, and in fact the entire Western World, from the menace of being overrun by “ruthless Bolshevik hordes”. Blumentritt, for one, was convinced that the world would some day realize that

1945-1959. Box 45. (NARA), Blumentritt, "MS # B-635. Persoenliche Gedanken ueber die Weltlage, February 1947.", Cf. for example Sodenstern, "Gedanken zur Gegenwart."

³⁵¹ Sodenstern, "Gedanken zur Gegenwart," p. 10.

³⁵² Ibid., p. 15.

³⁵³ Cf. for example Blumentritt, "Gedanken ueber die angelsaechsische Weltstellung, March 1947."

³⁵⁴ ———, "MS # B-635. Persoenliche Gedanken ueber die Weltlage, February 1947," p. 41.

³⁵⁵ Cf. for example ———, "MS # B-582. Weltstrategische Lagebeurteilung 1947, 5.5.1947.", also cf. Sodenstern, "Gedanken zur Gegenwart."

the Germans' fight against Russia from 1941 to 1945 had "an inner vindication."³⁵⁶

However, the "bulwark"-image was not an invention of the postwar era but had a longer tradition within German perceptions of Russia. Since the 19th century Germans had perceived and portrayed Russia as uncivilized and the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution further weakened whatever positive images had formerly existed. More and more Germans viewed themselves as superior to the Russians, and generally all Slavic people, in terms of politics, economics, military might, and intellectual ability.³⁵⁷ In the interwar period German nationalists and imperialists, among them many officers, came to anticipate an inevitable final struggle for land between Germany and Russia. One element of this vision was the image of Germany as "bulwark" against Bolshevism—a commonplace that proved flexible and persistent enough to be exploited first by Hitler for his *Lebensraum*-program, and later for Germany's anchorage in the Western community.³⁵⁸

After 1945, the bulwark-image could thus be translated into a picture that depicted the Soviet Union as aggressor and Germany as victim—notwithstanding the historical fact that it was indeed *Germany* that had invaded Russia twice within half a century. The political conditions in the postwar period facilitated the duration of certain negative images of the Soviet Union and the Russians. While anti-Semitic elements, which had played a considerable role in the interwar years and especially during the Nazi

³⁵⁶ Blumentritt, "MS # B-582. Weltstrategische Lagebeurteilung 1947, 5.5.1947," p. 7.

³⁵⁷ Cf. Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*, pp. 6-8; 12-13.

³⁵⁸ Cf. Axel Schildt, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika. Studien zur Westdeutschen Ideenlandschaft der 50er Jahre* (Munich 1999), pp. 28-30, also cf. Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*, pp. 11-12; 14.

regime,³⁵⁹ disappeared from public discussion, anti-Slavic and anti-Communist attitudes remained socially acceptable and lived on after the end of the war. For West Germans, the perception of Russia as an enemy formed thus “one of the few ideological links between the wartime and postwar era.”³⁶⁰

As the studies by Günther Blumentritt, Lothar Rendulic, and Georg von Sodenstern quoted above show, the picture drawn by former German officers writing for the Historical Division was interspersed with anti-Slavic and racist rhetoric. In fact, the German authors could anticipate that their attitudes would be in line with basic opinions hold by their American recipients. American leaders had long deployed Germany’s alleged affiliation to *the West* as a means to endorse and justify a lenient and integrating policy towards Germany. As early as fall 1945, influential American officers such as General William J. Donovan and George S. Patton propagated the necessity to turn Germany into an ally against the USSR.³⁶¹ In this context, Telford Taylor, chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg Military Trials conducted by the United States after the IMT, noticed that parts of the American officer corps displayed a noteworthy dose of racism, proposing a significantly milder treatment for German than for Japanese war criminals. In his memoirs, Taylor put it short: “Apparently, in old-school military circles yellow generals are not worth as much on the virtue scale than white northern ones.”³⁶²

Moreover, such attitudes were not confined to the military but were also

³⁵⁹ Cf. Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*, pp. 14-17; 25-89.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³⁶¹ Cf. Meyer, "Situation der deutschen militaerischen Fuehrungsschicht," pp. 680-681, also cf. Telford Taylor, *Die Nuernberger Prozesse. Hintergruende. Analysen und Erkenntnisse aus heutiger Sicht*, 2 ed. (Munich 1992), p. 285.

³⁶² Taylor, *Nuernberger Prozesse*, p. 285. On the role of racism in the pacific war cp. John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, 7th printing, corr. by the author. ed. (New York 1993).

expressed by American politicians. In December 1945, Senator James C. Eastland of Mississippi, for example, called for a replacement of the punitive policy towards Germany and in doing so used an occidentalist and racist rhetoric that is stunningly similar to statements made by Blumentritt and other German officers. He declared that

[t]here is involved in the present predicament of Germany the whole question of the relation between the eastern and the western civilizations. Germany has served both as a neutralizing agent and as a barrier between the Oriental hordes and a western civilization 2,000 years old [...]. Our treatment of Germany will decide this question of whether Germany is going to clamor for [annexation] to Moscow, or is to be reincorporated into our own civilization and culture [...].³⁶³

A little over a decade later, in 1959, the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno summed up this tendency quite accurately when he pointed out that the developing course of international politics had offered an opportunity for retrospective justification: “When the Western World essentially defines itself as a united front in its defense against the Russian threat, then it appears as if the victors of 1945 had foolishly torn down proven bulwarks against Bolshevism, only to rebuild them a few years later.”³⁶⁴

In other respects too, the worldviews of German and American officers showed some remarkable similarities. For instance, they often had a similar outlook on war as an essential expression of human nature. Günther Blumentritt, for example, viewed war as “naturally inevitable.”³⁶⁵ Tying in with this estimation, Paul M. Robinett stated in a pamphlet titled *Conflict in the 20th Century* that conflict was “universal among all living

³⁶³ Congressional Record of the United States, 4.12.1945, p. 11376, as cited in Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy*, p. 134.

³⁶⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, "What does coming to terms with the past mean?," in *Bitburg in moral and political perspective*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartmann (Bloomington 1986), p. 119.

³⁶⁵ Guenther Blumentritt, "MS # B-302. Das Wesen und die Probleme des modernen Krieges im 20. Jahrhundert, 11.1.1951 [Originally written in January 1947]," (NARA), p. 3.

things.” With a view on mankind, he went on to say that

even though man has developed customs, rules, and codes for his guidance in dealing with other man, within his group he is still competitive within his own group, and collectively, with all other groups. The basic force in man’s competition with man is biological—a force which has not been adequately explored and in no way curbed in a scientific way. This aspect of life among men has been left to nature.³⁶⁶

In addition, German and American officers within the Historical Division shared a somehow distorted view on democracy and dictatorship respectively. For Franz Halder, for example, autocracy was not necessarily a bad thing. In his opinion, it was not “autocracy in itself, but the character of the autocrat” that was decisive for the outcome.³⁶⁷ Impressed by the seeming successes of dictators like Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, and Adolf Hitler, Paul M. Robinett’s thoughts followed similar lines. In the 1930s and early 1940s the general had at least fancied dictatorship since to him “many-headed parliamentary governments” seemed quite “unwieldy in times of crisis” and the “personal rule of an able commander appear[d] to be more efficient than that of a parliamentary group.” In Robinett’s view the “failure of dictatorship” laid mainly “in the transition from one leader to another.”³⁶⁸

These few examples have to suffice in illustrating that German and American officers had, indeed, oftentimes little difficulties in identifying some common ideological ground on which to build their cooperation. The most important, though not the only

³⁶⁶ Paul M. Robinett, "Conflict in the 20th Century," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers. Box 16. Folder 18* (George C. Marshall Research Library), pp. 3-4.

³⁶⁷ Franz Halder, "Letter to Hauck, 25.1.1960," in *ZA1/2548. Correspondence on military study P-114c* (BAMA).

³⁶⁸ Paul M. Robinett, "Dictatorship [no date, but apparently written between 1933 and 1945]," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers. Box 14. Folder 26* (George C. Marshall Research Library).

factor gluing them together was a common fear of the Soviet Union and Communism. The concept of the Eastern enemy in opposition to an adjusted *West* also provided German and American officers with an arena in which they could merge their respective racist, Social Darwinist and partly even anti-democratic worldviews.

3.3 Two different “Wests”?

Underneath the surface of a “public narrative” that propagated an “epic struggle”³⁶⁹ of Western democracy against Eastern totalitarianism, laid latent tensions. Historian Ronald J. Granieri, for example, pointed out that in spite of the rhetoric “of the West as a unified community”, there existed, in fact, at least two different ‘*Wests*’ in Europe and North America, which “sometimes overlapped and sometimes excluded each other.”³⁷⁰ Europeans often viewed their continent as the original cradle of Western ideals and themselves as the true heirs and representatives of Western culture. Thus, a gradual ideological convergence of Western Europe with the United States on the one hand and a continuation of traditional European anti-Americanism on the other hand characterized the transatlantic relationship in the second half of the 20th century. Europeans often despised, for instance, America’s supposedly low-quality mass culture and saw Europe as culturally, intellectually, and academically superior.³⁷¹ This arrogance revealed not only European cultural elitism but also pointed to a persistent fear of allegedly “mental[ly]

³⁶⁹ Romero, "Democracy and Power: The Interactive Nature of the American Century," p. 48.

³⁷⁰ Ronald J. Granieri, *The Ambivalent Alliance. Konrad Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and the West, 1949-1966* (New York 2003), p. viii.

³⁷¹ For an overview on European anti-Americanism see for example Berghahn, *Intellectual Cold Wars*. Especially chapter 4, Cf. Volker R. Berghahn, "European Elitism, American Money, and Popular Culture," in *The American Century in Europe*, ed. R. Laurence Moore; Maurizio Vaudagna (Ithaca 2003), pp. 117-118.

inferior” popular crowds who threatened the power and position of the old elites.³⁷² In fact, many Europeans with a traditional bourgeois or aristocratic social background—and many former German generals possessed such a background—viewed America as having a lack of experienced elites; criticized American culture as defined by the “masses”; and despised America generally as a technological and mass-based “civilization” in contrast to the European “culture”.³⁷³

This general observation of transatlantic dissonances is also displayed within the historical cooperation. Carefully following general political and cultural developments, the former German generals were thus oftentimes anxious about the inner condition of *the West* and their criticism of contemporary phenomena reveals considerable reservations toward American influences on German society and culture. In 1955, Franz Halder expressed his concern about “the hectic pace in which [...] [the] Western world is pushing forward.”³⁷⁴ At another occasion he criticized *the West* as being too “materialistic and attuned to technical progress.”³⁷⁵ In fact, many of the German generals (as well as conservative Germans in general) feared that *the West*, indulging in excessive decadence, was in danger of weakening itself. Rudolf Hofmann, a member of the Control Group, for instance viewed the cultural developments with great suspicion. For him, everything seemed “so contrived, so uncertain, so volatile.” In a letter to Günther Blumentritt from 1956, he expressed his disgust drastically:

³⁷² Cf. Berghahn, *Intellectual Cold Wars*, pp. 82-83.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

³⁷⁴ Franz Halder, "Letter to Hermann Teske, 15.9.1955," in N220/79. *Personal Papers of Franz Halder. Private Correspondence 1954/1955* (BAMA).

³⁷⁵ ———, "Letter to William Schmidt, 20.3.1957," in N220/81. *Personal Papers of Franz Halder. Private Correspondence 1956/1957* (BAMA).

When a movie actress exchanges her husband for the sixth time, the newspapers are full of it and the youth gazes enchanted at their idol; are big breasts really enough to drive a whole generation round the bend? . . . When Sofia Loren shows up at the slalom slope, the people disregard the racers and crowd around the film diva. This makes me sick. The white world has lost any dimension and shows a decadence so alarming that tomorrow Yellow or Brown can celebrate cheap victories.³⁷⁶

The avowedly racist statement reveals considerable concern about the inner condition of *the West*. In Hofmann's view, vast parts of the Western population—especially the youth—indulged in silly inanities and in its dullness lost sight of the ongoing struggle with *the East*. Obviously, the engagement in a coalition with the “materialistic” and “individualistic” United States came for a price—the exposure to and integration of “mass” culture into the German society.

Such criticism of certain contemporary developments did not remain confined to a general level. When the historical cooperation progressed, the Germans became increasingly sensitive of philosophical and cultural differences with their American superiors. First, the former *Wehrmacht* generals became more and more aware of the rather weak position of the Historical Division within the American military administration. Even though they would never have admitted it in front of their American colleagues, they soon realized that the young Historical Division was in no way the product of sophisticated plans but had developed out of a rather vague interest for the compilation of official historical accounts. Based on the long tradition and high esteem

³⁷⁶ Rudolf Hofmann, "Letter to Guenther Blumentritt, 23.4.1954," in N252/8. *Personal Papers of Guenther Blumentritt. Correspondence* (BAMA). Original German quote: “Wenn eine Filmdame zum 6. Mal das Ehebett wechselt, dann sind die Zeitungen voll und unsere Jugend start verzückt ihr Idol an; genügt denn ein fetter Busen um eine ganze Generation verrückt zu machen? . . . Wenn die Sofia Loren in Cortina am Slalomhang sich zeigt, lassen die Leute die Läufer außer acht und drängen sich um die Filmschikse; das nennt man denn Olympische Spiele. Es ist zum Kotzen. Die weiße Welt hat jedes Maß vergessen und zeigt eine solch erschreckende Dekadenz, daß morgen Gelb oder Braun billige Triumphe feiern können. DAS hindert mich glücklich zu sein!”

for the elitist institution of the former German General Staff's war historical division, the Germans soon began to look down on the improvised and underfunded American equivalent.³⁷⁷

Not surprisingly, the rather unsophisticated structure of the Historical Division caused considerable frustration among the Germans. Franz Halder in particular, who as Chief of the Control Group was in constant close contact with his superiors in Washington, repeatedly expressed his dissatisfaction with ill-conceived assignments and sudden changes in studies already under way.³⁷⁸ In addition, further inquiries in regard to studies already submitted to Washington met with little appreciation from the Control Group. In Halder's view such queries were a result of the unsatisfactory organizational structure in Washington that produced a "bunch of scribes" who questioned the German studies only to legitimate their own existence. In March of 1954, he vented his anger in a letter to his comrade Gotthard Heinrici: "Instead of relying on what *experienced and mature men* deliver to them, the unnecessary inquiries of these *boys* only delay the completion of the projects for many months [emphasis E.K.]."³⁷⁹

Over the years the Germans also became increasingly annoyed with the Americans' different approaches to the writing of war history. Repeatedly, the editors of Historical Division urged them to compose their studies in a more accessible style and

³⁷⁷ Cf. Halder, "Letter to Hellmut Schultze, 16.3.1955.", ———, "Letter to Waldemar Erfurth, 3.3.1954.", for an overview on the German General Staff's war historical organization see Poehlmann, *Kriegsgeschichte*.

³⁷⁸ Cf. for example Franz Halder, "Letter to Gotthard Heinrici, 10.6.1952," in *N265/71. Personal Papers of Gotthard Heinrici* (BAMA), cf. ———, "Letter to Gotthard Heinrici, 30.5.1952," in *N265/71. Personal Papers of Gotthard Heinrici* (BAMA).

³⁷⁹ Franz Halder, "Letter to Gotthard Heinrici, 19.3.1954," in *N265/71. Personal Papers of Gotthard Heinrici* (BAMA). Original German quote: "Statt dass sich diese Knaben auf das verlassen, was ihnen erfahrene und gereifte Männer auf den Tisch legen, verzögern sie mit ihren unnötigen Rückfragen den endgültigen Abschluss der Arbeiten um viele Monate."

language. The Germans found such efforts to satisfy the taste of the recipient astonishing and disapproved of an attitude that supposedly measured the value of a scientific work by means of demand. On behalf of the German writers, Halder therefore informed the Historical Division that he refused to disavow the superior “German research methods” to produce “narratives” instead of “war history.” The German writers would not make themselves depend on “the taste and laziness” of their American audience.³⁸⁰

Although annoyed by the differing style of the Americans, the former German officers nonetheless appreciated the cooperation. As discussed above, the organizational weaknesses of the Historical Division gave the Germans considerable leeway, and the opportunity to pursue their own agenda counted more than their temporary irritation.

3.4 The Necessity to Regret and to Forget and the Legend of the “Clean” *Wehrmacht*

According to Ernest Renan, a “shared heritage of [...] regret” is essential for the constitution of a community. “Shared suffering unites more than does joy, [...] acts of mourning are more potent than those of triumph, since they impose duties and require common effort.”³⁸¹ As awkward as it might seem, the manifold suffering brought about by National Socialism and the Second World War provided Germans, West Europeans, and Americans with an opportunity to grieve together. The enormous sorrow experienced by all warring parties and the sheer impossibility to mentally process the experience of industrialized genocide, the uprooting of millions of people, the devastation of largest parts of Europe, in fact, held the potential to create a state of mind that fostered acts of

³⁸⁰ ———, “Letter to Gotthard Heinrici, 23.4.1954,” in N265/71. *Personal Papers of Gotthard Heinrici. Correspondence with Franz Halder 1951-1954* (BAMA).

³⁸¹ Renan, *What is a nation?*, p. 47.

shared regret. Essentially, the vast agonies caused by the National Socialist regime, its costly defeat, together with changes in the international power structure provided the premise for Germany's admittance to *the West*.

Forcefully encouraged by the victorious powers, West Germany began to confront her recent past early after the war, successfully creating a new identity based on a rejection of National Socialism and an internalization of the Nazi past. In fact, to this day the legacy of the Third Reich plays a crucial role in the self-perception of the Federal Republic.³⁸²

Not all past sufferings, however, are apt to unite. While certain misdeeds committed by members of a current international community in the past can be resolved through shared regret, some crimes have to be forgotten. Therefore, agreed acts of regret *and* forgetting became integral premises for the constitution of *the West* after 1945.³⁸³ Scholars of German memory have rightly pointed out that the German exposure to the National Socialist past was in general characterized by patterns of defensive denial and proactive reinterpretation. Institutional and individual involvement in crimes and mass murder were concealed through various suppressive strategies such as 'denial', 'charging up', 'externalization', 'masking', and 'keeping silent'.³⁸⁴

However, the political and ideological conditions of the postwar present did not only affect how Germans' remembered their recent past, but also shaped the memory patterns of Americans. In the presence of a world divided between a liberal-democratic

³⁸² Kattago, *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity*, p. 6.

³⁸³ Cf. Renan, *What is a nation?*, p. 19.

³⁸⁴ Cf. Assmann, *Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 82; 92; 98, also cf. Hannes Heer, "*Hitler war's*": *die Befreiung der Deutschen von ihrer Vergangenheit* (Berlin 2005), pp. 12-13.

West and a totalitarian *East*, the content of *the West's* cultural memory of World War II had to be negotiated between Germany and its new partners in order to truly integrate the Germans into the Western community. The Cold War thus soon began to influence American efforts for prosecution, denazification, and reeducation.³⁸⁵ In consequence, the transnational Western exposure to the National Socialist past was shaped by generally accepted and extremely persistent “taboos and amnesia”.³⁸⁶

One such taboo was the involvement of the former *Wehrmacht* in major war crimes and the Holocaust. Very early, influential military figures such as General William J. Donovan opposed the prosecution of military leaders in order to secure Germany's integration into the Western community.³⁸⁷ In retrospect, Paul M. Robinett also found the trial of German officers before the IMT to be “one of the blackest chapters in modern history”, a chapter that in his view would “rise to plague the United States for years to come.”³⁸⁸ In fact, many participants of the German-American historical project would have agreed with Günther Blumentritt's statement that it did not make much sense “to accuse one another since mistakes and digressiveness could be found with all warring parties.”³⁸⁹ Considering that this common attitude it is not very surprising—although the war crimes trials that German and American officers despised so much turned up plenty of evidence for the *Wehrmacht's* involvement in the Holocaust—the German and

³⁸⁵ Cf. for example Frank M. Buscher, *The U.S. War Crimes Trial Program in Germany, 1946-1955*, Contributions in Military Studies (New York 1989), Cornelia Rauh-Kuehne, "Life Rewarded the Latecomers: Denazification During the Cold War," in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945-1990. A Handbook. Volume I: 1945-1968*, ed. Detlef Junker (Cambridge 2004).

³⁸⁶ Maria Hirszowicz and Elzbieta Neyman, "The Social Framing of Non-Memory," *International Journal of Sociology* 37, no. 1 (2007): p. 82.

³⁸⁷ Meyer, "Situation der deutschen militaerischen Fuehrungsschicht," pp. 680-681.

³⁸⁸ Robinett, "German Participation in the U.S. Army Historical Program," p. 1.

³⁸⁹ Blumentritt, "MS # B-302. Das Wesen und die Probleme des modernen Krieges im 20. Jahrhundert, 11.1.1951 [Originally written in January 1947]," p. 8.

American public soon forgot this particular aspect of the history of World War II.³⁹⁰

From the beginning, German and American officers actively fostered this atmosphere of obliviousness. In fact, the emergence and transatlantic dissemination of a downright “legend” of the *Wehrmacht*’s “clean hands” in the German war of annihilation bestowed a belated victory on the *Wehrmacht* leadership. The origins of this myth reach back to the last days of the war when General Admiral Karl Dönitz in the last *Wehrmacht* report of May 9th, 1945 assured the capitulating German soldiers that—even though they had succumbed “to a vastly greater force”—they had “fought bravely” and “honorably” for their country and could thus “stand proud and tall” as they laid down their arms.³⁹¹ With this report already pointing in the direction of an apologetic politics of war memory, the German military leadership made further steps only a few months later. In November 1945, Franz Halder, Walter Warlimont and several others composed an apologetic memorandum that denied any responsibility on the part of the General Staff for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Interestingly though, the Germans were encouraged to write such a statement by those parts of the American military that opposed the prosecution of the German General Staff as a criminal organization.³⁹²

Writing down an overview on his military career for the Historical Division in December 1946, Günther Blumentritt also emphasized once again the innocence of the German soldier. According to his account, the “true German soldier” who had been socialized in the “old German army with its high tradition” never “murdered” and never

³⁹⁰ Cf. Ronald M. Smelser and Edward J. Davies, *The myth of the Eastern Front : the Nazi-Soviet war in American popular culture* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 48, on postwar trials of German *Wehrmacht* leaders see Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*, pp. 208-228.

³⁹¹ As quoted in Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*, p. 206.

³⁹² Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

committed “mean actions.” In regard to his own actions, Blumentritt—possibly reassuring himself just as much as his American superiors—stated:

I have a free conscience and that suffices for me. I don't have anything to regret! I kept my oaths, the last one with doubts and nerves. For 34 years, I carried out my duties as a soldier... I have always given and not taken, I always helped others and abdicated myself from being helped by others. I enjoyed being a soldier and, in spite of all that happened, I would repeat my military life exactly like it was, because it was good! Everything for my people—even though without gratitude. That is ‘German’ [emphasis in original, E.K.]!³⁹³

In a nutshell, this statement contains all the popular arguments used to fend off any criticism or accusation of the former *Wehrmacht*. Accordingly, the German soldiers had—inescapably bound by their oath on Adolf Hitler—merely fulfilled their duty; under great sacrifices they had selflessly defended not National Socialism, but their fatherland, just to return home from the battlefields not only defeated, but cursed even by their own people. As the former discussion of personal relationships and reciprocal perception between German and American officers within the Historical Division has shown, the Americans were apt to buy into this story. In their view, most of the German generals were merely “professional soldier[s] doomed to serve a tyrant.”³⁹⁴

Another example for the Historical Division's lopsided concentration on the putatively apolitical and purely military abilities of their German coworkers is provided in an incident involving Walter Warlimont—after all a convicted war criminal. A

³⁹³ Guenther Blumentritt, "Military Career of Guenther Blumentritt, 14.12.1946," in *ZA1/606* (BAMA). Original German quote: "Ich habe ein befreites Gewissen und das genügt mir. Ich habe nichts zu bereuen! Ich habe meine Eide gehalten, den letzten mit Zweifeln und Nerven. Ich habe meine Pflicht 34 Jahre als Soldat getan. . . . Ich habe stets gegeben und nicht genommen, stets anderen geholfen und selbst auf andere Hilfe verzichtet. Ich war gern Soldat und würde mein militärisches Leben trotz allem genau so wiederholen, denn es war schön! Alles für mein Volk—auch ohne Dank! Das ist eben 'deutsch'."

³⁹⁴ Paul M. Robinett, "Letter to George T. Keating, 3.5.74," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers. Box 5. Folder 31* (George C. Marshall Research Library).

participant of the first hour in the German-American historical cooperation, Warlimont had continued his work for the Historical Division from Landsberg prison and was assigned with the conduct of a special research project on the OKW that would comprise several volumes. In fact, leading officers of the Historical Division had serious doubts that this “most brilliant” soldier actually deserved a long-term prison sentence.³⁹⁵

Aware of this lenient attitude, Warlimont approached the Historical Division in September 1953 and asked for an appraisal of his contribution for use in an appeal to the Military Government’s Mixed Interims Board for clemency and parole.³⁹⁶ The Historical Division did not hesitate to issue such a document and boldly expressed its opinion on Warlimont’s sentence. The statement thus read: “So far as the Office of Military History has been able to determine from strictly military records available to it, General Warlimont seems merely to have fulfilled the duties of a senior staff officer in the *routine conduct of conventional type warfare* [emphasis by E.K.].”³⁹⁷

Fueled by the changing international context, this whitewashed story offered by certain circles of former German and American officers was largely incorporated into the transatlantic memory of World War II.³⁹⁸ Consequently, earlier, more differentiated views on the responsibility of the military were replaced by a myth that denied any ideological links between National Socialism and the armed forces and portrayed the

³⁹⁵ ———, "Letter to George T. Keating, 1.5.1965," in *Paul M. Robinett Papers. Box 5. Folder 30* (George C. Marshall Research Library).

³⁹⁶ Walter Warlimont, "Letter to Col. Hans W. Helm, 14.9.1953 " in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. Records of OCMH. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 5. Folder 1* (NARA).

³⁹⁷ Chief A.C. Smith, Military History, "Certificate for Walter Warlimont [without date, but certainly fall 1953]," in *RG 319. Records of Army Staff. Records of the Office of the Chief of Military History. General Correspondence 1943-1960. Box 5. Folder 1* (NARA).

³⁹⁸ Cf. Smelser and Davies, *The myth of the Eastern Front*, p. 46.

German soldier as innocent and unknowing victim of the regime.³⁹⁹ In the early 1950s the legend had become so widely accepted that it was even sanctified by German and American statesman. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, an outspoken opponent of German militarism, thus declared in January 1951 that the German soldier had fought honorably and decently for his country and should to be distinguished from the criminal Nazi clique.⁴⁰⁰ In December 1952, Konrad Adenauer, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, issued a similar formal apology in front of the German parliament.⁴⁰¹

Myths such as that of the *Wehrmacht's* clean hands are rather persistent and the images of the past they represent are usually only slowly altered by generational change. Even though *Wehrmacht* crimes have been the object of critical historical research since the 1960s, the larger public continued to ignore this part of the German past.⁴⁰² Only in the mid-1990s did the public debate about crimes committed by *Wehrmacht* soldiers eventually intensify. In 1995, an exhibition titled *Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der*

³⁹⁹ Cf. Joerg Echternkamp, "Arbeit am Mythos. Soldatengenerationen der Wehrmacht im Urteil der west- und ostdeutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaft," in *Nachkrieg in Deutschland*, ed. Klaus Naumann (Hamburg 2001), p. 441, cf. Peter Reichel, "Helden und Opfer. Zwischen Pietät und Politik: Die Toten der Kriege und der Gewaltherrschaft in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert," in *Der Krieg in der Nachkriegszeit : der Zweite Weltkrieg in Politik und Gesellschaft der Bundesrepublik*, ed. Michael Th. Greven and Oliver von Wrochem (Opladen: 2000), p. 168.

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. Georg Meyer, "Von Feinden zu Verbündeten. Aspekte des deutsch-amerikanischen Verhältnisses nach 1945," in *Arbeitskreis Franken/Oberpfalz* (Wuerzburg 2004), p. 17.

⁴⁰¹ Cf. "Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages. Stenographische Berichte. 1. Wahlperiode. 240. Sitzung, 3.12.1952," p. 11141.

⁴⁰² For example Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, "Kommissarbefehl und Massenexekution sowjetischer Kriegsgefangener," in *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, ed. Martin Broszat (Munich 1967), Helmut Krausnick, "Kommissarbefehl und "Gerichtsbareiterlass Barbarossa" in neuer Sicht," *Vierteljahrshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte* 25 (1977), Manfred Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat. Zeit der Indoktrination* (Hamburg 1969), Klaus-Juergen Mueller, *Das Heer und Hitler. Armee und nationalsozialistisches Regime 1933-1940* (Stuttgart 1969), Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941-1945*, Studien zur Zeitgeschichte Bd. 13 (Stuttgart Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1978), for an historiographical overview also see Wolfram Wette, "Bilder der Wehrmacht in der Bundeswehr," *Blaetter fuer deutsche und internationale Politik* 43, no. 2 (1998). In spite of their analysis of *Wehrmacht* crimes historians for a long time shied away from calling the status of German soldiers as victims into question.

Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1945 [War of extermination. Crimes of the *Wehrmacht*, 1941 to 1945] served as catalyst for a large-scale revision of the legend of the “clean”

Wehrmacht.

V) Conclusion

Kenneth W. Hechler's involvement in the German-American war history project was rather short; it lasted only from July to December 1945. However, the role of the young, ambitious Major should not be underestimated. Initially, the War Department had limited the Shuster Commission's assignment in Europe to ninety days and had not intended an extension, much less an enlargement of the interrogations. It therefore seems as though Hechler, who came into contact with the project rather accidentally in the first place, had an important share in the fact that the Historical Division, Europe picked up the idea of interrogations and modified it for its purposes. In his memorandum of October 1945, Hechler had suggested that a core group of German officers be entrusted with the compilation of a "History of German Operations". Due to opposing interests of the War Crimes Branch, the plan could not be implemented at the time. In the summer of 1948, however, the situation was different; and the organizational framework of the Control Group and the attached circle of home workers came strikingly close to Hechler's original proposal.

Moreover, the manner in which Hechler treated the German generals set the tone for the attitude that the Historical Section would adopt towards the Germans over the next fifteen years—to a considerable extent, he laid the foundation for the relations between American historical officers and former German *Wehrmacht* leaders. The reference to the officially defined task of extracting 'objective' historical facts on military operations became a standard justification for a rather opportunistic and shortsighted approach to former German generals. The American war historians usually showed little interest in the responsibility of their—in some cases convicted—German co-workers for war crimes

and atrocities.

The line between pragmatic information gathering and an apologetic collaboration with formerly leading representatives of German militarism and National Socialism was indeed thin, and sometimes hard to identify. Carried away by the prospect of gaining intimate insights into the German *Wehrmacht* on an unprecedented scale, the Historical Division stepped out onto a slippery slope. It was certainly difficult for the mostly young American officers to establish the amiable relationships necessary to ensure the Germans' cooperation, at the same time keeping a professional and critical distance. Neither the Historical Section, Europe nor the superior Historical Branch in Washington provided their officers with guidelines in this regard.⁴⁰³

In fact, from the very first days, the organizational structure of the historical cooperation provided the German generals with a considerable amount of room for maneuver. As already intended by Hechler in 1945, important responsibilities were left to the Control Group. Halder and his colleagues were in charge of the general conception and outline of the studies demanded by the Historical Division. Furthermore, they selected the respective home workers. By delegating these responsibilities to the Germans, the Historical Division basically demoted its own officers to mere legwork. The main task of the American officers was to secure the documents and personnel requested by the Germans. This imbalance between German and American collaborators was additionally enhanced by the frequent change in American personnel, especially in the second half of the 1950s. Due to the ordinary rotation of officers within the Army, the

⁴⁰³ At least, the records of the Historical Division do not contain anything in that direction.

Historical Division often found itself relying on young and inexperienced officers. This, in turn, provided the much more constant core group of Germans with room to pursue their own specific goals: first, the rehabilitation of the image of the *Wehrmacht* through the transportation of a whitewashed version of the German military's role in World War II; and second, the promotion of traditional German military thought within the U.S. Army that should ultimately ensure the survival of the spirit of the old Prussian-German General Staff.

It can easily seem like the Historical Division underestimated the danger of being exploited by the Germans for their own purposes. To merely ascribe the American officers' lenient attitude or naivety, however, would fall short. In fact, in doing so, one would miss an important aspect of the collaboration: The rapprochement of German and American officers in the context of the unfolding Cold War and the role of ideological alignment in Germany's integration into the Western community. The recreation of German postwar identity as member of *the West* was thereby closely linked to the perpetuation of images that portrayed the Soviet Union as an enemy.

One can thus argue that individual American officers consciously accepted the Germans' apologetic agenda because it served their interest for providing them with supposedly valuable strategic information on their new enemies. Furthermore, the worldviews of many German and American officers overlapped to a considerable degree. Some of the most outspoken German generals had thus ideologically much in common with their American counterparts. The biggest point of connection consisted, of course, in their staunch anti-communism, but their consent reached way beyond the comprehensible rejection of the politically, economically, and ideologically antagonistic social and

governmental system. In fact, the shared perception of a communist menace provided room for the alignment and continuation of racist attitudes on both sides of the Atlantic. Men like Günther Blumentritt and Paul M. Robinett, for example, could thus easily relate on the grounds of a belief system that saw the world divided in “white”, “yellow”, and “black” races who were constantly fighting one another in a struggle for resources, and ultimately for survival. In such a scenario, all Western, that is “white”, people had to join forces to fend off the onslaught of the “Asian hordes”. If the prize for a German contribution to Western defense consisted in “forgetting” certain aspects of German warfare in the East, so be it. And anyway, maybe the *Wehrmacht* was not even all that wrong?

Thus encouraged by the Historical Division’s understanding and sympathetic attitude, the former German officers seized their chance to play an active and controlling part in the political interpretation of the immediate past. Assisted by the Americans, the German officers were able to take part in the creation and reinforcement of the legend that the German army fought an honorable war and was hardly involved in war crimes or the Holocaust. Provided with a very convenient arena in which they could harmonize their respective views on the war, the generals were able to preserve an idealized memory of the Second World War that to this day pervades popular views on the *Wehrmacht*.

Underneath the surface of the larger project of restoring the image of the German military, one man definitely succeeded in raising a monument for himself. In the fall of 1961, Franz Halder was honored with the prestigious *Meritorious Civilian Service Award*, the second highest decoration available for civilians working for federal agencies. This recognition of Halder’s “significant achievements in the improvement of

cooperation and understanding” thus officially ended the sixteen-year cooperation of the U.S. Army with the former *Wehrmacht*.⁴⁰⁴

This thesis attempted to offer, for the first time, a comprehensive examination of the war historical cooperation between the U.S. Army officers and former German generals, thus giving an organizational overview as well as providing starting points for a cultural analysis. However, naturally many questions have to remain open, questions that would deserve closer examination. It would, for example, be interesting to take a more detailed look at the utilization of German studies at American service schools. Moreover, it could be of value to trace the distribution of the German material, not only within the American military, but in the British and French armies as well. Furthermore, in the late 1950s, the U.S. Army handed the majority of historical studies over to the *Bundeswehr*; it would thus be interesting to explore whether and how the West German military utilized these studies. Finally, the relationship between the German officers and civilian historians still remains unexplored. In fact, the sources suggest that numerous American and German historians approached the Germans with detailed questions on the military and political history of the Third Reich. Especially in view on the development and persistence of the legend of the “clean” *Wehrmacht*, this aspect would deserve closer attention. This thesis can thus be not more than a starting point. It seeks to offer some approaches to this complex topic—paths that will be further explored in my dissertation.

⁴⁰⁴ Franz Halder, "Schreiben an die Ordenskanzlei des Bundespraesidialamtes, 4.1.1962 [Letter to the office of decorations of the German Federal President]," in *N220/93* (BAMA).

Abbreviations

BAMA	Bundesarchiv Militärarchiv, Freiburg – German Federal Military Archive
CinCUSAREUR	Commander-in-Chief United States Army Europe
D-Mark	Deutsche Mark
DEFE	Disarmed Enemy Forces Enclosure
ETO	European Theater of Operations
EUCOM	European Command
G-2	Intelligence
HDIE	Historical Division Interrogation Enclosure
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte, München – Institute for Contemporary History, Munich
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
OCMH	Office of the Chief of Military History
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht – Armed Forces (Joint) High Command
OMGUS	Office of Military Government for Germany-US
POW	Prisoner of War
PW 8	Prisoner of War Enclosure No. 8 (Garmisch)
PWE	Prisoner of War Enclosure
RM	Reichsmark
USAREUR	United States Army Europe
USFET	United States Forces European Theater
WDSS	War Department Special Staff

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Archives of the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN

CSHU *Personal Papers of George N. Shuster*

Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg (German Federal Military Archiv)

ZA1 *Organization and Work of the Historical Division*

Msg1 *Military History Collection*

N220 *Personal Papers of Franz Halder*

N252 *Personal Papers of Günther Blumentritt*

N257 *Personal Papers of Waldemar Erfurth*

N265 *Personal Papers of Gotthard Heinrici*

Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich (IfZ, Institute for Contemporary History)

ED 91 *Personal Papers of Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg*

OMGUS *Microfilms of Records of the Office of the Military Government for Germany*

Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv München (Bavarian Main State Archive Munich)

MSo *Sonderministerium für politische Befreiung* (Department of Political Liberation)

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